Annual Report
April 2022 - March 2023

bhasha

Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, Vadodara
Adivasi Academy, Tejgadh
Edited by G. N. Devy, Tony Joseph and Ravi Korisettar, *The Indians: Histories of a Civilization* is an ambitious book prepared under the aegis of Bhasha Centre and published by Aleph Book Company, Delhi. The book maps the origins, evolution, and present-day reality of India’s civilization and people, presenting the entire history of India from the first habitation of humans (Homo sapiens) till the year 2000. It consists of 100 chapters written by 90 domain experts from the fields of archaeology, linguistics, philosophy, history and social sciences, amongst others from all parts of the world. The essays in the book cover a period of more than the last 12,000 years—from before the last Ice Age to the 21st century covering Environment, People, Life, Thought, Expressions, Formations, Movements, Traditions and Transformations.

The book was launched on 30 July 2023 in Vadodara at the hands of distinguished writer and philosopher, Prof. Rahamat Tarikere in a gathering of scholars, writers and artists. The book will be published in Marathi, Hindi, Malayalam, Bangla, Hindi and Oriya translation.
Bhasha's founder, Prof. G. N. Devy undertook The People's Linguistic Survey of India, a massive survey of the living languages in India in 2010 and by 2013, completed the research covering all States and Union Territories of India with a team of 3000 community speakers, linguists, scholars and field researchers. The survey reports on 780 living languages in contemporary India including the languages of the Adivasi, nomadic, hill, desert, coastal and plains communities. Envisioned as a 50-volume series, each volume in the series is published in both Hindi and English, and in most instances in the regional language of that states or Union Territory. A total of thirty-five volumes containing 63 titles have been published so far.
In collaboration with and the support of the University of Northern Colorado, US, Bhasha completed a study on documentation of the 'Traditional Justice System and Customary Laws of the Rathwa community' in 20 villages across the six talukas of Chhota Udepur, Kanwant, Naswadi, Bodeli, Pavijetpur and Sankheda of Chhota Udepur district in Gujarat. A first of its kind study, the documentation covers understanding of the community’s traditional justice system, its continuation and relevance in present times, its relation to the judicial system and the transitions taking place. Interviews with the panch members show the dire need to protect and carry forward the time-tested community law that not only dispenses justice but is also timely, economical and adheres to the community’s beliefs and customs. The documentation will be accessible with the Adivasi Academy and University of Colorado archives. Bhasha plans to extend the study across the entire eastern tribal belt of Gujarat.
With the support of the University of Leicester, UK, Bhasha documented and created a series of thirty podcasts on the impact of Covid-19 on Adivasi and Denotified Communities. The project concluded with an Exhibition titled, ‘What was to pass, remained’, held at the Conflictorium Museum, Ahmedabad, from 23 September to 30 November 2022. Along with visual display, the Exhibition included plays and performances by the Rajbhoi, Madari, Bahurupi, Nat, Bawri and Rathwa communities, supported by talks and discussions. The Exhibition received an excellent response with nearly 1700-1800 footfalls.
What was to pass, remained
LINKS TO OUR PROMINENT PODCASTS

- Quarantine
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PoOHvW5hKNI

- Badava, Vaidyas and Covid 19
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4h6Ij36KfOs

- A Teacher’s Story
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFA_09f7lsY

- Covid-19 Awareness
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhpRi25XjyU

- Art, Artists and Covid-19
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOQjlYBGXv8
Migration during COVID-19 in Chhota Udepur District, Gujarat
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Lb3yOt2nGQ&t=37s

Well-being and Health during COVID-19
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Vgz0-6PSGU&t=54s

Agriculture and the Pandemic
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4KlumbAp54

Education and Covid-19
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHVCAlm2X28
With further research support from the University of Leicester, Bhasha carried out a training programme in A/V documentation and film-making. 12 youths from Chhota Udepur joined the year-long programme for which domain experts Dakxin Bajrange, Akshay Khanna, Riya Soni, Anshul Agrawal and Yashodhara Udupa were invited. They covered photography, theatre, film direction, research, interviewing and editing. The trainees have produced a series of 7 short films capturing local history, culture and social practices. The films will shortly be available on YouTube.

Two films were also made on the Dadi and Kalbelia communities by Vipin Nayak and Amit Tadvi, interns from Anant National University, Ahmedabad.
Education
Vasantshala School, on the campus of the Adivasi Academy, specialises in Mother Tongue and Multilingual Education. Initiated in 2005, Vasantshala focuses on bridge schooling of out-of-school children between 6 and 15 years. The Gujarat State Education Board (GSEB) gave it recognition as an official school for Standards I-V in April 2021. During the academic year 2022-23, Vasantshala School enrolled 58 children (35 boys, 23 girls) across 18 villages of Chhota Udepur.

Vasantshala is a residential schooling programme and along with their regular activities, the children are involved in story-telling, ecological activities, traditional arts and fun trips. The children have access to the Academy’s Museum and Library that has a large collection of interesting books and films for them. The children have their own Bal Panchayat. Along with celebrating festivals, the children get to meet the numerous visitors to the Academy from across the world.

This past year, a series of hands-on clay workshops were organised by 'Umbro' (a group of university students in Vadodara) for the children of Vasantshala. They created objects inspired by nature, through their imagination.
The workshops covered the basics of pottery-making, such as moulding, shaping and decorating the clay pieces, with the aim to promote creativity, develop motor skills and appreciation for the arts among children. The end result of the workshop is a collection of creative pottery pieces made by the kids.

The Vasantshala children are encouraged to tap and excel in their special talents and faculties. This year 4 children presented eight stories in 4 different Adivasi languages (Rathvi, Bhili, Nayaki and Tadvi of Gujarat) in an international symposium titled 'Kathakari' (Story Telling), organised by the Anant International University, Ahmedabad. The stories speak about the relationship of humans with nature and their living together in harmony with each other, by developing problem-solving skills. Urban audiences at the University appreciated listening to these stories, as presented by our young narrators on stage.
Bhasha developed multilingual supplementary readers in Rathwi, Gujarati languages, on Language & Environment and Mathematics for classes 1 and 2 under a year-long programme by the name, *Bhasha Teri Meri* (Language-Yours and Mine). Educationists and government teachers from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand contributed to the making of the readers. The readers will be useful as teaching aids in tribal schools in the Rathwi-speaking-belt of the Chhota Udepur district. A series of workshops and practice-based exercise sessions were conducted with the Vasantshala School and government school teachers along with doing trial runs in schools. Bhasha plans to prepare more of these in other tribal languages and also cover classes 3 to 5 in the coming years, in keeping with the New Education Policy, 2020.
HEALTHCARE
Under the Prakriti Healthcare Programme, the Adivasi Academy holds a Sunday OPD conducted by visiting doctors from Vadodara. This year, 2459 patients visited the OPD during the year for skin, gastric, neurological, orthopedic and cardiac problems, tuberculosis, urinary infections, sickle cell anaemia, epilepsy, diabetes, blood pressure, and general complaints.

Of these, the highest complaints were related to skin ailments followed by general complaints, gastric, muscular and respiratory issues. The centre is equipped with a pathological laboratory that can conduct basic tests. The doctors’ team includes Dr. Kiran N. Shinglot, Dr. Jayshree Rao, Dr. Shivji Kanate, Dr. Sudhir More and Dr. Anurag Gumastha. The cell counter and biochemistry diagnostic machines received from the Rotary International grant in 2021 have benefited many patients for conducting tests at discounted rates.

Bhasha is now adding sickle-cell testing and counseling facility at the centre. As a pilot research programme supported by the Indians for Collective Action, USA and Axtel Industries, Halol. Bhasha will conduct sickle cell tests during its own OPD. The programme will primarily focus on the new entrants in the local colleges to know the prevalence of sickle cell anaemia incidence among young adults in the district and to decide upon measures to reduce the scale and incidence of sickle cell through marital counseling and awareness generation, as it is a congenital disease with no cure.
DEVELOPMENT
Taking forward its long initiated endeavour to address the issues of dignity, social justice and citizenship entitlements for the Denotified and Nomadic Communities, Bhasha has initiated grassroots interventions for community development in western India under the title: 'I Am: Bhasha Dignity Collective' supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation with the aim to capacitate communities to voice and address their issues.

Organisations working with the Denotified Communities such as Jan Sahas, Muskaan (in Madhya Pradesh), Kota Heritage Society, Gramin Shiksha Kendra (in Rajasthan) and Budhan Theatre (in Gujarat) have come together to provide training to the communities. These include the Bachhada, Bediya, Gadiya Luhar, Baori, Kalbeliya, Kanjar, Nat, Pardhi, Pauwa Bhopa, Maganiar, Naik Bhopa and Sansi/Chhara.

The intervention includes running of education centres for primary age group children, creating 'barefoot lawyers', exploring livelihoods potential using traditional skills, documenting oral narratives, developing community leadership and providing voice through theatre.

A series of capacity building workshops were held with community members by each organisation in their area of specialisation such as schooling and education, legal issues, theatre and livelihood, thereby building shared capacities across organisations and communities. To bring dignity and visibility to the communities, oral traditions of the Pauwa Bhopa in Pali, Kalbelia in Jaipur, Maganiar in Barmer (Rajasthan) and Bijori Kanjar were documented.
As part of the programme, Bhasha has started education centres at Kota and Barmer in Rajasthan and at Ahmedabad in Gujarat, covering 120 children.

Bhasha organised a celebration of the cultural heritage of the Denotified Communities at the Adivasi Academy on 14 March followed by a meeting of the partner organizations on 15 and 16 March 2023. The day-long event included:

- A musical performance by the Maganiar musicians from Barmer, Rajasthan
- A Dance by Madari Women from Kothamba and Ramol, Gujarat
- A Magic show (Majma) by Natubhai Madari, Ramol, Gujarat
- Kabir and Meera songs by Ramesh and Kaluram (Pauwa Bhopa) from Sirohi, Rajasthan
- A Theatre performance by the Nat and Madari communities from Mahisagar, Gujarat
- A Musical performance by the Mirs from Ahmedabad, Gujarat
- A Craft Fair showcasing Kalbelia quilts, ironsmithy work by the Gadia Luhar, knitting and crochet work of the Madari women and stonework of the Salat community.
The Adivasi Academy facilitated rural practicum of seven students of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai from 1-15 June 2022. They conducted a survey of the Salat stone carver Denotified Community living in Itwara village near Pavi Jetpur in Chhota Udepur district. The community once survived by making grinding stones used in the kitchens to sell them in the villages. With modernization and easy availability of electric kitchen mixer-grinders as well as flour-mills in every village, this demand has ceased and the youth of the community are finding it tough to get employment. Based on the survey about their present socio-economic status and livelihood challenges, Bhasha plans to initiate community development work with the local Salat community.
LIVELIHOOD
Bhasha began work with 16 Madari women who had taken to begging during the COVID-19 pandemic, to help revive their traditional embroidery skills. Designers Shubra Singh and Seema Pires mentored them in Braiding and Crochet techniques, as well as embroidery and needle thread work to produce marketable products. Bhasha exhibited their works at the Satya Art Gallery, Ahmedabad, at a show titled ‘Crafting Livelihoods’ from 21 to 26 December 2022, receiving a warm response.
Bhasha organized a week-long exhibition of Kalbelia quilts from 20-26 July 2022 at the India International Centre, Delhi. This is part of the Kalbelia Craft Revival Project in Bundi, Rajasthan of the larger ‘I Am’ programme for the denotified and nomadic communities. Livelihood is one of the components under this programme to create employment opportunities for the nomadic communities.
Bhasha continues its efforts to revive the traditional Kasota hand weave of the Vankars of Chhota Udepur. Traditionally, the Kasota was used as a loin cloth by the Adivasis. Now on the verge of disappearance, Bhasha has identified master Vankars proficient in its making. Presently, two community weavers—and the only practicing ones among the local Vankar community—are working at the Adivasi Academy’s Lakhara (refers to the painter) Studio for reviving the Kasota by making new products as table mats, dupattas, stoles and jackets. The intricate patterns and designs woven into the cloth are unique to the region and are highly valued for their beauty and cultural significance. The Academy has undertaken to revive the textile by adapting it to modern use without losing its traditional style and essence. The natural dyes for the weave are grown and processed at the Academy. One of the Academy’s staff, Praveen Rathwa, has got trained by experienced dyer Jagada Rajappa from Hyderabad. Following is a link to a film on Kasota made by Mogstar and TV News International that was supported by former Advisory Board member, Sapna Bhatia: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86q2-7H0MM.
Students of Fashion and Textile Design, Sonal Kumar and Surbhi Bajaj from NIFT-Jodhpur, completed their four-month internship from January to April 2022 at the Adivasi Academy. During their stay, they made garments and home furnishing articles with the Kasota weave that were displayed by Sonal Kumar at an exhibition-cum-fashion show in Jodhpur held in May 2022. He resumed his role at the Academy in November 2022 as a fashion and textile designer, and worked with the local artisans on design interventions to provide them with sustainable income. This is in line with setting up of the ‘farm to fashion’ programme at the Academy that involves stakeholders from farmers to spinners, dyers, weavers and tailors.
The Adivasi Academy organized a 3-day Yarn Spinning Workshop from 18-20 June 2022 on Ambar Charka for weaver families and Adivasi women. The training was provided by Shri Dhirendra Soneji, a Gandhian follower from Sakva village in Narmada District, Gujarat. The yarn produced is being supplied to the Vankar weavers for making the Kasota fabric. Earlier the Adivasi Academy was outsourcing yarn from Gandhigram, Tamil Nadu and Wardha, Maharashtra but now it has started its own production to reduce dependency and save on cost.

INDIGO CULTIVATION

To get in-house dyed yarn for textile production, the Adivasi Academy has ventured into indigo cultivation on a two-bigha piece of rented land at Achala village in 2019. While this continues along with production of indigo dye, this past year the Academy procured seeds of natural brown cotton of long staple length developed by the Central Institute of Cotton Research, Nagpur and two varieties of desi white cotton seeds from Wardha in Maharashtra and Viramgam in Gujarat.
Fabrics made from natural brown cotton are more sustainable as the entire dyeing process is eliminated, dye treatment is limited and use of water, chemicals and electricity is less. While heavy monsoon last year damaged the BT cotton cultivation in the Chota Udepur district, these cotton varieties did excellently well. The Adivasis in the region are seeing such cotton plants after a gap of three decades. This is a step towards preparing the yarn and weaving textile in-house along with promoting Kasota as a completely hand-spun, hand-woven and naturally dyed textile.
Bhasha has launched the 'Baadi' programme under which it is supporting 50 marginal women in villages nearby Tejgadh by training them in vegetable cultivation in their backyards. Already one season of vegetable cultivation is over. This initiative is helping them with vegetable produce that can be used for self-consumption along with sale of any extra produce in the local market. This programme was supported as a pilot project by the Indians for Collective Action, USA.

**BAADI PROGRAMME**

**BANANA PAPER PRODUCTION**

Ravi Raj, on Fellowship with the Adivasi Academy since 2022, has mastered the process and technique of making handmade banana paper on campus. Bhasha acquired banana paper-making machines for the initiative through support from Dr. Eva Romero, a research scholar from Spain, and Bhasha’s Trustees, Shri Lalit Mehta and Prof. Om Damani. Ravi conducted a 5-day workshop from 1-5 June 2022 with the youth of Chhota Udepur district and has trained 12 youth in banana paper-making. The Academy has now started making notebooks and diaries out of this paper. Ravi is sharing his expertise with others by conducting national level workshops, which were held at the Academy from 25 to 29 November and 26 to 30 December 2022. Ahana Dey, a design intern from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Kannur spent four months from May to August, designing products such as diaries, note books, gift tags and cards from handmade banana paper.
Handmade paper making workshops conducted by Ravi Raj

Diaries made at the Academy with Banana fibre
Anjali Tyagi, an undergraduate intern from the Indian Institute of Crafts and Design, Jaipur, spent a 4-month period at the Adivasi Academy from 15 April to 30 August 2022 to work on non-stick terracotta cookware made by the Dhanak Adivasi community in Chhota Udepur. She developed a range of modern cookware for the urban kitchen with the Dhanak terracotta artisans to widen the market and to promote healthy cooking. She got two lab tests conducted for leachable lead and cadmium and food safety at a lab to check whether the lac resin that is used in them for coating is safe or not. The results have acertained that the cookware is safe and healthy for cooking.
A workshop was conducted with the Pardhi community members from Bhopal at the Academy to develop products using their existing skill of making Fine Bamboo Joinery that is used for making bird and animal traps. With the strict implementation of the ‘The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972’, the community is being criminalized for making these traps. Like the Kalbelia and Madari community Bhasha is trying to explore their existing skills for producing contemporary products for daily use. A similar exercise has been taken up by the Indian Institute of Crafts and Design (IICD) alumni Vidhu Dwivedi in Sawai Madhopur with the rag-picker Baori community to develop products out of plastic weaving. The women from the community are being trained in it and new looms are being installed for them.
VISITS & INTERNSHIPS
Eleven officer trainees from the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Delhi visited the Adivasi Academy on 17 October 2022. Tejgadh was one of their many 21-day destinations of the 'Bharat Darshan' tour. The Adivasi Academy team shared their various activities and development work in the region.

The Adivasi Academy hosted a group of students from the National Institute of Design (NID) in Ahmedabad for their curriculum course ‘Environmental Perception’ in February 2023. These students gained a first-hand experience of the environmental challenges faced by Adivasi communities and learnt about local solutions and traditional practices. It provided them with an opportunity to have a cross-cultural exchange of ideas and knowledge with the Adivasi Academy's team. The trip led to an understanding of sustainable design and environmental conservation and the role these play in preserving the environment, as well as a deeper appreciation of the culture and traditions of indigenous communities.
The Vaacha Museum had a footfall of 5500 with 5415 visitors from India and 85 from overseas.

Students from several academic institutions and organizations visited the Academy for their study and field work. These include:

- 28 members from Shroff Foundation visited the campus from 8 to 10 November 2022. Another batch of 55 members from the same organization visited on 12 December 2022.

- 61 students and faculty members from the Faculty of Social Work, M.S. University, Vadodara visited and stayed at the Academy campus from 14-19 November 2022 for their field work.

- 4 interns from Shri Surayoday PG Centre of MSW, Bhavnagar district did their field work at the Academy from 20 December 2022 to 20 January 2023. Similarly, one student from Sri Sahajanand PG Centre of Social Work, Bhavnagar stayed at the campus at the same time for his field work.

- 140 members from the Primary Education Department visited on 30 November 2022.
• Faculty members of Parul University, Vadodara, visited on 24 December 2023.

• 100 students from Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Centre at Dabhoi, Halol and Valia visited the Academy on 31 December 2022.

• Faculty members of Takshila Institute of Commerce visited on 6 December 2022.

• 285 students and teaching staff from Panchmahals school visited the Academy on 16 December 2022. Similarly, 169 students and teachers from the Chhota Udepur Government School visited the Academy on 10 January 2023. 444 students, teachers and staff members from Model School, Chhota Udepur visited the Academy on 24 February 2023.

• 35 students and faculty members from the Hindi Department of Sardar Patel University visited the Academy on 4 February 2023.

• 24 students and faculty members from the Department of Linguistics, M S University of Baroda, visited the Academy on 25 February 2023.

• First Semester students from the Department of Architecture and Planning, CVM University, Vallabh Vidyanagar visited the Academy on 24 February 2023.
- 71 students and faculty members from the Charutar Vidya Mandal College of Fine Arts, Anand visited and stayed at the Academy on 20 and 21 February 2023.

- 129 members from the Parivartan Educational and Charitable Trust, Chota Udepur visited the Academy on 28 March 2023.

- 42 students from the B.Ed. College, Pavi Jetpur, in Chota Udepur district visited the Academy.

- 5 participants of the Gram Art Project from Nagpur participated in the Indigo Dye and handmade paper-making Workshop from 25 to 30 December 2022.
OTHER ACTIVITIES
From 13 to 15 January 2023 the Adivasi Academy participated in the Adivasi Ekta Parishad Mahasammelan at Kanwant in Chota Udepur district of Gujarat and put up a stall of its publications. The Banana Paper Project was also displayed. Around 3 lakh Adivasis from Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra visited the Sammelan.

The Adivasi Academy showcased Adivasi craft products at the 'Farmer’s Nest Festival' organized by Pristine Events to promote organic farming and local sustainable vendors on 7-8 January 2023 at Vadodara.

A new Pithora was made at the Adivasi Academy's Vaacha Museum of the Adivasi Academy on mud surface as is done traditionally. The Pithora has been made by two veteran Lakhara artists, Nandu Rathwa and Ratan Vankar of Baroj village. Natural pigments have been used to capture the true essence of the Pithora painting.

From 15 to 16 July 2022, training in rope making was imparted to the Academy staff by trainers from Phoenix Products—the firm that supplied the hand spinning Charkhas to the Academy. This is part of the Banana Paper Project of the Academy.

As part of its regular documentation programme the Vaacha Museum team documented Pithora rituals in the Chhota Udepur region spread over various nights. Both still photography and A/V documentation were done.
For the past two years, the Vaacha Museum team has been creating a digital database of the artefacts in the museum. The digital register of the museum artefacts has been completed this past year. It comprises 1852 articles in the Vaacha Museum collection including musical instruments, textiles, paintings, bead jewellery, sculptures, masks, kitchenware, agricultural and household tools.
LIST OF FUNDERS FOR 2022-2023
PROJECT GRANTORS

Agriculture Insurance Company of India, Delhi
Association for India’s Development, USA
Directorate of Archaeology and Museum, Gandhinagar
Funds for Global Human Rights, USA
GAIL Charitable and Education Trust, Delhi
Indians for Collective Action, USA
Paul Hamlyn Foundation, UK
Raza Foundation, Delhi
University of Leicester, UK
University of Northern Colorado, USA
### CORPORATES & TRUSTS

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## INDIVIDUAL DONORS

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While Bhasha receives project-based funding, not all its activities receive support. In particular, the Museum, Vasantshala School and the Prakriti Healthcare Program are only partly supported. Bhasha welcomes donations for its activities. Bhasha has the CSR certificate, 80G tax exemption and FCRA Certificate. Bhasha’s accounts are audited annually by an External Auditor. To make donations to Bhasha, one may write to bhasharesearch@gmail.com for cheque/bank account details.