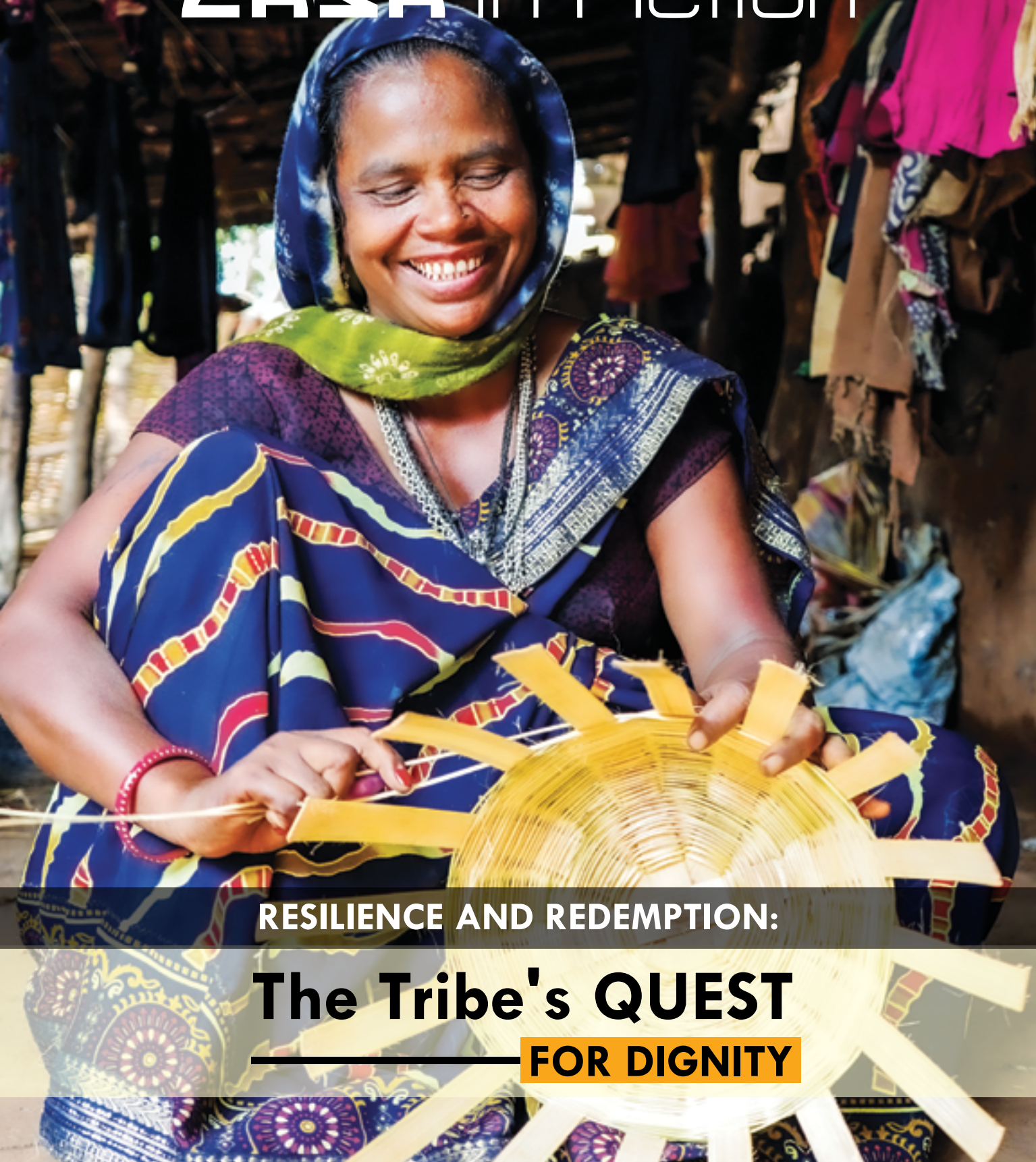




CASA in Action



RESILIENCE AND REDEMPTION:

The Tribe's QUEST

FOR DIGNITY



church's auxiliary
for social action

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EDITORIAL

Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) has been a driving force in Gujarat and Maharashtra since its inception in the early 1980s. Through a range of community-centered initiatives, CASA has spearheaded transformative changes, fostering resilience and sustainability in the region.

At the core of CASA's work lies the establishment and empowerment of community-based organizations (CBOs). By nurturing these grassroots entities, CASA has enabled local communities to take charge of their own development agendas. Through capacity-building programs, CASA has equipped these organizations with the necessary skills and knowledge to address pressing issues effectively.

Agriculture, being the backbone of many rural communities, has received special attention from CASA. The promotion of organic farming practices has not only improved food security but also contributed to environmental conservation. CASA's advocacy for sustainable agriculture reflects its commitment to fostering long-term resilience in the face of changing climatic conditions.

Moreover, CASA's emphasis on women's empowerment has been instrumental in challenging traditional gender norms. By facilitating the formation of women's groups and promoting their active participation in decision-making processes, CASA has empowered women to become agents of change within their communities. These initiatives have not only enhanced women's economic opportunities but also bolstered their sense of agency and self-worth.

CASA's approach underscores the importance of local engagement in driving sustainable development. By working closely with communities and fostering ownership of development initiatives, CASA ensures that interventions are not only effective but also culturally and contextually relevant.

As India continues its journey towards a sustainable and equitable future, initiatives like CASA serve as inspiring examples of grassroots-driven development. However, challenges persist, and ongoing support and collaboration are essential to overcome them. Governments, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders must continue to partner with CASA to build upon its successes and address remaining gaps.

In conclusion, CASA's commitment to capacity building and local engagement has brought about tangible improvements in the lives of individuals and communities in Gujarat and Maharashtra. As we look towards the future, let us draw inspiration from CASA's journey and work together to create a more sustainable, equitable, and inclusive society for all.



India has the largest concentration of tribal populations globally, comprising about 8.6% of the total population, which is approximately 67.8 million people. These tribal groups are considered to be the original inhabitants of India and are culturally diverse. The majority of tribal populations in India reside in rural areas, with states such as Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Karnataka accounting for around 83% of the total scheduled tribe population.

Enclosed in the hills and forests of southern Rajasthan, extending into the bordering areas of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra in western India, reside the ethnic communities that form the third largest Scheduled Tribe of India, collectively known as the Bhil tribe. While the origins of the term "Bhil" are still a subject of scholarly debate, some argue that it is derived from the Dravidian word for bow, "billa" or "billu," highlighting the tribe's traditional expertise in archery. The tribe does not share a single, easily definable linguistic, cultural, or racial identity.

Their presence is most concentrated in the southern reaches of the Aravalli Range, the western uplands of the Vindhya and Satpura ranges, and the northernmost hills of the Western Ghats. Some Bhil groups have also settled in nearby river valleys and coastal plains.

The term "Rewakantha" is occasionally used to describe their traditional territory, primarily referring to the basin of the Rewa (Narmada River).

THE BHIL TRIBE'S STRUGGLE FOR A DIGNIFIED LIFE

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ANCIENT LEGENDS AND ENIGMATIC ORIGINS

The Bhils' historical roots are mysterious, with scholars still debating their exact origins. References to the Bhil tribe can be found in India's epic literary treasures—the Mahabharata and Ramayana. According to Ramayana, it was a Bhil woman who presented berries to Lord Rama while he was on his quest to find Sita in the dense Dhadaka forests. Another captivating tale traces their lineage to Nishada, the son of Mahadev, who was exiled to the mountains and forests for his deeds.

Throughout their history, the Bhils' interactions with neighboring communities have been multifaceted.

The first professional anthropologist to undertake an intensive study of any branch of the Bhil people was Wilhelm Koppers. Koppers' research on the Bhil tribe was conducted during the early 20th century which was interrupted to an abrupt end due to World War 2.

A BRIEF TIMELINE OF BHIL'S STORY

Ancient Sanskrit texts mention wild hill peoples in the region, possibly referring to the Bhils. In the 6th century AD, a Bhil chieftain opposing the passage of another king through the Vindhya Mountains is documented in Sanskrit literature.

As Rajput clans settled in western India in the 7th century, some Bhils resisted the invaders and sought refuge in the interior to protect their independence, while others accepted the conquest peacefully, even intermarrying with the newcomers.

Bhil-Rajput ties endured, with Bhils playing roles in Rajput coronations. In some Rajput states, it was customary for a Bhil to place a ceremonial mark (tika) made with his own blood on the forehead of a new raja (king).

In the 17th century, the Marathas, extending their influence northwards from Maharashtra, mercilessly oppressed the Bhils. This era saw the killing of Bhil individuals caught engaging in criminal activities and the decimation of entire Bhil communities.

When the British government gained control of the region in the early 19th century, it established special military units to pacify Bhil populations.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, Bhils participated in local tribal resistance movements, protesting against political and social injustices.

The Mewar Bhil Corps, formed in the 1840s, aimed to steer Bhils away from predatory habits, provide them with honorable employment, and assist the British government in maintaining order. They were the only native troops in Rajasthan to support the British during the 1857 Mutiny.

In 1949, the Indian Constitution designated the Bhils as a Scheduled Tribe, recognizing their need for special representation and assistance in independent India.

BATTLE AGAINST MARGINALIZATION

The Bhil tribe, with a population exceeding 1.7 crore as of 2013, faces a range of challenges that contribute to their socio-economic backwardness.

The Bhil tribe in India faces an identity struggle characterized by the challenge of defining a cohesive cultural and ethnic identity among its dispersed and linguistically diverse groups. While they are commonly referred to as Bhils, they lack a singular linguistic or cultural trait that unifies them, as their dialects belong to the Indo-Aryan family and may have been influenced by neighboring groups. This diversity and dispersion across Western India make it challenging to establish a clear Bhil identity, leading to questions about their original mode of speech and cultural unity. Despite these challenges, Bhils recognize each other as members of the same people, and their identity remains an ongoing subject of study and discussion in the field of Indian anthropology.

Many Bhil communities inhabit hilly and forested regions, making access to education and infrastructure difficult.



Their remote locations hinder economic development and employment opportunities. Access to healthcare services in remote Bhil villages is often limited or non-existent, resulting in poor health outcomes and increased vulnerability to diseases.

Many Bhils are engaged in agriculture and agricultural labor, which are highly dependent on climatic conditions.

Subsistence agriculture is a common livelihood among the Bhils, but land holdings are often small and fragmented. This fragmentation, coupled with inefficient farming techniques, leads to limited agricultural productivity and economic fluctuations. The regions inhabited by the Bhils, such as parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh, experience semi-arid climates which bestows erratic rainfall, frequent droughts, and scorching summers, with temperatures exceeding 40°C (104°F).

Bhil's natural habitat is the thorn scrub forest, dominated by hardy acacia species, although excessive human and animal activity has taken its toll on the region's vegetation. To the south, in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, rainfall becomes more reliable, temperatures milder, and the landscape shifts to denser deciduous forests. However, even here, human and animal pressures have adversely affected the environment. Many have been forced to seek livelihoods outside of agriculture, becoming laborers or engaging in activities like woodcutting and gathering forest products.

The Bhil community has historically had limited access to quality education. Schools in remote tribal areas often lack infrastructure, qualified teachers, and resources.

While the Indian government has introduced various programs and schemes for the welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes, including the Bhils, the effectiveness of these initiatives in addressing the community's specific needs varies. Implementation challenges, corruption, and bureaucracy can hinder the impact of such programs.

BEING A WOMAN IN THE BHIL TRIBE

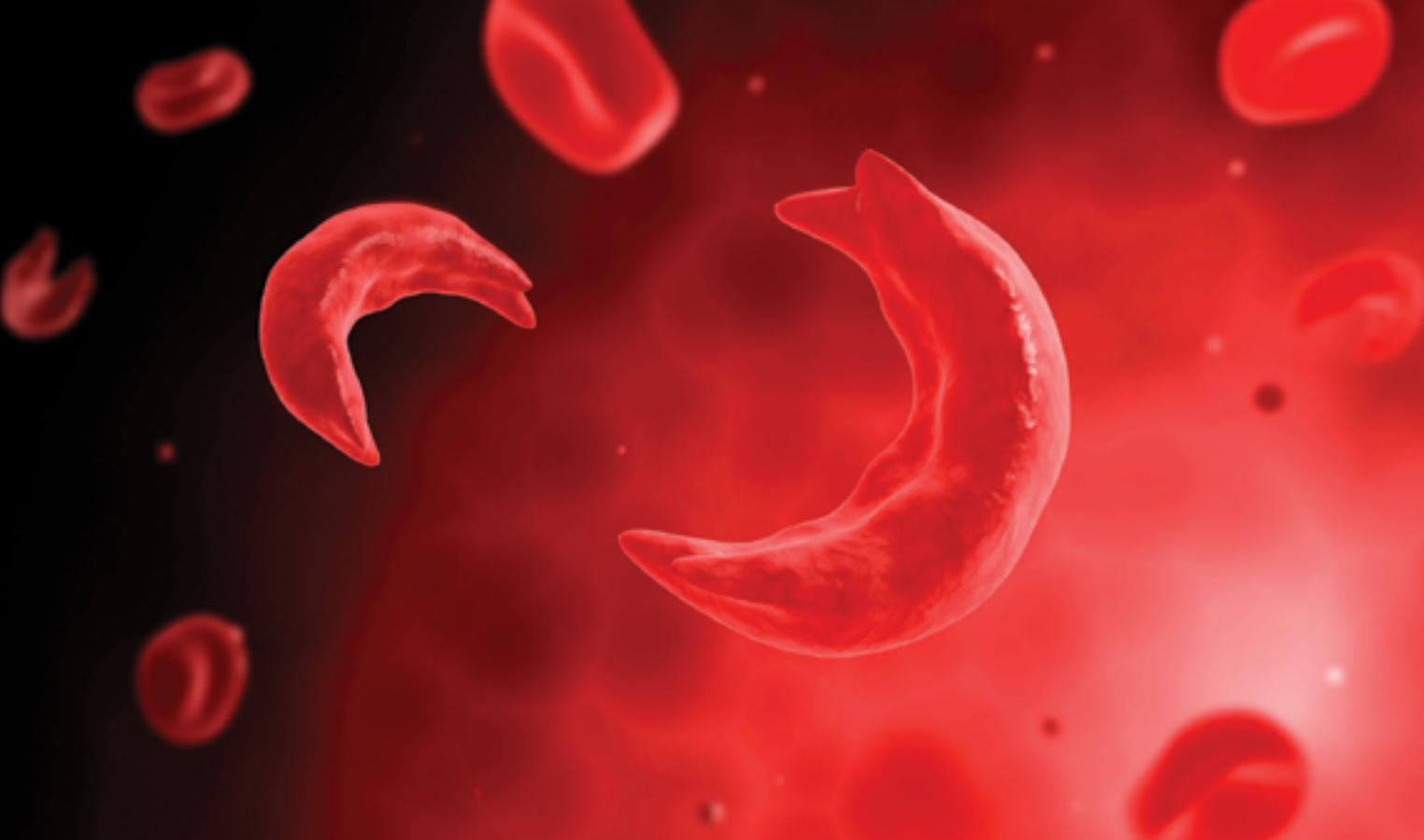
Being a woman in the Bhil tribe, like in many traditional and indigenous communities, comes with its own set of experiences, challenges, and cultural norms. It's important to note that the Bhil tribe is not a monolithic group, and experiences may vary among different subgroups and regions.

Bhil society tends to adhere to traditional gender roles, where women are often responsible for household chores, childcare, and agricultural work. Bhil women experience gender disparities, with challenges related to early marriage, limited rights within marital disputes, and traditional customs such as veiling.

Tied in cultural norms and the web of socially-ordained rules, the women have limited access to healthcare facilities, high maternal mortality rates, and lack of awareness about their rights. Gender-based violence and discrimination is also a prominent concern. Weather related stresses often manifest in the women's increased household responsibilities besides increasing their vulnerability to violence.

In recent years, there have been efforts to empower Bhil women through self-help groups, education initiatives, and awareness campaigns. These efforts aim to improve their socio-economic status, health, and overall well-being.





THE GENETIC PESTILENCE OF SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA

Sickle cell disease (SCD) is a genetic disorder of the red blood cells. It is primarily caused by a mutation in the hemoglobin gene, leading to the production of abnormal hemoglobin known as hemoglobin S (HbS). Hemoglobin is a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. In individuals with SCD, the HbS protein causes red blood cells to become rigid and take on a characteristic sickle or crescent shape, rather than the normal disc shape. These abnormally shaped red blood cells can lead to various health problems and complications.

SCD is most prevalent in regions with a high prevalence of malaria, including sub-Saharan Africa, parts of the Middle East, India, and some Mediterranean countries. In India, the tribal groups with a high prevalence of HbS (20-35%) include Bhils, Madias, Pawaras, Pardhans, and Otkars in Maharashtra.

Tribal communities in India, such as the Bhil tribe, often experience a high prevalence of sickle cell disease due to a combination of factors. These include genetic susceptibility,

isolation from mainstream healthcare, limited access to education and awareness, and a lack of adequate healthcare infrastructure in remote tribal areas. Additionally, intermarriage within these small, isolated communities can increase the likelihood of passing on the sickle cell gene to offspring, further contributing to the disease's prevalence. The fatalities of the disease include:

Vaso-Occlusion: The abnormal shape of sickle cells makes them more likely to get stuck in small blood vessels. This can obstruct blood flow, leading to vaso-occlusive events. These painful episodes can occur anywhere in the body and are often referred to as sickle cell crises. They can cause severe pain, tissue damage, and organ dysfunction.

Hemolysis: Sickle cells are fragile and can break apart more easily than normal red blood cells. This leads to hemolysis, the premature destruction of red blood cells. As a result, individuals with SCD often have anemia, which can cause fatigue, weakness, and paleness.

Organ Damage: Over time, the repeated episodes of vaso-occlusion and hemolysis can damage various organs and tissues. Commonly affected organs include the spleen, liver, lungs, bones, and brain. Organ damage can lead to a range of complications and health issues.

Infections: SCD can weaken the immune system, making individuals more susceptible to infections. Infections can be severe and life-threatening, especially in young children.

Pain: Chronic and acute pain is a hallmark of SCD. Pain can be unpredictable in its onset and severity, and it significantly impacts the quality of life for individuals with the disease.

Stroke: Sickle cell disease can increase the risk of stroke, particularly in children. This is due to the risk of sickle cells blocking blood vessels in the brain.

Delayed Growth and Development: Children with SCD may experience delayed growth and development, including delayed puberty.

It is estimated that approximately 300,000 infants are born with SCD each year globally. Between 2000 and 2021 the total births with sickle cell disease increased by 13.7% globally and India too witnessed the spike.

THE PREVALENCE

Research has revealed that thousands of years ago, there was significant intermarriage and genetic mixing among India's tribal populations, leaving genetic traces, including the sickle cell gene, even in isolated tribes. The prevalence of the sickle cell gene carrier status (sickle cell trait) among different tribal groups varies widely, ranging from 1% to 40%

Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have some of the highest prevalence rates of the sickle cell gene, with millions of individuals carrying the gene. Several districts in these states fall within the "sickle cell belt" with HbS prevalence ranging from 10% to 33%.

The Wayanad district in Kerala, which has a tribal population, also has a high prevalence of HbS, ranging from 18.2% to 34.1%.

Dhodia, Dubla, Gamit, and Naika tribes in Gujarat have a high prevalence of HbS (13-31%).

INDIA'S BATTLE AGAINST SICKLE CELL

Newborn screening programs for sickle cell disorders have been initiated in several Indian states, including south Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Madhya Pradesh. These programs have identified a significant number of sickle gene carriers and infants with sickle cell disease, allowing for early intervention and care. Some sickle cell patients among tribal populations have benefitted from hydroxyurea therapy, which has shown efficacy in reducing disease severity.

However, challenges in curbing the sickle cell anemia prevails as delivering healthcare to tribal populations is difficult due to remote locations. Village-based models and outreach programs have been implemented to provide care to sickle cell disease patients. Limited data on maternal and perinatal outcomes of women with sickle cell disease in tribal regions indicate higher risks of adverse neonatal outcomes and complications during pregnancy.

Sickle cell disease has a profound impact on the health, socioeconomic status, and overall well-being of tribal communities in India. Evidence-based research underscores the urgent need for comprehensive strategies that address the healthcare disparities, provide access to quality care, and offer psychosocial support to individuals and families affected by SCD in tribal regions.



Amidst his struggles, Motiram found solace and support through CASA's initiatives. Our commitment to addressing root causes and empowering individuals through education resonated deeply with Motiram. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when Motiram and his family faced hardship due to illness and loss of income, CASA stepped in to provide crucial support, offering a beacon of hope in their darkest hour.

Motiram's personal transformation did not end with receiving aid. Driven by a newfound sense of purpose, he embarked on a mission to raise awareness about sickle cell disease within his community. His advocacy, fueled by the belief in the power of knowledge, has become a guiding light for others facing similar challenges.

Motiram's journey took an unexpected turn when his daughter-in-law, grieving the loss of her husband, approached him with a heartfelt request. She asked him to consider adopting a child, believing it would bring her solace and provide a loving home for a child in need. Motiram and his wife embraced this request with open arms, nurturing the child with love, care, and the education needed to thrive.

Motiram's story epitomizes the core values that drive CASA's mission. It underscores the importance of initiatives that empower communities through education and awareness-building. Through his resilience and determination, Motiram has become a beacon of hope, illuminating the path toward a brighter future for all.

As we celebrate Motiram's success, let us reaffirm our commitment to supporting initiatives that uplift and empower communities. Together, we can continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals like Motiram, ensuring that no one is left behind.

Empowering Communities Through Education:

Motiram Ranchod's Journey In the mountainous terrain of Dhargaon resides

Motiram Ranchod, a 55-year-old daily wage laborer whose life has been marked by hardship, resilience, and a commitment to empowering his community. Motiram's story is not just about personal tragedy but also about finding strength through education and community support, especially in the face of genetic diseases like sickle cell disease

Motiram's life has been marked by profound challenges, particularly with the devastating loss of his only son to sickle cell disease—a genetic illness that has afflicted generations of his family. In a community where misconceptions about such ailments prevailed, Motiram's journey towards understanding and acceptance was a poignant one.



LEADING A BATTLE AGAINST GENDER DISPARITY AND UNAWARENESS

Vasanta Ben, a 40-year-old widow in India's Surat district, faces persistent challenges. Her village has long struggled for basic amenities like hospitals and education- several government schemes often go unnoticed. In this marginalized setting, gender disparities run deep, and women bear the brunt of societal inequalities. Their roles are traditionally limited to household chores and caregiving, leaving little room for personal growth or ambition.

Vasanta, educated up to the 10th grade, always defied these traditional roles. She believed her passion could contribute beyond society's expectations. Despite her early marriage and the gradual confinement to household duties, Vasanta found ways to volunteer as a field worker under a women's empowerment mission, earning a small allowance. Her family, however, resisted her involvement, and conflicts intensified after her husband's passing.

Social respect and community unity form the very fabric of human existence. When individuals feel valued and embraced within their community, they are empowered to make meaningful contributions. Yet, what happens when someone's contributions are constantly belittled, especially when challenging the norms of a conservative society? Vasanta Ben's story answers this question.



Emotionally bruised but undeterred, Vasanta realized her story wasn't unique; many women in her village faced similar struggles. In 2016, she became a volunteer at CASA.

Determined to make a difference, Vasanta provided emotional support to women facing domestic conflicts that prevented them from leaving their homes. She understood that women needed to value their contributions and find pride in their work. Together, they saved time on household chores to attend awareness and supervision programs. These programs provided insights into their rights and government schemes, ultimately benefiting their families.

In her five years with CASA, Vasanta Ben has worked extensively in Adivasi regions, spreading awareness about schemes that can benefit students, farmers, and the community as a whole. Initially, she encountered resistance and scepticism, with some people disregarding her efforts as mere talk. However, the appreciation of even one woman learning something from her fueled her determination.

Vasanta firmly believed that educated and aware women made significant contributions to the community. She focused on raising awareness about Anganwadi programs, maternity and child care supplements, and nutrition boosters. She also worked to dispel misconceptions about nutrition packets for girls during puberty.

Addressing women's hesitation to visit hospitals, Vasanta provided detailed information and guidance. She also learned how to create home decoration items and engage in macramé weaving.

With a self-help group, they ventured into macramé weaving, investing around 1500 rupees in raw materials. Their products gained recognition and are now sold for approximately 10,000 rupees. Earnings are equally shared among the women, with a portion allocated to group savings, amounting to around 30,000 rupees, serving as a financial safety net.

Vasanta's journey displays the transformative power of passion and dedication to social cause. Despite adversity and resistance, she champions gender equity, awareness, and empowerment, creating a brighter future for herself and the women and girls of her village. In her words, everytime that a woman from the village appreciates or makes use of her shared knowledge and awareness, Vasanta's fight against the society's resistance moves a step ahead towards success.





Marriage often marks the end of a woman's personal aspirations. From moulding into a new home environment to bearing maternity choices, women take up a lot of unacknowledged responsibilities where compromises are mandatory. One of the leading compromises includes strangling professional ambitions.

Sumitra Vikas Padvi, from the Shaltapani village of Nandurbar district, Maharashtra, however, stood against these normative expectations. A BCA degree graduate stepping into marital life decided not to let her zeal and dreams fade. She yearned for something more, beyond the rules prescribed within the four walls of household.

In 2018, destiny intervened with a shining opportunity. CASA was conducting training on employable skills such as stitching and embroidery for rural women. Sumithra did not think twice before enrolling on the free-of-cost learning program. Over three transformative months under CASA's guidance, Sumithra's rudimentary stitching skills blossomed into an artistry of threads and needles. More importantly, it kindled her dormant courage, setting her on a path she had barely envisioned.

CASA's support extended beyond training; they provided Sumithra with a financial lifeline of Rs. 20,000. With this backing, Sumithra and her compatriots ventured to establish a boutique in their village. Sumithra recalls, "Investing the support amount, we purchased dress materials and essential supplies for our boutique. Initially, the boutique started operating in our village, but when Joycia ma'am from CASA visited us, she was deeply impressed with our progress and determination. Her unwavering support and encouragement propelled us to take a bold leap and establish our shop in the bustling market area. This pivoted our journey for the good".

CHOOSE TO BREAK THE BARRIERS NOT YOUR ASPIRATIONS



Sumithra's new role as an enterprise owner allowed her to master the art of commerce and customer relations. Most importantly, she became a mentor to the young girls of her village who were seeking employment and wanted to join her. "Before, we didn't know much, but CASA training transformed our potential. We learned new designs, improved our skills, and became more confident. We owe so much to CASA; they taught us how to run a shop, handle customers, and even how to train others. CASA has been our guiding light, and we are so grateful for everything we've learned from them", shares Sumithra.

Supported by her husband and family, Sumithra reinforced the belief that dreams could be pursued, no matter one's circumstances. CASA's mission to uplift resonated in every aspect of Sumithra's journey. CASA did not just contribute to skill; it became the architect of dreams, and builder of self-reliance.





FROM BARREN TO BOUNTIFUL: CASA'S JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMING A LAND INTO AN ORGANIC OASIS



In the heart of the Nandurbar District in Maharashtra, a story of resilience, determination, and sustainable farming practices has emerged, transforming a once barren and sloped piece of land into a thriving organic farm adorned with lush mango groves. This is the remarkable and inspiring journey of Mr. Thumla Pawra, aged 65, and Mrs. Bumni Thumla Pawra, aged 62, residents of Son Bk village. Their remarkable

story highlights the power of sustainable agriculture and the unwavering dedication of individuals in nurturing the land for a better life.

Pawra family resides on a land that was once uneven and characterized by infertile, sloping soil, which was deemed unproductive for agriculture. Mr. Thumla conveyed, "The land which we are living in, was once a very uneven barren land, unfit for any agricultural purpose. However, in 2013, our family's fortune changed when CASA offered support to our family through their distribution programme, where we got wheat seeds for planting." But the difficulty did not stop there as the entire area was prone to soil erosion. To cultivate these seeds, the family decided to level the uneven terrain and make the soil fertile, preventing soil erosion.

With the support of CASA, they approached the Agriculture Department and received 80 mango saplings to plant on the newly leveled land. Also, to ensure a sustainable source of water for their farming, the government helped dig a well, which became instrumental in their journey to transforming the land.

"Today, the once saplings have grown into flourishing mango trees, each bearing an average yield of around Rs.



1,000 per tree. This incredible transformation has helped us garnered an annual income of around 80,000 to 1,50,000 rupees from the 80 mango trees." shared Mr. Thumla.

Mr. Thumla Pawra and Mrs. Bumni Thumla Pawra credits CASA for the transformation that has completely changed their lives. CASA's constant support and guidance have made them aware of numerous government schemes that are available for their wellbeing. Mr. Thumla conveyed his heartiest message stating, "We feel privileged to have been able to access these benefits and implement them successfully, turning farming into a viable source of income that we can satisfactorily support our family."

The family have been meticulous in their approach to managing their mango farm. They implement regular pest control measures, monitor water stagnation to prevent sapling rot, keep grazing animals at bay, and apply organic fertilizers for healthy sapling growth. Their dedication ensures that their yield is protected from pests and birds.

The mangoes harvested from their farm are sold in other ways too. Unripe mangoes are processed into 'Aam papad', 'Aam Chur' as popular snacks, while ripe mangoes are sold in local markets. This diversification has added to their income and provides them with a stable source of revenue.

Before their journey into sustainable farming, the Pawra family led a life as migrant laborers, working in agriculture and earning meager wages. Their lives have witnessed a profound transformation through their unwavering determination and CASA's support. They have moved from being day laborers to thriving farming entrepreneurs.

Mr. Thumla Pawra has also taken on leadership roles in his community. He serves as the President of the GVKP (Gramin Vikas Karyakartha Parishad), facilitating discussions among locals and panchayat leaders. Through their collective efforts,



they have resolved water supply issues and advocated for jobs under the MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) for villagers. Additionally, they have raised awareness about various government schemes for livelihood and livestock development.

Mr. Thumla's son Mithun Thumla Pawra, takes great pride in continuing the legacy of his father's hard work in cultivating the fruitful mango grove. Inspired by CASA's intervention, he plans to expand the business by cultivating more organic produce, like organic lemons and ensure its sustainability for future generations.

The journey of Mr. Thumla Pawra and Mrs. Bumni Thumla Pawra is a testament to the transformative power of sustainable farming and community support. Their hard work, dedication, and the assistance from CASA and government schemes have turned a once barren piece of land into a flourishing mango farm, significantly improving their quality of life.



"Today, the once saplings have grown into flourishing mango trees, each bearing an average yield of around Rs. 1,000 per tree. This incredible transformation has helped us garnered an annual income of around 80,000 to 1,50,000 rupees from the 80 mango trees."

- shared Mr. Thumla.



THE COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION INITIATED BY RAMJI BHAI

In a small village of Mathavali Village, Gujarat Ramjibhai resides in a humble accommodation with his wife. He has been raising his small family through farming as his primary occupation, though financial shortcomings had always restricted their dreams. Earning from his toil and hard labour, Ramjibhai managed to get his two daughters married off and settled in domestic harmony.

Ramjibhai had an immense desire to pursue a leadership role. His potential however, remained unexplored. It was in 2006 when his potential finally found a medium of expression as he came across a CASA Coordinator. Ramjibhai was encouraged to attend village-level meetings of GVKP (Gram Vikas Kendra Parishad), a community-based organization supported by CASA. Working at the grassroot level of attending to the needs of the village, Ramjibhai developed more awareness of the challenges that his community is jointly facing due to lack of basic amenities like water supply or good roads.

Tirelessly working towards development of the village, Ramjibhai never missed a meeting at GVKP and conducted awareness drives. Soon he was included in the apex-body of GVKP on the virtue of his contribution. His dedication and passion for community development became evident. To assist

him in financial well-being, CASA also supported him to start a Brick Klin.

The story of Ramjibhai became an inspiration for many. He garnered the support and courage to stand for Panchayat elections, as he was confident that his field-experience makes him capable of representing the village and working towards its development.

Every odd working to his favour, Ramjibhai won the elections, ultimately becoming the Sarpanch. Here on, his life became a saga devoted to rectifying the issues of his village and improving the overall living conditions of his fellow villagers. Despite his role as Sarpanch, Ramjibhai remained an active member of the GVKP group, consistently spreading awareness about government policies and advocating for the rights of the tribes in the area.

In a heartfelt note, Ramjibhai mentioned that he has witnessed the village grow like a child from dependence to a semi-sustainable level. This was made possible due to individuals with a transformative spirit and the support of organizations like CASA. Schools have been established, and improved water facilities are now available. Women in the village are more active participants in community affairs than ever before. The village had progressed significantly, and

surrounding villages had also benefited from the positive changes.

Ramjibhai expressed his deep gratitude to CASA, acknowledging that the organization had not only transformed his life but also the lives of countless villagers. At 68 years of age, Ramjibhai, now retired peacefully from the post of Sarpanch, became a story of inspiration for hundreds of youth and community leaders in and around his village. Indeed when the passion of the heart is fierce, no barrier can limit an individual from contributing to the community.



NARSINGH'S ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT AND COMMITMENT

Born into the rural heartlands of India, Narsingh's journey reflects the common struggles faced by many, when it comes to securing stable employment and finding their life's larger purpose. 40 years old Narsingh belongs to Dediapada, Gujarat. Narsingh's father could only afford to educate him till 7th standard, after which Narsingh engaged in the informal sector selling ice cream. His income was too meager to handle the weight of his dreams.

At the age of 18, Narsingh could not have anticipated stepping into entrepreneurial empowerment and leadership had he not come across CASA. It was through a 20 days training on driving skills that Narsingh was introduced to CASA. The training aimed at equipping young residents of the rural area with the employable skill of driving.

"I got my driving license after completing CASA's training. Within six months, I rented an old jeep and started driving. I used to make Rs. 10,000 per month, a big step up from my earlier jobs. But I didn't want to stop there. With the money I saved, I decided to do something important - farming. With the right guidance from GVKP, a CBO supported by CASA, I attended a skill-building course at Krishi Kendra to learn about organic farming methods. Through the course I learned about dragon fruit which has the combined goodness of over 100 other fruits and organically raised dragon fruit can yield good profits", shared Narsingh.

One of his primary goals was to train a minimum of 150 members of his community, especially those associated with GVKP (Grameen Vikas Krishi Pratishthan) in his village, on dragon fruit cultivation. He aims to provide them with a consistent source of income while also setting an example of how organic farming can transform lives.

Narsingh gives an overview of his farming plan and technique stating, "I adopted the pole pattern technique from the Krishi Kendra for optimizing space. I attended the vermicomposting sessions held by CASA to learn organic compost making processes that can help in getting natural yield of dragon fruit. One of my farming plots has 40 dragon fruit poles. With a minimum selling price of Rs 50 per dragon fruit, and each pole potentially yielding 500-1000 fruits, the revenue generated per pole can be substantial. These plants have an impressive lifespan of 20 years so these will continue to yield without the need for frequent replanting. This not only saves costs but also reduces the labor costs."

Narsingh plans to also explore avenues like selling dragon fruit plantlings to other farmers. This not only generates income but also spreads the benefits of organic farming within the region.

CASA educated him and fellow GVKP members about how to communicate effectively with authorities, approaching them with confidence. This was a vital skill in a community



where people often struggled to articulate their needs to officials. CASA instilled in them the ability to navigate the bureaucratic landscape, enabling them to secure resources for their farming endeavors. Narsingh even managed to install two solar pumps for irrigation.

Inspired by his own journey of education and growth, Narsingh is deeply committed to ensuring a brighter future for his children. His elder daughter is studying in the second year at college and the young son studies in 10th standard, whom he expects to grow up into innovating and improving the convenience of conducting organic farming.



RAMAKANTH: A WITNESS TO THE GROWTH OF CASA'S INFLUENCE

An active member of CASA since 10 Dec 1995, Ramakanth has been the witness to the transformation brought by CASA in the remotest of villages in Gujarat. Ramakanth joined CASA as community organizer in Dediapada area of Gujarat and by 2007 he was posted as coordinator in Taloda, Maharashtra. Delving into the wide range of CASA's work, he mentions that CASA initiated its intervention in 3 taluka of 2 districts in Gujarat. 72 villages were assisted from the Dediapada and Saggpada taluka of Narmada District and 30 villages from Umarpada taluka of Surat District.

"Dediapada, inhabited by a tribal population, saw CASA's vital role in empowering vulnerable communities. These were the most economically challenged areas in the state in 1995.

In 1995, the villagers had limited awareness of beneficial government schemes. Ramakanth reminisces that during that time, whenever he rode his motorcycle into the village, people would flee due to unfounded fears. The villages' forested locations bred superstitions, leading residents to believe a motorcycle signaled a foreign forster's capture. Women were hesitant to attend meetings, influenced by their families, particularly male members, who forbade their participation in MM meetings.

"However, change began to bud with CASA's effort as women started attending meetings that enabled a gradual mindset shift. As women started attending meetings regularly, CASA began assisting them to Mohammad Nagar and Paithan resource centers for skill training and awareness camps." shares Ramkanth.



Inspired by the courage displayed by these small groups in local development, CASA merged them into a unified association: Gramin Vikas Karyakarta Parishad (GVKP).

"Recentmost accomplishment of the GVKP has been the FACM program benefiting farmers. The village committee selected recipients, passing the list to the apex body. GVKP, with CASA's guidance, coordinated assistance from state-level entities. Initiatives like "Kaam ke badle anaaj" were soon designed to aid listed individuals. Thus, GVKP's organized approach fosters systematic concern raising and community welfare. CASA oversees CBO functions, ensuring active problem-solving for villages. CASA advises the apex body on village-specific matters, assessing solution efficacy." mentions Ramakanth. Adding inputs on the financial structure, he describes, "CBO members collect Re 1 monthly per village member. The corpus is managed by the apex body. This local fund is stored under GVKP's name in an SBI bank account. The organization covers travel and meeting expenses from this fund, maintaining thorough financial records".

The impact of CASA reaches beyond just village-level addressal of issues. Many old age and widowed women from the marginalized communities did not know about the pension schemes in Dediapada and Umarpada, which GVKP could inform

them on. Several young girls in the area have been entering into teenage marriages and undergo early age pregnancy, begetting malnourished children. CBOs have recently raised it and GVKP is discussing an amicable, legal and harmless solution to teenage marriages of the youth who flee with their love interests.

Addressing gender equity efforts, Ramakanth reveals, "Women CBO representatives aid fellow villagers through communication and interaction. They engage in the local language, building trust and discussing issues. This trust extends to training, with women traveling to Delhi. Once a sarpanch constructed bathrooms, right on a vital commute route in the village. A woman, trained by GVKP raised the issue fill collector level. Despite initial inaction, her persistence led to successful demolition. This resilience inspires women to initiate action for community benefit. Their confidence is evident in their outreach to government offices and banks. One woman's initiative motivates others to break free from societal confines for worthy causes."

As CASA concluded its project, it empowered CBOs and GVKP to independently address village concerns and sustain progress. They were assured of ongoing guidance and support from CASA. CASA continues to track their advancement, aiming to foster specific livelihood improvements for sustained betterment.



A VILLAGE LEADER'S ACCOUNT OF CASA'S GRASSROOT IMPACT

In 1995, while playing marbles under a tree, Mansinghbhai Banwadiabhai encountered Ramakanth who arrived on behalf of CASA. Ramakanth inquired about whom to meet for discussing the purpose of CASA, to which villagers guided him to Mansinghbhai.

Conversations ensued, and Ramakanth unveiled CASA's plan to aid the region. Mansinghbhai, armed with support from village leaders, collaborated with CASA, taking the first strides in forming Village Development Associations (VDA), Mahila Mandal (MM), and Yuva Group (YG).

As 1995 unfurled, CASA's endeavors spread across 72 villages. The potential of these three associations was illuminated, culminating in their unification as the unregistered GVKP (Gram Vikas Karyakarta Parishad). CASA's training spanned government schemes, welfare programs, gender equity, and more. Eventually, Mansinghbhai assumed the presidency of GVKP.

A testament to community-driven progress, GVKP emerged from its inception in economically challenged areas, evolving into a well-structured network that encompassed local, taluka, and state levels. Through 144 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) members, representing 72

villages, GVKP orchestrated quarterly meetings to tackle concerns. Guided by a 21-member apex body, solutions were meticulously designed, fostering unity and lasting development. GVKP's accomplishments extend to empowering vulnerable communities, championing gender equity, intervening in domestic violence cases, and nurturing self-reliance. Collaborating with CASA, GVKP has emerged as a beacon of grassroots development, showcasing the potential of localized initiatives.

Mansinghbhai recalls the time when a devastating disease struck the area, claiming 389 animal lives. "The absence of cattle jeopardized agriculture during the rainy season, essential for plowing. GVKP orchestrated a massive protest in front of the government, demanding cattle. Supported by CASA, villagers staged a hunger strike until their demands were met. Government representatives eventually arrived, pacified the protestors, and promptly allocated 4,20,000 worth of animals. This bolstered the villagers' confidence in CASA's guidance. CASA assisted in drafting applications, including a letter to the Minister of Animal Husbandry who was then present in Gujarat. CASA has been founding force behind GVKP which has provided assistance & dignity of life to a large number of villagers"

GVKP's strategy is to thoughtfully address village issues and pursue appropriate actions through relevant channels. Mansinghbhai attests, "In the past, villagers, especially women, hesitated to voice their concerns or interact with authorities. I too was hesitant. But CASA's training changed that. The training programs by MM empowered women, making them aware of their rights and emboldening them to communicate concerns to authorities." An exemplar of this newfound confidence occurred in 2005 when, bolstered by CASA and other Civil Society Organizations, GVKP members championed a fight for land rights.

Around 13,600 individuals from various villages, including 2013 from Dediapada, secured agricultural land despite numerous obstacles. This land, reserved solely for farming, ensures sustenance and dignity.

GVKP secures government work through MGNREGA, engaging in tasks like farm leveling and cultivating crops. CASA's guidance enriches GVKP with essential research and community-building efforts. Mansinghbhai's closing words encapsulate CASA's impact: "CASA has infused life and dignity into individuals, fostering empowerment and an improved quality of life."



FROM FOREST TO FIELDS: A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE AND TRANSFORMATION

In the serene village of Dabka, amidst the dense forests, resides a beacon of resilience and determination - Dileep Bhai Vasava, age 46 from Dabka village, Gujarat, is a dedicated member of the Gramin Vikas Karyakartha Parishad (GVKP). Dileep Bhai's story is a testament to unwavering commitment and the transformative power of community collaboration.

Life in the forested land isn't just picturesque. The lush landscape that surrounded every household in Dabka village is undoubtedly a blessing, however, through these blessings, there are challenges to be met. Dileep Bhai and the fellow villagers face a lot of hurdles as the forest rights Officials maintained strict control over the land, disallowing any agricultural activities.

Undeterred by the hurdles, Dileep Bhai and few members of the village embarked on a relentless journey to secure their community's right to farm. Government offices became familiar grounds for them as they persisted in seeking permission to cultivate crops in the land they called home. Their determination, fuelled by the desire for better lives, became the driving force for change.

Dileep Bhai's determination came

to the forefront after his relentless efforts and found support from GVKP and CASA officials. Dileep Bhai with the support of CASA managed to appeal to the government for land farming rights. His efforts bore fruit as the government granted 214 villagers farming rights in forest lands, allowing cultivation and sustainable livelihoods. The government issued a "Sanad," permitting the utilization of assigned forest land for cultivation, with both spouses in a family sharing responsibility. He shared, "CASA and GVKP's help in directing me and other villagers to appeal to the government for land rights has incredibly been a success as we are granted the land rights to cultivate crops in this region for our livelihood."

Although the land is allotted to each family in Dabka village, since it is a forested land, there is another hurdle that prevents the people from reaching their goal of producing their own crops. The land was uneven which needs levelling. He said, "CASA stepped in when we were in need. They have helped us level the land, bind its edges with stones to prevent erosion and soil loss." The difficulty did not end there, they faced the challenge of securing water supply. The village members again approached the government

with their requirements. This time they had come for the permission to get power supply to the village for setting up water pumps. "We approached the Gujarat Electricity Board (GEB) to acquire a three-phase power line for the land and homes, along with the water supply requirement, so that underground water pumps can be installed in each home." Shared Dileep.

However, given the area is in a remote location, the GEB opted to provide solar-powered motor pumps to these farmers, a total of 207 solar motor pumps were approved to the villagers, the remaining 7 are under pipeline. The solar-powered pumps facilitated year-round cultivation, allowing for three crop cycles annually and ensuring sustained earnings. Dileep Bhai shared, "Throughout the year, we cultivate paddy, Toor Dal, and corn, which sustains us and the produce is also sold in the market."

After successfully being able to transform lives and livelihoods in the most challenging rural environments, Dileep Bhai conveyed that he and other villagers are grateful for CASA's help and support throughout this journey to overcome the challenges in the forested area for agriculture to make a livelihood.



DEDICATION TO COMMUNITY IS A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

"CASA has been our savior, our guide, and our hope. You have shown us the path to a better life", shares Ravidasbhai, a fifty years old farmer and a CASA volunteer. His jovial disposition is etched with the lines of a life that had seen both joy and sorrow.

Ravidasbhai used to lead his life in humble corner of the undulating terrains in Gujarat, with his wife and four children. Amidst the course of this journey, an unanticipated shock made his life quiver. His wife suddenly stepped away from the house, leaving behind a shroud of mystery and remarried soon after. Ravidasbhai did not marry again; he had chosen to shoulder the responsibility of his four children.

The weight of raising four children was a considerable one. Ravidasbhai mostly met expenses through farming. He and his two brothers jointly owned a sprawling fifteen-acre piece of land to raise crops for livelihood. However, during the construction of the Tapi dam, a significant portion of the land was overtaken by the government at a nominal compensation, leaving them with just three acres. Farming alone failed to sustain their livelihood. During the off-season, they resort to day labor,

which provide inconsistent work and even more inconsistent income.

The village is an abode to cultural and resource diversity, with people from different religions and communities living together. However, life in the village was marked by scarcity. The nearest school and hospital are far away, and even when there was a medical center, doctors were a rare sight. In Dogripada, the nearby arogya center, people stood in long lines, hoping for a glimpse of a doctor. When Ravidasbhai's daughter-in-law was in labor, they had to travel to Umarpada, because in Dogripada the medical center lacked doctors.

It was amidst the challenging COVID-19 that CASA provided much-needed medical equipment, oxygen cylinders, masks, and sanitizers greatly alleviating the village's suffering. The villagers, including Ravidasbhai, were immensely grateful for this support. CASA, supported the formation of a Community Based Organization, of which Ravidasbhai being a part, work towards empowering the villagers. From the villages that they served, there are 25-30 members, spanning different religions and communities.

CASA showed them the way to tackle the issues plaguing their village and provided intellectual support that was invaluable.

In his interaction with CASA, Ravidasbhai highlighted that the economic support and livelihood assistance available in the village continue to be insufficient. Widows, old-age individuals, and the vulnerable segments struggle due to their lack of awareness about government schemes and the correct channels to approach for solutions. CASA is working as the guiding light, inspiring volunteers like Ravidasbhai to work diligently for the development of their village.





EMPOWERING WOMEN IN RURAL GUJARAT- ARUNABEN'S INSPIRING JOURNEY

In the heart of Surat, Gujarat, lies the quaint village of Mandlikua. It is a place where age-old norms dictated that women should not actively participate in various aspects of life or assume any leadership role. However, amidst this backdrop of tradition and convention, a remarkable transformation has been taking place, and at the center of it all is Aruna Ben Surendrabhai Vasava, a 35-year-old resident of Mandlikua.

Mandlikua is nestled deep within the interiors of Surat, a region where change often takes its time to manifest. In these remote parts of Gujarat, CASA, has been diligently working to break down barriers and raise awareness about opportunities and rights, especially for women.

It was during one of CASA's awareness and training sessions that Aruna Ben first found her inspiration. She conveyed, "It was during the training sessions provided by CASA, I realized that there were opportunities for women waiting to be seized and that each woman possessed the resilience needed to be empowered. So the



knowledge that I learned from CASA I decided to share the same with other women in my village to help them improve their livelihood." Aruna not only embraced these lessons but also became a beacon of hope for others by sharing her newfound knowledge and inviting fellow villagers to attend CASA's training programs.

Aruna's determination for a better livelihood led her to establish a Mahila Mandal, a women's group, in her village. Within this platform, women gather to discuss the challenges they face and collaboratively devise strategies to address them. She, along with ten other women chosen from the village, became the representatives of the Mandlikua Mahila Mandal.

Before her involvement with CASA, Aruna Ben was a dedicated homemaker, tending to the family's farmland and household chores. However, exposure to CASA's field staff and the organization's village-level training programs ignited a new passion within her – a desire to contribute more significantly to her family's financial well-being. "Prior to my introduction to CASA and its work, I was a dedicated homemaker. However, CASA's village-level training program transformed my life from a homemaker to a leader among the women of the Mahila Mandal Group. This transition not only enabled me to meet my family's financial needs but also substantially improved our financial stability."

Recognizing the potential for change, CASA decided to assist the women of Mandlikua by introducing them to goat rearing and livestock management. CASA provided them with five goats, which would be bred together, and the offspring would then be distributed to other women in

the village. This ingenious approach ensured that each household in Mandlikua would have access to goats rearing in the future, serving as a sustainable source of livelihood.

Aruna excitedly shared, "We started with 5 goats, and now we have 9. The younger goats will be given to other Mahila Mandal members, and this cycle will continue. Thanks to the goat-rearing training from CASA, we can efficiently care for them, and every six months, they reproduce offspring. According to our Mahila Mandal's agreement, each woman will receive a goat for her livestock. This has enabled us to allocate our funds to our children's education and other essential needs, or we can sell a goat in times of financial hardship."

Aruna's journey epitomizes the transformation occurring in Mandlikua. She believes that CASA has given the women in her village a sense of purpose, dignity, and self-respect. The knowledge and skills acquired through training have significantly improved their lives, not only empowering them but also garnering respect within their families and the larger community.

Aruna Ben Surendrabhai Vasava's story is a testament to the power of knowledge, empowerment, and community cooperation. It's a story of hope, resilience, and transformation that inspires not only the women of Mandlikua but all of us to break free from traditional constraints and embrace opportunities for a brighter future. CASA continues to make a meaningful impact on lives across the region, one village at a time, guided by individuals like Aruna who prove that change is possible when empowered individuals come together with a shared purpose.

JAYATABEN'S INSPIRING JOURNEY IN THE PURSUIT OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS



The fight for women's rights demands a continuous dedication of individuals who are determined to bring meaningful change in their lives. It is a long-lasting journey and struggle for every woman longing for their rights. Jayataben Baniya Vasava, a 36-year-old member of the GVKP in her village- Piplod Ta, Dediapada, Narmada District, Gujarat; embodies the spirit of this struggle. Her story is a testimony to the world, proving the transformative impact that education, advocacy, and community involvement can have a positive transformation on women's rights. Her story is not just one of personal empowerment but a driving source for women's empowerment in the community.

Jayataben is one among the educated women in her village. She had completed her schooling and attained a bachelor's degree as well. However, as her father was the only breadwinner in her family she decided to work with him in order to help her family economically. She shared, "I decided to work with the forest department, during which our village's panchayat leader, Manshingh Bhai, nominated me for attending some training from CASA organization."

Jayataben's journey toward women's empowerment began when she attended CASA's training sessions. Her thirst for knowledge and empowerment was evident from the very first training, and she soon

became a regular participant in CASA's workshops. Her enthusiasm for her personal transformation and willingness to embrace the change in her life make her more curious about CASA's training and its awareness programs. She further conveyed, "I felt the transformative impact in me, and the confidence it gave me from the very first training. Since then, I have been constantly attending every CASA workshop."

Armed with the knowledge she gained from CASA's training, Jayataben initiated a Mahila Sanghatan in her village. Comprising 13 women from each household in her village, this group has become a platform for women to come together, discuss issues, and advocate for their rights. "It helps all the women in the village to unite and discuss regarding any issue or requirements," shared Jayataben. Her commitment to women's empowerment is not only limited to her village but extends far beyond. When CASA organized workshops in Dediapada, she played a pivotal role in encouraging and accompanying women from her village. The main focus of this workshop is on gender equality, acknowledging the importance of women's rights and responsibilities in every community across the nation.

"Both genders were treated equally, and training helped all the women to feel acknowledged and encouraged," shared Jayataben. Today, the transformation in how women in the region perceive themselves is one of the outcomes CASA's training has bestowed upon each woman in the society. Through the trainings they get the chance to learn about their rights and gain the confidence to speak in public areas, challenging traditional norms that once held them back.

CASA's training also focused on communication etiquette. Previously, women would shy away from interactions with men, but post-training, they experienced a newfound confidence and fearlessness. She also expressed, "Women have the right to speak in public areas, which earlier women in the region avoided due to inferior feelings. CASA's training helped break the ice that used to make the ladies feel inferior, by not speaking out in places they are supposed to."

Jayataben's journey is an example to other women of what the transformative power of knowledge and empowerment can achieve, crossing all barriers, embracing every change throughout their transformative journey and becoming champions of their own rights. She has raised awareness about women's rights and has also taken a stand against domestic violence within her community, which was an unspoken ordeal. Her efforts in fighting for women's rights have led to a more informed approach to women's healthcare during pregnancy, dispelling misconceptions and fears that once hindered women from seeking essential medical attention amidst their pregnancy.

Jayataben's story underscores the profound influence that a single woman can wield within a community, fortified by knowledge, empowerment, and an unwavering dedication to fostering transformation. Through her efforts, gender equality and women's rights are steadily progressing, illuminating a path towards a brighter and more equitable future for all the women in her community.





▼ The vanished home of Mohar Singh, swallowed by the relentless force of Manali's flash floods.



◀ Devastating aftermath: A hillside crumbles beneath a vanished village, swept away by the flash floods in Manali.

In the heart of the picturesque village of Mahili in Manali, a harrowing tale unfolded during the relentless rains that struck from July 8th to July 10th, 2023. Mohar Singh, a 42-year-old laborer, found himself caught in the merciless grip of the 2023 Manali floods, a catastrophe that would reshape the lives of the entire community.

Mohar Singh's recollections paint a vivid picture of the tragedy: "From everywhere, water came. All the villagers started rushing, and they didn't take anything, not even important documents." The rain, initially a gentle cascade, transformed into a force of destruction that spared little in its wake.

"During the 1995 flood, we lost our agricultural land, and this time we lost our home. We grieved," Mohar Singh reflects, his eyes revealing the weight of two decades of tragedy etched onto his soul.

As the government and non-profit agencies responded swiftly, organizations like CASA emerged as beacons of hope, providing immediate relief to the



distressed villagers. Dry Ration, lamps, utensils, and blankets were distributed, offering a lifeline to those grappling with the aftermath.

In the midst of the chaos, tales of bravery emerged. "That night, the youth of the village bravely started evacuating. Landslides in the front, water in the back – chaos surrounded us. Other villagers opened their doors, providing shelter and food. They helped us a lot," Mohar Singh recounts, emphasizing the resilient spirit of a community facing adversity.

Now, Mahili Village stands as a testament to the fragility of life. With mountains at their back and rivers in front, the villagers are living on the edge – a precarious existence on unstable land. "Almost everyone lost their homes. Only two or three homes remain, but they too are on the verge of collapse. Winter is approaching, making survival even more challenging," Mohar Singh shares, casting a somber gaze towards an uncertain future.

As a daily wage laborer, Mohar Singh's story takes a poignant turn. His voice trembles with emotion as he speaks about the daily struggle to feed his family. "I earn daily, and whatever I earn, I use to feed my family. After years of saving, I built my home. After the floods, whatever the government and organizations like CASA gave us, we ate. Now, that ration is coming to an end." His children have stopped going to college, and dreams for a brighter future are dimming.

Yet, amidst the despair, Mohar Singh clings to hope. Hope that the government will step in and help them rebuild. "I started building my home in 2014, and this year, in front of my eyes, I lost it. Now, we just hope that the government will help us," he says, expressing gratitude for the instant help provided by organizations like CASA.

The story of Mohar Singh and Mahili Village is not just a tale of tragedy; it is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. As the villagers face the harsh realities of winter, the hope for a better tomorrow remains alive – a hope that, with support, Mahili Village will rise from the ruins and rebuild, stronger than before.

REBUILDING LIVES:

MOHAR SINGH'S ODYSSEY IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2023 MANALI FLOODS



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