



**Visthar**

**Annual Report - April 2017 - March 2018**



My heart is moved by all I cannot save:  
so much has been destroyed  
I have to cast my lot with those  
who age after age, perversely,  
with no extraordinary power,  
reconstitute the world.

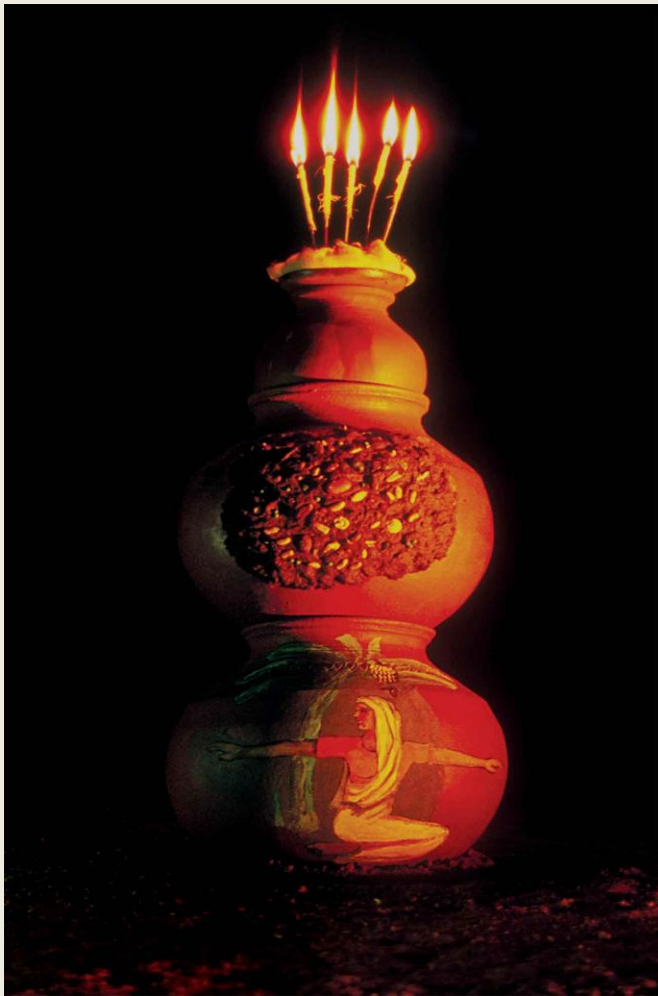
- Adrienne Rich

# The Context



- Our work is set in a context of increasing inequalities, conflicts and disasters, violence against children, women, Dalits, gender and sexual minorities, religious minorities and so on.
- The culture of violence has become so pervasive and normal that we watch lynching of humans as a spectacle. Cow protection takes precedence over human dignity and rights.
- Recently an Amnesty International report claimed that India is among the deadliest countries for defenders of rights related to land, environment, dalits and adivasis.
- The latest Thomson Reuters Survey classifies India as the most dangerous / unsafe country for women.
- Dissent is being smothered. You are constantly called to prove your patriotism.
- Religious leaders are embroiled in land rackets , sex rackets and sexual abuse .
- We are gripped by fear and helplessness, struggling to keep hope alive.
- Fear, arising from external or internal factors, can stifle our creativity and force us into a 'puppet's world' where we wait for 'the master of show, to be stirred into a mimicry of life.'
- The floods in Kerala - death, devastation, and distress- has affected us beyond words.
- This was preceded by the 'drought' in Visthar which too was/ is scary and drained out our energies, especially that of the Executive Trustee.

# Visthar - Vision & Mission



- Visthar = Dimensions / Expanse
- Founded in 1989, Visthar is a secular Civil Society Organization based in Bangalore with field base in north Karnataka
- *Vision* : Just, democratic and sustainable communities with gender and social equity
- *Mission* : **Resistance & Alternatives**
- *Strategy* : **Transformative education and community based advocacy / initiatives**
  - In collaboration with educational institutions, FBOs, CBOs and social movements
  - Responding to issues of poverty, development induced displacement, environmental destruction, gender discrimination and social exclusion.

# Visthar Programmes – An Overview



- 1. *Visthar Academy of Justice and Peace*** offers study programs on gender and diversity, social justice, and sustainable development practices .
- 2. *Community based initiatives*** with marginalized women and children in north Karnataka .
- 3. *Visthar Eco Sanctuary*** in Bangalore campus. A place for ecological farming, biodiversity conservation and environmental education.
- 4. *Solidarity Economy Initiatives ( SEI) - Consisting Conference and Retreat Centre (CRC), Srujana Recycled – the Recycled Paper Unit and Namma Angadi – the Visthar Eco Store.***

# 1. Visthar Academy of Justice and Peace



## Gender, Diversity & Social Transformation (GDST)

- ❑ GDST is a 1-month international program aimed at building perspectives and skills of participants engaged in social action.
- ❑ An annual program in its 10th year, the program has attracted participants from several African, European and Asian countries, from CSOs, Educational and Media Institutions and INGOs .
- ❑ The course is accredited by XISS, a premier institute for the study of social sciences in India.
- ❑ 24 Participants from countries : Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Philippines, Nepal, Nigeria, Bangladesh, and India in 2017 batch .
- ❑ Facilitators : Roshen Chandran & Mercy Kappen
- ❑ Visiting faculty included Dr. Shekar Seshadiri, Dr. Akkai Padmashali, Ms.Ranjani K.Murthy and Dr. David Selvaraj.



# Visthar Academy of Justice and Peace



## Sustainable Development Practice in India

- For students from Concordia College and Gustavus Adolphus College ( USA)
- An interdisciplinary development studies program through experimental, immersive and contextual learning in India.
- 19<sup>th</sup> batch held from 25<sup>th</sup> August till 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017
- 16 students – all women – from Concordia and Gustavus Adolphus Colleges.
- Provides diverse learning environments for students to undertake field- based study with people and communities seeking social change.



- Experiential and collaborative pedagogy.
- Planning and curriculum development sessions held with Roger Atkins and Per Anderson
- Coordinated by David Selvaraj – Dean, International Education - Visthar .
- Supported by Mercy Kappen, Sagaya Sahanti , Nazar & the CRC team.

# Visthar Academy of Justice and Peace



## Child Labour and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

A 3-day capacity building workshop primarily for ICCO-KIA partners working on child labour / child rights related issues was held at Visthar on 25th – 27th September 2017

- The workshop aimed at strengthening the capacity of NGOs and activists in SDG 4. Topics included:
  - SDG, Child rights and SDG, Goals, targets and indicators
  - SDG and child labour & targets and indicators pertaining to SDG 4
  - Best practices
- 23 participants drawn from 12 organizations in India
- A manual on SDG and child labour
- Supported by ICCO-KIA





# Visthar Academy of Justice and Peace



## Financial Management and Social Accountability

- An annual 5-day workshop for non profit & charitable organizations.
- Aims at strengthening participants understanding of:
  - Concepts and tools of financial management
  - Systems for financial planning, monitoring and evaluation.
  - Strengthen skills in integrating finance and operations effectively.



- Facilitators included practicing Chartered Accountants, Cost and Management Accountants and Programme Directors .
- Over the last eight years this programme has been well received among NGOs and Civil Service Organizations.
- The 2017 edition was held in August 3rd week and had 19 participants

# Visthar Academy of Justice and Peace



## Masculinities in the Neo-liberal Context



- A 3-day workshop facilitated by Mike Abrams from South Africa in January 2018
  - To deepen participant's understanding of masculinities.
  - To explore the inter-sectionality of class, patriarchy and race/ caste in our lives, families and communities
  - to explore dominant masculinities in post-colonial society, particularly in the Indian context.
- 
- The process drew from participant experience to look at the impacts and sources of aggression and violence in men and the construction of masculinities
  - 25 participants including students from Kristu J sayanti College

# Visthar Academy of Justice and Peace



## **Research on Experiences of Female Survivors of Violence in Shelter Homes**

- Initiated in October 2017, anchored by Visthar
- A collaborative action research with eight organizations in Delhi (Jagori, Action India, and Nazariya), Assam and Meghalaya (North East Network), Tamilnadu (Ekta), and Karnataka (Vimochana & Visthar).
- The study focuses on the experiences of female survivors of violence
- The aim is to gather evidence that would form the basis for recommendations to the government for a wholesome and inclusive envisioning of shelter homes for women.
- 76 IDIs with current and former residents of shelter homes and 10 FGDs with stakeholders and communities completed spanning across the 5 states.
- 32 Key Informant Interviews with persons from law enforcement agencies, shelter homes and professional services have also been conducted.
- A two-day review meet held in Delhi on 19-20<sup>th</sup> of June 2018, where all state teams got together in Delhi and shared progress, and challenges and plans ahead.

# Visthar Academy of Justice and Peace



## Manthana Library

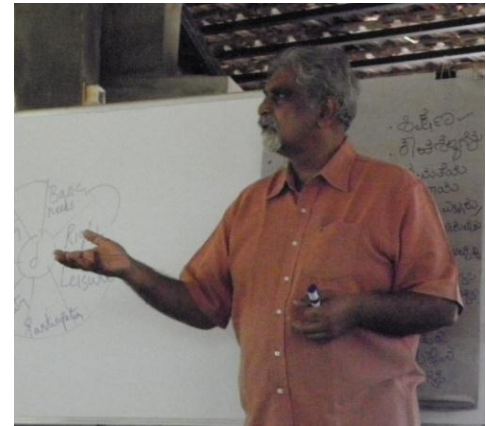
- The Visthar library is housed in Black Box, first floor of Manathana which has a lot of natural light and space.
- The library has 2885 books on the shelves. Another 500 new books are in the process of classification and numbering.
- The books have been recorded both in the manual and digital catalogue.
- The collection is extensive and has books from a wide range of categories.
- Every category is given a unique code and every book is numbered.
- Each book has a sticker with the code of its category, classification and number, making it easy to find a particular book among the many.
- The books are kept in labelled shelves according to their category to aid easy discovery and avoid confusion of any sort.
- The digital catalogue makes life even simpler. By just searching for the keywords, the author's name, title or genre, its availability can be known.
- They will then be added into the manual catalogue and then to the digital library software.
- The digital library software used is JISIS Suite, which is an open software.
- Special thanks to Theodore Baskaran, whose insistence and support made this happen. Also to Kheerthan from St. Joseph's College who relentlessly worked on it.

# Visthar Academy of Justice and Peace



## Consultancy

- *Church of the American Ceylon Mission (CACM) Sri Lanka* - Enabling the organisation develop a development cum reconciliation programme in the Northern region of Sri Lanka.
- *Association of the Theological Education in Myanmar (ATEM)*
- K. C Abraham Trust



- Women's empowerment in church and society: Trainings for religious leaders on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment – NBCLC & NCCI
- Kudumbasree staff and officials in Kerala . Covered 400 in 8 batches. Another 350 to be covered.

# Visthar Academy of Justice and Peace



## Publications

### ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಕುರಿತು

ಮಕ್ಕಳು ನಮ್ಮ ಭವಿಷ್ಯದ ಸಂಕೇತ. ಇವರ ಸುಖ-ದುಃಖ ನಮ್ಮ ಸಮಾಜದ ಸ್ವರೂಪವನ್ನು ನಿರೂಪಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಒಂದು ಉತ್ತಮ ಜೀವನ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ನೀಡುವುದು ನಮ್ಮ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿಯಾಗಿದೆ.

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Crinonson - Papilio Hector

'May the wings of the butterfly liss the sun  
And find you shoulder to light on  
To bring you luck, happiness and riches  
Today, tomorrow and beyond.'

This calendar presents butterflies from the  
Butterfly Garden at Visthar Eco Sanctuary.  
The proceeds of the sale will go towards  
maintaining the garden.

YEAR  
2018

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mail@visthar.org  
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### ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಂಕಲನ

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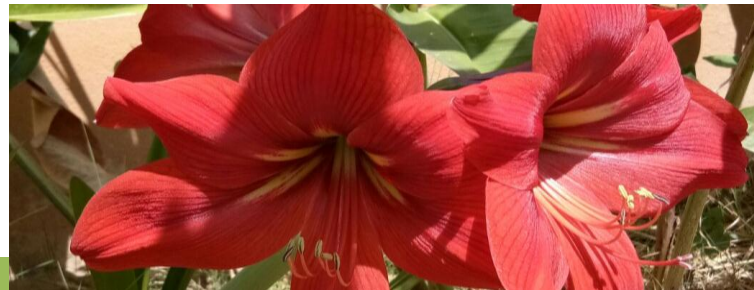
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## II. Eco Sanctuary



- Visthar Eco Sanctuary (VES) refers to the physical space as well as the Eco Education programme offered to schools
- The objective is to enable people learn the importance of nurturing and protecting the earth and its living systems through various live examples and also to serve as learning site for eco-justice issues.
- The different aspects of the Sanctuary include
  - Ecological farming
  - Herbal garden & Nursery
  - Butterfly garden
  - Eco-Justice education
  - Documentation and publication
  - Bhoomi Habba – the Earth Festival.

# Eco Sanctuary...



## Millets & fodder cultivation





# Eco Sanctuary ...



## Herbal Garden



# Eco Sanctuary



## Butterfly Garden



# Eco Sanctuary



## Eco Education

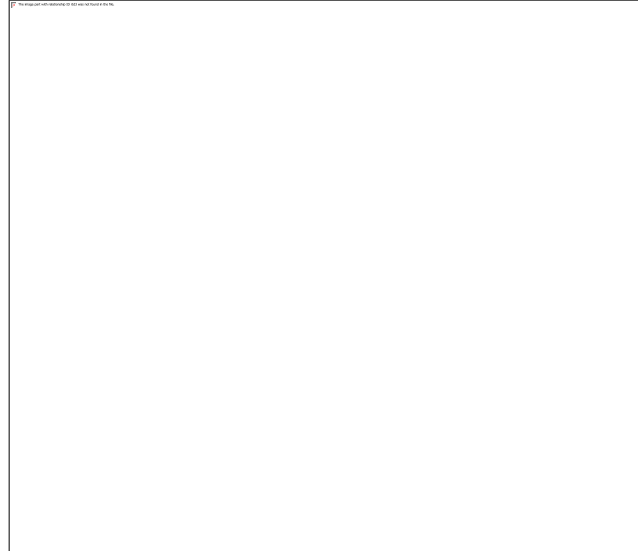
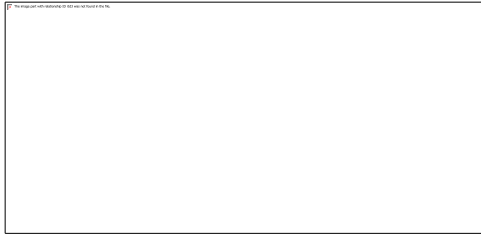
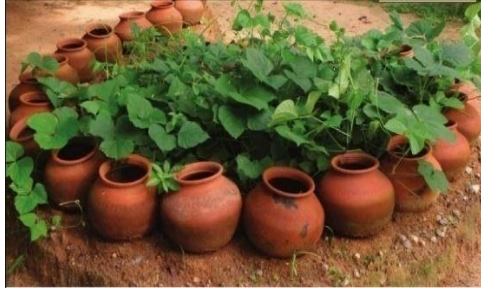


# Eco Sanctuary

**Bhoomi Habba 2017**

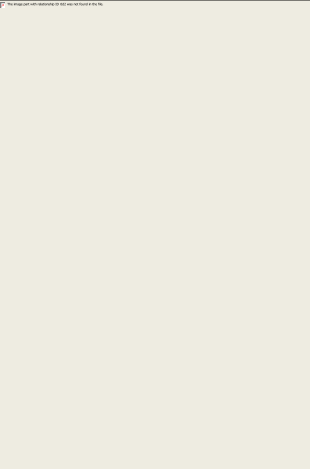
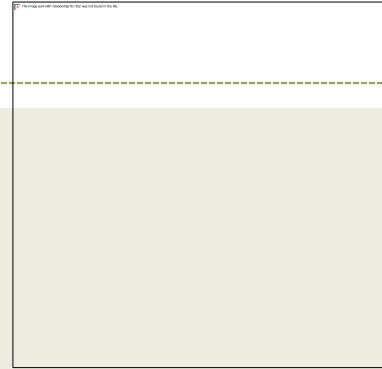
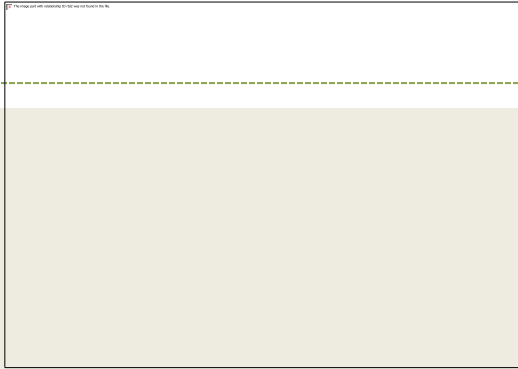


**The Earth Festival**



- An annual event organized by and at VES. 2017 edition held on 10<sup>th</sup> June
- The objective is to increase people's awareness of eco justice and sustainable development alternatives.
- About 3000 people, including a large contingency of school children participate in this day-long event.
- The focus is on 'justice, peace and sustainable communities'. The festival includes theatre and music, exhibition of posters & campaign materials, sale of products by rural artisans, children's films and documentaries on current environmental issues.

# Bhoomi Habba ...



# III. Community Based Initiatives



Our Community based initiatives foster and co-ordinate networks, and address the needs and injustices of communities, especially of women and children in North Karnataka. The specific projects include:

- ***Bandhavi*** : A holistic programme for girl children from the devadasi tradition.
- ***Samagara Shikshana Shale (SSS)***: An integrated learning programme (primary school).
- ***Child Rights Education & Advocacy (CREA)***: A sustained campaign towards creating child labour free zones.
- ***Rural Women's Collective (RWC)***: A campaign focusing on violence against women and women's political participation.
- ***Children's Movement for Climate Justice (CMCJ)*** : Developing ecological consciousness and sustainable development practices among children by children.

The community based initiatives are spread in 5 districts with secretariat in Koppal, North Karnataka and managed by personnel from Visthar.

# Community Based Initiatives



## Bandhavi – Empowerment of Girls at Risk

Protection, promotion and fulfilment of the rights of girl children from Devadasi/Dalit communities in North Karnataka.

Specific objectives are:

- ❑ To ensure safe and secure residential care for 100 girls at risk.
- ❑ To provide nutritional and balanced diet and health care
- ❑ To promote access to formal education
- ❑ To develop gender sensitivity and ecological and rights awareness.
- ❑ To develop leadership and enable effective participation of children in decision making bodies.
- ❑ To strengthen community involvement in monitoring child rights and gender based violence.
- ❑ Currently 86 children at Bandhavi



# Community Based Initiatives



## Samagra Shikshana Shaale

- Samagra Shikshana Shale (SS S) is government recognised primary school run by Visthar in Koppal campus . SSS has the scope to run up to class VIII
- The total strength is 63 for the year 2017-18 including children from Bandhavi and from neighbouring villages. It is a co-education school.
- Mobile Museum was organized in 13 villages in 13 schools of Yalaburga Taluk. Display of posters, banners, singing songs and street plays were the key items of mobile museum.
- The themes were violence against women and girls, climate change .





# Community Based Initiatives



## Child Rights Education and Advocacy - CREA

- CREA is a network project initiated by Visthar.
- The network includes 5 NGOs in five districts of North Karnataka.
- The CREA network is funded by ICCO-KIA.
- In April 2016 CREA started the third phase
- The goal of the third phase is to facilitate Child Labor Free Zones (CLFZ) in 15 panchayaths in North Karnataka.
- The specific objectives of CREA-CLFZ are to:
  - Ensure formal, full time and quality education for all children up to the age of 15.
  - Provide access to continued education, vocational training and decent employment to youth.
- 76 children (49 boys & 27 girls) rescued from child labour, forced labor and child marriages during 2017 - '18
- As of 31st March 2018, 17 villages declared as CLFZ



# Community Based Initiatives



## CREA – Child Labor Free Zone (CLFZ) Campaign



# Community Based Initiatives



## Rural Women's Collective – RWC

- The mission of RWC is to respond to violence against women by strengthening women's collectives through which socio-economic and political entitlements and rights of poor rural women are ensured .
- Works in collaboration with various Govt. departments, Panchayat Raj institutions, CBO's, CSO's, FBO's, youth groups, farmer's collectives, school & colleges, social movements / campaigns, media and other social institutions.
- Focus on women in Koppal district in North Karnataka. Have taken up several cases of VAW/G in Koppal.



# Community Based Initiatives



## RWC ...

- 16 days campaign (from 25th November to 8th December ) on Gender based Violence against Women is a worldwide campaign.
  - To build awareness among the community, Govt. officers, children and teachers for an end to all forms of Gender-based violence in education once and for all.
  - To raise awareness and urge the Govt. to honour and fund their commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4a.
- The theme of 2017 was “Together we can End Gender Base Violence in Education”.
- Organized various activities in colleges, hostels and schools of Koppal, Yalaburga and Kushtagi taluks



# Community Based Initiatives



## Children's Movement for Climate Justice (CMCJ)

- Children's Movement for Climate Justice (CMCJ) is a National campaign lead by children
- CMCJ aims to create more equitable and just use of Natural Resources
- With a focus on ecological rights of children
  - CMCJ Activities in three pancyaths of Yalburga Taluk (Hirebidnal, Vonageri and Chikkamyageri)
  - 6-girls & 4 boys participated in CMCJ children's retreat held at Hosur
  - 10 children from Koppal CMCJ participated in Bhoomi Habba 2017
  - Initiated and maintains kitchen garden in Bandhavi and Honnonsi schools.



# Community Based Initiatives



## Visthar Ranga Shale (VRS)



- VRS is a project of Visthar, located in Koppal, in north Karnataka.
- Offers a diploma course in theatre arts accredited by the Hampi University.
- The pedagogy involves a combination of research, field visits, theatre improvisations, preparing and performing, and critical reflection.

- The course is conducted by experienced theatre teachers and facilitators from Karnataka.
- 13 students have completed the course and the second batch began with 10 students in the month of July 2017 and going on.

### Repertory

- The first batch students formed a repertory. Performance from August to December, 2017. 'The Mother' by Maxim Gorky and 'Post box no 9' were the plays. 8 performances on stages.

# VRS – Second Batch, Repertory & Children's Theatre







# Solidarity Economy Initiatives (SEI)

## 1. *Conference and Retreat Centre (CRC)*

- Located in the Sanctuary- a social enterprise which offers facilities for conferences, exhibitions and celebrations
- CRC provides facilities and services to a wide range of guests both from India and overseas

## 2. *Namma Angadi*

- An eco enterprise which sells recycled handmade paper and paper products, organic and millet based food products and provides a platform for handwoven fabrics and crafts from rural artisans / women's collectives.

## 3. *Srujana Recycled* - Recycled Paper making Unit



# Looking Ahead: Challenges / Possibilities



- Trifurcation : VIDS, VCRC & CRC –V & the transition process
- CREA – what next ? Proposal for next phase
- Future of VRS - Continue or not. If yes, how? Funding ?
- Completion of the study on Shelter Homes
- Exploring funding possibilities with AJWS / UN Trust Fund etc.
- Reviving international education options
- Strengthening Eco Sanctuary as a programme
- Promoting Srujana, Namma Angadi & Manoranjitham as eco-educational enterprises
- Explore eco and green gifting solutions for corporates
- Re-visioning Bandhavi post 2021.
- Upgradation of SSS and developing an integrated curriculum
- Setting up a communication & fundraising unit / point person
- Initiating Eco Art School
- Building staff capacities and recruiting committed and creative staff
- Leadership transfer - who, how ?

# Thank You !



- Grateful for the support and encouragement of the Board members.  
For your participation in our struggles and celebrations.
- Special gratitude to the Executive Trustee
  - for dealing with the several crises that happened during this year
  - for bearing the triple roles of Executive Trustee, Director and Chair Person of V-SEI.
  - for his care, concern and support for the 'brain-hemorrhaged'.
  - for keeping hope alive in the midst of various disasters , deficits, inefficiencies etc.
  - For his unfailing attempts at reimagining & re-rooting the vision and mission of Visthar
  - To the team members for putting up with this Kali and extending all possible support.



Visthar

“There must exist a paradigm, a practical model for social change that includes an understanding of ways to transform consciousness that are linked to efforts to transform structures.”  
- bell hooks