

ANNUAL REPORT



OUR ANNUAL REPORT INFORMS ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES, EVENTS & OTHER ORGANISATIONAL DETAILS FOR THE YEAR 2023-24.

INTRODUCTION

One of the major works of Abhivyakti has been in the field of development communications. We have been pioneers in putting media and communication at the centre stage in the development sector, and our work for the past 35 years and more is a testimony to our existence. Although we started with the production of audio-visual material and it is still one of our core programmes even now, there are many other activities like capacity building or the Media Resource Centre that we added to our initiatives so that we remain relevant and in tune with the changing and dynamic nature of the context. Every year, we ask ourselves: Is our work addressing the pressing needs of the marginalised communities that we work with? Is media and communication still as relevant as they were when we started our journey? The answers may not be straight forward with the advent of social media and its different forms. Perhaps, the access to technology and space to voice views and opinions has become relatively easy as we are witnessing a growing tribe of young producers of content from different sections and parts of India, which is a welcome change. However, when it comes to a different demographic profile, of those multitude of communities on the margins, struggling to eke out a living, the priority to get on social media is still low and not so urgent. Access is still an issue with the majority of young girls and women from rural and tribal areas who do not own a mobile device. According to 2023 national data, only 64% of women owned mobile phones, of which only 35% had smart phones. The human-interest stories of people from marginalized communities still struggle to find space in the mainstream media. In such a lopsided media scenario, organisations focused exclusively on development communications like Abhivyakti still have plenty of ground to cover to be able to confidently say media is truly in the hands of the people!

A few years ago, we also changed our strategic approach. We decided to add direct intervention as

a strategy to our identity of being a development communications support organisation. The Trimbakeshwar block in the Nashik district became our project focus area, and for the last decade we have been designing programmes that address the issues faced by the large tribal populace living there. From early marriage issues faced by young girls, to gender discrimination, access to local panchayats and livelihood scarcity, and declining folk forms, we have been steadfast in our efforts to empower local leadership, strengthening local collectives and institutions that are accessible and accountable to its people and community.

Whether it is the young girls known as Shodhini, who through the process of action research are emboldened to negotiate and demand for a better life than the prospect of early marriage without their consent from their parents and elders, who suggested that we work with young boys so that they become their supporters instead of adversary, or young village women who have become first-time entrepreneurs and are energetically trying to make their local enterprises viable so that they do not have to migrate and endure exploitative practices in the cities, to farmers who are engaged in agro-businesses that offer solutions to solve their economic hardships, to local youth who are managing community learning centres that offer diverse activities that transcend just library services, the action across many tribal villages are manifold, locally lead, and are emergent of processes and practices that have seeds of transformation ready to mature and grow!

Our media support unit continues to consolidate its various functions. It was able to convince the Bangalore-based organisation, Dhwani Foundation, to hand over the responsibility of translating the e-content of 200 video films on important elements of NGO governance into Hindi. The task was huge and demanding, which the production unit team was able to deal with effectively.

While this task occupied their major time, they were also engaged in providing technical support to many other organisations, and even handling the internal demands of Abhivyakti projects of keeping the social media platform alive and pulsating. One of our earlier video animation films, 'Hum Chahate Hain' on the impact of COVID-19 on the education and lives of tribal young girls, was recognised at the Ladli Media Award for gender sensitization in Jaipur.

Our partnership with other organisations like Akshara, India Multiversity Alliance (IMA), Nirantar, RSCD, Mahavan and local educational and cultural institutions, artists, and changemakers is strong and built on mutual trust and respect. Because of partnership and collaboration, we have been able to help in a few projects that are based in urban colleges in Nashik on the issue of gender equality and citizenship. Many urban college students benefitted from the gender awareness sessions and were able to understand the impact of patriarchy on their lives.

We are also proud of the Learning Hub facility in Abhivyakti which enables many students from diverse colleges across India, volunteers, and interested individuals to seek internships and engage in our various activities. They are entrusted with small tasks and activities, invited to attend our events, visit our project sites, and engage in discussions that go a long way toward developing their skills, perspective, and leadership.

Due to our engaged partnership, we are fortunate to meet interesting people, social activists, and academicians who are able to stimulate ideas and thinking processes that are perhaps links to develop and birth new projects and programmes. They even offer different perspectives on some of our concepts. For instance, the Nirantar team, who was visiting to explore collaboration, raised an important issue that we had missed. They asked why we had named the newly formed team of rural young boys'

as 'Shodak' which was formed as support for Shodhini. Why couldn't they also function under the identity of Shodhini? It was an interesting question that made us reflect.

Despite our unique Organisational identity, we still find it hard to raise financial resources that will enable us to continue with our work without any stress. Securing grants, raising funds through our programmes, getting donations from individuals and institutions has been arduous and consumes much of our energy and efforts. We are still searching and exploring for sustainable answers to this urgent and pressing need.

We are pleased to publish this year's annual report, which contains information on our projects, programmes, events, collaborations, and financial status. We invite you to go through our report and help us to reflect, re-consider, and review our initiatives with your critical reflections and views. We are also indebted to your continuous support and encouragement.



We present a few achievements from our various projects and programmes -



SHODHINI -

We have worked with nearly 300 young rural girls over the last six years. Presently, we are working with nearly 50 Shodhini, out of which we have managed to convince nearly 35 to continue their studies.



HUNNAR-

We reached out to youth of Nashik with courses in computer skills and Fire and Safety. Of the 218 students enrolled in the various courses, 192 students (88%) completed the course they were enrolled in; nearly 70% were later gainfully employed and continue their studies.



INTEGRATED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT -

The long-pending repair of the dam in Sapte Village was completed successfully. The dam holds nearly one crore litres of water, which will enable the farmers to cultivate second crops like wheat, gram dal and also vegetables, thereby supplementing their income.



COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE-

In the five community learning centre, we reached nearly 235 young people of whom 95 were girls, and 65 were children.



LIVELIHOODS -

For the first time, women farmers of Malegoan village began growing mushrooms and were able to harvest nearly 1500 kgs of mushrooms, fetching them a decent amount. Similarly, the farmers of Sapte village, for the first time, ventured into cultivating mulberry trees and were able to harvest the first batch of 25 kgs of cocoons and earn nearly ten thousand from its sale. Such instances of agro-based livelihoods are on the rise, and the villagers are embracing it with interest.



ANKUR -

The tenth edition of Ankur Film Festival was hosted successfully in Nashik, in which nearly 50 short films, documentaries, and animation films were screened in the space of three days. The growing popularity of Ankur Flm Festival demonstrated the need for creating such public spaces that showcase a different cinema that holds a social mirror to the different realities that are present in our society.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT

Our strategic Intent is outlined in the following inter-connected programmes-

- 1. YOUTH FOR CHANGE
- 2. LIVELIHOODS AND WELL-BEING
- 3. COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES
- 4. CORE PROGRAMME SUPPORT UNIT
 - A. CO-LEARNING
 - **B. PRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY MEDIA**

1. YOUTH FOR CHANGE

This programme is targeted on developing the various capacities and leadership of youth in urban and rural Nashik. We have two projects under this programme, namely, the Shodhini project for rural young girls and the Gender and Citizenship project in urban Nashik.

SHODHINI PROJECT

BACKGROUND-

The Shodhini meaning seekers is about the lives of young rural girls of Nashik district and how they, through the engagement with the process of action research, became empowered. The conducted research in their villages on various themes ranging from education, mental health, employment, and discrimination, among others. We reached out to young rural girls from nearly fifteen villages that are located in Harsul area of Trimbakeshwar taluka of Nashik.



COLLECTING INFORMATION -

As the project enters the last two-year phase, we decided that the main thrust of our work with Shodhini would be to find the impact of our intervention on their lives. We have been working with young rural girls since 2016 and have interacted with many of them who were trained in different aspects, including action research, communication skills, media, gender, and leadership. We are interested primarily in collecting data, which includes many aspects of their lives and other details like their current locations, the work they are engaged in, marital status, education, and values they believe in. This will help us in determining the impact of our work and whether any modification is required in the design of the programme for the future. The team is visiting various villages and meeting past and present Shodhini and Shodak. The Shodhini team has visited villages like Pahine, Sapgaon, Shirasgoan, Ganeshgoan, Ambai, Hirdi, Waghera, Rohile and Velunje. More meetings are planned ahead to keep collecting information and adding to the rich data on Shodhini.





WORKSHOPS ON FORUM THEATRE-

A two-day workshop was organised in the first week of October with Shodhini and Shodhak, from the villages of Rohile, Dhumdi, Velunje, Ambai, Ganeshgaon, Sapgaon, Pahine, Shirasgaon, Brahmanwade and Hiradi. The aim was to discuss with each group about their journey after becoming Shodhini and Shodhak and the problems faced in their villages and how they deal with them. They were given two topics to discuss on caste and gender discrimination, and each group was asked to think about how they would like to perform in the street play. Both the group

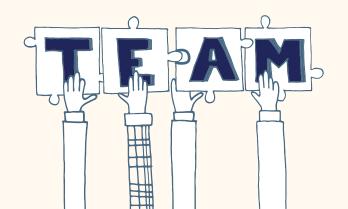


discussed experiences of discrimination and rehearsed the play under the guidance of the facilitator, Mr. Kumar Kapale. Both the groups practiced the street play, and later it was performed in one village in Harsul and at MVP College of Trimkeshwar to give them confidence. The youth enjoyed their experience of staging a play. The outcomes enabled the Shodhini and Shodhak to develop lot of confidence and they also learnt to develop group co-ordination.

WORKSHOP ON TEAM BUILDING -

A three-day workshop was organised at Abhivyakti office in November on the theme of team building. About twenty Shodhini and Shodhak from the villages of Rohile, Ghumodi, Velunje, Ambai, Ganeshga- on, Sapgaon, Pahine, Shirasgaon, Brahman- wade and Hiradi were present. The purpose of the workshop was to gauge the learnings of Shodhini and Shodhak from the action research process and to learn what has been achieved till now. Shodhini and Shodhak gave presentations on the challenges they faced and conducted interviews on what they learnt from the project. The informal space and three days of staying together gave them the chance to reflect on their lives, to learn about each other and what further needs to be achieved in their villages.





VIDYA MAULE,

19, Shodhini from Hirdi village in Trimbakeshwar block of Nashik district participated and presented her views on violence in love in the recently held 'Hinsa Mukti Parishad' at Ambejogai. It was her first speaking experience in such an event. She says, "I was sceptical and nervous about my ability to speak in front of so many experienced activists and on the theme of violence and love. I took up the challenge and started preparing for the event. I wrote down my experiences based on what I had seen and heard.



I also practiced speaking in front of Abhivyakti team and got their suggestions. At Ambejogai, I met many experienced activists and heard their stories of violence. The stories were about violence and how women suffered from its impact. On the stage, there were many senior women who were speaking on different aspects of violence suffered by women. A wave of fear ran through my body. However, I told myself that what I am about to say is based on my experiences, and there was nothing to worry about. As I started to speak, I gained confidence, and the flow became natural and easy. A thunderous applause made me realise that I had succeeded in sharing my experiences as per my preparation. Many women came forward to appreciate my efforts. They applauded my courage, as I was the youngest to speak in such a big gathering. I was happy that my efforts were appreciated. More importantly, I learnt that my dignity is important and that I need to resist and speak against any forms of violence perpetrated on young girls and women. Being a Shodhini has been an enriching and empowering experience for me and other young girls from different villages.

GENDER & CITIZENSHIP AWARENESS -

Abhivyakti and Akshara, mumbai is collaborating on creating awareness in six colleges of nashik on gender equality and citizenship.

During this period the following activities took shape-

Y-TALK EVENT -

The project implemented in six colleges of Nashik received energetic participation from the students and so to appreciate their involvement and listen to their feedback on last years activities, we held a sharing of experiences event on 17th April in KTHM college, Nashik.

More than 140 students and a few teachers participated in the event. The guest of honour was the popular actor, Chinmay Udgirikar. The students enthusiasm was evident, as they had designed and created a 'Balancing Scale' depicting gender equality. The guest of honour declared the event open by cutting the ribbon of the weighing scale of equality. Abhivyakti team then felicitated all the teachers and principals who had supported the programme in their colleges.

The peer guides who had participated and contributed to the gender equality and citizenship programme were honoured with certificates of experience. Peer guides from the six colleges then spoke about their experiences of trans-formation. The students spoke of the impact the programme had on their lives and how the concept of gender equality opened doors of awareness and created change in their behaviour. Most of the students felt that the right from childhood girls and boys needed to be treated without any discrimination and given equal opportunities. The students also expressed the significance of patriarchy in their lives and how it has led to creating differences and inequality. Overall, the students were satisfied and expressed that they would like to continue with the programme in the future as well.

The second phase began with an orientation in four colleges, namely, the College of Social Work, NBT Law College, SMRK College, and KVN Naik College. Around 170 students participated enthusiastically.





ORIENTATION IN COLLEGES -

At the end of October, we organised an orientation session with the first- and second-year students of sociology at KTHM college. The orientation was about introducing the work being facilitated by Abhivyakti and Akshara organisation in the development sector and especially about the YCP programme which aims to build the capacities of students in gender understanding and citizenship. About one hundred students and four faculty members from the college attended the orientation. Later, we selected 30 first-year students to participate in our year-long activities. Similarly, another orientation session was organised in the RYK and BYK colleges where around 45 students took part. Both the orientation sessions were received enthusi- astically by the students.



WORKSHOPS-

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP' [OUR LIVE, OUR RIGHTS] -

Given the rise in criminal activities and violence, Citizens, mainly youth, are facing the brunt and feeling violation of their basic rights. To create aware- ness on Citizenship and what it means, two work- shop were organised in October for the students of NBT Law College and for the College of Social Work, Nashik. Through the use of stories, the students were made aware of their rights and how the rights are violated on a day-to-day basis. They also enacted role plays to depict their views and resolution. More than 35 students from each college participated in the workshop.



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SOCIAL ACTION- YUVAK-YUVATI MELAVA AND GANA REWRITE -

After the workshop on citizenship and gender, the students who were interested in organising a 'Yuvak-Yuvati melawa' in the colleges of NBT law and KTHM were invited to participate in a preparatory workshop. The melawa was based on creating aware- ness on gender. About 25 students showed interest and attended the workshop, which was about how to organise the melawa in their respective colleges. The students also learnt about an interesting activity that was about re-writing Hindi film songs that made mockery of womanhood or were abusive in their content. The idea was to rewrite the songs in a creative way that honoured gender equality. The students enjoyed the workshop and understood how the lyrics of a few Hindi films songs demeaned women. The workshop was held in the third week of March.

FILM SCREENING -

In the third week of March, we organised a film screening for the students of SMRK college. Two short films, namely, 'Juice' and 'Girls on the Margin' were screened. The screening was followed by discussion with the students. About 55 students were present for the screening. The films were about the social reality of rural girls, and the discussion centred around the theme of education and its access and relevance. The students became aware of the reality of girls lives and how early marriage resulted in a break from the education process. Many other questions about rural life and its culture of denying opportunities to girls to pursue education came to the fore.



GENDER EQUALITY -

A one-day workshop was organised for the students of the College of Social Work in the last week of February, and in the first week of March, it was organised again for the students of HPT, SMRK and NBT Law College on the issue of gender equality. Through an interactive session, the students were first asked about their understanding of gender, and based on their response, which was very basic, they were provided input on understanding gender and how it is constructed. Later, two groups were made separately consisting of boys and girls. They were made to give their views on an ideal man and woman. The ideal man was trustworthy, free from any addiction, and caretaker, while the ideal woman was the one who took care of the culture and was sensitive and mature. This led to intense dialogue and the need to understand the overarching patriarchy that is prevalent in society and how to overcome it.





CITIZENSHIP -

In the third week of February, a one-day workshop was organised for the students of HPT College who had joined the YCP programme. The workshop was on citizenship, and its focus was on creating awareness amongst the students about citizenship. There were twenty students who were part of this workshop. Through different simulated activities, the students learnt about their rights as written in our Constitution and how some of the Rights were violated. Some of the examples were taken from experiences of people from their daily lives, and the students were asked to think and act about getting justice. The students participated actively and learnt of their rights from the dialogue and interaction amongst themselves.





RUTUJA KHAIRNAR, is studying at the HPT College of Arts, Nashik. She says that she joined the NSS because she wanted to contribute and help the marginalised youth and was inspired by the NSS motto of 'Not Me but You'. It was due to my association with NSS that I came into contact with Abhivyakti and learnt about its Youth for Change programme. I was selected to be one of the group leaders and attend the workshop on leadership. I was nervous and even sceptical, as I had never considered myself a leader nor understood its meaning. I also could not attend the workshop on leadership due to personal reasons, so I had many doubts about my role, but gradually, as I started participating in the activities, Istart- ed realising its importance in my life. I also got the opportunity to organise events like the workshop on citizenship, gender equality, and other events. The task of talking with other students, motivating them to join the workshops, and managing the dynamics of the group process helped me to understand myself better. Juggling attending my regular classes and practicals and giving time for YCP work was challenging and demanding. It tested my patience and self-doubts about my abilities.

However, Abhivyakti team members, Manisha and Avinash, were always there to encourage me and support my decisions. I also volunteered at Abhivyakti's other events, like the Ankur Film Festival. I was offered the opportunity to compere in the event, which was challenging as I had never done it in my life. I decided to give it a try, although I was tense. However, I did a good job on my first stage show! It was an enriching experience, as it boosted my self-confidence. Later, I took on the responsibility of organising the YCP's closing event. From small details to actually organising the closing event, it was a big learning experience for me, something that I would have missed while attending my classes.

Due to this initiative, I gained a lot of experience and self-assurance. I started believing in my abilities. I started taking an interest in the NSS activities and even in its planning. I was selected as the college group leader, which enabled me to attend the state level Chancellor Brigade and NSS youth festival held in Gadchiroli. I was even awarded the best NSS girl student, which I realised was due to my hard work and leadership.

My engagement with YCP enabled me to learn many things about gender discrimination, the overarching impact of patriarchy on society, and how it leads to unwarranted behaviour of domination and aggression by men towards women. The gradual changes in me were not lost on my parents, who were very happy to see my transfor- mation. Many people supported me in my choices, and I am grateful for the opportunities I got from NSS and Abhivyakti. My parents don't discriminate between me and my brother. They have confidence in me, which enables me to travel alone, even at night, to distant places and enjoy my time with my friends. I am very proud of my trans- formation, and particularly for a girl like me, I feel it is an important progression.



2. LIVELIHOODS & WELL-BEING

We aim to introduce local livelihoods in the Trimbakeshwar block of Nashik so that it enhances opportunities at the village level as well as reduces the dependency on migrating to towns and cities in search of employment which is both exploitative in practice and a forced compulsion. We have two projects, one on Strengthening Rural Livelihoods, which was started during the Covid period and which we have continued, and second, called Integrated Village Development supported by the CSR initiative of Mahindra and Mahindra Group.

STRENGTHENING RURAL LIVELIHOODS -

MILK DAIRY AT KHARWAL VILLAGE -

Due to summer conditions, the milk collection dropped to 25 litres daily, which affected the overall process. The routine of milk collection and distribution is going well, and those involved in managing the livelihood are learning to cope with such fluctuations.

RAGI ENTERPRISE AT BERWAL AND HIRDI -

This livelihood managed by women is progressing well. The women were able to take a loan of rupees three lakhs to buy an automatic papad-making machine, which will be able to yield a large quantity of papad. They are also exploring avenues where their products could be sold. The women are also involved in generating supplementary income by making other products like pounded masala and vermicelli. Women are able to generate an income of Rs 2000 on a daily basis.

MARKETING OF PAPAD -

The women of Berwal were able to sell a record 12000 quantity of papads by putting up stalls at City Centre Mall and other places. They were able to earn around twenty thousand rupees. They have also established links with Guruji Hospital and a few individuals to sell papads regularly.

MANGO ORCHARD IN BEHADPADA-

Twenty-five farmers of village Behedpada have come together and, through their manual labour, were successful in digging up a water pond in their village. They hope to store rainwater in the coming monsoon and use the water for mango saplings they had planted earlier.







KRISHITHON AWARD -

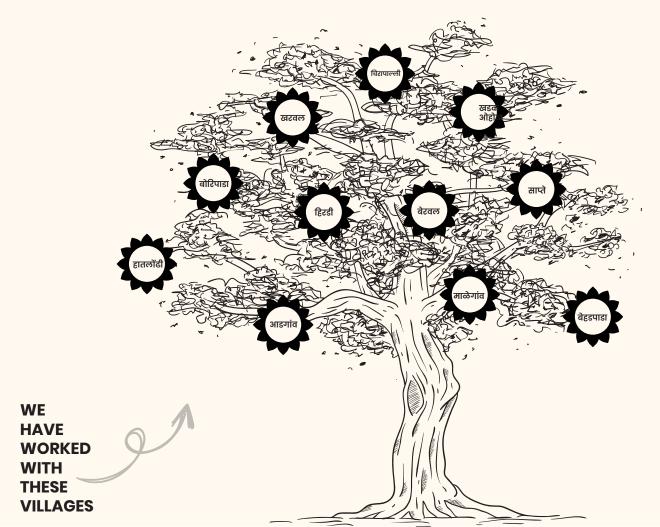
The women entrepreneurs of Berwal and Hirdi were recognised for their efforts in managing small businesses in their respective villages. They were awarded the Krishithon Award for being Agro entrepreneurs in the month of November. Parvata Mahale of Berwal and Maya Khorte of Hirdi village received the award on behalf of their womens group from the local MLA, Saroj Aahire. The women were happy to see that their efforts were being recognized, and it motivated them to work even harder.



In the last week of December, women of Berwal showcased their Ragi products in an exhibition organised at Dev Dongra. Various Ragi products, like Ragi Satva, Flour, Papad, and Ragi mixture, along with hand-prepared rice was on sale in the exhibition. The stall was made possible by the generosity of the Member of Parliament, Dr Bharti Pawar from Dindori. She also purchased papad from their stall.







POONAM TAI KASBE, who is the head of 'Pragati Mahila Bachat Gat' in Sapte village, narrates that the plight of many rural women who toil relentlessly from morning to night to make ends meet is similar, which is filled with severe hardship and no visible support nor any appreciation. We were trying desperately to enhance our financial condition for many months but without any tangible results.

Abhivyaktis intervention couldn't have come at a more appropriate moment! Abhivyakti team was interested in supporting any small-scale agro-based initiative. After much exploration, we women agreed on venturing into mushroom cultivation. The idea was new to us, but we were willing and excited. Ten of us got training in mushroom farming from the 'Krishi Vigyan Kendra' based in the YC Open University, Nashik. The process seemed easy and simple. The most important part was that the time period to grow mushrooms and earn was short and manageable. It could be done without leaving any of our daily chores, including farming. Initially, we began with 80 beds of mushrooms. Our motivation was high, so we gave our utmost attention. In no time, mushrooms began to grow, and we harvested about 80 kilos of a good-quality product. We were overjoyed. Our efforts had yielded good result. We had sixty kilos and the idea of selling and earning from the mushrooms became the talking point between us women.

However, after a lot of deliberation, we decided to celebrate. We distributed our 'bounty' in the village and also consumed it ourselves. We wanted to sow the idea amongst other women of the village and encourage them to become entrepreneurs. The newspaper too gave good publicity to our efforts. It was no small achievement for us women, who are never considered 'worthy' of anything! Reading our names in the newspaper was like the icing on the cake! Riding on the wave of success, we started again, now with bigger ambition. We prepared nearly 200 beds, pregnant with hope and new confidence. Our hard work resulted in harvesting about 430 kgs of mushrooms.

With Abhivyakti's help, we sold the mushrooms', filled in bags, in the markets of Harsul, Ganeshgoan and Trambakeshwar. It fetched nearly eighty thousand rupees. A sum we had never imagined from one single harvest!

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Each one of us got ten thousand. It was time for celebration; rejoice in our collective efforts, hope, and determination. We had a delicious dinner together where we promised to aim higher in the next round! We are already planning to make the business profitable by making quality mushrooms and how we could continue it through the year! While we are proud of our achievements, we are also aware of the huge responsibilities that lie ahead. However, we are not afraid of challenges, as we are now committed, resolute, and inspired. The support, encouragement, and belief of Abhivyakti in our abilities has been instrumental for this transformation. We will keep learning and take steps to strengthen our enterprise further!



INTEGRATED VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT -

We surveyed and selected Malegaon and Sapte villages to focus our intervention under the project supported by Mahindra and Mahindra CSR. The focus of the work is on generating livelihood and improv- ing the water source from the river Vashista. Under livelihood, we are supporting 80 farmers to plant four thousand mango trees and 25 women to start mushroom farming. To generate drinking water and help the community solve their water issue, the work on removing the sediments in the dam, which had accu- mulated over the years, and releasing water to collect up to nearly one crore litres.



WORKSHOPS-

UNDERSTANDING SILK BUSINESS -

In September, a one-day workshop was organized for 11 farmers of Sapte village on how to initiate silk business. Silk entrepreneur Chetan Mahale was present as the chief guide for this workshop. He shared insights about starting a silk business, about how much capital is required to start this business and how much profit is generated, and detailed information about precaution when starting this business. He gave the farmers the belief that if every farmer understands and learns the technique of silk business very well, then a substantial earning can be generated to sustain a farmer's family.



PREPARING MUSHROOM BEDS -

On 1st November, a one-day workshop was organised by Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Nashik on preparing Mushroom Beds, which was attended by 15 women from Malegoan village. The workshop was facilitated by Archana Deshmukh. She helped the women prepare ten mushroom beds and also shared technical infor-mation of mushroom production. Later, the women prepared seventy mushroom beds and harvested about 50 kgs of mushroom which they distributed freely in the village as their first produce.



MUSHROOM CULTIVATION-

The women from Malegaon, who also learnt Mushroom production, started preparing the beds for nearly 1500 mushroom production. It was a positive step for the women, who, it is believed, will be able to harvest about 1500 kgs of mushroom. They will also get a decent amount from its sale. This has been good advertising for agro-business and will definitely attract attention from other villages.





DAM REPAIR -

The long-pending repair of the dam at Sapte village was undertaken to remove sediments and other problems. This was completed successfully, as the dam is capable of holding nearly one crore litres of water, which will help the farmers cultivate Rabi crops and supplement their earnings. The villagers harvested second crops like wheat, gram dal and also vegetables. The villagers also planted the Kesar variety of mango and got ready for mulberry cultivation.



MANGO CULTIVATION -

Due to the repair of the existing Dam, there was avail- ability of water, which was used for the young mango trees. The trees were growing nicely, and the farmers were satisfied with their growth. The farmers had invested a lot of their time and energy in taking care of the Mango trees and providing necessary nutrients at the right time. The farmers were also provided with information about using organic manure for the mango trees and its long-term benefits. This February, each of the 80 farmers was supplied with 50 kgs of organic fertilizers, which they have used with a positive attitude and a promise of maintaining good care in the future.

SILK PRODUCTION UPDATE-

To complement the farming community with appropriate livelihood, we started Silk Production in Spate Village. Last July, we planted the first batch and in March, the farmers were able to harvest 25 Kgs of Silk cocoons. The process goes through several steps of careful planning, cultivating and feeding the silkworms with Mulberry leaves, taking care & giving lot of attention as the weather conditions can vary and be unpredictable. The farmers had to undergo rough climatic conditions but due to their determination and resilience they were able to deal with the situation effectively. The harvested Cocoons were then sold at the Silk Centre in Beed in March. They were able to get a good price by selling the Cocoons for nearly ten thousand rupees. The farmers were satisfied as this was their first attempt at an entirely new agro-based livelihood. Their hard work and motivation had paid off which in the long run would inspire other farmers to consider venturing into such complementing livelihoods.

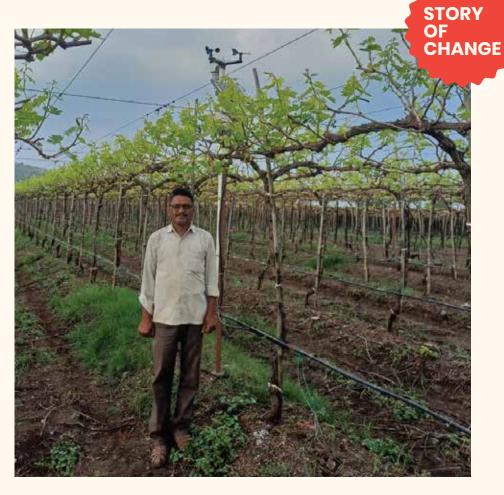


WEATHER STATION INSTALLATION -

In collaboration with 'Mitra Agro Equipment Pvt Ltd' under the sustainable livelihood (MITRA) programme, we have started installing weather stations in three villages of Khedgoan in Dindori taluka, Wadnere Bhairav in Chandwad Taluka and Palkhed in Niphad taluka of Nashik district. The weather station was provided to those farmers who were marginalised, Covid-affected, with some disabili- ty and to widowed women who were into grape cultivation on less than 2 acres of land. Weather stations were provided to access weather conditions and use them to increase their yield and profits. The farmers were very happy in installing the weather stations, which were provided to 13 farmers in Khedgoan, 11 farmers in Wadnere Bhairav and 14 in Palkhed. By installing the weather stations in different villages, we were able to reach farmers in different locations in Nashik and understand the conditions of marginalized farmers. The farmers are in constant touch with our team even after the installation, wanting guidance in different areas as well, like their children's education, about marketing, etc.

MY EXPERIENCES WITH WEATHER STATION -

I am a farmer from the village of Vadnere Bhairav engaged in grape cultivation. We have been struggling to come to terms with the weather and its uncertainty. The yield of farmers has also been affected due to the vagaries of the weather. Every year farmers suffer losses running into lakhs due to the untimely advent of rains. Due to the CSR of MITRA Agro Company and Abhivyakti, eleven farmers were selected to install weather stations in their farms. The weather station device was installed in my small farm of two and a half acres. The weather station app installed in my mobile had the ability to inform me about the amount of water needed for the grapes as per the size of the farm, the amount of fertilizer and insecticide needed, the quality of the soil, and the nature of the weather.



The advance notice was very helpful in preparing the farmers for cultivation. In previous years, we suffered a lot as we had no idea how much to water the plants, and the uncertainty of weather impacted us the most. The installation of the weather station has helped in watering the right amount, and advance notice of weather was also very beneficial. My farm is looking productive; the grapes are in good shape, and I am expecting a good yield this year, a profit of at least fifty thousand rupees. More than the financial gain, I am very happy that the weather station helped me to prepare well and gave me the right amount of information on various things needed to make grape-farming successful.



3. COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE

The goal is to set up community learning centres (CLC) in 5 tribal villages of Trimbakeshwar taluka and to provide an autonomous and self-governed platform for the community members of the villages to learn, exchange, and develop knowledge for their growth.



EXPLORATION -

We started visiting different villages to identify the best possible sites for starting the community learning centres. We started by going to Hirdi and Malegoan villages. In Hirdi, the Women Sarpanch, Yashoda Khotare was enthusiastic about starting a CLC in her village and even agreed to repair the old Anganwadi centre and give it for starting the CLC. In Malegaon, a meeting was organised with the youth to discuss the concept of CLC and its different activities. The youth were eager and asked a few questions about its benefits. The youth then decided to take the proposal to the village panchayat for allocating space to start the CLC. We also visited Ambai, Dhumodi , Pahine, Sapgoan and Shirasgoan villages to finalise the selection. The discussion was fruitful to decide the future course of activities to be undertaken in the villages so that it would motivate more villagers to join the CLC and make it meaningful. It was decided to organise art-related activities and film screenings on issues of importance to the villagers. The five villages of Ambai, Pahine, Sapgoan, Shirasgoan and Dhumodi were selected as the venues for initiating community learning centres. Apart from starting a library to cultivate reading habits amongst the villagers, we also wanted to focus on developing youth leader- ship, with an emphasis on young girls and women, hosting events to spread the word about the CLC, and making the CLC a vibrant space where people will gather to discuss important ideas and share their concerns.

FILM SCREENING - AMBAI VILLAGE

As mentioned earlier, the initiative to start a Film Club for students of class fourth and fifth bore good results as the first film screening took place in the Zilha Parishad Primary Vidya Mandir school in the second week of January. An animation film, 'Meena' was screened for the students. The film was about personal hygiene and narrated the importance of toilets. Later, a lively discussion was held with the students. The principal, Ms. Pratibha Sonje was present, who appreciated the initiative and shared that the content of such films would definitely create awareness and complement the educational process.



DESIGNING SKY LANTERNS -

A one-day workshop was organized on creating sky lanterns at the Community Learning Centre (CLC) at Sapgoan village in the second week of November. As the festival of Diwali was approaching, we decided to host an activity which was appreciated last year as well. Youth from the villages of Ambai, Sapgaon and Pahine participated. The objective of this workshop was that Shodhini and Shodak will earn from the sale of Lanterns and also increase their creative skills further. The workshop was facilitated by Sandip Medhe and Vidya Moule of Abhivyakti. Several sky lanterns were made with a lot of interaction and fun.

DIALOGUE-

We have been meeting village panchayat leaders, youth and women in all the five villages to dialogue on their issues and concerns. While the villages have appreciated the efforts and welcomed the idea of CLC, the response has been gradual. While the youth were curious, and visited the space often, the elders are yet to gather momentum. A few sessions on village issues, panchayat functioning, and Shodhini work were held with youth. The space encouraged youth to share their ideas and views without hesitation, and it helped to understand what the youth felt about their own village and its development.



BIRTHING A COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE-

Birthing a Community Learning Centre Of the five villages which were selected for initiating community learning centres, Dhumodi presented a different picture. Dhumodi, a small village of population under 1000, is situat- ed on the highway between Trimbakeshwar and Jawhar. Three years ago, Shodhini started a small library exclusively for girls and women, which had probably sown the seeds of a more dynamic space for the commu- nity in the minds of the youth. The library space was given by the gram panchayat by converting the old Aanganwadi into Shodhini library. It had a few books which were circulated, and regular activities began to take shape in which the youth participated enthusiastically.

The exclusive space became vibrant with girls meeting there to exchange views and discuss their issues. The space also invited other youth to use it for studying and preparing for competitive exams, sessions on issues, and general discussion, among others. Gradually, a few youth started taking interest in the activities and began taking academic-related sessions for the younger school-going children. They also began looking at possible scenarios for village development. The youth were enthusiastic, committed, curious and valued Abhivyakti's interest in their own growth. They started discussing various ways in which village life could be improved. They were ready to give their time and energy. More importantly, they were eager to learn and grow together. They started raising questions and looking at ideas.

One idea that grew from serious interaction was about transforming the existing Shodhini library into a broad- er utility centre that would serve the varied interests of the youth. They wanted activities like training, access to computers and career advancement, and livelihood options. As the idea of Community Learning Centre started taking root, their involvement also grew. They reached out to other youth, visited Abhivyakti and participated with earnestness in deciding the functioning of the learning centre, its scope, activities, and its management.

The interest of the youth and their seriousness have been instrumental in consolidating the ideas into concrete actions. The Community Learning Centre is taking shape and driving its destiny as a collective of youth, young men and women, who are envisioning the birthing of a local institution.

A dream is becoming a reality!



4. PROGRAMME SUPPORT UNIT

We have two units under this programme strategy. Both have been the core units of Abhivyakti since its beginning.

The two units are -

A. PRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY MEDIA B. CO-LEARNING

which is about designing training and workshops on themes related to development communications and leadership for the development sector and grassroots professionals.

PRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY MEDIA -

We have been producing audio-visual material on our own, which emerges from our different projects. We also produce films for other organisations as well as document their events. This year, we have been busy attending to calls from other organisations and making our own films. This has been challenging for us to balance the internal and external demands.



FILM ON EARLY MARRIAGE OF GIRLS -

The findings of Shodhini's action research show that girls are married at an early age to a large extent in villages. The law states that girls should be at least 18 years of age when getting married, but the practice in villages is that girls below 18 years of age are getting married on a large scale and most times without their consent. We decided to depict this reality through a video film. We selected Ambai village for the shooting purposes. The villagers were supportive and even helped in the recreation of a few scenes. They were curious about the shooting process and participated enthusiastically in the making of the film. The Shodaks and Shodhini were in the forefront in organising the shooting and in mobilising the villagers.



RECOGNITIONS AND APPRECIATION -

One of our video films on the reality of rural girls, 'Veshivarchya Pori' - (The Girls on Margin) is being screened extensively and is receiving applause at different film festivals.

Here is the list -

- AWARDED BEST FOURTH FILM AT MAHARSHI SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, NASHIK
- OFFICIAL SELECTION AT THE 13TH PUNE SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, PUNE
- OFFICIAL SELECTION AT FIRST-TIME FILMMAKER SESSIONS -HOSTED BY LIFT-OFF
- GLOBAL NETWORK, ENGLAND
- SEMI-FINALIST AT SWIFF FILM FESTIVAL, NJ, US
- OFFICIAL SELECTION AT 13TH INTERNATIONAL HAIKU AMATEUR LITTLE FILM
- FESTIVAL AT PALAKKAD, KERALA

While the other animation film on reality of Covid and its impact on the education of rural and tribal girls called, 'Hum Chahate Hain' (We Desire) was appreciated for its content at the Ladli Media Awards for gender sensitivity. The Ladli Media award is the flagship programme of Population First, a social impact organisation that works for women empowerment, gender equality and community mobilisation.



IMPACT VIDEOS OF 'ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA', SOLAPUR-

Groundwater Surveys and Development Agency (GSDA), Govt. of India approached Abhivyakti for making an Impact videos on 'Atal Bhujan Yojana', at three villages of Solapur district. We documented the process and made three impact videos on the 'Village Ground Water Information Centre', rain gauge mapping, well water mapping and water recharge shop. The videos are very useful to other villages for saving groundwater!







TRANSLATING VIDEO E-LEARNING TRAINING CONTENT FOR DHWANI FOUNDATION, BANGALORE -

Dhwani Foundation, Bangalore, is collaborating with Abhivyakti to make audio-visual e-Learning training content of NGOs functioning. Dhwani Foundation has already created 200 videos in English, but they wanted to expand its reach by making the videos in Hindi. We have accepted the responsibility and have started production work on the Hindi version on governance, compliance, program management, finance & accounting, human resources, MIS & technology, fund-raising & marketing, leadership & strategy, etc. The work is in progress as it required a tremendous amount of coordination and management. We have completed 50 video script translations, set up teams, and plan of action to complete this assignment on time. It is hoped that the benefits achieved during the terms of this partnership will result in grassroots NGOs serving marginalized communities effectively by implementing the learnings provided in the videos to strengthen their organizations.

DOCUMENTATION – 'RANBHAJI MOHOTSAV' AT AMBATHA VILLAGE, SURGANA –

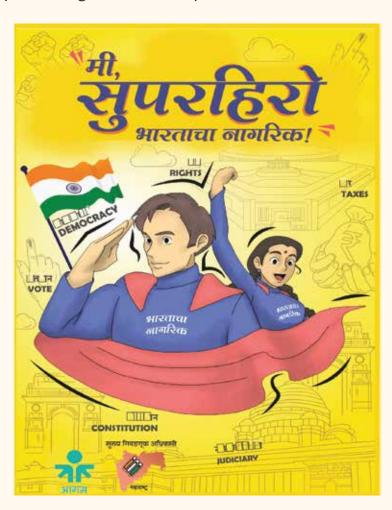
Maharashtra Prabodhan Seva Mandal (MPSM), Nashik, approached us for Video and photo documentation of 'RanBhaji Mohostav' (forest food festival) at Ambatha village, Surgana block, on 26 August 2023. We have documented on video the activities related to the festival, like tribal women picking wild vegetables from the forest, preparing different dishes, exhibiting the prepared food at the forest food festival, and sharing the importance of the forest food.



PRODUCTION OF CITIZENSHIP COMIC BOOK BY AAGAM ORGANISATION -

The comic book entitled 'Me, The Superhero Indian Citizen' for empowering India's youth was successfully completed in collaboration with Aagam Organisation, Mumbai. This involved translating 18 chapters into Hindi and Marathi along with design that engages the young reader and first-time voters. The book has youth-centric content and is meticulously crafted to appeal to the interests and concerns of young readers, providing valuable insights into citizenship rights and responsibilities in a format that is engaging and it relatable. By addressing issues relevant to first-time voters, such as civic engagement, electoral participation, and democratic values, we aim to empower and inspire a new generation of responsible citizens.

The comic is also culturally relevant, as the translations into Hindi and Marathi ensure that the comic book resonates with the cultural sensibilities of our diverse audience, fostering a deeper connection and understanding of citizenship principles. The Visual Impact through innovative design and vibrant illustrations, which we have created for a stimulating and visually captivating experience that not only educates but also entertains, leaving a lasting impression on our readers. Our partnership with the Aagam Organization exemplifies the spirit of collaboration and shared commitment to social impact, demonstrating the collective strength of working together towards a common goal.



VIDEO DOCUMENTATION OF FOLK ARTIST WORKSHOP

We finished the video documentation of capturing the unique art forms presented during the Folk Artist Workshop conducted by 'Lok Shahir' Sambhaji Bhagat and his team in the second week of January at 'Sarvahara Parivartan Kendra', Chikhalwadi, Trimbakeshwar. The two-day workshop was about building good relationships with the artists and reconnecting with activists involved in promoting various movements.



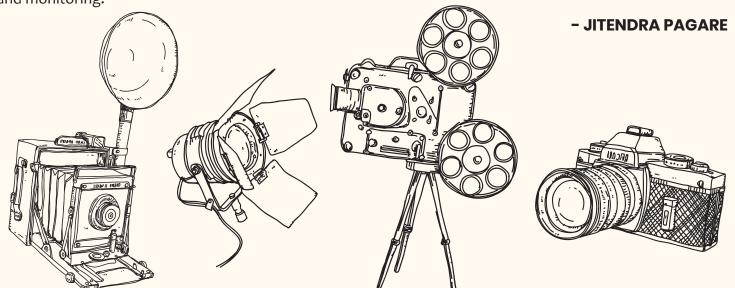
VIDEO TRANSLATION - A CHALLENGING ASSIGNMENT!

Last year, Cynthia Dsouza, a postgraduate student from Azim Premji University, joined Abhivyakti for a one-month internship. During her time, she worked across all units, but particularly enjoyed and learnt a lot from the media production unit. She even created a short video film during her internship. Cynthia expressed that her experience with Abhivyakti was incredibly enriching. Her brother, Jacob, who is the Program Head of the 'Drishti' program at the Dhvani Foundation, was told about Abhivyakti by Cynthia. He then travelled from Bangalore to Nashik to understand the work of Abhivyakti. Based on Cynthia's insights and his own understanding, Jacob proposed a project to translate 200 videos from English to Hindi. These videos were part of an e-learning material aimed at helping organizations build their capacity in organizational development. Dhvani Foundation already had this content in English, but to reach organizations across India, particularly in rural areas, they needed the videos in Hindi.

They requested a sample video, which we promptly created and sent. They were very impressed, and as a result, we secured the project to translate 200 videos from English to Hindi.

After getting the assignment, the real challenge was to complete the project within a six-month timeframe. It involved finding translators, voice-over artists, video editors, and quality monitors who could deliver within our budget and time constraints. We had to ensure that the Hindi translations would be easily understood by both urban and rural audiences, and decisions on whether to keep certain English terms or translate them into pure Hindi were constantly discussed. Since four translators were working simultaneously, it was crucial toensure that all translated scripts and storyboards were consistent. We also had to coordinate closely with the voice-over artists, ensuring the tone was conversational to keep the audience engaged. The video editors were carefully selected, and the project was kicked off.

Every part of the work - Hindi translation (script and storyboard), quality check, voice-over, video editing, and final quality check - was happening simultaneously. Each task was dependent on the other. Often, delays in receiving translated scripts would hold up the voice-over, and without voice-overs, editing couldn't proceed. Despite numerous follow-ups, some translators failed to deliver on time, and we had to replace them. After overcoming many such hurdles, by March 2024, we had successfully completed 100 videos. Overall, this project taught me invaluable lessons in effective team coordination, project implementation, proper planning, and monitoring.



CO-LEARNING-

The goal of the co-learning unit has been to design and facilitate workshops and training sessions on development communications, leadership and organizational development to build and strengthen the capacities of NGO and grassroots functionaries. We organize the co-learning activities through by designing and announcing our own workshops, and second, we accept invitations by other social and grassroots organisations and institutions to design need-based workshops for their team members.

Apart from organizing our own workshops, the co-learning unit also managed a project 'Hunnar' supported by Mahindra and Mahindra. Learning Hub is a space within Co-learning Unit for young people to intern and learn from our work.

The various activities are detailed below -

WORKSHOPS AND SESSIONS -

We facilitated a workshop on the importance of Media in Communication for the students of Law College of Nashik. 40 students from the undergraduate level participated and learnt about the various aspects of media and how it influences our choices.

A three-day workshop with first-year design students of MET College of Architecture and Design was held in the last week of July. About 35 students participated with a focus on understanding themselves, understanding peers and collaborating with them was the main focus of the workshop.

A similar two-day workshop was organised for the first year Design students of MVP College of Architecture and Design, Nashik, in August. Nearly 40 students attended.

We facilitated a district level workshop on 'Self-aware- ness and Active Citizenship' with more than 200 NSS students organized by NBT Law College of Nashik. Students came from rural and urban areas of Nashik, and they enjoyed this participatory workshop.





We facilitated a two-day workshop on 'Self-awareness and Leadership' for the 48 students under the Youth for Change Program at Yuva Center, Kharghar, Mumbai. Students from Nashik, Pune, and Mumbai participated in this workshop. The workshop was participatory, with lots of simulation exercises. Students learnt about how to enhance their leadership, become change agents, and contribute towards becoming active citizens for the cause of social change.

A series of sessions on entrepreneurship were facilitated by Abhivyakti team for the final-year students of Architecture of MET College of Architecture and Design, Nashik from January to March. Each session was for a half day and introduced the students to several aspects of entrepreneurship through a participatory process of dialogue and exchange.

A series of sessions were held for the first-year students at the Design of MET College of Architecture and Design, Nashik, on 'Self and Mindset' from January to March. Understanding our brain, how it functions, understanding our emotional side, and other related themes were discussed using simulation exercises and reflections. The students also shared their struggles with class dynamics, competition, and keeping focus on academics.

SHORT SESSIONS

The postgraduate students of the College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai visited Abhivyakti in the first week of January to understand about our work, mission, and programmes. The students were briefed about our work through screening of films and dialogue on gender and development. An interactive exercise on gender led to serious discussion on the various aspects of gender equality.







A half-day session was facilitated on gender equality for the NSS students of the College of Design and Architecture and the College of Pharmacy, Nashik in a village of Mungsarai near Nashik in the first week of January. Through a simulated exercise and interactive process, various aspects of gender emerged, which were discussed openly and frankly.

In the second week of February, graduate and postgraduate students of psychology from KTHM College, Nashik visited Abhivyakti office to learn about our work. A PPT presentation on understanding our cognitive abilities was shared with the students, which was followed by discussion of the theme and its application.

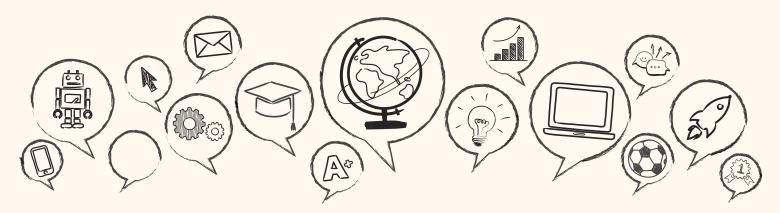


Half-day sessions were organised for the students of Design of both MET and CANS College of Architecture, Nashik on environmental perception. The session was to prepare the first-year students for a rural camp to understand and experience the relationship between design and environment.

We facilitated a session with 60 MSW students from the College of Social Work, Nashik on development communi- cation.



We facilitated an orientation session on the Abhivyakti organization and its work with the students from Oak School.



HUNNAR - SKILL ENHANCEMENT OF YOUTH, NASHIK

Hunnar - Skills Enhancement for marginalized youth from Nashik urban is a new initiative supported by Mahin- dra and Mahindra, Nashik. The aim is to develop different employability capacities of marginalised youth. Some of the capacities were related to learning computer skills, while fire and safety measures being the other. We also chose different partners who were experts in providing such skills.

ACTIVITY DETAILS ARE AS FOLLOWS -

After announcing the various courses, we completed the enrolment process of the 218 students in different courses, including certificates in Fire and Safety, and the other four were related to skills in computers. Out of those students, 43% are young girls. From the 218 students who were enrolled, 46% are from marginalised category, 37% are OBC, and only 17% are from the open category.

We took life skill sessions with students of Certificate in Fireman, Maharashtra College, Nashik, and students of Computer courses of Sri Sai Computer Shivaji Nagar, Nashik in the month of October 2023. We gave inputs on the self-awareness, strengths and weaknesses of the students, and how to become responsible citizens. Students reflected on themselves and enjoyed the process.

As the various skill-orienteded courses were completing their duration, we decided to honour the successful students who had graduated, valuing their efforts in completing the course along with appreciating the dedication of its teachers who had given their valuable expertise. The Felicitation ceremony was held on the 24th of February in Nashik. The chief guest was the Fire Station Head of Nashik Municipal Corporation, Mr. Pradeep Borse.





Out of the 218 students enrolled in the various courses, 192 students (88%) completed the course they were enrolled in. All those who had completed the course successfully were invited to the Felicitation ceremony. The students and the course directors were awarded with a certificate of appreciation. What was heartwarming and assuring was the response of the various course directors who conducted the courses. They were not only effusive in their appreciation but saw the efforts put in by the Abhivyakti team in making the various courses relevant and meaningful for the students.

One course director even suggested that in the future, 20 hours of the courses need to be given for developing life skills and mental capacities of the students, which the Abhivyakti team had facilitated during the duration of the course. The event was well-attended by the students, course directors, parents, and Abhivyakti team. The summary of achievements is against the agreed KPI; 4 computer courses and 1 certificate course in fire and safety have been undertaken and completed successfully by 218 students. Out of 218 students, 157 students, i.e., 72% of students, including 101 men and 56 women, have been placed in local industries, hotels, hospitals and offices. A few have started self-employment in and around Nashik. They earn Rs 8000 to 15000 on an average monthly income and are supporting their family.







SHUBHANGI BHOJANE,

A student of course on computer hardware support, had studied till 12th when she had to drop out due to financial constraints of her family. I was interested in learning about computers but due to financial limitations I was unable to pursue it. It was then Abhivyakti's 'Hunnar Programme' caught my attention. It was offering various courses in learning computer skills at low fees. By paying a partial amount of the fees, I was able to secure admission in the hardware course offered by 'Sky Touch Computer' at Pawan Nagar, which was easily accessible. Abhivyakti and Mahindra and Mahindra had made it easy for me to fulfill my dreams of learning computer skills. In the course, which was a mix of theory and practical application, I learnt the various aspects of computer hardware, like assembling a desk-top computer, repair and maintenance, formatting a computer and networking. The practical enabled me to understand the problems of hardware and how to repair it. Regular practice made me competent and enhanced my skills. I completed the course and passed the exams with good grades. The Sky Touch computers had a sales and repair unit, which offered me a job as a hardware engineer on completion of my course based on my aptitude and skills. The job offer was a good opportunity to hone my skills further. I am now independently handling the repair and maintenance work, even the installation of antivirus software programme. I am even teaching new batches of students. The job offers a decent payment, which enables me to also support my family and my needs. I am fortunate to have gotten this opportunity, and I am filled with gratitude for Abhivyakti and Mahindra and Mahindra for their support.



PHILOSOPHY OF CO-LEARNING

Our philosophy of training draws from the methods developed by Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educationist known for his work on developing the theory of critical awareness. Our trainings are always centered around the process of action and reflection. We recognize the potential and energy within each person and each community and build on it to empower them to contribute to the shaping of a society where it is possible for all the people to fulfill their basic human needs. Dialogue is crucial in every aspect of the participatory learning process and of transformation. For years, traditional education and training have been seen as a process of passing on information from one "person who knows" to those "who do not know". But we know now that this way of teaching has not yielded the required results, nor has it erased the existing social hierarchies.

We believe that each person may have valuable knowledge to contribute, and so we need dialogue to draw in the insights of all the participants of our training. Our training atmosphere is based on the culture of co-learning. It means that we as facilitators provide a framework for critical thinking and reflection. We do this in creative ways by encouraging participants to ask questions and allowing the answers to unfold through participatory exercises and discussions. Hence, the participants, the learners, are active in the social construction of knowledge. Knowing the needs as well as the learner's prior knowledge is critical in designing the training sessions. It helps the learners build trust that they are valued and respected and that their prior knowledge is an important part of the building further knowledge. The session flow is developed based on participants' needs and experience.

However, it is always challenging to develop this culture of learning which values and is sensitive to the needs of the group. All our training workshops have constantly explored ways to build trust, openness, and honesty between the participants and us. We as facilitators are open to their feedback and suggestions, as it provides insights to examine our own values and ways of working. Being a facilitator is a continuous learning process, and that is what we value the most.

LEARNING HUB-

Learning Hub is part of the Co-learning unit with the aim of hosting various young people, and individuals at Abhivyakti to enable their learning in mainly development communications or in the social issues we are engaged in. Students, young persons from various educational institutions, come as interns and are part of our different projects for a short period of time engaged in specific tasks and helping the project team in their activi-ties. The students who intern at Abhivyakti learn, discuss, and exchange ideas and perspectives on different aspects of development.

During this period, the following interns participated –

Two students from Azim Premji University, Bangalore were with us for a month and were involved in our various project activities.

One student from Punjab University was also present to get acquainted with our development communications programme.

Students also came from the College of Social Work, NBT Law College, Sandeep University, Nashik, BSW Colleges from Satara & Jalgaon.

Two students, Nivrutti Gangurde and Madhuri Garud from College of Social Work, Nashik joined Abhivyakti for their field work.

Aboli Vibhandik, pursuing her graduation, joined Abhivyakti voluntarily for getting NGO exposure.

The interns are also invited to present their learning at the end of their tenure before the Abhivyakti team. They are encouraged to create media for their presentation, which enables them to hone their media skills and also learn the art of presentation.















Abhivyakti has been organising public events to share its activities with the general public and create awareness on the issue of importance. Each year, we have been organising two events on the day of the girl in October and Ankur Film Festival in December.

Abhivyakti has been organising public events to share its activities with the general public and create awareness on the issue of importance. Each year, we have been organising two events on the day of the girl in October, and in December, we host the annual Ankur Film Festival. Both the events are well attended and we take great efforts in organising them. This year, a third was attended when we decided to host the Cinema Heritage exhibition.

So, in the months of October to December, we were busy hosting the following events -

- 1. CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL
- 2. EXHIBITION ON CINEMA HERITAGE OF NASHIK
- 3. 10TH ANKUR FILM FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL -

On 11th October, we organised a day-long event to celebrate the international day of the girl at Kusumagraj auditorium. The team of Shodhini and Shodak took on the responsibility of organising the event based on the theme of 'Our Rights, Our Future! The team of Shodini and Shodak shared their experiences of research that they had conducted in their villages on violence and discrimination faced in education because of their background. They enacted a few lessons through a small skit and also a few of them participated in a panel discussion on the theme. The other guests, Pooja Pawar from Anubhuti Trust, Kalyan and Shobha Pawar, members of Child Protection Board, Nashik and Panchayat members of Hirdi village, spoke about their experiences and encouraged the young team of Shodhini and Shodak to continue with their good and inspiring work. Members from different civil societies of Nashik, parents of Shodhini and Shodaks, villagers, Panchayat members and other officials attended and appreciated our efforts.









EXHIBITION ON CINEMA HERITAGE OF NASHIK -

Abhivyakti and Monia Acciari, film historian from the UK exhibited a unique exhibition on cinematic heritage in Kusumagraj Centre for three days in the first week of December. The aim of the exhibition was an explorato- ry work to recognise and give visibility to citizen narratives and to make them active in history-making. The exhibition displayed film publicity material and memorabilia that was collected by ordinary citizens of Nashik. It was to celebrate personal and intimate histories and memories associated with cinema of the common public. In a way, as Monia said, the exhibition was a way to democratise cinematic heritage and celebrate the unique contribution of cinema in creating memories. The exhibition put together personal holdings of common people of Nashik like cinema posters, tickets, songbooks, cinema reels, old cameras, and associated equipment and invited Nashik citizens to see it and share their views. Many diverse citizens visited the exhibition and shared their unique memories of cinema. Monia hopes that such an exhibition on cinematic heritage will become a permanent citizen heritage hub in the future.









10TH ANKUR FILM FESTIVAL-

The 10th Ankur Film Festival was organised from 10th to 12th December in Nashik at the historic cultural centre at Kusumagraj Smarak. The festival was opened by the noted documentary filmmaker, Rahul Roy from Delhi by showing his film 'Factory' on the struggles of workers of Maruti Factory for their rights. The three-day festival screened nearly fifty short films and documentaries made by young filmmakers. A workshop on documentary and democracy was facilitated by Zharna Zhaveri from Pune University. Noted filmmakers Pradumanya Patil, Mumbai, screened his short film 'Blackhole, Abhijit Zhunjarroa from Kalyan showed his film 'Miraj- the Celebration' and local filmmaker Jayesh Apte screened his acclaimed film 'Shur- panakha' during the festival as special invitees. The festival closed with a special session on photography by the Padmashri awardee, Sudharak Olwe who spoke about his experiences of documenting social events through the lens of his camera. It was followed by a film by Mumbai-based filmmaker Nirman Choudhary on Grassroots Storytellers as agents of change. The festival once again demonstrated the need for hosting such festivals celebrating independent cinema that documents important socio-cultural events.



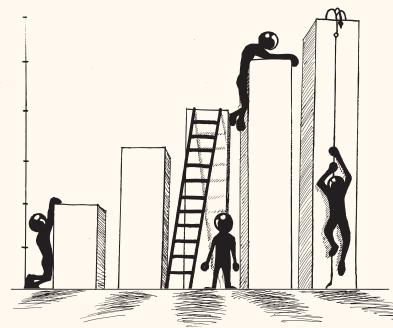




Managing an NGO is perhaps the toughest responsibility. After thirty-five years of existence, the challenges are many. Some are old, while each year something new gets added. A few years ago, the context for NGOs was not so complex. It was not so data driven; neither were questions raised about its credibility. Now with CSR driving the financial aspect, norms have undergone drastic change. The days of monthly reporting were unheard of. Grant-making organisations were more visible and in tune with the functioning of most of the NGOs and were not so demanding. Now, monthly reporting is the new norm with a focus on utilisation of finances. Each penny given is weighed and evaluated. More evidence is needed to prove your claims. Numbers have become more important, and impact, which was thought to be a long-term feature has undergone key metamorphosis. Impact is expected in a short time duration, sometimes in a year. The project cycle too has become short-term. From the popular three-year period, now it has come down to a year, more suited to corporate governance. All this has compounded the already stressed functionaries of the NGO world. In the wake of strict regulation in receiving foreign grants and new tax rules, NGOs are finding it difficult to adjust and fine-tune their working methods. Already overburdened with shortage of professional staff and with low pay packages available, finding creative ideas of programming, and its articulation in new languages is taking a heavy toll. Multi-tasking has never been easy nor popular, but for most of the NGO personnel, this has been the prevalent standard way of functioning. It is not surprising that leadership is facing many issues of burnout in their team. While necessity in understanding such needs and providing support is a prerequisite for any healthy organisations, this is singularly missing. In such a challenging context, Abhivyakti too is facing many issues.

Some of which are -

- **1.** It is difficult to sustain our main thrust of providing media and communication support to other social organisa- tions.
- **2.** While training is still important for NGO functionaries, we are facing many issues related to designing innovative programmes in development communication.
- 3. Professional personnel suited to our unique organisational needs are hard to find and sustain.
- **4.** Raising funds is a ubiquitous issue and each year we have to devote considerable time in exploring new funding agencies as the project cycle has shrunken and ends in a year.
- **5.** Reporting is another tough proposition where number crunching needs to be added to the narrative diet of reporting.
- **6.** The new leadership face is still evolving, and the external world is taking time to notice the change.
- **7.** Developing proposals in the new language of logical framework is another issue that's needs attention.
- **8.** Justifying our unique organisational identity to regulatory authorities and convincing them that we are not a commercial organisation is a new challenge that we faced this year.
- **9.** Administrative and organisational expenses keep on rising, yet no funding partners understand their levels and provide support.



Here we present a few of the other activities and events that took place during the year

Shodhini team visited the Dignang Foundation in Nandurbar, who are working with the tribal communities, and oriented their team on the work of Shodhini in Nashik and about the effectiveness of a newsletter.

Ranjana and Manisha Gangude visited 'Samvada' organization and attended the Youth Research Symposium in Bangalore in May. The symposium was organized by the Kanaja cell, actively working on research and need-based studies on education and livelihood. The Shodhini team presented the work done by them using action research. The agenda of the symposium was to understand youthhood.

Abhivyakti organised a three-day Annual Meet for its team members in the first week of April to discuss and reflect on its achievements and plan for the future.

Professor Monia Acciari from Leicester Media School, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK, visited Abhivyakti office to discuss an exhibition on cinema heritage in Nashik in November/December.

Ranjana participated in the WOMENIFESTO organised by Urja Foundation, Mumbai, in May. The event was to understand the civil entitlements of homeless women and LGBT youth.

In the last week of July, Nitin and Ranjit attended a three-day workshop on Emergent Leadership in Pune, organised by Mahavan and facilitated by Gagan Sethi. It was fulfilling and relevant in terms of strengthening new leadership in organisations.

In the last week of August, Nitin attended the annual 'Indian Multiversity Alliance' (IMA) meeting at Kanha Heartfull Centre near Hyderabad. The four-day meeting on exploring alternatives to higher education was attended by nearly fifty participants from all over India.

The Nirantar team, Delhi visited our office to explore collaboration on a national level project on understanding the impact of gender on school students and education. The meeting was fruitful in understanding each other and exploring different aspects of our work with Shodhini.

In the second week of August, Jude Clark, a psychologist and facilitator of the course 'Training for Transformation' in South Africa, visited us along with Sunil Gangawane to talk about her work in trauma healing and wellness.

A two-day follow-up meeting was organised by Nirantar Trust in Delhi in the first week of September to further discuss the modalities of collaboration on the research on gender discrimination in education. Partners from other states also attended. Ranjeet and Bhikan attended the meeting.

Nitin was invited by the NTL network to attend an online meeting in the first week of August about sharing experiences with a potential funding partner.

We participated as an examiner at the District Level Street Play Competition organized by the NSS unit of NBT Law College of Nashik. We gave input on the importance of street play for social awareness and how we can initiate participatory processes in the education system.

Sandeep Medhe attended the Free Library Network (FLN) workshop from 20 to 22 Nov. 2023 in Bhopal and learnt different methods to make the library accessible as well as welcoming to its readers by designing innovative activities.

Vidya Maule, one of our Shodhini, presented her experiences of facing violence in her village in a panel discussion in the 'Hinsa Mukti Parishad' at Ambejogai which was appreciated by the audience.

A team from Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore, visited our office and held discussion on the possibility of initiating a project on local governance in a few villages near Trimbakeshwar.

In the last week of March, Kumar Kapale performed a solo act in Abhivyakti office based on a play written by Uday Prakash on the theme of mother-son relationships. There was a lively discussion with the director about his play.

We are pleased to share that after a long wait, Abhivyakti received confirmation of its FCRA renewal from the Home Ministry of Government of India.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Abhivyakti collaborated with Oxford Policy Management, Delhi, on conducting a study to identify normative factors and internalised norms preventing or promoting meaningful ownership and/or use of mobile phones among adolescent girls and women in Nashik. The insights from this diagnostic study would be used to design and test social and behavioural change approaches and prototypes to address specific normative barriers among key audience segments. The study planned to conduct a rapid dipstick study to understand the profile and context of women's access to and use of mobile phones and the different archetypes of population and stakeholders who directly or indirectly influence it in specific population segments. The study was conducted through focused group discussions in two low-income communities in Phule Nagar and Anandvalli in Nashik by meeting women participants. The study brought interesting findings to the fore, mainly confirming that women and adolescent girls did not have easy access to mobile phones, and their usage was monitored by the men of the household, while all the men and boys said that their phones were never supervised.

We are collaborating with Nirantar Trust, New Delhi to conduct a study in rural Nashik that is concerned with mapping gender-based practices in secondary and senior secondary schools to understand how NEP 2020's vision of equitable and inclusive education for all, especially for girls from socially and economically disadvantaged groups, can be realised. To take this forward, a 5-day workshop was organised at the Leslie Sawhny Centre, Deolali in the second week of March to understand the research process and ways to implement it in the rural areas of Trimbakeshwar. The focus was on strengthening the understanding of gender, education, and the research process. The participants were from the Shodhini cohort who were to help in the data collection in their villages. Three members from Nirantar Trust and a few of Abhivyakti staff also participated. The workshop created a conducive environment for learning, and the process was based on an easy pace of dialogue and exchange. The participants also got to know each other and learnt about gender, process of data collection, especially about the nuances of focused group discussion. The workshop helped to get clarity on the purpose of research and a wider perspective about its mission and impact.

Abhivyakti team is a mix of experienced and new members who make the team well balanced. Abhivyakti has always believed in developing its team and takes efforts to deepen and exchange peer learning processes so that the diverse perspectives, experiences and skills are shared on a regular basis. Here is an update on our human resources –

Most of the team is homegrown, coming from the rich soil of North Maharashtra with degrees in social work, engineering, humanities, psychology, fine arts, sound recording, library science, and finance.

The accounts team has fine-tuned its expertise in NGO accounts and financial management, legal compliance, and Trust-related issues. They have attended many online sessions to consolidate their knowledge and understanding.

Bhikan Dandgavhale, one of the two team leaders, completed his graduation after a long gap in his education.

Two of the Shodhini from the village of Hirdi shifted to Nashik to complete their education, and also joined Abhivyakti in the Shodhini project.

Three new members, namely, Varsha Suryavanshi joined the Shodhini team, while Rohit Pagare and Manaswi Dhumase joined the Community Media team.

We also said good bye to Ranjana Joshi and Shubhangi Bagul from the Shodhini project. Similarly, Gayatri Badve, who was part of the accounts team decided to quit Abhivyakti services. We wish them the very best for their next journey in the development world.

As part of the team development, we organised several in-house processes to develop the leadership capacities of the team in various aspects of development communications and organisational management.

As part of team bonding, a community lunch prepared by the team members was held in Abhivyakti premises at the end of March. Members brought the ingredients and then worked in teams to cook a delicious lunch, which was enjoyed by everyone.

INTERNAL ARCHITECTURE

We present some of our practices, which make Abhivyakti a stable, balanced, and learning organisation formed to perform and uphold the values of democratic functioning, just governance, and people-centred development.

STAFF COUNCIL-

The Staff Council is an elected independent body which has been formed for organising staff welfare programme as well as look into staff grievances and solve them. This year, too staff council elections were held, and a new team was elected.

The team members are – Manisha Gangode, Ranjeet Gadgil, Manisha Bendale, Avinash Neve, Jitendra Pagare.

They organized the following activities - Holidays Announcement, Diwali Celebration, Picnic, Community Lunch, Birthday Celebration, Fairewell.

BOARD MEETINGS -

We have an active board that meets regularly, once a quarter. Apart from the board meetings, we also have our General Body meeting, which meets once in a year. This year the board met three times on o6.08.2023, 23.12.2023 and o6.03.2024 to discuss critical issues of the organisations. Some of the issues were about reviewing the performance of the programmes, financials of the organisations, leadership issues, and transitions. The board has appointed a financial committee that monitors the finances and other related matters of the organization and keeps a critical eye on legal compliance. Each quarter, the financial committee reviews budgets, expenses, legal compliances, and other finance-related matters.

INTERNAL COMMITTEE FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT -

The Committee met a few times during the year to look into complaints regarding sexual harassment. There were no complaints made by the staff members.

DIVERSITY WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

We present a table on diversity within the organization. We are conscious of having a diverse team in all matters of our functioning be it the Board, internal team, staff council or in other committees formed for special occasion.

The table is as follows -

Staff Diversity Table March 2024									
Disignation	Gender		Total	Caste					
	Men	Women		sc	ST	NT	ОВС	General	Minority
Executive Director	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Leader	2	o	2	-	-	-	1	1	-
Coordinator	5	0	5	2	-	-	3	-	-
Facilitator	1	2	3	1	1	-	1	_	-
Assistant	0	3	3	-	2	-	1	-	-
Total	9	5	14	3	3	-	6	2	-

STAFF REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

Abhivyakti has a broad salary structure and benefits for its team members. It also follows a practice of disclosure about its practices. The Programme Leader receives an annual pay of seven lakhs thirty six thousand twenty while the lowest rank member receives about a lakh of rupees. Some of the benefits include PF, Gratuity, Medical and accident Insurance, etc.

NETWORK & PARTNERSHIP

- 1. ASPBAE
- 2. Swaraj University
- 3. RSCD and MRA
- 4. Learning Societies UnConference
- 5. Vikas Sahayog Pratishtan
- 6. Tata Institute of Social Sciences
- 7. VANI
- 8. MAHAVAN
- 9. Non Traditional Livelihood Network

FUNDERS

- 1. ASPBAE, Philippines
- 2. AJWS, New York
- 3. Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd, Nashik
- 4. MITRA Agro Equipments Pvt. Ltd. Nashik
- 5. Individual Donors

ABHIVYAKTI TEAM







BHIKAN



BHILA



JITENDRA



MANISHA



MANASWI



MAHESH



NITIN



RANJEET



ROHIT



ROHINI



SANDIP



VARSHA



VIDYA

BOARD MEMBERS

1	Dr. Sanjay Savale	President
ı	Dr. Sarijay Savale	Board member since 2013
2	Mr. Bhimrao Raskar	Vice-President
	WII. BI III III GO KGSKGI	Board member since 2019
3	Ms. Anita Borkar	General Secretary
3	IVIS. ATTICU BOTKUT	Co-founder
4	Mr. Anurga Kongo	Treasurer
4	Mr. Anurag Kenge	Board Member since 2010
5	Mc Pradova Khadilkar	Member
5	Ms. Pradnya Khadilkar	Board Member since 2021
6	Ma Doweti Phagwat	Member
0	Ms. Rewati Bhagwat	Board Member since 2015
7	Dr. Daiondra Banzo	Member
/	Dr. Rajendra Barve	Board Member since 2016

FINANCIAL STATUS

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LEGAL INFORMATION

1	Societies Registration No	Maharashtra state, Mumbai – 5, 1987, G.B.B.S.D, Dt. 05/ 01/1987
2	Charity Registration No	F- 2702, Dt. 29/05/1991
3	80 –G Registration No	Unique Registration Number - AAATA0061D24PN01 FROM AY 2022 -23 TO AY 2026-2027
4	12 – A Registration No	AAATA0061DE 20214 FROM AY 2022 -23 TO AY 2026-2027
5	FCRA Registration No	083900052 Dt. 01/04/2024
6	Abhivyakti Pan No	AAATA0061D
7	NGO DARPAN No	Unique ID - MH/2017/0169650
8	CSR1 Certificate No	CSR 00004999

AUDITORS

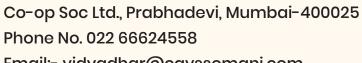
C. S Ajgaonkar & Co.

Chartered Accountants

Proprietor C. A. Vidyadhar Somani

Unit No. 127, 1st Floor,

Prabhadevi Unique Industrial Premises









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