

ANNUAL REPORT

A peak into the year of 2021-2022



Foreword

Dear Friends,

The year 2021-2022 was a challenging period for Charkha as we faced the devastating impact of the second wave of Covid-19 and mourned the loss of our Chief Executive Officer, Mario Noronha. Despite this adversity, with the support of our dedicated board, rural writers, associates, funders, friends, and well-wishers, we emerged stronger from the crisis.

Our immediate response was to contribute to managing the Covid-19 crisis by creating a Covid-19 Information Guide in 5 local languages. This guide reached inaccessible areas, providing preventive measures, home quarantine guidelines, and vaccination information to 1200 households, with a focus on rural communities, especially women and the elderly. Furthermore, our Trilingual Feature Service released 157 articles reflecting on lived experiences with Covid-19, written by young individuals from the community.

Amidst the challenges, we also celebrated new beginnings. The 'Disha' project in Uttarakhand's Bageshwar district aimed to empower young girls by enhancing their leadership skills and encouraging them to speak up against patriarchal norms perpetuating violence. This project marks our commitment to creating safe spaces for young girls to express themselves.

Recognizing the importance of visual storytelling in today's digital age, we introduced our volunteer trainers and rural writers to the basics of visual media. Our goal remains to amplify the voices of rural communities, challenging urban dominance in media spaces.

In a meaningful reunion, we returned to J&K and Ladakh to meet our rural writers and volunteer trainers after a two-year hiatus. Their stories of struggle and commitment inspired us to publish 924 articles across Hindi, Urdu, and English platforms, authored by 119 rural writers, including 61 women and young girls. The impact of these articles was captured in our e-book, 'Impact – spinning action into words,' documenting the transformation fueled by Charkha's initiatives.

We also published 'Abhivyanjana – Yuva Ladkiyon ki Kalam Se,' a compilation of articles written by adolescent girls from Rajasthan's Ajmer district. These poignant accounts

shed light on the harsh realities these girls face, urging us to work towards a better future.

As we reflect on the past year, we are redesigning our strategies to engage more intensely with rural youth, especially adolescent girls from inaccessible, media-dark zones. Our focus is on empowering them with knowledge and skills, aiming to build a more inclusive society where development is viewed as freedom, as defined by Amartya Sen.

This journey would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our generous donors, supporters, well-wishers, and the entire Charkha team. Your feedback and ideas are invaluable as we strive to make a difference.

With sincere gratitude and appreciation,

Chetna Verma

Manager – Programmes and Editorial

Introduction

Charkha is an innovative non-profit organization that was founded by the visionary social activist, Sanjoy Ghose in 1994. We work towards the social and economic inclusion of marginalized communities in remote and conflict areas through the creative use of media. Many of these areas are highly inaccessible and socially, economically and politically unstable. We aim at creating sustainable two-way communication networks that enable the under-served and vulnerable communities in these areas to benefit from development mechanisms and advocate for policy changes. As they attend workshops conducted by Charkha, they learn to write features on issues that concern them the most. These articles are translated, edited and disseminated to various national and regional print and digital media through Charkha Feature Service - the only 'Trilingual Feature Service' in India that works in areas that are also media dark zones.

Founder

Sanjoy Ghose was a grassroots activist who wrote excessively about rural issues at a time when they were still uncommon in newspapers. He was inclined towards the idea of drawing the attention of the urban elite to rural issues. This section of society meant policy influencers and makers. And this was the target readership that Sanjoy sought to reach. Sanjoy saw media as a powerful tool to connect the voices of the 'unheard' rural marginalized; those who remain in the shadows of development and established Charkha on 24 October 1994. His abduction by ULFA militants from Majuli, the world's largest riverine Island, in July 1997, has been an irreparable loss to the institution and the development sector at large.

Content

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Charkha Feature Service

Best of Published Features.....

Impact Stories.....

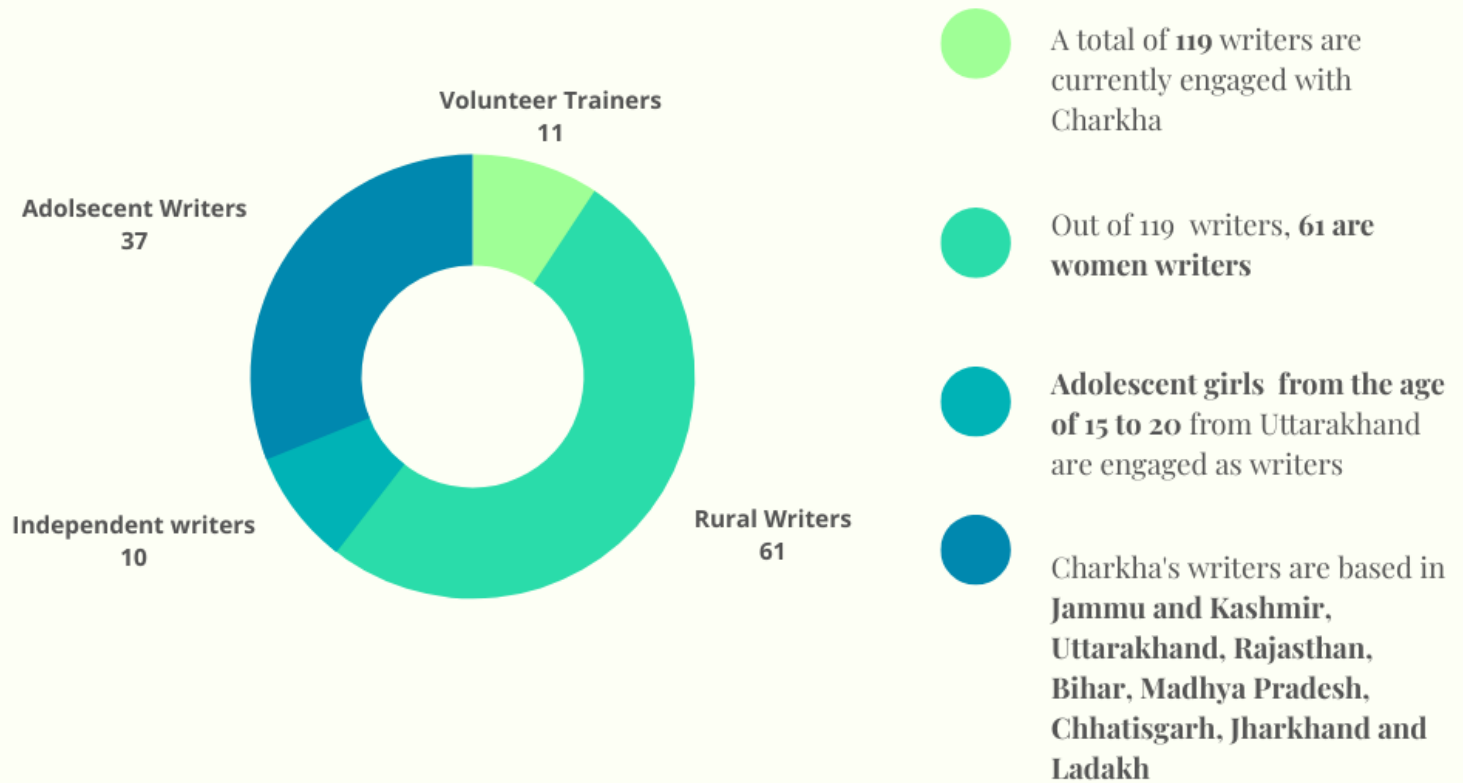
Upcoming Plans & Projects.....

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Year in a Glance- 2021-2022

Charkha Writers



19

NUMBER OF
WRITING
SKILLS
WORKSHOPS
HELD IN 2021-
2022

200+

TOTAL
NUMBER OF
PARTICIPANTS
REACHED
THROUGH
WORKSHOPS

924

TOTAL
NUMBER OF
ARTICLES
PUBLISHED IN
THE YEAR
2021-2022

500+

IMPACTING
LIVES



STRENGTHENING CHARKHA'S FEATURE SERVICE

-SUPPORTED BY HUMAN CAPABILITY FOUNDATION

After achieving milestones last year, the project continued to reach the corners of the country and strengthening the community in voicing their opinions. Before summing up on December 2021, the project expanded Charkha's pool of new writers in different states such as Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan to name a few.

Despite continuous hurdles caused by Covid-19, the project received good response from the stakeholders. Along with rural writers, independent development journalists have also contributed good quality features focusing on development challenges of disadvantaged communities residing in rural areas.

These stories were published as part of

a strategic media advocacy campaign aimed at bringing the attention of local, state and national authorities towards the plight of rural communities especially women on Covid-19 related struggles along with other development issues.

Besides amplifying voices of the disadvantaged communities, the published articles have led to the emergence of an effective space for discussion on women's centric development issues which so far had limited or no visibility in the mainstream media. In this one-year, rural writers especially women have been empowered at both professional and personal level.

The Process

Training of Trainers' Programme (TOT)

Under the project, the ToT programme was conceived to create a sustainable, self-sufficient network of rural writers in states Charkha has previously worked in. To achieve this, Charkha identified and selected writers from J&K, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar who showed interest and commitment volunteer as Trainers.

The TOT programme began with organizing online workshops for these selected trainers. Charkha's Editors took them through different sessions in which they discussed different ideas and the possibility of exploring those ideas while approaching new writers.

After training, these 'Volunteer Trainers' identified and contacted young, interested members of the community. They oriented these young enthusiasts with the objective of the project, provided them training and guided them to write articles on the crucial development challenges of their areas.

Guidance and Assistance

Project meetings were held throughout the project duration. These meetings were organized to provide guidance and assistance to the volunteer trainers. Feedback, challenges, various information, and story ideas were shared during the meetings, which ensured that volunteer trainers embark upon a journey of personal and professional growth by being part of our Feature Service. Meetings were held in batches to address and focus on the problems of the volunteer trainers in greater depth. This allowed the entire team to achieve better results and outcome which made it possible to make changes on the ground.

Meetings with rural writers were also organized which delivered the support and inspiration rural writers required, especially during the difficult times of Covid-19. During the meeting, possible story ideas, suggestions were shared and most importantly, motivation to continue their effort to highlight the concerns of their respective regions were provided. These interactions fueled to achieve the best results.

Workshops held in 2022

Workshop on Reporting on Gender and Climate Change, Leh, Ladakh

Charkha in collaboration with Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust, Leh organized a three-day workshop on “Reporting on Gender and Climate Change” from October 14 to 16, 2021. The workshop aimed at discussing not just the basic concepts of Gender and Climate Change but develop an understanding among the participants about the interlinkages between the two. It was organized with the purpose of inspiring the young members of this snow desert region the importance of adopting a gendered approach while reporting on impacts of climate change.

Workshop on Visual Storytelling, Poonch, Jammu & Kashmir

After conducting writing skill-building workshops for young members of rural

communities in a different part of the country, Charkha conducted a pilot workshop on ‘Visual Storytelling’ in one of its oldest regions of intervention – Poonch in Jammu and Kashmir. The workshop introduced the approaches and techniques of storytelling through videos to the participants. The main objective of the workshop was to build the capacity of the participants in visual storytelling, teach the participants various approaches and techniques of video journalism and to create space and opportunity for the Volunteer Trainers and writers in video journalism besides writing.

As a result of the workshop, three stories shot during the field trip are being edited and are broadcasted by Ground Report and the Volunteer Trainers and the writers had acquired skills in video journalism. Besides, it has opened a new avenue for the VTs and the writers to prosper in the field of journalism.

Output

By the end of the project, we have received 136 articles by the rural writers, trained and guided by the volunteer trainers.

Till March end, a total of 52 articles have been contributed by independent writers on development themes including Governance, Rural Livelihood, Sustainable Development, women in leadership, Health, Education and Covid-19

A total of 263 stories were published through Charkha's Trilingual Feature Service. Out of 263 articles, 20 articles covered topics related to Covid-19, 57 articles on socio-economic development of women and girls and 186 features covered different topics like governance, education, health, infrastructure, agriculture, livelihood, tourism, environment and migration etc.

Till March'22, 61 new rural writers, identified and trained by Volunteer Trainers, have contributed 136 articles to Charkha Feature Service. 50 articles have been written by Volunteer Trainers. All these articles have been published on various digital and print media platforms.

Along with giving importance to women's issues, the project also focused in strengthening women writers from the rural areas. The project drove the women writers to realize their role in media and in the larger society.

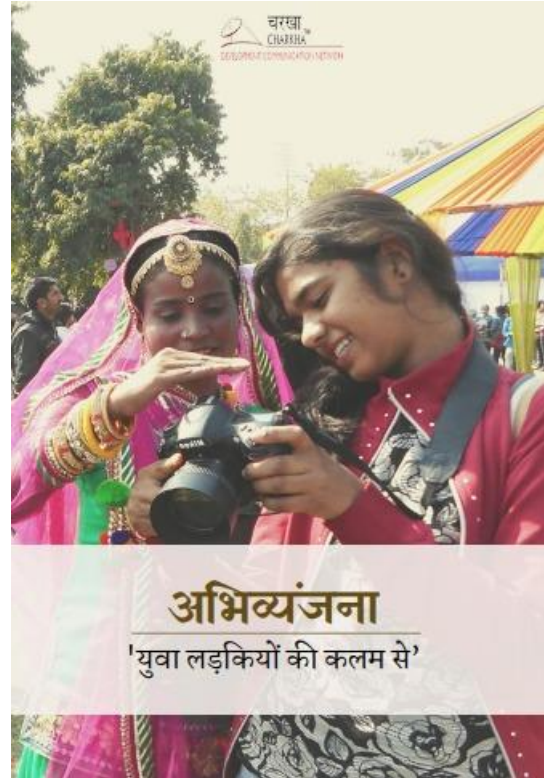
Started with 30 rural writers, charkha is currently associated with 61 rural writers through the project. A total of 136 articles have been written by these writers. In addition, 50 articles have been contributed by the volunteer Trainers.

Charkha's 27th Founder's Day

Charkha observed its 27th Founder's Day on 4th December, 2021, which was also a tribute to Mario Noronha, Charkha's late CEO, and to Arvind Ojha, the Founding Chair of Urmul Seemant Samiti, Bikaner and Chairman of Girls Not Brides, Rajasthan.

Tinni Sawhney, CEO of Aga Khan Foundation, India, was invited as the Chief Guest, who shared her memories of how Sanjoy Ghose guided her during the initial stages of her career. The event also marked the release of two important e-books – '**Abhivyanjana- Yuva Ladkiyon ki Kalam Se**' and '**Impact- Spinning Actions into Words**'.

Abhivyanjana- Yuva Ladkiyon ki Kalam Se is a compilation of articles authored by twenty-eight adolescent girls and women from rural Ajmer, Rajasthan, who actively participated in Charkha's workshop on grassroots journalism. Among these contributors are child brides, who bravely share their experiences of living within a patriarchal society. The articles passionately address various crucial issues, such as child marriages, girls' education, menstruation hygiene management, and women empowerment. The book's release event was presided over by Indira Pancholi, the esteemed Founder Member and Secretary of Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti in Ajmer, Rajasthan.



The second book titled '**Impact- Spinning Actions into Words**' documents the remarkable journey of rural writers associated with Charkha, hailing from regions like Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, and Bihar. These writers have been instrumental in advocating for tangible changes at the grassroots level through their powerful articles. The book was released by Sayed Anwar Hussain Shah, a retired

Additional District Development Commissioner from Poonch district, Jammu and Kashmir.

Charkha, an organization committed to rural development, has been actively working in rural areas for three decades, bringing about significant transformations using the power of words. The book beautifully portrays the inspiring experiences of these rural writers who have played a crucial role as agents of change, utilizing the medium of articles to champion causes and advocate for much-needed improvements at the local level. Their dedication and impact deserved recognition, and this book aimed to chronicle their inspiring journey and transformations.



*CREATING TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION NETWORKS IN
RAJASTHAN FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN*

- SUPPORTED BY THE LUSH FOUNDATION

This project was conceptualized to identify and nurture young women change makers to become potential leaders in their respective regions. It aimed at creating nurturing spaces to support them in their individual growth and enhance their leadership skills in taking steps towards a balanced,

sustainable development model. The tools adopted to achieve the goal focused on improving the communication skills of the youth, particularly women, so that their valuable perspectives can inform the development debate in – and for – the region. The project ended on December 2021.

Workshops

Writing Skill Building Workshop Rajasthan

A “Writing Skill Building Workshop” was organized by Charkha on July 25th, 2021, for development workers and individuals working in rural and remote regions of Rajasthan. Participants working and living in some of the most remote areas of Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Ajmer, Udaipur, Pratapgarh, Baran, Karauli, Bharatpur, Dholpur, and Jhunjhunu became part of this online workshop. The workshop provided the participants a forum to understand and appreciate the importance of communication, using media and information for social change. During the workshop, complex social and development issues were questioned and debated, with everyone sharing views and experiences. This dialogical

process had led to the emergence of new ideas, understanding and knowledge.

Writing Skill Building Workshop, Ajmer, Rajasthan

Another workshop– second in the online series was designed specifically for a group of girls associated with Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti, an organization dedicated to equal rights for women. They work in Rajasthan with women and girls belonging to the margins of society facing discrimination and lack any kind of social or economic security. 30 girls from different villages in Ajmer District, Rajasthan participated in the 3-hour session. The workshop acted as a forum for the girls to learn basics of feature writing and understand the role print media can play to advocate for development challenges faced by their communities.

Outcome

1. Enabled women in Rajasthan advocate for policy changes at state and national level through mainstream media.
2. Nurtured a pool of community-based writers and social advocates, mainly women.
3. Discussed development challenges through gendered lens focusing on livelihood and social welfare schemes

Highlights of the project

- Published more than 50 articles under the project on socio and economic development of girls and women from Rajasthan
- Reached more than 50 girls and women from Ajmer and Bikaner through writing skills workshops
- Published a book titled “Abhivyanjana” containing articles of girls from Ajmer which talks about the social evils and discrimination they face.



“Charkha has provided me with a platform to actually publish my article. I was delighted when my article got published in Amar Ujala. Aspiring writers like me can learn and benefit a lot from their workshops”- Neeraj Gurjar, Ajmer.



COVID-19 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES: BRIDGING THE INFORMATION GAP

-SUPPORTED BY THE LUSH FOUNDATION

In the wake of Covid-19, the project aimed at addressing the information gap that exists in remote areas that hinders rural communities' capabilities to contain the spread of the virus. The project aimed at providing much needed information on how to stay safe and access support. For those with limited or zero access to social media platforms and/or internet connectivity, were reached out by Charkha's Volunteer Trainers with information on Covid-19.

The project also focussed on building the capacity of the Volunteer Trainers on understanding the intersections of Covid-19 and socio-economical factors to better highlight the stories of struggle and perseverance of rural communities against Covid-19, which are almost invisible from the mainstream news platforms, were highlighted through Charkha Features as part of this intervention. Started on May 2022, the project ended on June 2022, the project was undertaken in J&K, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and Bihar.

Changes on Ground

Output Achieved

- Prepared Covid-19 guide in five languages- Hindi, Urdu, Kumaoni, Bajjika and Garhwali.
- 5000 people and 1200 households were provided information on Covid-19 through guides with clear, concise and local languages with culturally-relevant graphics.
- Total 157 articles on impact of Covid-19 in rural areas were published in English, Hindi and Urdu languages
- Conducted 6 online training workshops with rural writers on how to write articles on the current crisis by understanding the implication of Covid-19 in the society at large.
- Conducted 6 online training sessions with selected Charkha trainers to equip them with relevant information on how to use the e-guide to prepare them to provide essential information to villagers who are not connected via any online social platform.

*Reporting
on Covid-19*

- The project led to the increasing reporting on the impact of second wave of Covid-19 on the lives of rural communities

*Bridging
Information
Gap*

- Increased availability and accessibility of information and knowledge related to Covid-19 among rural communities in J&K, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and Bihar for better decision making

Accessibility of Covid-19 information on Vernacular Languages

- Guides on Covid-19 protocols and precautions in Hindi, Urdu, Kumaoni, Bajjika and Garhwali languages were available for the villagers in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Bihar

Highlight of stories from remote rural villages

- The struggles and stories of Covid-19 from villages in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Bihar were highlighted which were often overseen by the mainland newspapers.



कोविड-19 संक्रमण को रोकें

कोरोना वायरस पर सूचना पुस्तिका, अलग अलग भाषाओं में :

हिंदी / उर्दू / बज्जिका / कुमाऊनी / गढ़वाली





*PROJECT DISHA- An integrated program addressing multiple needs of
“Adolescent girls through Information, Skills and Scope of Livelihood”*

-SUPPORTED BY AZIM PREMJI FOUNDATION

The project was started in August 2021, which aims at improving the quality of life of Adolescent Girls (10-20 years) by creating a sustainable two-way communication network that enables them to understand their social development issues and advocate for policy level changes by expressing their concerns using different media platforms at national, state and local level.

Project “Disha” focusses on building the capacities of AGs from Garur and Kapkot block in Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand, that allows them to transition effectively from childhood to maturity with knowledge and skills that will positively shape their adulthood.

Journey so far

- Workshop on Basic Gender and Media Writing-Level 1 was organized by Charkha from 10th to 14th December 2021. Held in Baijnath in Garur block, it was attended by 21 identified Adolescent Girls (AGs) from 2 blocks of Bageshwar District. 10 AGs from Kapkot and 11 AGs from Garur block took part in this 5-day residential workshop. The main aim of the workshop was to guide the AGs into becoming AG leaders called ‘Disha Didi’. The residential workshop focused on basic concepts of ‘Gender and Writing’ using customized module that suited the needs of this group.
- The second level of Gender and Media Workshop for Cohort 1 of Disha Didis was organized by Charkha from May 4 – 7, 2022 at Garur in Bageshwar district of Uttarakhand. This five-day, residential workshop was part of our Project Disha supported by Azim Premji Foundation. Specially designed for the girls who had attended the Level 1 workshop in December 2021 and some new girls who were trained by our Disha Didis over the last 4 months, this workshop focused on equipping the participants with visual storytelling skills. Attended by 18 participants this workshop also marked the graduation of Disha Didis to Disha Sakhis.
- More than **100 articles** have been published in Urdu, Hindi and English written by the adolescent girls highlighting the developmental and social challenges through gendered lens.
- More than **50 poems** have been published.
- More than **30 meetings** have been conducted by girls in their villages to discuss and make their peers aware of various important topics influencing their lives.
- Imparted writing skill workshops to more than **150** girls.
- Built comprehensive understanding on Gender and how it affects their agencies.

Know the Disha Sakhis and Didis

Charkha is currently associated with 20 Disha Didi and Sakhis from Kapkot and Garur block in Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand. In this section a few of them is introduced.



Disha Sakhi Kumari Kavita

Kumari Kavita is a student of class 12 from Lamchula village, which is 22 km from district headquarter Bageshwar, Uttarakhand. A very sincere and dedicated girl, Kavita's life is surrounded with struggles and difficulties even to carry out her everyday tasks just like any other adolescent girls in her village. Everyday, she travels nearly two hours to reach school, another two

hours to reach back and then carry out the household chores she is entrusted with. Kavita has attended two level of Charkha's workshop and has become a driving force of Project Disha on the ground. So far, after attending the workshops she has got her two articles published in newspapers and media portals. Besides, she regularly conducts meetings with the peers in her village to spread the knowledge and information she has acquired through project Disha.

Articles: Pratha ke Naam Par Mahilao Pe Soshan

Corona se Gaon main Rojgar Ka Sankat

Publications: Voice of Margin, Youth Ki Awaz, Vichar Suchak Newspaper, Adhunik Rajasthan, Pratilipi Hindi, Basti Bureau, Ground Report, HindiKunj, Gram Taru.com, Janta Se Rishta, Asia Khabar, Livearyavart, Avadhnama Newspaper.



Disha Sakhi Diya Arya

Diya Arya belongs to Ason Village in Kapkot block in Bageshwar, Uttarakhand. A student of class 10, Diya has attended Charkha's two level of workshops under Project Disha. With greater dreams in her eyes, Diya joined project Disha to excel in the field of writing and be a youth leader to guide her peers. With Charkha's continuous guidance and support she has been able to publish article and several poems reflecting on social

and developmental concerns of women and adolescent girls in her region.

Article: Nahi Badli Hain Gharelu Hinsa Ka Swarup

Poems: Waqt Ye Bhi Badal Jayega Janab, Afawo Se Janmi Ye

Publications: Gram Taru.com, Pravakta.Com, Pratilipi Hindi, Vichar Suchak, Voice of Margin, Adhunik Rajasthan, Basti Bureau, Janta Se Rishta, Voice of Margin, Youth Ki Awaz, Livearyavart, Navsanchar Samachar.com, Ground Report, Devpath Newspaper, Asia Khabar, Hastakshep.com, Hindikunj.



Disha Didi Hema Rawal

Hema is a resident of Ganigaon, which is 24km away from Bageshwar in Uttarakhand. She has recently completed her 12th examination and is currently unable to continue her future studies as the closest college is in Bageshwar. As her parents are unable to fund her studies anymore, she was almost in the verge of giving up on her dreams. Meanwhile, she came across

Charkha's project and decided to be a part which not only provided her a space to grow but also continue her dream of taking up a career. Currently, Charkha is sponsoring her computer course and looking avenues to help her financially in order to continue her future studies.

Article: Ladke Ladkiyo Main BhedBhav Kyu Karta hain Samaj.

Publications: Doon Horizon, Vichar Suchak, Pratilipi Hindi, Youth Ki Awaz, Voice of Margin, Livearyavart, Gram Trau.com, Hastakshep.com, Adhunik Rajasthan, Avadhnama Hindi, Ground Report.

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IN THE LIMELIGHT: FIRST THOUSAND DAYS, EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND CHILD MARRIAGE
-SUPPORTED BY UNICEF, INDIA

The year 2021-2022 has turned out to be difficult due to second wave of Covid-19 and persistent lock downs. Despite several difficulties, Charkha completed two tranches during the time period. Meetings with Journalists from Nashik, Aurangabad and Malegaon were held workshops on the issue of Child marriage were held. During the lockdown there was a spurt in child marriage. The police and administration were engaged in emergency duties. Taking advantage of the crisis many parents chose to marry their underage daughters. The journalists from the above- mentioned places did a great job of researching and

publishing stories of child marriage that had taken place in remote areas.

In the beginning of fourth tranche, the health minister of Maharashtra expressed concern given the rise in the number of cases. The state was on red alert and recorded 33,470 new cases and 8 fatalities. This translated to team Charkha amplifying the reach in Maharashtra to future the message on Covid appropriate behaviour (CAB) and the need to vaccinate at a faster rate to build stronger communities to counter the virus effectively.

Deliverables Achieved

- A total of 16 articles were published under this project.
- The team reached out to the various stakeholders, ie. journalists and faith-based organizations to widen the scope of outreach and further the message on effectively countering Covid-19.
- Charkha was also a part of the special campaigns of UNICEF such as Responsive Care. 17 posts pertaining to the issue were created.
- Social Media Content Bucket was developed.
- Editing and Proof reading of UNICEF change- makers document.
- Editing the bios of Counsel Generals of Belgium, Japan, Sweden, Canada and Switzerland.
- Prepare impact report of breastfeeding week campaign initiated by UNICEF.
- Curated and devised a social media content bank for Responsive Caregiving with the UNICEF Maharashtra team.
- Created a content plan for government agencies and influencers under the Swastha Balak and Balika Campaign with UNICEF and other stakeholders involved.
- Designing a booklet documenting story of the NSS volunteers who have done challenging work during the Covid-19 pandemic for NSS-COVID Warriors.



Gratitude to Sir Sobha Singh Public Charitable Trust

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous funder, who has made an invaluable contribution to our organization by providing us with a grant of Rs 5 lakhs. This funding has enabled us to acquire essential equipment, including laptops, recording equipment, and a printer, significantly enhancing our work and impact.

With these essential tools at our disposal, our day-to-day operations have been streamlined, allowing us to work more efficiently and effectively towards our mission. The laptops have empowered our team members to stay connected, collaborate seamlessly, and carry out their tasks with greater precision. The recording equipment has proven to be instrumental in capturing high-quality audio and visual content during our fieldwork, enabling us to create impactful videos that shed light on critical issues and drive positive change.

The new printer has been a valuable addition, enabling us to produce necessary materials in-house, saving time and resources while maintaining quality control. This investment

has not only enhanced our productivity but also allowed us to allocate more resources towards our core initiatives and activities.

The impact of this funding extends far beyond the mere acquisition of equipment; it has been a catalyst for progress and growth in our organization. Our teams are now better equipped to document stories, disseminate knowledge, and engage with communities in a more meaningful and impactful manner.

As we reflect on our achievements this year, we acknowledge that none of this would have been possible without the unwavering support and generosity of our esteemed funder. Their belief in our vision and dedication to empowering us with the necessary resources have fueled our passion for positive change.

With this note, we express our profound gratitude to the trust, who has not only invested in equipment but also in the future of our organization and the lives we aim to touch. We commit to utilizing these resources responsibly and effectively to further our collective mission of creating a more just and equitable world.

Thank you for being a driving force behind our progress and for sharing in our commitment to making a difference.

Charkha Feature Service



Total Articles Published: 924

Thematic Areas of Articles

Environment, Covid-19, Governance, Adolescent Girls, Child Rights, Violence Against Women, Maternal Healthcare, Disaster, Education, Women in Leadership, Rural Livelihood, Sustainable Development, Employment, Migration from Rural to Urban

English Publications: 19

The Wire, Village Square, India Development Review (IDR), The Better India, Daily Excelsior, Gaon Connection English, Youth Ki Awaaz, Indian Water Portal, Reach Ladakh, Grassroots, The Pioneer

Hindi Publications: 27

The Pioneer Hindi, Lucknow, Dshbandhu, The Womaniya, Ground Report, Youth ki Awaz, Bharat Update, Bhopal Samachar, Azad Express, Aaj Hindi, Navsanchar Samachar, Lok Prasang, The Blast, Lokbharat.com, Pravakta.com, Gaon Connection, CG Khabar

Urdu Publications: 23

Inqalab, Sada-e-Kohistan, Aag (Lucknow), Quami Tanzeem (Bihar), Akhbar-e-Mashriq, Awadhnama, Chattan, Jawan Dost, Faruqi Tanzeem, Quami Tanzeem, News in Khabbar,

Hamara Samaj, Hindustan Express, Urdu Times, Jamuriyat Times, Urdu Daily Taskeen,
Urdu Daily – AAG, The Daily Lazawal, Kashmiri Uzma, Srinagar-e- Jang, Roshan Kashmir,
Tameel Irshad, Rahbar

Best of Published Features



बाढ़ में बेजुबान पशुओं की भूख मिटाना चुनौती है

अमृतांज इंदीवर, बिहार

पूर्वी भारत के अधिकांश हिस्से इस समय बाढ़ की चपेट में है। नगर से लेकर गांव तक के ताल-तलैया, गली-मुहल्ले जलमग्न हो चुके हैं। जिसकी वजह से जन-जीवन अस्त-व्यस्त हो गया है। बात जब आती है, ग्रामीण जीवन की, तो इस मुश्किल समय में सबसे पहले रोजी रोजगार की समस्या आती है। गांव के लोगों की जीविका खेतीबारी, पशुपालन और खेती आधारित रोजगार है, जो बाढ़ आने के साथ काफी प्रभावित हो जाती है। ग्रामीण भारत के अधिकांश कृषक खेती के साथ साथ गाय, भैंस, बकरी और मुर्गी आदि पालन करके जीवनरूपी नईया को खेते हैं। लेकिन बाढ़ की इस त्रासदी में इनके आय का यही साधन सबसे अधिक प्रभावित होता है। जिसकी तरफ न तो सरकार और न ही प्रशासन का ध्यान होता है।

असमय बारिश के कारण किसानों की खेतीबारी भी पिछड़ गई है। अभी तक लोगों ने धान की रोपनी भी नहीं शुरू की, तबतक बाढ़ ने दस्तक दे दिया। परिणामतः खरीफ फसल धान, मक्का आदि की बुआई भी नहीं हो पाई है। [पूरा लेख पढ़ने के लिए यहाँ क्लिक करें](#)



Kalbeliya Beadwork Hanging By a Thread

Shefali Martins, Ajmer, Rajasthan

Most famous for their 'snake charmer' dance, the Kalbeliya tribes have another precious legacy they are desperate to preserve and earn a livelihood from - the unique bead jewellery that is part of their costume.

Tiny, shiny colourful beads strung together into exquisite jewellery. You are mistaken if you thought only women wear ornaments made of these beads. Beads strung into bracelets often adorn the wrists of men too.

The women who make this colourful jewellery are the Kalbeliyas, a nomadic tribe of Rajasthan, known for being snake charmers. Just a few shops sell this jewellery. Taking the wares to a bigger consumer base would not only offer the Kalbeliya women a livelihood, but would ensure the sustenance of their art.

The Kalbeliyas of Rajasthan

The Kalbeliyas are known the world over for their famous 'snake charmer' dance. Women swirl to musical instruments and songs, mimicking a snake, as the tribes were traditionally snake handlers. The dance form is even listed as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO. [Click here to read more](#)

روزنامہ صدائے کوہستان جموں

جیت ایئر : سرفراز احمد گنائی Mob 7006910331 اسٹنٹ ایئر : محمد مقاب گنائی Mob:9622058278

میں خاتون ہوں، پانی کی خاطر تعلیم چھوڑی دی میں نے!

تحریر: سلمیٰ راضی، منڈی، پونچھ

جموں و کشمیر کے ضلع پونچھ میں گزشتہ دو دنوں ضلع ترقیاتی کوشش نے عوام کو ایک موبائل ایپ متعارف کروایا۔ جس کے ذریعہ ہر گاؤں سے کوئی بھی پانی کے متعلق شکایت حکام تک پہنچا سکتا ہے۔ شکایات تو اس موبائل ایپ کے ذریعہ بھیجی جاتی ہیں مگر پانی کیسے عوام تک رسائی حاصل کرے گا؟ پہلے تو اس شکایت کا نام شکایت عام تھا لیکن اب یہ نام تبدیل کر کے بل شکایتی کے روپ میں سامنے آیا ہے۔ ایک ایسا علاقہ جہاں کروڑوں کی آستیں میں سرکاری جانب سے منظور ہو کر زمین ساج برصرف چمک رہی ہیں۔ مگر گھر کے ساتھ مل ہے پر بل نہیں! ہر گھر اور ہر جگہ پائپوں کے جمال بچھے ہوئے ہیں۔ جہاں

واپس آتے ہیں، پھر کئی ان مہانوں کی خاطر توازن ہوتی ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ ہم غریب ہیں شاید اسی لئے ہمیں پانی نہیں دیا جاتا ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ پانی بچاؤ، زندگی بچاؤ کا نعرہ تو خوب لگتا ہے لیکن اس علاقے میں پانی دوہ زندگی بچاؤ کا نعرہ لگایا جاتا ہے۔ اسی سلسلہ میں روپیشہ کوڑ جو ایک بے سہارا خاتون ہیں اور ایک محصوم بیٹی اور دو بیٹوں کی ماں ہیں۔ وہ ایک کچے مکان میں گزر بسر کر رہی ہیں۔ جب انہوں نے اپنی آپ بیتی سنائی تو آزادی اور جمہوریت میں خواتین کے حقوق کا فقدان نظر آیا۔ ان کا کہنا تھا کہ میں ایک بیوہ خاتون ہوں۔ میرے گھر سے چالیس پچاس میٹر دور پانی کی پمپنگ ملی ہے۔ جہاں بھی پانی آتا تھا وہاں سے ہم اپنے گھر میں رہی رہتی تھی پمپنگ سے پانی کے مشکیزے وغیرہ بھر لیتی تھی۔ لیکن گزشتہ پانچ چھ ماہ سے وہ پانی نکلنے کے ملازمین کی جانب سے بند کر دیا گیا ہے۔ اب یہاں کپڑے دھونے یا نہانے کے لئے تو درکنار پینے

کی پمپنگ لگائی گئی۔ انہوں نے الزام لگایا کہ ان محلہ جات کی غریب عوام کو محکمہ بل شکایتی کے ملازمین جان بوجھ کر پانی سے محروم رکھتے ہیں اور رشوت لینے کی آڑ میں بھی ان لوگوں کا استحصال کرتے ہیں۔ محمد دین نامی ایک بزرگ کا کہنا تھا کہ ہم نے گھوڑوں پر دریائے سرن سے پانی لاکر ماتم کے دن گزارے ہیں۔ یہاں تک کہ میت کے غسل کے لئے بھی پانی میسر نہ ہو سکا۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ جہاں موت کے موقع پر یا کہ میت کے غسل کے لئے پانی میسر نہیں وہ عوام کس طرح اپنے ملازمین پر ناز کرے؟ انہوں نے سوال کیا کہ جانوروں کا کیا تصور کہ ان کا پانی بند ہے؟ اور جہاں خواتین اور بچے اپنی تعلیم پانی کی قلت کے باعث ترک کر دیں وہاں حقوق کی پاسداری کس قدر کارگر ہوگی؟ اسی سلسلے میں جب محکمہ بل شکایتی کے اعلیٰ عہدیدار سے فون پر بات کی گئی تو ان کا کہنا تھا کہ یہاں دو لکھ آستیں

[Click here to read the full article](#)

Changing Lives

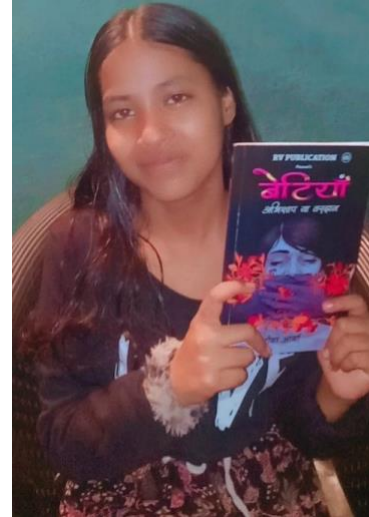
41 km from Bageshwar district lies Baghar, a remote village in the foothills of Himalayas. In few hours trek from this village, the sight of enchanting Pindari and Kafni Glaciers can be witnessed from the high mountains. Amidst this beautiful nature and surrounded by mountains, lives a group of adolescent girls who are associated with Charkha through its project Disha. Hansi Baghri, the leader of the group and a student of class 10, **recently got her article published in the famous newspaper Amar Ujala**. In this article, Hansi talks about the difficult journey the student of Baghar endures to reach their school. Absence of proper road often becomes the reason to miss their schools. The unpredictable weather in Baghar always keeps the villagers on their toes but during extreme weather condition they completely gets isolated. And hence, attending schools during these conditions becomes mere impossible. Reflecting on the difficulties and their struggle through the medium of the article has not only provided Hansi a sense of motivation to do more for her community, but also built her self-confidence to achieve bigger things in her life. The notion that belonging from a remote village has few opportunities for her to prosper has broken after the publication of her article. The article became a window for her to show the world outside that she and many alike her exist, who are in a constant battle to receive their basic needs and rights. Today, Hansi has become an inspiration for several adolescent girls in her village, who wants their articles to get published and raise the important matters that affect them and the villagers at large.

Another individual who has not only gained confidence to put forth her opinions but also began her journey as **published author and poetess** is Diya Arya. Diya has been associated with Charkha through project Disha and have attended its several writing skills workshops. This bright and powerhouse of a girl belongs to Ason village in Kapkot block in Bageshwar, Uttarakhand. Her association with Charkha has given her the space, connections and skills to polish her passion of writing and helped her in being a published author at a very young age of 16. Recently, after getting her many poems and article published through Charkha in national and regional newspapers, she was approached by a local publication house to get her collection of poems published in a form of a book. Apart from this, she has also received several appreciation and certificates for being a budding writer. Likewise, Rama Sharma, a development professional from Chaksu, Jaipur, found her calling in journalism after being one of the Charkha's Sanjoy Ghose Media Awardees. After her continuous effort in writing articles that raised social and developmental concerns of women and girls and getting it published through Charkha Features, she has **received recognition as the first woman journalist in Chaksu, Jaipur**. Charkha's guidance made her believe in her potentials and impact she can bring through her writings for herself and others.

Along with equipping the communities and especially the youths, with the power of communication, Charkha also amplify the development initiatives the citizens are taking at their local level. Whether during the workshops or field visits, the organization look for the genuine efforts that needs to be addressed and acknowledged. With this approach, Charkha met Stanzin Dothon, a resident of Phey village in one of the writing workshops held in Ladakh. At the time of meeting, Stanzin was voluntary working for and towards environmental sustainability. He ran several initiatives in Leh and Phey to aware the people on waste disposal and management. However, he was seeking for a platform that would give a leverage to his initiative and grow more connections with the like-minded people to support him in his cause. Charkha promoted his cause by publishing an article on his initiative which was written by one of the workshop participants. This article was published in **Better India** which attracted the right connection which helped him grow in his direction. Ever since, he has been **approached by several media houses for interviews and his initiative got promoted across various platforms**.



(Beautiful Baghar on the left and Hansi Baghri)



Diya Arya with her Published Book



Stanzin Dothon with his mother



Rama Sharma in middle

Actions through Articles

Charkha has always believed in creating ground impact through the articles instead of just publishing it. The larger goal is to always drive change through the power of words. The changes that many of Charkha's articles has brought about are tangible in nature- it built development infrastructure, helped in better accessibility of government schemes and promoting initiatives. ***Poonch, the border district in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir is the embodiment of Charkha's model of action driven articles.***

More than 10 years of Charkha's association with rural writers (trained by Charkha) from Poonch has resulted in initiating development in several villages. The rural writers highlight issues from remote villages in the district and get it noticed at the administration level. Recently, several articles were written reflecting on the issues faced by villagers from Chikriban- a village which still lacks basic amenities such as road and schools and can be reached after crossing a forest. After publishing these articles, all the district officers including the District Magistrate (DM) of Poonch visited Chikriban. For the first time, a team of government officials actually took the effort to trek all the way to the village from the main road which is nearly about 10 kms. ***Inder Jeet, the DM of Poonch assured to work on roads, health, ration on priority basis after the visit.***

Another campaign the rural writers took up was to write articles on the health issues concerning the Mandi block in Poonch. Several articles were published on this topic written by Charkha's Volunteer Trainer- Rayaz Malik and rural writer Salma Razi, among others which have accelerated the process of ***recruiting hospital staff such as doctors and technician labs which was lacking earlier. Further, the articles led to the installation of medical equipment in the hospital which helped the locals in accessing better health care facilities.***

Apart of these, rural writer Salma Razi has also written an article on the issue of network in Sultan Pathri village in Poonch which have brought boon for the villagers ***as the establishment of a new mobile tower is underway.*** The article helped as a medium to initiate conversation with the Block Development Chairman of Poonch and other district administration to bring change.

Upcoming Plans and Projects

- Work No Child Business
- Rural Reporting During Times of Crisis: Building Capacities of Young Women and Men from Rural Areas to Narrate their Own Stories
- UNICEF Maharashtra
- Project Disha

Publications & Guides



अभिव्यंजना

'सना लदकियों की कल्प मे'



कोविड-19 संक्रमण को रोकें

कोरोना वायरस पर सूचना पुस्तिका, अलग अलग भाषाओं में :

हिंदी / उर्दू / बज्जिका / कुमाऊनी / गढ़वाली



Board Members

Tilak Mukherjee (President)- Co-Founder & Chairman of Sigma Research, India; Co-Founder, Chairman and Senior Partner of Median Consultants, Dubai. He was also the co-founder and promoter of GfK ME, Dubai and Saudi Arabia in 2008, and was its Chairman, till August 2012.

Usha Rai (Secretary)- Usha Rai has an experience of over 40 years in journalism and has worked for mainline newspapers- Times of India, Indian Express and Hindustan Times. A pioneer in reporting on women's issues, health, environment and development, she is also the founder member of the Indian Women's Press Corp in New Delhi. At present, she is serving in the coveted post of a Deputy Director, Press Institute of India.

Late Anil Singh (Ex-Treasurer)- He was the Secretary General of SANSAD (South Asian Network for Social & Agricultural Development). The organizations vision is to make South Asia free from hunger and poverty.

Sumita Ghose (Member)- Sumita Ghose is the founder and executive director of Rangsutra, an organization of Craftspeople who own shares and have a stake in the company. She has close to 20 years of experience of working with rural communities in remote areas of India in order to bring about social and economic change.

Mathew Cherian (Member)- Mathew Cherian is a B.E. (Honours) in Civil Engineering from BITS, Pilani Rajasthan and holds a PG Diploma in Rural Management from the first batch of IRMA, Institute of Rural Management Anand, Gujarat. Later, he worked in the area of rural development with cooperatives in association with the National Dairy Development Board. He also served as Director of Oxfam India from 1987-1994.

Pritpal Marjara (Member)- Pritpal Marjara is the Managing Director of Population Service International in India. He holds a Master's degree in Information Technology and has over 15 years of diverse professional experience in social marketing, behaviorchange communication, research and Information Technology.

Rajdeep Sardesai (Member)-Rajdeep Sardesai is a senior journalist and author of the best-selling book, '2014: The Election that Changed India'. With 26 years of journalistic experience in print and TV, Sardesai was managing editor of the NDTV network before he set up the IBN network with channels like CNN IBN as founder editor.

Prashanto Chandra Sen (Member)- Prashanto Chandra Sen completed his B.A in History (Hons.) from St. Stephens College, University of Delhi. He went on to do his LLB from the University of Delhi and completed the Bachelor of Civil Law (BCL) Course from the University of Oxford, UK. He is now practicing independently and has put in 20 years of practice.

Staff Members

Chetna Verma- Manager- Programmes and Editorial

Associated with Charkha for over 10 years now, Chetna is a Disaster Management Professional and a Development Journalist. She has worked for over 9 years across J&K, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Assam, Mizoram and Meghalaya. In 2014, she was selected for the National Media Fellowship by National Foundation of India (NFI) to highlight stories on women's health in the context of climate change. In 2014 and 2015, she received the prestigious Laadli Media and Advertising Award for her reporting on gender-sensitive issues from rural India.

Shams Tamanna – Consulting Hindi Editor

Shams Tamanna is a Postgraduate in Mass Communication and Journalism. Shams worked with Charkha earlier as Hindi Editor and is currently working with DD News as Production Assistant.

Dipsikha Devi- Project Associate and Assistant English Editor

A postgraduate in sociology from Ambedkar University, Delhi, Dipsikha has previously worked as Documentation and Communication Officer with Spectra - a Rajasthan based NGO. She has been working with Charkha since March 2021.

Prasanta Acharya – Manager Finance & Accounts

A postgraduate in Operation Management, Prasanta has worked with corporate companies for several years. Post 2017, he started working with iNGOs. He has been associated with Charkha since June 2019 (through Soumya Support Solutions). At present, he is posted as Manager Finance & Admin (Project).

Akshay Mishra – Accounts & Office Assistant

Outsourced from Soumya Support Solutions in November 2019. Has been regularized as Accounts & Office Assistant on February 1, 2021.

Malvika Singh- Communication Specialist (Consultant)

A theatre practitioner, academic and media specialist, Malvika has a MPhil degree in English Studies from Ambedkar University, Delhi and has completed her Masters in Arts & Aesthetics from JNU. She had joined Charkha in December 2021 as Social Media Intern.

Suman- Assistant Hindi Editor (Trainee)

A postgraduate in Mass Communication from Kurukshetra University, Suman has prior experience of working across various media houses as Assistant Producer. She had joined Charkha in November 2021 as Project Intern.

Bhawana Mehra- District Coordinator, Project Disha (Uttarakhand)

A teacher by training, Bhawana joined Charkha as a District Coordinator under the project Disha in October 2021.

Neelam Grandy- Project Associate, Project Disha (Uttarakhand)

Neelam, a social worker, joined Charkha as a Project Associate as part of the project Disha in October 2021.

Alka Gadgil -Project Lead – UNICEF Project (Maharashtra)

With a Masters Degree in Social Work from University of Mumbai, Alka started her career as a consulting communications specialist. She's been working as Project Lead with Charkha for implementing the UNICEF funded initiative in Maharashtra since 2016.

Mithila Naik Satam- Media and Documentation Specialist, UNICEF (Maharashtra)

Mithila Naik-Satam has a Master's degree in Political Science from University of Mumbai. In her time at the dept., she initiated an online publication called Drushti with an aim to trigger into action the students' geniuses. She is also associated with Khaana Chahiye Foundation, a Mumbai based non-profit organization.

Sujata Shirke- Project Coordinator, UNICEF (Maharashtra)

Sujata Shirke is a social worker and researcher. She has founded micro finance self-help groups (SHG) in Thane and Raigad districts. She holds a post-graduation degree in Social work.

Tejaswini Tiwale- Media Mobilization and Communications Specialist, UNICEF (Maharashtra)

Tejaswini Tiwale, has completed her BFA (Bachelors of Fine Arts) in Commercial Art from Sir. J. J. Institute of Applied Art, Mumbai. She is a passionate storyteller trying to address social challenges through filmmaking and art.
