# bhasha

# Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, Vadodara and Adivasi Academy, Tejgadh



Annual Report
Highlights of Key Activities
April 2021 to March 2022

### 1. PEOPLE'S LINGUISTIC SURVEY OF INDIA (PLSI)

In the past year, 7 new volumes were added to the *People's Linguistic Survey of India* series.

The volume titles are:

The Languages of Chhattisgarh (English), Volume 7, Part II
The Languages of Uttar Pradesh (English), Volume 29, Part II
Puducherry ki Bhashayein (Hindi), Volume 23, Part I
The Languages of Gujarat, Diu, Daman and Dadra Nagar Haveli (English), Volume 9, Part 2
The Languages of Sikkim (Hindi), Volume 26, Part I
The Languages of Nagaland (Hindi), Volume 21, Part I
The Languages of Bihar (English), Volume 6, Part II

This brings the total number of published volumes in the PLSI series to 58.



# 2. DOCUMENTATION OF ADIVASI LANGUAGES, MUSIC AND ORAL TRADITIONS (SUPPORTED BY MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS, GOVT. OF INDIA)

The 'Centre of Excellence' project awarded to Bhasha in 2019-20 got extended due to the Covid pandemic. Bhasha has completed the project and submitted the Report and UTC to the Ministry. The following activities were accomplished under the project:

i) Production of 10 short films (each of 12-15 minutes), exploring endangerment in each of the following tribal languages:

In Gujarat: Kunkna, Charani, Siddi, Chaudhari, Gamit, Dhodia

In Maharashtra: Gondi, Halbi, Pawri

In Karnataka: Hakki-Pikki

Additionally, a 30-minute film titled, *Ek Bhasha*, *Anek Bhasha*, is prepared to present a comprehensive situation of these languages.

- ii. A Study and Report was completed on the 'Traditional Life-Skills, Livelihoods in Transition and Potential Opportunities among Adivasi Communities of Narmada District of Gujarat'.
- iii. Bhasha digitised 600 audio and 20 video tapes containing Dr. Bhagwandasbhai Patel's lifetime of dedicated work of recording the oral traditions of Garasia and Dungri Bhils in north Gujarat. The recordings run into 500+ hours and contain original Adivasi epics and legends as *Bharat* (Bhili *Mahabharat*), *Rom Sitmani Varta* (Bhili *Ramayan*), *Rathod Varta* and *Gujarano Arelo*, all rendered in Bhili.
- iv. Bhasha now has in its archives, the performing traditions of Sikkim. A 90-minute film is made presenting the music and performances of the Khas, Nepali, Gurung, Bhutia, Lepcha, Rai, Tamang, Magar, Limbu, Bhujel and Sherpa Adivasi communities, along with interviews with artistes.
- v. Recording in Gujarati, Hindi and English was completed providing information on 80 tribal languages of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. With this, Bhasha Van now has recordings of 150 languages, many of which are spoken by Adivasi communities.

#### 3. VAACHA MUSEUM

The Vaacha Museum team continued to work on preparation of the Digital Register of the museum's entire collection, started the previous year. The Vaacha Museum has a collection of nearly 3000 artefacts comprising paintings, sculpture, pottery, jewellery, household items, musical instruments and textiles. The data base provides information on each artefact with regard to its size, weight source, price, utility and context.



As part of the Centre of Excellence project, Bhasha Van has added recordings of 80 tribal languages of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in Gujarati, Hindi and English. The earlier recordings of 70 languages available in English and Hindi were translated into Gujarati. Visitors can avail these recordings on tablets. Pathways were planned and created at the Bhasha Van space on the Adivasi Academy's campus.

The Adivasi Academy was invited to participate in an Exhibition and showcase its activities therein during the visit of Honourable Union Steel Minister Shri Ramchandra Prasad Singh to Chhota Udepur on 15 November 2022. The Union Minister and District Collector particularly appreciated Bhasha and Adivasi Academy's work on sustenance of traditional arts and livelihood.



The Adivasi Academy put on display Rathwa bead jewellery, Kasota textile, non-stick terracotta cookware, bamboo basketry and musical instruments in a two-day 'Farmer's Market' Display organised by Upaj Farm at the Laxmi Vilas Palace in Vadodara on 11-12 December 2021.





## 4. KASOTA WEAVING (PARTLY SUPPORTED BY SHAKUN POLYMERS PVT. LTD.)

The Adivasi Academy has been working on the revival of Kasota since 2018, the indigenous loin loom woven by the Vankar community of Chhota Udepur district. Five looms were set up at the Academy and master weavers were invited to revive and continue the now threatened weaving tradition. Throughout the Covid period, two practising community master weavers in the Chhota Udepur district—Govindbhai Vankar and Ratanbhai Vankar from Moti Tokri village—continued to work on the Kasota handloom weave, making new products as new products as table mats, *dupattas*, stoles and jackets. During the past year, the weavers worked with interns Surbhi Bajaj and Sonal Kumar from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Jodhpur who experimented with costume designing using the Kasota fabric. The natural dye yarns for the weave are prepared at the Adivasi Academy using *aal* (Morinda tinctoria), lac, indigo, iron, etc.









## 5. INDIGO FARMING AND DYE EXTRACTION

The Adivasi Academy began indigo cultivation in the year 2019 on one *bigha* of land rented at Achala village of Chhota Udepur taluka. In 2021, the indigo seeds were shared with nearby farmers to increase indigo cultivation in the area and make it available for sale in the market. A meeting was conducted with the farmers of Malaja and Kotiya villages for cultivation of organic cotton. Seeds brought from Nagpur, Wardha and Viramgaon (Ahmedabad) were distributed.



The Adivasi Academy hosted a series of Workshops on Indigo Harvesting and Dyeing, conducted by Akshita Gangwal, a designer from Ujjain and invited as Fellow by the Adivasi Academy.

The first workshop on 'Spinning, Weaving and Dyeing' was held from 15-26 April 2021 followed by a second one on 'From Indigo Harvesting to Dyeing conducted from 25-31 November 2021. The next workshop was held in December 2021 and covered Indigo harvesting and extraction, along with vat preparation and dyeing of yarn and fabric. Ashok Siju from Kutchh taught the Japanese technique of Sukomo for extraction of indigo. The participants in these workshops belonged to diverse domains and included farmers, weavers and designers.



### 6. YARN PRODUCTION (SUPPORTED BY JEWEL BRUSHES)

The Adivasi Academy has procured 5 Ambar Charkhas to train local women in the spinning of raw cotton fibre, thus opening avenues for local employment. Currently, three women are regularly producing yarn which is being used for Kasota weaving. This has reduced the Academy's dependency for yarn purchase from outside sources.

# 7. PRODUCTION OF BANANA HANDMADE PAPER (PARTLY SUPPORTED BY SHAKUN POLYMERS PVT. LTD.)

Ravi Raj, a post graduate from the Indian Institute of Crafts and Design, Jaipur, has been on Fellowship with the Adivasi Academy since November 2021. He initially came for his college project and later stayed on to continue his research on Handmade Paper produced from Banana plant waste along with use of dried bamboo leaves, grass, the local cactus variety (verphata of sisal family) and corn peel.

In the past year, Ravi spent a major part of his time training 4 individuals, including one staff member of the Academy, in the process of paper making. Having successfully acquired the skill of paper making in various natural colours and sizes, he now aims to train interested community youth and set up an enterprise to generate local livelihood in the Chhota Udepur district. To support the enterprise, Bhasha has acquired Calendaring



and Banana Yarn Spinning Machine, Paper vat, Beater and Pressing Machines to cut down on the labour and time. Along with production, Ravi has been exploring marketing avenues too and shared paper samples with buyers in Surat and Ahmedabad. In October 2022, he met the District Development Officer of Chhota Udepur who has agreed to extend support by buying handmade stationery products as diaries made from banana fibre. Towards this, Ravi plans to work with the District Mahila Mandal and provide paper making and product development training so as to scale up production and sales at the local level.

Ravi hosted several Papermaking Workshops to train interested individuals in batches. Workshops were held from 21-25 October 2021, 28 January-1 February 2022 and 25 February-1 March 2022.

To explore the viability of product diversification, a workshop with Rajbhoi DNT community at Ahmedabad who traditionally make rope from textile waste. The workshop was held from 27 to 29 November 2021 at the Adivasi Academy.

In December 2021, natural dye expert Jagada Rajappa from Bangalore was invited to conduct a Workshop on Natural Dyeing of Banana paper.





A Bamboo Product Making Workshop was held at the Adivasi Academy from 29-31 March 2022 for the Kotwalia community members of Narmada district.





To explore the enterprise, Ravi visited the Handmade Paper Industry in Sanganer, Jaipur. He met Rajratnaji Maharaj in Surat for Jain Handmade Paper. He made a visit to the Paper Expo in Greater Noida and went to Dehradun to meet and learn paper making from the expert, Ramlal Verma.



## 8. DOCUMENTING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 AMONG INDIA'S ADIVASI COMMUNITIES (SUPPORTED BY UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER, UK)

Soon after the onset of the pandemic, Bhasha undertook a research project supported by the University of Leicester and led by their Faculty at the Department of Museum Studies, Dr. Alice Tilche, to document the impact of the Covid pandemic on the Chhara community in Ahmedabad. Successfully completed, the University awarded a second project to Bhasha, this time for documenting the impact of Covid 19 on Adivasi communities in the Chhota Udepur District. Bhasha has produced a series of 12 podcasts exploring the impact of the pandemic on health, education, livelihood, migration and art and culture. The links to the podcasts are as follows:

#### Ouarantine

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

Covid19 Awareness

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhpRi25XjyU

Art, Artists and Covid 19

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOQjIYBGXv8

Migration during COVID-19 in Chhota Udepur District, Gujarat <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Lb3yOt2nGQ&t=37s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Lb3yOt2nGQ&t=37s</a>

Wellbeing and Heath 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





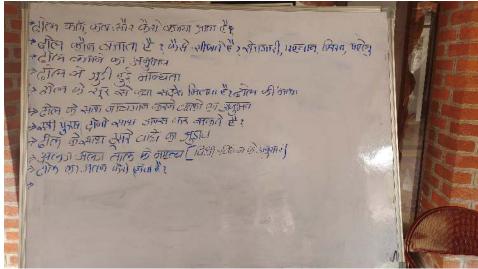
As part of the project, Bhasha is holding an Exhibition titled, 'What was to pass, remained' at the 'Conflictorium: Museum of Conflict, Ahmedabad' from 23 September to 23 November 2022. The Exhibition will have on display images from history, the pandemic podcasts, along with holding weekend discussions with and performances by the communities covered in the documentation.

Considering that Bhasha now has a trained group that can now make podcasts and short films, the University of Leicester awarded another project to Bhasha that involves training a group of 12 community members in documentation. Under this program, the Adivasi Academy has selected 12 community members (including 4 of its own teachers) and is running a course to train them in research, documentation and dissemination. Under the training, Bhasha invited experts Akshay Khanna, Dakxin Bajrange, Anshul Aggrawal, Riya Soni and Yashodhara Udupa to cover aspects of research, script writing, acting, camerawork, interviewing, film shoot and editing. The group of trainees has undertaken to make a film each during the course that will conclude in December 2022.









# 9. SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF DENOTIFIED COMMUNITIES IN GUJARAT THROUGH PERFORMING ARTS (SUPPORTED BY FUNDS FOR GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS)

During the pandemic, Bhasha received support from the Funds for Global Human Rights to work with three Denotified Communities in Gujarat: Chharas in Ahmedabad, Madaris in Kothamba and Nats in Khanpur in Mahisagar district. The project has a two-fold focus: one, to carry out a survey of the status of citizenship entitlements at these three community locations and facilitating families to obtain necessary documents; and second, creating plays to address their social justice and human rights issues. As part of the project, Bhasha organised theatre training workshops with Nat and Madari community members during which community matters were discussed and two plays were produced: was Amaara Saap amane pachha aapo (Give back our snakes) and Amaari Kala, Amaara Adhikaar (Our Arts, Our rights). The community members performed the plays in the villages around their locality where they reside. The performances have made the neighbouring communities cognizant of DNT issues and helped create conversation between them. Community libraries have been set up at Kothamba and

Khanpur. The District Collectorate was approached to help the two communities to get their entitlement documents.

Due to the pandemic, the project has received an extension till March 2023 during which a final play will be collectively produced and presented by the Chhara, Madari and Nat communities.



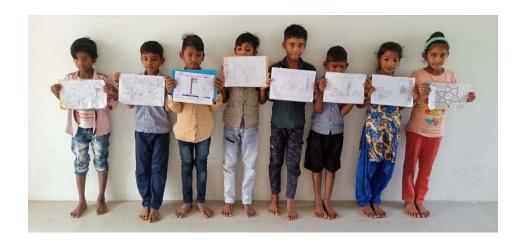
# 10. Pustak Pankh (Supported by GAIL Charitable and Education Trust)

Bhasha was awarded the *Pustak Pankh* project by GAIL in December 2019, to run community libraries in schools of 21 villages of Chhota Udepur district with the purpose of enhancing the learning levels among primary school children through varied activities. The project commenced in December 2019 and was kept in abeyance due to the national lockdown and the closure of schools during the pandemic.

GAIL gave Bhasha the go-ahead in September 2021 to resume the program. The Government of Gujarat too re-opened its schools from 22 November 2021. To aid children to cover the learning deficit caused by Covid 19, Bhasha ran the concluding part of the Pustak Pankh program by creatively using the libraries to help children to bridge their learning gaps and return to schools. When the program concluded in March 2021, it had covered and benefitted 788 students in 21 villages. The libraries continue to be placed in the 21 government schools where the program was run.







# 11. VASANTSHALA MULTI-LINGUAL SCHOOLING PROGRAM (PARTLY SUPPORTED BY ASSOCIATION FOR INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT, NEOGEN CHEMICALS LTD)

Vasantshala was kept closed from March 2020 to October 2021 due to the ongoing pandemic.

On 4 April 2021, in a major step forward, Vasantshala was duly registered as a school with the Gujarat State Education Board. Vasantshala can now run as a recognised school for Standards 1 to 5 (Gujarati Medium).

Once the second Covid-19 wave had subsided and its aftermath had settled in the rural area of Chhota Udepur, the Vasantshala teachers began visiting its earlier children in their villages

from end-June 2021. They assessed the Covid situation in general and the how the children were coping with the learning loss in particular. The teachers began to hold *sheri shikshan* or 'open neighbourhood learning centres' in the villages where the Vasantshala children resided to re-engage the children in the teaching-learning process. Story-telling and activity sessions were held to sustain the interest of children who had been away from schools for far too long.

For its first batch, the Adivasi Academy registered 64 children (30 girls, 34 boys) from across 19 villages. Initially, the schools ran in the villages.



The Vasantshala School at Tejgadh resumed from 20 November 2021. The major focus of the teachers was to bridge the learning deficit of the children and to sustain their regularity.

By March 2022, 9 children who were enrolled to Vasantshala before it got registered as a school, were prepared for enrolment to government schools.

Following workshops were held for the capacity building of Teachers:

A workshop was held with the education team of Gramin Shiksha Kendra, Sawai Madhopur from 22-24 November 2021 on pedagogy.

On 5 December 2021, an Activity Workshop was conducted for children by visitors from Yog Niketan, Vadodara that involved performance, story-telling, paper craft and games.

Kavita Bhagwat from Maharashtra held a one-day session with the Vasantshala teachers on 12 December 2021 on Teaching of Arithmetic and Principles of Mother Tongue Education.

Theatre Director, Dakxin Bajrange conducted a workshop on 1 December 2021 for the Vasantshala children on creative expression and story-telling.



Vasantshala celebrated 15 August 2021 and 26 January 2022 at the Adivasi Academy with the Sarpanch and other heads of Tejgadh village.



Vasantshala teachers, Rekha Chaudhari, Vanita Chaudhari, Arjun Rathwa and Gopsing Rathwa participated in the discussion held on 1 February 2022 at the Meeting of Education Committee held at S. F. Highschool, Chhota Udepur on the gaps in Education and how educational institutions can help to bridge these.

A three-day training in Orality and Story Telling from 25-29 March 2022 was conducted by educationist Kamal Sharma for the teachers at the Adivasi Academy.

The Vasantshala teachers attended a one-day Workshop on Rural Education and Pedagogy was conducted by Prashant Joshi of Zydex Industries, Vadodara on 28 March 2022.

## 12. PRAKRUTI HEALTH CENTRE (PARTLY SUPPORTED BY SHAKUN POLYMERS AND GULBRANDSEN TECHNOLOGIES)

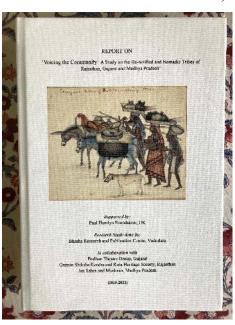
The severity of the pandemic having gradually declined, patients have once again begun to visit the Prakriti Centre at the Adivasi Academy. Between April 2021 and March 2022, 2474 patients visited the centre for skin diseases, tuberculosis, respiratory ailment. cardiac complaints, neurological issues, gastroenteritis and sickle cell. Dr. Kiran Shinglot and Dr Jayshree Rao visit Tejgadh every Sunday for the OPD. With the support of Rotary International, the Prakriti Centre added a Semi



Auto Biochemistry Analyzer, two CBC Blood Cell Counters and a microscope to its laboratory.

### 13. VOICING THE DENOTIFIED COMMUNITIES (SUPPORTED BY PAUL HAMLYN FOUNDATION)

Initiated in October 2018, Bhasha completed the research study to explore the historical transition of 6 Denotified Communities across Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and being 'nomadic' Rajasthan, from to becoming 'denotified'. The study included a survey of their status of citizenship entitlements along with films on each of the communities covered. These included the Bachchada. Bediya, Gadiya Luhar, Kalbeliya, Kanjar, Nat, Pardhi and Sansi/Chhara Denotified Communities. The Report of the research study was prepared by Dr. Madan Meena and presented and shared with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and other **NGOs** and government departments. The Report has been much appreciated.



The Hindi translation of the Report and the films on each of the six communities are in their final stage.

In the meanwhile, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation has awarded a second project titled 'I Am: Bhasha Dignity Collective' (April 2022 to March 2024) to address the issues that were reflected in the study through collective collaboration with the organisations, Jan Sahas, Muskaan, Gramin Shiksha Kendra, Kota Heritage Society and Budhan Theatre.

## 14. LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT FOR RAJBHOI AND DABGAR COMMUNITIES (SUPPORTED BY PAUL HAMLYN FOUNDATION)

In October 2018, Bhasha received support from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to resume and upscale the livelihoods of the Rajbhoi and Nat Denotified Communities whose livelihoods had come to a halt due to Covid-19. Bhasha undertook the livelihood support project at Vatva in Ahmedabad for strengthening and up-scaling the traditional skills/trades of Rajbhoi and Dabgar DNT communities. The Rajbhois have been traditionally making ropes while the Dabgars are into wig making. Under the program, Bhasha organised the Rajbhois and organised training for them at Mahua and Tejgadh, along with purchasing semi-automated machines for them. However, the Rajbhoi are not very technology-friendly and preferring to do rope making on traditional machines run manually rather than shifting to semi-mechanisation of the rope-making process.

Since the Dabgars refused to come together due to internal conflicts, Bhasha took up the revival of traditional embroidery skills of the women of the Madari community at Ramol-Ahmedabad. Embroidery is now hardly practiced professionally by the Madari women who have now been reduced to seeking alms. Bhasha has attached three designers with 15 Madari women to enhance their skills and diversify their products. Their sample products have been exhibited for market sampling. Bhasha plans to exhibit their works at Satya Gallery of Navjeevan Trust-Ahmedabad during December 2022.

(https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vadodara/begging-hands-now-weave-charming-craft/articleshow/91822480.cms27.05.2022) and

(https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/from-begging-to-crocheting-madari-women-on-way-to-earning-a-livelihood-7974346/17.06.2022).





### 15. VISITORS AND INTERNS

After a lull of visitors due to the pandemic, 2500+ visitors visited the Vaacha Museum Academy during the past year. Students came for exposure and project work from the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Parul University, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and local government colleges and high schools.

### 16. OTHER MATTERS

Educationist and former Trustee of Bhasha, Ms. Suverchala Kashyap joined as Chief Executive Officer of Bhasha from September 2021 to May 2022.

### SINCERE THANKS

We would like to put on record our very warm and sincere thanks to the several Ministries and Government Departments at the State and Central levels and the corporates who have steadily and continuously extended a helping hand via the CSR mode. At the same time, there are individuals, whose contributions, in cash and kind, throughout the year, has been a strong steadying factor. Our immense gratitude to all our friends and well-wishers!

### **Grantors**

Sr.	Organisation
No.	
1.	Association for India's Development, US
2.	Directorate of Archaeology and Museum Department,
	Government of Gujarat
3.	Funds for Global Human Rights, US
4.	GAIL Charitable and Education Trust, Delhi
5.	Indians for Collective Action, US
6.	Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India
7.	Paul Hamlyn Foundation, UK
8.	Rotary International
9.	University of Leicester, UK
10.	World Learning, US

## **Trusts, Foundations, Corporates**

Sr.	Name of the Donor	Amount
No.		(Rs)
1	Shakun Polymers	10,00,000
2	Neogen Chemicals Limited	7,74,575
3	Chemcon Speciality Chemicals Ltd.	5,00,000
4	Shri G. H. Patel Charitable Trust	3,00,000
5	Kadillac Chemicals Pvt. Ltd.	2,70,000
6	Pushpavati Kantilal Charitable Trust	2,00,000
7	Rubamin Foundation	2,00,000
8	Harjivandas Parshottamdas Sheth Trust	1,00,000
9	Zydex Industries	1,00,000
10	Gulbrandsen Technologies	85,000
11	Fyoli Fyoli Pvt. Limited	50,000

## **Individual Donors**

Sr. No.	Name of the Donor	Amount (Rs)
1	Om Damani	3,50,000
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3	Varsha Apte	1,50,000
4	Shankar Sthanuretnam	1,50,100
5	Eva	1,46,598
6	Minoo A Shah	1,00,000
7	Rushab Amit Mehta	1,00,000
8	Shailesh Parekh	1,00,000
9	Nehal Vinod Shah	51,000
10	Bhaskaran Raman	50,000
11	Bipin Chemburkar	50,000
12	Deepak Bhaskar Phatak	50,000
13	Lalit Mehta	50,000
14	A well-wisher who wishes to remain anonymous in reports	50,000
15	Sunita Sarawagi	48,000
16	Brian and Eileen Coates	41,174
17	Kerim Freidman	40,418
18	Gulam Mohammad Sheikh	30,000
19	Narayan Rangaraj	25,000
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22	Umesh Bellur	25,000
23	Devika Krishnan	20,000
24	Rajappa Jaguda	20,000
25	Madhav Vasan	20,000
26	Jyoti Purohit	18,000
27	Vipul Kapadia	18,000

28	Yogniketan Students	14,600
29	Sandhya Gajjar	11,000
30	Vikram Hazra	11,000
31	Gouri Rajan	10,000
32	Indranil Acharya	10,000
33	Lilavati Bhaya	10,000
34	Harivadan Bhaya	7,000
35	Sameer Gaikwad	5,001
36	Poornima Burte	5,000
37	Rekha Meena	5,000
38	Shreenivas Kunte	5,000
39	Devendra Kotecha	1,100