

अभिव्यक्ति
Hulchal
January to March 2026

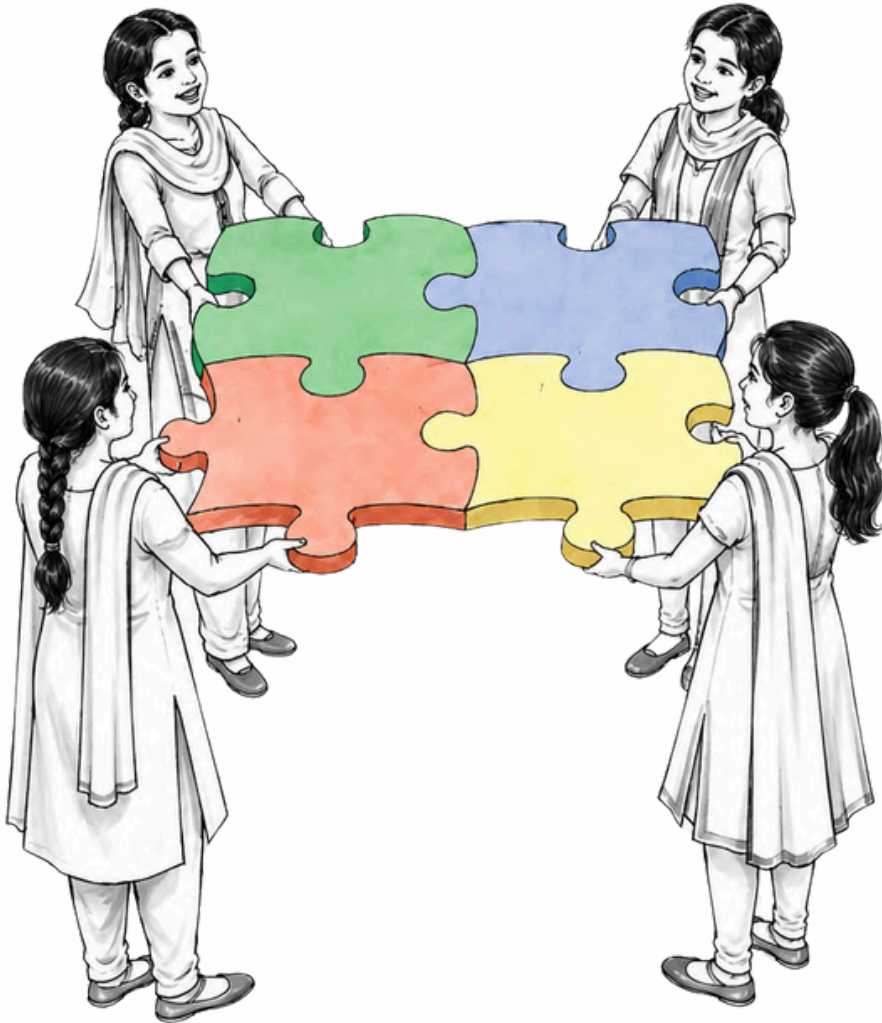


HULCHAL ACTIVITY

The focus this quarter was on consolidating the work initiated in different projects and continuing with the youth leadership development course that we initiated in the last quarter and which had confirmed the need for such an initiative. We have also been reviewing our development communication focus and how we revitalise it again to become the core of our various projects. The dialogue with the team and our partners has also re-affirmed the need to deep dive into its various dimensions and possibilities. Another edition of Hulchal is ready, and we invite your views and perspectives about our work. We really like to read your comments, as we think feedback is an important part of learning and growth!



Shodhini Updates



New Shodhini Direction - Transition to Adulthood

The focus on adolescent girls and their transition to adulthood has been our area of interest, and we have been busy collecting information and practices from different sources in the four villages in Trimbakeshwar. We have been talking to adolescent girls, their parents, teachers, ASHA workers, siblings and community elders to understand the transition process in the villages. Within this context, adolescent girls and young women experience multiple and intersecting barriers that affect their education, agency, mobility, and transition into adulthood.

Education and the Transition to Adulthood:

Access to education remains a significant challenge for girls in the region. In most villages, schools are available only up to Grade 5 or Grade 8. Continuing education requires girls to travel to another village, town, or educational hub. This transition typically occurs when girls are between 12 and 13 years old a period when families become increasingly protective and begin preparing daughters for socially prescribed adult roles and responsibilities.

At the same age when educational demands increase, girls are also expected to contribute substantially to household survival. They assist with domestic chores, sibling care, agricultural work, livestock management, collection of forest produce, and wage labour. Over time, many become active contributors to family income and household functioning.





Economic Vulnerability and Gendered Expectations:

Economic insecurity has a direct impact on adolescent girls and young women. Families often view every household member as an economic contributor, and girls are expected to share responsibility for both unpaid and paid work / labour. During periods of financial stress, girls' education is frequently the first sacrifice made by family. In such circumstances, girls are expected to prioritise family responsibilities over their own educational aspirations. Their labour becomes an invisible subsidy that helps households cope with economic hardship.

At the same time, many parents question the value of investing in girls' education because they observe educated youth, including graduates from their own villages, continuing to engage in wage labour, agriculture, or domestic work.

Aspirations and Unfulfilled Potential:

Despite significant constraints, interactions with adolescent girls and young women pursuing higher education reveal strong aspirations for a better future. However, these aspirations are often controlled by limited family support, restricted mobility, inadequate information about opportunities, and the burden of domestic and caregiving responsibilities.

In contrast, school dropouts engaged in full-time wage labour often expressed a sense of resignation about their futures. Several girls shared that they had once dreamed of completing at least Grade 12 but now view marriage as the next expected step, with uncertainty about opportunities and choices beyond it.





Community and Institutional Perspectives:

Interaction with community stakeholders reveals differing perspectives on the future of adolescent girls and young women.

Parents, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, and other community members often view the transition to adulthood primarily through concerns related to safety, family reputation, marriage, and traditional gender roles. These concerns significantly influence decisions regarding girls' education and mobility. As a result, many young women's aspirations remain unrealised despite their motivation and desire to create better futures for themselves and their families.

Saha Yatri Project – Peer Leaders

The project is about developing youth leadership and generating actions by them in the villages where we work. The project supported by the Azim Premji Foundation aims to support youth in five tribal villages, develop their capacities and enable them to set up community learning centres and take appropriate actions in the villages to build awareness, leadership and solidarity.

Visit to Sapgaon and Vinayak Nagar

In January, Ashutosh from the Azim Premji Foundation (APF) visited Sapgaon and Vinayak Nagar villages. During the visit, discussions were held around the functioning of collectives, participation of adolescent girls, and the ongoing efforts toward creating safe learning spaces within the community. Peer leaders shared their experiences, challenges, and learnings from the activities conducted so far. The interaction encouraged the girls and strengthened their confidence and motivation to continue their leadership journey within their villages.





Second Monthly Activity and Exploration of Kachurali Village

In February, the second monthly activity was conducted with the collectives across the project villages. The activity was planned as a need assessment exercise to better understand the interests, comfort levels, and participation of the collective members through fun and interactive methods. This interactive activity created an energetic and joyful environment where participants actively engaged with one another. It also helped build connections, teamwork, communication, and comfort among collective members while encouraging equal participation from everyone. During the same month, Kachurali Village was explored as a potential new project village. Initial visits and interactions were conducted with community members and adolescent girls to understand the village context and possibilities for future engagement. This exploration marked an important step toward expanding the reach of the initiative and connecting with more young people at the grassroots level.

Shirjgaon Community Learning Centre (CLC) Opening Ceremony

One of the major highlights of this quarter was the opening ceremony of the Community Learning Centre (CLC) in Shirjgaon village. The inauguration marked an important milestone in creating a safe and dedicated learning space for adolescent girls and young people within the community. The event witnessed the participation of peer leaders, collective members, village representatives, community members, and local stakeholders. The vision and purpose of the Community Learning Centre were shared during the ceremony, emphasising the importance of creating spaces where girls can learn, discuss, grow, and build leadership together. Interactive activities and cultural programmes added enthusiasm to the celebration and encouraged community ownership of the space. The opening of the Shirasgaon CLC laid a strong foundation for future community learning, leadership, and collective activities in the village.





Gender Champions

The Gender Champions Project marks the beginning of a structured effort to engage young boys and men in critical conversations around patriarchy, masculinity, and gender equality.



Fortnightly Sessions

During the months of January, we conducted fortnightly sessions focused on the themes of self and identity, as well as gender equality. Members of the boys' and young men's collectives actively participated in these discussions and shared their perspectives, experiences, and reflections on the themes explored during the sessions. The conversations created a meaningful space where young participants could openly express themselves and critically engage with questions related to identity, gender, and social expectations.

In the session on gender equality, an important discussion emerged around masculinity and the ways in which social ideas of masculinity influence an individual's identity. The participants reflected on how they understand manhood within their own social and cultural contexts and how these expectations shape their behaviour, emotions, relationships, and decision-making. Through collective dialogue, the session attempted to explore the deep connection between masculinity, self-perception, and identity formation.

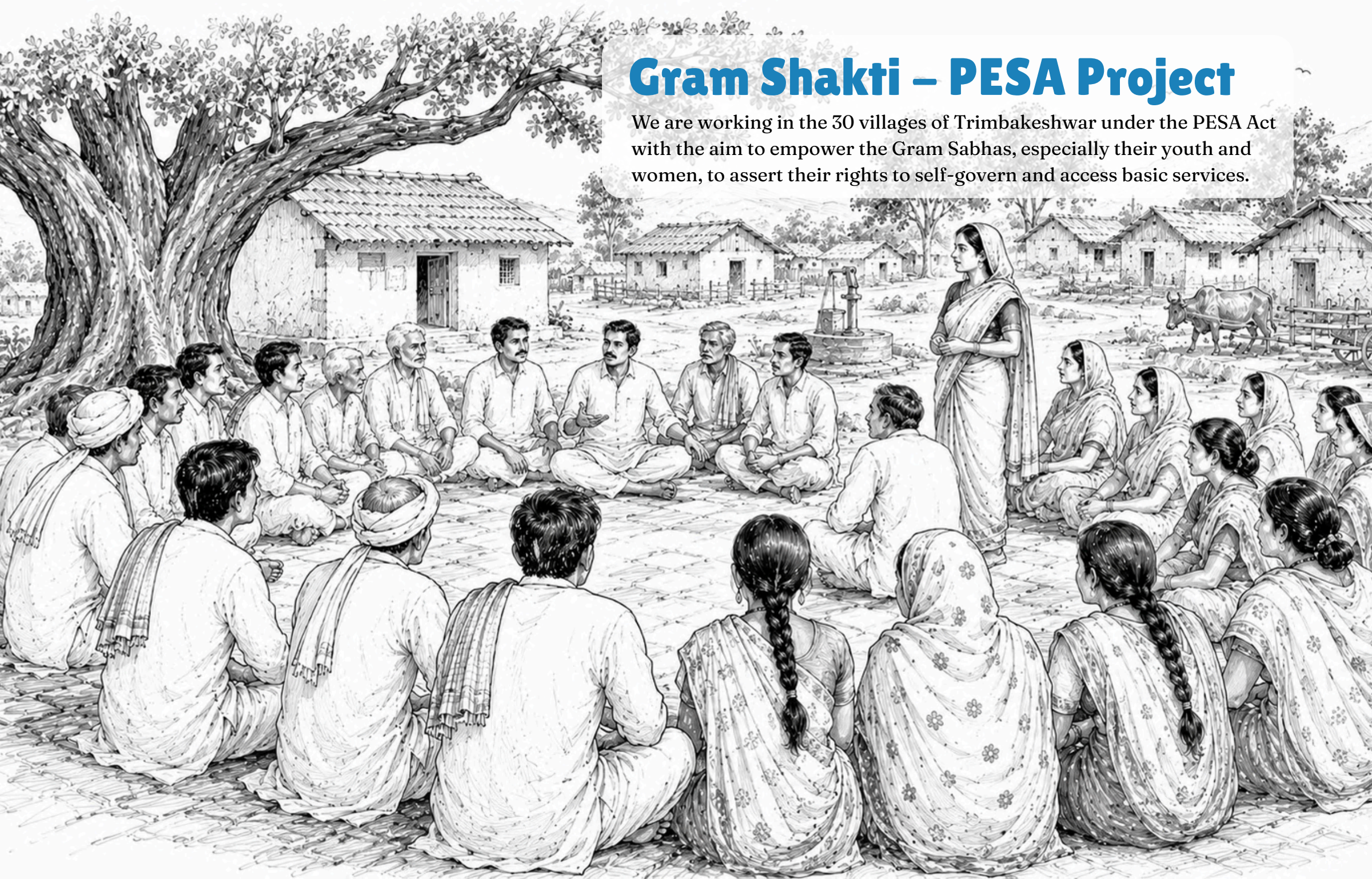
Sessions on Power

During the months of February and March, focused group discussions were conducted on the theme of power. In these discussions, participants shared their observations and experiences regarding different forms of power existing within their villages and communities. The members openly discussed the dynamics of power in everyday life, including authority within families, village leadership, gender relations, and social hierarchies. These conversations helped participants critically analyse how power operates within society and how it impacts relationships, opportunities, and decision-making processes.



Gram Shakti – PESA Project

We are working in the 30 villages of Trimbakeshwar under the PESA Act with the aim to empower the Gram Sabhas, especially their youth and women, to assert their rights to self-govern and access basic services.





Organisation of Gram Sabha

During the reporting period, a total of 21 Gram Sabhas were organised. Various important issues related to village development were discussed in these Gram Sabhas, which helped strengthen the planning process at the village level. Some of the important issues discussed were proper and transparent utilisation of PESA funds, identification of development priorities for villages, planning of development works based on local needs, increasing active participation of citizens in Gram Sabhas, and ensuring accountability and transparency at the village level. Citizens, Gram Panchayat members, women representatives, youth, and concerned officials actively participated in the Gram Sabhas. The discussions encouraged collective decision-making for local development by identifying and understanding the needs of the villages.

Training Workshops

During this period, a training programme on “Convergence and Adarsh Village for Sustainability” was organised. The objective of the training was to strengthen the approach toward sustainable village development through convergence of various government schemes. Major topics covered in the training were the convergence of various government schemes, the concept and implementation of an ideal village, the village planning process for sustainable development, the conservation and management of natural resources, the importance of community participation and methods to enhance people’s involvement. The objectives of the training are related to achieving holistic and sustainable village development, ensuring effective and planned utilisation of available resources, and lastly, developing leadership capacity and increasing citizens' participation at the village level. The training provided useful guidance to participants regarding planning, coordination, and implementation required for the long-term development of villages.





Exposure Visit

An exposure visit was organised at Pachgaon with the objective of providing practical knowledge about village development and sustainable initiatives, as well as learning from successful village governance practices. A total of 27 members from 11 villages participated in the visit. 6 field workers from the Abhivyakti Organisation also participated. Major Objectives of the Exposure visit was to gain practical exposure to successful village development initiatives, including organising Gram Sabhas, and to develop awareness and understanding of the Forest Rights Act. During the exposure visit, participants closely observed village governance systems, conservation of natural resources, community participation, Gram Sabha management, and various sustainable development initiatives. They also gained knowledge about the effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act, which strengthened their understanding of participation and responsibilities at the village level. The visit inspired our villagers, particularly the youth, to implement effective, people-centred, and beneficial initiatives in their own villages.

Community Media





Shodhini's Transformative Journey Film Completed

We are delighted to share the successful completion of the documentary film on the 8-year transformative journey of the Shodhini initiative. This film captures the powerful stories, struggles, leadership, and collective strength of adolescent girls and young women from tribal and rural communities who have emerged as changemakers through the Shodhini process. Over the years, Shodhini has become more than just a programme; it has evolved into a movement of confidence, awareness, leadership, and social transformation.

The film reflects this inspiring journey by documenting real-life experiences of girls who challenged social norms, overcame barriers, and created spaces for dialogue and change within their communities. The completed film will soon be screened and shared with wider audiences to amplify the voices and experiences of girls from marginalised communities and encourage collective action toward gender equality and empowerment.



शोधिनी
प्रश्नांपासून परिवर्तनाकडे



Video on Kishor's learning story

A video has been completed under the PESA Project showcasing the inspiring journey of Kishor, a youth leader from Garmal Village in the Trimbakeshwar block. The film highlights his learning experiences through Abhivyakti's training sessions and how he applied this knowledge to mobilise community participation for PESA activities in his village. Kishor's growing confidence, leadership, and active involvement in community processes reflect the positive impact of youth engagement at the grassroots level. Through his efforts, he is emerging as a promising future leader for his village and an inspiration for other rural youth.

Collaboration with Humsafar, Lucknow

‘Hadasa Ya Hinsa?’ - Film completed

In collaboration with Humsafar, Lucknow, the documentary film Hadasa Yah Hinsa? on burn survivors has been successfully completed. This was a highly sensitive and challenging subject, requiring thoughtful storytelling and a compassionate approach to engage wider audiences and create meaningful awareness. The film highlights bringing attention to the harsh realities of domestic violence that women silently endure. It powerfully portrays the daily struggles, emotional trauma, and devastating journey that can lead to burn violence inflicted by husbands and family members. Through the real experiences of survivors, the film raises critical questions around gender-based violence, justice, and dignity. The final film was appreciated by the Humsafar team for its sensitive treatment, impactful storytelling, and strong potential to create awareness and inspire social change.





A Film Project on Girls Collective

We are happy to share that the team from the Azim Premji Foundation, including Ashutosh and Rajib, visited Abhivyakti in January to learn about the Peer Leader Project. During the visit, we screened our recently produced video, which was highly appreciated by the APF team. Impressed by the storytelling and production quality, the foundation proposed a new film project on Girls Collectives, and Abhivyakti gladly accepted this meaningful opportunity.

As part of the project, exploratory visits have been completed at Nishtha from Kolkata, Vishakha from Udaipur, and PANI from Ayodhya. These visits provided valuable learning experiences and deeper insights into the inspiring grassroots work being carried out by these organisations in their respective regions.

Currently, the team is engaged in research, scripting, planning, and scheduling for the upcoming film shoots. The project aims to document and amplify the voices, leadership, and transformative journeys of girls' collectives across different parts of India.

Co-learning

We continue with our work of strengthening the capacities of grassroots functionaries on communication skills, community media and leadership.



Youth Leadership Development Course

The fourth phase of the Youth Leadership Course was completed in the last week of March. The three-day workshop included sessions on relationship building, health education, and reproductive health awareness. This phase was facilitated by resource person Dr Mohan Des, founder of the organisation Arogya Bhan, along with team members Shruti and Renuka. The workshop created an engaging and safe learning environment where participants could openly discuss topics that are often considered sensitive or difficult to talk about within rural communities.

These sessions encouraged participants to ask questions freely and discuss their concerns without fear or hesitation. Many of the gender champions spoke openly about issues related to sexual health and adolescence, including questions around nightfall, pimples, bodily changes, and emotional confusion during growth. The openness shown by the participants reflected the trust and comfort that had been built within the learning space.

Several participants also shared personal experiences and challenges from their own lives, particularly those connected to alcohol consumption within families and conflicts at home. These discussions highlighted how social and family environments deeply affect the emotional wellbeing and growth of young people. The sessions became not only educational spaces, but also platforms for emotional expression, collective reflection, and mutual support.

To make the sessions more engaging and relatable, Mohan Des used various creative and participatory methods, including health-related self-written songs, storytelling, and case studies. These tools helped participants connect with the themes in a more personal and meaningful way. Through these interactive approaches, the workshop was conducted very effectively and succeeded in creating awareness, dialogue, and deeper understanding among the participants.





Sessions on Entrepreneurship for Architect Students

A series of sessions were held with the final-year architecture students of MET College of Architecture and Design, Nashik on entrepreneurship and its relevance for the students. Spread over three months, the students explored the meaning of entrepreneurship, the mindset required to initiate an enterprise, dialogue with entrepreneurs and understanding their businesses, and students' own interest in starting something of their own, completing assignments and presentations. The students also learnt to conduct peer reviews of their fellow students on case studies and other projects. The sessions were participatory and were conducted in an environment of openness, exchanges and reflections. The students enjoyed the open and informal environments which they felt were conducive to their learning.





Community Learning Centre – Anandalaya at Dhumodi

The Community Learning Centre aims to inculcate a learning culture amongst the village youth, particularly in girls and women. The centre has a variety of resources and space for reading, critical thinking, dialogue, and learning. We give below the activities implemented during this period.

Celebrating Savitribai Phule's birth anniversary:

On 3rd January, we celebrated Savitribai Phule's birth anniversary with lots of enthusiasm. Students were in the forefront in organising this event. The aim was to focus on the importance of education, especially for the girls. This was highlighted by Pooja and Kamini, who spoke in detail on the importance of education and the role of Savitribai in promoting women's education. The discussion which followed indicated the interest of the students as many girls spoke about their motivation to continue education.





Film Screenings and Discussions

The monthly film screening continued. In this period, three films were shown on diverse subjects such as domestic violence, education and greed. The films were followed by discussion on the subject. The discussion helps the community members to speak their thoughts and interact with others. This exchange is important for developing their long-term interest in self-development as well as in films.



Guidance on chemical-free cultivation

In the month of February, a session was held for the women of the various self-help groups that are active in the village. Women had shown interest in learning about chemical-free farming so that they would cultivate vegetables in their kitchen gardens. Abhivyakti had invited Mandeshi Foundation to facilitate a session on the theme for the village women. 30 women were present and participated in the discussion with a lot of interest. Vanita of Mandeshi Foundation was able to provide inputs based on the interest of the women, which ranged from types of vegetables that could be grown to their management and care. She also distributed fenugreek seeds to women to encourage them to initiate their own kitchen gardens. Women assured her that they would start growing chemical-free vegetables.





Exposure Visits

A day-long excursion visit to Nashik city was organised for both boys and the girls of Dhumodi in the second week of February. The aim was to expose the young minds to different initiatives in the city and also to give them a feel of city life. The mixed group was excited, as it was their first such tour to a city.

They visited the 'Sampoornam Sewa Foundation', which specialises in taking care of discarded statues and photos of deities and repairing them to make something new. The children learnt about the importance of conservation and reuse of old stuff. Later, they visited a planetarium where they learnt about planets and stars through a film show. The discussion on the importance of science and enquiry was relevant for the young and curious minds.

Visit from ASHA UK

Sameer Deshpande from ASHA UK visited the Anandalaya centre at Dhumodi on the 19th of February to learn about the functioning of the CLC. He interacted with the youth who were present on the occasion. A book reading session was also organised for him to demonstrate one of the regular activities of the CLC.



Books Donation

The CLC is gradually gathering interest from the larger civil society. People from Nashik visit the centre and also donate various items. In January, members of the “Knot of Eternity Group” visited the CLC and interacted with the youth. They donated books on competitive exams such as MPSC, UPSC, etc. This will encourage the youth to prepare thoroughly for the competitive exams.



Shodhini Community Learning Centre, Ambai



General Knowledge Activity

One of the interesting activities that was organised was a quiz on general information pertaining to India. Youth participated and were keen to do well. To motivate them to take interest in such activity, they were rewarded with books, pencils and other such stationery items. The youth were able to answer most of the questions, which indicated their interest in learning and improving their capacities and also reduced their anxiety of giving exams.





Painting exercise

This activity was continued from last quarter, as a lot of youth showed interest. This time the theme was ‘Spontaneous Art’. One of the conditions of the exercise was to use only water colours. Children and youth who participated drew many forms of art, which they also explained with reasons. Later, all the paintings were displayed on the CLC wall, which added to the diversity and beauty of the CLC. The children and the youth were happy to see their art forms on display.

Happenings

1. In January, we celebrated our 39th Founders' Day by inviting Vidyadhar Somani, Chartered accountant, to share his insights on his long association with Abhivyakti.
2. In the first week of January, the APF team visited our office to discuss the Sha-Yatri project and to learn about its implementation in the villages. They later visited Sapgaon and interacted with the field team.
3. The Abhivyakti team of Ranjeet and Ashwini Dhokar has been participating in a series of online sessions called 'Speak Out loud' campaign initiated by 'AJWS' with their partners on understanding adolescent girls' transition to adulthood for a social media campaign to be launched soon.
4. Sakhi presented her PhD findings to the Abhivyakti team and cohort of Shodhini and Shodak who had participated in her field data collection process in the third week of February.
5. Bhikan and Mahesh attended the online webinar on the new labour code changes organised by 'Pattic' and facilitated by Sharad Bhargava on 23rd Jan 2026



Voices from the Field

We bring to your notice a youth leader from the village Shirasgoan in the Trimbakeshwar taluka of Nashik.

Charting Her Own Path



Vaishnavi Minde
Shirasgoan, Trimbakeshwar

“ At just Seventeen years old, **Vaishnavi Sandeep Minde** from Shirsagaon village in Trimbakeshwar block is already demonstrating a remarkable combination of courage, curiosity, and determination. Currently pursuing her higher secondary education in science, she is one of those young women who refuse to let circumstances define her future. Vaishnavi first became associated with Abhivyakti's Shodhini programme when she was in the seventh standard. As part of a participatory action research project, she and her friends travelled across the village conducting interviews and speaking with community members. What began as a new and intimidating experience soon became a turning point in her life. Through Shodhini, she found opportunities to write, reflect, and engage with questions that affected girls around her. She contributed articles to the Shodhini magazine on topics such as girls' education, mobility, and the impact of early marriage. Although she was initially hesitant to participate, interactions with girls from different villages and experiences such as attending a Shodhini convention and watching the film Jhund helped build her confidence and strengthened her connection with the programme. For her action research project, Vaishnavi chose to study the issue of early marriage among girls. Speaking with girls her own age exposed her to realities that deeply affected her. She met young women whose education had ended after primary school, who were pushed into work and marriage at an early age, and who had little say in decisions that shaped their lives. Listening to their stories made her realise how easily her own life could have followed a similar path. Instead of discouraging her, these conversations strengthened her determination to continue her education and make independent choices about her future. ”

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That determination was tested when it came time to continue her studies after Grade 10. Having completed Classes 8 to 10 while staying at a hostel in Nashik, Vaishnavi wanted to pursue her higher secondary education there. However, her family preferred that she study closer to home. Like many girls from rural communities, she faced concerns and social scrutiny around travelling and studying away from the village. Yet she persisted, secured admission, and continued her education despite resistance and discouraging comments from people around her.

Her concern for the opportunities available to other girls led her to become involved in establishing a library in her village. She believed that girls needed a space where they could read, learn, and spend time productively without having to travel long distances. The process was not easy. Finding space, arranging facilities, and convincing local authorities required patience and persistence. Even when people questioned her efforts, she continued to advocate for the initiative. Today, she actively encourages other girls to use the library to read and participate in learning activities.

Beyond academics, Vaishnavi enjoys theatre, working with groups of adolescent girls, and exploring opportunities for leadership and learning. She has applied for various fellowships and youth programmes and continues to seek new experiences that will help her grow. Her dream is to join the National Defence Academy, and she is constantly looking for ways to build her skills and broaden her horizons.

What stands out most about Vaishnavi is her ability to hold on to her sense of agency despite the constraints she faces. Thoughtful, energetic, and socially aware, she continues to challenge expectations, create opportunities for herself, and encourage other girls to do the same. Her story is a reminder that meaningful change often begins with a young person who dares to imagine a different future and then works steadily to make it possible.

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Hulchal Face

“ Continuing with our feature of introducing Abhivyakti team members, we bring to you our new and young member, **Prajakta Sanap**, who joined us last year to lead the newly launched project Peer Leadership. She joins Abhivyakti as a social development professional with a master’s degree in social work. Her background is rich in experience of working with children, adolescents, and young women to promote their rights, leadership, and overall development. This experience of hers helped us to select her for the new project which was to be launched in the rural area of Nashik. The project focuses on empowering adolescent girls and young women aged 13–25 years across five villages in the Trimbakeshwar block of Nashik district.

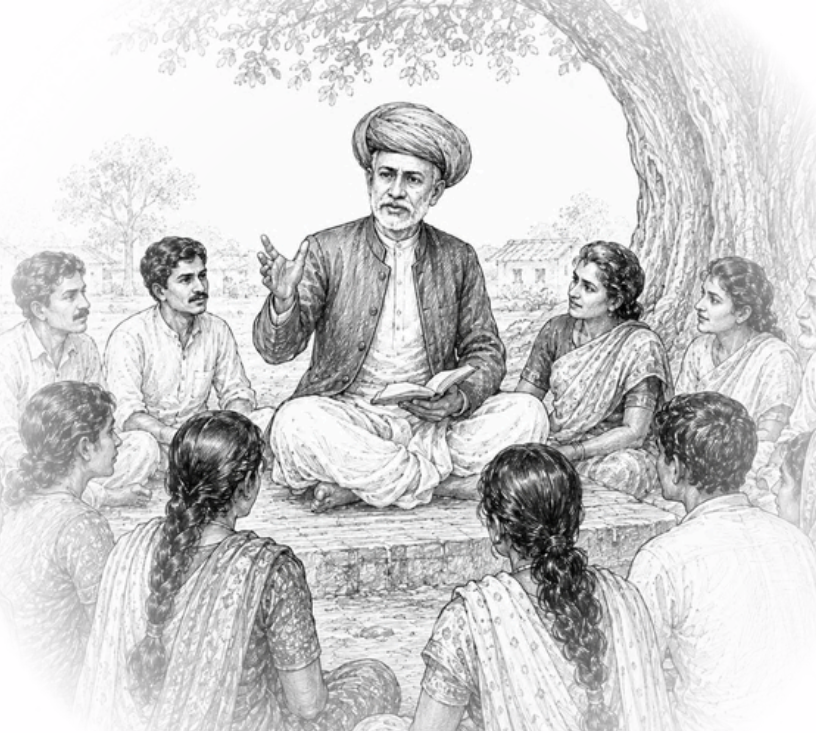
She began her professional journey working with children on the issue of child sexual abuse, contributing to awareness, prevention, and child protection initiatives. This familiarity strengthened her commitment to creating safe and supportive environments for young people. As part of her role, she facilitates the development of young women leaders, supports community mobilisation, and helps young people identify and address local social issues. She has played a key role in establishing Community Learning Centers (CLCs) that serve as safe and inclusive spaces for learning, dialogue, and community engagement, especially for adolescent girls. Through mentoring and capacity-building efforts, she guides girls and young women to lead social action initiatives and actively participate in bringing positive change within their communities.

Prajakta brings a lot of fresh energy to the team. She has settled comfortably in her role of leading the peer leadership project and is driving the change process of youth leadership with her enthusiasm, passion and commitment. Her friendly disposition has helped her develop constructive relationships with the rural youth and community leaders, which are steering the various processes forward in the five villages where the project is currently in operation. ”

This feature aims to share information on interesting and experimental art that we have experienced, viewed, or read. It can be a live performance, a cinema, a documentary, a TV series, a publication, or even a digital presence like a podcast.

One of the fascinating visual forms that emerged from the Iran war was its use of LEGO videos, using animation to narrate their point of view. The videos are short, specifically for internet users, and are specific to sparking interest and conversations. Using the familiar LEGO household figures and blocks, the short films convey their message through using humour, playfulness, recognition and rap music. The videos became hugely popular and were viewed multiple times on the X platform by the young audience well-versed in meme culture.

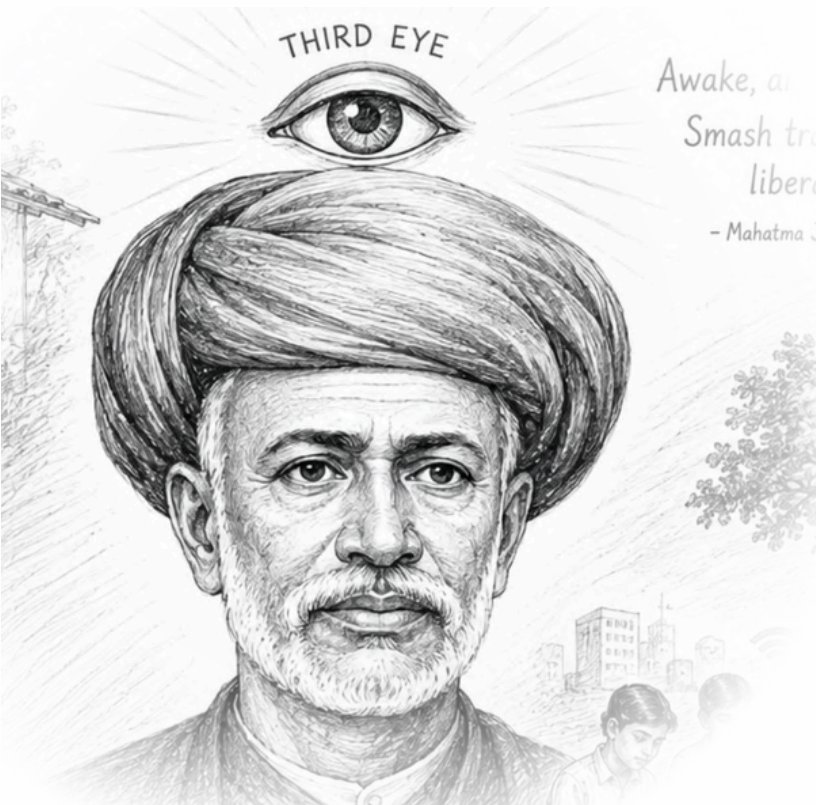




Before we say Good bye

The bicentenary year of the social reformer **Mahatma Jyotirao Phule**, born on 11th April, 1827, is here already. What do we make of his work? He laid the foundation for some of the principles we cherish today – equality, dignity and restructuring of power in our caste-ridden society. Due to his articulation in various books and publications, we now understand that economic exploitation, social hierarchy and state indifference are jointly responsible for strengthening social injustice. He exposed how oppressive structures become normalised and viewed as natural by people and that the root cause was ignorance. We now understand his immense contribution to promoting education for all and to making us realise the cost of injustice and exploitation. The ‘Satya Shodak Samaj’, which he established in 1873 for creating a just and equal society rooted in truth, is relevant even today. In the digital world we live in today, his ideas of how we consume information, how we think, and questioning blind faith are equally important for us to live rationally. His phenomenal work reminds us that development and growth are not automatic and that we will have to strive hard to achieve them. Phule’s ‘Third Eye’ concept was revolutionary and is relevant even now. The ‘Third Eye’ advocated for the oppressed to understand their reality of exploitation and create paths of liberation through the transformative power of education. In the present context, too, his metaphor of the ‘Third Eye’ is significant for creating radical change in our society through embracing education.

Awake, and
Smash the
liberal
- Mahatma Jy



What do you think of Jyotirao Phule and his metaphor, the ‘**Third Eye**’?

Please write to - admin@abhivyakti.org.in about your insights, and do visit our website www.abhivyakti.org.in