



# Retelling, Reclaiming and Restoring

Annual Report 2019-20



Visthar

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There is a need to retell and reclaim cultural narratives from the perspective of the vanquished who are committed to an alternative reign. Onam is an example of a dream we need to restore. Below the translation of a traditional song sung about the glorious reign of King Mahabali (also known as Maveli) during the annual Onam festival in Kerala.



*“When Maveli ruled the land,  
all the people were equal.  
And people were joyful and merry;  
they were all free from harm.  
There was neither anxiety nor sickness,  
Deaths of children were unheard of,  
there were no lies,  
there was neither theft nor deceit,  
and no one was false in speech either.  
Measures and weights were right;  
No one cheated or wronged his neighbour.  
When Maveli, our King, ruled the land,  
all the people formed one casteless race.”*

In his book, *“The Transformative Constitution*, Gautam Bhatia highlights that the Constitution of India is grounded in a philosophy of social justice. He situates the Constitution as the culmination of the freedom struggles and as anchored in the philosophy of transformation. Bhatia quotes Ambedkar’s closing speech to the Constituent Assembly on 25th November 1949: *“Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognises liberty, equality, and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity. Liberty cannot be divorced from equality, equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things”*.

Visthar must seize and apply every opportunity to promote ‘social democracy’ and democratic politics. Towards this we must create platforms for people committed to peace with justice. For, as Bhatia points out, it is fraternity that holds together liberty and equality. It serves as the bridge. In what ways will our work restore a sense of peace with justice? How do we move from the realm of rhetoric to a lived experience, even if it is in a limited sphere? We are constantly reinventing and reimagining our work in response to the evolving context.

As we think of the future, we must look back, remain in the present and sow seeds for a future with petals of peace with justice. Yes *‘it is a long road to freedom’* but we must press on. In this we need to affirm a spirituality of love, justice and compassion, constantly update our information and analysis and prudently engage, given limited capacities. It is this that will sustain the journey.

*“It’s a long road to freedom, a winding steep and high.  
But when you walk in love with the wind on your wing,  
And cover the earth with the songs you sing,  
The miles fly by”*

**David Selvaraj**  
Executive Trustee

*(Excerpts from the report presented  
at the Board meeting on 13th September 2019)*

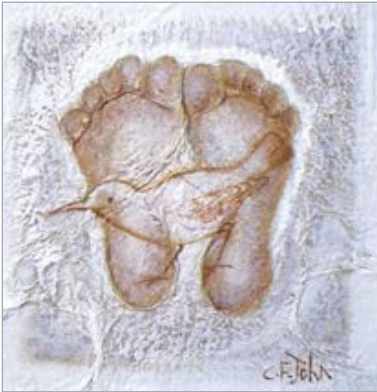


*When you do nothing you feel overwhelmed and powerless.  
But when you get involved you feel the sense of hope  
and accomplishment that comes from knowing  
you are working to make things better.*

**- Maya Angelou**

# Introduction

## The Long Walk



“They will reach their homes ultimately, those marching millions, minus a few thousand who will die on the way. They will not even be mentioned in the statistics: there will be no Schindler’s list for them. And we will pat ourselves on our collective, genuflecting backs that one problem has been taken care of, the danger to our neo-liberal civilisation has been beaten back, the carriers have been sent away, the curve will now flatten. But the mirror has cracked and can never be made whole again. ... Look into that cracked mirror. Do you feel any shame, just a little, for what we have become, for the lost soul of a once great nation?” Avay Shukla (thewire.in)

Covid-19 pandemic has posed grave challenges to every aspect of everyone’s life. The coronavirus outbreak has been unprecedented in scale, speed and spread. As India locked down, the poor and migrant workers were forced out of their source of livelihood and denied every shred of human dignity. The heart wrenching images of

thousands walking home hundreds of miles away, they being sprayed with disinfectants, being run over by train and so forth should prick our conscience. They should make us ashamed of being part of a system which is so apathetic, uncaring and unaccountable to the citizens. It gives hope if we feel shame. For, as Marx said, ‘shame is a revolution in itself’.

The coronavirus pandemic has drastically changed the way we see ourselves, our relationships, our ways of living and making a living. It has deepened the fissures in our society, especially the communal fissure resulting in ‘morphing of corona virus into an anti-muslim virus’. The communal virus, which erupts at regular intervals, has been a dreadful challenge to our polity. Prior to the corona virus outbreak, the country was stricken by the discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), and the curtailment of academic freedom and the right to dissent. Struggles to safeguard the foundational principles of the Constitution marked the last quarter of 2019. The Preamble of the Constitution became a rallying point for ‘we, the people’.

The above context also influences our involvement as a civil society organization committed to social justice, peace and ecological sustainability. Considering the enormity of the issues at stake, our contribution is a drop in the ocean. But we believe that every action of resistance and solidarity counts in our journey towards ‘justpeace’, towards reclaiming our constitutional rights. We are on a journey of recovering our lost humanity and anchoring ourselves in constitutional values of democracy, equality and justice. It is a long walk, but we owe it to us and the generations to come to continue in hope.

This report presents a brief account of our work during 2019 –20 under four headings: Transformative education, Eco Sanctuary, Community based advocacy and Looking ahead. The last section highlights our attempts to reinvent and re-root ourselves in the Covid-19 context. We thank our programme participants, project partners, team members and most importantly, the Board of Trustees who have have been a great source of support and inspiration. Special thanks to our funding partners, KNH and ICCO/KIA, for journeying with us over the years. It is the solidarity of fellow travellers that can sustain this journey.

**Mercy Kappen**

Director

May 2020

# 1

# Transformative Education

## Gender, Diversity & Social Transformation (GDST)

13th edition of GDST was held in May 2019 with 20 participants from 5 countries and 8 states in India. This month-long course aims at developing gender and diversity responsive and transformative leadership among professionals, activists and students from diverse backgrounds. The specific objectives of the course included strengthening participants' understanding of:

- » Concepts of gender, diversity and social transformation in the Asian and African contexts.
- » The recent debates on gender justice, masculinities, LGBTQ rights, disability and empowerment.
- » The implications of globalisation, disasters and conflicts, for gender relations and women's rights.
- » The policies of the government and UN agencies from a gender and diversity perspective and strategies to strengthen gender and social equity.
- » Approaches and skills in facilitating transformative learning in Gender and Diversity.



The course was facilitated by Mercy Kappen and Roshen Chandran from Visthar. RajKumari Nimbale, a GDST alumni, joined as co-facilitator. The course also drew on a panel of resource persons including Ms. Ranjani K Murthy (Independent Researcher and Author), Dr. Sekhar Seshadri (NIMHANS Bangalore), Dr. David Selvaraj (Educationist), Ms. Madhu Bhushan (SIEDS) and Ms. Akkai Padmashali and team from Ondede. Course outline at [www.visthar.org](http://www.visthar.org)

*"I am grateful for the GDST experience which has reignited my passion to do more towards creating a gender just world. It also helped me to relook at things in the program and work that I handle in Pravah and incorporate learning from the course. I am trying to figure out how I can extend my efforts beyond my own existing circle towards this cause in a more sustainable way." - Ramaneeek Banga (GDST 2019)*



## Training in Mainstreaming Gender

### For Programme Associates and Coordinators of CASA South Zone

CASA is a national organization dealing with Humanitarian Aid and long term development in 24 states in India. CASA has been mainstreaming gender within the organization and its programmes for over a decade. Towards that, CASA has sensitized hundreds of staff,

trained partner organizations, created National and Zonal Gender Task Forces, developed a Gender Policy, revised existing policies etc. CASA recognizes that mainstreaming gender is an ongoing journey where the organization and the programs it supports progressively improves how it addresses gender injustice. Visthar has worked with CASA at various levels in the last two decades. This 3-day workshop on Mainstreaming Gender for CASA South Zone was part of that process.



The workshop had programme associates and coordinators as participants. The sessions served to revisit and clarify concepts related to gender. Participants identified roadblocks and potential strategies to overcome them, learnt new techniques and tools to integrate gender concerns in programmes and organizational structure. They felt re-energized and confident of incorporating gender perspectives in their work.

## Gender and Social Inclusion

### Training for CCFC partners

Christian Children's Fund Canada (CCFC) is an international development organization with education focused child development. They have been working in India in the last 40 years. With time their programs have undergone huge shifts basically from welfare to development. Currently they are engaged in evolving to be a Centre of Excellence on Social inclusion and Gender. Gender has been cross cutting across their initiative. In the new phase CCFC wanted to be more intentional and look at intersectionality between caste and gender. It is in this context that CCFC approached Visthar for building capacities in Gender and Social Inclusion for their partners in Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. 35 participants, 6 each from 4 organizations and representatives from CCFC, participated in the training.



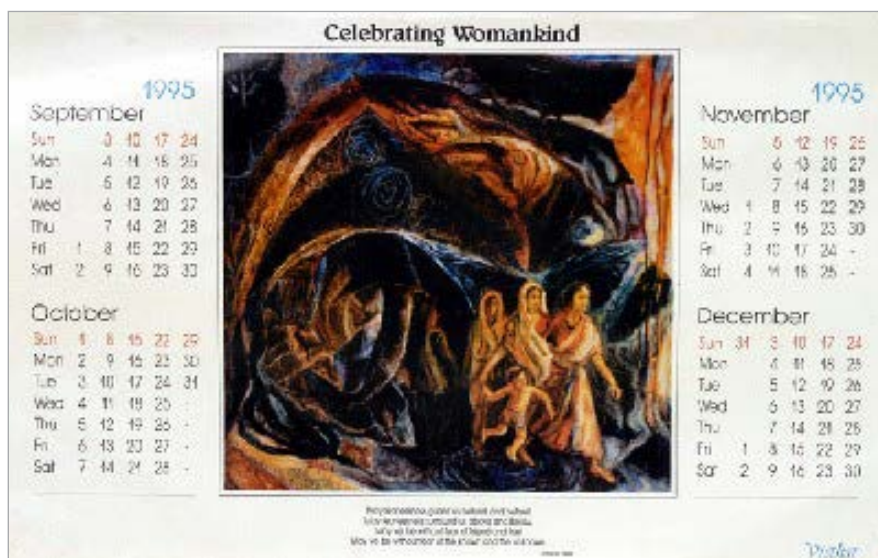


# Southern Regional Consultation on Commemorating Beijing +25

## Towards Equality, Development & Peace: The Indian case



Organized by UN Women and the National Alliance of Women (NAWO), the objective of the consultation was to review Beijing +25 review process, at national and global level. The sessions also facilitated a constructive dialogue around the priority issues that are crucial to Women in India. The consultation brought memories of our involvement in Beijing Conference. Visthar was actively involved in the preparatory processes towards UN Fourth Conference on Women in 1995. Post Beijing we incorporated CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action in all the gender training programmes. We continued to be associated with national networks like the NAWO and the National Conference on Women's Studies and offered capacity building for mainstreaming gender for national and international organizations.

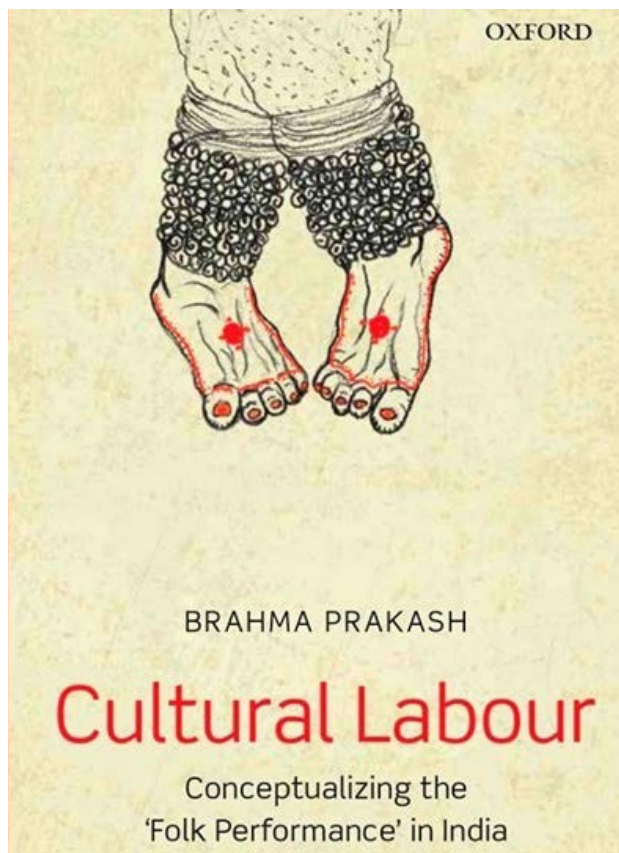


A calendar designed and produced by Visthar for the Beijing Conference in 1995. The idea was to create paintings that would celebrate the true spirit and essence of womanhood. The painting in this page depicts courage and solidarity of women. The two women symbolise togetherness in the face of adversity and the boat moving towards the confluence of the river and the sea indicates the strength of women in their collectiveness to face challenges.

## Book Discussion

### On Cultural Labour: Conceptualizing the 'Folk Performance' in India

By Brahma Prakash, Assistant Professor, SAA, JNU



Folk performances reflect the life-worlds of a vast section of subaltern communities in India. What is the philosophy that drives these performances, the vision that enables as well as enslaves these communities to present what they feel, think, imagine, and want to see? Can such performances challenge social hierarchies and ensure justice in a caste-ridden society? In *Cultural Labour*, the author examines various ways in which meanings and behaviour are engendered in communities through rituals, theatre, and enactments. Focusing on various motifs of landscape, materiality, and performance, the author looks at the relationship between culture and labour in its immediate contexts. Based on an extensive ethnography and the author's own life experience as a member of such a community, the book offers a new conceptual framework to understand the politics and aesthetics of folk performance in the light of contemporary theories of theatre and performance studies.



The discussants at the book discussion included:

Sammitha Sreevathsa, Freelance writer and Art Critic with the *Hindu*, Shashikala, Fullbright Nehru Scholar, Dr Manola K. Gayatri a Postdoctoral Fellow of Drama at Witwatersrand University South Africa. The discussion was moderated by Kirtana Kumar, Actor, Director, Film-maker and was attended by an engaged audience including writers, artists, activists and students.



## Workshop on Financial Management and Social Accountability



Everyone involved in community action has the responsibility of ensuring that their limited resources are used effectively while implementing programmes. Good financial management is crucial for voluntary organizations and it depends on programme and finance staff working together. Effective use of resources depends on programme staff assessing the actual needs of the communities they are working with understanding and supporting such needs.

Visthar has been offering a week-long workshop on Financial Management and Social Accountability for NPOs for over a decade now. The 10th batch of the workshop was held from 14th to 18th October, 2019 at Visthar. Over the last nine years this programme has been well attended and well received among NPOs. The main objective of the programme is to enable participants understand and learn concepts and tools of financial management and evolve systems for programme and financial planning, monitoring and evaluation. It also creates awareness of the latest provisions of Taxation laws and FCRA as applicable to NPOs. Participants included Finance and Programme Administrators and Executives of NPOs & charitable organizations in India. The workshop was facilitated by M. Francis and Biju John from Visthar. Other resource person included practicing Chartered Accountants, Cost & Management Accountants and Programme Directors with decades of experience.

## Workshop on Improv Theatre

Improv theatre is performed unplanned, unscripted – created spontaneously by the performers. The workshop was designed to help better communication skills, build teams, manage anxiety, embrace ambiguity, and think positively. It also enabled participants understand the advantages of honing an improvisational mindset which values deep listening, non-judgment, and exploration of the moment-at-hand. Improvisation encourages personal responsibility, empathy, and above all, collaboration. This methodology has proven effective with a variety of students – actors, health care workers, language learners, business professionals and teachers among others.

The workshop was facilitated by Jim Robinson, PhD, professor of psychology and a professional improviser. 15 professionals from various fields participated in the workshop.



## Orientation for Social Work Students

Colleges offering BSW/MSW degrees mandate a visit for their students to NGOs and social welfare organizations to understand their work. Orientation visits are organized with the objective of providing students an opportunity to observe, discover and deepen their awareness by understanding the vision, mission, structure and functions of the organizations. The students are expected to document the visit. We provide the group of students an introduction to the perspectives and programmes of Visthar and a walk



around the Eco Sanctuary. The discussions enable them gain fresh perspectives on development, the role of social workers etc,. During 2019 we facilitated orientation visits for Kristu Jayanti College, Bishop Cotton Women's Christian College, Indian Academy, Acharya Institute of Graduate Studies, Claret College and Mount Carmel College.

## B. A. in Sustainability Studies Curriculum Development & Affiliation Process

*A single, one-dimensional way of thinking has created a monoculture of the mind.  
And the monoculture of the mind has become a self-fulfilling prophecy.  
This is the root of why we have pitted equity against ecology and sustainability against justice.*

**– Vandana Shiva**

Visthar College of Arts is a new initiative evolved out of our commitment to nurturing change makers. We have developed the syllabus for a B. A. in Sustainability Studies and have submitted the application for affiliation to Akka Mahadevi State University, Bijapur. The Local Inquiry Committee (LIC) from university visited to assess the facilities and the faculty and have recommended affiliation. The course will be launched in 2020. The college will offer a unique undergraduate course (BA) in Sustainability Studies. In significant ways, this course marks a departure from those offered in conventional programs. This interdisciplinary program emphasizes exploration of alternatives to destructive development. We believe that the present model of development is not sustainable and hence drastic and urgent change is necessary.

The course will have six semesters and 18 papers. Students will be studying the following main subjects, besides language, constitution studies and practicals:



- » Introduction to Economics
- » Introduction to Ecology
- » Sustainability and Development
- » Environment, Ecology and Livelihood
- » Economics for Sustainability
- » Sustainable Food Systems
- » Sustainable Cities and Communities
- » Diversity and Social Inclusion
- » Climate Crisis and Justice
- » Democracy and Peace Building
- » Gandhi and Sustainability
- » Gender Equity and Sustainability.

## Traditions and Counter-traditions

### 18th Kappen Memorial Lecture by Prof. Nivedita Menon



This annual lecture is organized in celebration of the life and work of Dr. Sebastian Kappen S. J., philosopher, writer and liberation theologian. Kappen has made substantial contribution towards evolving perspectives on culture and social transformation and has inspired and mentored many ‘dissenters and dreamers’ in India, including the senior leadership in Visthar.

The lecture drew attention, to two important discourses that challenge ideas of the Hindutva project. One counter narrative comes from a position that has for long been critical of Eurocentrism, that recognizes the complex interplay of historical exchanges that have shaped both ‘West’ and ‘non-West’ ideas. By implication this strongly contests Hindutva claims to a pure Hindu past. The second counter-narrative fractures Hindutva attempts to produce a singular “Hindu” identity, and instead, is cognisant of the thought and life-worlds of Dalit-Bahujan-Adivasi communities producing a world view which Hindutva has tried to delegitimize and marginalize.

The lecture was delivered by Nivedita Menon – a Professor at Centre for Comparative Politics and Political Theory, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi and moderated by Madhu Bhushan, Independent (re)searcher, activist-writer and film maker, CIEDS Collective. David Selvaraj, Founder and Executive Trustee of Visthar welcomed the gathering and introduced the lecture.

“The myth of the Hindu Rashtra can be met only by an alternative project that combines myth and reason, the sacred and the secular. In this perspective, nationality will have to be defined, not only in terms of citizens organized under various secular institutions, but also as a union of communities, each community maintaining its own identity without, however, any one community enjoying hegemony over the rest.” – S. Kappen 1992.



# 2

## Eco Sanctuary

### Eco Education and Sustainability practices

*The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy,  
and after all our most pleasing responsibility.  
To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope.*

**– Wendell Berry**

Visthar Eco- Sanctuary is a conscious initiative to nurture and protect all life on our campus. It is not merely a physical space but a programme reflecting 'inclusion' and 'sustainability'. The objective is to enable people learn the importance of nurturing and protecting the earth and eco systems through various live examples. The different units and programmes which form the sanctuary include Organic Farm, Herbal Garden, Manoranjitham Nursery, Butterfly Garden, Srujana Recycled, Eco Education, and Corporate Volunteering. The sanctuary also serves as a model in social entrepreneurship based on sustainable development practices. During 2019, we maintained the horticulture in the campus and were able to market farm fresh produce, pickles and coconut oil. Seasonal vegetables and greens were cultivated for our own use and also for sale. Production and usage of organic manure, vermin compost and bio pesticides helped nurture the soil and the vegetable farm.



Manoranjitham Nursery, a new initiative of the Sanctuary, has been a successful enterprise. The Nursery has over 300 varieties of herbs and decorative plants and has had a sale of ₹2 lakhs in the reporting period. The nursery has also been preparing and selling potting mix and bio fertilisers. Besides the Nursery, we have an Herbal Garden with 100 varieties of herbal plants. Yet another new initiative is the Butterfly garden, mainly meant to attract visitors especially children to the sanctuary. Maintaining the plants and the water lily pond were the key tasks during the year. Both the Herbal and Butterfly Gardens have been sites for Eco education, especially for school children.



## Eco Education

“An environment-based education movement—at all levels of education—will help students realize that school isn’t supposed to be a polite form of incarceration, but a portal to the wider world.”- Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*.

Children need to be made aware of the environmental issues they are faced with and equipped to handle them. Learning takes place best in a gentle, conducive environment. Latest researches on children’s efficiency in learning and recalling from memory suggest that a positive emotion is a strong factor that aids in learning.

Visthar’s Eco Sanctuary is like a mini sanctorum on the border of a fast expanding urban space. Here in the lap of nature, children can learn, play and explore its mysteries. Spending quality time in nature ensures that children form a positive emotional connect with what is being taught. School children typically spend a day at Visthar absorbed in various eco activities. They arrive in numbers upwards of 50, with a maximum of 125. Children, formed into smaller groups, learn through carefully selected eco activities including mural painting, paper recycling, paper craft, pot painting, organic gardening, Treevellers’ Katte (story telling), yoga and dance.

Sparkling Mindz School, Legacy International School, Little Red Hen School, New Horizon Public School have participated in the Eco Education programme during 2019. We have been able to raise ₹2,06,752 as fee.



*We must teach our children to smell the earth, to taste the rain,  
to touch the wind, to see things grow, to hear the sun rise and night fall – to care.*

**– John Cleal**



## Summer Camps for children

“Beat the heat this summer with fun filled workshops under the expansive trees at Visthar. Swing from one activity to another, such as paper making, warli art, craft, treevellers katte, eco moves and gardening at our specially curated summer camp”.

The 5-day camp in April 2019 was open for children in the age group 8-14 years and had 15 children's participation. We charged a fee of ₹2000 per child. It was coordinated by Amarinder Kaur with teams from Srujana Recycled and Eco Sanctuary. External resource persons included Nakula, Charumathi Supraja and Mahesh. Children spent fun-filled time learning through carefully selected eco activities including mural painting, paper recycling, paper craft, pot painting, organic gardening, Treevellers' Katte (story telling), yoga and dance.

Each day of the camp began with some gardening fun. Children enjoyed digging into the soil, placing a seed or plant, covering it with soil, applying compost, mulching and watering. They marvelled at nature as a seed turned into a sapling, learning about the many hidden facts about soil and its creatures which are perhaps the biggest unsung heroes that guarantee us our food!

The summer camp also facilitated recycling sessions. Children learned to recycle paper by making their own paper from old newspapers and waste papers, created papier mache pen holders and engaged in paper crafts at the Srujana Recycled. They connected with their ancestral past, by listening to stories from a rural backdrop as they created warli art. This easy-to-draw tribal art form is a perfect look for greeting cards, gift envelopes, clothing, photo frames, pots, canvas and many other decor items.





# Bhoomi Habba – The Earth Festival



Bhoomi Habba is an annual event organised by Visthar, dovetailing with the UN Environment Day on June 5th. The objective of the Habba is to increase public awareness of the environmental crises faced by our city and showcase inclusive and sustainable alternatives. Given our critique of the current paradigm of development, sustainability is a key theme in our educational and advocacy work. The thematic focus of Bhoomi Habba 2019 was on water with the slogan ‘Save Water, Save Life’. The event was filled with environment campaigns and workshops, poster exhibitions, theatre presentations, film / documentary shows, folk

music and much more. The Habba featured extensive workshops on recycling, upcycling, arts and crafts, theatre and storytelling for children. We also promoted exhibition and sale of eco-friendly crafts, organic farm produce and traditional and millet foods from all over the country. The 13th edition was inaugurated by well-known environment activist, Ashish Kothari. Excerpts from his blog:



“The Bhoomi Habba, a festival focused on ecological issues, is organized annually by Visthar in Bengaluru. I was honored to be asked to inaugurate it this year, on 8 June. The inaugural was a happily chaotic affair, with hundreds of schoolkids in no mood to listen to speeches but delighted to sway to the rhythmic beat of Balu’s vigorous drumming, and cheer a song by Nirmala. The Habba was a happy mix of stalls displaying ‘alternative’ or positive initiatives crafts, organic food, wildlife friendly coffee, mango and other diversity, soil types, urban rooftop gardening, waste recycling and upcycling, forest products, books and films, and much else ... and stalls with an amazing range of food. I also spoke and interacted at a ‘conversation’ on issues of alternatives, where Roy David of CORD (Adivasi rights) joined. And visited a wonderful display of dolls, by Francoise Bosteels.

Great to meet Theodore and Tilaka Baskaran, old friends. Theodore has been an inspiration in how he managed for decades to be a dedicated postmaster while enjoying, writing about, and spreading an infectious enthusiasm about nature, dogs, Tamil literature and films, and much else. Wonderful also to meet filmmaker KP Sasi, after perhaps 20 years we met often in the Narmada movement when we were both active with it, but lost touch subsequently. Happy to see he is still into films and cartoons! This was my second visit to the extremely inviting, green, open campus of Visthar super place for retreats, meetings, or just hanging around, and amazing that it’s in Bengaluru, possibly India’s most visible symbol of all that could go wrong with urbanization. “

– Ashish Kothari



## Highlights of Bhoomi Habba 2019

### Dolls Speak by Francoise Bosteels

'The dolls speak. Their images speak too. They bid us listen. They speak of the common people and their everyday life. These dolls urge us to join the masses in their struggle to change what ill accords with human dignity and hurts the wholeness of the humanity'. This was the most popular exhibition at the Bhoomi Habba which inspired visitors to rethink development and gain perspectives on social justice.



### Handmade Paper Making



Participants engaged in the art of making paper at the Srujana Recycled. Recycling, crafting, creating, designing paper has been a way of life for Steven Paul for two decades at Visthar. Recycling paper conserves natural resources, saves energy, reduces greenhouse gas and reduces the amount of waste to the landfill.



### Treevellers' Katte

The Treevellers' Katte, by Charumathi Supraja, was an invitation to open conversations with the earth in our bodies. Katte is Kannada for a place where people gather to chat, sit idle and stare, to listen to birdsong or laughter, to talk about their day. A space where stories are imagined, shared, heard and added on to. As visitors joined in, the stories kept growing.

### Water Dance – Jal Nruthya

'Let's dance, imperfectly beautiful, just like water. Like river, like ocean or even like a water droplet. Water doesn't need anybody else's accreditation. It flows in its own direction. Take the shape of the situation and move as per its own wish. Reflect others similarly holds its own being. Let's dance like water. Hundred of children joined in the dance workshop by Rajkumari Nimbale, an educationist and Visthar alumni.



### Storytelling



'The planet desperately needs more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of all kinds' (Dalai Lama). Paarvathi Om told stories of the trees, rivers and animals. Drawing in everyone's attention to water, forest, climate changes etc. The story telling sessions attracted children and adults in scores.

### Warli Art

The Warli Art workshop was facilitated by Akshya from Bandhavi. 'Warli is one of the oldest forms of Indian folk art and has its origins in the Warli region of Maharashtra. This form of tribal art mainly makes use of geometric shapes such as circles, triangles and squares to form numerous shapes depicting life and beliefs of the Warli tribe. One of the most popular themes in Warli art is a spiral chain of humans around one central motif. This in accordance with their belief that life is an eternal journey, and it has no beginning and end'.



## Composting and Gardening Workshops

The Organic Terrace Gardening (OTG) group shared their knowledge and experience in making compost at home. The session explored two techniques to make nutrient rich food for your plants: Aerobic Composting and Vermi Composting. The session covered the entire process in both techniques – from getting started to harvesting, with demos. The Gardening workshop also dealt with the life cycle of plants – from sowing, transplantation, watering, regular care at different stages of growth, pest control, and troubleshooting.



## Community Painting



“If you hear a voice within you say, ‘You cannot paint,’ then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced” – Vincent Van Gogh

At the Community Painting workshop children teamed together and painted, pooling in their imagination and creativity to paint a green world for all. Facilitated by Poonam Bhonsle and Rohan Chavan.

## Under Pressure

Presented by Visual Respiration, India’s first immersive theatre company founded by Aruna Ganesh Ram. The performance examined the domino effect of Individual & collective choice and environmental consequence to question and reflect upon their own view point and their relationship with the earth.



## Theatre Performance

Visthar Ranga Shale (VRS) performed their new production on climate change highlighting the impact of climate change, especially on the on the poor and marginalized sections in India.



## Children’s Film Festival

“Everything I learned, I learned from the movies.” – Audrey Hepburn. The Children’s Film Festival featured award winning short films and documentaries on current environmental issues, especially the water crisis we are faced with. 10 short films were screened.

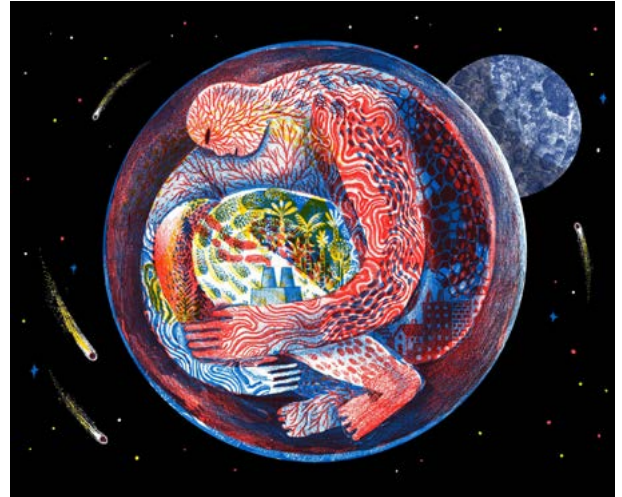


## Corporate Volunteering

*We are at a point in human evolution when human solidarity on a global scale is absolutely vital for the survival of the human species.  
That means understanding that we are all co-inhabitants of this planet.*

**– Petra Kelly**

A good part of the Corporate Social Responsibility budget of any corporate is towards volunteering activities by its employees in the NGO sector. For every hour of volunteering work that an employee puts in, the organization pays a matching grant to the NGO towards its projects. In doing so, the employees become aware of the NGO's work and spread its message within the organization. This messaging is further encouraged by the corporate through internal events that showcase the various NGOs it supports. Overall it leads to more and more people becoming aware of the social causes and approaches with an aim to create more egalitarian, just and sustainable communities.



The volunteers are engaged in regular garden and farming work at the Eco Sanctuary. The Srujana recycled is another important and favoured work area for the volunteers. The message of recycling is appreciated by one and all. They also enjoy working with papier mache and other paper products.

We have hired a consultant, who has put us in touch with various organisations that would be interested in supporting our projects through corporate volunteering. We are thus far empanelled with Cisco, Dell, Intel and Thomson Reuters. Their grants plans range from 10 -50 USD per hour per employee matching grant. The most successful volunteering engagement so far has been with Cisco which has sent us more than 800 employees as volunteers. This organisation alone has contributed ₹23, 80,000 in the year. Funds are also awaited from Intel and Dell for their previous employee volunteering visits (A rough total of 10,000 USD). Concern India has paid ₹1, 00,000 for volunteering engagement.

During 2019 Visthar also participated in three corporate exhibition-cum-sales events – Amazon, Hitachi and Cisco with Srujana and Manoranjitham products. Total sales from these events were ₹30,000. In addition, we sold Manoranjitham products worth ₹25,000 to Intel employees. From Intel, CRC received an order for ₹45,500 for its bakery product – Graneusli.



# 3

## Bandhavi Community based initiatives of Visthar

From its inception, Visthar has been supporting campaigns, especially on Violence against Women and Girls. A study conducted by Visthar in 1998 on violence against women revealed the prevalence of the Devadasi system in Karnataka. In 2005, Bandhavi, a residential care and empowerment program for girl children of devadasi women was initiated in Bangalore. The programme started with 36 girls with the support of 5 partners from North Karnataka and Adhoni (AP). By 2012 Visthar moved Bandhavi and all its community-related programs from Bangalore to Koppal. In October 2018 the Community based initiatives of Visthar were registered as a separate trust named Bandhavi. The mission of the Trust is to respond to issues of gender discrimination, social exclusion, poverty, and environmental destruction, by institutional care and protection, transformative learning, and community-based advocacy in collaboration with state, civil society, and community-based organizations.

### Projects under Bandhavi

1. **Bandhavi:** A residential care and empowerment programmer for girls at risk.
2. **Samagara Sikshana Shale (SSS):** An integrated learning centre
3. **Visthar Ranga Shaale (VRS):** A 10 months diploma course in Theatre Arts affiliated to Kannada University, Hampi.
4. **Child Rights Education & Advocacy (CREA):** A sustained campaign towards ensuring child rights and creating child labor free zones.
5. **Rural Women's Collective:** A campaign focusing on violence against women and women's political participation.
6. **Children's Movement for Climate Justice (CMCJ):** Developing ecological consciousness and sustainable development practices among children by children.

### Bandhavi Residential Care

101 girl children enjoy safe and secure residential care at Bandhavi. The house parents maintain enabling relationship with the children and their mothers. The physical and emotional needs of the children are taken care of. Counselling and extra care are given as necessary. Children have received training in child rights and the child protection policy of Visthar. Phone numbers of District Child Protection Officer, Child Welfare Committee, and other emergency numbers are displayed prominently in the office.



Children up to 5th class are studying in SSS on the campus. 6th and 7th classes are in the primary school in Chikkabidnal and 8th -10th classes in Hirebidnal High School. Due to Covid-19, all exams till 9th classes were cancelled and the 10th class exam is postponed.

During the reporting period, girls from Bandhavi gave excellent performance both in curricular and extra-curricular activities in schools. They have won prizes for their schools at district level. Regular tuition classes were conducted for children from 6th to 10th class. As part of the child rights education, two child rights clubs have been formed during 2019 and organized awareness sessions facilitated by CREA. 10 children from Bandhavi participated in the District Children's Parliament held in Koppal on 4th November 2019. This was organized by the Department of Women and Child Development and UNICEF. Netra from Bandhavi was selected as one of the two representatives from Koppal district for a meeting with the Chief Minister.



**Summer Camps:** Held from 6th to 26th April 2019, the objective of the camp was to enhance children's awareness of child rights and gender equality and to promote their creativity, skills and leadership. Theatre training and Karnatic music were also part of the camp. Classes on Kalari Payattu from Vinod Gurukul from Kerala was an exceptional item which focussed on self-defense. The Dussera camp held from 8th to 28th October 2019 gave attention to curriculum-based tuition classes and making teaching aids. Children were introduced to easy ways of learning concepts like division and multiplication. Besides the camps, one day study tours to Hampi, Saalu Marada Timmakka Garden, and Tunga Bhadra Dam were also conducted. Most of these places were new to the children and provided them opportunities to learn about historical places.

**Celebration of festivals and National & International Days:** Bandhavi is conscious and sensitive toward celebrating significant religious festivals and national and international days. This is an opportunity for children to share stories and practices related to various festivals. During the reporting period, festivals such as Nagara Panchami, Ganesh Chaturthi, Dussera, Christmas, Ramzan and Makara Sankranti were celebrated. Bandhavi children also observed Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Jayanthi, during summer camp on 14th April. As part of the celebration, a quiz on Dr. Ambedkar and his teachings were conducted. Bandhavi Day was celebrated on 7th Dec 2019 as part of Sambhrama 30. Environment Day was observed on 5th June by planting fruit trees in Bandhavi campus. 20 children participated in Bhoomi Habba, held at Visthar, Bangalore on 8th June 2019.

**Health & Nutrition:** Regular yoga, meditation and garden therapy are taken up by children. The children's health committee takes care of the sick children along with house parents. Children are aware and take care of their personal hygiene and health. Regular health check-ups were conducted. Those who are anaemic were administered medicines and tonics. Awareness classes were held by doctors and staff from the Primary Health Centre.

President and members of the Junior Chamber International (JCI) visited Bandhavi on 7th July 2019 to assess the child care and protection systems. The visitors appreciated and recognized Bandhavi as a model in Koppal district for best practices. JCI members from Koppal visited Bandhavi twice: on 23rd February and 1st March 2020. They gave a motivational speech and orientation to children on how to face examination. Two children from Bandhavi participated in Karnataka Darshana, a tour organized by the State Government. Children learned about important places in Karnataka. 18 children were part of the "Abhiranga Theater festival", a children's theatre festival organized by Department of Women and Child Development, Koppal. Children also participated in a theatre workshop and performed the play, "Novina Bandhana". Facilitators from Visthar Ranga Shale were the key resource people.

## Samagra Shikshana Shale (SSS)

There are 73 children (43 girls and 30 boys) in SSS studying pre-school to level five. Out of this 20 are from Bandhavi and 53 from the neighbouring communities. Regular visits to the community by SSS staff have increased the strength of children in the school. Exams and tests were conducted regularly. 6 children were prepared for Morarji Desai and Navodaya schools entry exams.

**Extra-curricular activities:** 56 children from one to eight levels participated in the summer camp. Apart from school syllabus, theatre, art, songs, creative writing, gender sensitization, agriculture, social analysis pottery etc. were part of the camp. SSS was able to collect ₹30000/- as fees from this camp.



A 16-day camp was organised for Bandhavi girls by SSS leadership. This was to evolve new methodologies for teaching in SSS. A Jungle gym unit was created in SSS premises for children from 4 –15 years. Amar Daniel from Ananda Sagara School in Bangalore was the key person behind this. Children are learning Kabadi, Kho-Kho, running races, shuttle-coke, skipping etc. with prescribed rules and regulations.

**Pratibha Karenji** is the art festival of government school children. SSS has been regularly winning prizes in the competitions. SSS won seven prizes in cluster level and three at taluk level. Songs, art, mono acting, public speaking, dance and clay modelling were the items SSS children contested. It is a matter of pride that Pratima from 4th level won first prize in public speaking at district level.

**Tree Planting:** Children planted 60 tree saplings inside and outside of the school premises under 'A Tree per child Programme'. Children also gave their names to these plants. A three-bin waste management system was introduced in SSS during the year. Also a new format for prayer / reflection. A set of activities like centring, introducing a great personality, reading newspapers, sharing local news, word of the day and proverbs were part of the prayer time apart from songs and national anthem. Theatre is becoming an integral part of SSS.

**Mookasakshi**, a collection of poems, short stories and drawings of children's experiences and *Namma Naala Jeeva Jala*, a study on the Naala (water stream) conducted by children. A set of pictures of insects, birds and trees along the naala was exhibited during the Sambhrama 30 celebration in Chikkabidnal campus. Like Bandhavi, SSS also celebrate different festivals including religious festivals, local, state, national and international days under children's leadership. Children learn about the significance of symbols and rituals related to each festival.



## Visthar Ranga Shale (VRS)

The fourth batch of VRS diploma course in Theatre Arts was held in 2019 –20. Despite major financial constraints, Visthar took it up as a challenge. VRS team was able to mobilize about five lakhs during the year. Subsequently, the entire course was redesigned keeping fundraising and sustainability in mind. The fourth batch started on 5th August with 14 students (4 girls and 10 boys) including a girl with physical disability and a boy with low vision. Some of the candidates had already completed Bharatanatyam, contemporary and folk dances, animation course, fashion design and Carnatic music (vocal). There is a student who has an MA in Music. All these skills were incorporated in their theatre productions during the year. The major productions are listed below:



- » 'Sankranti' written by P Lankesh and directed by Dheemanth R, a theatre diploma graduate from Sanehalli theatre school and an ex-student of VCC. This 90 minute play staged six shows including in Bidar and Bijapur.
- » 'Gorukana 1974' is a play based on the life of Gorukana tribal people after the Wild Life Protection Act 1973 in Karnataka. It is written by Mr. Ranganath and directed by DIngri Naresh. The duration of the play is 75 minutes. This play got 4 shows. Apart from three shows on the campus, this was also included in the Anegunti Cultural festival 2019 by the Kannada and Culture Department of Koppal.
- » 'A Mid-summer Night's Dream' of William Shakespeare. The play was translated into Kannada by KS Nissar Ahammed. The 90-minute play was directed by Renuka Honnalli. 'A Mid-summer Night's Dream' had 5 shows. This was performed in Honnonsi as part of the Women's Day 2019 on 8th March. As a stylized drama, this play won two awards for the best costume for the director and best actor in the 'Ranga Thorana - Youth Drama Festival 2019' held in Bellari.
- » 'Plastic Mari Hemmari' and 'Matrumanassina Mane Kealasadavalu' are two short plays of 30 minutes duration. The plastic play was performed in Hubballi as part of the banning plastic in Hubballi and also two shows in Bangalore (Cisco and Visthar). Both the plays were brought out as a publication and released during the 'Sambhrama 30' celebration.

**Workshops and performances:** A 15-day Kalari Payattu workshop was organized for theatre students and a 60-minute



performance was staged as an outcome. Mr. Vinod Gurukkal from Kerala was the resource person for the workshop. Kolatta was another 15-day long workshop. The students learned 16 varieties folk steps of kolatta. Renuka Honnalli was the resource person. Kolatta performance had 4 shows. This was an attractive performance during the 'Sambhrama 30' celebration. The lighting workshop was another special component of the fourth batch. Though every year lighting workshop was part of the course, this year the students came up with a performance incorporating the skills they learned from the workshop. Mr. Madhusudhan was the resource person.



## Child Rights Education and Advocacy (CREA)



CREA is committed to responding to issues of child labour, malnutrition, exclusion and discrimination of Dalit and Adivasi children in North Karnataka. Our goal is to ensure that children enjoy food security, quality education and freedom from all forms of violence. In 2019 a baseline survey was conducted in five panchayats, and identified 593 (285 boys and 327 girls) under 18 years who had dropped out of school. These children included child labourers, dropouts and irregular attendees. The following activities were carried out during the year:

**Children' Sanghas and Children's Parliament:** Children's Sanghas have been initiated in new panchayats. Three inter-club meetings combining children from six villages were held. With the

participation of 18 members. The enrolment campaign in 23 villages organized with the involvement of children, SDMC members, school teachers, Anganwadi workers, and youths succeeded in enrolling 576 (291 boys and girls 285)

**Makkala Grama Sabha:** CREA members played a major role in organizing Makkala Grama Sabhas in five panchayats. A makkala mela was organized as part of Sambrama 30. 116 people including children and teachers participated in this. 96 children (50 boys & 46 girls) from 18 schools participated in the debate competition conducted in 5 panchayats. The final was held in Bandhavi campus on the 6th of December. Topics fixed for the debates were child rights protection and Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZ). Excellent ideas and strong arguments came up from children. Certificates and prizes were distributed to the winners as well as the participants.

5 SDMC trainings were organized in five villages. There were 130 participants (94 male and 36 female). Violations of child rights, enrolling the dropouts and CLFZ concepts were key topics of the training. Five Child Protection Committees (CPCs) were formed during the year. There are 70 (45 male and 30 female) members in the committees. There are 12 CPC in the CREA-Koppal villages. 171 people (96 men and 75 women) are members in the committees. The committee is assessing children's situation in their area and making recommendation to the Panchayats.

**Declaration of CLFZ:** Muradi Thanda, Kavalakeri, G Veerapura, and Narsapura are ready for the declaration of CLFZ. This was planned during the month of Mach 2020. But due to COVID 19 lockdown, the declaration was not done. 24 children from 4 villages are enrolled in schools.

**Transformative Learning Centre (TLC):** Processes of TLC got delayed due to the delay in finalization of the baseline survey. 9 centres were activated simultaneously in the target areas. There were 412 (200 boys and 212 girls) children participating in the centres. It helped the children to cope with their education in mainstream schools especially children who are enrolled in school by the CREA team. TLC facilitators became the key people for the CLFZ campaign in the respective villages.

**Malali flood relief camp:** Members of CREA along with 14 people from Visthar participated in the flood relief camp in Malali village of Bagalkot organised on 24-26 August 2019 by CREA.

**Festival celebration:** A set of festivals and state/ national days were celebrated during this year. Anti-child Labour Day celebration in Gaddigere on 27th July 2019. A procession, community painting, and stage program including theatre presentation about child rights protection/ violation were the key activities of the day. The unique part of the celebration was taking an oath to protect child rights and working towards CLFZ village. It was organized in collaboration with Gram Panchayat and the government schools.

**Documentation:** 50 case studies have been completed with stories of children who are child labourers, dropouts, children from single parents, children at risk and children who are in conflict with law.

## Rural Women's Collective (RWC)



**The Global 16 Days Campaign against Gender Based Violence:** RWC has been actively involved in this campaign for many years now. The slogan of the 2019 edition of the 16-day campaign was 'end gender based violence in the world of work'. RWC decided to focus on women in MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act). Skits and other communication materials were developed to highlight the discrimination and denials women face in MNREGA. The actors were MNRGEA beneficiaries (mothers) from villages in Koppal and facilitators of CREA-Koppal. The skit was presented in 16 villages including schools and reached to 1000+ people of five panchayats in Koppal district. It was a great success as a people-centered advocacy for the proper implementation of MNRGEA

**Women's Day celebration:** A week-long Women's Day celebration was conducted from 8-14 March 2020. A bicycle jatha of 9 youths was the key activity. The bicycle team prepared a cultural presentation including liberation and human rights songs, speeches, etc. The celebration started on the 8th in Honnonsi village and included speeches, dances, songs and a theatre presentation by VRS students. The bicycle jatha was also launched on the same day. It was a wonderful program and we covered 24 villages and reached about 2300 people. But due to Covid-19 and lockdown, we stopped the bicycle jatha on the 12th and concluded the event with a small gathering in the campus itself.

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

New Eco Clubs were formed in 5 schools and training conducted for children on child rights and the importance of the environment in protecting child rights. 150 children from 5 schools participated in this.

- » A draft curriculum on Green Village is made as an output of a three-day workshop for children and youth. There are 10 topics under the green village. Green village project was launched on 7th December as part of the Sambhrama 30 celebration. Five villages – Honnonsi, Kavalakeri, Kudarikottagi, Muradi Thanda, and Malakasamudra – have selected for this as the first phase (3-5 years). Two rounds of orientation and a detailed plan were discussed with representatives of Kavalakeri, Honnonsi and Muradi Thanda villages. Totally 150 people were part of these orientations.
- » Environmental Day was celebrated in Kudarikottagi village on the 23rd of June. 150 people including children, SDMC, and grama panchayat members, SHG members, and other community members participated. 500 tree saplings were planted in 16 villages.
- » CMCJ coordinator and members participated in a meeting with parliamentarians and board members of KNH Germany and made a presentation on the concept of 'Green Village'.





## Towards a legacy of dissent and alternatives

“The journey of Visthar is embedded in counter cultural politics, values and practice. The story of 30 years must be told, shared and continued. As we confidently move towards celebrating 30 years and exploring a legacy of sorts, my mind repeatedly goes back to experiences of vulnerability. Here and here alone we share a platform with all those who struggle for freedom and dignity. This is a democratic space. To speak truth to authority, to engage in civil disobedience, and side with the dissenters. This is risk beyond measure. We are vulnerable.

We are not a charitable body offering good deeds to the poor. The dye is cast. We are raising questions as to why the poor are poor and calling those who perpetuate this violence to take cognizance, repent and repay, ‘even four fold’ to all who have been unfairly dealt with. We stand with the victims of this structural violence, strengthening their efforts to defend and reclaim their right to dissent and right to development. This risky act puts the majority of the population and Visthar in a state of perpetual vulnerability. The historical task therefore is to interpret vulnerability as reflecting a different power. A power to embrace nonviolent thought and action that will defy and confound the perpetrator of violence.

What shape and form will this take? We must explore mode, methodology and means to celebrate the power of vulnerability and hope rooted in social justice. Sustainability should be our guiding ingredient. Whether some of us can physically sustain the next decade is not pertinent. Whether as a core group we can sow seeds that goes beyond our life time is the historical task. Institutions must outlive their founders”. David Selvaraj .



# Sambrama 30

Visthar celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2019. It was a celebration of a journey of resilience, resistance and hope anchored in our vision of *another world*. Friends and colleagues who have journeyed with us and supported us in our work were invited to participate in the event held on 7th December at Koppal. The celebrations included Bandhavi Day, CREA Makkala Mela, conclusion of 16 day campaign, a play by VRS team and a public event. Different sets of guests and activities were held for different segments.

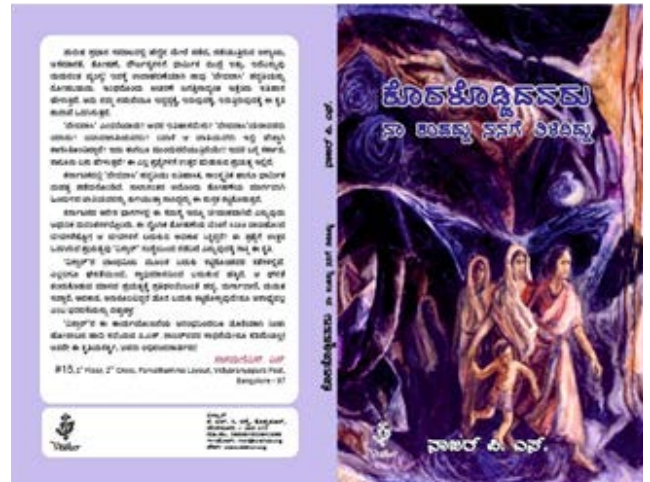


The celebrations began with a Cultural Procession from Honnonsi Cross. The focus was on local art forms of Dalit communities. The procession culminated in the inauguration of the day and launch of Green Village. Segment two comprised of Bandhavi Day celebration and CREA Makkala Mela. About 250 children (including Bandhavi girls) participated in the event. Meeting with government officials, speeches, honoring children and adults, cultural activities and presentation of reports

were major activities in this section. This segment concluded with a traditional Kanavali lunch.



The public event held in the afternoon included an introduction to the journey of Visthar, visual presentation about the projects in Koppal, success stories of Visthar, honoring, testimonies of children who are rescued by Visthar and release of a books. The day long celebrations concluded with 'Goruka 1974' a theatre presentation on the life of tribal community in North Karnataka by VRS. *Sambrama 30* also honoured those who have made significant contributions in fields of art, media and social activism.





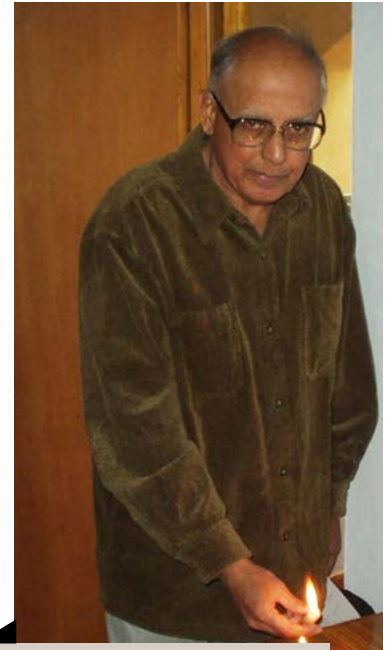
## Celebrating Memories



**Gen. O. M. Mani**



**Rev. Dr. K. C. Abraham**



**Prof. Hasan Mansur**

*At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person.  
Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who  
have lighted the flame within us.*

– Albert Schweitzer

Remembering in gratitude Gen. O. M. Mani ( Author Trustee) in this his centenary year and Rev. Dr. K. C. Abraham and Prof. Hasan Mansur, former Chairpersons of Visthar. As we celebrate 30 years of Visthar, we celebrate your memories and contribution. You are with us in spirit and continue to inspire the journey.

*A long time I have lived with you  
And now we must be going  
Separately to be together.*

*Perhaps I shall be the wind  
To blur your smooth waters  
So that you do not see  
your face too much.*

*Perhaps I shall be the star  
To guide your uncertain wings  
So that you have direction in the night.*

*Perhaps I shall be the fire  
To separate your thoughts.  
So that you do not give up.*

*Perhaps I shall be the rain  
To open up the earth  
So that your seed may fall.*

*Perhaps I shall be the snow  
To let your blossoms sleep  
So that you may bloom in spring.*

*Perhaps I shall be the stream  
To play a song on the rock  
So that you are not alone.  
Perhaps I shall be a new mountain  
So that you always have a home.*

– Nancy Wood

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**Visthar Team 2019**

As a Civil Society Organization with no support from the State or private endowments, we are constantly faced with the challenge of finding resources. We face a deficit due to a drop in donor support for our work in North Karnataka. It is imperative that we enhance our funding sources and income. Covid-19 has aggravated the situation. With the lockdown we are not in a position to offer on-site programmes or hire out the facilities on the campus. We have been trying to access support through corporate volunteering. The following are the initiatives we hope to launch /strengthen during 2020-21:

**Visthar College of Arts:** As reported earlier we have been working on a BA level course in Sustainability Studies. Affiliation of the college with the Akkamahadevi Women's University in Bijapur is in process. We are happy that the LIC have visited and were appreciative of the facilities and faculty at Visthar. Our syllabus has been approved by the Board of Studies. Next step is presentation to the Academic Council and approval from the Government. The launch planned for June/July 2020 will now be postponed with the Covid-19 crisis. This course on Sustainability Studies will strengthen our identity as an educational institution and sharpen our focus on eco justice.

**Visthar Eco Enterprises:** This will sustain and strengthen the Eco Sanctuary initiatives on the campus and our attempts to model sustainability practices. The following units will be added / strengthened as part of the eco enterprises: Bio fertilisers and pesticides, Organic Terrace Gardening Services, Mushroom Farming and Bee Keeping, Manoranjitham Nursery, Horticulture and Vegetable Farming and Rent a Plot.

**Solidarity Forum for Migrant Workers:** Visthar has been engaged in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic by mobilizing immediate relief operations both in Bangalore and at Koppal. What marked our effort was our consciousness of being in solidarity with the migrant workers the worst victims of the lockdown. We are in the process of developing a long term, holistic response and solidarity actions with the migrant community. As we have extensive field base in Koppal and other districts in North Karnataka, we hope to work with migrants from this region located in north Bangalore. Our responses will include: Pilot study on identification and demographics of migrants in Bangalore and needs assessment, Services such as free legal education and legal aid, primary health care and education, counselling, sports and games, cultural events, livelihood training and lobbying with Government on wages and working conditions.

**Writer's Residencies:** This is another post Covid-19 initiative. Open to writers, visual artists, performers, designers and other creative individuals in India and overseas. The residency is designed to give writers and artists the time, space, and inspiration to focus on their creative pursuits. It will be an opportunity to expand their creative horizons, in commune with nature and a caring community. We plan to host 10 writers / artists each year. Besides board and lodge, the Residency includes opportunities for eco-therapy including gardening, recycling and eco art, and conversations with writers and artistes from Bangalore.

**Kanasu Kishori Sanghas:** The proposed project will work in 125 villages, spread over 25 Panchayaths in 5 Taluks of Koppal district in North Karnataka. The primary objective of the program is to empower collectives of adolescent girls to resist violence and claim their rights and sensitize multiple stake-holders to support the empowerment of adolescent girls. The program aims at collectivizing 5000 adolescent girls from 125 villages in 250 Kishori Sanghas. The Kishori Sanghas will be federated at the Taluk and District level through Kishori Parliaments, modeled around Children's Parliaments. The approval of the proposal was delayed due to the lockdown.






*Awake,  
Arise and Educate  
Smash Traditions.  
Liberate.*

**- Savitribai Phule**



*Visthar*

 Kothanur Post  
Bengaluru - 560 077. INDIA

 Tel. : +91 80 28465294 / 28465295

 [mail@visthar.org](mailto:mail@visthar.org)  [www.visthar.org](http://www.visthar.org)