

Divided By Development

Dams, Displacement and Dimbhe

DISCOVER INDIA PROGRAM

2017-18

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work incorporated in this report entitled “*Divided by Development-Dams, Displacement and Dimbhe*” submitted by the undersigned Research Team was carried out under my mentorship. Such material as has been obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This report is an attempt to project our study and findings about the socio-economic impacts of the construction of the Dimbhe Dam on the tribal population as accurately as possible. We do so by extensive primary and secondary research on the impact of dam-induced displacement and related government policies and initiatives. The report primarily discusses the shift in socio-economic contexts and livelihoods, before and after the displacement process, with specific reference to the tribes in and around Ambegaon *taluka*, Maharashtra: Koli Mahadev, Katkari and Thakar. What we also explore are the dynamics and differences between populations that were forcibly displaced due to a development project, populations that were displaced due to a natural calamity and people living in fear of displacement. In the case of Dimbhe and the surrounding villages, the impact of the efforts of pioneers like Mr. Anand Kapoor and Ms. Kusum Karnik seems to have uplifted the destitute from mental and financial ruin – the memories of which are still fresh within the minds of the people. One such effort was the suggestion of several alternative livelihoods for the thousands that lost their agricultural lands. Through studying their socio-economic change—as well as their socio cultural change—we hope to connect their contemporary scenario with endless possibilities that may uplift the tribes to a better standard of living.

Keywords: dams and displacement, Dimbhe, Shashwat, Koli Mahadev, Katkari, alternative livelihoods, cage culture, agriculture, *padkai*, fishing

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Dams and Displacement

Large dams in India—according to World Bank Estimates—comprise 26.6% of displacement-causing projects; however, they are responsible for 62.8% of displacement. The people displaced by these dams and other developmental projects are often dismissed as collateral damage – they have paid the price of progress. More often than not, over 50% of those displaced happen to be tribals, though many projects have seen these numbers spike to 96-97%. The numbers also fail to include communities indirectly affected by the consequences of dam-building, like those who have fallen victim to resource exhaustion and secondary displacement.



Figure 1.1. False color composite of Dimbhe locality; image taken by Landsat 3 on 17th October, 1981.



Figure 1.2. False color composite of Dimbhe locality; image taken by Landsat 5 on March 29th, 2000.

Communities that have, for generations, lived in isolation from mainstream society are abruptly uprooted from their land and are essentially left to fend for themselves. The primarily forest-based production systems, kinship, and trade mechanisms of the tribals fall into disarray; they are forced to endure the sheer emotional trauma of displacement as well. The result has been the creation of a new class of Indians who have been impacted across social, cultural, psychological, and economic facets – victims of manufactured poverty. Once the dust settles and the waters rise, self-sustainable village communities invariably dissolve into the rural landless or the urban poor.

1.2 Historical and Geographical overview

Dimbhe Dam is a gravity dam on the Ghod River in the Ambegaon *taluka* of Pune district, Maharashtra, India. The 220-foot-tall, large-category dam was sanctioned in 1968 and has been fully functional since 2000. It is a part of the Kukadi Major Irrigation Project benefiting the Pune, Ahmednagar and Solapur districts. In addition to irrigation, the dam also provides hydroelectric power (Dimbhe dam D02966). The construction of Dimbhe Dam displaced 1253 families, submerged 11 villages and partially affected 13

other villages as well. There was a preponderance of Katkari and Koli Mahadev tribals in the displaced families.

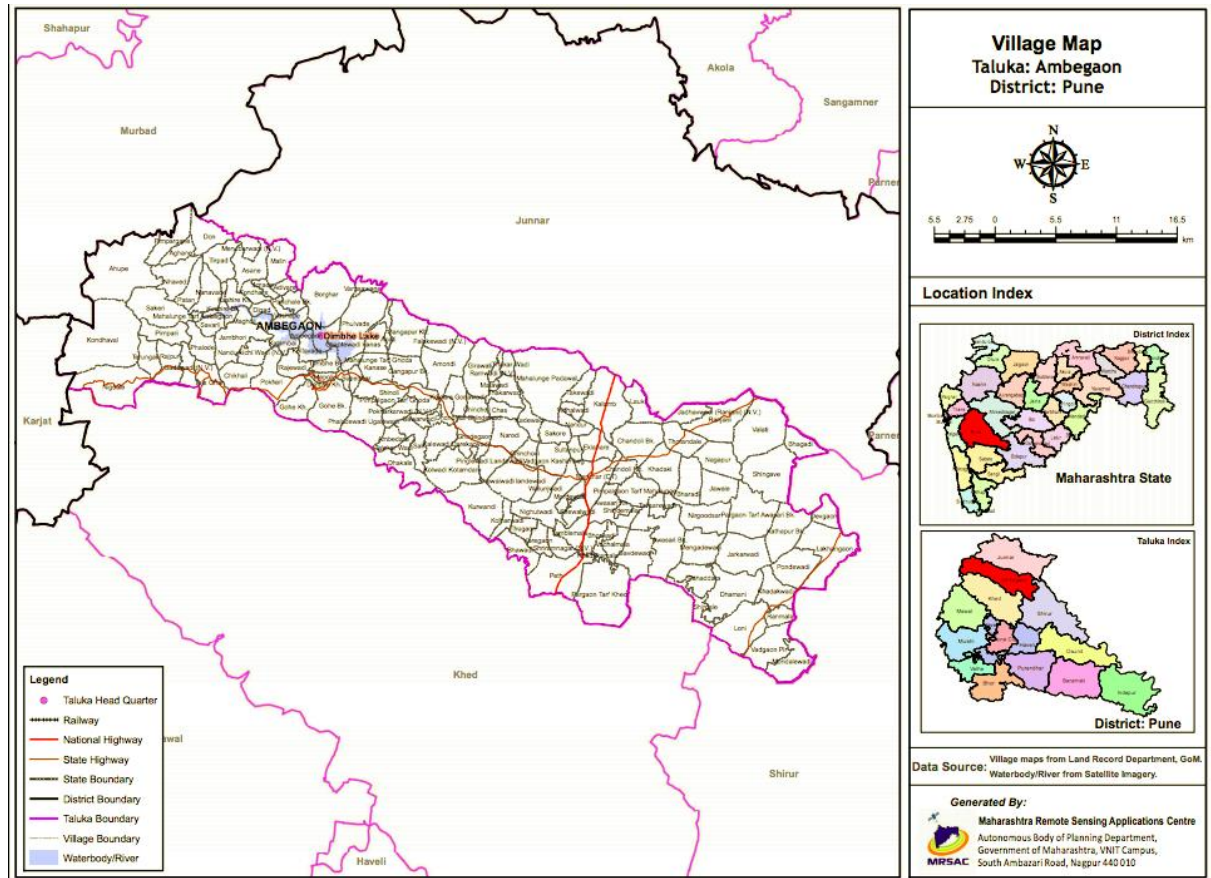


Figure 1.3: Official map of Ambegaon Taluka



Fig 1.4: Dimbhe dam

Dimbhe is located between two major rivers, Ghode and Kukadi; the tribes depended heavily on them as agriculture was their primary form of livelihood. The dam reservoir submerged the best agricultural land, pushing the tribes to higher, rockier terrain. The government is obligated to provide compensation for all displaced populations. However, officials from Shashwat—an NGO working in Dimbhe—contest that the reality of the situation is far different and a majority of the tribes have not been compensated appropriately. The tribes of Dimbhe have since been forced to come up with alternate livelihoods to sustain themselves while preserving at least a modicum of their traditional ways.

Caught between two worlds, a nondescript hamlet in Maharashtra tells the tale of thousands of places in India and millions of people who have been at the receiving end of a similar fate. Gleaning a clearer picture of the costs of dam-building mandates an assessment of the social, cultural, psychological and economical fallouts of dam construction.

1.3 Research Statement and Aims and Objectives

This report is “An investigation to understand the socio economic aspects and livelihoods of the tribes settled in and around the area of Ambegaon Taluka who were displaced due to the construction of Dimbhe dam.

The primary aims of this research are as follows:

- To understand how the socio-economic aspects, like the livelihoods; opportunities, etc of these tribes that have changed after their displacement.
- To study the alternative livelihoods taken up by these tribes after their displacement.
- To understand the contributions made by the NGO, Shashwat in the process of rehabilitation of the people displaced due to the construction of Dimbhe Dam
- To suggest potential alternative livelihoods that could be implemented in Dimbhe.
- To understand the shortcomings of the resettlement and rehabilitation plans which were implemented in the areas affected by Dimbhe dam.

1.4 Research Methodology

1.4.1 Sources of Data Collection

In order to understand and design our research, we relied on multiple secondary sources relating to displacement due to dams, alternative livelihoods adopted by those displaced by dams and papers regarding information exclusively on Dimbhe. We referred to research papers, articles, journals, government reports to gain further insight on displacements by dams, socio-cultural and psychological impacts caused by displacement, financial discrepancy caused by displacement and issues of rehabilitation and resettlement policies within communities displaced due to dams.

We were also able to acquire primary data during our one-day visit to Dimbhe as part of our pre-field pilot study. The information were collected through informal group discussions and open-ended interviews conducted on officials of the tribe-run non-governmental organization named Shashwat.

1.4.2 Qualitative Research

The scope of our research focuses on Dimbhe dam and the impact it has on the tribal communities displaced due to it. It is crucial to note the vast changes brought onto the everyday lives of these communities, from their livelihoods to their socio-cultural norms like the shift in their sources of livelihood and their dependency on each of them. An in-depth study on the past and present experience of these tribes will aid us in understanding the influence, both beneficial and adverse, the dam has brought on them. A detailed qualitative research will allow us to identify these changes, the tribe's perspectives on them and their plans for the future regarding social, economic and cultural aspects of their life.

1.4.3 Instruments of Data Collection

Our main tools of primary data collection will be Semi-Structured interviews, Naturalistic Non-Participant Observations, Focus Groups, Audio-Visual Documentation and Transect Walks.

Semi-Structured Interviews will allow the responder to provide information without being restricted to binary answers or limit themselves to focus on one theme or topic or context. A predetermined list of topics or themes to be explored can help guide the conversation with the interviewee in order to obtain meaningful and relevant information. This will also help us in extracting information that could become potentially vital to our research, which may not be clear otherwise.

Naturalistic and Non-Participant Observation is where the interviewer simply observes the participants in a natural setting. The aim is to understand the natural day-to-day behaviors and gather data without finding a cause-and-effect relationship. It might prove to be difficult to record everything observed on the field and most of the data collected will be highly susceptible to researcher bias but, as many of us will be making observations, we hope to retain objectivity in the research by collating multiple observations. It has high inter-observer reliability (Singh, A. K. 1986)

Focus group discussions will help us gather individuals who share experiences pertaining to a particular situation, context or topic. Though it is efficient and effective, the participants may not be as comfortable sharing their honest opinions in discussion and may provide false information which could potentially skew the data. Also, there was a language barrier, since the research team wasn't too comfortable with Marathi.

To document our research, we will be using visual and audio-visual documentation to capture the daily events of the consented participants including their social, cultural and economic activities. This method of data collection will allow us to revisit our observations, interviews and discussions and gather smaller implicit details that we may have missed during the interview session.

“Transect Walk is a systematic walk along defined path across the community/project area together with local people to explore...” (Keller, S. n.d.) It is a tool that greatly helps when studying the resources and the physical environment of the subject we are studying.

To locate respondents with information relevant for our research, we will be employing convenience and snowball sampling:

Convenience sampling involves selecting participants based on their accessibility and convenience of the researcher. It will be beneficial as it will save us a lot of time considering the lack of time that constrains our research.

Snowball sampling is a method of sampling in which the participants recruited by us recruit other people of their acquaintances who are suitable for the research. It enables us to locate hidden population which would otherwise be very difficult to come across.

1.4.4 Limitations

As part of research, being aware of the limitations that come with it is crucial to our research. Keeping the context of our research topic and location in mind, we have identified 4 main limitations we expect to encounter on field and have encountered so far:

1. Lack of prior research studies on the topic: on beginning our initial research, we soon realized that there have been very few studies done on the displacement that the Dimbhe dam caused or the dam as a whole but we managed to come across a few on other large dams. There are no academic papers that discuss the issue of displacement- pertaining specifically to Dimbhe and the affected populace. The papers that focus on Dimbhe are the reports published by the local tribe-run organization called “Shashwat” and discuss at length the statistical data regarding the displaced. These papers also focus on the administrative ‘glitches’ on the part of the government but not (at length) on the social impacts on the tribe. Hence we are heavily reliant on primary data for our research.
2. Time: the Koli mahadev and Katkari tribes are a part of the community that was displaced due to the construction of the Dimbhe Dam. The process of relocation took 8 long years, with major shift in their livelihoods and occupations being a major aspect for the people. In order to study the socio-cultural impacts, to fully grasp the economic as well as emotional and psychological toll it took on the tribes, the time-frame of merely 8 days may be insufficient. It is a challenge to contact and interact with as many people as we can- moreover the ‘right’ people within 8 days. Perhaps, a longer time-frame would aid in enhancing the quantity as well as quality of our research.

3. Language barriers: the tribes / populations that we shall be dealing with throughout our fieldwork are the Koli Mahadev and Katkari tribes. The primary language that the tribes use is Marathi. Though some understand Hindi, and there are a few officials who are proficient in the language, our research team still couldn't communicate very well as only a minority of us are comfortable with the language. Although we did try to overcome this by helping and training each other in some basic Marathi. With the help of the local officials and leaders, we hope to convey our questions and thoughts in the most apt manner and also capture the essence of their answers and emotions with maximum accuracy, to the most of our potential.
4. Openness/acceptance on their part: keeping in mind the difference in social contexts between the displaced tribes and us, students, we are aware of the possible dismissal towards certain ideas that we may pose. We understand that it is but natural to be apprehensive of unknown entities and their ideologies; however, with the help of the local authorities who shall accompany us at all times and their constant reassurance to the tribes, we hope to put the respondents at ease during the length of our field visit.
5. Bias: last but not the least; owing to the fact that we are heavily dependent on collection of primary data for our research, we are aware of the danger that our personal or ethnic biases- although subconscious- may seep in into the collection and interpretation of data. While on the field, we shall make a conscious effort to uphold as much cultural relativism as possible.

We understand the limitations of the university and shall try to the best of abilities to deliver the same quality of work that would be expected in a longer period. And we as a team, further hope to overcome these limitations to the best of our abilities and achieve our objectives with maximum efficiency.

1.5 Rationale

The socio-cultural and economic troubles faced by the tribal population that inhabited the area before the building of Dimbhe dam flooded the region and displaced them has gone unnoticed for an excruciatingly long time. There has been little research conducted to understand the after effects of the construction of this dam in 1999.

This research project aims to fully comprehend how displacement has left behind ripples and cracks in the lives of the tribals in terms of their cultural practises, traditions,

and livelihoods. We will also be evaluating resultant psychological impacts; being uprooted and forcefully estranged from a place they have called home for generations altogether is bound to have a drastic effect on the tribals. We unanimously agreed that the fragile and vulnerable state they live in deserves immediate attention as it has been stalled for longer than it is fair. We hope to improve their situation by adding to the debate against large dams.

As there is a link between all these different elements, the effects have been magnified twofold. The displacement has negatively affected their mental state and stuck holes in a rich culture. The culture, now damaged, affected the way they conducted their daily lives and sources of livelihoods. In short, the displacement created an endless cycle that resulted them in spiraling downwards without efficient government aid to support them.

We found a few positive outcomes of this situations but they are highly outweighed by the enormous costs which have been blatantly ignored in the name of development. We hope our research will add immensely to the debate on costs associated with construction of large dams, especially in tribal areas.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Historical Overview and Cultural Significance

Ever since the inception of dams, there has been a wide range of studies that have addressed the issues of tribes or communities who were reluctant to move out of their homelands, or were forced to do so. The paper “**Attachment and Displacement: The Resettlers of Bhakra Nangal Dam**” by **Raghubir Singh Pirta, Nitin Chandal, and Chhaya Pirta (2013)** focuses on the Bhakra Nangal Dam in the western Himalayas; it deals with the psychological impact on the individuals the dam displaced. This study uses Bowlby’s Attachment Theory¹ to understand the “social pain of loss” among those who were displaced by these dams. There has been evidence of long-term psychological effects that have been induced in those who were forced to displace, including changes in cognitive schemas of memory. Every being is inherently capable of mapping their surroundings to get acclimatize themselves to the environment. When individuals fall prey to displacement, they are essentially severed of their deep-rooted connection with the land that has long since become a part of their psychological system. Although they were displaced half a century ago, the victims of the Bhakra Nangal Dam project still vividly remember their forced separation from their homes. The study found a significant relationship between displacement and past memory scores: those who were displaced showed greater recollection of memories than normal participants who were not displaced. The researchers also measured the relation between retrieval cues—under magnitudes of low and high anger—but they found that past memory scores in relation to high anger were not significantly higher than those with low anger. With these findings, the aim of the study was to bring to the attention of the policy makers of such developmental projects the many long-lasting adverse effects brought on by displacement.

Another study on dam-induced displacement aims to establish benchmarks for arranging and law making concerning displacement and rehabilitation in India. In the

¹ an evolutionary theory of attachment that states that children are biologically programmed to form attachments with others, to aid survival

study “**Dams, Displacement, Policy and Law in India**” by **Ravi Memadri, Harsh Mander, and Vijay Nagraj**, the researchers delved into the situations of displacement brought on by big dams in India and the popular resistance that ensued. The paper states that in the year before the study’s publication, about 70% of the displaced were still to be resettled. Development projects like hydropower and irrigation dams have always been criticized for the losses they bring to those they displace: destruction of culture, drastic changes in sustainable livelihoods, and irreversible environmental damage. It is debatable whether or not the dams have compensated for these through their output. The study looks at displacement from two angles: the sides of those displaced and those of policy makers who provide guidelines that become of vital importance to the former. These aspects include the inability of the displaced to handle cash compensations, the failure to acquire cultivable land for sustaining their livelihoods, forced displacement along with delayed relocation, issues prevailing at resettlement sites and failure of the beneficiaries or authorities of big dam projects in providing an alternative livelihood to those displaced. As said in the paper, “The idea of a just displacement is one that may be expected to evolve out of a process of continuous dialogue between the state and the people”, though it is widely apparent that such “dialogues” rarely occur between authorities and people

2.2 Socio- Economic Significance

2.2.1 EQUATOR INITIATIVE CASE STUDY OF SHASHWAT, INDIA: A Fisheries Cooperative is Formed

Shashwat had been toying with the idea of bringing the people together to form a sort of cooperative by which they could create an alternate form of livelihood for the displaced tribal farmers. That's when they came upon the idea of forming a fisheries co-operative and rearing fish in the dam reservoir.

2.2.2 TRIBALS DEVELOP FISHERIES IN DIMBHE DAM, by Budhaji Damse and Anand Kapoor: Rearing fishes in cages

The Dimbhe Jalashay Shramik Adivasi Machhimar Sahakari Society Maryadit, Digad was setup in 2006. Per the Fisheries Department, (Damse and Kapoor, 2016) fish seed totalling Rs. 9 lakh and 9000 fingerlings worth Rs. 3.80 lakh were to be put in the reservoir in the first year itself. Upon the request of the Fisheries Society, Shashwat submitted a proposal to the Tribal Development Department (TDD) for a grant of Rs. 5,37,360 towards the contract amount, security deposit & fish seed cost.

They were sanctioned Rs. 3,79,900 towards fish seed cost and Shashwat arranged for Rs. 41,003 as beneficiary contribution from SWISSAID. It took 3 years for the Fisheries Department to supply all the fish seed. "Together we have harvested up to 27 tonnes of fish annually and are poised to break even within the next 3-4 years", says Anand Kapoor of Shashwat.

Fish rearing cages have the dimensions of 3m x 3m x 3m. Budhaji Damse, who works with the Co-op and Shashwat says that this is the ideal dimension to rear fish. 16 cages together form one set for breeding. Each cage can hold upto 5000 fish seeds for 3-3.5 months. Through the year, 15,000 seeds are grown in one cage alone.

Before cage fishing commenced, the farmers made very little money- some as less as Rs. 30,000 for one crop season. Now, women are also involved in maintaining the cages. In addition, they have tied up with self-help groups to teach them about financial management. Since 2006, 214 fisher families have come together in this group.

2.2.3 FROM FARMING TO FISHING, by Hamsa Iyer: Problems with Cage Farming

EQUATOR INITIATIVE CASE STUDY OF SHASHWAT, INDIA

The mountains around Dimbhe had very little tree cover; the soil that was eroded during the rains would accumulate in the reservoir and impacted the dam. A test (Iyer, n.d.) carried out by the Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE) showed that the reservoir water had few zooplankton, which were necessary for the growth of the fish. The silt deposited had low organic content, which was essential for the good health of the

fish. The tribals began afforestation and planted *dhaincha*² which is used as manure and fodder for cows and buffaloes. They began to do so before the first rains.

2.2.4 Padkai Cultivation: terrace rice cultivation in Dimbhe

The terrace hills near Dimbhe pose a problem for the farmers. The backwaters of the reservoir submerged a lot of cultivable land. While the fisheries co-op was one way to generate livelihoods, the people also wanted to set up an alternative to farming. Instead of viewing the steps of the hills as a hindrance, they came up with a way to use the terrain to cultivate crops, particularly paddy. This is done by terracing the slope of the mountains.

The steps are then consolidated by stone bunds to trap water that is ideal for paddy cultivation. Kusum Karnik, founder of Shashwat suggested this after talking to all the villagers. The farmers came up with an idea of *Shramdaan* (volunteer labour) and constructed stone bunds on each other's farms. This not only brought the community together but also served as a platform to share problems and issues that they faced. This type of cultivation has resulted in them harvesting two crops a year: paddy from June to September and maize, bajra and jowar from November to February/March.

2.2.5 From farmers to fishermen

The process of identifying oustees and dam-affected people has made a substantial difference. Government staff would reach villages with a few volunteers from the village and help create records to make the process faster. This has also enabled the tying up of several government programmes for the benefit of the tribals since they were determined to be a part of the process. Out-migration to towns and cities has reduced visibly or even stopped in some cases.

The fish farming experiment has been presented to institutes like IIT Bombay and Karve Institute of Social Sciences. The Cooperative has also become a resource house for others who want to learn how to rear fish.

² the legume *Sesbania bispinosa*

2.3 Contemporary Scenario

The small town of Ambegaon, once renowned for its green paddy fields, peaceful village homes with red-tiled roofs, and bustling markets is now under water. The construction of the Dimbhe dam has submerged 11 villages fully and partially flooded another 13. The tribal people who lived in these areas were transported—with their cattle and belongings—to distant colonies for resettlement. Although the Dimbhe dam irrigates roughly 14,000 hectares of land today, the displaced tribals have suffered the repercussions as victims of development. Their most fertile lands were taken; they were forced to relocate to the steep, hilly slopes above the water level and cultivate the stony land. There are certain points that must be followed by the government while rehabilitating a community such as providing land for agriculture and establishing villages, schools, healthcare and so on. Yet the government fell short on their promises. The tribals felt that they had lost their roots since their identity and culture were all associated with the lands which were taken from them.

As expected, the tribes of the Dimbhe dam catchment area faced several problems with sustenance and finding alternate sources of income. A majority of the displaced population is illiterate and uneducated, and this limits the sources of income available to them. Shashwat, a Pune-based NGO working out of Ambegaon, came to the aid of these tribes. The NGO works on local development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities and they have been working with the tribes of the Dimbhe dam catchment area since 1981. Since their earlier method of agriculture was not feasible on the stony slopes, the tribes adopted the *padkai*³ system along with the construction of terraced paddy fields with the help of Shashwat.

One important alternative source of income was sustainable fishing in the dam reservoir which has been Shashwat's priority activity since 2003. This process led to a host of problems: emptying the dam would lead to the death of all the fish in the reservoir; if the dam does not fill to capacity, it provides less volume for fish growth; when the dam gates open, the fish die from the 70-meter fall down the spillway. However, Shashwat has supported the community in overcoming these issues. Today, fishing in the reservoir makes the most of modern fishing techniques while still being

³ a practice of community mutual aid in which community members work together on a rotating basis to complete work on individual plots of land

community-run. There is also an ice plant and future plans include acquiring more boats for the less fortunate members. During the non-fishing, monsoon season, the landless Katkari tribe depends on the practice of ornamental fish rearing as an alternative income stream for local fishers. The tribal women who were looking for a means to enhance their livelihood have formed 32 self-help groups (SHGs).

There has also been an increase in productivity of agriculture. When water is released for irrigation downstream, the fall in water level exposes fertile land around the reservoir. The community—with the help of Shashwat and the government's approval—has started seasonal planting along this land; this venture has improved and expanded local agriculture options. The aim was to bridge the gap between the tribal communities and the Government of Maharashtra to leverage financial support for the activities that provide alternate sources of income to the displaced.

However, there are many families from the *Adiware grampanchayat* who have not yet received the compensation promised to them (in terms of land and money). They face floods induced by the dam and heavy rain as well; the soil is very prone to mud formation, which disturbs land cropping patterns. The movement of soil leads to erosion, which limits water retention and reduces soil fertility. This not only poses a huge disadvantage for the agriculture-dependent communities, but also increases susceptibility to landslides, making the area a high-risk zone. Additionally, the Panchala Khurd village still lacks electricity and basic medical and sanitary resources. The villagers need compensation for flood, landslide, and drought; they also require basic resources like electricity, natural pesticides, permanent housing, water facilities, and proper connectivity. Instead, the government and NGOs have given them temporary shelter, rice seeds (which need excessive amounts water and provide inadequate yield), water pumps with no electricity to power them, pipelines devoid of water, public distribution systems but no road accessibility, and hospitals without qualified doctors or nurses.

The inefficient and uncoordinated efforts of officials have led the villagers to adopt faulty practices like land leveling; there were no awareness programs to remedy this. Monetary compensation has simply increased alcohol consumption levels among the villagers. The landslide victims of the Malin and Panchale Khurd villages have still not been provided land or rehabilitated to safer areas; they continue to live in their old homes or temporary shelters constructed in high-risk zones.

3. Socio-Economic Aspects

3.1 Shashwat

Shashwat is a non-governmental organization involved in empowering the tribal communities displaced by the construction of the Dimbhe gravity dam and the areas demarcated for the Bhimashankar wildlife sanctuary in Pune, Maharashtra. Founded by Ms. Kusum Karnik and the late Mr. Anand Kapoor in 1996, it focuses on developing agriculture and aquaculture in the region and in helping the tribals receive the governmental resettlement benefits entitled to them. This, coupled with its assistance in the fields of health, education, and sustainable development has helped lift the residents upstream of the Ghod River from certain ruin. Shashwat's initial endeavours have been in mediating interactions between the tribals and the governmental authorities. It was prominent in mobilizing support for building the terraced paddy fields and procuring leasing to fish in the dam reservoir. In 2000, Shashwat mobilized over 700 tribal families to obtain permission for the paddy land, which came to fruition in 2002. The fishing lease was procured in 2006 after a long and protracted legal struggle to win the rights to the reservoir that had been tendered out to a local politician. Shashwat helped bring the area under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) through the terrace farming effort. The fishing lease helped get the Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE) involved in the area. Shashwat also initiated ornamental fisheries to sustain the tribes during the monsoons – off-season for normal fishing. It has organised the local women into 32 self-help Groups and, with the help of the CIFE, trained them in the culturing and upkeep of ornamental fish varieties. Shashwat lobbied to obtain the right of the tribals to practice drawdown agriculture⁴ and procure better irrigational facilities as well.

Besides alternate livelihoods, Shashwat also developed a People's Forest Research Institute (PFRI) to help the tribals protect their lifestyle through the conservation of sacred forests and the tribals' right to them, especially in the face of external stress. Ms. Kusum Karnik had famously led a '*chipko*' movement: to save the 700-year old climber in the sacred forest of Ahupe from a contractor who wanted to burn the forest down for charcoal. Shashwat also supports various health and education initiatives, like the school in Aghane.

Shashwat's foundation is Mr. Kapoor's insistence on equipping the tribals to be self-sufficient through livelihoods that are in sync with socio-cultural norms of tribal life. This was reflected in the Focus-Group discussion we conducted with the current Shashwat officials who insisted on livelihoods that promoted communitarian cooperation. The livelihoods they have developed so far are all an echo of the same: the system of padkai culture, the fishing cooperative, and collective farming of the drawdown area. The

⁴ to be practised on the land that becomes available when the waters recede during the summer months

final aim is, of course, to gradually shift all the major responsibilities to the locals and to settle into a supporting role (Shashwat India, 2013).

3.2 Psychological Impact

Displacement and resettlement can be long and arduous processes; the loss of ownership and property breeds grief and helplessness. When brushed aside as collateral damage of a developing nation, these emotions sour into frustration and resentment. Under such circumstances, individuals try to grab onto any ladders of opportunity that could improve their current state. While they may bring with them the burdens of heavy expenditure and baggage, they may be beared in the name of rest and resolution.

The repercussions of displacement can manifest themselves in myriad forms. This could be clearly identified in the displacement of the Ambegaon *taluka* induced by Dimbhe Dam. An aspect of the difference between what villages would look like before displacement, the vision for the rehabilitation of the displaced and the actual implementation and the present scenario was conveniently conveyed. This research led to another striking discovery: a difference in effects and process of rehabilitation could possibly be due to the difference in the reason for displacement. We visited different sites, within the geographical map outlined for our research, which could be categorized into three different categories on the basis of the reason for displacement and their rehabilitation programs. The first category could be termed as displacement caused to a natural disaster, the second could be discussed as the partial displacement which has lead to incorporation of fear of loss for the unexpected abandonment of their lands and livelihood. And lastly, the displacement caused due to the construction of the Dimbhe Dam. The agenda here was to study and assess the demographics, economic and social dependencies of tribal area that were displaced, due to the above-mentioned categories. The study of all these categories took us to places which included Aamde Village, the rehabilitated village for those who were displaced due to a Landslide. Then to the village situated within the boundaries of the Bhimashankar sanctuary in Ahupe village, where people are living with the constant fear of being displaced, at any twelfth hour. And lastly to Khushire Khurd and Khadki were the tribes who were displaced due to the construction of Dimbhe Dam were rehabilitated. One of the active members of the Shashwat

Organisation, Mr Kalyan Tanksale, very rightly termed this process as “the study of the lives beyond those walls of the so-called development.”

3.3 Aamde Village

This village is a living example of the successful rehabilitation process the government funded (along with the immense amount of assistance Shashwat provided). The Malin landslide was a major reason for the displacement and rehabilitation of the tribals to Aamde village. The landslide took place on the 30th of July 2014, between 7:30 am and 7:45 am. The heavy rains which had begun a day before were the prime cause of the landslide. The intense rainfall resulted in the drifting and dismantling of the entire area. Nothing of the village, save for ten to fifteen houses, was discovered after the landslide.

There were approximately 150 casualties. A preponderance of the affected population were Mahadev Kolis. The process of rehabilitation also included the use of rescue team to help discover and save the people who were pushed to the ground. The government had provided the land for the construction of the rehabilitated village two kilometres away from Malin, with total land coverage of eight acres. Around seventy-two houses each were built, each being four hundred and fifty-one square feet. The government also helped in starting an ‘ashram’ school which had taken the responsibility of food and shelters for the victims of this calamity. In order to stabilize the minds of the victims of this calamity and helped them get a hold of the situation, many organizations volunteered to help. Maharashtra Arogya Mandal, a trust helped these people affected by the landslide while they were going through some mental strains and stress. The construction work for the houses started with a year and was completed within the next two years. The process of this was however not that easy. After many discussions between the government and displaced tribals, three to four different blueprints for the house were developed. Once the budget was released the design (which complimented well with it) was finally decided upon. The final decision stated that the government had allotted rupees six lakhs for each house. However, an amount of approximately one lakh had to be paid by the victims for the construction of each house. It wouldn’t be wrong to say that the construction and the blueprints were only finalised after many detailed brainstorming sessions between the government and the tribals, hence no scope of

complaints and dissatisfaction could be seen. Along with the houses eighteen different modern facilities and amenities like electricity, western sanitation, school, temples, health care centre, central water tank, livestock shelter e.t.c., were also provided at the rehabilitated site. The livelihood practices of the people were not affected to that extent. They practised agriculture before and after the calamity and rehabilitation process. However, the inclusion of livestock rearing could be seen after the rehabilitation process.



Figure 3.1: Aamde village

The extensive media coverage of the calamity was a major reason why this rehabilitation process was a success. If it weren't for the involvement of the media to such an extent, the present scenario would most probably have been very different. The villagers constructed a memorial for the lives that were lost was constructed at the site of Malin (the site of the landslide).



Figure 3.2: Malin victims memorial

3.4 Ahupe

3.4.1 Sacred Forest in Ahupe

The state of Maharashtra is famous for its sacred groves; they are scattered across the state over both tribal and non-tribal land. The documented number of *devrai*—the colloquial term for the groves in the Western Ghats—is roughly 2820. These groves are devoted to different deities, including *Maruti*, *Vaghoba*, *Vira*, *Bhiroba*, *Khandoba*, and *Shirkai*. They are rich in biodiversity: they harbor portia trees, casuarinas, silk cotton trees, Indian laurels, Indian elms, bead trees, Indian butter trees, turmeric trees, and Japanese gingers. One of the most striking features of these groves is the abandonment of timber extraction and hunting and poaching of animals.

The Ahupe sacred grove—situated within the boundaries of The Bhimashankar Sanctuary—is one of the forests we had a chance to visit during our research. It is crucial to the tribals who depend on it economically and culturally. They currently live in the constant fear of being displaced by the new Environmental Protection Act. This law prohibits the intervention and access of the tribal to the forest increasing the chance of

causing an imbalance in the forest ecosystem. The tribals have been indispensable in the forest ecosystem for centuries and have protected it from many unseen dangers of extinction. In this scenario (as stated by the tribals) forest fires have usually be prevented and controlled by the tribal community, hence there displacement could increase the possibilities of the destruction of the forest. Another concern was that of a climber called ‘Garvi’, a parasite which if grows on any tree would kill the entire thing. It is the unsaid duty of the tribes to remove this parasite from the trees in order to save the entire forest. They are experts at it as they are well versed with every part of the forest and the different species found here. Hence the displacement of the tribes will affect the process of de-weeding of the forest. The constant contact created between the tribes and the forest has made them believe that they are a single entity and cannot be separated from each other. They say:

*हे जंगल आम्हाला आमच्या आई-वडीलां सारखा आहे. आम्ही ह्या जंगलात वाढलो आहोत.
हे जंगल आमचा घर आणि देव आहे.”*

(Hai Jungle aamhaalaa aamchyaa aai-vadilaan saarkhaa aahe. Aamhi hya junglaat vaadhlo aahot. Hai jungle aamchaa ghar ani deva aahe.)

(This jungle is like our mother and father – our parents. We’ve grown up in this jungle: it is our house and our god.)



Figure 3.3: Sacred forest in Ahupe

Translated from Marathi, it means that the forest is akin to their parents; they were born from it, and it is their home and their god (in the form of *Vanadev*). Interestingly, every tribal community has a different clan which has a different God or *kuldevata* who is worshipped in order to protect a patch of the forest in the name of that clan.

3.4.2 Ahupe Village, within the boundaries of Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig 3.4: Ahupe village

The tribes depend on agriculture for their source of income and self-sustenance; which further depends on the rainfall pattern. The majority of the tribal population consist of Mahadev kolis in this area. However, for the past few years, the rainfall pattern has been quite erratic making it hard to recognise a regular pattern. They have attempted to alter and improve crop patterns, but all their efforts were in vain. Paddy has been the staple crop of these tribes; as they were unsure of whether or not it would grow properly this year, they have begun to produce *varai* as a failsafe. This uncertainty is due to shifts in seasonal rain trends which worsens chances of crop spoilage. Occasionally, when their crop is destroyed, they utilize leftovers from the previous year's harvest – on which almost 10% of the village subsists. The others have to either buy it or work on various farms as labourers, in exchange for crops. They also collect *hirda* from the forest for medicinal purposes; they sell it on the market to garner themselves some extra revenue.

In 2005, the government launched the Forest Right Act, with its rules being launched in 2008. Under this act, the tribes are supposed to make claims so that the government can go through them and approve those claims. The government requests all the members of the *gram panchayat* and *gram sabha* to discuss and submit their claims, as part of the procedure. After which only the tribals can be given a legal entitlement to

the forest which would provide them with a free access to the forest. In the present scenario, the tribals have been denied access to the forest especially after the declaration of Bhimashankar as a wildlife sanctuary (Ahupe village falls under this area). In this scenario, a mountain is situated around three to four kilometres from this place known as “*Bhati dan*” or ‘brick kiln farm’; where some of the same tribe (Ahupe village) have their private lands which can be used for cultivation. However to access that piece of land they would have to walk through the forest. They have to carry their agricultural tools, equipment etc., which the forest department can prohibit under the current act. An official case against the tribes can be filed for doing so. That’s another reason why they are scared and can not access the forest freely. They have submitted the claim long back but still have not been able to get their rights because the government administration is not taking any stern decision. There is a committee formed to discuss the above-mentioned matter and make a decision. However, this committee comprises of representatives from the Forest Revenue Department and other government departments. As these representatives are not in favour of the tribes, all the efforts made by the tribals go in vain. We must not forget that the forest is a rightful entitlement of the tribes. And it is unfair, according to tribes for some outsiders to intrude and cause chaos in their community.



Figure 3.5: Focus-group discussion in Ahupe village

Some interesting changes that have taken place in the last few years are that the tribes have started following some of the rituals and festivals celebrated by the other communities (Maratha communities) downstream, for example, the *Ganesh* festival. Migration downstream has been noticed. Some of the children from this village are going downstream for higher education. But the shortcoming of this is the identity crisis which they experience due to the difference in the lifestyles, between the communities upstream and downstream. It wouldn't be wrong to say that it is hegemony in a way. Due to the wildlife sanctuary, the dependence of the tribes on agriculture has increased. Earlier they would only be depended on the forest or rare cattle for their livelihood.

It wouldn't be wrong to say that the members of the Ahupe village do not share any close relationship with the other community downstream. Their only interaction is when they go to the shops to buy items and when they work on the field as labours. The adults of this village do not have an educational background and the children have a very mediocre education, therefore, they are not aware of the educational opportunities and administrative procedures.. Also, they live rather far from any institutions in a remote place thus it will cause difficulties. Even if all this was not a problem, the families would not be able to afford the fees and living. Usually, people go for higher education in arts, commerce, some in science, but engineering and medicine is still a dream which is not accessible. Most of the girls study up to the twelfth standard. Only some of them would go forward to study nursing or some D.Ed (diploma education). Girls are usually married off by the ages of eighteen to twenty-two, however, if they perform well in academics and have a keen interest they are encouraged to pursue further education. Some members of the oldest generation are also teachers, and clerks in government offices. They are creating and spreading a lot of awareness about their community, and they are giving back to the larger society. Even before them, there have been some IAS officers and other senior officials, but they did not contribute meaningfully to the economies of their native villages. The middle generation is, however, more keen on giving back to the society. Due to the job requirements, they usually stay at different places but do come down for occasional visits. All women in this village work, and all they take care of all the agricultural work. There is no strict segregation of labour along the lines of gender - women are involved in everything.

3.5 Khushire Khurd

The residents of Khushire khurd are the original inhabitants of the Ambegaon village that is now submerged under the reservoir. The resettlement occurred 30-40 years ago; the original population displaced comprised the generation prior to the one that we interviewed, who resettled when the reservoir was full. Their present land used to be their agricultural lands prior to the dam's construction. Further, they did not help in the construction of the dam as they did not engage in labour at that time – the construction site was distant and there were no concrete roads that connected it to the village.

3.5.1 Occupations, Past and Present

Before they were displaced, the tribes practised only agriculture; they now also engage in labour work. They cultivated wheat and rice alongside the banks of the river. Now that the construction of the dam has forced them to move uphill, they practice agriculture in the hills and grow only rice. The fertility of the soil that they practice agriculture on is not as fertile as the soil beside the river banks. The fertility of the soil they used to work with was markedly better in juxtaposition with the state of their current land; they had higher income levels before the construction of the dam. Now, their produce is barely enough to get them through the year.

They engage in a specific form of labour during agriculture as well as other practices, called *Padkai*. *Padkai* can be considered the barter of labour; it shall be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

Khushire khurd houses a hatchery that was set up around two years ago; the only family to set one up in the village was funded by Shashwat. Nine families practise fishing; when others were asked why they didn't do so as well, they responded that they didn't have the skills to row or fish. One of the respondents present was a woman who knew how to row a boat and fish; she claimed to have learnt these skills by herself. The boats, however, were mobilized by Shashwat through CSR funding, some of which the government provided. When asked why the villagers themselves weren't willing to build boats (or attempt to, at the very least), they replied that they lacked not only skill but also

the equipment necessary. The timber is readily available but not the tin sheets, which have to be processed first.

3.5.2 Facilities

The gram panchayat created borewells over the past 4 years to supply drinking water to the villages. According to the tribes, they have had no trouble from government officials. The village has had access to electricity for the last 5 years, with the occasional randomized power cut at night, and more frequent ones during the rains. Concrete roads are also fairly recent (4-5 years). The tribes in Khushire Khurd have access to 2 schools - an Ashram school (government residential school) in Asane and one in Aghane. The education and stay are free. Once the child completes their studies till the 10th grade in Aghane/ Asane, the child then moves to Ghodegaon for higher education. Girls are encouraged to study further just as much as the boys are. No employment for the educated youth is available in the vicinity; they move to Chakan for employment opportunities. One of the respondents has been to a similar school, like Vigyan Ashram in Narayangaon.



Figure 3.6: Focus-group discussion in Khurshire Khurd

The closest primary healthcare centre is in a village called Khushire Budruk that lies on the other side of the reservoir bank. Nurses are available in this healthcare centre every Monday. The centre only provides tablets, no injections. Despite this, there have been no reported deaths due to diseases or injuries.

3.5.3 Socio-cultural Aspects

Most families in Khushire Khurd belong to the Koli Mahadev tribe, save for two families in the entire village. One is a scheduled caste family while the other belongs to the Katkari tribe; neither owns any land of their own. These two families are not a part of the *gram panchayat* in the village. The reason for this, they say, is that there is only one Katkari family in the entire village.

When asked if there has been any change in their cultural practices post-displacement, they say none. The festivals they celebrated before, like Diwali, Bail Pola and Panchami, are still celebrated. In case of marriage, they don't believe in the practice

of dowry. Hinduism is the dominant religion, though there exist very few *Navbodhs* (Buddhists).

They celebrate nothing peculiar to their community. They perform *Sankrant* and *Bhalar*⁵: agricultural festivals / rituals. We had the opportunity to listen to one of their songs about Janabai. Janabai was a saint poet of 15th century Maharashtra. She was a true devotee of Lord Krishna and the folksong narrates how Lord Krishna himself used to come down to earth to help her in her household chores – grinding grains, collecting water and agriculture. In the final stanza, she pleads with him to stop working lest his hands get blisters.

3.5.4 Emigration

Two to four families have completely moved from the village and return for vacations; they have leased out their agricultural lands to someone else. Also, now mostly split migration⁶ occurs after children leave for education and jobs. Split migration is when the entire family migrates, not together, but over a span of time. In case of Khushire Khurd, members of each family have already left for elsewhere; their financial deposits are made in the post office. When questioned about the rehabilitation centres in the urban area, they stated that they don't want to relocate to rehabilitated areas because there they will have to pay for every single facility—even firewood—several of which are available naturally.

When asked if better education for children would urge them to move, they replied that were the government to provide them land in the area, they would definitely go.

⁵ *Bhalar* is the ritual of the farmers (men and women) singing on the fields while they work, along with a man who beats the *dhol* (drum)

⁶ Split migration occurs when the entire family migrates, not together, but over a span of time.

3.6 Khadki

Khadki is a town located approximately 30 kilometres away from Dimbhe; it is the location the government allotted for the resettlement of the people displaced by Dimbhe Dam. However not all families resettled here; some stayed in Dimbhe while others simply relocated to other nearby places. When the Koli Mahadev tribal community was initially resettled at Khadki in 1992, they had to live in houses made of tin sheets as no provisions were made for house construction. A displaced family would have to make do with a fragile tin shed; they were provided neither other forms of shelter nor amenities like electricity, agricultural land, basic sanitation or clean drinking water.

It was not till 2014 that they were able to construct for themselves solid, permanent housing by taking loans of Rs. 8000-10,000. Shashwat recently took up an initiative to provide Rs. 10,000 to two families for the construction of sanitary facilities. It was also stated that the government had apparently bought the lands at a low price – Rs. 500-600 per acre; they were then sold for rehabilitation purposes at significantly higher prices – approximately Rs 6000-7000 per acre. They were also allocated 4-7 acres of agricultural land; however, not only was the provided land miles away from the residential area it was also divided into unequal proportions for each family. This made it very inconvenient for the tribals to practice farming. The tribes had no access to water, so they had to seek help from native residents for access to the water canal. This did not turn out to be in their favour as communal differences of caste and creed had the residents hostile towards the tribe. Recently, the tribal community has been buying water from those residents to practice minimal farming for their sustenance. They have also taken to rearing livestock as an alternative livelihood after the resettlement. Some individuals also practice manual labour as an alternative job during summer for minimal wages like Rs. 150 – 200 per day. Earlier these tribal communities were part of a single larger community. However, their displacement has separated them from 9 different villages which are up to 50km apart; the furthest one lies outside Pune district. This has caused an emotional scar on them as they no longer are able to celebrate and live together as one community, to enjoy the aesthetics of their culture. The remorse about not being able to practice fishing as an alternative livelihood is not a concern for these tribal communities as they had stopped practising it over the years, due to lower yields. However, the

expenditure of the lifestyle for these tribes was way less in Dimbhe when compared to their present scenario due to the easy availability of resources.



Fig 3.7: Meera *Tai* in Khadki

Meera *Tai*, an active member of the Shashwat organisation was the first tribal female *sarpanch* of the main village *Khadki*; she stated that it would not have been possible had that seat not been reserved for tribal women at the time. One of the nine members of the *gram panchayat* is elected from this settlement. They tried to apply for a scheme for water supply but failed as there were not enough people in the settlement for the scheme to be implemented. The government even put down 36 lakhs in aid of this cause but due to the interference of the *gram panchayat*, it failed. This pushed eight families to privately invest in water tankers. It is truly ironic how the families who lost everything for the construction of a dam are struggling to get enough water to drink. Self-help groups (SHGs) were formed to help the women of the village. There are a total of 600 women across several groups out of which only two to three group belong to this settlement. Ten to fifteen women come together to collect small savings and loan it to women in need. The SHGs have really helped these women, thirty women have started

poultry businesses in Dimbhe, and twenty women are also looking after ornamental fishing.

4. Study of Alternate Livelihoods

4.1 Agricultural Practices

The Dimbhe Dam project that began construction submerged most of the villages along the banks of the river Ghod. The families belonged to the Koli⁷ Mahadev tribe and had practiced agriculture along these banks for generations.

The dam displaced 19 villages, submerging most the agricultural land that they owned. They lost most of the agricultural land beside the river bank and were forced to move uphill, onto the surrounding hills. This is the terrain of the Koli Mahadev, most of whom continue to practice agriculture. Some of them—like the villages of Khushire Khurd and Khushire Budruk—have settled on what used to be their agricultural land. Now that they practice agriculture on the hills, they cultivate only rice. However, prior to the dam's construction, they used to cultivate wheat as well. Doing so is no longer possible due to two reasons:

1. Infertility: the soil along the banks of river Ghod was naturally irrigated and highly fertile. The same does not apply for the soil on the hills.
2. Arability: the rough and sloping terrain of the hills make it difficult to cultivate wheat.

Padkai is a traditional practice of sharing agricultural labor: it is shared among a group of 10 people. First, sloping land is segregated into smaller sections and flattened to form a field. A fence of stones and brick is cast around each field and at least 10 people work on a single farm a day (only to ready the field and not the actually agricultural practice), contributing to each one's farm. Once labor has been done on each one's farm, the group returns to the farm that they began with. This form of shared labor was suggested by Anand Kapoor, who realised that the terrain is such that a single person cannot work single handedly on one's own farm. He was also well aware that the villagers cannot afford to outsource laborers to work on their farms. It is, therefore, a barter of labor. When the produce is gained, however, the profits are reaped only by the owner of the land.

Another summer agricultural practice is conducted, in May, to improve the fertility of the soil, which requires labor in groups. Dry wood is collected, over the course of a month, from their private lands within a nearby forest in groups (*padkai*), and is spread throughout the field and burned; this is used as biomass. It is their belief that the fertility of the soil increases by baking the field; several people who own private land in the forest follow this practice.

⁷ *Koli* means fisherman in Marathi, though the tribe in Dimbhe and the vicinity had accepted agriculture as their profession centuries ago

4.2 Hirda

Hirda is a fruit that is readily available in most of the villages in the vicinity and its sale is also a major source of income for the villagers. Most villagers in and around dimbhe sell Hirda. However, in case of certain villages like Khushire Khurd which are located at the far end of the reservoir, there are no Hirda trees on the private lands that they own in the forest. The trees are present on other parts of the forest, but they are not accessible to the villagers for two reasons:

1. The geographic terrain poses a major challenge.
2. Plucking fruits from other parts of the forest that come under government land may have legal implications.

Thus, the sale of Hirda is also eliminated as a source of livelihood for them.

The major source of income for such villages has therefore become labor. They climb downhill to nearby villages or towns like Dimbhe and Ghodegaon to perform labor. They do not engage in manufacturing bricks like certain other displaced families (in other villages) do. Also, they travel down to perform labor when it is not raining or when they are not engaging in agriculture at the moment. They do not sell their agricultural produce, as they are completely dependent on the produce for their consumption. It is barely enough to suffice throughout the year.

It is interesting to note that all women, across the villages that we traveled to, engage in all traditional occupations or at least aid in them. They are active participants in agriculture, fishing, collection of Hirda and firewood from the forest.

In the case of some cattle-rearing villages, *khoya*⁸ is prepared from milk. It is traditionally used to make sweets during the festive season. Thus the *khoya* that is prepared by these tribals is sold to sweet confectioners in Bhimashankar.

⁸ a popular dairy product in the Indian Subcontinent

4.3 Cage Culture



Figure 4.1: Cage Culture

The concept of floating cages was introduced to Shashwat by Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE) in the year 2007. The cages are made of Nylon nets of mesh size 4 to 6 mm. These cages, of size 3 metres long, 3 metres wide and 3 metres deep, are tied onto floating platforms in deep waters. Floatation is provided by sealed 200 litre PVC barrels. According to farmers the barrels leak or they develop cracks when the waves go over the cage tops. If a small gap develops in the joint of the top and side nets due to carelessness, the inside fish seed floats out and away. In 2007, CIFE gave the farmers one broken cage structure and the floats and nets for 4 cages. Shashwat and the tribal fisherfolk had put in a lot of effort to take 2 crops of advanced fingerlings in the first year itself. Seeing the zeal of the tribal people, the CIFE provided the farmers with additional 16 new cages for them. The enthusiasm and keenness of the tribals in working on these cages in 2009 and 2010 was heartwarming.

According to the farmers, Dimbhe reservoir which has an average fishing area of 1278 hectares, needs to be stocked with 9 lakh fish seed of fingerling size (25-35 mm) every year, as per the contract conditions. However, the survival rates for such small size fish seed in such a large reservoir are barely 10-15 % due to high waves and other reasons. If the stocking could be done with fish seed of advanced fingerling size – 100-150 mm, the survival rates increase up to 85-90%. In 2010 the fishers of Dimbhe have successfully reared 3 lakh 90 thousand 500 advanced fingerlings of Katla/ Rohu/ Mrigala in cages and pens, and released them in the reservoir.

The fish in the cage are fed twice a day with rice bran and groundnut oil cakes, in proportion to their body weight. Every week the cage nets are to be cleaned with long-handled brushes to ensure good exchange of water inside & outside the cage. In about 3 ½ months the fish seed grows up to 100-150 mm. They are then carefully taken out of the cages, counted and gently released in the reservoir. It is considered quite a job to care for the small delicate fish fingerlings in cages floating in deep water.

4.3 Ornamental Fisheries



Fig 4.2: Ornamental fishes

It was in 2009 that Mrs. Bababai Wagh, the Vice Chairperson of the Fish Co-op and herself of the Katkari primitive tribe, spoke boldly to the Director of CIFE –“we have 23 women’s SHGs, please give us some work for our hands”.It was from this that the idea of ornamental fish rearing by tribal women came about. In 2010, the tribal women put in

goldfish in 2 cages on the suggestion of the CIFE scientists. The goldfish turned into gorgeous shiny red-gold colour after about 2 months in the Dimbhe waters.

Thereafter 50-70 women attended the first training and introduction sessions regarding ornamental fish. Handling these delicate ornamental fish very gently is second nature to these women. 8-10 tribal women at a time started to come and take care of their goldfish in cages. Once a crack developed in the net of one of the cages and many of the goldfish floated away, but the women did not lose heart. Slowly they started to ably tackle the jobs of cleaning the cage nets, feeding the fish at proper times, taking measurements of length & weight of sample fish periodically. It is a delight to see the shiny red-gold creatures gently moving against the backdrop of the green-blue waters of the dam lake.

The National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) recently sanctioned 16 cages for a two year project through CIFE to give hands-on training to tribal women on rearing ornamental fish, as also another 32 cages to provide an opportunity to the tribal fisher-folk to familiarise them with rearing advanced fingerlings.

The first crop of goldfish and angel fish is now to come out of these cages. By 2015, 37 tribal women have participated in 8 trainings at different places in rearing ornamental fish. They have successfully reared goldfish up to 75-100 mm in size and provided the same as brooders to CIFE thrice. According to the Shaswat officials, there is a new dawn emerging.

4.4 Hatchery

Shashwat, the fisheries cooperative, set up a hatchery in one of the villages that we visited- Khushire Khurd. This hatchery is still in its trial stage. When we interviewed the caretaker of the hatchery in Khushire Khurd, Shankar Bhau, he described for us the entire process, right from the conception of the eggs to their release into the reservoir.

4.4.1 Brooding Process:

First, female fish that weigh around 4kg are brought from the cage culture and introduced into the pond that is made right beside the hatchery. They are then injected with hormones to produce lakhs of eggs. The eggs are brought to the circular incubation containers which are then set in circular motion. The circular motion is aided by overhead tank and air motors and the eggs are left to circulate for 12 hours.

After 12 hours, the eggs are then transferred into the pond for another 12 hours. This allows them to adjust to the water temperature of the pond, after which these eggs are released into the reservoir. The mortality rate throughout the process is around 30 %.

4.4.2 The Pond

The pond is nearly an acre large and is used for growing ornamental fish. The cost of making the pond is approximately 50,000 rupees.

The hatchery currently accommodates around 120,000 eggs but has a capacity of 160,000. However, the hatchery is utilized only for 2 weeks in a year – from the end of July to the second week of August.

Shashwat, having noted the success of this hatchery since the past couple of years of its installation, intends to expand this project on a large scale and export these seeds all over Maharashtra. Currently, the government leases a portion of the reservoir that holds a capacity of 700,000 eggs, whereas the total capacity of the reservoir is around 2.7 million. If given more stakes in the reservoir, the hatcheries have the potential to grow into an established, highly profitable business.

4.5 Educational Opportunities and Employment for Women

4.5.1 Education

On interviewing multiple tribes, it was interesting to note that most villagers advocated a formal education for their children, especially in the case of their daughters. They seemed fairly willing to send their daughters to towns and cities for higher education. One of the villagers explained:

“If our daughters show promising capability to pursue higher education and professional jobs, the why not? We shall support her just as much as our sons.”

According to a villager in Ahupe, 99% of the girls study till the 12th grade, after which they get married. If they pursue higher education, they generally opt for a D.Ed (diploma education) or become a nurse. However, marriage in the age group of 18-22 is the norm.

The tribes of Ahupe stated that most of the generations that go out to find professional jobs in the organised sector become clerks or nurses. They study commerce or arts, but to study engineering or medical science is still a distant dream.

However, when asked why the tribes were hesitant to send their children to other cities, the 4 reasons that they listed were: a lack of cultural background; limited access

due to geographical reasons; limited exposure to urban environments; inability to afford them economically.

When it comes to traditional occupations like agriculture and fishing, women are encouraged to work. they participate actively in all traditional vocations – in some cases, even more actively than the men.

As part of our research, we visited one of the 2 government residential schools in a locality called Aghane and a private school for higher education, Vigyanashram, in a nearby area called Pabal; the other residential school is in Asane. The tribes in Dimbhe and adjacent villages rely heavily on these two elementary schools for their children’s education. For higher education, the children are usually sent to nearby towns or Pune, which is the closest city.

4.5.2 Aghane



Fig 4.3: School in Aghane

Aghane school is one of the major residential schools in the locality for children coming from Dimbhe as well as other areas in the vicinity. Several organisations—including a body from Norway—fund the school. The school started in 2000 and was fully established by 2002. The school-going population was initially just from Dimbhe; over the years, people from uphill (more distant) villages have begun to send their children as well. There have also been problems with teachers leaving the school to find jobs with

better salaries. Most teachers have finished their HSC exams and some are graduates. Now, however, there is better traction.

As the principal of the school, Mrs. Pratibha Tambe proudly states, there are students of all tribes and religions studying in this school. There are three predominant tribes that study in the school: Koli Mahadev, Katkari and Thakar. In case of the Katkaris, the generation that is currently goes to school is the first generation to receive a formal education; Hence their numbers are fewer compared to the Koli Mahadevs. To accomplish this, the teachers had to constantly talk to the Katkari populations in order to convince them. It wasn't until 2007 when the Katkaris first started to join the school. Initially, irrespective of their age, the children would run away from school after a while. Now, the Katkari community is finally beginning to understand the importance of education. The Koli Mahadevs have had a stronger desire for their children to acquire formal education and pursue more professional jobs. They, hence, needed lesser convincing on part of the school. What is further interesting to note is that there are more number of girls than there are boys- 46 girls and 36 boys.

Mrs. Pratibha Tambe tells us that the motto of their school is “Reach to Unreach”, which implies that the ambition in each child should be to reach the unreachable- to accomplish that what no one else has ever before. Alongside, they aim to instill a sense of “equal education for all”. While doing so, the school keeps in mind that the students belong to different backgrounds – each with its own peculiarities. This is what gives them their inherent personality, which the school strives to preserve.

There are several cultural activities that the school conducts to hone their personality as a whole. In order to do so, an entire week is dedicated to cultural events such as art events and sports. On teachers' day, the day is spent on the adjacent hills to educate the children on nature- all the surrounding plants and animals. In order to familiarize them to the outside world and different contexts, the children are taken on field trips to places closer to cities like Sinhagad, Katraj, etc. If children show flair for a particular sport or art, they are encouraged to pursue it even further. All festivals are celebrated in the school- including national holidays. They also celebrate the birth anniversary of their very first teacher- Savitri.

In the case of healthcare, there are nearby health centres that the students are taken to in case of any issues. In case of more serious illnesses, the children are transported to Manchar in a car that is available to the school.

4.6 Vigyanashram

Vigyanashram is an ‘engineering’ school in an area called Pabal. Several students from all over the country come to the school. In Vigyanashram the focus is completely on practical knowledge and instilling a business aptitude.

In the 2 years of their education, they are expected to learn how to deal with machinery and eventually devise one of their own- keeping in mind a specific technological problem or issue. According to the DBRT Coordinator, Mr. Vishal Jagatap, there have been several instances where the children have come up with new and innovative solutions when certain groups have come to them with their issues. The institute however, does not patent the ideas of the students. The students are free to do so.

At the end of two years, the students are expected to have completed their project that they would have undertaken earlier and state a business idea that they would want to implement. They are not marked on the outcome of their project- its success or failure- but the thought behind it, and the effort put in.

Thus, the aim of Vigyanashram is to inculcate a business aptitude, aided by practical knowledge. Mr. Vishal Jagatap states that their success is only achieved when a student is able to come up with his own ideas and “be their own boss.”

5. Potential Livelihoods

5.1 List of Criteria

Once we began to understand the social and economic scenario at Dimbhe, we attempted a list of potential alternative livelihoods that could be implemented in and around Dimbhe dam. For this, we prepared a set of criteria. We arrived at the criteria after consulting the Shashwat officials and other volunteers from the local tribal communities as to what they considered absolutely essential for any livelihood to be feasible. The necessary criteria were as follows:

1. Dependence on locally available resources
2. Accessibility of resources
3. Daily commute
4. Capital investment
5. Short term goals versus long term goals
6. Cultural and social acceptance
7. Minimal exposure to urban populations
8. Maximal involvement of all communities and promotion of cooperation
9. Consideration of who truly benefits
10. Leveraging existing govt. schemes
11. Necessity for legal permissions
12. Administrative ease

5.2 Proposals

Among the ideas pitched, the officials finalised six options as potential livelihoods:

5.2.1 Hatchery

We proposed to the Shashwat officials and the tribals an idea to expand the hatchery into a bigger business generating additional capacity through multiple, smaller ponds. We also suggested the introduction of varieties which have few bones or a single bone which are more marketable than the present, multi-boned varieties of Rohu, Katla.

5.2.2 Small Ponds

We proposed to the Shashwat officials the creation of small ponds to lessen dependence on the reservoir, whose lease amount is ever-increasing. This form of aquaculture is a regular practice in various parts of India. The small ponds—with the depth of each pond going up to 12ft and the seed capacity of the hatchery—can help grow more fish than in the reservoir. They can avoid the problems which come with growing in a reservoir in the process, grow more fish and generate demand for the hatchery technology.

5.2.3 Indigenous Seed Varieties

Most of the agriculture done in and around Dimbhe involves indigenous seed varieties of paddy. Many NGOs assist in developing agriculture methods involving the use of indigenous seed varieties to aid their conservation. Tie-ups with such NGOs can intensify agriculture and obtain better yields while conforming to the tribals' cultural sensibilities and traditional methods.

5.2.4 Seasonal Floriculture

The temperatures in areas in and around Dimbhe remain low during the rainy and the winter seasons; we suggested to the officials and the tribals they could take advantage of this; they could grow seasonal flowers which require low temperatures sell at high prices on the urban market.

5.2.5 Fish Pickle and Dried Fish

We suggested manufacturing dried fish and fish pickles from smaller varieties of fish (which can be cultured in the cages they currently use) as something the women's SHGs can expand into.

5.2.6 RO Plant

The officials working with Shashwat told us that during the construction of dam, in the statement of purpose and objectives of the project, 6% of the water in the reservoir would be allocated to the use of the tribals in that area. We suggested to the officials of shashwat and the tribals to set up Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants along the reservoir and sell mineral water to areas around Dimbhe and urban centres near Dimbhe.

5.3 Conclusion

The tribal populations in and around Dimbhe, with the aid of Shashwat, are mostly involved in agriculture through the *padkai* system and fisheries through cage culture. There are certain demographic trends that emerged; the Katkaris were more open to taking up cage culture compared to the Koli Mahadevs. This was because the Katkaris were already practising fishing and the Koli Mahadevs tended to stick to the conception that fishing was a Katkari-exclusive practise.

Another important factor was that the Katkari tribes were previously landless, almost nomadic. They mostly engaged in fishing, albeit through very crude methods like using tubes to venture into the water and fish. The current adult generation is the first of them to live in proper homes; the younger generation is the first to take up formal education in schools. The Koli Mahadevs, on the other hand, were the ones who lost agricultural land when the dam was built. As a result, when asked about the impacts the dam has had on their lives many Katkaris actually spoke positively of it. For the Katkari community, the dam is a source of opportunities and a more stable future. Most of them weren't particularly better off before the dam and they lost no land to it. Many Koli Mahadev families speak with nostalgia of their fields and homes. It is reflected in the Koli Mahadevs of Ahupe too, who live in fear of displacement by the wildlife sanctuary. Their lives are tied to their land and their forests. It is clear in the wholesome vitality one can see in the yet untouched community of Ahupe as opposed to the ones living in makeshift homes on the fringes of the dam reservoir in Dimbhe.

Dimbhe dam was completed in 2000 but resettlement had begun much earlier. The archaic resettlement and rehabilitation policy that was implemented in a scattered manner has broken up close-knit communities. A slightly more comprehensive policy was introduced in 2013: The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (2013). However, since the act is not applicable retroactively the tribals remain largely uncovered by its benefits. Families whose homes were completely submerged were resettled to distant parts like Khadki in Manchar, and parts of Thane district. The reality of the resettlement policy is reflected in the resettled villages. The villagers resettled to Khadki were given tin sheds for homes and 4-7 acres of land for each family regardless of the size. One family had lost close to 15 acres of land when the dam came. They were given 4 acres as compensation – divided

as 2 acres in one area and 1 each in two others. There is a severe water shortage. Families eke out a living in the pieces of less-than-ideal farmland, subject to the oppression of larger hostile communities. Even today, over 300 people in Dimbhe remain to be rehabilitated even after Shashwat's rehabilitation efforts. According to the director of the NGO, this is in stark contrast to the resettlement experience of the villagers of Malin whom the landslide displaced completely. Malin received extensive media coverage and while it was not less than what it deserved, it stands that Dimbhe and the other dam-affected areas deserved the same coverage too. While the people of Malin were resettled into a well structured village (over approximately 2 years), the thousands displaced by Dimbhe dam are still reeling from their resettlement experience more than 20 years into it. That is the fate the tribes of Ahupe remain wary of. They speak with dread of the experience of the tribes of a nearby village. One day, a government truck arrived and asked the villagers to board it for transportation to their resettlement location. It drove the unsuspecting tribals a fair distance, after which it unceremoniously dumped them in the middle of nowhere; the driver told them to vacate their village, which was now government property. This is the sad reality of the discriminatory nature of the resettlement and rehabilitation of tribals and other vulnerable communities in India.

As part of the Discover India Program 2017-18, we travelled 120 km from Pune city to the inconspicuous village of Dimbhe, tucked away in rural Maharashtra, worlds away from the city left behind. The story of Dimbhe has been one of contradictions - development for many but destruction for others, abject poverty in so many ways but a richness of life in so many other. It took these tribals over 20 years to get back on their feet. They remember their Anand *Mama* (referring to ___) with fondness and of everything they could have started doing now that they were finally in a position to, only, he is not there anymore. The injustices have been many, but the tribals of Dimbhe have gone a long way in rising above it. The stereotyping of tribals as backward, agency-less communities is a common phenomenon. However, the India we saw gave us enough reason to see the other side of the narrative. A hundred kilometres from one of India's major cities, we discovered a tribal hamlet, living beyond a concrete wall, fighting realities that are shockingly common across the country but something most people remain untouched by. And this is the India we take away from this project.



Figure 5.1: Katkari Lady

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APPENDIX

Ahupe

Interviewer: To what to extent are they forced to other communities and how?

Participant 1: No family relationship, no personal relationship. It's purely economic. They would buy something from their shop, they'll go work on their farms as labourers that's it.

Interviewer: Education. How open are they with their children going outside for college?

Participant 1:

1. There is no background
2. Access is very limited because of geographical reasons
3. Exposure is also limited
4. Economic condition is such that they cannot afford it - it is a big thing to go out of the village, stay there, etc.

Usually people go for higher education in arts, commerce, some in science, but engineering and medical is still a dream it's not accessible.

Interviewer: what about the girls?

Participant 1:99% of them study up to +2 that's it. Then 1% would go forward to nursing or some Ded (diploma education). They have to get married by around 18 - 22 years of age. If they are doing well, passing all their exams, then they don't have to get married. They moment they fail marriage.

Interviewer: whatever subsequent generations you have for higher education, when they come back, have they been able to give back to the community

Participant 3:One generation elder to him (sarpanch) are into jobs like teaching, clerical work at govt offices, they are creating and spreading a lot of awareness among their communities, they are giving back. Even older than that there have been some IS officers

or heading some really good departments But they never gave back. The middle generation is giving back. But there still not into professions. Like they're not engineers or doctors.

Interviewer: Do they stay there or in the village

Participant 5: Generally they stay where their job is. But once in a while if there's some festival or some rituals or for vacations they come home.

Interviewer: Do they prefer their traditional livelihoods?

Participant 2: It is technically not possible. Like if they stay here they won't be recruited. But they are using social media to create awareness more these days.

Interviewer: What tribe?

Participant 1: Mahadev Kohli

Interviewer: Do the women work?

Participant 5: 100%. All agricultural work is performed by women. They do everything. Not like some work only women perform and some only men do. Not like that. Women are involved in everything.

Interviewer: Why does his gender bias exist when it comes to professional education but not in the kind of work they do traditionally like collecting ntfp, etc?

Participant 2: They think. It's not a rule that girls study only until 12th it just happens to be so.

If the child shows promising capability, we will support her just as much as our sons.

Participant 2: What was your occupation before displacement?

Before displacement, the tribes practiced only agriculture.

Participant 5: What is your occupation now?

They now also engage in labor work

Participant 3: What about agriculture?

They cultivated wheat and rice alongside the banks of the river. Now that they have moved uphill due to the construction of the dam, they practice agriculture in the hills and grow only rice. The fertility of the soil that they practice agriculture on is not as fertile as the soil beside the river banks. Thus, their income was better before the construction of the dam. Now, their produce is barely enough to get them through the year.

Khurshire Khurd

Interviewer : Do you practice Padkai?

Participant 1: The tribes practice Padkai cultivation on the hills. Padkai is a practice of sharing labor, where agricultural labor is shared among a group of 10 people. At least 10 people work on a single farm a day (only to ready the field and not the actually agricultural practice), contributing to each one's farm. Once labor has been done on each one's farm, the group returns to the farm that they began with. It is done since they cannot afford to outsource laborers to work on their farms. Thus it is a barter of labor. Also, the terrain is such that a single person cannot work single handedly on his farm. When the produce is gained, however, the profits are reaped only by the owner of the land. Another agricultural practice is conducted in summer- in the month of May- to increase the

fertility of the soil, which requires labor in groups. Dry wood is collected from their private lands within a nearby forest in groups (Padkai), which itself take about a month, and is spread throughout the field and is then burned. This is used as biomass. Thus, it is their belief that the fertility of the soil increases by baking the field. Several people, who own private lands in the forest, engage in this practice.

Interviewer : What is Hirda?

Hirda is a fruit that is available in most of the surrounding villages and its sale is also a major source of income for them. However, in case of the Khushire Khurd villagers, there are no Hirda trees on the private lands that they own in the forest.

They are present on other terrains in the forest, but they are not accessible to the villagers for two reasons: a) the geographic terrain poses a major challenge b) plucking trees from other parts of the forest that come under government land, may have legal implications. Thus, the sale of hirda is also eliminated as a source of livelihood for them. The major source of income has therefore become labor. We do not engage in manufacturing bricks like certain other displaced families (in other villages) do. Their agricultural produce is also just consumed by them.

Boats and fishing: The one person who set up a hatchery in the village was funded by Shashwat. In case of fishing, only 9 families practice it. When asked about the lack of engagement on part of the others, they respond that they don't have the skill- to row a boat or fish. Also, it is something that is done in a pair. (Idk why that's a problem?) Out of the respondents present, there was one woman who knew how to row a boat and fish. She claims to have learnt it on her own, by practice. The boats however were mobilized by Shashwat through CSR funding, and some were provided by the government. When asked why the villagers themselves weren't willing to attempt to build boats, they replied that they were not only lacking in skill for it, but also the necessary equipment. The wood (timber) is readily available but not the tin sheets, which also have to be processed.

Interviewer : What do the women do?

. They engage in all occupations. Fishing, agri, collecting firewood, etc

Interviewer : why not make khoya?

A. no cattle to get milk. Other khushire people do it.

Interviewer : What is external help?

NREGS (National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) was a government scheme according to which the farmers are entitled to at least 100 days of labor which provides them with a cash income by the government. This scheme was an intervention for these displaced villagers advocated by Shashwat to the government. Through this scheme, the farmers practiced Padkai agriculture on their farms and since these lands were also an asset (for the government?), they were paid in cash. This scheme was run for 5-10 years.

The government has provided rehabilitation services to the tribes. However, out of the 45 families, only 13-14 families were paid about a lakh for the construction of the houses. Thus for them, they have not yet been rehabilitated. They have approached officials of the ministry (they don't mention which exactly) in Mumbai for the same, but to no avail. Although the tribes continue to protest, the tribes claim to be "tired of protest". No compensation (in terms of money or land) was provided for the submerged property by the government. The money provided was strictly for the construction of their new houses.

Interviewer : If land compensation was provided elsewhere, away from here, would you relocate?

A. yes, we will have to. What if something like the Malin incident happens here? Also, they don't want just half the village to resettle. When all of them get lands, everyone will move together.

Interviewer : Since now your livelihoods are all well set here? Won't it be a task to start all over again elsewhere?

A. we're hoping to get better agricultural lands there.

Interviewer : What are the facilities here ?:

The gram panchayat created bore wells in the last 3-4 years for drinking water in the villages. (When asked if the tribes were ever troubled by government officials, they denied it). The village has had electricity for the last 4-5 years, with randomized occasional power cuts (generally at night) and more frequent power cuts during the rains. Concrete roads are also fairly recent (4-5 years). The tribes in Khushire Khurd have access to 2 schools- an Ashram school- the government residential school- in Asane and one in Aghane. The education and stay are free. Once the child learns in Aghane/ Asane till 10th, the child goes to Ghodegaon for higher education. Girls are encouraged to study further just as much as the boys. No employment for the educated youth in the vicinity, so they move to Chakan for employment opportunities. One of the respondents has been to a similar school like Vigyanashram in Narayangaon.

The closest primary healthcare centre is in a village called Khushire Budruk which is on the other side of the reservoir bank. Nurses are available in this healthcare centre for once a wee- every Monday. However, this centre only provides tablets, no injections. However, there have been no reported deaths due to diseases or injuries.

Interviewer : Socio-cultural aspects?

Most families in Khushire Khurd belong to the Koli Mahadev tribe, except for two families in the entire village- one being a Katkari family and the other being an SC family. These two families own no land of their own. Also these two families are not a part of the gram panchayat in the village. The reason for this, they say, is that there is only one katkari family in the entire village.

When asked if there has been any change in their cultural practices post-displacement, they say none. The festivals they celebrated before, like diwali, bail pola and panchami, are still celebrated. In case of marriage, they don't believe in the practice of dowry. The most predominant religion is Hinduism, with very few 'Navbodhs' (Buddhists).

Interviewer : Any Any festivals/ rituals related to occupations?

Nothing specific. They celebrate Sankrant and Bhalar which are agricultural festivals/ rituals. Bhalar is the ritual of the farmers (men and women) singing on the fields while they work. There will be one man who beats the dhol alongside.

(The song they sang was about Janabai. Janabai was a saint poet in 15th century Maharashtra. She was a true devotee of lord Krishna and the folksong narrates how lord Krishna himself used to come down to earth to help her in her household chores- grinding grains, collecting water and agriculture. In the last stanza she pleads him to stop working lest his hands get blisters.)

Interviewer : Why this song specifically?

A : We don't know.

Interviewer : What are the tattoos on the women's hands?

A. they are tattoos of their husband's (interestingly, referred as 'malak' when they spoke) and brother's names. Left- hubby, right- brother. Only women do it. Done because its tradition. There may be some other figures of elements too. Now-a-days, girls don't do it anymore. Even the older women and men in the room said, its time to leave behind such old traditions. Also the tattoo artists don't come here anymore. The imprints on the forehead (a line, arc and a dot on top) are like a permanent sindoor.

Interviewer : Why not set up a shop outside bhimashankar mandir?

A. where will we stay? No permanent housing. Forest department will interfere as it is illegal.

They visit the bhimashankar temple after a couple weds. Other gods- vaghoba, masoba.

A convenient store nearby is owned by a teacher that teaches in a nearby school.

Interviewer : Any mythology regarding god's, Bhimashankar?

A. No

What are your thoughts about displacement process, hatchery?

The generation that was originally displaced, are dead. They are still unhappy with the dam construction.

All of them, some say the ones that were rehabilitated are happy.

none are happy, even they have to do labor.

Interviewer : If different types of seeds were to be grown, then won't more people get employed?

A. yes, then in that case, yes.

Interviewer : How did the one family get involved in the hatchery project/ how did they come across Shashwat?

A. Shankar bhau, the person who looks after the hatchery, has been an active volunteer with Shashwat for 3 years. 2 years ago the hatchery project started. He was introduced to the organization by Budhaji. Also, Motiram Ji, the president of the fisheries cooperative belongs to this village and is settled here. Budhaji and Motiram ji are hence frequent visitors to the village in order to talk to the villagers and mobilize them. And word spreads fast in the rural areas.

Interviewer : Emigration?

What are your feelings about people who have been emigrated?

2-4 families have completely moved. They come back for vacations. They have leased out their agricultural lands to someone else. Also, now mostly split migration occurs after children leave for education and jobs. One or two people from each family has already left for elsewhere.

Savings are done in the post office.

They don't want to rehabilitated areas because there they will have to pay for every small facility, even firewood. Here a lot of things are available in nature itself.

Interviewer : What about children who are in the more urban centres are getting better education. Isn't that a motivating factor?

A. Yeah but as of now, we don't have land there. If government allots us land/houses there, we'll go.

Interviewer : Do the local politicians come here?

A. they come once in 5 years to ask for our vote, they make promises about mobilizing us and then turn up after another 5 years.

Interviewer : Any similar projects that caused trouble? Do forest officials come here?

A) Also because this area doesn't fall under the Bhimashankar forest, so the forest department doesn't bother them. B) PESA (Panchayat Raj Extension to SC Areas) is applicable to them. PESA was introduced in 1994 as a decentralized form of government- district councils, block-level councils, etc. but tribal communities all over the country traditionally have their own government structures and institutions. Therefore the introduction of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) was an imposition on their traditional tribal areas. After several protests, the government was forced to give a second thought. Then another extension was introduced to the PRIs for the tribals, which promises/ grants them some special rights- access to the forest being one of them. Thus, since they are entitled to forest access, they are making use of it and forest department doesn't bother them.

Aghane

Interviewer : Ma'am can you tell us about the school and its history?

Answer : I am Pratiba Tambe. This school started in the year 2000. During that time, since there were only 17 houses the people demanded for a school so that their children could be educated. There's a group from Norway who fund us for such things and we asked them for it and the school started after 2 years. In the beginning while making this school we didn't think so much but when tai started working, everyone realized that this school is of importance, hence kids from other

villages started coming too. And then this school was made residential. Their motto was to 'Reach to Unreach' which means we have to reach to that level where the others aren't able to reach. We have to reach there and work there. we have to learn from them and not teach ourselves. They got these two things to our attention and this also helps us while we teach the kids. In the beginning when the school started, we took in local teachers who had completed their education till the 12 th grade and 1 was B Ed 1 professor came at the start and the other came in 2002. Now what happened was the people who were well educated they left the village and the others ran the school and also made it last. Hence hats off to them. They ran it for 10 years. But what happened was they didn't have enough funds hence they weren't getting enough salary as well. Hence after 10 years they left the job but we had more people come in by that time. A lot of people came and went in this way. Basically theyre are well educated. Now the difference is that before we had different problems and we did not know how to deal with them, we couldn't provide them sufficient salary.

Interviewer: What is the present situation?

Answer :But now these teachers are so well trained that we can ask the people who are funding to raise the salary. There hasn't been a drastic change but its better than before. During this time all the kids hat came to us were Mahadev Kohli, Katkaris, Thakar, and Christian. We have all these kids studying here now. Every child has different values here. The way they talk to the way

they behave. We see that their community has some impact on them and we try to keep it that way. We don't try to wipe it away.

Interviewer :Why?

Because that's their originality. And now there's an event called "Quest". Quest is a trust. This event also believes in keeping their values and hier language and going ahead. While doing this we make changes in different things like education, their writing and listening skills, speeches which include tables and basic English. This also includes drawing. We also have a sports day. fun with drawing is also a day. we have a whole week dedicated to culturals where we have out arts, crafts, indian as well as western games are played. We do various things like this. We also celebrate the 15th of August and 26 th of January. Our first teacher was Savitri, we also celebrate a day for her. In the same way all the tribals here celebrate world tribal day on the 9 th of august. Also celebrate 5 th September as teachers day. taking the smallest of things we celebrate each thing with the kids. We also take dahi handi and rakshabandhan into consideration. Here, poli and pola these festivals are very important. That's why during that time we let the kids go home. we celebrate all other festivals here. Even Diwali we celebrated here and offered food as well. We celebrate all festivals here. We want to inculcate the value of "quality" among everyone. Hence how this quality is achieved in teachers, in students, their behavior and their health is figured out by us. we also celebrate Science day. we

do this so the kids know how they benefit from such events, how they are impacted, what happens.

what do we get, what do we learn etc. Just like this even about geography we have similar things. 30 children from Dimbhe and around it come here to study.

Interviewer : How many children are studying and what is the demographics?

Answer : There are around 40 children from the villages above. We have 46 girls and 36 boys here. This is the ratio. We usually have more girls coming in. We have good security. We have 4 cleaners, 5 teachers, 1 supreme attendant and 1 principal which is me. As Katkaris are the first generation people they were lower in number before but have increased recently. During 2007 when the katkari kids started coming, almost 100% of them would run away. But this happened only in the first year. No matter if they were 1st graders or 6th. The first year they would always run away. Later when they understood they'd come back. Because they were kids who stayed in the mountains they'd run back there and eat there itself. Living 'Bindass' so what we did this year was instead of celebrating teachers day here, we celebrated it in the mountains and gave the children every information about the plants and flowers around. Also told them about which plants grow here, which animals live here etc. The parents of Mahadev Kohlis feel that their kids should be given the best education and they trust this school on doing that. They also believe that once the kids are out of this school they'll do well even in their further education outside. Someone wishes their child would be a doctor, someone wishes they would be an engineer, someone wishes they should become a school teacher, someone should be a drawing teacher etc. they basically want the kids to be well

educated. In Mahadev Kohlis the basic understanding of equality of education has come. They have slowly starting adapting to this which is a good thing. We still have a lot of work to do towards the Katkaris. We had to go to each one of their houses and promote and tell them to send their kids here to be educated. The problems they faced when they go out is exposure. But for them to gain this exposure we keep big tours. Last year we went to Mulund. Before that we went to, Sinhagad and Katraj. Here the kid have the chance to see different things. They get experience. Even for sports we invite various teachers here so if someone is really into sports they can pursue it further on and whatever complex they have that shouldn't be there. we want the kids to be confident enough and say 'I can do it' even when they aren't in their own village. We want to inculcate that much confidence in them.

Interviewer : Do you have a healthcare centre nearby?

Answer : We also have a healthcare centre at a village called Taper and Adire. But what we do here is, we have heavy rains for almost 4 months. And the rains are so heavy that the moisture enters the classrooms, hence the kids hands and feet catch infection. If it gets too much we have told them to keep a car and drop the kids to Manchar, keep them there for 8 days till they're completely fine and then bring them back. If it's a small issue we treat them here itself and bring them back. We don't compromise with education and health.

Glossary

Bajra- Pearl Millet

Dhaincha- *Sesbania bispinosa* (legume)

Hirda- Black/ chebulic myrobalan

Jowar- Sorghum

Katkari- a tribe in Maharashtra

Khoya- A dairy product usually used in
Indian sweets

Koli Mahadev- A tribe in Maharashtra

Marathi- The primary language spoken in
Maharashtra

Padkai- Practice of step agriculture

Shramdaan- voluntary contribution of
physical labour

Tai- Older sister

Taluka- A group of several villages
organized for revenue purposes