

Bhasha Research and Publication Centre

Annual Report 2018-19

Activities During the Year

A) RESEARCH

1. *People's Linguistic Survey of India*

Bhasha's Founder and eminent scholar, Prof. G. N. Devy had embarked upon a survey of Indian in the year 2010. Titled the 'Peoples Linguistic Survey of India' (PLSI) this survey is the first-ever survey to be undertaken in post-independent India and the second to be ever taken in India. The first Linguistic Survey of India was taken up by Irish linguist and civil servant, George Grierson in 1894 and published between 1903 and 1928. Carried out a century later, within a budget of less than one crore, the PLSI involved 3000 community speakers, linguists, scholars and publishers from across India. Covering all States and Territories of India, the PLSI reports on 780 languages and is being brought out in a 70-volume series in regional languages, Hindi and English.

2. *Dakshinayan Thought Series*

Conceived by Prof. Devy, the Dakshinayan Thought Series brings together literary and philosophical Indian texts that celebrate diversity, tolerance and non-violence in response to the social and intellectual need of current times. The series is conceptualised in 10 anthologies in as many languages, with each anthology containing the original language text along with an English translation. Each of the anthologies will include essays, charters, lectures, poems and creative writing. This year, the preparation of the first two volumes in Punjabi and Telugu was initiated.

3. *Study of Endangered Languages*

During the process of carrying out the Peoples Linguistic Survey of India, it became evident that many languages in India are facing vulnerabilities of various kinds ranging from less number of speakers, absence of script, adoption of and influence of other dominant languages, limited avenues for usage of the language, loss of pride in language and community identity, the absence of transmitting traditional languages to the next generation and others. The UNESCO has established a set of parameters for the study of endangerment of languages. Having been one of the first organisations in India to take up study, documentation and publishing in Adivasi languages, Bhasha Centre has decided to take up a systematic study of endangered languages in India and come up with recommendations for their revitalisation.

In the first instance, Bhasha initiated the study in four states of western India: Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The study included identifying criteria for

endangerment that was followed by an analysis of these and an audio-visual documentation of the languages. The following languages have been found to be endangered :

In Maharashtra: Dungra bhili, Vadi, Hadpati

In Gujarat: Korku, Nihali, Kolami

In Madhya Pradesh: Nahal, Sehriya

In Rajasthan: Dhavadi, Dhatti and Thali

4. Preparation of Bibliographies of Tribal Studies and Customary Law

In recent years, some universities in Gujarat have launched courses in Tribal Literature and Society. Often, their faculty and students approach Bhasha for recommending reading and research material. In order to help the growth of Tribal Studies for which aim the Adivasi Academy was set up, Bhasha undertook the preparation of the Bibliography of Tribal Studies of Gujarat. The Bibliography includes 500+ titles in the area of tribal history, literature, culture, sociology and development pertaining to Gujarati.

Similarly, on the request of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, Bhasha prepared an extensive Bibliography on Adivasi Customary Laws with nearly a 1000 titles. Various institutional libraries across India, especially in the tribal populated states, were referred to for the preparation of the bibliographies. The Customary Laws Bibliography will be extremely useful for law students and researchers particularly interested in tribal law as well as to policy makers as at times, traditional Adivasi law and the standard law can be conflicting in nature.

5. Study of Traditional Life Skills among Adivasi communities in Chhotaudepur and Mahisagar districts of Gujarat

Considering the rapid modernisation of tribal areas, Bhasha took up a study of the traditional livelihood skills among Adivasi communities of Chhotaudepur and Mahisagar Districts of Gujarat. The study included traditions in the domains of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and arts, craft and performance practices. The study was taken up to see the changes in community livelihood patterns, challenges that traditional life skills are facing and to explore ways to revitalise these to augment income generation and check out-migration. The study covered the Adivasi communities (Rathwas, Naikas, Tadvis and Dungra Bhils) in Chhotaudepur and Adivasi and Nomadic Communities (Nats, Gadiya Lohar, Dabgar, Raval, Vasava, Vadi, Bhil Nayaks and Vaghri) in Mahisagar district.

The study shows that in Chhotaudepur district, the income from agriculture is decreasing due to the generational division of land within the family, lack of proper irrigation facilities and the increasing investment that agriculture now demands. This is the primary reason for compulsive migration of Adivasi families during the non-monsoon months. While some sections of the community have formed Joint Forest Committees, the access to natural forest resources is limited due to the forest laws. There is tremendous scope to develop the local arts and animal husbandry as viable livelihood options in the region. Mahisagar experiences a similar lack of adequate water for farming. In addition to Adivasi communities, Mahisagar also has performing communities whose performative traditions are no longer in demand due to new means of entertainment and communities as Chamthas whose making of stone implements has lost its relevance due to modern technology. These traditional skills need to be documented and also revitalised if they are to remain a continued living heritage.

6. Documentation of the Traditional Cuisine of Adivasi Communities in Gujarat

Adivasi communities in the various geographical areas of India, have their own traditional cuisine that not only includes their staple diet but also special culinary dishes during weddings and festivals, during birth and death. The cuisine changes with seasons and the variety encompasses to include different kinds of rotlas, sweets, chutneys, drinks and tid-bits/snacks. Bhasha took up documentation of the cuisine of the Adivasi communities across the eastern tribal belt of Gujarat including Dungri Bhils, Garasia Bhils, Rathwas, Tadvi, Naiks, Panchmahali Bhils, Chaudharis, Gamits, Vasavas and Dangi Bhils covering the districts of Banaskantha, Sabarkantha, Chhotaudepur, Aravalli, Mahisagar, Panchmahals, Chhotaudepur, Narmada, Tapi and Dang. The documentation is being published as a full-length book.

7. Documentation and Study of the Status of Citizenship Entitlements of Denotified and Nomadic Communities

Bhasha has taken up a two-year study on the status of citizenship entitlements of five Denotified and Nomadic Communities in three states of western India: Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Considering that the statutory status of Denotified Communities varies across states, the research will study a single community across at least two or all the three states to gain a comparative perspective on their history, nomadic routes, migrations, livelihood practices, conflicts with the law/society. The communities being covered are Bedia/Banchchda, Sansi, Gadia Lohar, Madari and Nat. Along with documenting their lived reality and how it is influenced by historical, social and political dynamics, the study will also involve a survey on the status of their citizenship entitlements in relation to civic facilities, education, healthcare, transport, communication, housing etc. The study is expected to come up with a Status Report specific to Community-Locations and to make Recommendations for the amelioration of the communities covered in the study. Bhasha is

collaborating with Jan Sahas and Muskaan in Madhya Pradesh and Kota Heritage Society and Gramin Shiksha Kendra in Rajasthan.

8) Connecting Community Heritage

Bhasha was selected as one of the two organisations in South Asia by the US State's sponsored Community Connecting Heritage Programme. Bhasha partnered with the University of Northern Colorado and the Immigrant and Refugee Centre of Colorado, both based in Greeley, US. Comprising in-exchange visits by Indian team to the US and the US team to India and Virtual Exchanges across the two organisations, the programme connected the historical and cultural heritage of the Chharas in Ahmedabad and the Karenni Burmese, Native American and African-American Communities in the US. The programme was very successfully completed by a team of five—Sonal Baxi, Vipul Kapadia, Kalpana Gagdekar, Chetna Rathod and Abhishek Indrekar—from Bhasha and Budhan Theatre leading the India end of the project, and who also travelled to Greeley in February 2019. Five representatives of UNC-IRCNOCO—Prof. Michael Kimball, Collin Cannon, Pu-meh, Larissa DanielsHill and Joanie Finch—visited Chharanagar and Tejgadh in May 2019. The project closed with a week-long Public Exhibition put up by Bhasha and Budhan Theatre at the Satya Gallery, Navjivan Press, Vadodara. The exhibition received such a tremendous response that Bhasha aims to continue to put it up at future performances of Budhan Theatre.

B) EDUCATION AND CHILD PROTECTION

1. Vasantshala

The Vasantshala Mother Tongue and Multilingual Training Centre is part of the Bhasha Centre's Adivasi Academy at Tejgadh in Chhotaudepur District. The Centre enrolls out-of-school children between the age group of 7 to 14 years and admits them to the local government schools after bringing them to age-appropriate learning levels. Since most of such children have dropped out of school due to the difference between their Adivasi language and Gujarati that is the school medium of instruction, Vasantshala teachers carry out the teaching-learning process initially in the child's mother tongue and gradually transition them to Gujarati, Hindi and English. This pedagogy has worked successfully and the children are able to continue their education in the government schools. Children stay with Vasantshala for a period of 1 to 3 three years depending upon their learning gap and abilities.

Vasantshala begins its academic year in June 2018. During 2018-19, the centre had 60 children. 2 children dropped out (as one had sickle cell and the other left) and 58 children remained. In June 2019, the Adivasi Academy enrolled 30 children from Vasantshala centre to the local government schools/ashramshalas. These children no longer face linguistic and other formal educational challenges as compared to when they first arrived at Vasantshala. The remaining 28 children will continue to be at Vasantshala for a year or more till they are

ready to be transitioned to the government schools. Meanwhile, Vasantshala has enrolled 30 new children for this academic year. Vasantshala has in all 58 children at present for 2019-20.

2. Child Protection

Bhasha had initiated awareness regarding Child Protection in 133 villages of Kanwant taluka of Chhotaudepur district with the support of UNICEF in 2014. During the next four years, Bhasha formed School Management Committees, Adolescent Groups, Child Protection Committees to address Child Protection issues in Kanwant and interlined these with the District Child Protection Unit and other government departments responsible for creating a child-friendly environment in the district. Intensive capacity building programmes were conducted to strengthen Child Protection Governance and create accountability of government for taking ownership of the initiative and to develop community capacity to work in alliance with the government.

Following responsiveness of the community, UNICEF and Bhasha decided to institutionalise the Child Protection initiative as well as to expand it to other talukas of Chhotaudepur. Bhasha open 'Child and Adolescent Resource Centres (CAARC) at Chhotaudepur, Kanwant, Pavijetpur, Bodeli, Naswadi and Sankheda talukas of the Chhotaudepur district with the aim of providing information regarding the implementation of laws and schemes related to Child Protection, to create a demand for the same and to disseminate these services effectively and in an accessible way. The CAARCS were meant as a gateway to channelize information, liaison between the government, community and children and to strengthen the various platforms/units involved with making child protection a reality. Throughout the year, the CAARCs held meetings with the community and discussions and assisted the filling up of applications. In all, 11582 individuals visited the six CAARCs in the district during the year to avail information on various schemes. Of these, 1446 could successfully claim the scheme benefits. In addition, CAARCs provided career guidance to 4036 adolescents, and held 76 meetings with Adolescent Groups at Vocational Training Centres and ITIs at all blocks.

However, with UNICEF shifting its focus to Narmada district and the district administration declining to own the CAARCs, these centres had to be closed with the end of the project in May 2019.

3. Preparation of Multilingual Education Material

Bhasha is known for its Pictorial Glossaries in Adivasi Languages produced in collaboration with the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore. This year Bhasha took up preparation of two language Pictorial Glossaries in Tadvi and Bareli. Bhasha has reviewed its earlier glossaries and in consultation with educationists and school teachers has made modifications in the format. The illustrations in the glossary are being prepared by Adivasi

artists. Local government school teachers in the language areas will be provided training in the use of the glossaries.

C) Art and Culture

1. Study of the Arts and Craft of Chhotaudepur District

As part of its endeavour to document and revitalise Adivasi arts, Bhasha took up study and documentation of the traditional arts of Chhotaudepur. The study covered traditional Adivasi arts as Pithoro Painting, Sculpture, Pottery, Canework, Bead Jewellery and Weaving. The publication in Gujarati, has been taken up for English translation.

2. Documentation of Tribal Music

Continuing its state series of the documentation of Adivasi music, Bhasha carried out the music documentation of Odisha and Telangana states. Done by ethnomusicologist, Ms. Prachi Dublay, the documentation covered the music traditions of Adivasi communities and some major festivals of both states. The documentation is available with the Adivasi Academy's archives for reference.

3. Revival of Kasota

Over the years, the weaving of the traditional *kasota (langot)*, quite popular in the Chhotaudepur district till about a decade ago, has not declined to the extent that only two weavers continue its weaving. With the transition to shirts and trousers, the kasota is now used during the last rites of a person. As an endeavour to save this threatened tradition and to make it re-usable in contemporary times, Bhasha has set up a Loom Workshop at the Adivasi Academy's Lakhara (Artists' Studio).

D) HEALTHCARE

Under the AYUSH project for promotion of Ayurveda, OPD was regularly held at the Adivasi Academy. Between April and October, the Ayush OPD registered 460 first-time patients in addition to 303 follow up patients.

A new formulation prepared by Vaid Govindbhai Rathwa was prescribed to 41 patients with sickle cell anaemia carriers of both disease and trait. 7 male patients with sickle cell disease saw 30% to 70% symptomatic improvement and 34 patients with only traits saw a symptomatic improvement from 50% to 80%.

A number of diagnostic camps were organised in 22 villages in Chhotaudepur district during this time, given the high incidence of malaria, dengue, chikangunia, viral fever during the summer and monsoon months. Health camps took the AYUSH team along with the vaidyas and the medicine kits to the villages in the Academy ambulance so as to be able to reach out to the ill elderly and children where they were and treat them. The camps have revealed a

growing incidence of Leprosy and Fungal Skin disease which is extremely alarming. More than 2000 patients were examined and treated in these Camps.

Several General Awareness programmes were organised in the villages to not just provide information about the benefits of Ayurveda but also about the several health schemes offered by the Government for the benefit of rural and tribal communities, especially those who are poor and below the poverty line. The Awareness Programmes informed villagers about medicinally useful plants growing in their neighbourhood or which they can also easily grow near their own homes and how these can be used to provide relief and even cure in common and non-threatening illnesses. Sometimes they can provide an effective preventive measure also if consumed regularly.

Workshops with Tribal Healers and Ayurved Practitioners were held to bring them together. The first workshop was held on 18 May followed by a second workshop on 22 June 2018. The workshops were conducted to understand the traditional healing practices of tribal healers and their knowledge systems generally inherited from their families. An endeavour was made to bring about an understanding between the practices of traditional healers and ayurved practitioners in a way that increases well-being of the people.

Four workshops for orienting School Teachers in Ayurved Practices, especially in the growing of community gardens and the use of herbs for day-to-day well-being were held at the Adivasi Academy. The workshops were held on 28 June, 27-28 September and 3 October 2018. The workshops were conducted by experienced ayurved practioners and were very popular among the schools teachers.

Under the AYUSH project, Bhasha started a Training Programme for high school passed tribal girls who would be trained as qualified Health Workers/Paramedical workers. This training included basic but detailed understanding of the human anatomy, providing emergency first aid, handling hospital patients and so on. This training began in May 2018 and the final examination was held during November and December 2018. Along with lectures at the Academy, the trainees were deputed to ASFA, Surat for a 10-day training on the making of ayurvedic medicines and their use.

Bhasha now has a fully functional herbal garden on the Adivasi Academy's campus, with nearly 350 herbal and medicinal plants and plant varieties. On an average, there are 5 specimen of each of the plants, taking into consideration plant deaths. The garden serves to create awareness about common herbs and their use for ailments among the many visitors who come to the Adivasi Academy.

On behalf of the Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India, the Centre for Market Research and Social Development Pvt. Ltd. representative visited Bhasha's AYUSH project at the Bhasha

Centre, Vadodara and Adivasi Academy, Tejgadh on 2 August 2018 for project evaluation. As part of the evaluation they visited the AYUSH OPD and made a visit to Puniyavant, Khajuria, Bhilpur villages where they met patients who had benefitted from the project.

New Initiative

The Adivasi Academy at Tejgadh has taken up on an experimental basis, the cultivation of organic indigo as the soil in the region is conducive for its growth. This is an initiative to create work and income generation for the young Adivasi adults among local farming communities as indigo is a cash crop that grows with minimal inputs, and the demand for quality indigo is growing very steadily. A small farm near Tejgadh has been taken on lease for a year and the indigo seeds have been planted. If the experiment succeeds, the Academy will disseminate the idea among the local farmers and carry out training in indigo plantation. In a world where jobs are increasingly hard to come by, we do need to control distress migration to cities and urban areas, this endeavour could help to mitigate this situation.

Fellows and Interns

As American India Foundation's Clinton Fellow, Nishant Gokhale, a post-graduate in Law, was with Bhasha for 8 months from September 2018 to April 2019. As part of his Fellowship project, Nishant prepared an extensive Report on the status of the Adivasi Academy's Library and made Recommendations for optimising its resources and networks so that it can reach out to a wide community of scholars and readers locally, nationally and internationally. Extremely bright, enterprising and resourceful, Nishant has given excellent output for the development of the Library. Having a background in Law, he also prepared the Bibliography of Adivasi Customary Laws during his fellowship period.

For the second consecutive year, the German organisation, Via e.V. (Association for International and Intercultural Exchange), deputed two young volunteers, Ms. Dominique Sauer and Ms. Marie Fritsch for a year from September 2018 to August 2019. Dominique and Marie stayed at the Adivasi Academy and worked closely with the Vasantshala children, engaging with them in English teaching, creative activities as drawing, dancing and sport. They also contributed in keeping Bhasha active on the social media platform, organising the Museum archives and the Library. Their contribution has helped to enhance the access of the Library and Museum collection.

Ms. Rashika Desai, a graduate from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, interned with Bhasha for 5 months during which she translated two of Bhasha's publications: *Chhotaudepur Jilani Hunnar Kala* (The Craft Skills of Chhotaudepur District) and *Adivasi Adim Chitrakala: Rathwa Samajno Babo Pithoro* (The Pithoro Tradition of the Rathwas).

Events

Bal Mela

Constitution of the Adivasi Academy's Advisory Board

The Advisory Board of the Adivasi Academy was constituted after a gap of few years. The following eminent member are part of the new Board:

1. Dr. Madan Meena, Director, Adivasi Academy and Trustee, Bhasha Centre
Artist and Researcher
2. Ms. Aditi Mehta (Retd. IAS), Udaipur
Formerly Jt. Secretary to Govt. of India, Jt. Secretary in PMO, Department of Women and Child Welfare and Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India
3. Prof. Indranil Acharya, Midnapur
Professor with Department of English, Vidyasagar University, Midnapur
Member, National Editorial Collective, *People's Linguistic Survey of India*
4. Prof. Lisa Lomdak, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh
Faculty, Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh
Member, National Editorial Collective, *People's Linguistic Survey of India*
5. Ms. Sapna Bhatia, Delhi
Holds an MBA from India and a Masters in International Journalism from City University, London; an International Journalist, has worked with CNBC, Al Jazeera, APTN (Associated Press Television Network); Presently heads TV News International
6. Mr. Sharda Gautam, Head-Crafts, Tata Trusts, Bhopal

Recognition

Funding

During the year, Bhasha Centre received Project-based funding support from the following organisations:

1. Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India
2. UNICEF, Gandhinagar
3. Tata Trusts
4. Rajeev Gandhi Foundation
5. World Learning

6. Paul Hamlyn Foundation
7. FICCI
8. India Friends Association
9. Association for India's Development

Bhasha received CSR support from Shakun Polymers and Neogen Chemicals.

Funding Support for 2019-20:

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has approved Bhasha's proposal for 2019-20.

Projects that will continue include Tata Trust (till August), Paul Hamlyn Foundation and FICCI.

New grants applications are being sent to GAIL India, Tribal Sub-plan and Tata Trusts.

Visitors

The Adivasi Academy received students and organisations who come to Tejgadh for their own projects, research, exposure and orientation on Adivasi issues.

Among students, the Academy had Aakansha Matreyi in May 2018, a student of IICD, Jaipur who came for documentation of local staff.

Shantanu Patel from Vallabh Vidyanagar college came on 8 September, Kaustubh Vekhande from the Institute of Architecture, visited the Adivasi Academy as part of their research in architecture.

Saurav Agarwal from Bulandshar, Uttar Pradesh, spent a few weeks in June to explore opportunities for working with the Adivasi Academy.

A group of 25 students from the Department of Linguistics and 34 students from the Department of Hindi visited the Adivasi Academy in January 2019

Mr. Cowet Oliver from Venice, Rome came to Bhasha as part of his research on tourism.