THE POWER TO MAKE OURSELVES

Stories of communities working to educate children in migration prone villages in India.

NAMRATA ASTHANA
Foreword by SHABANA AZMI
“We are responsible for what we are, and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves.”

Swami Vivekanand
THE POWER TO MAKE OURSELVES
Stories of communities working to educate children in migration prone villages in India

Namrata Asthana

Foreword
Shabana Azmi
Migrant-affected areas tend to consist of the most desolate environments. In a few such locations, migrants and non-migrant communities are working collectively to do everything in their power to educate the children in their villages. This book is dedicated to those pioneering, who believe that education can alter the lives of future generations, and to their children who are a testimony to this vision.
Distress seasonal migration is the way of life for large numbers of impoverished rural families in India. Hundreds of thousands of families from the unorganized labour class their human and citizenship rights, and face inhumane living conditions to earn meagre wages at the migration sites. The worst affected are the children of these families who are dragged into labour at the sites away from their homes and villages, and deprived of an education and a chance to grow. This book is an important effort to lend a voice to this grossly exploitative annual cycle that so many citizens of our country end up being subjected to.

Pioneering intervention efforts were made by American India Foundation’s LAMP Learning And Migration Programme in different parts of the country to break this heart-breaking cycle. LAMP’s work in the regions, Rudrapur (Uttarakhand) and Hilsa (Odisha), which is presented here as a case study and a pedagogical attempt, is an eye-opener. LAMP brings to the phenomenon of distress seasonal migration to light and makes an appeal to policy makers and stakeholders to direct their gaze at the far-reaching, uncontrollable impacts it has on these communities. The sustained efforts of the LAMP teams, which largely comprise local youth working to prevent children from migrating, is truly laudable.

The book brings us the hope-filled voices of migrant children and their parents, and the way they feel their lives and futures are changing with the opportunity of schooling having opened up through LAMP. They poignantly recall their bleak past at the brick kilns and salt pans, and of walking behind their animals for months on end, and contrast it with their improved present which, for the first time, holds the promise of a secure future. The faces of the child-reared page after page in this book, especially the girls, are so captivating and their words so juxta that it reaffirms what we always knew but somehow chose to disbelief, that all children – without exception – have the power to make themselves.

And the youth! The images reflect their transformation – from bent backs to smiling, confident faces! The stories of these young people relate how they seized the chance that came their way to turn their lives around, how they reclaimed their dignity – but a small hard labour cut away from society, and how they are able to contribute to their villages by teaching children and furthering their own education.

Significantly, the book also lends a voice to the non-migrant communities – those who are not economically better off, but for whom the feudal set-up is as normal as daylight. Now they are offering to hold the hands of migrant children to help them survive for a better future. This perhaps is LAMP’s most remarkable achievement, for education is the only resource that is not taken away from one to be given to another. Education lifts everyone together and is the biggest equalizer of all. This book can strengthen and replicate it, which will pave the way for many more heart-warming stories of change to emerge from the remotest corners of our country.

This book reveals the hidden issues which urban India is perhaps blissfully unaware. It makes us each turn inward, and compels us to choose between doing our bit to help the mission of LAMP, or letting the other way...

Shabana Azmi
Actor, Social Activist
and Senior Supporter of AIF
LEAVING HOME

A NOTE ON DISTRESS SEASONAL MIGRATION

When the American India Foundation started its Education Programme in 2003, our idea was to identify and work in an area that had not yet been adequately addressed. AIF works closely in alignment with the government. It develops intervention models and, in the process, identifies gaps in existing programmes and policies and takes them up for advocacy. Since the country is geared towards universalising elementary education through its flagship programme Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) – an Education For All, which means access, retention, learning and the completion of elementary education for every child of 6-14 years, we tried identifying those categories of out-of-school children that were not being effectively covered.

We started working with children of seasonal migrant labourers as a category, as one of our home states, Tamil Nadu, at that time was working with a small number of children of migrant labourers who came from Central Madras to harvest sugarcane in Western Maharashtra, and stayed there for several months every year. These children wereสายically dropping out of school because of migration. This marked our entry into the area of distress seasonal migration by poor rural families in search of a livelihood.

Distress Seasonal Migration

As we delved deeper into the issue of distress seasonal migration, we were taken aback by the range of industrial sectors using migrant labour, as well as the number of states and districts sending out such labour, and the enormity of the scale of these operations! Even more surprising was the fact that at that time there was no data available with the government on seasonal migration. Nor was the issue on the radar of academics, the development agencies and even the media. We struggled to understand and piece together the issue, gathering firsthand information from our own travels and inquiries. This exploration gave us insights into the phenomenon of migration, such as the migrant labour all along the Gujarat coastline, which is involved in salt production and battery industries. Numerous agro-industrial sectors such as sugarcane plantations, coffee plantations, and cotton production run on migrant labour. The entire construction industry and allied sectors such as stone quarries, brick-making, roof-tile making and so on, also depend heavily on migrant labour. In addition to this, migrant labour is scattered all over the country, engaged in agricultural operations such as weeding, transportation and harvesting, hired by farmers with large holdings.

Migrant families are socio-economically the most backward: as many as 90% of them belong to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. These groups of poor rural families leave their homes after the monsoons in search of work because large swatches of the countryside facing agri-rural distress, and forest degradation can no longer support the population. Conditions include low levels of education and poor health, leaving the migrants susceptible to exploitation. Children are often left behind to manage their homes and fields, and may end up working in the fields or in households. The children who do not have the opportunity to continue their education due to migration are at a disadvantage in terms of their future employment prospects.

We also tried to understand the economic cost of the migration, the employment relationships and its impact on the families. The overall picture was one of unbearable exploitation and exploitation of the migrant families, and huge profits for employers. The employers use very efficient systems to move these labourers across long distances, and due to the invisibility of the phenomenon, they get away with radially exploiting the labourers, and other regulatory mechanisms. On the other hand, the migrant families, being away from their villages, enjoy a lot of their basic rights and entitlements such as free healthcare services, subsidized free grains, benefits of various government schemes, participation in panchayats, even the right to vote. Thus, a deprived section of the population gets even more vulnerable. Releasing children from their right to education is therefore the top priority, at least to ensure that the next generation does not fall into the same trap.
A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF AIF’S LEARNING AND MIGRATION PROGRAMME (LAMP)

First Phase: Providing Access To Schooling

Thus, we launched our educational intervention for migrant children called LAMP – Learning and Migration Programme, launched in 2002, is one of the earliest in its kind. It grew over the next few years to four states – Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh - spanning 20 districts and 7 migration sectors. We set up a network of schools in the villages during the summer vacation months. These lasted 4 to 6 weeks and were designed to be the first step in the seasonal hostels for the next migration cycle, while they attended government schools.

Multiple options were initially needed to reach out to as many children as possible to put them back in school. Eventually, they would all have to be convinced to stay back in the village and not migrate. Thus, LAMP reached out to nearly 300,000 migrant children in their villages. These years were also the period of persistent advocacy with the government. In the beginning, the state governments refused to recognise seasonal migration as an occurrence, or to fund large-scale school drop-out rates. We therefore worked closely with the government to develop new models for funding and implementation.

Second Phase: Ensuring Quality Of Learning

In the second phase of LAMP, the programme moved to a strategic shift with achieving the objective of scale and advocacy in the first phase. From 2003 onwards, the focus shifted to quality. While a large number of migrant children now attended government schools in the project areas, the learning outcomes these schools were able to deliver were far from satisfactory. And this applied to all children, not just migrants. Poor learning outcomes fuelled huge drop-out rates. According to national statistics, roughly 25% of children drop-out by grade 5, 50% by grade 6, 60% by grade 10, and 80% by grade 12. Thus, we redefined our objective to address the quality of learning and completion of secondary schooling, which was essential for any migrant child looking for an alternative future. Further, we expanded our scope to include all children of these larger villages in migration-prone geographies.

Project LAMP II: We now took this a step further by starting to focus on improving learning outcomes and completion of secondary schooling for migrants. The new challenge was to develop quality learning opportunities in the backward regions of LAMP. We began this by working closely with the district and local government officials to develop quality learning opportunities in the backward regions of LAMP. We began this by working closely with the district and local government officials to develop quality learning opportunities in the backward regions of LAMP. We began this by working closely with the district and local government officials to develop quality learning opportunities in the backward regions of LAMP. We began this by working closely with the district and local government officials to develop quality learning opportunities in the backward regions of LAMP. We began this by working closely with the district and local government officials to develop quality learning opportunities in the backward regions of LAMP.

The poorest of the poor in India today want education above all else for their children.

The recent landmark legislation – The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE) - has made Elementary Education a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6-14 years. It demands that all children in this age group are enrolled and stay in school for 6 years. But in reality, the situation is far from ideal. Children from migrant backgrounds are particularly vulnerable to dropout rates due to a variety of factors such as accidents, illness, and discrimination. The RTE Act has provided a framework for ensuring that children from migrant backgrounds are not left behind.

Community Voices

Over the last few years, many AIF friends and volunteers have suggested that we capture the voices of the children, families, and community members who have been part of our work. This has been a challenging task, as the communities we work with are often in remote and difficult-to-reach areas. However, with the help of our partners and local community leaders, we have been able to gather some powerful testimonies from children who have benefited from our programmes.

A child from a village in Odisha says: “Before LAMP, I used to go to the nearby city to work as a daily laborer. But now, I am in school and learning new things. LAMP has changed my life.”

A parent from a migrant community in Maharashtra says: “LAMP has given my child a chance to learn and grow. I am grateful to the programme for providing education to our children.”

A community leader from a rural district in Gujarat says: “LAMP has been a game-changer for our community. Through the programme, we have been able to provide education and support to our migrant children, ensuring they have a bright future.”

These are just a few examples of the many voices we have heard. They are a testament to the power of education and the importance of providing equal opportunities to all children, regardless of their background.
groups, women’s groups, government school teachers, programme teachers and supervisors, and the partner staff. At AIF, we were keen to have an independent person give us an objective picture of the thought process on the ground. Our visits throw up certain kinds of project-related information, and times that the field people express to us would surely carry a bias. The real truth, or as close as we can get to it, can help us proceed with our work in a better way. Stories from the field are also a compelling means for fund-raising, especially for the individual-based fund-raising model that the American India Foundation predominantly employs.

This was a tough call. The task of having an outsider record “community voices” was challenging both in terms of the assignment—design and execution with the requisite degree of sensitivity, objectivity and skill. We decided to go ahead with it nevertheless. Two years later, we are delighted to share with you the photos and voices from the field of two of our oldest partners – Loksabha, from the tribal district of Nayapada (Odisha) in the East, and Kesavan Foundation Trust, from the desert district of Kutch (Gujarat) in the West. Each of them works directly in sixty villages, but has spin off effects in approximately another 100-150 villages.

We hope that those of us passionate about education as a means to break the poverty trap, and bring into play the enormous potential of the children and youth of the country, will find in the work resonance and inspiration to bring about a change. The rich and luminous lives of the children, youth and adults are not only portrayed through images and words in this book, but compel us to re-examine our own thinking and conclusions about the people we work with... This is truly about them, not about us.

Smita
Director, Education
American India Foundation
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REGIONS OF NEGLECT
A Look at Migration Prone Geographies
THE DESERT DISTRICT OF KUTCH, GUJARAT

Kutch is the western-most district of India in the state of Gujarat, and shares its border with Pakistan. It is the largest district of the country in terms of size and is spread over 49,000 square kilometers, of which more than half is uninhabited desert area. Kutch is well known for its unique geographical features – the salty marshlands known as The Great Rann of Kutch and The Little Rann of Kutch. It is also the largest producer of salt in Gujarat. In 2001, Kutch came into the international limelight because of the devastating earthquake it experienced.

Development Indicators

The population of Kutch is 1,360,000 of which 11.90% are Scheduled Castes and 6.9% Scheduled Tribes. Kutch is predominantly rural with 67% of the population living in villages, and 23.3% living below the poverty line. As per the 2001 Census, the State Literacy Rate is 69.97% whereas that of Kutch is 60.40%. The female literacy rate in the state is 59%, and that in Kutch is 49.07%. Furthermore, in the most backward pockets of Kutch – Bhiloda and Rapar blocks – the female literacy rate falls as low as 33.47% and 29.98%, respectively.

Despite Gujarat being one of the fastest growing economies in India, this growth has largely bypassed the people of Kutch. The district is known for its extreme weather conditions, prone to droughts and floods. Despite this, the region has suffered from droughts in the last 90 years. While Kutch comprises 22% of Gujarat's geographic area, it contains only 5% of its water resources. The major sources of income include farming, animal husbandry, and agricultural labor. However, scarce and irregular rainfall and salinity ingress along the coastal and Rann areas seriously compromise agricultural productivity. Vulnerability to disaster, widespread poverty, and lack of viable employment opportunities in Kutch translate into high seasonal migration. Moreover, in Kutch, the basic infrastructure in terms of roads and electricity is very inadequate as far as its villages and small (smaller habitation) are concerned. Kutch also has a very low population density of 33 persons per square km. This, coupled with its remote location and its desert like geography, makes a high degree of social isolation for its people, and enormous distances that need to be negotiated for any development interventions.

Ironically, in Kutch, poverty is interspersed with richness – the district boasts of some of the richest villages in India due to the remittances coming in from the substantial diaspora in Africa, the Gulf, USA and the UK and, within the country, from cities like Mumbai. In short, the causes and consequences of poverty in Kutch, as well as its social dynamics, are complex.
Village Taga belongs to the Ahir, Muslim and Maldhari communities. Here, a man from the Ahir community sits in a village meeting. Different communities wear distinctive headgears.
Young women work on their embroidery for several hours everyday for years together, to accumulate a substantial pile for their wedding trousseau. This beautiful embroidery thus becomes a hindrance in the schooling of girls in Kutch.
Migration in Kutch
The Lives of Salt Pan Workers, Brick Makers and Charcoal Producers

Gujarat is a hub of seasonal migration. It receives labourers from about nine states for work in over a dozen sectors. Gujarat produces 66% of the salt in India in inland and marine salt pans. The latter dot a quarter of the 3800 km coastline of the state. Kutch is a major salt district, producing 52% of the total salt yield of the state. Salt is produced by drawing out saline ground water in inland salt pans in the Little Rann of Kutch and using saline sea water in marine salt pans along the coastline. The labour intensive salt industry engages the salt workers on a seasonal basis. From October to May each season, an estimated 200,000 to 225,000 people migrate to Kutch every year for salt making. Salt is also produced in ten other districts of the state. Apart from the salt sector, labour migration is also found in a number of other sectors. Close to 100,000 people migrate for cattle grazing, crossing state boundaries to go to neighbouring states such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Another 80,000 people migrate for charcoal making but remain within Kutch or its neighbouring districts.

The marine salt pans or agars provide the harshest living and working conditions by far. A typical agar is spread over an area measuring 10 acres, and is serviced by one family of two adults and two to four children. Their job is to concentrate saline sea water by exposing it to the sun as it circulates over large areas, and finally to crystallize it into salt. The workers face the tough natural conditions at the pans day after day — including strong sea winds, the glare of the sun reflecting off the salt, the strong mid-day heat, and chilly temperatures at night. Although there are no specific tasks for children to perform, they help their parents in all parts of the operation. Girls also take on many of the household responsibilities in order to free their mothers to work at the pan.

Families typically live in shacks made of wood and plastic sheets, which are open to the cold and wind. The supplies of water and food are uncertain and usually meager. Salt workers also face the additional deprivation of social isolation. A family of four or five may live a lonesome existence on their pan, with the next pan and its workers at least a mile or two away.

Workers like this young woman, carry salt from the pan to a small heap for collection. After working in the salt for over 14 hours each day, salt pan workers compare the feeling of salt cutting through the cracks in their feet to the sensation of fire burning through their skin.
Farida neatly uniformed salt onto a salt pile while her son (left) looks on. Farida and her husband Nazar (both are from Village Nabad) spend three hours a day from the job. In fact, the family traveled by train but then took a ride on a train on the last leg of the journey as it was Rs. 20 ($0.30-$0.45) cheaper than the common taxi bus. Their son does not go to school and works alongside his parents everyday from 7 am to 3 pm. The family earns a total of Rs. 3000 (around US $32) a week.

The seemingly endless salt pans stretch into the distance. A woman and her family stand outside their makeshift tent where they live for eight months every year.

The traditional salt pans are made of mud which has been gathered near the coast and heated in the sun to evaporate the water. The resultant salt is then harvested and transported to the towns and cities.

In such situations, salt pan workers have grown up to find jobs and sometimes do not have a place to go. In the world of salt pan – two or three days away from the nearest government school to which equipment has always been available to them.
Salt pan workers live in makeshift huts made out of burlap and wood, such as this one. The tilted Indian flag hints at the proximity of the salt pans and mocks the citizenship of these migrants who remain bereft of all their rights and entitlements.
A breaker machine used in the salt manufacturing process sits amidst heaps of salt produced the year before. Rain and strong winds have sucked off the salt on the surface, but it will still be used.

After the boulders of the Jalis Ponda are chopped down to size, they are arranged into a pile and then burnt into charcoal. When the children working in the charcoal fields went to school for the first time, they didn’t take well to sitting with a pen and would instead use a stick to write in the sand. They would pile up objects one on top of the other to add sums.

The seasonal workers/teachers, some of them former charcoal workers themselves, recognised this pattern and incorporated the technique into their teaching methods.
A charcoal worker’s family sets up house in a desolate field and uses a lone tree to shelter its belongings and store its cooking utensils.

The dry terrain stretching for miles provides sustenance to Jute Pura, the tree used to make charcoal. In this photo, Pravin works and his cousin walks in the harsh heat to find the site where their family is engaged in making charcoal.
Pieces of logs, turned into charcoal, stick out of a burnt and deserted mound. You can also see the charpa, a string bed, where a worker sleeps, with no protection from the harsh elements of the desert.

Migrant workers create their own place of worship, even in the stark tundra which is their home for most of the year.
Will only a thatched roof to cover the migrant's modest belongings and clothes on the branches of trees.

ANIMAL GRAZING, KUTCH

Parents have to migrate with their daughters who help with daily chores such as fetching water. Shanta (5) carries a pot of water on her head to her family and their animals. She walks a kilometer each way to get water, a chore that is repeated several times a day.
Men and women both work in the fields. They help out with daily chores such as feeding the young animals.
The Tribal District of Nuapada, Odisha

This red earth that can be found in Nuapada, a tribal district in the Eastern state of Odisha, stands out against the soft green Mahua trees indigenous to the region. The ochre colour of the mud huts being swept by women wearing silver nose rings that pierce both their nostrils, reflects the uniqueness of this tribal state. At night, people depend on wood fires to complement the light from the distant sky. As quiet and picturesque as the scenery is, it is also a stark reminder of the sanction and deprivation of this part in the state.

Services and facilities such as proper roads and electricity, still do not exist here. Additionally, this part of the state is notorious for its long history of droughts, famine, and poverty, that dates back to the 18th century.
Development Indicators

Nabarangapur district holds the unenviable position of being amongst the poorest districts in India. This district contains 234 villages and has a population of 540,000. According to the 2001 Census, 74% of Nabarangapur's population lies below Poverty Line (BPL). The majority of the population stems from disadvantaged communities – 35% belong to the Scheduled Tribes (ST) and 18% to the Scheduled Castes (SC). The literacy rate in the district, way below the national average, stands at 43%, while the female literacy rate is as low as 29%. The sex ratio of 1007 females per 1000 males is better than the national average, and is largely a result of massive male migration caused by the lack of employment opportunities within the area.

A large portion of Odisha is still tribal. Infrastructure is underdeveloped as can be seen in this rural area in Village Khamtani.
Livelihoods

In Nuapada district, between 60 and 90% of the population depend on agriculture and forests for their livelihood. Forestry continues to remain a major component to the development of the socio-economic conditions of the poor in the region. Nuapada is a tribal region, and in most villages of the district, the ownership of the better quality lowlands lies in the hands of a few landlords, while the poorer quality highlands are owned by the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Due to soil erosion and depletion, the yield from the highlands is very low. This accentuates the poverty of the forested sections of society. In addition to agriculture, the tribal people of Nuapada are also dependent on forests for their livelihood. Forest resources in the region are diminishing rapidly, and the custodians of the forests lie in the hands of traders and the Forest Department. Moreover, the absence of storage and processing units and lack of access to the markets compels villagers to make distress sales of their produce to middlemen. This cycle reduces the tribal people to destitution, and the lack of income around the year forces people to leave their villages and look for work outside their districts for several months every year.

Children celebrate Ganesh Puja which generates wisdom and education. The children in village Interaction play is a painting of the Goddess Durga, painted on the decorated chair.
Although beautiful and unspoilt, this part of the state has suffered a long history of drought and famine.
Migration from Nuapada to the Brick Kilns of Andhra Pradesh

It is estimated that approximately two million people migrate from the predominantly tribal districts of Western Odisha – Bolangir, Kalahandi, Bergerh, Sonepur and Puri – to the brick kilns surrounding major cities of Andhra Pradesh – Hyderabad and Vishakhapatnam (Jyothi, 2003). From Nuapada alone, 60,000-70,000 people migrate every year to the peripheries of Hyderabad, while as many as 150,000 to 190,000 people migrate from the adjoining Bolangir district. The number varies from year to year depending on the harvest. In these migrations, labour is moved by agents on trains across 700-800 km to Andhra Pradesh on a 36-hour long journey.

The exodus of migrants from the Nuapada district begins in November when contractors load migrating families in the middle of the night on trains to transport them to the railway station from where they are taken to urban destinations in Andhra Pradesh. At the worksite, the labourers mould bricks for the next eight months. The process of migration actually begins in August when Telugu middlemen arrive in large numbers in the remote villages of Nuapada and its surrounding districts. They visit the homes of prospective migrants to lend them an advance for the upcoming harvest festival of Roba Khaa, which is celebrated by every family in Western Odisha. In return, the migrants pledge their labour at the brick kilns for the ensuing eight months. With this advance, they fulfill their pressing needs like house repairs, medical treatment, weddings, and the celebration of Roba Khaa, and are ready to proceed to the worksite in November to pay off the advance with their manual labour. The movement of the labour takes place in the dark of the night because this entire operation is sub-legal. The contractors do not report to the labour department, the number of labourers being taken, or that they would be obliged to adhere to the labour laws ensuring proper wages and working conditions, which would cut into their profits.

Mountains of bricks such as this one can be found at large brick kilns, each of which employs hundreds of migrant workers.
A child of 11-14 years is an essential part of the pattani (mud) or brick work and that contractors hire for brick work in Sindh. If a couple has no child in this age group, they often borrow a child from the community, fearing that they will be rejected by the contractors. A recent unpublished study of 300 brick kilns around Hyderabad revealed that as many as 95% of the total migrants were children, of whom 25% were of elementary school age.

Although brick kilns can be seen scattered all over the countryside, the major concentration of kilns is found on the peripheries of large urban centres. The brick kilns around Hyderabad are primitive. They are small in size and lack tall chimneys that reduce the effects of pollution on the workers. While kilns in many other parts of the country have switched to coal for transportation of bricks, many women and children are still made to carry bricks on their heads. The brick-making process runs like an assembly line, and involves mixing clay, making mud balls, moulding them into bricks, carrying wet bricks to the field to dry, flipping the bricks as they dry, carrying these dried bricks in head loads to the kiln to be fired and, finally, carrying fired bricks to the trucks to be transported to the market. The labourers, under the watchful eye of the supervisor, work for 14 or more hours each day, and now with the availability of night lighting at workshops, even longer. A range of tasks are assigned for children owing to their light bodies and small fingers. These include walking on wet bricks and flipping them over to ensure that they dry uniformly, wrapping sacking mud off the bricks, and such like. Parents are made to genuinely believe that brickwork cannot proceed without children. Child labour is, of course, almost free for the employers. Parents also take the younger children of the family along, who tend more than a hand at the workshops, slowly getting apprenticed into brick work. Girls have to bear the additional burden of cooking, fetching water, and minding younger siblings.

Families working at the kiln usually live right next to the work space in tiny, dingy, makeshift huts. Weekly markets arrive to sell the poorest quality food. Hens (broken rice or chicken feed and dried or rotting vegetables) to migrant labourers at exorbitant prices. The drinking water available to them is of the same quality as that used to make the clay for bricks. It is under these circumstances that families survive for eight months every year. The result of such poor conditions is that children who are 7-8 years old often look no more than 4 years old. Adults also suffer from malnutrition, deteriorating health.
Children spend hours laying out bricks to dry in rows stretching long distances.
PREVENTING THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

Labour contractors in Cuttack hire a pulli-kuma labour unit comprising a man, a woman, and a child since each member of the unit is responsible for different tasks of brick production. If a couple do not have a child of the right age, they often borrow one from a neighbour to be eligible for the job.

Children play on top of stacks of bricks.
A GLIMPSE INTO THE SEASONAL HOSTELS

At the seasonal hostels, teachers spend individual time with each student. Here, Gorkh of Village Amrit goes over his favourite creative Teaching Learning Material (TLM) containing numbers and colourful pictures.

Each seasonal hostel and work-site school has invested in creating a library to foster reading. Here, two young readers reach for books at the seasonal hostel in Village Lakhepur, Kushto.
Teaching Learning Materials (TLM) consists of hand-made flash cards, counting sticks and beads, and many other creative, engaging aids to help children imbibe basic skills in Language and Mathematics.
Write such as this one in Village Dwarkanath lie close to the border of India and Pakistan and comprise the seasonal hostels in this village. In other parts of Kutch, community members have either donated their workshops or large sections of their houses to function as seasonal hostels.

4 major components of UMP is the ongoing manuscript teacher capacity building. Here, a teacher coordinator discusses the TLM that he has created and explains to other coordinators how it works.

This is a page from a student’s mathematics notebook. Parents of children at the seasonal hostels and worker schools say the greatest benefit of education is that it prevents their children from being cheated by shopkeepers or their parents. Children now accompany their parents to the stores or on pay duties to ensure that the calculations made by the shopkeepers and their work supervisors are correct.
In Odisha, the hostels run in 2 or 3 rooms within the government schools. The classrooms are converted into hostels at night. In the morning, the children line up their bedding and belongings, such as these pots and pans, against the walls when their rooms are again used as classrooms.

**Typical Day at a Seasonal Hostel**

Village Lakhapar, Kutch

Boys get ready to bathe outside their hostels.

Rohenzpadar, Nuapada

The hostel children wake up and walk through the village to a neighbouring lake to bathe and brush their teeth. The sun has still not risen over the mountains and the rest of the village is barely awake.
Lakhapar, Kutch
A boy gets ready to start his day.

Rohenpadar, Nuapada
Girls brush their teeth with neem twigs, a habit they learned after joining the FASBL.

Rohenpadar, Nuapada
The washerwoman gets the breakfast ready for children. The early morning sunlight streams into the small kitchen.
Salebidi, Nuapada

In an LEAP (Learning Enhancement Programme) class, the children work in groups helping one another. These classes are held before and after school hours, and are targeted towards all the children in the village.

Gharana, Kutch

An engaged learner at an LEAP class.

Kampur, Nuapada

An early morning rally is held in which the children, accompanied by other teachers, walk through the village singing about the importance of going to school — a message that has created awareness within the community and contributed to higher attendance and retention rates.
Khiemal, Nuapada
Breakfast is served by women who, like other members of the village’s self-help group (SHG), volunteer to cook for and take care of the children, and keep the school clean.

Village Lakhupur, Kutch
Children are in the government school classes. The government-qualified teachers include with us to clean the children's homework. They are also helping to teach the students in an innovative way using CWS.

Village Sukhpar, Kutch
Children are attended to by the government school by their teacher coordinator, Shankar Mali, who ensures that the children get to school on time. This practice enables government school teachers to be punctual.

Village Khamtarai, Nuapada
Barabati and Sanghi Mali, members of the school and members of the village’s SHG, ensure that the school premises stay clean.

6:30 am

6:45 am
Rohenpadar, Nuapada
Children say a prayer before eating a lunch of rice, lentils, and vegetables. Following lunch, children go back to their studies until again if their government school teachers do not decide to end classes early for the day.

Village Gharana, Kutch
Children earn with creative teaching aids in after school tuition run by the local Entrepreneur.
Village Ghamra, Kutch
Girls dance in their houses.

Village Dongrigudda, Nuapada
Children play outside their house.

Village Ghamra, Kutch
LEP class starts at Nani Ben's seasonal house.
Village Dongrigudda, Nuapada

Children use the light from lanterns to illuminate their pages as they study in their hostel.
Village Rohimpadar, Nuapada

In villages like this, power cuts can continue for any length of time. Here, children have their meal in a room dimly lit by solar lights before they go to bed.

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY
VOICES OF MIGRANTS

CHILDREN OF MIGRANTS IN THE SEASONAL HOSTELS

Children would migrate along with their parents to the worksites before seasonal hostels were established as part of the Learning and Migration Programme (LAMP). Here, they would work as labour, take care of their younger siblings, cook for their families and tend to their makeshift homes. Some of the children who migrated in the past now stay in seasonal hostels, while their parents continue migrating annually. These children have expressed a great deal of empathy for the children who still migrate with their families.

When I was younger, I used to work with my parents in the salt. My father would wake up at 5:30 in the morning, sometimes as late as 6, so that he could finish his work before the day became too hot. Whenever I had to wake up, I would also wake up because I knew that I had to help him. I would turn on the engine, make sure that the salt didn't get destroyed by the water that went into them, and then I would load the salt and transport it to the trucks. One day, my father said to me, 'Look, there is a seasonal hostel in our village and we are going to send you there. You need to study.' I didn't argue and that's how I came here.

Ranoo Husain (12) Village Tage, Khich

Bundhar ran away from his family just as his parents were set to migrate to the brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh. He remembers his parents packing up their belongings before getting on the contractor's bus, bound for the train station. Bundhar managed to escape when his family was preoccupied with last minute arrangements. He had tried running away with his younger sister once before the hope that he could save both of them from the trauma of living at the worksite and being beaten by their alcoholic father. Unfortunately, Bundhar's first brave attempt was unsuccessful. During his second attempt, Bundhar remembers peeking at the family getting on the truck, and distinctly recalling the moment his parents put his little sister on it. He said that he felt sad as there was no one to break his resolve to stay on in the village. When people in the village found out what had happened, Gunthar's government school teacher allowed him to live with his family temporarily until Gunthar could move into the hostel. Over the next few months, his father sent him a message asking Bundhar to come back from the village to help him with the work. Each time this happened, Bundhar refused to go. When we met Gunthar, it had been a year and a half since his family had migrated, and they still hadn't come back. Gunthar is committed to staying at the seasonal hostel and intends to study BTech in computer science, a goal that most of his peers have yet to develop.

Seasonal hostel coordinators realise that when migrant children, such as Gunthar, feel home in a hostel, they will invariably have a difficult time adjusting to classroom work. The teachers use educational songs and games since these activities help migrant children learn more effectively especially because they aren't used to sitting down and to pay attention for extended periods of time. Over time, the children familiarise themselves with the rhythm of a classroom, studies and a set routine.

When you talk to these children, they not only relay what their coordinators have recounted – that they had a hard time being able to study initially – but that they also intently questioned whether they had to ask them, "How will I be able to do this?" is a question a number of children said they asked themselves when they first arrived at the seasonal hostels. Now, however, these children help their teachers create teaching learning materials. They also travel to other hostels and share their educational songs and games with other kids.

Marvin Tewari was one of the first students to come here. He used to speak directly to his parents because he was so shy. He would be able to express himself in any other language, but not in Hindi or Urdu. He would be very quiet. He started involving in the class activities and performing in programmes in front of the entire community. He had gained a lot of confidence and could speak to anyone. He came first in one of the village programmes in which he played a stage play. There were so many older children in the village who were too shy to participate in the programmes. Now, he performs in the play that went on for 20 minutes.

Ramesh, a hostem coordinator in village Tage, Khich

Ramesh's words are insightful. Migrant communities have a deep sense of fear as they have always been vulnerable to exploitation. By those more educated than them. However, this fear is becoming a distant memory for these children who study in seasonal hostels. The creative curriculum and non-traditional communal set up in the hostels have helped these children learn and gain confidence.
Children remember that they didn’t know how to take care of their hygiene, such as taking a bath or brushing their teeth. They learned these habits at the seasonal hostel along with other skills such as washing their own clothes and serving food to others during meal times. Several hostel children recall being adored to tolerate to expose the grueling conditions at the worksheds. Some were addicted when they were just 6 years old. All the seasonal hostels, all these children are now intoxicated and choose to not even consume caffeinated beverages such as tea. The hostel coordinators say that they see a marked sense of discipline and cleanliness in these children now, which was missing earlier.

He says he wants to be an engineer. I don’t know what an engineer does or how much more he will have to study to become that. But that is his dream and we will see what we can do to help him.

Lal Bahadur Panjwani, father of four children speaking about one of his sons who studies in the 8th grade at the seasonal hostel in Bageshwar, Kutch.

The hostel coordinators and villagers say that when they ask any child in the seasonal hostel what they want to do when they are older, they receive a very clear response about the career or job that the child hopes to be employed in. This mental agility and foresight is a stark contrast from the children who continue to migrate and remain unexposed to growth opportunities. They have not been nurtured to dream for themselves.

Hansa, 9 years

Bageshwar, Kutch

I drink, I drink black and wasn’t dirty. I didn’t know that you need to wash your hands before and after you eat. I learned all that here. I learned how to comb my hair over here.

When Hansa visits her parents in the charcoal fields, she helps them keep an account of the money they spend and save while doing their monthly shopping. She has also taught her father to write his name, a major achievement in an area where fingerprints suffice as signatures.
Mukesh, 12 years
Village Udaipur, Rajasthan

When the soil went into the cracks in my soul, I felt the cry of the wind on the trees.

Mukesh remembers the harsh working conditions in the salt pans where he worked with his parents before they decided to send him to the seasonal hostel. His three brothers also now study at the same hostel. Mukesh says that his parents had initially pushed him out of the seasonal hostel to go back to the salt pans but after the hostel coordinator spoke to his parents, they allowed him to stay on. Seeing the progress that Mukesh has made in his studies, his parents constantly tell all their sons that if they study, they will be able to achieve something when they grow up.

Watoba, 10 years
Village Chhata, Rutal

I told the children who refused to stay in the seasonal hostel, I ask them, “Why are you doing this? You should stay here.” I also tell them about the government school and inform them that we should attend the government school as well as the LCP classes at the seasonal hostel. I ask them, “What do you do there? Is there food?” and they say, “We eat meal,” and then I tell them, “You have changed a lot because you can read and write but we are not like you.” Watoba and her family leave for the fields. Some children have followed my advice and joined the hostel, but others have gone back.

Savitha (above) remembers her life in the salt pans and vividly recounts her memories of being addicted to tobacco. She says that sometimes her mother would give her money to buy tobacco. A field that a number of the children in the seasonal hostel remember indulging in when they lived with their families at the salt pans. After Savitha came to the seasonal hostel, she realized that she missed it and told her parents to send her younger brother as well, which they did. Savitha wants to be a teacher when she grows up.
I want to get all the children of the Rabari community to come to school. I will work as a headmaster and explain to the parents that they must send their children here. If they don’t listen, I will think up another way to convince them. To prove to parents that they should send their children here, I know that I have to make something of myself so that they can see the difference an education can make.

After two months of learning how to use computers, Prabhu (sitting, extreme left) now teaches 35 children in three seasonal hostels how to type, draw and manage files on the computer.

Jaishree, 11 years
Village Dharama, Kutch

Jaishree’s mother passed away a while ago and her father initially refused to send her to the seasonal hostel as she was responsible for looking after her family and taking care of her three younger siblings at the workforce. But the seasonal hostel supervisors convinced Jaishree’s father to send her to the hostel. Seeing the marked change in Jaishree (above, extreme left, pictured with two of her younger siblings) when he first visited her at the hostel, her father was taken aback and commented to his hostel coordinator that he was impressed by her strong language and mathematical skills. He was so moved that he sent his three other children to join Jaishree at the hostel.

Most of the children enrolled in the seasonal hostels had, earlier, either dropped out of government school or had never been enrolled in school at all, which is why many of them study in grades that are much below their age group. Jaishree studies in the 2nd grade at Somlal’s seasonal hostel, but should ideally be in the 5th grade. The Learning Environment Programme (LEP) is now working to fill the gaps in the children’s learning deficits and to enrol them in their age-appropriate classes.
I was 12 when I came to the seasonal hostel. It took me a long time to be able to focus on my studies because I wasn’t used to it. But got the hang of it and caught up with the others and am doing well in class. I like the fact that everything was according to schedule in the seasonal hostel. We would get up in the morning and do our studies and then go to school and come back and study again in the evening. We were always doing something.

What I liked best about the seasonal hostel was the individual attention we received, which hadn’t happened in the government schools. Since there were just too many children, none of us received enough attention from the teacher.

Motiram, 16 years
Village Rammanna, Nizgapeta

Motiram and his three siblings used to migrate with their parents to Raipur Chhattisgarh where his mother worked as a maid and his father as a rickshaw puller. Motiram would help his mother clean the utensils, sweep the floors and wash in her employer’s home.

Motiram is the first member of his family to have recently passed the 10th grade and his future aim is to complete 12th grade and go on to college. His favourite subject is Mathematics.

His three siblings have still not returned from Raipur.

Madhav and Moti, 9 years.
Village Rammanna, Nizgapeta

Madhav (left) and Moti (right) remember migrating to the brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh with their parents. Madhav recalls that his main job at the site was to carry water to help mould the bricks. A Lakadong supervisor remembers that when she first met Moti, she was struck by the fact that he would write some of his letters in reverse. When she realised that he had dyslexia, the supervisor consistently spent more individual time with him to ensure that his learning needs were met.
Harish (left) has been in the seasonal hostel for two years. He remembers migrating to the salt pans with his parents before he was enrolled in the hostel. His hostel coordinator, Ramila ben, recalls that Harish would modify and convert words such as 'pol' into 'sali,' which she found confusing. Slowly, she said, Harish learned the right way to speak.

His best friend, Chetan (center), had been enrolled in four other government hostels before his parents heard about this seasonal hostel. Chetan had run away from each of the government hostels shortly after he joined them. He has been at Ramila ben’s hostel for more than five months now, and says that he likes it.

Harish, 11 years, and Chetan, 12 years.
Village Khamba, Rashik
MIGRANT PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN SEASONAL HOSTELS

Until a few years ago, a majority of parents felt it imperative that their children labour at the worksites to ensure higher earnings for the family. Only some of these migrant parents took the risk and sent their children to school. However, today, no matter where they go and what they migrate for, whether they are schooled or illiterate, the one thing that an increasing number of migrant parents share is the desire that their children do not re-live their harsh experiences. They believe that the solution lies in sending their children to school. Numerous parents trust that going to school helps children acquire knowledge and strengthens their ability to form their own opinions, question figures and find information on government schemes that would benefit their community members.

Migrant parents who had attended at least two to four years of school or had learned to read, write and make simple calculations, said that they had managed to create significant savings for themselves by securing jobs as managers or accountants at the worksites. They asked themselves that if even the most basic skills helped them earn enough to live and to ensure that their children would never have to migrate, then how much more could one achieve with a 10th or 12th grade education? They felt that if the children from their respective communities succeeded in completing higher secondary school, they would be able to earn enough to give back to their villages or even work as panchayat leaders for the much needed development of their own communities.

I have worked since I was a child and I need to. I will die working, but my girls will go to school and get a job so that they can lead better lives.

After her husband's death six years ago, Indra (left in photo) is amongst the few women who migrate alone to the brick kilns of Andhra Pradesh. Fortunately, she has been luckier than other women who make the journey alone and are faced with sexual exploitation. Her daughters, Lata (left in photo) and Rashma (right) are in the 7th and 9th grades, respectively, and have always stayed at the seasonal hostels. Indra says that she will do whatever is necessary to ensure that her daughters never have to migrate.

Jaga bhima
village Taja, Rabri

Because I decided I sent my girls to school. I am able to help my panchayat and I can walk on my head. It hadn't worked in the 10th grade, my sons wouldn't have done it. My children are my pride. I take them to school, but it will be different for these children. Ten years ago, there was no education in the community. Now it is about 25%. From now on, it will be 75%. Education will change the village.

Jaga bhima studied until the 10th grade and spent the rest of his childhood card-playing. Sometimes he would hunt with his 300 animals from Gujarat to Maharashtra. He remembers having to walk nearly all day, every day, for a month to cover the distance. Even before the seasonal hostels system was established in Village Taja, Jaga bhima accompanied children of the Rabri, or animal grazing, community to the village school. Fifteen years ago, he remembers, he enrolled a group of children into the 1st grade. Three of these boys now sell shops in bigger towns. Two boys, who he convinced into staying at the seasonal hostel a few years ago, graduated from high school with marks above 80%. They are currently employed in government jobs.

Jaga bhima's life has changed - he has sold off his animals which many from his Rabri community aspire to be able to do. He now has a house in town as well as in his village and he has donated one of his houses to be used as a seasonal hostel. He also donates money on behalf of migrant parents who can't afford to pay the Rs. 30 monthly contribution to the hostel.
Devai bhai could not study beyond the 2nd grade because his family didn’t have the money required for him to continue his education. He has worked in the charcoal fields for the last ten years, and spent a long time honing his mathematical skills which enabled him to do accounting work for people in the charcoal fields.

Devai bhai has donated one of his houses to run as a seasonal hostel. To ensure the comfort of the children, he added another bathroom and fans, an investment he didn’t think was worth making when he lived there with his family.

He sent his two daughters to a seasonal hostel when they were very young. They were the first in the Koli community in Napar block to have gone to the 7th grade. They now work in Mumbai in the internet business. Devai bhai’s youngest son studies in the 8th grade at a government hostel in another village.

I remember bringing the children to the hostel on my motorcycle but it would break my heart when, after some time, I saw them look at the salt pans. Then we would bring them back again and again until they were convinced that they wanted to stay. The salt pans were all that these children knew. Eventually, we saw that one boy started, then two, then five, then ten. The next generation, if educated, stands to live a much, much better life than the ones before it. I believe that.

Ajan bhai has spent the last five years trying to get children from the salt pans to stay at the seasonal hostel. He grew up in the salt pans where his uncle taught him mathematics at a young age. Ajan bhai now does all the accounting for the labour in the salt pans. But he says that he saw his father die and die in the salt pans which made him realize that the future of the next generation had to be different from his.
FAMILIES THAT MIGRATE WITH THEIR CHILDREN

"We have an eight-year-old son whom we sent to the seasonal haat. But now our daughter stays with us. She has studied till the 2nd grade. We had her enrolled in the 3rd grade – I have all the registration papers to prove it, but I didn’t want her to go back as I pulled her out of school. I have three other sons who work on other people’s farms. I am so attached to my daughter. I don’t want her to be so far away from us.

Lakshmi’s mother, Village Taga, itzhal"

"At the worksite, our own half of the brick we make the bricks. When he works, we get some rest.

Pramod’s mother, Village Dongkitta, itzhal"

When poor families migrate with their children, they have an extra pair of hands that helps increase their output at the worksite. Also, there are some jobs that children do much better than adults – for example, turning bricks over at the kiln takes a lot less time for children with their smaller hands. The parent-child bond that Lakshmi’s mother (quoted at the beginning of the page) speaks of, is another strong reason for families to migrate together. Daughters play an important role at the worksite. Their responsibilities include cooking, collecting water and tending to younger siblings while their parents work. Girls who have reached puberty are also seen as vulnerable whom compel their families to pull them out of school at the age of 13/14, deeming it unsafe for them to travel alone or to be away from the watchful eyes of their parents.

Some have it no easier. Parents put them to work in the harsher environment for extra income. Yet the prime reason children migrate is because many parents, being literate or under-educated, still do not recognize the benefits of an education. Additionally, a number of parents whose families have known nothing but poverty for generations, believe that it is not in their destiny to go to school and create lives any different from their forerunners. They held a very deep-seated belief that their children are fated to live in hardship just like the generations before them.

Lakshmi, 14 years

Village Taga, itzhal

I wake up in the morning at 5 am, wash and drink tea. Then I feed the animals, make food for everyone and cut the grass. Then I work for a kilometre to the wet to fetch 3-4 balls of water. I also take the cattle animal with me so that they can drink water. Then I collect fodder for the animals and feed them. After I come back home late in the afternoon, I do some embroidery work. By the time I finish stitching, it is evening. By this time, all the animals such as the sheep and the goats are back from grazing and we make a sleeping pen for them to rest at night. Then I make food for everyone and we all eat dinner. After that, I lay out the bed for my family. I go to sleep at about 11 pm.
Pravin (above, right) lives with his parents and starts work in the fields at 6 am every day. His cousin, standing next to him, doesn’t work in the fields and stays at the seasonal hostel. When asked what he wanted to do in the future, this cousin said that he wanted to work in a shop. Pravin said that he wanted to live with his parents to which his mother exclaimed, “No! You have to get a job when you are older! We can’t support you forever!” Pravin said that he had never considered any such alternative.

Omar, 16 years

Last that night works as a supervisor in the salt pans. He and his eldest son, Omar (left), work from 8 am to 5 pm in the working heat six days a week. Omar dropped out of the government school in his village to help his father in the salt pans. When asked what he thought of the future of his siblings, both of whom study in working schools, Omar said that he could see them, “become doctors or teachers” because of their education. When asked where he saw himself five years from now, he said that he did not know and that he had no plan for his future.
VOICES OF COMMUNITY LEADERS

WOMEN'S COMMITTEES AND SELF-HELP GROUPS

Interestingly, most of the women in the women's mandate (collective) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Odisha act as surrogate mothers to the host children, even though they are not migrants themselves and have not received an education. They take great pride in their nurturing role; most cook five meals each day for the children, sweep the floors of the seasonal hostels ensuring that the vicinity is clean and hygienic, and spend nights at the hostels taking children to the bathroom in the middle of the night and looking after them when they are sick.

SHG members in the tiny village of Kombara in South-Western Odisha helped reconstitute the government school which also doubles as a seasonal hostel for migrant children. They pooled money from their SHG savings to purchase material to fix the roof of the school and then worked together to rebuild it. The SHG community also took the initiative to clean the plugged sewage drains that ran along the school, while some male members of the village bought them, telling that they were doing the work of “unnecessary” and should be treated as such. The women were unflinching and worked to the school was safe for the children to live in. These women believe in the worth of education so deeply that they have

Before the seasonal hostels were set up, Vali bai, who had five children of her own, successfully negotiated with the government school in her village to let children from the neglected Koli community enrol in school during the period in which they did not migrate with their parents. Later, these children joined the seasonal hostels. Vali bai's own children have taught her and other adults in the village how to write their names. Her children also help their father weigh the charcoal that he produces to ensure that he doesn't get exploited by unscrupulous traders. They are the first generation in her family to be able to carry out such tasks.

Today, Vali bai is a cook in a hostel, but more than that, she is a crusader for children's education in her community and village. She addresses large gatherings of a couple of thousand people, and behind her ghunget (wall) speaks powerfully in the presence of senior politicians. In her village, Demarai, she fought with the administration for access to water, electricity, and improved infrastructure.

In Kutch, women of the Parkara Koli community worked hard and ensured that the seasonal hostel for the children of migrants in their community ran smoothly. The Parkara Koli community is one of the most backward communities in this area. The ongoing neglect of this community by the government stems from the fact that the Parkara Koli migrated to India from Pakistan during the 1970s war but were forced to stay on after the post-war closure of the Indian-Pak border.

The Parkara Koli have traditionally been a nomadic tribe, which made it difficult for their children to attend school. A decade ago, no Koli child stayed in school beyond the 6th grade. After the Gujarat earthquake in 2001, this community's lifestyle changed and they opted to settle in a place for longer periods of time, and to move less frequently.

Women from this community, along with women's groups in Kutch, and Kusumpa, keep a record of the children who do not attend school regularly and spend time speaking to the parents or caregivers of these children. Some also ensure that government school teachers are punctual and do their jobs effectively.
Babbi ben sent her daughter, Rama ben, and son, Mehnesh, to a government-run ashram near the village. Mehnesh now studies in the 9th grade at the seasonal hostel, while Rama ben works as a cook. Babbi ben’s life changed when she learned how to make food for the hostel. She is now the coordinator of the seasonal hostel.

Before joining the hostel as a cook, Babbi ben worked in the charcoal fields. Her daily diet consisted of roti and onion, since this was all she knew how to cook. She was not aware of how to manage the amount of food she cooked. But after she was hired as a cook for the seasonal hostel, things changed. Babbi ben and the other cooks now participate in monthly meetings, where they are taught new menus for nutritious meals. Hygienic practices to ensure that ingredients are cleaned and stored properly, and ways to manage and plan the quantity of ingredients, based on the number of children they cook for. They are also taught to maintain and save their resumes, which tend to more than double the amount they earned at the migration workshops.

Through the TDBs that run the seasonal hostels, the cooks have also learnt how to speak up for their rights and are informed about the specific government offices they need to visit to gain information about various government schemes that relate to them.

Heena is around 69 years old and an active member of her SHG. She remembers working alongside other SHG members to rebuild the wall of the school and clean the sewage around the school compound when the SHG first started working there. For four years she worked as a coordinator of the seasonal hostel. She says that she is grateful that the seasonal hostel is a safe place for children where they are treated with respect.

When you send your children to school, you are sending them to a safe place where they won’t get hurting at all. I ran away from school, after just two days of attending classes, when my teacher slapped me in front of everyone. And I was not even 9 that day. I would have stayed in school and treated a better life for myself. I wouldn’t still be here in this village so many years later.
Valji ben (centre) has a grandson, Ishwar, who attends coaching classes in the seasonal hostel in Village Gharana in Kutch. When Valji ben learned about the seasonal hostel, she decided to come to see how Ramila ben, the coordinator at the hostel, was teaching her grandson and the other children. She has continued to come every day since then to help Ramila ben. Her eldest grandson attended tuition classes here till the 7th grade and now studies in the 8th grade, along with Ramila ben’s younger brother, in a neighbouring village. Valji ben represents an increasing number of non-migrants who go out of their way to support the seasonal hostels in their villages.
VILLAGE LEVEL COMMITTEES

In Kutch and Nusapada, encouraged by UNICEF and supported by the local NGOs, non-migrant community members have formed committees, such as the Village Development Committee in Nusapada and the Village Advisory Committee in Kutch, to ensure that children attend school, teachers arrive on time, and migrant parents are informed about hostel enrolments. The committee members include parents, grandparents, youth and panchayat leaders, who work together to raise contributions and monitor the efficient use of funds to create playgrounds, repair and maintain the seasonal hostels, and organise educational and cultural tours for the children.

Ramzan bhai runs a small photo-copying store in Village Taga. He is amongst a handful of educated people in his village. He helps his community in many ways, from getting ration cards made to helping comprehension levels of students in school. The latter project was conducted in partnership with the CPT. Community members in village Taga say that if they even have a question about their rights or the processes they need to follow for government schemes, they ask Ramzan bhai.

The development of the village tends to be a common concern cited by most committee members who believe that with education, the children in the hostels will acquire the knowledge required to fight for their rights and stand up to exploitative and corrupt government officials. Additionally, they recognise that educated panchayat leaders will be able to read the government booklets that outline all the village development schemes and will then be able to disseminate this knowledge to the community.

The school system in India is organised such that almost every village or hamlet has a primary school. But the upper primary school is mostly shared by a small cluster of contiguous villages. A high school is generally even further off and is not easily accessible. Besides, in remote, backward areas, these norms\(^a\) are often not adhered to, and children may find even an upper primary school hard to access. High schools tend to be few and far between in areas like Kutch and Nusapada. The need to go to another village is one of the reasons why so many children drop out at the transition stages of their schooling – between primary and upper primary and then between upper primary and high school\(^a\). Girls end up dropping out the most in this process.

A significant role of the village committee members in these villages lies in informing migrant and non-migrant parents about the upper primary school enrolment process and supporting them through it. Due to this network of information, resources, and support, an increased number of children now attend high school.

A number of committee members stated that they noticed a difference between the education system, where it was common for teachers to intimidate or beat children (who then either dropped out of school or went to school fearfully), and the current system in the seasonal hostels, where co-ordinators are trained to teach children creatively and respectfully. They see this as one of the main reasons why children are eager to attend the seasonal hostels and to persuade their parents to send their siblings to the hostels as well.

\(^a\) According to Government of India norms, a primary school is located in a village. A lower primary school is located in a town or village. A higher primary school is located in a town or village.

\(^b\) Panchayat, primary school covers grades 1 - 5, whereas middle school covers grades 6 - 8. The former is usually an extended to grade 10.
Nathu bhai is the sarpanch (village head) of Sukhpur and has studied till the 8th grade. He says that he diligently goes over each of the benefits received from the government schemes offered to the village communities. He knows that Village Heads who cannot read or write do not have the confidence to question government officials on various village schemes. They also do not know enough to pass on the necessary information to the people. Nathu bhai is very thorough in informing various segments of the community about schemes for which they are eligible.

"I am the panchayat leaders who know how to read, who go through the benefits of government schemes and are informed about every aspect of each scheme. They are in a position to present the information accurately."

Rucha Sa is the President of the Village Development Committee in Village Dongriguda, Naspada. He is committed to doing whatever is necessary to ensure that the seasonal laborers are well. He believes that this is the only way to ensure that the children in his village do not fall in the footsteps of their parents.
ADEOENS A町ND YOUTH GROUPS

Youth groups have proven to be an extraordinarily useful resource to the seasonal hostel coordinators. They participate in duties that range from assisting in running the after-school LEAP classes held in the seasonal hostels and assisting understaffed teachers supervise children, to taking sick children to the hospital. The youth committees consist of more than 30 members who range in age from 18 to 25 years. The members elect a president of the committee which meets every ten days to discuss issues related to the school. Most of the members we spoke to had dropped out after the 7th grade, but some had stayed on till the 10th grade, and most had migrated before.

A number of teachers complained that, when parents leave for work in the morning, there is no supervision in the house to ensure that the children attend school. This was a major reason for low attendance. But now, this is one of the many responsibilities taken over by the youth committee. Many members of the youth committee now accompany children to the school. In situations where the children migrate with their parents, the youth must communicate with them on a regular basis, explaining the benefits of having their children stay in the school system.

Recently, youth groups in many villages took on the challenge to monitor children who had graduated from primary or upper primary schools that existed in their villages. In the next level of school that existed in the nearest village. This is proving to be a very complicated and involved task since, first, the youth groups have to convince the parents and the children, especially the girls, that continuing their education is essential, even if it means that the children must travel to another village. Following this, they have to organize children in groups and get them enrolled in schools in the upper primary or high school in other villages. They also have to arrange transportation for the children to ensure that they reach their schools every day. In addition to this, members of the youth groups have to meet with these children frequently in their new schools to counsel and support them while the children settle into their new routines. When government school teachers are absent, which happens frequently, the youth also have to teach the children with the TLMs that they have been seasonal hostel coordinators.

When we were first invited to form the committee and to discuss matters related to the school, everyone at home said, what’s the point? Once you meet up with your friends in these meetings, you won’t do any work. Don’t go. Stay at home and work in the kitchen. But then the seasonal hostel coordinators and NGO staff came to our parents and talked to them about the importance of getting the girls involved with the seasonal schools and that’s why our parents let us attend these meetings. If we don’t come to the meetings, we’d spend that time in the kitchen cooking food just like our family members had worked us to do magically.

Santika, 27 years, village tunnel, Kusada

When the teachers in the government school presented the idea of forming female youth committees to the parents of adolescent girls, they feared a great deal of resistance. It was only after the seasonal hostel coordinators and NGO workers intervened that the girls were allowed to leave their homes to help at the schools. They said that this kind of freedom is a wonderful experience for the girls and that it is a great way for them to learn about how to take responsibility for their own education. The members of these committees said that when they first met, they spoke about events and experiences important to their lives and how the schools and seasonal hostels are functioning.

When we came in school, the main purpose of our teachers was to teach through regular classes with the help of the school for students who did not attend school. Some of the students who were being taught were already in school. The idea that the after-school LEAP classes could be used to review material that students had already learned was a great way for these students to catch up. Each child in turn taught accordingly so that each one of them moves ahead.

Averal Babu, President, Male Youth Committee, Nusada

Madhusan Jagjit is the President of the village Development Committee at village Khamrani in Kusada. Madhusan has two children who study in the government school and attend LEAP classes in the seasonal hostels. He spends a great deal of time in the village educating children about how to attend school. Madhusan studied until the 2nd grade but says that he learned many of his skills, such as speaking Hindi, only because he had worked for odd jobs to other states, and not because of his education, which lacked quality and was based on rote memorization. A stark contrast to the type of education his children now receive.
The members of the youth committee want to help in these schools for several reasons. Since they have received trainings on how to use TLMs to teach children in an engaging, fun and creative way, they feel that they will be able to teach their own children in the same manner in the future. Most of them remember being frustrated by the threat of being punished by their teachers when they were at school, and are committed to teaching children in the hostels in a non-intimidating manner, which they say has really helped children in the seasonal hostels progress more rapidly.

One of the most frequently stated reasons that members of both the male and female youth groups attribute to their commitment to the hostels is the dream of playing a role in bringing their village out of poverty through education.

"I think that most of us, our participation can help the girls who attend the UDF classes. I've had a soft access to after-school classes and went taught in the same way, we would be doing something better with our lives now."

Praveena/Young Activist
President of Adolescent Girls
Group, Village School, Vavapala
SEASONAL HOSTEL COORDINATORS

Earlier, the parents of these children had no clue what a seasonal hostel was, and what was taught there. And they would come home and challenge us. They’d say, you can do whatever you want to teach our children, but they’ll not be able to learn anything. It is just their daily. They would leave. I felt this attitude had to change and we had to show them what they believed was wrong. If we didn’t make a change, they would continue to believe that this is how their lives were meant to be.

But then something changed. In the first season itself, they saw the change in their children and they had no choice but to believe that things could be different and that they could trust this seasonal hostel. Now we have a parent who, regardless of where she has migrated to for work, comes running to ask us to take care of their children in the seasonal hostel.

Veji Dhawale, Seasonal Hostel Coordinator, Khutch

Critical to the success of the seasonal hostels are its coordinators who spend eight months every year living with migrant children, ensuring their safety and seeing that they receive a creative, interactive education. In Khutch, workable schools have been set up in the salt pans so that even children who migrate with their parents have access to quality education. Here, the teachers are former migrants, and they teach from 9 am to 2 pm.

Seasonal hostel coordinators have to meet a number of challenges in their jobs: from getting over their own fear of education arising from the scarring role-based schooling they received, to playing a significant mentorship role vis-a-vis young migrant children, many of whom had never been away from their families before starting at the seasonal hostels.

The seasonal hostel coordinators say that they have gained a great deal from their work. The most important is the new found confidence that comes with the job. This stems from the number of factors including the realisation that the selected coordinators were considered suitable to be offered this opportunity, and received numerous trainings and intensive exposure to other schools. The visits that a number of these coordinators have made to different parts of the country for their trainings have really empowered their self-esteem.

A number of coordinators reported how scared yet excited they were when they took a train to Delhi or to Rajasthan for the first time. They said their families were proud of them for having seen so much of the country.

I have signed up to take my 12th grade exams. I felt that if I am teaching, why shouldn’t I also learn further? I would ultimately like to complete my graduation.

Veji Dhawale, Seasonal Hostel Coordinator, Village Khutch

Seasonal hostel coordinators stated that since they were encouraged to continue their education as they started their jobs, they felt that they were able to create some sort of vision for their own future. Some coordinators passed their 12th grade exams, some completed their 12th grade, and have already started studying at the college level. Many of them said that the K2Os they worked with had taught them how to save money, a skill that they were passing on to their friends as well. This was the first time that many of these community members were being introduced to the notion of saving or studying further, to create an enriched future for themselves.

I have gained so much as an individual. Earlier, the parents of these children would call me ‘kuchhe’, but now they call me ‘Ramesh bhai’, or sometimes they call me ‘Ramesh bhai’ (elder brother), and this is a big thing for me. They ask me for advice on how to teach their children. Now, if they ever need to get their children’s name registered in the village or enrolled in the 6th grade in a school, they come to me for help. They depend on me. Even if they are older than me, they treat me with a lot of respect.

Ramesh bhai, Seasonal Hostel Coordinator, Village Jung, Khutch

Coordinators said that they received a great deal of respect from migrant parents and even non-migrants owing to the work that they were doing in the seasonal hostels. For former salt pan workers or charcoal workers, who had never before known any sense of internal or external respect, this proved to be of great significance. They viewed this respect as not just a sign that they are held in high esteem by community members, but that their work is making a difference to their villages.

One of the seasonal hostel coordinators, Ramesh bhai, is passionate about parents and community members and has helped mitigate the alcohol consumption in his community which was notorious for its high levels of addiction. Due to his respect, he has earned in his community through his role as a teacher in the seasonal hostel, migrant parents listen to him and pay more attention to their children’s studies and to the progress that they are making in their schools. Ramesh bhai says that a number of these parents, who earlier would think only about themselves and were consumed with their addictions to alcohol, gambling or tobacco, now come to the school and make it a point to bring sweets or small presents for the children. Other community members commended Ramesh bhai for his significant role in reducing alcoholism in the village. This is just one example, amongst many, of how seasonal hostel coordinators contribute to their villages.

Gaffour bhai

Sunil Parva, Kutch

I live in Kutch and I’m a teacher. I would still be living with parents, butting them to send their children in the seasonal hostel. In the village, I would continue to work here in the salt pans. Earlier, I thought of going back to the village. But then I realised that there were many people there who are concerned about the welfare of the community, while in the salt pans, there are very few. I thought that by being here, I can give more help to those who are and work here.
Ramesh Jhala is the coordinator for the seasonal hostel in Village Jangi. He was born in the same place where he and his family worked for 14 years. Ramesh had studied to the 7th grade when he joined JAMP, but since then has gone on to pass 12th grade, and is currently studying for the 13th grade exams. His long term goal is to get a Master's Degree.

I don’t care whether you are a government school teacher or a village school teacher. At the end of the day, you are a teacher and you have to decide how long you want to be one, and what you really want to do with your career. If you have 10 students in the 7th grade, do you want to see them go to the 8th, 9th and then 10th grade? If so, then you have to create an entire system that would allow this to happen in your classrooms. You have to ask yourself what you want to do. If you are not willing to put more effort into this, then you shouldn’t be a teacher.
In the future, I hope to see all my 20 girls graduate from the 10th grade. Their mothers and fathers will see them study and will also go to school. The village parents will also be encouraged to send their children to school. These girls will educate their own children, making the entire village and change with an education.

Sonal Ben
Village Gharana, Uttar Pradesh

When Sonal Ben, the coordinator of the second seasonal house in Gharana, started teaching at the hostel, she was especially terrified at the prospect of travelling for her training. Initially, a family member would always accompany her. Now, she says that the thought of going anywhere by herself doesn’t intimidate her in the least and, unlike the shy person she recalls being earlier, she says that she now has the confidence to actively participate in all her trainings. She was the first girl in the Hill community in this village to go to the 7th grade.

Mathun Tandi
Village Khairur, Narseen

The first time I was named pre-moursavy the T.M.B, and told that I would have to see these children letters and numbers. I thought that the whole school would instantly forget me. I named, how will they learn with these T.M.B? I've never been taught this. I was told that these would hold the children’s attention. I was overwhelmed. But when I needed teaching with these aids, I could see the children beginning to talk more and show more interest, and they started to learn very quickly.

Mathun says that his family was very poor but always placed a great deal of emphasis on education. After he passed the 5th grade, Mathun realized that he wanted to be a social worker. He worked in odd jobs to finance his education. He feels strongly about the work that he does. Besides being portrayed by migrant and non-migrant parents for the interactive and engaging classes he teaches, Mathun is also admired by the village for his creative story-telling that he has written about the importance of education.
When these girls turn 18 or 19 years old, their parents take them back to the villages and partly this by saying, "They are too old for school and they need to work." They are sent to the hostels to take care of their younger siblings. So we tell them, "But they learn to cook in the seasonal houses as well." In the seasonal houses, children are taught to cook and to keep their environment clean. They don't know how to take care of themselves. We explain this nicely to the parents. We tell them that when their daughters are educated, they will start to get over the difficulties in their lives.
Dawal Dhar would spend his entire day drinking alcohol. Later, after I spoke to him repeatedly, he was convinced enough to leave both his children in the seasonal hostel. I would check in on him regularly and talk about how they were doing better in school and were improving in behaviour. I would ask, "Don’t you care about your children’s progress? But you have not changed your behaviour at all. You don’t think of them because you spend all your time thinking about your alcohol. You don’t contribute anything to your children’s future but you spend Rs. 30 or 35 on each bottle of alcohol you consume. Earlier, we didn’t quite believe you enough to appreciate the change that was taking place in the children. But I kept going to him to make him see the improvements and over time, he began to listen and realised that I was right. Today, he doesn’t touch alcohol and if you were to ask me if a parent who has taken out the meal in this seasonal hostel, I would pick him.
GOVERNMENT SCHOOL TEACHERS

Government schools in rural India have suffered a poor reputation for decades. It is commonplace for government school teachers to neglect their students, and use harsh punishments in the classroom to instill fear in their students. However, to create long-term change in the state of education in the villages covered by LAMF, mutual collaboration and understanding between the seasonal hostels and government schools is essential.

LAMF's hostels' supervisors, educators, and parents have invested in building a strong relationship with government school teachers through the years. They have also encouraged community leaders and sarpanches to interact with government school headmasters through meetings in a conscious effort to bridge the gap between the government school and the community. In all the village meetings and events, school headmasters are included as the main participants, along with sarpanches and other eminent local individuals. The fact that the Livelihood Enhancement Programme (LEP), the initiative in the seasonal hostels during after-school hours for the children of migrants, now also covers non-migrant school-going children, is a concrete step towards improving the attendance and performance levels of all government school students.

The members of the village committees assure that the government schools are open and close on time and that their functioning improves. The youth committees keep an eye on children skipping school, and accompany them back to their classroom; members of sarpanch groups actively go out looking for truant school teachers. These are just some of the examples of the efforts being made to reform the government schools in these villages. And this process will gain momentum as more and more people start feeling responsible for the education of the children in their villages. Gradually, many government school teachers have not only become supportive of this change but are also committed to contributing to the process.

I grew up in a tribal area which didn't have a communication system to link up to the rest of the world; we were the last of the tribal. The whole village lived off a small house. The children never knew education. Even when they came to school, they would be busy with other things. We didn't have a school building; we studied in a classroom under the sun. Today, there are proper classrooms and buildings, and the teachers are also trained. I am thankful to LAMF for the change they have brought in our lives.

Pujari Bhai has worked in the salt pans for 14 years. He now works in the salt pans, and is a seasonal school coordinator in the village. He works from 6 am to 3 pm. He spends his time making TLMs and also committed to improving his Hindi and English by studying from books donated to the worksite school library.
comprehension levels of students. In a culture where the education system is still based on rote memorisation, these TLMs help children learn their subjects in a manner that is easy to understand. Although government school teachers are provided a budget to purchase TLMs, this seldom happens. And in the rare cases where these TLMs are purchased, the government teachers are oblivious of how to use them due to inadequate training. These factors compel government teachers to request seasonal hostel coordinators to teach them how to use these teaching aids and creative strategies that they can use to teach more effectively.

Hostel coordinators recount that, in return, many government school teachers helped them understand mathematical concepts and problems that they found difficult to tackle. The government school teachers also provided them with information on how to apply for children's birth certificates and other such official documents. Some government school teachers provided space in their classrooms for running LEP classes, which added to the spirit of collaboration between the government teachers and hostel coordinators.

Since hostel coordinators accompany the children who live in the hostels to school every morning, there has been a noticeable increase in the attendance rates of children in government schools, a fact that is much appreciated by many government teachers.

Numerous teachers also speak of the increased comprehension levels of the migrant children after they started attending LEP classes. They said that a number of children have started sitting in the front rows in the classroom after having shynly occupied the back rows, which is a common tactic followed by children to hide their inattention or disinterest in their studies by sitting far away from the teacher in the hope of being overlooked. For a child to voluntarily move to the front row right under the gaze of a teacher reflects an increase in his or her confidence and comprehension levels.

Government school teachers stated that although there were several teachers, including a principal, in their school, one or the other teacher would consistently not show up to work, or would be required to attend a month-long training which would ultimately leave 80 - 100 children under the supervision of one teacher. In situations like this, the government teachers said that they were incredibly appreciative of the support that they received from seasonal hostel coordinators and stepped in to teach classes.

Lastly, the government school teachers recognize the close ties that these local NGOs have built with the migrant and non-migrant communities in the village, and that the support of the seasonal coordinators in the hostels and LEP classes is based on a deep knowledge of how the children of these communities live, what they respond to, and how they best comprehend what is taught in the class. Due to this, the communities place a lot of trust in the seasonal hostel leaders and LEP classes, and are willing to leave their children in the hands of the seasonal coordinators. Thus, despite initial resistance and even hostility, many government teachers have now realised that collaborating with the NGOs serves to create a win-win situation for all.

Kashirot Gahir
Village Kashirot, Hosapete.

"When I was young, there were no facilities such as this. Lepeshala arrived here 12 years ago. We studied in the traditional method. Now we teach through stories and songs that we have learned from Lepeshala, and we see that students interact with the teachers with ease. There is no fear in them."

Kashirot Gahir worked alongside the seasonal hostel coordinators to ensure that neither the government school classes nor the after-school LEP classes are hindered. He is amongst the growing number of government teachers who understand the importance of this partnership. Kashirot says that his co-teacher and principal have not turned up for work for months on end and it has been the seasonal hostel coordinators who have helped him run his classes. According to him, although government school teachers are provided a budget to purchase teaching-learning materials and to attend trainings or how best to use these materials, the funds are seldom put to the right use.
SUPervisors of seasonal Hostels

In order to be creative while teaching children, the teacher had to have a mind that is open and curious as a child. If the right mentality of government school teachers does not change then there is no hope that the quality of education will improve.

Dhambarchar Majhi (Last row, centre), a government school teacher in Village Kharia, strongly believes in the importance of seasonal hostels and the quality education offered by the after-school Learning Enrichment Programme. When a student of his, Gunher, ran away from home to escape migrating with his family, Dhambarchar Majhi invited him to stay with his family until the seasonal hostel opened. He also worked with the seasonal hostel coordinators to ensure that Gunher was not taken back to the workers against his will.

Education should be a lifelong process. It is most effective when it is relevant to the students. In rural areas, our children seem to develop academically at a slower rate than in the urban areas because they don’t receive as much guidance from their teachers and parents, and also because a lot of the text material isn’t based on topics that seem relevant to their rural lives. I think that when we envision and plan for quality education, it has to relate to rural children mentally, socially, physically. This is absolutely essential.

Pamphlets, supervisors, Lokadhurti, Huzuri.

Supervisors feel that it is harder for children in rural areas to study as the curriculum doesn’t cater to a population with such little exposure to the urban world. And children of the migrants have it even worse since they spend their entire lives in the coal pits or at the brick kiln and do not see much else. Therefore, many supervisors believe that using content to teach children is important if they are to comprehend what they are being taught. A special emphasis is placed in LAMP classes on using examples that are relevant to these children and to their environment.

When we started putting this practice into the education practice with our children, we noticed that they would all silently and look at us just the first time when I was a student of their age. But after a while, we could see their minds lighting up that was shooting up, and then more and more quickly. And the same thing happened to my mind which meant that the right mentality between us was giving way.

Pamphlets, Supervisors, Lokadhurti, Huzuri.

It is commendable that the supervisors are so open minded that they are ready and willing to remove what they know and understand of the education system so far. They were taught in the traditional Indian system where teachers depended on role memorization to teach their students, and obedience scored over analytical reasoning. However, while participating in the trainings, they said that their minds opened up to a new way of thinking. They felt that they were being exposed to new, breakthrough perspectives about education from the trainings conducted under LAMP. They now find themselves approaching education very differently.

On another note, a number of supervisors said they have not received any guidance from their family members about the academic path they should follow. A number of them said that they depend on friends, who were more educated than them, to stay informed of the skills that they needed to take to further their studies. Completing the 12th grade or even their Teacher’s Certificate marked an end to their dependence on other people for such significant advice. Now they were in a position to advise younger people.
What was interesting to learn was that the LAMP trainings that these supervisors had to go through didn’t just affect their understanding of education, but also influenced them in a variety of other things such as gender discrimination, planning for the future and so on.

Before I joined the Cohesion Foundation Trust, I didn’t treat women as equals. I was never taught to do this and I never questioned it. But after I came here, I had to participate in these gender trainings. And it was only after these trainings that I started realizing that we are all equal. Women and men work together now, I was also raised to never question why a man was taking to his wife before he marries her. It’s only after the marriage that a man can talk to his wife. But after I joined Cohesion, this rule no longer made sense to me. Now I speak to my father on the phone and where I have close to where she lives, we meet and discuss what we’d like for our future as a couple and what she would like for her own future.

Raju bhai, Supervisor, Cohesion Foundation Trust, Kutch

In addition to questioning traditional gender roles, a number of supervisors stated that the NGO trainings taught them how to plan not just in the classroom but financially as well. If they were building a house, they said, they would plan out the timelines, the disbursement of money, and other issues that they would never have considered previously. They also said that they now sit with the members of their families to discuss their future plan and to help them make one if needed. They attribute these changes in themselves to their trainings through LAMP, and acknowledge that this has led to stronger family bonding.

The management of the seasonal hostel is not possible without actively involving members of the community as they too have a role to play in helping the hostel run smoothly. For example, a supervisor in Surat met with the members of the Village Development Committee to ask for their help in requesting the Principal of a government school to share some of the school’s rooms with the seasonal hostel. The VDC members said that they were so desperate that they had decided that if the Principal did not allow use of the rooms in his school, they would take the matter to the District Collector. They did not have to go that far since the Principal agreed to contribute three rooms to be used as a seasonal hostel.

Supervisors have the tough task of explaining to each parent and convincing them that they should leave their children behind in the hostel when they migrate. This is probably one of their hardest jobs as many parents are just not willing to listen, but the supervisors continue their efforts until they succeed. They also work with the seasonal hostel coordinators to carry out a migration survey. Since the middlemen tend to give prospective families an advance 2-3 months before the migration, the teachers map which families will migrate based on this information. They also find out whether families, which migrated in the past plan on doing so again in the coming year. This information helps the supervisors figure out how to address these migrant families to ensure that their children can be retained in their village when their parents migrate.

Raju bhai
Supervisor, Cohesion Foundation Trust, Kutch, Gujarat

I didn’t have a close relationship with my father. We would eat together and then go off to our respective jobs. But after coming here and participating in our trainings, I began to talk about why I was doing what I was doing. I have gone home and more was said with my father and my mother and I have told them about what they expect from the future, and how to make it happen.
When children are educated, they can guide their community members and help develop their villages. This can only happen when they gain knowledge. It is only when the children study that they will be able to understand what their rights are, and can work with the government to develop their villages based on the rights of their community members. These children will be able to spread awareness about anything bad that is going on in the village. They can unite and help bring about the development of their community.
OF KINGS AND MOUNTAINS

Lokadru is founded two decades ago to a varied group of university researchers working in the Kalinga-Bisang-Konkali (ABC) districts of Odisha. The region is notorious for its poverty which has forced numerous parents to sell their children as labour. This desperate practice was taking place notably in Kharial, the small town where Lokadru’s headquarters are located today.

At that time, Abani Panigrahi, who currently heads Lokadru, was researching livelihoods in Khabalpur, aeway district of Kalinga. Today, the value of Lokadru’s work is in good measure due to Abani’s progressive foresight and dedication to the Odia people, and his university’s effort that outlines effective leaders who possess a resilient attitude even at times of need. Eventually, Lokadru expanded its focus on livelihoods into the area of education, and from 2004, it worked with Lakshmi to become a serious player in the field of education for the children of district-affected migrants.

How does one describe Abani? Strangely, there are two stories — about a king and a mountain — that capture Abani’s almost surreal vision towards creating change in his landscape.

Khan’s descendant King had three sons, the youngest of whom was notorious for his cruelty. There were rumors that he tortured soldiers who worked as peasants on his estate. Abani recounts a specific case that took place in 2001 when a young boy who was carried on the shoulders of the youngest prince and had been sent with burnt rounds all over his body. His eyes burning. Abani narrates how he attended past the dying Garwal (the royal palace). Found the captive boy and phoned his injuries. These photographs were circulated in the media, and the Tezpur public outcry ensued. For his subsequent treatment, the king’s son was jailed for three months in the very prison his family had built. Today, he awaits trial.

The victim’s story was from a nearby district named Beharbari, which officially, the queen of Khan — who had bought the child after his parents died in the course of migration — belonged to as well. After his dramatic resuscitation, the boy was placed in an SCI village in Bhubaneswar and is currently enrolled in a school where he is studying in 10th grade.

The second story, about a mountain, reflects Abani’s dedication to education. In 1989, Abani left his job as a college lecturer in order to work for the education of Pakihata, a primitive mountain tribe of the region.

The mountain inhabited by the Pakihata community is forbidding; a few hours of walking up a rough path to reach the top. Yet Abani and his four colleagues took turns to do so, even carrying goods such as all and soap for the isolated tribal communities living there. They dedicated themselves to educating these people. Every Monday, a teacher would make his way up the mountain to replace the one who had already spent a week there. This rotational method was life-saving; it ensured that any teacher who had experienced malaria, which was rampant in the mountains, would have access to medical facilities in the plains as soon as the symptoms started to manifest.

This system also allowed teachers to educate a tribal youth named Radhe Syiem Pakhania with the goal of preparing him to serve as a teacher. For a monetary salary, Radhe Syiem in turn passed on what he had been taught by Abani and the other teachers that he had visited with to the children and adults of his tribe. The Pakhania children revelled lessons on every subject that Radhe Syiem had learned, while the adults were taught necessary things, such as how to write their names and print their signatures.

Sukul Sai Pakhania was a student of Radhe Syiem whose sharp comprehension and analytical skills made him stand out from the others. In 1992, Abani and his colleagues brought Sukul Sai to their office in the plains so that he could live there and join the government school nearby. Sukul went on to graduate with honours from college. He is now a government health worker in his own village.

Shimulbari, the area where the Pakihata tribe is settled, and where Lokadru’s first office was located. It is there that Sukul Sai raises awareness and administers preventive care for malaria.

Sitting in his colourful office, Abani’s animated gestures and insightful words are direct and forward-looking. ‘Education isn’t just about learning your ABCs. That’s just the first step you need to take if you want to create awareness in a community. If you live in a poverty-stricken village and the government opens up a hospital there who will be the first ones to use it? If the person can, the access to education, will know what a hospital is and the services it can provide to them. Education is an instrument that allows people to utilise the facilities that are available to them. Without awareness, how can people use these facilities let alone participate in the exchange of ideas?’

Abani habilitates that educating women leads to ‘social education’ since a woman helps two families — the family she is born into and the one that she marries into. And if she marries into an entirely different village, her reach extends even further. Through the interlinking of lives within villages, a woman who is
educated can be an important provider of knowledge to various groups, especially to other women who can then pass on this knowledge further, thus, ensuring that this process continues spreading rapidly.

Aben’s relentless energy did not dissipate after he had scaled the Mifahari mountain. Twenty years ago, through sheer perseverance, he has continued to surmount many more challenges. His achievements are visible in every village that Aben, every SHG member thatAben, and every community member who convinces a migrant parent to enroll their child in Lokadhuru’s seasonal hostel.

Aben’s strong belief in the power of communities to create change was effectively manifested by a community member that Lokadhuru works closely with, Hasana, a grandmother of four and an SHG member who works tirelessly to promote education among the children in her village, shared with us an ancient proverb that best reflects these stories of collective community action: “When you have many logs of wood spread all over the ground, they serve no purpose. But when you put the logs together, you can build a fire.”

ONE VILLAGE AT A TIME

Rajen Bhangar, known as Rajen bhai, is in the atrium of his house in Kutli. It would have been easy for him to be a recluse, like the hundreds of thousands in Kutli. Instead, he is the LAMP Programme Head at the Cifession Foundation Trust (CFT), with a vision that will last his 35 years.

In 2003, Rajen bhai was invited by LAMP to work in the field of education. He remembers feeling resistant to the move, having dedicated himself, for several years, to the livelihood sector in the belief that this was the only way to help the poor. But today, he is passionate about the long-term benefits that education provides to children. He says, “In the last five years I worked in livelihoods, I could enhance a family’s income by not more than 50%. But through the work that I do in education, I know I can enhance it by 500%, if not more.”

In the last five years, the number of migrant children in LAMP’s school interventions has increased from a mere 205 to over 4,000, a figure which includes the children of migrants as well as non-migrants. In particular, the seasonal hostels in Kutli’s village have seen a rise in numbers from just 14 in 1995 to 90 in 2010. Rajen bhai does not attribute this increase in the enrolment rate to higher migration rates. He says, “The number of families that migrated then is the same as it is today. But at that time, parents weren’t ready to listen to what we had to say about education. With great difficulty, we were able to free 50 children from the lives of the families when the project started. We went into salt pans and tried to explain to every single parent why their child should be in school.”

Rajen bhai’s own life exemplifies how difficult it is for children to go to school even if their parents are supportive of them receiving an education. When he was in the 7th grade, Rajen bhai and his brother spent their vacations working in the fields of a farmer in their community and also helping their parents. Physically, they had to cover two kilometers away from their native village. He says that he still remembers the first time he was paid, and the fact that the 5 rupees coin that was placed in his hand after his first day of working earned him 30 rupees. He continued through the day with a half-hour break for lunch. He was 12 years old and was proud of the weight of that coin in his little palm.

Financial hardship forced Rajen bhai to drop out of school in the 8th grade. At that time, a number of his main relatives were involved in the diamond cutting business and Rajen bhai, then a teenager, decided to join them on a full-time basis. However, after earning the full fee of Rs. 500, the remaining Rs. 2500 from his salary was sent to his family every month. Even so, he constantly wondered about his future and finally convinced his parents to enroll him in school.

Rajen bhai’s experience of battling loneliness andinhuman working conditions as a diamond cutter made his empathy for migrant workers even stronger. He says, “We work with them because they lead the hardest lives. When you look at people who don’t migrate and live in their villages all year round, you see that they stand to benefit from the knowledge of their environment. They receive none of government schemes from time to time and can benefit from the facilities and services in their villages. But the minute someone migrates, they are alone. There are no services that will reach the migrants. They will get nothing but the income they and the children from their work. The problems in their lives are just so huge.”

It is not surprising that Rajen bhai sees a vast difference between going to school and actually receiving an education. “Children need to be able to understand the basic concepts that they are taught,” he says. This is especially important for children who have to work and also need the relevant material to ensure that their children understand what is taught in the classrooms. Moreover, Rajen bhai would like every child to study up to at least the 10th grade, if not the 12th grade. He feels that by this age, children gain a basic level of self-assurance that is required to form their own view of the world, and to speak out in the face of exploitation.

The advantages of the seasonal hostels have allowed CFT to the non-migrant population living in the villages, through the after-school LAMP classes. This display of unity and mutual support would have been unfeasible under the DPT’s education programme, when the non-migrant families, including those of migrant parents, virtually ignored the migrant population.

Of most significance is the change that Rajen bhai has seen in migrant parents. He says that when the programme first started, parents from the disadvantaged Rawatbunder community would say, “God has written our destiny. Our children will never be doctors or teachers. We are destined to work in the salt fields.” But now they say that their children have a chance to actually become doctors or school teachers because for the first time in their lives, they see a change.
When Katsen blatt suggested that migrant parents contribute financially to the hostel (which had been free up till then), he expected to meet with resistance. But he and his team were pleased to see that more than 90% of the migrant parents contributed Rs. 35 per month towards the maintenance of the hostels.

Besides the mental shift that is visible in migrant parents, there is also a significant improvement in the female enrollment rate. In five years, the number of girls in the hostels has risen from just 5 to 400, while much more needs to be done. Katsen blatt is happy that the parents who earlier could not afford educating their girls, are now at least sending them to study until the 7th grade.

Towards the end of our conversation, Katsen blatt starts talking about his vision on leadership and his vision for the future. He eloquently states the purpose of his work, “if you want to see a shift in the lives of the next generation, you need to ensure that every single child receives an education. And if you want to change this country, you have to start in the villages.”

**THE SILENT LEADER**

A youthful Biswambhar Behena** explains the silent yet large scale process of migration that takes place annually from small villages in rural Odisha to the big cities of Andhra Pradesh. His commitment to helping the migrants visiting his hostel is staggering.Visiting no less than 15 villages in Odisha and meeting with more than 150 community members, Biswambhar is on hand to clarify the nuances of each migrant, with information about each of their family members. He is also incredibly knowledgeable about which families tend to migrate together, when they migrate, and even whether any of them had ever met with any unexpected consequences such as family illnesses, accidents and such like, during migration.

Before Biswambhar joined Lokadrudd, he was tutoring students to support his parents. Whenever little remained from his meager salary he put aside to pay for college, which he attended simultaneously. After graduating from college, Biswambhar joined Lokadrudd and conducted field surveys and made his way up to the position of an accountant.

Biswaambhar Behena
Former Programme Head, Lokadrudd

The turning point in his life, that made Biswambhar realize that his heart belonged in teaching, took place while he was helping coordinate a teacher training session. He found himself actively participating in the deliberations and soon enough, he opted to work full-time in education for Lokadrudd as part of LAMP. He says, “I wanted the opportunities to teach that the migrant workers of the area that Lokadrudd covers, mostly in and around villages of the district.” Biswambhar continues in bringing awareness and change in students who have faced similar hardships as he did, and for his work, he received the first stage of a prestigious Fellowship with an international development agency he was informed that he could not qualify since all the selected applicants were women.

Biswaambhar explains the hidden elements of migration. This includes women who migrate alone and who suffer tremendous exploitation and trafficking. Some of these women, he says, don’t make it back home. Ever since the seasonal hostels started, women made an active effort from the workshops to get news about their children in the village. Biswambhar recounts the story of a woman who migrated alone in 2003, leaving her husband at home and her children in the seasonal hostel. When she heard that her husband had put their daughter out of school to satisfy his family, she immediately returned home. She said, “I am working in these conditions to ensure that my daughter doesn’t have to follow in my footsteps. I need to place her in the seasonal hostel and not allow her to spend time cooking for her father.” Unfortunately, her experience is all too common for women who migrate alone while their husbands stay behind in the village. When it is the other way around, the women who stay in the village, when their husbands migrate, take care of their homes and ensure that their children keep up with their studies and help with other housework before or after school and during holidays.

When Lokadrudd set up its seasonal hostels in 2004, the initial goal was to ensure that children had a safe place to stay back in their own villages while their parents migrated. During the months of November to June. Besides nutritious food and a safe environment, the hostels enabled these children to regularly attend government school during the day. In the first few years, the work of the hostel coordinators was also seasonal in nature and they would return home after the seven-month teaching schedule was over.

In the first year of the programme, 193 migrant children were enrolled. This number grew to 546 by the following year and by 2006, the programme had grown to 33 main camps—and four times the number that Lokadrudd had started with. By 2008, they had reached out to 42 villages. More impressive is the decrease in the dropout rate for the school-going children in the district. It was high as 95% in 2000-2005, and is now down to 30%. This is mainly due to the early days of the programme, when Biswambhar remembers walking in the dark of the night for the houses and schools that would simultaneously take migrants to their workshops. He recounts getting into fights with middlemen, who tried to take children to the workshops. His team’s job was also made harder by the police who obtained a commission from the middlemen and, thus, remained uncooperative of LAMP’s efforts.

The directors of Lokadrudd’s programmes are committed to a classroom that is creative and interactive. However, the task ahead is daunting - how can one evolve a relevant education for a community with such limited exposure? When we went to see an education programme in Saiki, the children were working on a math problem where they had to calculate the dimensions of a tower. Our children don’t even know what a calculator is,” explains Biswambhar in a matter of fact manner.

The solution may lie in creating a system similar to the one followed by Lokadrudd and the Coalition Foundation Trust, where everyone involved – from the teachers who themselves start from rural environments, to the children in schools – participate openly in inventing a curriculum that they can relate to. As LAMP has proven, change can only happen when different members of a community unite to overcome obstacles, and take ownership of the outcome.
TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION - THE VISION OF LAMP

An Interview with Smita
Director, Education
American India Foundation

Why do you think seasonal migration is such a neglected issue?

I think this is because seasonal migration is such an invisible phenomenon. Initially, for us to even find children or migrant adolescents, or to find the cities where they were working, was tough. For example, if you are driving on a highway, you don’t see the numerous brick kilns that border every city to feed its construction activities. And consider the salt pans which stretch over a quarter of the 3600 kilometers of the coastal edge of western Gujarat - we had to drive long distances to appreciate the issue and the ground reality. Even the sugar and jute plantations where thousands of acres of land are being used to grow cane and feed mills with hundreds of sugar factories are almost impossible to reach. Unless you put your foot on the plantation, you don’t realize who these migrants are, where they come from, and the scale of the operation. The child labor involved in these also remains hidden today. This is why seasonal migration is such an unexplored area.

How long has seasonal migration been going on in the country?

Seasonal migration has always existed in India. But earlier the scale was much smaller. It appears that migration started escalating only from the mid-1990s. When big dams were constructed, cost-cutting meant using multifaceted infrastructure projects were launched and cities started to grow, the demand for labor also went up exponentially. Contractors looked out for cheap labor, so tribal and rural areas became their hunting grounds. Poor families who had no work in their villages after the monsoon and were willing to travel long distances and work for survival wages.

What struck you about migration when you first started working in this area?

After facing resistance everywhere in the country for more than 15 years, I thought that I had seen the worst in terms of the human position in rural areas. But I was completely taken aback when after joining ASI in 2003, I started visiting these migration worksheds in different areas.
I remember one of my visits when we went to a hilly village in Bandantika, Dandak. It's a hilly village in Dandak, and there was a migrant family that lived in a house surrounded by nature. Their home was a small house with a thatched roof. We went there on foot, through the forest, and we spent the day with them. The family was very friendly and welcoming. We cooked together, shared stories, and enjoyed the beautiful surroundings.

And now let's talk about the village itself. It's a small village, located at the foot of the mountains. The people there are very friendly and welcoming. They have a strong sense of community, and they work together to make their village a better place.

And finally, let's talk about the future. The people in this beautiful village are very hopeful for the future. They have a strong sense of community, and they work together to make their village a better place. And with time, they will achieve their dreams.

The village is a testament to the power of community and the importance of working together for a common goal. The people in this village are an inspiration to us all, and we should take a lesson from them. Let's work together to make our communities better places to live.
APPENDIX
AN OVERVIEW OF THE PHENOMENON OF DISTRESS SEASONAL MIGRATION

Mapping Migration Flows

Distress migration appears to be a reality in almost all states, although to varying degrees. Some states/regions attract migrant labour, while others provide it. The poorer states such as Orissa and Bihar tend to send labour, while the industrialized, agriculturally rich ones such as Gujarat and Punjab, tend to receive labour. Likewise, there is substantial migration taking place within states, from one district to another. Employers prefer to use migrant labour instead of local labour because it tends to be cheaper and more amenable to being controlled. Tribal areas form the hubs for employers seeking cheap labour. Employers often cross state boundaries and arrange to transport huge numbers of labourers across long distances to hire them.

The Seasonal Migration Cycle

Labour contractors provide cash advances to impoverished families in villages of which the majority belong to the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). In return, the families pledge their labour for the coming season in the lean post-monsoon months. Migration begins around October-November following which migrant families spend the next six to eight months at the workites, and then return to their villages before the next monsoon. Once the rains are over, they again prepare to leave their villages.

This seasonal migration cycle is typical of the lives of hundreds of thousands of the poorest rural families in many parts of India, and it overlaps with six to seven months of the school calendar. This means that children enrolled in school can only attend it from June to October, after which they usually withdraw.

Living and Working Conditions of Migrants

The living and working conditions of migrant labour at the workites, including shelter, nutrition, health and security, are poor in every respect. Labourers—men, women and children—are required to work for 14–16 hours daily, and wages are well below the legal minimum. Women and girls additionally face attacks on their physical and psychological integrity. In most cases, there is no enforcement of labour laws at the workites. There are, for example, no medical facilities available, no insurance, no mechanisms to address grievances, and so on. The basic cause of all legal acts related to labour and child rights are flouted, resulting in exploitation levels to the extreme. Employers maximize their profits by paying the workers at barely survival levels. The legislation governing migration is grossly inadequate and poorly implemented.

The nature of work varies widely from sector to sector, although there are underlying common elements. Workites are usually located far from habitation, and are separated from any basic facilities such as safe drinking water, markets, schools and health centres. The housing provided to workers is shabby, unhealthy and atrocious. Each type of workite also has its own set of health hazards, like infections and fever, diseases caused by contamination, injuries and accidents, gradual loss of hearing, malnutrition among children, etc. Additionally, women and girls have to cope with the psychological burden of living in an unstructured environment and the risk of sexual abuse.

Impact of seasonal migration on families and children

There is a stark absence of policy debates on the peculiar situation of migrant labourers, who being neither to their villages nor to their work destination areas. They form the government's welfare benefits in their villages, and yet cannot access these at the migration sites. Either, migrant labourers are also unable to participate in elections and census data collection, thus resulting in their thorough disenfranchisement.

Distress migration is an invidious promoter of child labour. Poor families with no additional support in their villages have few resources but have to send their children along with them when they migrate for work. At workites, little hands and feet are inescapably drawn into the labour process from the young ages of 6–7 years, and as early as 12–13 years many of them start getting included into the labour force. Additionally, girls manage household chores and tend younger siblings, leaving their parents free to do the paid work.

The vulnerability of migrant children is augmented as they do not have access to the kind of support which non-migrant children automatically have in their villages. These children are subjected to dangerous travels between their villages and workites, and months or years of toil at the workites: they survive on very low nutrition levels, have no health support, receive no immunization, and are deprived of even the basic parental care. The most important thing that children miss out on is schooling. Even when migrant children have access to a school, the state of government schools in the migration prone regions is dismal. Moreover, the schools do not...
take any responsibility for the migrant children. The lack of education pushes children inevitably into the annual cycle of migration.

**Education is the way out**

Education is critical if migrant children are to break out of the cycle of distress seasonal migration and strive for a better future. Ensuring access, retention, completion and proper learning for children whose parents do not lead a settled life, is a great challenge indeed, but one that needs to be met. India passed the Right to Education Act in 2009, thus making elementary education a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6 - 14 years. The country is also trying to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Amidst this scenario, there is little attention being paid to the plight of the children of migrant labourers. Urgent steps must be taken for their education and development. If we are to universalize elementary education in the country within the timeframe that we have set for ourselves.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

By Director Education, AIF

I start by expressing my deep gratitude to my parents and to Nita Parekh. On this journey of LAMP, I must mention the names of my colleagues - Prakashwar who was an invaluable part of the programme for several years. Tanush Ojha who came in as Country Director at a critical time and enabled us to launch the quality programme encouraging us to enrich, enrich, enrich. Dayanand who has invested immense time, energy and belief into this work and has also brought in the very critical Right to Education perspective. Dr. Jalaluddin who truly is the guiding light in India today on learning, and we are fortunate to have him guide us. A special word for Hemang, an IndiCorps volunteer from the UK, and an amazing behind-the-scenes value creator for the kutch programme, and to Rajesh Keval for his very effective leadership of the CIP programme. Thanks to Shaj and the Jodo Gon team for their rich inputs. There are many more amazing individuals working tirelessly in the field – Prabhat, Anjali, Mani, Ankit, Lohitaksha, Raman, Prashrut, Pankaj, Shalini, Shyamal, Rupak, Durga, Pratiksha, Nirmal, Sandip, Neethi, Alok, Pratiksha, Nagesh and the recent high energy entrant Arijit – we have had a fabulous time working together.

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Smita

By the Author

I am very grateful to AIF for providing me the opportunity to document these incredible stories and to gain a glimpse into the change that is taking place in the areas that LAMP works in. From the moment this journey started, I was compelled to introduce these unique stories, hopes and dreams of each of the inspiring people mentioned in this book to readers interested in this subject.

I would like to thank Ankita, Neeta, Manu, and Aparna Anantha as well as Shefali Chett, Jonathan Ripley and Alain Grandjean for their continued encouragement for the project. Their constant enthusiasm proved to be a strong source of encouragement during the entire process. I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to Smitha’s creative team for their hard work and their commitment to this project, and to Harshita, Narayan and Raj Kumar for their ongoing support. I am also very grateful to Anand for her invaluable assistance.

Most of all, I will always be indebted to the numerous parents I have come across in this area, and to the hundreds of children who live in the most unimaginable migratory conditions for most of the year, but who are making the will to transcend the view that their children are forced to live in the same lines. They embodied resilience as did their young children who possess the courage to live away from their families in the hope of redefining their futures. Their bravery and their ability to create change, which is already visible in some of these villages, remains a constant source of inspiration.

Smita

Namrata
Hostel Coordinators

Rema ben, Village Gharana
Raju ben, Village Lalmpton
Ramshri bai, Village Jangi
Vidhi bai, Village Ambiyana

Pavel bai, Swagatini Ramn
Gajanand bai, Verra Ramn
Bina ben, Village Gharana

Children

Praful, Pagwendi
Grou, Varna Ramn
Ramesh, Pagwendi
Prashu, Village Jangi
Samanta, Village Gharana
Gharana, Village Gharana
Harsh, Village Gharana
Mohini, Village Tagga
Mohan, Village Gharana
Harsh, Village Jangi
Harsh, Village Gharana
Manik, Village Gharana
Jagmohan, Village Gharana
Pavna, Khabit, Village Tagga
Harsh, Village Jangi
Smriti, Village Jangi
Pavna, Khabit, Village Tagga
Harsh, Village Jangi
Narayan, Verra Ramn
Sukhdev, Village Tagga
Narendra and Vejji, Thorey

Cohesion Team Members

Priti bai
Kubrak bai
Raju bai
Manu bai
Sukh bai
Vijay bai
Kamal bai
Ramakant bai, Bidkhana

Hostel Coordinator

Vijay bai, Village Ambiyana

Children

Gundu bai, Village Ambiyana
Balasaheb, Village Ambiyana
Rajiv bai, Village Ambiyana
Prem bai, Village Ambiyana
Pankaj bai, Village Ambiyana
Soumya Rangan, Village Ambiyana

Odisha

Community Members

Sitarani Dash, Village Khanna
Narmada Ramesh, Village Khanna
Darma Patel, Village Khanna
Damarshri Mahi, Khanna
Bhagwan Mahi, Village Senapati
Dharmendra, Village Senapati
Madhusudan Jat, Village Senapati
Parmanand Mahi, Parmanand Mahi, Village Khanna
Bhusun, Village Dongargarh
Bhuvan Sen, Village Senapati
Madhusudan Mahi, Village Senapati
Kameswar Mahi, Village Senapati
Saigiri Mahi, Village Khanna

Lokadrasti Team Members

Ali, Vehan Parangi
Bhimrao Dhavale
Parasnath, Senapati
Rajendra, Senapati
Durgesh Prasad, Parangi
LOSSARY

BPL  Below Poverty Line
CFT  Cohesion Foundation Trust
SSDA  Sansa Srikanta Asthyan
SHG  Self Help Group
KSA  Kaladhani - Solangri - Karaput
LAMP  Learning And Migration Programme
LEP  Learning Enrichment Programme
NGO  Non Government Organisation
SC  Scheduled Castes
ST  Scheduled Tribes
OBC  Other Backward Classes
RT  Right To Education
TLM  Teaching Learning Material
VDC  Village Development Committee
VDC  Village Education Committee

about the author

NAMRATA ASTHANA

A communication design firm that looks to branding strategies that move people... well... smitten! Every brand has a story to tell. Smitten uses the right combination of accessibility and skill to showcase the story of a brand. Right from Brand Identity to Book Design, Communication Design to Social Media Madness, the service list covers it all.

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