

People in Conservation

Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Security



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Special Issue on Alternatives

Opening word

Leonard Cohen, the famous Canadian poet and singer, wrote of hope in the times of despair when he coined the lines:

*There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in*

Ashish Kothari



Cohen's song, *Anthem*, to some extent, resonates with John Holloway, the Irish Marxist sociologist's views on creating "cracks" in the system, the system being the capitalist system as well power structures. Holloway described localized alternatives as cracks, however big or small they are. As examples, he mentions setting up a farmer's cooperative, a strike in a big industry, or even students protesting at the escalating costs of education (Das 2017).

The last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic have been devastating times filled with despair and hopelessness for many people across the globe. Severely affected were the most marginalized in society: the unorganized classes, small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, artisans and craft persons, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, the migrant labour force in urban areas and fisherfolk.

But in the midst of all the gloom, there were also stories of hope, stories of localized, radical alternatives that had helped local communities build resilience to deal with the sudden lockdowns, the loss of livelihoods and access to markets, and poor health infrastructure. These alternatives are many and are centered around strengthening local governance, rights and access to community forest resources, direct links to local markets, direct producer-consumer links, ecological agricultural practices, strengthening women's collectives, homestead kitchen gardens and community health empowerment.

In this volume, we share brief stories of some of these alternatives in India that were earlier featured in a series of volumes (titled "Extraordinary Work of 'Ordinary' People") produced through the

Vikalp Sangam process (<https://vikalpsangam.org/article/extraordinary-work-of-ordinary-people-in-multi-language-translation/>), as well as two stories from other countries that were featured in the first volume of "Weaving Solidarity and Hope: Beyond Pandemics and Lockdowns" produced by the Global Tapestry of Alternatives (<https://globaltapestryofalternatives.org/reports:pandemic:index>).

We hope that through these stories the hope and possibility of another world more just and ecologically resilient, is kept centre stage and alive. Till then, let's remember: *That's how the light gets in!*

Sujatha Padmanabhan

Das, Pallav. 2017. 'The power equation and India's future'. In Ashish Kothari and K. J. Joy (eds), *Alternative Futures: India Unshackled*, AuthorsUpFront, New Delhi. pp 103-119

1. News and Information

How self-help groups in rural Odisha helped both farmers and consumers during lockdown

By Pradeep Baisakh



Pratima Harijan (right) of Madhu Babu SHG with her autorickshaw. | Photo Credit: Sandhya Baisnab

An unusual scene was unfolding in Kalimela block in Odisha's Malkangiri district. Some farmers had let their cattle loose to feed on the fruits and vegetables that were growing abundantly in the well-tended fields. The truth is, they had little choice. With no hope of selling their produce, the farmers had decided to feed it to their cattle. In normal times, the produce would have been bought by local traders, who in turn would have transported it to cities like Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh or Raipur and Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh. Or even as far as their own State's capital, distant Bhubaneswar, 650 km from Kalimela. But there was a lockdown — demand had fallen and transport was scarce. Vegetable trading had ground to a halt.

Then the block administration hit upon an idea: ask self-help groups (SHGs) to procure the farm produce and sell it to local consumers. The idea clicked. With markets mostly closed and with movement restrictions, people were having a hard time buying vegetables and other necessities.

SHG to SHG

The past few years have seen the formation of several SHGs in Odisha, supported by the government and NGOs, the idea being to empower

rural women and help them ensure a basic income for their families. And so, in the first week of April, the administration asked some of these SHGs to team up for their plan in Kalimela. They agreed and soon developed a system of division of labour. First, members of the Odisha Livelihood Mission would identify farmers and their produce; then a few SHGs would buy the fruits and vegetables and sell it to a second set of SHGs. The latter would then take it to the villagers for doorstep sales.

In short, it was an 'SHG to SHG' model, similar to the 'business to business' models popular in urban areas. "The model worked quite well," says Roslin Das, who works with Odisha Livelihood Mission. She explains the rationale: "Some SHGs were able to buy the fruits and vegetables from farmers, but for transporting them to people's doorsteps, we co-opted SHGs whose members either had an autorickshaw or could arrange one. Such division of work made the process smooth."

Smooth running

The vegetables they sold included brinjal, tomato, bitter ground, cucumber, ladies' fingers, chilli, sweet corn and pumpkin, besides fruits like banana and watermelon. Some 17 SHGs were involved in the procurement work, while 69 worked with doorstep deliveries.

Apart from selling the produce to other villagers, they also delivered it to the free kitchens run by the government to feed the destitute and the elderly during the lockdown.

These vegetables also reached the Panchayat-level quarantine centres that soon came up. While the block authorities co-ordinated with different agencies to ensure the process ran smoothly, the government provided initial low-interest loans in the range of ₹50,000 to ₹1 lakh to those SHGs that needed it. The cash reached the women through mobile banking.

The scheme soon became so popular that not only were mobile numbers painted on the backs of the autorickshaws for call-and-deliver services, but the women also started picking up and delivering

fish and milk, with battery-operated refrigerators installed in these rickshaws.

Common good

Champa Kisani has studied till Class X. She belongs to the Biswa Maa Laxmi SHG in Potakhal village. "The vegetables were rotting. We bought them from the farmers and sold them at a small profit to other SHGs. We earned ₹500-700 a day," says Kisani. This money has now been invested in fish farming and a kitchen farm.

Pratima Harijan, 38, a tribal woman from Madhu Babu SHG, can barely sign her name but she says that she and her friends "ferried the autorickshaws and sold the vegetables to people at their doorsteps." The small ₹500-1,000 earnings they made per day helped them meet their household expenses during the lockdown. Everyone benefited. Farmers could sell their produce, the village women made a modest profit, and consumers got vegetables delivered at their doorsteps.

The scheme was soon taken up by all the blocks in Malkangiri district. This, in turn, brought in climate-related benefits — produce was no longer hauled hundreds of kilometres in vehicles burning gallons of fuel. A new model had emerged as the best community-level solution during these difficult times.

Now, as the lockdown is relaxed and things gradually limp back to normal, in Kalimela some seven or eight rickshaws still operate, showing the sustainability of the model. Both demand and supply might last for the long term.

Published in The Hindu (online version published on Aug 8th 2020)

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/how-self-help-groups-in-rural-odisha-helped-both-farmers-and-consumers-during-lockdown/article32294535.ece>

Vikalp Vartas – A series of online presentations and dialogues

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic induced lockdown and subsequent difficulties in meeting physically, as also the need to give a voice to communities responding to the health and economic crises, a series of online presentations and discussions titled 'VikalpVarta' was initiated through the Vikalp Sangam process in April 2020.

21 Vartas were organised in 2020; a second series began in 2021. Recordings of the Vartas are available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVGJfYVd8JMXoo4JE-0JNBoQk2fzxL9vK>

and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vRpoOVfF9o&list=PLVGJfYVd8JMWWeHoK6UxG-irmG3gTUUqAN>



2. Perspective

Are we listening to the lessons taught in the first year of Covid-19?

Ashish Kothari

Another wave of COVID, another round of lockdowns, another long journey back home for migrant workers. If there is one lesson we are learning after a year of COVID19, it is that we have not learnt any lessons, at least not the crucial ones.

2020 exposed the abysmal flaws of an economic system that drives tens of millions of people into insecure jobs that they can lose overnight, with no alternative or safety net. This is the fate of a majority of the 90% of India's workforce that is in the unorganized sector. Over the last few decades of 'development', economic policies have created a massive pool of cheap labour for the state-dominated or capitalist industrial class, adding to the already large numbers of landless agricultural labourers caught in traditional caste, class and gender discrimination. Since 1991, about 15 million farmers have moved out of agriculture, many because the economic system simply does not make farming (including pastoralism, fisheries and forestry) remunerative enough. And 60 million people have been physically displaced by dams, mining, expressways, ports, statues, industries, with mostly poor or no rehabilitation. Meanwhile, exploiting such people desperate for any kind of job, as also nature, a minority becomes wealthier by the second. The richest 5% of Indians now earn as much as the remaining 95%.

As Aseem Shrivastava and I showed in *Churning the Earth*, the Indian government's capitulation to global financial forces in 1991 significantly increased the vulnerability of hundreds of millions of people and caused irreversible damage to our environment. Of course, not all of India's unorganized or informal workforce is *necessarily* insecure; farmers, fishers, pastoralists, forest-dwellers, craftspersons, entertainers, are relatively secure if their resource base (land, nature, tools, knowledge, clientele) is intact, or if they have guaranteed access to a security net like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural

Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). But then they are not available as cheap labour, so they or their livelihoods must be displaced in the name of 'development'. The three farm laws introduced by the government last year will result in further handing agricultural controls over to corporates, creating an even bigger pool of exploitable labour. Farmers realise this, which explains the intensity and resolve of their prolonged agitation.

It is true that agriculture alone cannot provide full employment in villages. And that the youth do not necessarily want to remain in traditional occupations especially if they are also associated with caste and gender discrimination. But these realities result from our collective failure to tackle these issues at their roots. In any case, since 1991 there has been, for the most, 'jobless growth' in the formal sector, meaning those leaving villages end up in some other informal work, mostly very insecure.

But there are alternatives to such a trajectory, and they provide clear lessons. Since mid-2020, we have compiled dozens of examples of what we call the Extraordinary Work of 'Ordinary' People – Beyond Pandemics and Lockdowns (<https://vikalpsangam.org/?s=Extraordinary+Work>). In the midst of COVID19, several communities have had enough to eat, dignified livelihoods to sustain themselves, community solidarity systems to help the most vulnerable, collective health systems to ensure the virus does not run rampant, and alternative methods of learning their children could enjoy.

In Telangana and Nagaland, respectively, Dalit women of Deccan Development Society (DDS) and tribal women of North-East Network ensured complete food security for dozens of villages throughout 2020. Community health systems in Sittilingi panchayat, Tamil Nadu and in Kunariya panchayat, Kachchh, denied COVID any chance of gaining a foothold. In Assam, Farm2Food worked with several thousand students to continue local food growing in schools and communities. In Kolkata, the youth group Pranthakatha created a local neighbourhood safety net for 32 widows who had been forced to beg for a living. In the western Himalaya, Titli Trust, Birds of Kashmir,

CEDAR, and Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust continued nature guide activities with local communities, to build capacity for when tourism returns. Beejotsav Nagpur, the Gurgaon Organic Farmers' Market, village self-help groups facilitated by Navadarshanam in Tamil Nadu, Samaj Pragati Sahayog in MP, and Mahila Umang Samiti in Uttarakhand were able to ensure that farm produce reached a (mostly local) consumer base, averting economic collapse for thousands of farmers.

These and over a thousand other stories of alternatives (www.vikalpsangam.org), provide crucial lessons. The biggest is that local self-reliance for basic needs, and localized exchanges of products and services, are far more effective in securing people's livelihoods than are long-distance markets and jobs. Rather than incentivize big industry to take over most production, virtually all household needs – soaps, footwear, furniture, utensils, clothes, energy, even housing, food, drinks – can be produced in a decentralized manner by thousands of communities. The shortage of purely agriculture-based livelihoods can be made up by crafts, small-scale manufacturing, and services needed by their own or surrounding populations. As Suresh Chhanga, sarpanch of Kunariya in Kachchh told me when I visited in January, "if we can produce most of our household items locally, we not only save the Rs. 40 lakhs we spend *every month* buying these from outside companies, but we also create full local livelihood security." The women's collective Maati in Uttarakhand showed how farming and crafts must also continue along with community-led ecotourism so that there is a buffer, should one of these fail.

Unfortunately, the government's most recent packages, ironically labelled 'atmanirbharbharat' (self-reliant India), are actually increasing the control of distant markets and companies over people's lives, and increasing ecological damage (e.g. by coal mining in areas of central India where communities are still relatively self-reliant on land and forests). Where some government initiatives have learnt the lessons, as in the case of Kerala's Kudumbashree programme that enables dignified livelihoods to several million women, we saw a visible difference in how COVID was dealt with. Many of these examples of rural revitalization also

display significant reduction in outmigration, and even the return of people from cities to villages.

Local self-reliance has to go along with worker control over the means of production, more direct forms of democracy (*swaraj*), and struggles to eliminate casteism and gender discrimination. Again, there are many examples of this. In central India, communities that have successfully claimed collective legal control over surrounding forests, and mobilized towards adivasi *swasashan* (self-rule), survived the COVID lockdown much better than those who did not have such control. In Spiti, as soon as COVID hit, a Committee for Preventive Measures and Sustainable Development was set up by local communities to ensure full health safety and encourage greater self-reliance in food and livelihoods. Dalit women farmers of DDS have shown how to resist gender and caste discrimination.

But governments have been most reluctant to enable such political and economic empowerment. It threatens their power, and their ability to hand over lands and resources to corporations as they please. Both the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, meant to empower village and city assemblies, or laws like Forest Rights Act, have been only half-heartedly implemented. The current government has even tried weakening them or programmes like MNREGS, which has been a life-saver for millions during the lockdown.

An economy that promotes mass vulnerability only increases social strife, creating an atmosphere ripe for communal, class and caste violence. This will eventually engulf all of us, other than the super-rich who will escape to some safer part of the world.

Many millions would not have to go back to insecure, undignified jobs in cities and industrial zones, if they could have economic security in their own villages and towns. Alternative pathways that provide this are available, and have been demonstrated to work in the COVID crisis. But are we listening to their lessons?

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/coronavirus-pandemic-india-informal-sector-economy-7285193/>



3. Stories of Hope

Theme: Producing food locally; Strengthening Local systems of exchange; Using digital tools for communications

The Strength of Localized Production and Marketing: Sreelakshmi Women's Collective shows the way in Kerala (Authors : Usha S. and Arun R.S)

Thanal, a voluntary research and action group founded in 1986, has been involved in research on biodiversity and environmental education, training and advocacy. In the last two decades the focus has been on organic farming/agroecology and food sovereignty, zero waste, chemical safety and climate change. Thanal works at the grass root level with farmers, community organisations, NGOs, panchayats, students etc. on educating, training and empowering them on these topics as well as engagement with the State Government on policy issues. Thanal is one of the organizations, which initiated marketing of organic products produced by organic farmers way back in 2003 by bringing farmers and consumers to a common platform.

Vellar is a small coastal village close to Kovalam, the famous tourism destination of Kerala. This is a small, mountainous and beautiful place with a high density of population and small land holdings. Farming is not a major livelihood activity in this region for several decades. But the active decentralization of governance, formation of women SHGs, awareness about food safety issues, training on organic farming by different agencies like Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi, Thanal and Venganoor Grama Panchayath has led to a significant change in the mindset of people here. Many small holders in this area gradually began cultivating vegetables, bananas, papaya and yams on their land. Around 70 farmers, mostly women, who got training from Thanal started producing organic vegetables for their own consumption and later for the market too. Initially, they were farming individually using family labour but later some of them started forming small groups.

The Sreelakshmi collective, formed in 2018 with 15 women farmers as members, has been engaged in production and sale of organic vegetables on 3.5 acres of land. They are now almost self-sufficient in terms of seeds and organic inputs. During the lock down they faced several issues, with marketing becoming a major challenge. The families lost income since they could not move out for work. Most of the people in this area are daily wage workers or working in hotels, shops and such other establishments in and around Kovalam tourism destination.

With no transportation available during the lockdown, women farmers could not go to the market to sell their vegetables. Later, a few active members of the Sreelakshmi group found out that their neighbors were in need of vegetables and identified them through telephonic calls and



Chandrika Amma in her kitchen garden

through their ward members. They initially started supplying different vegetables to 90 persons belonging to 25 households. The production went up, with good sunlight and intermittent rains being very favorable. More over, people had time to take care of their farms.

During lockdown, the staff of Organic Bazar (an organic social enterprise started by Thanal in Trivandrum – www.organic-bazaar.in) made a call to all organic farmers to find out their problems. They came forward to collect vegetables from their farm and it became a great help to the women's collective. This motivated many local small producers and many of them got seeds from Sreelakshmi women's collective and started vegetable cultivation. These women became the resource team, helping the new members to do organic vegetable cultivation.

The pandemic also brought in more discussion on food production and the government decided to increase production of vegetables, tubers and fruits in the state. The Agriculture department and Kudumbasree Mission also started supplying seeds. Members of Sreelakshmi collective also got some support from Kudumbasree Mission.

Women Farmers' Food and Agriculture Resilience-building as response to COVID-19 (Author: WGWLO)

The Working Group for Women Land Ownership (WGWLO), an unregistered but formal network of NGOs and CBOs, has worked since 2002 to advance women accessing and owning land rights in Gujarat. In the last 18 years, the network has worked to advance women's land rights; their identity as women farmers; and their access to productive resources and entitlements. WGWLO has advanced various strategies and models such as community based paralegal workers, and block-level resource centres called Swa-Bhoomi Kendras, the learnings from which are shared with other like-minded civil society networks and governments. The Swa Bhoomi Kendras and community cadre of paralegals and

Mahila Kisan Sakhis work in over 225 villages in 15 blocks and 11 districts across Central, North-East and South Gujarat with women farmers from tribal, feudal, pastoralist, and other marginalized agrarian communities.

When WGWLO asked its members about the distress women farmers had experienced during and post the lockdowns, they found that close to 90% expressed a loss in the sale of their last Rabi produce. Vegetable growing farmers in Tapi district in South Gujarat shared that people were destroying vegetable crops due to a rumour that vegetables caused the virus to spread! The same women farmers also had to incur further debts by borrowing seeds for Kharif; and also to purchase ration, other household items etc. Vasantiben Lavjibhai of Patdi, Surendranagar echoed several women farmers' predicament of consuming their preserved seed stock as food as the influx of returning migrant family members stretched their depleting resources.

The intervention that WGWLO and their members adopted combined a series of actions at different levels by the members. Beginning with building a collective understanding among the network members of the implications for Kharif agricultural season and for women farmers especially, this understanding was taken to women farmers locally through the women's federations and block level community cadre of paralegal workers and Mahila Kisan Sakhis. Digital communication tools and virtual meetings played a crucial role in keeping women farmers connected to their federation leaders.

The Mahila Kisan Sakhis reached more than 15,000 women farmers through messaging with information regarding growing kitchen gardens, agricultural practices using locally available resources, diversifying cultivation practices and crops for longer term food security also beneficial for the land resource, promoting use of local, indigenous or improved variety seeds rather than hybrid seeds. Meeraben Padhiyar in an interior village in Ahwa, Dang found the audio messages on *sajivkheti*



Mahila Kisan Sakhi Kanak distributing seed kits to women farmers for kharif season farming -SWATI, Patadi, Surendranagar

(Photo courtesy WGWLO)

practices extremely novel – “we receive useful information on how to make natural fertilizers without having to go anywhere.”

In a more material way, as a response to the need voiced by many women farmers before the Kharif season of not being able to afford necessary inputs for cultivation, support of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, WGWLO was able to mobilize support from donors and other social philanthropists for 4,200 women farmers, especially single women farmers, women agricultural laborers and women farmers from the reverse migrant families. Seeds of major local food crops (both indigenous and improved) were provided along with support for women farmers to collectively prepare bio-inputs like Panchamruta, Jeevamruta, Panchagavya and others.

Seed banks initiated in 2019 of traditional indigenous seed varieties sourced from local farmers, exchanged among WGWLO members and obtained from other partners and collaborators of the network, supported 850 women farmers during this Kharif season. All of these approximately 5,000 women farmers will bring back, on harvest, one-half to twice the amount of seeds to the community

seed banks which will be managed by members of the women federations for further exchange in the next agricultural seasons.

For small and marginal women farmers, the pandemic has caused social, economic livelihood and sustenance challenges that a basic relief works program can help only but temporarily. Collectively, combining relief with the above interventions, WGWLO tried to rebuild their livelihoods, which enabled women farmers to rebuild better.



Theme: Direct farmer-consumer links

Thanamir Apples: Stronger together

(Author: Ramya Nair)

Thanamir Village is nestled at the base of Mt. Saramati, the highest peak in the Northeastern state of Nagaland. This region is the traditional homeland of the indigenous Yimkhiong Naga, who pursue a number of nature-based livelihoods, particularly slash and burn or *jhum* farming, fishing, hunting, mushroom picking, bee keeping and apple farming. Apples first made their way into this remote border village through a soldier who presented fruits to

a village elder who planted its seeds nearly four decades ago. Now known as the “Apple village of Nagaland”, Thanamir had hosted eight editions of the annual apple festival since 2010, until the pandemic hit in early 2020.

Challenges faced due to the pandemic

Thanamir lies on the Indo-Myanmar border in Kiphire district of Nagaland and gained road connectivity from Pungro Town, the nearest town and regional headquarter, only after 2008. The remote and mountainous roads in this part of the region make for poor connectivity, especially for trade. The apple festival was initiated by citizens and local leaders to boost tourism and agro-economy from Thanamir. Over the years, it became a significant part of the local economy and culture. Among the many socio-economic disruptions caused by the pandemic in Thanamir, some key ones affected students who had to return home and continue their education on sparse electricity and poor internet connection, daily wage laborers who were restricted from travelling to other regions in search of opportunities, and residents who experienced lack of access to essential commodities, services, and businesses in the town. Along with the apple festival being cancelled in 2020, the curb on local travel restricted customers and tourists from coming into Thanamir. The impact of this was borne by most apple farmers, who make up over 60% of residents.



Apple trees in a Thanamir resident's backyard

(Photo by N. Lemchimong Yimkhiung)

Addressing the pandemic

In the years prior to 2020, individuals and families would sell apples independently, as the opportunity arose. Farmers had been growing apples for many years in the hope of transforming this into a larger, community level business. But there were many barriers to their plans: poor road connectivity, having relied on outside support in the past, and fear of multiple taxes to be paid enroute to big towns and cities. However, in the current times, restrictions and isolation during the pandemic allowed the Thanamir residents to dedicate time and thought to bolster apple sales collectively as a community. Apart from trying to recoup a lost livelihood, another motivating factor for members of the Thanamir Village Student Union (TVSU) was to raise funds for their upcoming Golden Jubilee in 2023. Together, different groups of people from the Student Union, Village Council and the general public joined forces to pool their time and resources to strategize and execute a way to market Thanamir apples. While travelling to transport and sell apples from place to place was challenging, residents tapped into advertising their apples on multiple social media platforms with the aim to target a wide customer base. Exercising the knowledge they already had of social media, the youth used this to their benefit and developed a new networking system. Further, a number of customers were found through print advertisements in the local newspaper. People also relied on word of mouth marketing to friends and family in towns and cities like Dimapur, Kohima, Pungro Town and Kiphire Town. The most important step in their plan was to offer home delivery to their customers in these cities, which allowed both sellers and consumers to avoid busy markets during the unlock phases of the pandemic. Through this process they also built connections with their customers, who on many occasions ordered multiple times. By the end of their sales, there was more demand than supply remaining! In both 2020 and 2021, residents sold 500-1000 kgs of the 7-8 varieties of apples grown in Thanamir.

Gurgaon Farmers' Market (Author: Manas Arvind)

The Gurgaon Organic Farmers Market (GOFM) is a weekly market that has run continuously since 2014, till the COVID lockdown. This initiative connects about 20 organic farmers around Gurgaon with over 500 families living in Gurgaon. With the lockdown, the market went online, where customers have their baskets door-delivered. All these years, it has remained a profit-free and fully voluntary effort, and runs with a charter of ethics.

The farmers are mostly local, from small to large, as long as they are willing to adhere to the values of GOFM. The market has both farmers and aggregators (organic stores) setting up stalls. The prices are determined by farmers themselves.

Volunteers and some enthusiastic customers visit the farms regularly, to 'verify' that they are organic; GOFM does not believe in or encourage organic certification, and works on relationships of trust. There have been cases where farmers have cheated and been asked to leave. But the incentive to remain organic is so high that these cases are extremely rare.

Manas Arvind, one of the founders, co-manages an online group farmers-markets-india@googlegroups.com, of those already running farmers markets or interested in starting one.



Theme: Enhancing livelihood opportunities through ecotourism related activities

Birds of Kashmir Lead the Way for Eco-tourism and Livelihood Generation

(Authors: Irfan Jeelani and Ritwika Patgiri)

Birds of Kashmir was founded by Irfan Jeelani, a 32-year old bird enthusiast from the small town of Kangan in Ganderbani district of Kashmir. This initiative was begun during the lockdown with the aim to attract birdwatchers and familiarize other tourists with the region's avifauna. The idea was also to generate livelihoods in an eco-friendly and sustainable way.

Jeelani was always interested in trekking and had gone on trekking expeditions with various trekking groups in Kashmir. "While trekking, I used to observe nature and click pictures," he says, "clicking pictures of birds became my passion. I started to read about the flora and fauna but was disheartened when I found there has not been much research done on birds by locals. Whatever research is available has all been done by foreigners."

Jeelani started by posting pictures on social media. He photographed 243 different bird species in the Kashmir valley which caught the attention of many prominent national & international birders.

Aftermath of the pandemic

When the pandemic hit, everyone was forced to stay indoors. The lockdown was a difficult time for the tourism sector as well as for communities dependent on such ventures. The youth became uncertain about their future and unemployment peaked. It was then that Jeelani started a concept called "*Birding from Balcony or Birding from Backyard*". "My aim was to draw the viewer in and acquaint them with the avifauna of the region," he says, "this will also give them a wonderful opportunity to click something different and post it on our social media portal." This concept eventually got evolved into a club - the Birds of Kashmir (BOK).

Jeelani does not want to limit the group to only Kashmir unlike many other such groups with lesser participation. His idea was to create a broad group that will also act as a platform for the youth to showcase their work and guide them to become successful professionals in the area. He succeeded in doing this and BOK today has four thousand active members from different countries.

As BOK expanded, Jeelani started to get calls from different bird enthusiasts for bird touring. Jeelani saw this as an opportunity for generating a source of sustainable income for the youth of the region. Jeelani works with 30-40 youth and trains them personally to guide bird enthusiasts and other tourists. The youth are then paid by the tourist groups.

"Kashmir is marked by a rich biodiversity including a large number of bird species, many of which are unique to Kashmir," Jeelani says, "and after BOK expanded, we have started getting several requests for birding tours and nature tours which has emerged as a concept in Europe. We have subsequently started some eco-friendly tours where we are directly taking the birders to their desired destination. This has become a source of income generation to the people of that area."



Photo: Irfan Jeelani

Despite the sustainability of this income generation, BOK has kept the number of visitors to a limited number because of the pandemic. This can later be expanded to generate more environmentally sustainable employment.

SPREAD NE: Healthcare and Livelihood

(Author: Shantanu Muluk)

SPREAD NE (Society for the Promotion of Rural Economy & Agricultural Development North East) is an NGO that works with the vision of gradual but steady transformation of agricultural practices from chemical to organic production. SPREAD NE works in the entire north-eastern region, creating farm and food entrepreneurs using natural resources sustainably and equitably for inclusive growth in the sector. It was founded in 2017 in Guwahati by a farmer, Samir Bordoloi, and encourages local people to eat local food from local resources.

It has helped small and marginal farmers in nutrition security by helping them develop their homestead gardens into organic nutrition and medicinal gardens and has also created sustainable livelihoods by marketing the surplus through formation of farmers' cooperatives. Through its Green Commando (GC) programme, it has facilitated, trained and created a network of change-makers who promote zero-cost organic farming.

Responding to COVID-19

Samir conceived of the idea of a Community Wellness Centres (CWC) to address the multiple issues which got exacerbated during the pandemic: a market for agricultural produce and poor health care facilities.

During a trip to Kolongpur village to support Mohe Phangcho (a GC) who was training farmers in producing a food forest crop, two stories that he heard motivated him to start the CWC initiative. He learnt that 12 babies were born in a jeep, while transporting pregnant women to the nearest hospital. Mohe Phangcho also narrated the moving story of carrying his ailing mother in a bamboo stretcher through the hilly roads to the Sonapur hospital, only to lose her at the end.

The CWC would attract doctors to the village by offering a farm and village tourism programme. The villagers of Kolongpur village came forward and dedicated a space for the Centre in their village and also donated bamboo and thatch grass for it. They constructed the building in a mere 15 days as they had the expertise and skills to do so! They sought assistance for the construction of some bamboo huts with proper sanitation facilities which would serve as accommodation for the doctors.

They planned several activities around agrotourism: trails through orange orchards and roselle food forests, meals prepared with local food, farm-stays and camping. In exchange, the farmers would request doctors, including veterinarians, to give 3 hours of medical service to the community.

The CWC in Kolongpur started in September 2020. The population of the village is 700 to 800,



Promoting agrotourism as an additional source of livelihood.

Photo courtesy SPREAD NE

all belonging to the Amri Karbi tribe. The main occupation of the people is agriculture.

Dr. Swastika Padmapati, a young doctor from Assam, was the first doctor to offer her services to the farmers of the village. Her visit built the confidence of SPREAD NE and the farmers. The network of GCs and the use of social media helped in popularising the concept, reaching out and connecting with many young doctors and willing practitioners. Young doctors also came up as volunteers to support the movement now started by the community.



Dr. Swastika Padmapati, a young doctor from Assam at the Community Wellness Centre (Photo by SPREAD NE)

Samir's idea was to make it self-sustained, so he trained the women farmers of the village to make herbal wellness beverages from native nutraceutical plants like the roselle herbal tea. The Centre developed its first marketable product, Roselle Herbal Tea branded as 'Hanserong' Roselle tea. The women's group generated a fund of about Rs. 65,000 from the sale of roselle herbal tea grown with zero external input.

Under their latest initiative, "Slow & Active Living Programme", they are looking at slow fashion products like woven cloth which can help empowerment. They use traditional looms and ahimsa silk which use much less water to produce garments and tapestry products. They made use of social media to advertise their products and speed-post services for delivery in different parts of India. These Centres are designed to provide for not only health care but also livelihood security through agrotourism and the production of wellness food products. In a way, these Centres converge health care, livelihood security, and women's empowerment.



Theme: Access to minor forest produce based livelihoods and forest resources; Community forest governance

Governance led by Gram Sabhas

(Author: Keshava Gurnule)

"The Gram Sabhas ensured food security for all families, including an estimate of the quantity of food required, especially by the most marginalised. They arranged a free and dry cooked meal for people. Due to the high number of migrant workers returning home, quarantine facilities were made in the district and food was provided to the workers." Keshav Gurnule, a member of SRISHTI-a community support organization -commented on how the Gram Sabhas led the COVID management plans.

Ambagarh chowki is one of the nine development blocks within the district Rajnandgaon in the state of Chhattisgarh. In this block, the majority of the population is Adivasi (Gond, Kanwar, Halba and Baiga) who are dependent on the forest and agriculture. In 2012-13, the villages of Pangri, Khairi, Kesaldabari, Padaki, Sonoli and Durretola got their Community Forest Rights recognition certificate in the name of the Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMCs *are composed of both Forest Department and forest communities*) under which minor forest produce, grazing and Nistar (*community rights recognised at the time of Princely States and Zamindari systems*) rights were obtained.

The Gram Sabhas rejected the JFMC plan and independently formed Community Forest Rights Management Committees (CFRMCs *are composed entirely by Adivasi and Forest Dwellers to guide the management of community forest resources*) to exercise their rights, patrol the forests and practice CFR conservation.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, the community exercised their CFR as per the management plan previously passed and approved by the Gram sabhas. At the same time, the Gram Sabhas initiated and led a COVID lockdown governance process. The government and police administration, Forest Department and Health Department only followed

and supported the Gram Sabha-led initiative at a later moment. In fact, the local administration praised and supported the plans of the Gram Sabhas that encouraged local and forest-based food security, thereby preventing crowding in marketplaces. The plans were around forest protection and conservation, minor forest produce collection and sales, food security and distribution and livelihood management.

When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic and nationwide lockdown was to be announced, the Gram Sabhas declared a full lockdown. However, soon after, communities faced difficulties in getting grocery items, medicines and vegetables. Therefore, the Gram Sabhas made a decision to cope with this difficulty through a solidarity process. They decided to build a system to distribute medicinal plants grown around homes, farm vegetables and forest vegetables while banning villager's from going to or consuming from commercial markets for the same. Only village shopkeepers were issued a pass to bring some necessary grocery items and medicines.

As part of CFR management plans and MGNREGA scheme, a forest pond and Nistar pond were made and fisheries businesses were initiated in these ponds for employment. At the same time, indigenous plants like Jimikanda (Elephant Foot Yam/ *Amorphophallus paeoniifolius*), Kochaikanda (Vine Potato/ *Colocasia esculenta*) and Kewkanda (*Costus speciosus*) were planted.



The community carries out their regular CFR management work, while maintaining a safe distance.

The CFRMCs gave identity cards and passes to the villagers/ locals to carry out the daily collection of forest goods. For daily use and consumption, they decided that three women and three men from each hamlet should be assigned a different section of the forest, to collect fruits, flowers, tubers, vegetables, firewood and fodder grass every day. The committees devised a plan for the collection of Minor Forest Produce (MFPs) such as Mahua fruits and flowers (*Madhuca longifolia*), Char (*Buchanania lanzan*) and Tendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) leaves. They decided to assign two persons from each family a specific place in the forest, and each person wore a mask while maintaining a gap of 10 meters between each family's place of collection.

People were barred from going to the markets outside the village. Inter village movement was also restricted. All the routes within the forest were sealed and the community kept a check on theft of forest tubers, fruits and other minor forest produce by outsiders. In these ways, overcrowding in the forest was avoided and community members kept different areas of the forest safe from smuggling. In order to spread awareness about COVID19, the Gram Panchayats were instructed to paint slogans with health information on walls in public locations and to use a loudspeaker to share information.

Decrease in outmigration (Authors: Pratibha Shinde and Satresen Motiram)

Nandurbar district has the second highest acreage of CFR recognition in Maharashtra, where in April 2018, communities had titles over 2,16,723.10 acres of land¹. The forests have plenty of Bhutya (*Gum tree/ Sterculia urens*), Mahua flowers (*Madhuca longifolia*), Cuddapah Almond (Char tree/ *Buchanania lanzan*) trees and as part of CFR Management plans, the CFRMCs are guiding to plant more trees that help to support livelihood of forest dwellers.

The community is organised into MFP collectives, comprising members who collect the produce.

1. <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/community-forest-rights-out-of-12009-claims-submitted-since-2006-61-27-per-cent-accepted-5211217/>

The CFRMCs gather the minor produce from each collective and give them competitive prices and a bonus. This is possible as they sell the MFPs directly to traders and avoid all middlemen. The committee also has guidelines to allot funds to support a person who is unable to collect forest produce for one season, due to some difficulties, to guarantee everyone livelihood during the season.

Pratibha Shinde, part of a local NGO Lok Samanvay Pratisthan, shares "*Until 2016, a lot of people used to migrate out of Nandurbar district for work. Workers would go for six months as laborers to work in agricultural fields, however now that has stopped. During the COVID19 lockdown, the villages had livelihood: in collection of forest produce, tree plantation through MGNREGA and building ponds and water harvesting for irrigation and other purposes through the CFRMCs. In fact, an entire blueprint for water management in the district, focused on the Toranmal region, is being implemented by the committees. The workers on an average received INR 250 -INR 300 per day for their work. Staying in the village has benefits, they were able to protect the forests, and also look after the education of their children.*"

During the COVID-19 lockdown, CFRMCs in Nandurbar were organised and sold gum to cities like Indore and Mumbai at INR 70/kg. The villagers were paid INR 50/kg. for the labour of collecting and INR 10/kg. as a bonus of the profit. They also sold



Community planted local trees on CFR areas

Mahua at INR 50/kg. and paid villagers INR 40/kg for collection with an additional bonus of INR 5/kg from the profits. People could take their earnings from forest collection and purchase necessary items at shops in the village, even during lockdown.

Over the years, the communities have planted tree species that can be used to extract MFPs. During this lockdown, villagers planted mango trees etc., which could be beneficial for future livelihoods and food security. This year communities have harvested forest produce, been paid for the labour, and received bonuses from the profits of the sales on Mahua and Gum trees. For some of the other MFPs, the committees are awaiting a better price in order to sell.



Theme: Using lockdown time effectively

Community Connect Challenge - Building leadership and civic awareness in youth

(Authors: Pankhuri Jain, Kejal Savla and Aravind Natarajan)

The Blue Ribbon Movement (BRM) is a Mumbai based youth-led movement that works on building youth leadership and connected communities for a better world. It believes in principles of deep democracy and practices 100% consent based decision making. The Community Connect Fellowship (CCF) is BRM's flagship programme. It was started with the intention of engaging the youth of Mumbai in constructive action while increasing civic engagement and building interpersonal skills of the fellows.

Due to the pandemic the fellowship was put on hold in 2020 and this gave the team the opportunity to rethink, reflect, redesign and reinvent the fellowship. To continue their civic journey and to engage youth meaningfully with fun and learning, BRM came up with a two-week online civic challenge called Community Connect Challenge (CCC) with the intent of building youth leadership and civic understanding for local action in Mumbai. The CCC journey was a fresh perspective for the participants

as they came to see the city of Mumbai through a different lens. It looked at the city's history and culture, and helped reconnect participants with their identity as Mumbaikars. It also helped them to take the small steps required to be an active citizen.

CCC included four skill building sessions and 21 post session tasks. The focus of these sessions was to build an intentional relationship with Mumbai from a holistic lens beyond a geographical place they were born in or moved to. Through different activities, the participants connect to different aspects of the city: its food, its public spaces/ places, its defining moments or events and so on. It also included understanding the civic system of Mumbai, citizens' rights and duties and building communication skills like listening and those required to work in a community.

The real "Challenge" however was the post session tasks. The 21 tasks gave the participants a hands-on experience of what they learnt in the sessions. Some of the tasks included talking to one's house help to understand how COVID-19 had affected them, filing a civic complaint, understanding the local Municipal ward amenities or simply doing a random act of kindness.

A fellow taught her domestic help, driver and their families how to file a civic complaint. She helped them file a complaint about their water supply, which they had been facing for a long time. Their children also got involved, and had an opportunity to learn something new and helpful while in lockdown.

The first batch of CCC started in the month of July 2020. By December, 4 batches of 63 participants completed the programme and had worked on a wide range of tasks. The programme gave hope and confidence to the young participants that they could bring about change. At times when they were feeling lost and alone in their homes, CCC became a platform for them to share their thoughts and interact with like minded people. The hope is that this short journey will ignite in the youth a larger sense of belonging to the city and a wish to give back to the communities that have nourished them.

Learning goes on in the Pandemic: Young Nature Guides of Uttarakhand (Authors: Sanjay Sondhi, Kesar Singh, Ritwika Patgiri)

With declining agricultural productivity along with deforestation, the largely agrarian and forest-dependent communities of the Himalayas are being pushed away from their traditional livelihoods. As a result, out-migration and poverty have accelerated in the region. The Nature Guide Program, supported by Titli Trust and the Center for Ecology Development and Research (CEDAR), was initiated as a nature-linked rural livelihood program in three landscapes of Uttarakhand: Mussoorie-Benog, Jhilmil Jheel-Thano, and Mukteshwar beginning in October 2019. The program aims to create capable and dedicated nature guides in the three village clusters of Uttarakhand by encouraging nature-based ecotourism as an ecologically and economically sustainable livelihood among communities.



Photo: Kesar Singh

The trainees largely hail from families that see nature-linked guiding as an opportunity to supplement their incomes from agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Most of them are engaged in farming or in other non-farm sectors like transportation and hospitality and are highly enthused by the nature-linked livelihood opportunities Uttarakhand has to offer. Prior to the pandemic, each practice session generally comprised 3-4 hours of field training, taking place every 2-3 weeks. The field training includes bird identification and other natural history issues. The trainees were also taught how to use guide books for plant and animal identification.

Prior to the pandemic, the nature guides went through an orientation from October 2019. The residential training workshop and the training programs were in motion till March 2020 before the pandemic transformed human relationships with nature.

Aftermath of the Pandemic

When the pandemic started, like everything else, tourists stopped coming by mid-March. The Nature Guide Program, however, did not come to a halt. The initial 3 months of the lockdown saw no practice session or field training. However, training and learning about nature continued. Although the participants could not physically meet from mid-March to June, the virtual training still went on. Through innovation and creativity, nature-learning became possible even when a physical meeting was not possible!

"Earlier, we used to focus on birds, but now with changing times, we have shifted the focus to flora as well as butterflies," says Kesar Singh who has been associated with the Nature Guide Program since 2014-15. Kesar Singh and Taukeer Alam Lodha, who are based in the Mussoorie and Jhilmil landscapes respectively, have both played a significant role in handling and continuing the program amidst the lockdown. Both Singh and Taukeer are locals but have effectively disseminated their knowledge, kept the program running, and have acted as resource people. They have been able to maintain constant communication with the participants through their WhatsApp groups. "Even though we have not been able to meet physically, our learning continued. Sometimes, I would click photos with my camera and post them in the group, sometimes I would download them from the Internet. But the process did not come to a halt," Kesar Singh further adds.

The trainees were also asked to post birdlists based on backyard bird counts and post pictures of birds, plants, and butterflies observed by them in their villages. The virtual WhatsApp community was engaged in quizzes on bird identification, butterflies, and tree phenology.



4. Stories of Resilience from other countries

Reviving our Ritual Ceremonies to build Solidarity and Resilience in Response to COVID-19

(Author: Simon Mitambo)

The Tharaka territory, traditionally known as *Nthiguru iri Njuki* (The Land of the Bees), is located between the foothills of Mount Kenya and River Tana. This semi-arid land is a biodiversity hotspot characterised by lowland scrub and many hill-ranges.

Although the Tharakans had rich cultural traditions—the community's elders with deep ecological knowledge used to be at the centre of their governance systems—these traditions have been increasingly undermined. This has been so because of the promotion of ill-conceived projects within the region by the government and external agencies, including livelihood projects promoting livestock and seeds that are not adapted to these conditions. The traditional governance system has been eroded as have customary laws that controlled the cutting of trees, hunting of animals, and farming too close to water sources. This has all contributed to the community being increasingly vulnerable to pandemics and climate disruptions.

Established in 2013, the Society for Alternative Learning and Transformation (SALT) is a community-based network of cultural and ecological governance institutions founded and established under customary laws of the Tharaka indigenous community. SALT has been reviving cultural rituals and ceremonies to build solidarity and resilience within the community.

Over time, customary laws that control the cutting of trees, hunting of animals, and farming too close to water sources have started being respected and followed once again. The role of Sacred Natural Sites (SNS)—which are rich bio-cultural areas with spiritual significance—is slowly being revived and now, these sites are becoming central to culture, food sovereignty, and protection of ecosystems.

The community's elders remember how they have survived pandemics and plagues similar in nature to COVID-19. They have their own traditional ways

of responding to these events which are part of the reason that the Tharakan people are still here—despite huge locust swarms that have threatened food crops in the region and diseases like smallpox that have threatened the community before.

One of the responses to these threats is a ritual called *Muriira*. It is a rare ritual, which is done only when the community is threatened by illness or pestilence. *Muriira* comes from the Tharakan word *kuriira*, which means to prevent, to stop, to cast away.



Community members engaged in dialogues on resilience

(Photo courtesy: SALT)

Traditionally, the Tharakan elders conducted *Muriira* when they learnt about threats originating in neighbouring areas that could pass into Tharakan territory. The elders would gather people together and raise awareness of the threat, where it was coming from, and why they were concerned, thereby sharing key information and reducing the chances of being affected by it.

When the COVID-19 pandemic surged through Kenya, the elders gathered the community together to conduct the *Muriira* ritual. For the first time, this brought together the Christians and Traditionalists in the performance of this ritual. Their coming together in solidarity gave the community a relief from the shock created by the pandemic.

This ritual brings people together—both physically and culturally—to attend to each other's wellbeing and the health of the territory as well as to defend it from threats. It helps people remember who they are as Tharakans and their responsibilities to their

homeland. They become spaces to listen to the community's knowledgeable elders. This is a sign that the community is turning the tide on the history of loss in their land.

The community has also been working to bring back local varieties of resilient seeds. Over the past five to six years, there has been a huge increase in seed diversity, community seed swaps, as well as the knowledge of how to grow, cook, save, and store the seeds. These seeds grow well in the local conditions and are resilient to changing climatic patterns. The revival of traditional seeds and practices has also made the community less dependent on the outside market for their basic sustenance needs.

Through the work with SALT, the community has continued documenting customary laws for legal recognition and protection of bio-cultural diversity. SALT remains committed and strategically connected to national, regional, and global processes to ensure that its work with communities can contribute and influence all levels of political decision-making.

*Contact: Simon Mitambo, (smitambo@yahoo.com)
SALT (<https://saltnet.org/chumvi/>)*

Sows of Life, Harvests of Water

(Author: Lina Marcela Meneses Cabrera)

Located in Valle del Cauca (Cauca Valley), Columbia, the township of Montañitas lives a complex reality due to a scarcity of water caused by the dry ecosystem of this region. This scarcity is accentuated by pine and eucalyptus cultivation for paper production by the Cartón Company of Colombia, which has historically faced charges of deforestation, destruction of natural ecosystems, and being an ally of para-militarism in this region (Álzate, 2017).

The Montañitas community has historically struggled to resolve the shortage of water, which is needed for agriculture and domestic consumption. A small aqueduct supplies water every 15 days and families have to store it in jars or tanks for daily use.

In the face of these hardships, the community, with the help of civil society organisations, has come

together in a collective process which is focused on developing practices that help solve the problem of water scarcity in their territory.

Surcomún and the Yunka Wasi Foundation are organisations working on organic agriculture, local economy, environmental education, and social technologies for rural sustainable development. In 2014, they developed a working relationship with the Montañitas community. Together, they promote organisational spaces focusing on water-based issues, farmers' training, and propagating techniques of organic agriculture and rainwater harvesting.

In Montañitas, this relationship has given way to the formal birth of the Association of Agro-Environmental Rural Communities (ACORA) made up of 30 families. A work plan has been prepared by ACORA to provide alternative solutions for water-related issues and to pursue dreams together as a community.

With funds collected through the work of ACORA, many families have been able to install Zamorano tanks (water storage tanks) in their homes for agricultural and domestic use. Ten families have 7,000 litre tanks and several families have plastic tanks of 3,500 litres. These are managed by public entities with contributions from each family and resources saved by the association in the various activities carried out.

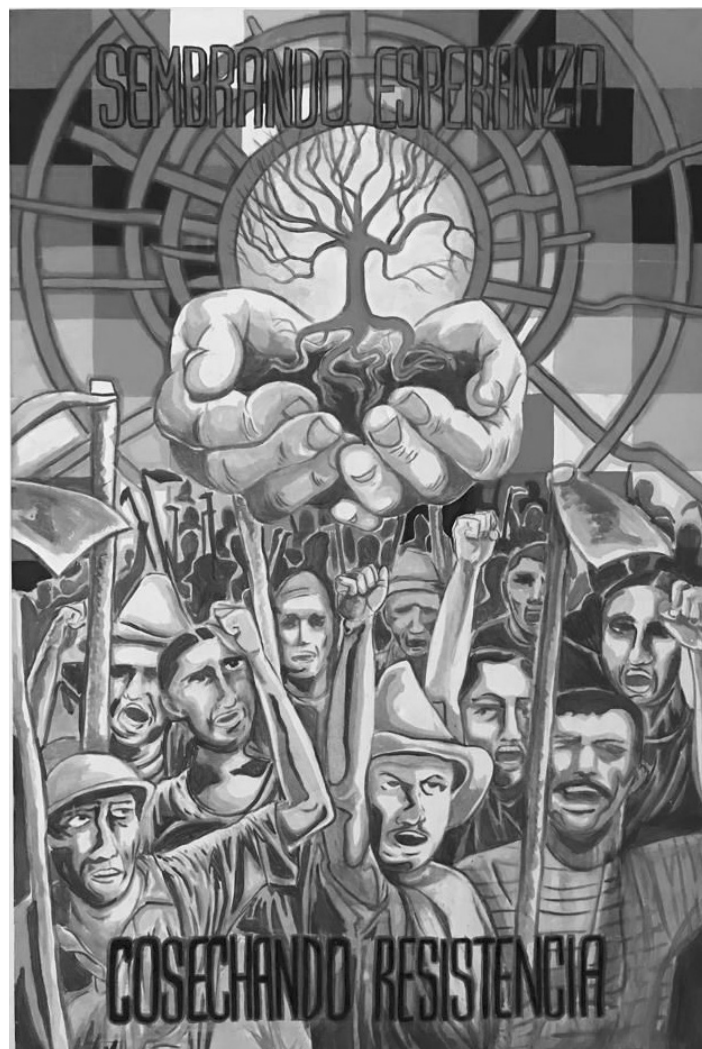
"We have always fought to achieve this. With the effort of ACORA, we have reached the achievement of installing Zamorano tanks for the collection of rainwater" says Nilba Muñoz, one of the women who rallied for this organisation and has tirelessly insisted on organising the community for a better life. The work is hard but the organisation stresses on advancing concrete solutions to everyday problems to retain hope and keep creating possibilities of life.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for the community as they weren't able to organise their regular meetings or carry out their collective work. Plans had to be postponed, families became isolated and the work-dynamics of the community stalled.

However, having rainwater stored in the tanks has allowed the community to grow their own food,

which has also been supplied to neighbouring areas which are facing food shortages. Many migrants who returned to the countryside have used this opportunity to work on the land and realised the need to take care of it—as it nurtures them when nothing else can.

With the availability of water, the raising of animals and birds such as chickens, ducks and pigs is increasing. This is contributing to the families' food requirements and generating economic income from the sale of surplus. Now, the associates have proposed training meetings to reduce their dependence on external inputs and the foreign market.



Poster on Sowing Hope, Harvesting Resistance
(Courtesy: Patricia Botero-Gómez)

With time, the association has found ways to meet in the midst of the pandemic. During 2021, meetings have been held that are allowing the organisational work to be resumed. There have been many adversities that the community has had to face. But their resilience has generated unique responses, such as peasant markets in the townships and the promotion of local food. Families who bought food from supermarkets in the city now buy their food on the sidewalk. This is helping in revitalising the local economy and, in turn, helping in recovering the social fabric of societies.

In these difficult times, ACORA has been a big support for peasant families. Their collective is strong and the community feels the need to continue their struggle to protect their territories of life. The association has strived to bring improvements in the living conditions for the community, thereby solidifying the belief that solidarity and collective work are key to their work.

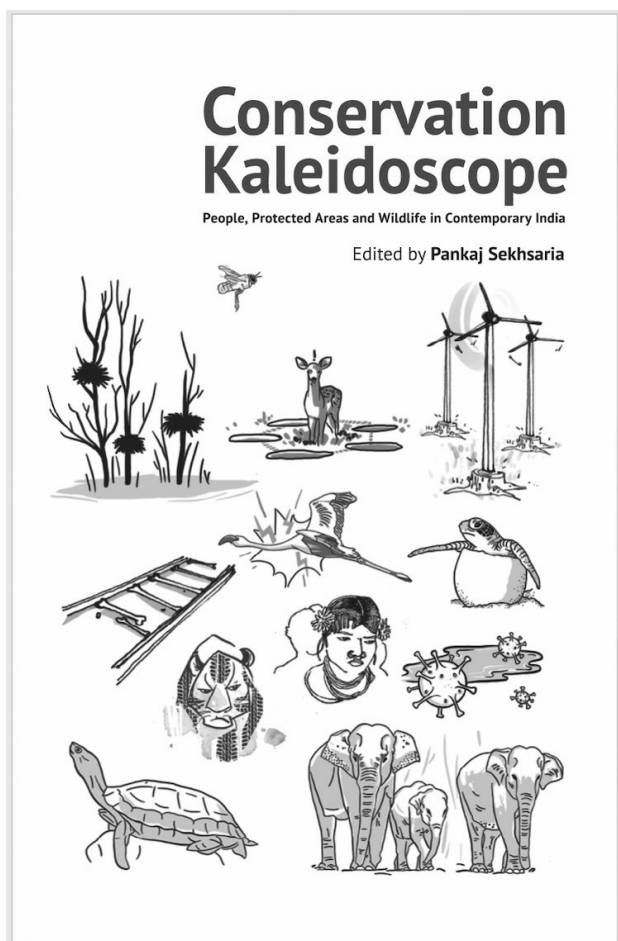
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Contact: Lina Marcela Meneses Cabrera- Surcomún, Yunka Wasi Foundation, Unitierra Manizales Caldas (marce15120@hotmail.com), Patricia Botero Gómez (jantosib@gmail.com)

✦ ✦



Conservation Kaleidoscope is a collection of over a 100 editorials and accompanying news items that have appeared over the last two decades in the Protected Area Update.

Written by the newsletter's long-time editor, Pankaj Sekhsaria, the individual editorials offer an interesting and often counter-intuitive account of the state of wildlife conservation and protected area management in contemporary India. Organised over 14 broad themes in this collection, the book offers a ringside view of conservation that is as challenging and informative as it is insightful and provocative.

Title: Conservation Kaleidoscope - People, Protected Areas and Wildlife in Contemporary India

Editor: Pankaj Sekhsaria

Publishers: Kalpavriksh, Duleep Mathai Nature Conservation Trust and AuthorsUpFront.

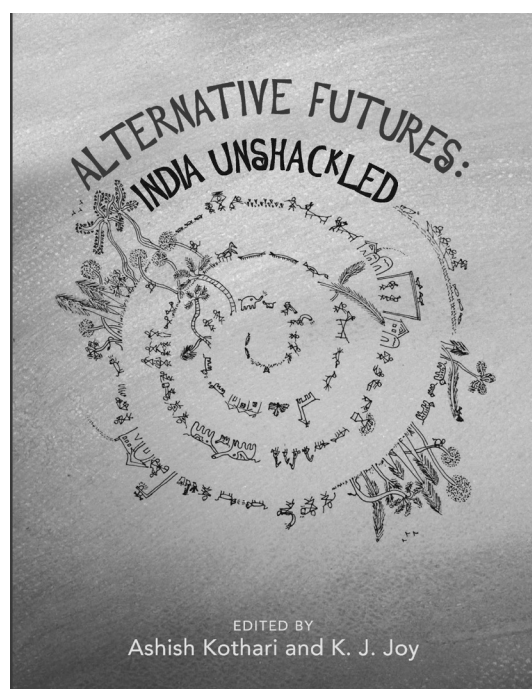
Year of Publication: 2021

ISBN: 978-9-38728-070-0

Size: 6.10 X 9.25 inches | 432 pages

Binding: Paperback

Price: Rs. 650



A unique collection of 35 essays on India's future, by a diverse set of authors – activists, researchers, mediapersons, those who have influenced policies and those working at the grassroots. It brings together scenarios of an India that is politically and socially egalitarian, radically democratic, economically sustainable and equitable, and socio-culturally diverse and harmonious. Divided into four sections—Ecological Futures, Political Futures, Economic Futures and Socio-Cultural Futures—the book covers a wide range of issues including environmental governance, biodiversity, democracy and power, law, agriculture, pastoralism, industry, languages, learning and education, knowledge, health and sexuality among others. Most essays include both futuristic scenarios and present initiatives that demonstrate the possibility of such futures.

Since its publication, the book has been received well in critical reviews, as also in various circles where it has been noticed. Some universities in India and abroad have decided to put it into their recommended readings for students of various subjects.

Title: Alternative Futures: India Unshackled

Editor: Ashish Kothari and K.J. Joy

Publisher: AuthorsUpFront

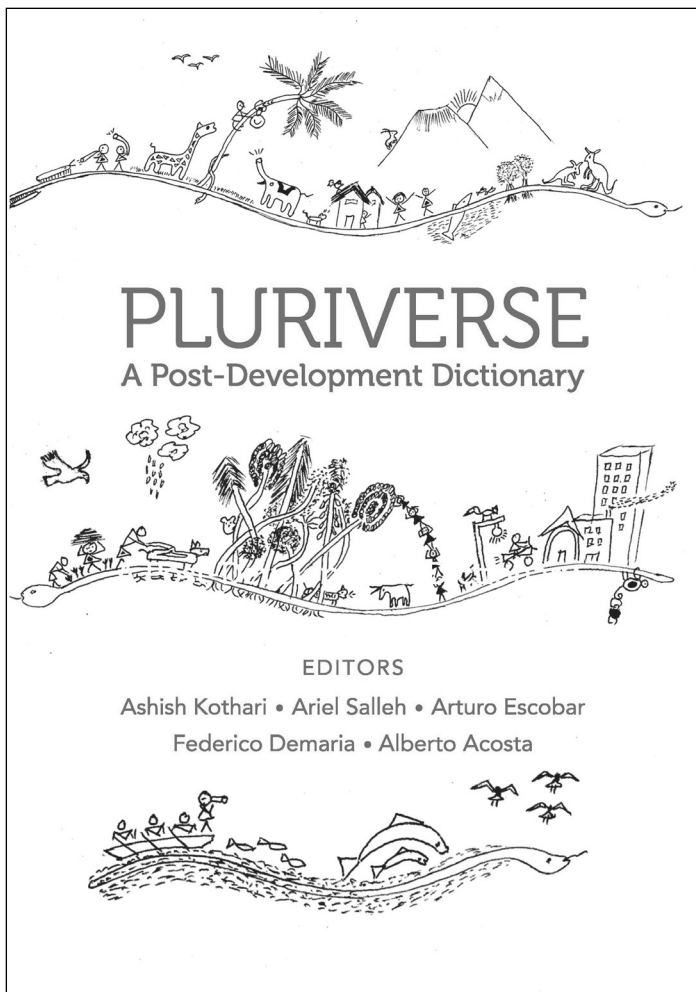
Year of Publication: 2017

ISBN: 978-8193392478

No of pages: 683

Binding: Paperback

Price: Rs. 1000



Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary

Over 100 brief, simply written essays on transformative initiatives and alternatives to the currently dominant processes of globalized development, including its structural roots in modernity, capitalism, state domination, racism and masculinist values. The first section contains an essay from each continent critiquing the mainstream model of 'development'. The second section offers critical essays on mainstream solutions that 'greenwash' development. The third (and largest) section presents radically different worldviews and practices from around the world that point to how an ecologically wise and socially just world can be striven for. An introduction by the editors threads all the essays together to offer a synthesis view on the malaise of 'development' and what the pluriverse – a diversity of alternatives, not a singular model – could look like.

Authors/Editors: Ashish Kothari, Ariel Salleh, Arturo Escobar, Federico Demaria, and Alberto Acosta

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