



MUSKAAN ANNUAL REPORT

2025 - 2026

OUR STORY

Muskaan's journey began in 1998, working towards educating young children who were engaged in waste picking. The initial attempt was to connect them with formal government educational spaces, but as our engagement grew deeper we understood how multiple layers of caste based stigmatization, prejudice and violence forces children from Adivasi and nomadic communities out of schooling, thereby forcing them out of livelihoods, and opportunities for quality living.

Working at the grassroots level, Muskaan focuses on nurturing the immense potential that already exists within every individual across different life stages. True change cannot be handed down as charity; it grows when a community draws strength from collective pursuits and reclaims its own narrative.

Because the struggles of daily survival cannot be neatly separated into project boxes, we do not limit our organizational mandate.

When a family is pushed to the margins, they face a web of challenges—from police harassment and rights denial to the basic struggle of accessing healthcare or food rations. Muskaan stands firmly alongside the community, working together to navigate broken systems, confront violence, and heal from the inter-generational trauma left behind by decades of colonization and caste apartheid.





WHAT WE DO

Our daily work focuses on correcting these historical wrongs by creating spaces where community members can lead their own interventions:

- **Critical Education:** In our school, libraries, and community centers, we help children and youth confront their challenges through critical learning approaches. Through our Azad Jugnoo Clubs, children find their collective voice, organize events around issues that matter to them, and publish their own community newsletter.
- **Community Leadership:** Through capacity-building workshops, creative outlets like writing, Theatre of the Oppressed, and the teamwork of Ultimate Frisbee, we help youth build agency. This has supported Pardhi youth in Madhya Pradesh to establish their own groups, to work for their own communities.
- **Healing and Resilience:** Decades of systemic oppression leave deep emotional wounds. We work with young adults from the community to work as community first aid counsellors.
- **Research, Documentation, and Advocacy:** We believe marginalized communities must write their own history. We preserve traditional stories and knowledge by publishing children's books created by people from the communities themselves.



JEEVAN SHIKSHA PAHEL

We practice an alternative pedagogy that rejects the "one size fits all" model. For children from Pardhi, Kanjar, Gond, and Dalit communities, education shouldn't feel like a foreign imposition. By centering our curriculum around native languages and lived contexts, we bridge the gap between their everyday realities and the classroom.

The reality of our students' lives often includes the pressure of early labor, systematic prejudice and historical barriers that lead to high dropout rates. Our pedagogy is designed to be resilient and adaptive, ensuring that children who have been pushed out of formal schools have a point of reentry.

We do this through;

- Creative Expressions: We use games, songs, stories, and naatak to make complex concepts accessible and culturally relevant.
- Contextual Learning: By integrating the students' daily realities into the classroom, we transform learning from an abstract chore into a meaningful tool for life.
- Socio-Emotional Learning: Our curriculum actively addresses the systemic prejudice and historical barriers our students face. Through group dialogues and reflective storytelling, we build the emotional resilience and critical consciousness necessary for children to navigate and challenge the structural inequities of the outside world.

Children from our school have become lawyers, teachers, basti level counsellors, film makers etc. Several youth from our schools are pursuing their higher education at reputed institutions such as Azim Premji University, Makhanlal Chaturvedi amongst others.

We currently have 198 students enrolled in our school of which 98 are boys and 100 are girls. This year 38 students cleared their 10th and 12th board exams of which- 19 girls and 8 boys cleared their class 10 and 4 girls and 7 boys cleared their class 12



RESIDENTIAL EDUCATIONAL SPACES

Children from DNT communities often grow up in conditions where safety, choice, and opportunity are all deeply limited. From a very young age, many are exposed to pressures that shape their lives long before they are ready to make decisions for themselves. For girls, early marriage remains one of the most serious challenges. Families and community panchayats often decide these marriages, sometimes with money exchanged in return, leaving girls with little say in who they marry or what kind of future they want for themselves. Once married, their responsibilities increase sharply. They are expected to contribute to the household through whatever work is available, whether that means waste picking, selling alcohol, or taking part in dance work arranged by the community. Young boys, too, are not free from these pressures, and many are also pushed into marriage before they have had the chance to complete their education or prepare for adult life.

The situation is made even more difficult for children and young adults who have lost their parents in traumatic circumstances such as accidents or custodial violence. In such cases, the absence of family support can leave them without a safe place to live, without emotional care, and without anyone to guide them through an already difficult environment. For many of these children, daily life becomes a constant struggle for survival, with very limited space to dream, learn, or simply experience childhood in a secure and nurturing way.

And yet, despite these challenges, many children continue to carry hope. They still imagine a different life for themselves, one shaped by education, dignity, and freedom of choice. Their dreams may seem distant, but they remain strong, and many are willing to make real sacrifices in order to pursue them. This determination is powerful, because it shows that even in the most difficult circumstances, children continue to believe in the possibility of a better future.

It is to respond to this reality that Muskaan started its hostel, especially for young girls. The hostel was created as a safe and supportive space where children and young adults can live with care, stability, and protection.





For children who work, the distance between their daily lives and a classroom can feel impossible to bridge. Our library centers, now thriving in 13 bastis and reaching 2,257 students (including 1,094 boys and 1,163 girls), act as an invitation back into educational spaces on the children's own terms. By offering stories that reflect their lived realities, we open up endless possibilities for young readers who have long been told that books aren't for them.

We have a system in place where stories are cataloged by reading levels, making them easily accessible to these young leaders. Inside these centers, reading is a shared, living experience: we gather for Read Alouds, where a single story sparks room-wide debate; we facilitate Independent Reading to honor individual curiosity; and we encourage Group and Paired Reading so friends can tackle new ideas together, turning a solitary task into a vibrant community conversation.

The impact of this approach is most evident in our recent focus on Nurturing Critical Literacy through Literature. In centers like Dhekpur, Mitti Ka Ghar, and Gandhi Nagar, children from Kanjar, Pardhi, and Gond communities engaged in intensive sessions focused on Adivasi identity and the caste system. Through targeted lesson plans and deep-dive discussions on books like *Thakur ka Kuañ*, *Jasinta's Diary*, and *The Book of the Constitution*, students moved from a baseline of superficial understanding to a profound critical awareness.



In practice, this meant children were able to move beyond the text to question the gap between constitutional ideals and the everyday discrimination they face from authorities and social structures. We observed a significant shift in perspective; children who once held externalized stereotypes about "tribal" life—often shaped by harmful media tropes—now articulate a deep sense of pride in their heritage as guardians of jal, jungle, zameen (water, forest, and land).

Our activities extended to rigorous teacher training, ensuring that educators from the community could lead these sensitive dialogues with nuance. By deconstructing their own biases, teachers were better equipped to help children navigate the "web of caste hierarchy" and recognize how traditional occupations are linked to systemic marginalization.

The results are measurable: assessment scores for identity awareness and understanding of social justice saw marked improvements, with the average score for Adivasi identity awareness rising from 14.3 to 37.3.

Beyond the numbers, the true success lies in the children's writing and their growing courage to ask "why." These libraries have become sites of democratic thinking, where young readers are learning that literacy is not just about decoding words, but about gaining the power to recognize and challenge inequality in their own lives.





Children from rural communities, migrant families, waste-picking households, working children, and Adivasi and Dalit children often do not find their lives reflected in the books, classrooms, films, or audio materials created for them. When children do not see their own realities represented, formal education can feel distant and exclusionary, and reading can seem like something made for someone else. Over time, this absence can weaken their interest in reading and listening cultures and quietly reinforce the idea that their stories do not belong in the public imagination.

This is why deep diversity in children's literature matters. Books that reflect children's languages, daily experiences, family lives, and cultural practices help create a sense of belonging. They tell children that their lives are worth noticing, their communities are worth writing about, and their questions and struggles are part of the larger world of knowledge and storytelling. Representation is not only about visibility; it is also about dignity, confidence, and inclusion.

Our books are rooted in children's lived realities. They are co-created with children from these communities, written in their own language, and shaped by their cultural practices and everyday experiences. The stories move across a range of themes, from social issues and resilience to gender bias and the small, vivid moments that make up indigenous children's lives. Some stories are playful and intimate, while others invite children to question the world around them.

These stories have travelled widely, reaching readers across the country in multiple languages. From bookstores in Bangalore to libraries in Assam, they have shown that children's literature can be both deeply local and widely resonant when it begins with the lives of children themselves.



During 2025–2026, book stalls were presented at a wide range of literary, educational, and cultural events across India, reflecting strong engagement with readers and communities in diverse settings. These included the Sagar Sahitya Mahotsav in Sagar, the Patang Sanstha Seminar in Sambalpur, the Udaan Children's Literature Festival in Patna, the Potters Market and Anand Mandi in Bhopal, the Doon Books Festival organized by NBT in Dehradun, the APF Sahitya Utsav and APF Programme in Bhopal, the Aadiwasi Shiksha Meeting in Wardha, the United Nations India Utsav in New Delhi, the Community Police Meeting at Minto Hall in Bhopal, and the Kabir Bhajan Programme at Ravindra Bhavan in Bhopal.

Altogether, book stalls were set up at 12 events, spanning literary festivals, book fairs, educational seminars, cultural gatherings, and community-based programmes. These platforms helped bring books into direct contact with different audiences and created opportunities for meaningful engagement around reading, storytelling, and children's literature.

The year also brought important recognition to several titles.

Algaon received the Best Story Writer Award 2025 from the Room to Read Award.

Chhan Chhan was honoured with the Best Illustrator Award 2025, also from the Room to Read Award.

In addition, Mera Bachpan, Mera Ghar, and Gaanth were included in the Parag Honour List 2025.





In the bastis, we have established learning centres to bridge the divide between formal educational spaces and the realities of the settlement. These spaces are designed to accommodate the complex needs of working children who were forced out of traditional schooling to support their families. Through these centres, we focus on the rigorous work of building foundational skills and civic agency.

We recognize that for many of our students, the leap from their daily lives into a rigid, structured environment is steep; therefore, our pedagogy is intentionally designed to meet them exactly where they are. A critical part of this is our approach to language. Many children from indigenous and denotified communities speak home languages that are often ignored or devalued in formal schools. In our centres, we embrace their mother tongues as a bridge to learning, ensuring that no child feels silenced by a medium of instruction they do not yet own.

By using this context-driven curriculum, we turn literacy and numeracy into practical tools for survival and resistance, ensuring that every lesson feels deeply relevant to their struggles. This approach ensures that education is not an external imposition, but a meaningful resource for self-determination, where their language and their stories are the very foundation of their growth.

Currently, these Community Learning Centres are operating across 17 bastis, directly reaching 465 students, including 210 boys and 255 girls, in settlements such as Madni Nagar, Gautam Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Harda, Bheelkhedi, Ajabpura, Dhekpur, Karariya, Bhadanpur, Baghmugaliya, Barkhedi.

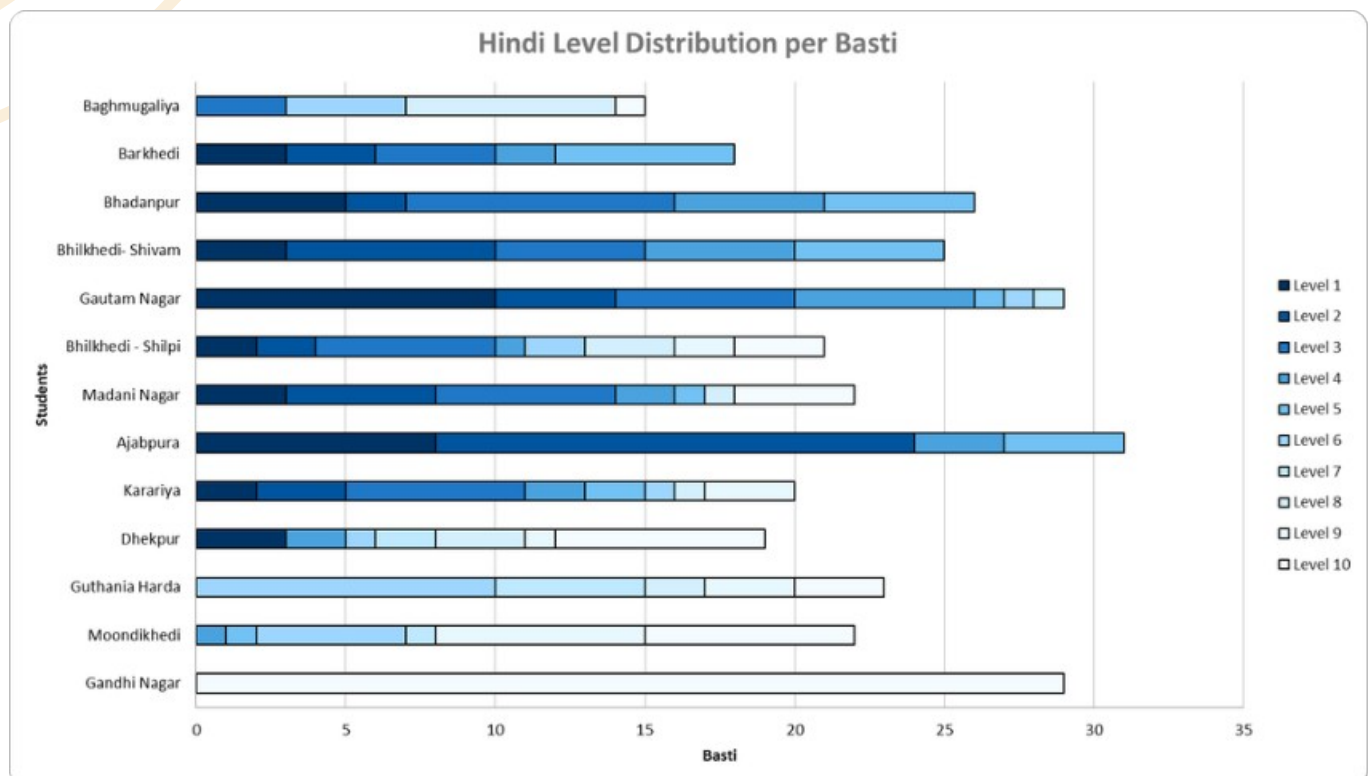
This year we have expanded our learning centres to Guna district, where we are conducting sessions in Kanhari, Singhwasa, Gokulsingh Ka Chak, Chhoti Kaneri, and Haddi Mill.



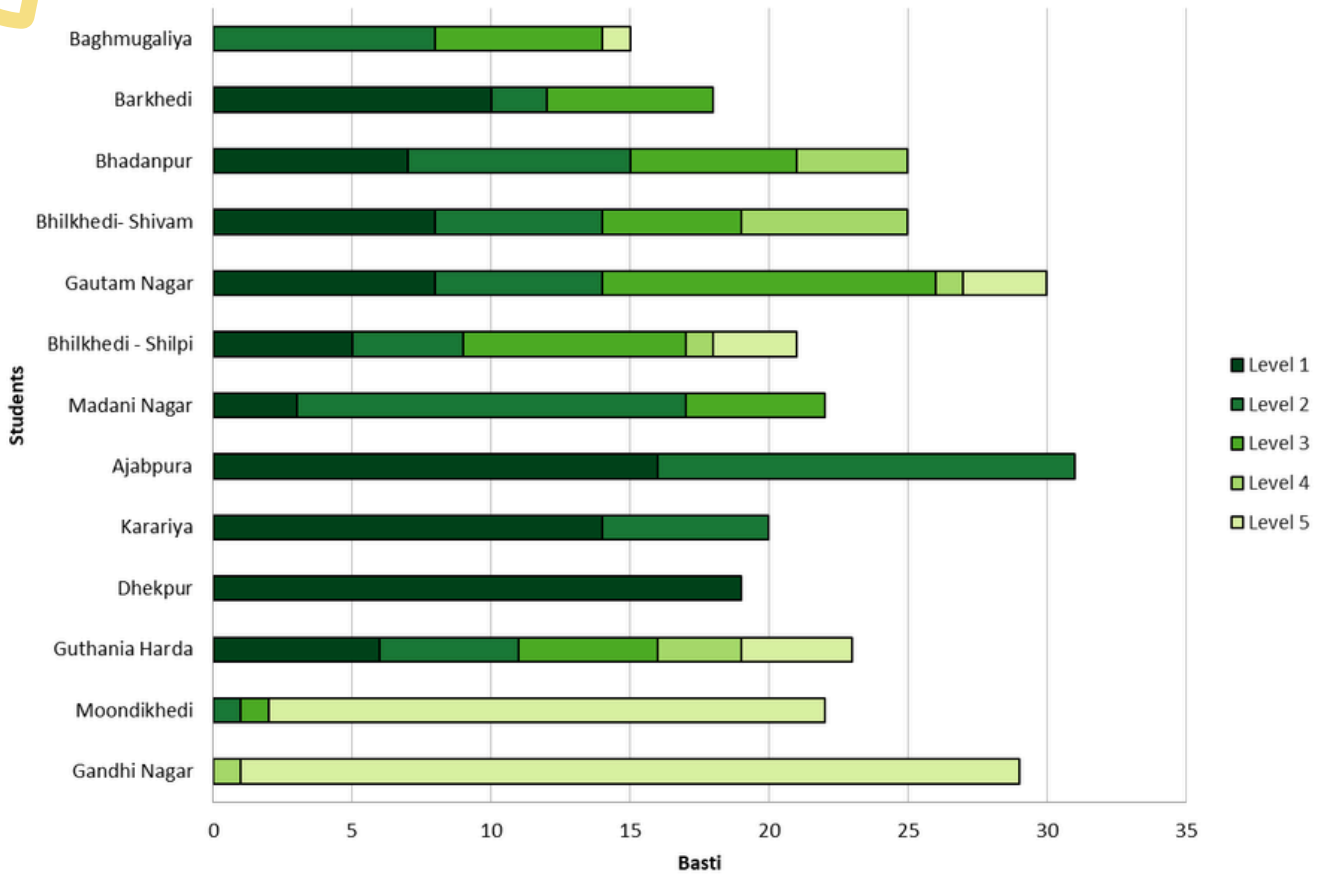
In Hindi, our 10-level hierarchy maps progress from basic letter sound recognition (Level 1) up to advanced fluent comprehension and expressive writing (Level 10).

In English and Math, students advance through 5 focused levels—moving from numbers to multi-digit division, fractions, geometry, and structured text translation.

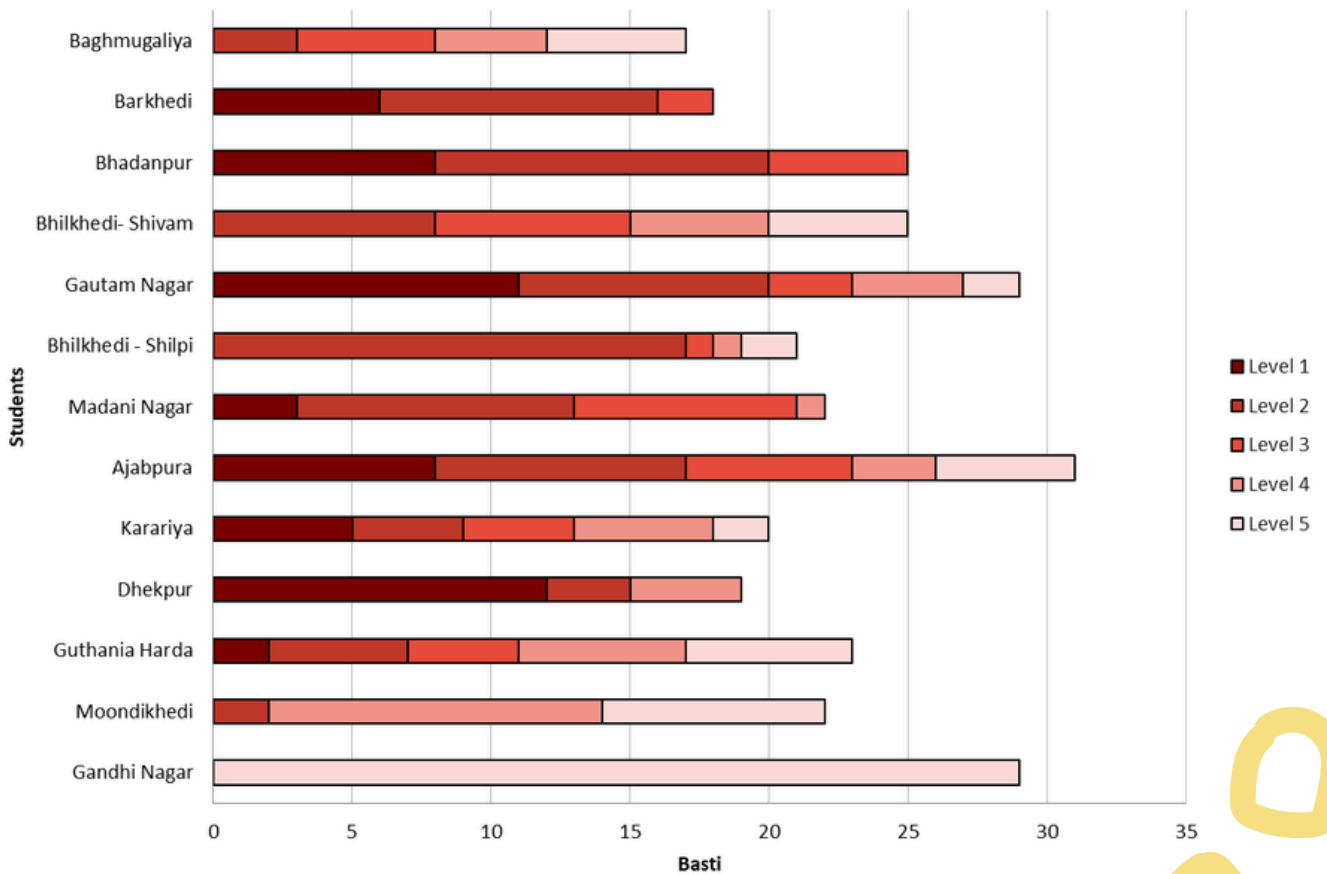
Our aggregate records reveal that a substantial core of our students is moving past baseline tiers, with 54 advanced readers currently excelling at the highest tier (Level 10) in Hindi, and 64 students actively mastering advanced operations and conceptual mathematics at Level 5.



English Level Distribution per Basti



Math Level Distribution per Basti





ULTIMATE FRISBEE

Frisbee continues to be more than a sport for the communities we work with. It is a powerful tool for inclusion, leadership development, youth empowerment, and access to education. Because Frisbee is self-refereed and commonly played in mixed-gender teams, it creates a natural space where young people learn respect, fairness, communication, and shared responsibility. In this environment, traditional gender roles and biases are challenged through participation, teamwork, and trust.

Our work has also focused on building local leadership. We actively train young people from our communities to become professional coaches, equipping them with the skills to lead sessions, mentor younger players, and represent their communities in wider spaces. This coaching pathway creates meaningful opportunities for travel, workshop facilitation, and leadership exposure. It also helps youth see sport as a possible avenue for personal growth, livelihood development, and long-term community contribution.

At the grassroots level, we have continued regular training and community empowerment sessions in Bhopal, Harda, and Berasia. These programs provide consistent spaces for young people to gather, play, learn, and build confidence. Through these activities, Frisbee becomes a bridge into educational spaces as well, supporting many children and young adults to stay engaged with learning and broader development opportunities.

Our annual work has shown that sport can be a practical and joyful entry point for social change. By combining play with coaching, community engagement, and youth leadership, we are helping create stronger local ecosystems where young people are not only participants but also contributors and role models. The impact is visible in the confidence of players, the growth of local coaches, and the increasing sense of ownership within the communities we serve.

ULTIMATE FRISBEE



Area	Number of Children
Ahsan Nagar	45
Rajiv Nagar	25
Mundikhedi	30
Gandhi Nagar	35
Sumerkhedi	15
Harda	30
Kajlikheda	16
Dhekpur	15 (girls)
Gandhi Nagar (Mongia)	18 (girls)
Mixed Cohort	19 (girls)





The trauma experienced by vulnerable communities because of decades of institutionalized marginalization is complex and multifaceted. The communities with whom we collaborate with have experienced violence from various institutional spaces such as police, school etc. The impact of this trauma presents itself in issues of addiction, substance abuse, self-harm, domestic abuse, etc. Denotified tribal communities are particularly vulnerable because stigma of criminality that has continued decades after the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act.

For women in the community, patriarchal norms and restrictions further adds to their experience of violence. There is a notable prevalence of suicidal thoughts and attempts across all ages and genders, highlighting the deep vulnerability within these communities.

We have trained young people from the community to provide mental health and psycho-social support to people in the bastis. Coming from the same context, our counsellors have a first-hand understanding of the challenges and lived experiences of people from the community and hence can provide a unique kind of care to people. Our basti counsellors have been trained in mental health and psychological first-aid, as well as arts-based therapies, dance movement therapy and narrative therapy practices. We have collaborated with Dr. Sukruti Khushwa, and organizations such as Kolkata Sanved, Umeeed Mumbai, amongst others

The Mental Health Program 2025–2026 in Bhopal was conducted across Rajiv Nagar, Ahsan Nagar, Shyam Nagar, Gautam Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Banjari Basti, Ganga Nagar, Bagmugalia, Sector No. 3, Mandwa, Ring Garden, Baskhed, and Muskan Hostel.



MENTAL HEALTH

The sessions covered a wide range of topics beyond mental health alone. These included suicide prevention, emotional support, periods and hygiene, family planning, vaccination, de-addiction, domestic violence, women's rights, bullying, body shaming, school reintegration, educational storytelling, girls' sports, government documents, public schemes, monsoon-related challenges, and community pride. By linking emotional wellbeing with everyday concerns, the program created practical and safe spaces for discussion, learning, and support within the community.

During this period, 339 sessions were held and 1,215 people were directly reached through face-to-face engagement. The program worked across diverse communities, including Pardhi, Gond, Ojha Gond, Muslim, Dafale, Nat, and Kanjar groups, with a strong focus on families, adolescents, women, and hostel students.

Demographic group directly reached by basti counsellors are as follows;

Sr No	Demographic Group	Directly reached participants
1	Girls	276
2	Men	287
3	Women	193
4	Boys	175
5	Mixed Group	284





AZAD JUGNU CLUB

Azad Jugnu Club continued to bring together children and adolescents from bastis across the region, creating a safe platform for young people to raise and address issues affecting them. The Clubs focused on a range of concerns relevant to children and adolescents, including discrimination in schools and communities, sexual violence, and the impact of childhood trauma. Our facilitators, many of whom were former members of Azad Jugnu Club, led capacity-building sessions that emphasized the importance of children's participation, supported group formation, and encouraged open conversations within the basti so that children's voices remained central.

Community-level meetings were held regularly in the bastis, using storybooks, activities, games, and guided discussions to engage children. Children identified local problems, gathered evidence, and shared their findings with relevant stakeholders to seek resolution. Several meetings focused on sexual abuse, which brought out multiple instances of abuse both within and outside families, and some of these cases had to be escalated to the police. To increase the participation of older children, especially girls, the Clubs also introduced sessions on menstruation across communities, which helped improve engagement.

We also collaborated with various institutions, including the Police Department, to organize martial arts and self-defence trainings for young children in Bhopal, Guna, and Berasia.

Our Azad Jugnu Clubs operate in Rajiv Nagar, Bapunagar, Bagmugaliya, Madni Basti, Suraj Nagar, Mandwa, Naya Basera, Sargam Basti, Ehsan Nagar, Navgrah, Arif Nagar, Gandhinagar, and in our school premise.



AZAD JUGNOO CLUB

This year, our basti sessions focused on bringing children together, encouraging them to speak up, and increasing their active participation. Discussions covered water and waste issues, hygiene, nutritious diets, and seasonal health awareness. We used theatre and activities to address substance abuse and gambling, helping children recognize these risks and learn how to avoid them. During festivals such as Diwali, sessions highlighted safety measures and used drawings to understand children's feelings and experiences.

We also conducted awareness sessions on gender equality and the prevention of child marriage, while cyber-safety sessions taught practical steps to avoid fraud and protect personal data, including the importance of not sharing OTPs or Aadhaar details. Educational barriers such as lack of books and documents, low motivation to study, and exam stress received special attention. We prepared lists of regular and irregular children, engaged with parents, and organized activities to reconnect children with school and learning.

For mental health and emotional support, we promoted meditation and yoga to help children manage negative thoughts. Creative and recreational activities such as drawing, songs, games, origami, and crafts were held regularly to engage children and strengthen self-expression. On the administrative side, we assisted families in filling SIR and other forms accurately to secure their rights and ensure online submission.

Community dialogue remained a priority throughout the year. Meetings with parents and women addressed domestic violence and neglect, and explored strategies for prevention. When emergencies occurred, such as a child falling from a roof, we brought the issue into sessions to strengthen safety awareness. Networking through youth federation meetings and interactions with visitors also gave children opportunities to present their basti and learn from others. Overall, these sessions aimed to connect children with education and activities, reduce discrimination, increase regular participation, and strengthen child safety. Through small but consistent steps and community involvement, we made meaningful progress in amplifying children's voices.





ZARIYA- IN SEARCH OF ALTERNATE LIVELIHOODS

For generations, people from NT-DNT communities have survived through nomadic livelihoods such as hunting in the forests or selling alcohol and other informal work. Over time, however, the lack of access to education and stable livelihood opportunities has pushed many families into deeper vulnerability. Today, in many households, women remain the primary earners, often collecting waste to support their families. Children, too, are drawn into this cycle, accompanying their mothers with sacks larger than their own bodies, walking long distances to collect scrap for very little return.

This reality has had a direct impact on children's education. Many are forced to drop out of school so they can help their families through waste picking or begging. At Muskaan, we realised that supporting children alone would not be enough unless their families also had access to reliable livelihoods. With this understanding, we began working to strengthen household income alongside education.

Following the first COVID lockdown in 2020, Muskaan supported two community groups to develop collective enterprises. One group, based in the Pardhi basti in Ehsaan Nagar, began making handmade diaries, while another group of youth living in Muskaan's hostels started producing handmade soaps. Around the same time, we also began supporting small-scale micro-enterprises in the community by providing loans to help individuals start ration shops, vegetable stalls, phone repair services, and similar ventures. Nazariya, which has been working closely on livelihoods at the community level, played an important role in identifying beneficiaries and following up with them.

We also set up a stitching centre in the basti, where women now make bags, pouches, and other products. Through our support in connecting them to external markets, these women have been able to increase their earnings. Both producer groups have gradually begun generating profits from the sale of their products, and these earnings are shared within the groups either as direct support for their families or as savings for the youth.



NAZARIYA- IN SEARCH OF ALTERNATE LIVELIHOODS

Key Results

- During April 2025 to March 2026, the programme sold 2,840 big diaries, 1,453 small diaries, 895 soaps, 530 bags, and 814 scrunchies.
- The total sales value from these products was Rs. 554,721.
- In the diary work alone, the total production reached 2,919 big diaries and 2,127 small diaries, generating Rs. 115,845 in earnings.
- The soap group generated Rs. 9,875 in earnings.
- Under the basti loan support, Rs. 42,000 was disbursed, Rs. 13,500 was repaid, and Rs. 28,500 remained outstanding.

Community Mobilisation

- With the support of Saraswati Didi, several people from different communities found work outside the basti.
- 7 people from Bagmugalia basti joined security work.
- 12 people from Shabri Nagar joined guard and school-related work.
- 4 people from Gandhi Nagar joined cleaning work.
- 4 people from Gautam Nagar joined hotel work.
- 2 people from Sargam also joined hotel work.
- In total, 29 people are currently working, while some have left and others are in the process of being placed.

Stitching Centre

- The stitching centre in Shabri Nagar has also started functioning.
- Women are attending the centre regularly, learning stitching for two hours, and earning a small wage for the work they complete.
- Their interest in learning more has been encouraging, and the plan is to connect 10 more women to the centre.
- Training and support are being provided by Kajal, while efforts continue to bring stitching-related work into the centre and help women turn this into a source of income.

Savings Groups

- Savings group work is active in several bastis.
- There are savings groups in Gandhi Nagar, Shabri Nagar, Ganga Nagar, and Bagmugalia.
- In Bagmugalia, the savings group is registered and functioning regularly.
- Work is also in process to start additional savings groups in Gautam Nagar and Bagmugalia.



HIGHLIGHTS

Srijan Program

For two months, Muskaan collaborated with the police department to implement the Srijan Program, through which students received training in martial arts and self-discipline. The program reflected a wider effort to build confidence, safety, and participation among children from marginalized communities. The Srijan program was introduced in Bhopal, Berasia and Guna

Workshop on Secularism

From 5 to 7 June 2025, Muskaan organized a residential youth workshop on secularism in Bhopal for 28 men from Vimukta communities across Bhopal, Berasia, Neemuch, Mundikhedi, and Guna. The workshop used discussions, group activities, films, and storytelling to explore identity, justice, and community. Over the three days, participants reflected on stereotypes, religion, national pride, lynching, and misinformation, and the workshop concluded with participation in Eid celebrations in the basti.

Workshop on Gender

From 14 to 17 June 2025, a residential workshop was held with 35 adolescent girls from DNT communities in Bhopal, Neemuch, and Guna. The sessions focused on self-awareness, gender roles, caste-based norms, menstruation, hygiene, and the social definitions of “good” and “bad” girls. Alongside these discussions, the girls played kabaddi, rode bicycles and scooters, and joined a healing session, creating a safe space for reflection, curiosity, and connection.

Art-Based Education

During the year, Muskaan, in collaboration with Art-First, worked on a year-long art-based education program that connected community knowledge, nature, and classroom learning. Children explored stories, poems, songs, recipes, and local traditions, and expressed their learning through embroidery, papier-mâché, clay, collages, painting, and other creative forms. As part of this process, an exhibition was held on 11 and 12 July at Muskaan to showcase the work of children and teachers.

Student Achievements

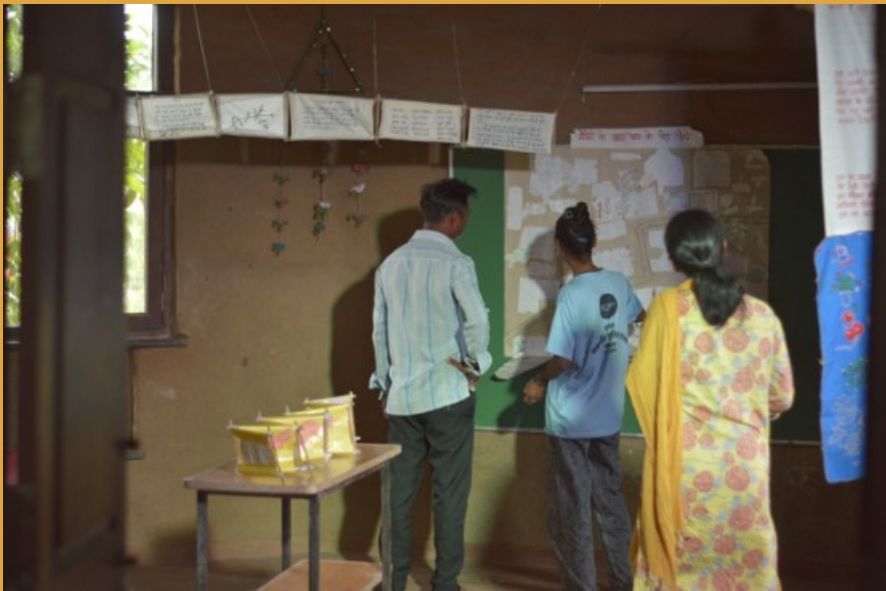
This year, eight students completed Class 10 and 13 students completed Class 12, and the team came together to celebrate their perseverance and achievement. Among them was Aman, a 17-year-old boy from the Pardhi community in Rajiv Nagar, Bhopal, whose journey reflects resilience, responsibility, and academic curiosity. His writing and poetry also showed a deep engagement with his lived realities and surroundings.



SRIJAN PROGRAM CELEBRATION IN BHOPAL



GENDER WORKSHOP IN MANAV SANGRALIYA BHOPAL



ART FIRST EXHIBITION

HIGHLIGHTS

Frisbee Tournaments

Our youth have participated in a range of frisbee tournaments- travelling to Lucknow, Jabalpur and Delhi. This year we organized our own tournament in Bhopal at the Tata Tope Stadium, wherein youth from across Bastis in Bhopal, Harda, Berasia participated. This tournament was also very special as it was primarily organized by our youth facilitators who have been engaged with frisbee.

Green Hub Fellowship

Two young girls from the Pardhi community, Nikita and Karuna, graduated from the Green Hub fellowship program, where they learned documentary and filmmaking. Nikita's film Mai bhi hu Satrangi was screened at a film festival, marking an important milestone for Pardhi learners from Harda. Their achievement also reflected the expanding creative and educational journeys of young people associated with Muskaan

SIR Work

During this period, Muskaan supported communities in completing the SIR process and understanding its requirements. The team worked closely with youth, women, and families to help them with documents, verification, and related concerns. In many bastis, people shared difficulties linked to missing names in older lists, incomplete papers, and family-related challenges. The process also became a space for community discussion on identity, rights, and access to services.

Teacher Training

Teacher training sessions were held to build the capacity of fellow teachers and strengthen classroom practice. The sessions focused on interdisciplinary teaching, reflection, self-evaluation, and connecting lessons with children's lives. Teachers also shared changes they had seen in children, including better interest in learning and more independent participation. The training encouraged more child-centered and responsive teaching approaches.

Library Training

Library training sessions helped children and teachers engage more actively with reading, writing, and storytelling. The focus was on read-aloud methods, picture reading, sound recognition, and linking books with children's experiences. These activities helped build confidence, curiosity, and stronger reading habits



BHOPAL FRISBEE TOURNAMENT



NIKITA SHARING ABOUT HER FILM
DURING GREEN HUB GRADUATION



JASVEER WORKING ON SIR FORM COLLECTIONS
IN RAJEEV NAGAR BASTI.

HIGHLIGHTS

Writing, Storytelling, and Photography Workshop:

We organised writing workshops in Gramin Shiksha Kendra and Jan Sahas, reaching people from the Bawri, Kanjar, Bachada, Valmiki, and other dalit communities. This workshop gave youth from Denotified and Dalit communities a space to reflect on and document their lived experiences regarding caste discrimination, barriers to education, and family responsibilities. This creative exercise helped participants recognise the value of their own stories, building their confidence to use written and visual documentation to raise awareness about community realities.

Design and Craft Workshops with Artisans:

Facilitated by Yashika from the Bhasha Centre for Adivasi Languages, these sessions brought together local artisans and students from Jagran Lakecity University to explore ways of adapting traditional Khandara craft techniques into new products like lamps while maintaining core traditional processes. This process encouraged collaborative learning and successfully supported artisans in understanding how to access official artisan cards and explore potential market linkages to sustain their craft

Mental Health and Well-being Workshop:

This initiative initiated conversations around how stress, social pressure, discrimination, and economic uncertainty affect well-being using approaches inspired by narrative therapy. By emphasizing the idea that "the problem is the problem, the person is not the problem," the session created a supportive environment for collective care and opened up a rare space for conversations that infrequently take place within these communities.

Sports for Leadership (Frisbee Workshop):

A five-day workshop was organised at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya with 26 youth participants from Sawai Madhopur, Neemuch, Bhopal, Panna, and Katni. Daily practice and team exercises were combined with discussions on teamwork, gender equality, and constitutional values, which successfully built stronger peer connections, coordination, and confidence among the participants



GOPI SHARING HIS STORY DURING WRITING WORKSHOP
IN SAWAI MADHOPUR



MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP IN BHOPAL



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CIRCLE DURING FRISBEE
WORKSHOP IN BHOPAL

HIGHLIGHTS

Pardhi Sangathan:

A two-day meeting was held in Rawat Village, Madhya Pradesh, with about seventy participants representing Indore, Harda, Panna, Katni, Bhopal, and nearby areas. The meeting focused on identifying key challenges and planning future action. Discussions highlighted police harassment, social stigma linking Pardhis to criminality, and the absence of basic identity documents such as Aadhaar and ration cards, which restrict access to welfare schemes. The lack of community representation in census data was identified as a major cause of invisibility in policy. Education emerged as a shared priority, with participants emphasizing the need to stop child marriage and promote educational opportunities for youth. The Pardhi Sangathan has taken up issues relating to the issue of caste census and even met with Krishna Gaur to understand how to support the process of DNT caste census in Madhya Pradesh

Ekjukta Divas (Solidarity Day):

Observed on 21 January 2026 in Gandhi Nagar basti, this day was dedicated to remembering individuals from Denotified and marginalised communities—such as Tinti Bai, Indramal Bai, and Deva Pardhi—who have lost their lives to state violence and systemic injustice. Led by youth from the Pardhi and Gond communities, the program combined moments of sharing and mental health reflections with cultural music by Anubhuti, her team, and Pardhi folk singer Jamna Bai, strengthening unity, resilience, and a shared commitment toward dignity and justice.

Udaan Children's Literature Festival:

We participated in the Udaan Children's Literature Festival held on 7–8 February at the Bihar Museum, Patna, alongside organizations like the Wipro Foundation, Eklavya, and the Parag Initiative. The event provided an engaging space for children and writers to interact through art workshops, music, and film sessions. Shivani from Muskaan contributed to panel discussions alongside other prominent educators, exploring literacy in Indian languages and youth empowerment through social justice.

Mental Health Facilitation Session at BSSS:

We conducted an expert session at the Bhopal School of Social Work (BSSS) focusing on how to facilitate mental health sessions for children engaged in begging. The presentation covered the history of Denotified Tribes (DNT), counseling processes, field ethics, responsibilities, and relevant case studies. The session also featured a short street play performed by our team and a Dance Movement Therapy session led by Chanda and Jyoti, successfully helping student participants understand the lived realities of these children.



PARDHI SANGATHAN MEETING IN RAWAT GAON



EKJUTTA DIVAS GATHERING



SESSION ON MENTAL HEALTH AT
BHOPAL SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

HIGHLIGHTS

Kanjar Upalabdhi Diwas (Achievement Day):

Celebrated on November 13, 2025, at Bhimrao Ambedkar Park, this event brought together around 300 community members to honor individuals making strides in education, hard work, and positive social change. Attended by local officials and stakeholders, the program featured specialized utility stalls providing on-the-spot assistance with documentation, caste certificates, health check-ups, and information on SIR government schemes, alongside creative spaces for clay crafts, storytelling, and mental health.

Permaculture Workshop in Dhekpur Village:

In collaboration with Muskaan, a workshop was conducted for community members in Dhekpur village to introduce low-cost, replicable permaculture techniques using existing local resources. The practical training included constructing a Banana Circle Grey-Water Management System using vetiver, banana, and papaya; building raised beds with local rocks, pond silt, soy bean waste, and cow dung; and preparing natural fertilizers and pest management solutions like Jivamrit and Das-parni from native plants.

District-Level Department and Community Dialogue in Guna:

On October 29, 2025, a joint program was organized in Guna featuring District Judge Amitabh Mishra, Guna Collector Kishore Kumar Kalyan, Guna SP Ankit Soni, and community leaders. Local departments set up camps to assist residents with critical documentation like Aadhaar and Ayushman cards, while youth shared their educational journeys. The dialogue directly addressed the structural discrimination stemming from the colonial Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 and focused on creating collaborative education and livelihood pathways for the region's development.

Felicitations at Room to Read Children's Literature Awards 2025: Our young authors and illustrators achieved national recognition at the awards ceremony in Delhi. Vandana Jhajhria won the award in the Young Authors category (Ages 8-12) for her sensitively written story, *Algaav*. Gagan Holkar was named Runner-up for the Young Illustrator Award for the book *Chhan Chhan*, and *Jungle Kiska*, written by Samita Ukey and illustrated by Pooja Sahu, secured runner-up for the Teacher-Librarian's Choice Award.



KANJAR UPALABDHI DIWAS IN BERASIA



COMMUNITY DIALOGUE IN GUNA



VANDANA JHAJORIA FACILITATED FOR HER STORY
ALGAAV

HIGHLIGHTS



Adivasi Shiksha Gathering

“आदिवासी डूब रहा है; हमें तुरंत पानी में कूदना होगा उसे बचाने के लिए.” That line stayed with the room as the Adivasi Education Network came together in Sevagram from 9 to 11 December 2025, with around 125 people from Adivasi communities and related fields.

What followed was less a formal conference and more a shared remembering. Storytellers, filmmakers, teachers, students, researchers, artists, and community leaders spoke about storytelling not as something to store away, but as something that lives on in speech, memory, song, law, food, and everyday life.

The conversations kept returning to one clear idea: Adivasi shiksha is not a project with a beginning and an end, but a long journey carried by communities themselves. Speakers like Lalsu Soma Nogoti spoke of the pressure on land, culture, and livelihood, while others shared stories, poems, images, and practices that held ecology, identity, and resistance together.

By the end, the gathering had opened new paths for collaboration in language resources, films, curricula, and advocacy. More than anything, it left behind a shared resolve to keep Adivasi knowledge alive, changing, and rooted in the people who carry it



Thank You

To all our supporters from our community who support us in
making our vision into a reality

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