JEEVAN SHIKSHA

Education from life

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



Set up in 2017, Jeevan Shiksha started its operations in Assam in Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts, with aadivasi communities whose primary livelihood fully depends on the tea gardens they have been working in for generations. The concerns and issues surrounding these communities raised some very serious questions about the socio-political scenario in the country with respect to aadivasi and forest communities, and helped us built a knowledge around the conflicts within which our society exists.

Established in 2018, Maee is an independent project under Jeevan Shiksha, an NGO based out of Assam working on mental health and education. Maee is a first-ever education intervention for the Van Gujjar community in Uttrakhand, who have been 'til then deprived of any form of formal or informal education. Maee's design is based on the values of truth and compassion. And through our model, we vision to provide primary education to every child of the community through experiential methods and then prepare them for formal education, along with preserving the community's culture and learnings. At the core of Maee's design is our engagement with our primary stakeholder, which is the community at large, to find sustainable solutions.

FOREWORD



It is our pleasure that Jeevan Shiksha has completed 5th year of services and has reached the present situation. The organization has gone through many ups and down phases but by the unconditional support from all our members and well-wishers the organization has attained the present status with all support from the common people of Chabua locality of Dist. Dibrugarh and as well as our supporters from all over India. We extend our gratitude to all our supporters, members and to all the people who are connected with us.

At Jeevan Shiksha, we see ourselves as a tool for change, a change driven by learning from what exists, from past and present - from life. We engage with our primary stakeholders – the people at large to find solutions to challenges through active dialogue and cultural re-thinking & re-transformation. We use an instrumental living process to engage with the society – by restoring their ability for action directly or indirectly. We simply observe in awe, in admiration of whatever happens as a result. The strength for our ideas and actions are backed by our core-values of Truth and Compassion.

Jeevan Shiksha is a space for experiments and innovations. We live by example and each of our efforts is driven to create a beautiful and innovative society. In order to push ourselves closer to achieving our dreams, we have a few pillars which are our foundation.

- Networking: Networking in the social sector is essential for creating a collective impact that goes beyond the capabilities of individual organizations or actors. It requires effective communication, trust-building, and a shared commitment to achieving positive social outcomes.

- Knowledge Building: Building knowledge and free distribution with love is our motto. We do not encourage copyright for public good, however with ample protection for creators and innovators.

- Equal pay scale: It has been hard for us to imagine a pay-scale which is just and equalized. We work with an equal "per-hour" system - which effectively means that our Director is paid the same as our Field coordinator.

- No centralization: At Jeevan Shiksha, we are working to introduce no centralization of our work, and creating a network of local spaces to work from. The offices hence would also serve as point of contact as well as administration.

- RASTA: The Real-time System for Transparency & Accountability has been conceptualized to create an effortless system for promoting end-to-end transparency and implementing best accounting system

The 5th Annual Report of Jeevan Shiksha details its performance during the year.

HEALTH


AMAN
FREE
1H CAMP
Jeevan Shikhsha
Organised by
AMAN Foundati

MITA or Mental Illness Treatment in Assam was initiated by the ant and Jeevan Shiksha was the first ever partner to start operations in Chabua, Dibrugarh district, Assam. Since then, we have 267 patients registered for mental illness and epilepsy cases with a regular inflow of approx. 50 patients. One of our achievements so far is that four of our patients are now working as volunteers as well.



MAEE LIBRARY



The library of Maee located centrally at the Gujjar Basti Gandikhata village is at the heart of all our operations, and is now symbolic to all the work in mobilization, education, and empowerment of children we are trying to do through books and knowledge. It is also a recreational space where we hold our events, sessons, workshops, and other activities with children.

At present, the library holds more than 1600 books in 4 languages.
The library also acts as the venue for the evening sessions we take for the nearby children.
We are in constant process to build the library up further, and to add more books and resources for the children to learn and engage with.

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES (CLC)



CLC is the flagship program of Maee, and our most ambitious one too. Maee is currently operating 2 Community Learning Centres in the villages of Thanda and Gujjar Basti. The centres are catering up to 100 out-of-school children.
These centres are community rooms that have been allotted to Maee to conduct daily sessions with children. Children here are taught Math, Science, languages and about nature. Last year, we were able to enroll 6 children who were educated only in the CLCs for further education in formal schools.

The occurrence of the pandemic although, brought a major blow to our operations and the support we had been receiving, and we are still on our way to recover that loss, and are hopeful that we will build back better.





DISASTER MANAGEMENT

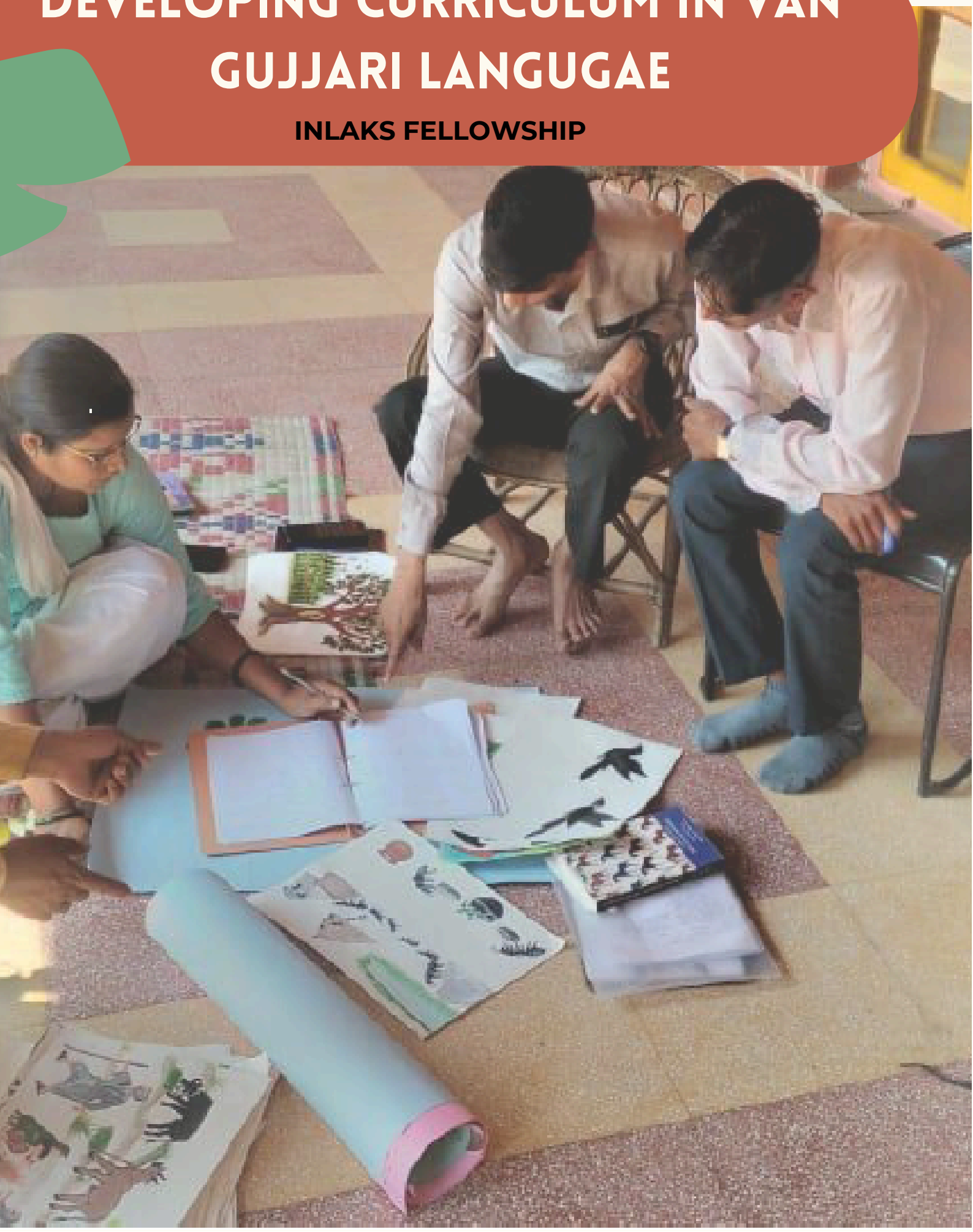


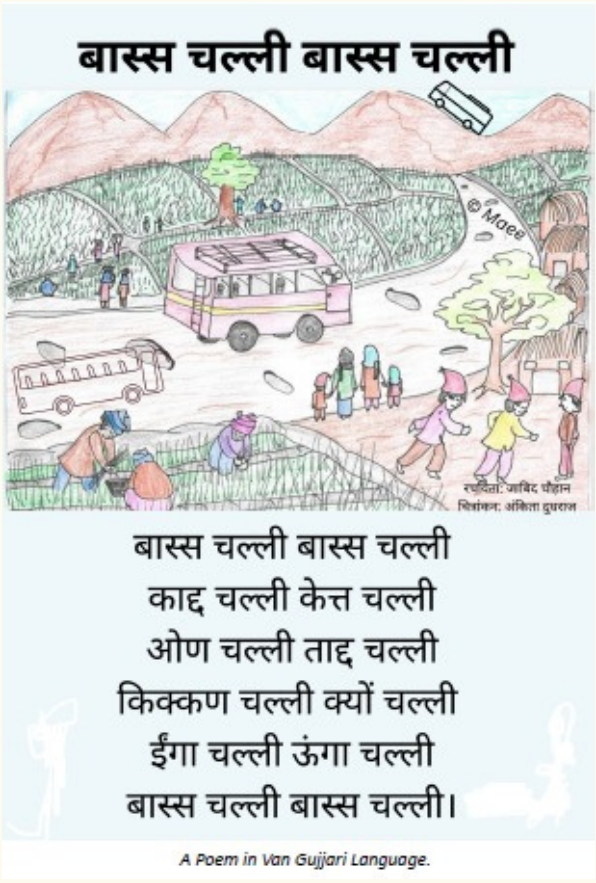
After the Flood lots of health issues arose in Assam. Like water borne diseases, respiratory issues, Mental Health related issues, injuries and wounds issues, poor access to health services etc. From jeevan shiksha we conducted Free Medical Health check up camps with our partner organiations from Karbi Anlong, Nalbari, Baksa, Darrang, Sivasagar, Majuli, Barpeta and Nagaon. For these medical camps we got support from various sources Like stand up comedian Mr. Abhineet MIshra, Promisebank and especially Covid Assam Network, Assam who raises funds for these noble causes. 4000 patients covered in these relief camps from

8 districts.

DEVELOPING CURRICULUM IN VAN GUJJARI LANGUGAE

INLAKS FELLOWSHIP





Taukeer Alam was awarded the Inlaks Fellowship this year to work on a specially-designed curriculum for the education of children in Van Gujjari language. Taukeer and the team has been working this last year and experimenting in various aspects to create a holistic and an engaging curriculum for the children which will be much closer to their roots and their surroundings contextually.

There are 5 major components in our work towards curriculum development:

1. Research – In order to start developing curriculums, the team, led by Taukeer, has undertaken the study of various existing curriculums, literature, and TLMs. The research is extensively supported by organizations like Eklavya and Patang, along with Ektara, Digantar, and Nature Conservation Foundation. We are continuously exploring the various learning materials, testing them in our centers and libraries. The objective is to understand the effectiveness of activities in terms of child engagement, fun factor and necessity of changing context.
Apart from this, Saddam Husain from Maee has been enrolled in Library Educators' Course (LEC). The course is an integral part of our research work, and is helping us to learn many nuances of child literature and build on the work we're doing.
We also did an exposure visit in Bangalore with Nature Conservation Foundation to observe and understand the work being done by them in the field of environment education. We believe since we cater to the children from forest communities, our approach on environment and its education makes a real difference not just for the children, but the overall communities we work with.

2. Building a knowledge system for developing pedagogy – .Another major component in our work for developing the curriculum is building and strengthening the knowledge system we are collating through our research and our work.
Maee team, in the last year, participated in 3 workshops by Bhasha Academy with the goal of learning and practicing curriculum formation for indigenous communities in their languages. We worked towards developing a model template that can be adapted in indigenous languages.
The idea behind building the concept of preparing curriculum in local language and context is with due consideration to various challenges faced by tribal students in different domains. During the workshop, few themes were identified and flow of modules for curriculum materials was also discussed. The major outcome of these sessions was that the learning material of children should be not just engaging, but relatable, and should have the context they live in. Content building and content writing sessions were also a major part of these workshops which has contributed in our learning for the documentation of our content material.



3. Text books – This year, we started preparing the manuscript of our first book in Van Gujjari language with Devanagari script, named Kan-Man (rain shower), which was followed by the development of second book, titled Kan-Man Bhag II. The books have 20 and 22 chapters respectively, with stories, poems and riddles in Van Gujjari language. Through these books, children will learn about language, environment, math and their culture together. The Kan-Man books remain our most ambitious achievement in properly developing and documenting the curriculum in our language.
For the first book, we had discussions among the group about the cover page of this book, we decided that the first page and last page concept should be interactive and express children's feelings; it should be related to the children's life and activities.
The content of the book’s curriculum contains local poems, stories, lok-kahaniya, puzzles, with the exercises based on listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension skills through simple activities. The content of the Math curriculum contains activities-based learning for children which is connected to their surroundings. The chapters on environment contain children’s local things and their surroundings and starts from their family, relatives, friends, nature and their daily life activities.

Before starting the work, we also had conversations with the community members, especially women and members of the LGBTIQ community, so that their views should also be reflected in the book.
Separate picture cards have also been prepared for the use of these books. We are also testing the activities with children to ascertain how it works or what kind of modifications are needed in it.

4. An illustrated dictionary – As part of our Research & Development work, we have developed an illustrated dictionary in Van Gujjari language. The idea is not only to help children to learn, but also to preserve the language. The dictionary will also act as a tool for other academic communities and institutions to refer to the Van Gujjar communities and languages. So far, the dictionary has documented more than 1000 words used in Van Gujjari language.

5**. Translation of poems and story books –** The final component in developing the curriculum is to translate popular stories and poems in Van Gujjari language. We have translated 116 short story books. The books can be found online through the following link - https://storyweaver.org.in/en/
In the process of translation and development, we also pilot the translations with children first and test their understanding and engagement with the content, following which the translations and edited and further refined.



Some glimpses of our translated story books



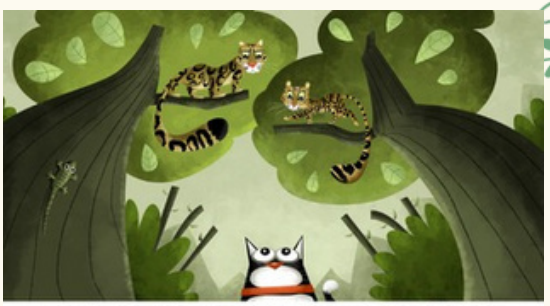
स्कूल बे आज्ज मेरो पेल्लो द्याड़ो ए। अम्मा मेरो आत्थ पगड़ गे मेरे नाळ थी चल्ले रै।
"मैं ओण बड़ी ओ गई थी," मैं कऊँ।
"चल्लो...चल्लो!"
अम्मा ने मेरो आत्थ कास्स गे पगड़ेयो गो।



गार्ज-गुर्ज गे आबे बदल।



एक द्याड़ो सलमा डेरे बेठ्ठी-बेठ्ठी परेशान ओ गई। उसने एक्क गाल्ल सोच्ची अजे वा अप्पणी दोस्त राणू नो छाप् टुंड खेड्ण लेई बलायी



कौछ् जंगली बिल्ली बोत उच्चे चाड़ सके। जिकण **बदल चित्रो** ते **मार्बल चित्रो**!
Some wild cats are the best climbers. Like the **clouded leopard** and the **marbled cat!**



मोट्टी काळी बक्करी आयी
झट गलाब गी डाळी खाई
चोण-चोण फोल्ल जक्तां बे बंडेया
ले गे फोल्ल जक्तां ने द्वाल पर टंगेया



नसोत ताब्बू ना गी कुड़ी रै थी। वा बोत शैल
ी। उसके कुळै एक्क तोत्तो थो। तोत्ता गो ना
मेट्ठु थो। ताब्बू जानबरां नो बोत प्यार करै
ी। एक्क द्याड़ो ताब्बू जाड़ बे अप्पणा तोत्ता



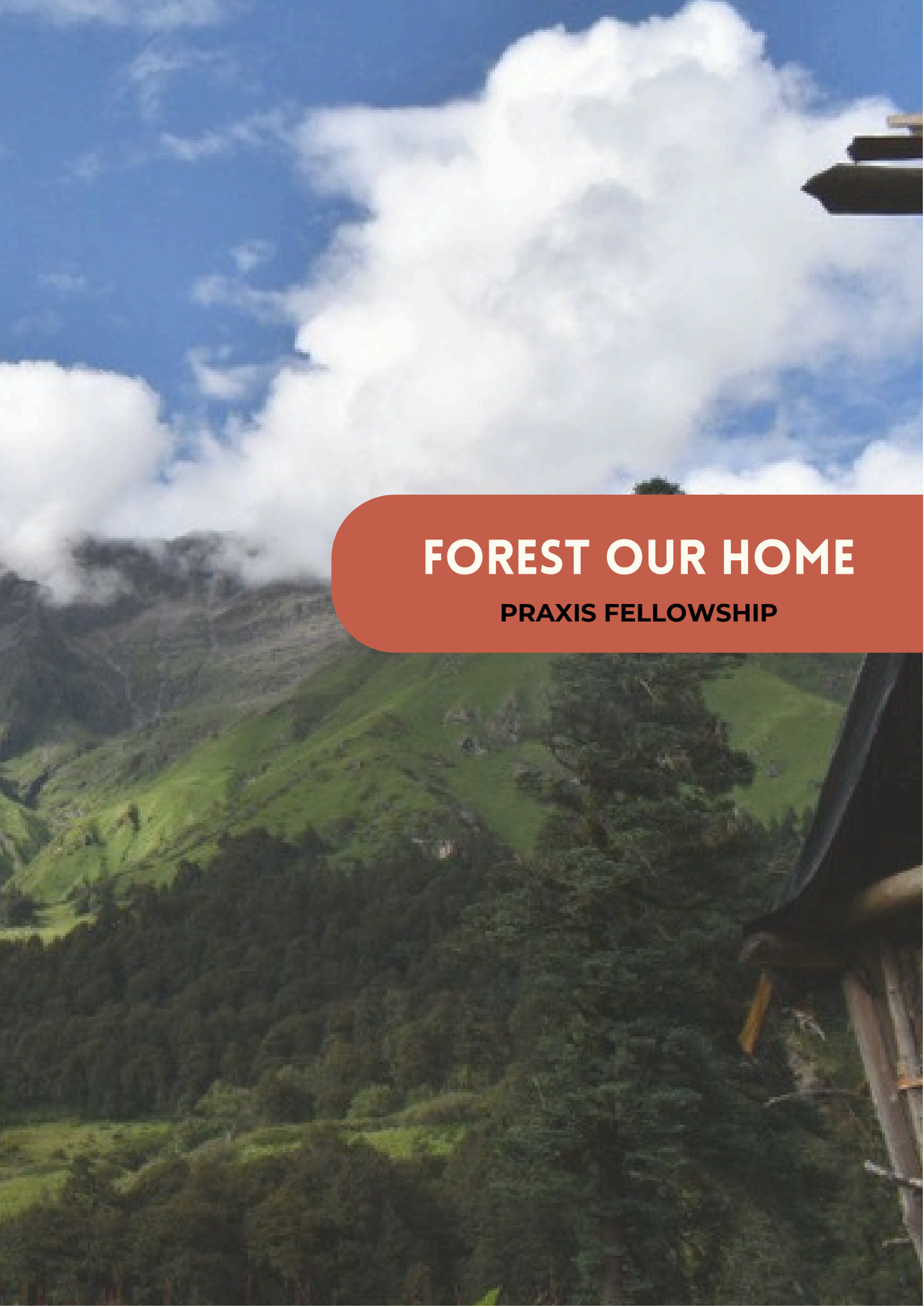
लटकती जड़ाँ आळो **एक्क** बबड़ोई गो बड़ो बुट्टो ए,
बोत बड़ी जगा कैर गे शान नाळ ए खळो उव्वो गो।

ENVIRONEMNT, LIFE AND CULTURE



Since its establishment jeevan shiksha is trying to Reduce the use of plastics. We understand that use of plastic is crucial for several environmental, health, and sustainability reasons. Plastics are a major source of environmental pollution. Improper disposal of plastic waste, especially in water bodies, leads to pollution, harming life and ecosystems. In jeevan shiksha, we encourage our staff and volunteers to Bring their own plates and water bottles to reduce the use of single-use plastics. We promote cycling among youth and created a group called Chabua Cycle Warriors. We organize cycling events regularly.

We have started ultimate frisbee in tea garden areas among the adolescent girls. Almost 60 girls are practicing frisbee in tea garden areas. It's a mixed gender sport. We are trying to mobilize more youth from the tea garden community and villages to participate in ultimate frisbee.



FOREST OUR HOME

PRAXIS FELLOWSHIP



Maee works directly with the Van Gujjars, a Muslim nomadic pastoral aadivasi community, whose traditions and culture are unique, undocumented, and invisible from the mainstream persona of India. Through our work, we want to empower children to take pride in their identity and use their traditional values to live a dignified life. At the same time, we wish to focus on the community as a whole itself, their vulnerabilities, the looming threats on their survival due to various socio-political factors, and their struggle to keep-up with the fast-changing world building on singularities. In an attempt to study these very complex factors, and develop an efficient problem statement so that we can widen our intervention horizon towards the community as a whole and not just limit to education, we took up the work with Praxis Fellowship last year. The fellowship's objective is the documentation of traditional Van Gujjari knowledge, to make the deliberately-neglected lives and struggles of Van Gujjar people visible.





The fellowship also allowed us to deeply understand the changing patterns in the lives of Van Gujjar people, causes for which are many, including political interference, climate change, and globalization.



1. Documenting Migration – Migration plays a vital role in the lives and lifestyle of Van Gujjars. Following this journey was highly informative in our research, and gave us a deep insight in understanding how external factors form this journey. Documentation of the traditional knowledge related to medicinal plants, ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation conducted with the help of survey forms, questionnaires etc.

2. Data collection and analysis – We collected data on various traditional knowledge on medicinal properties of flora, and use of bioindicators. For this process, we took the help of Traditional Knowledge Individuals (TKIs) who were identified from the community and documentation was done with the help of focused group discussions and individual interviews.

For this documentation we traversed 790 km across the five tracks and met 46 Van Gujjar families in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. We identified and documented traditional use of 298 species of flora, and classified them under various factors.





WAY FORWARD..

Jeevan Shiksha will continue to work for the development of marginalized communities and an equitable life for everyone. We realize that it is vital for our operations and their sustainability that we build a strategic approach, develop a network of alliances, and expand our resource mobilization strategies. We will also be planning to engage more volunteers, and start collaborations with other social-purpose organizations, to gain support and required assistance.





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