

NEWSLETTER 43

2nd semester 2021

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www.adivasis.org



Sustainability and its real protagonists

Over the last few months, the COVID but also climate change have both played the main role in the news bulletins: the increase in the frequency, length and intensity of heat waves in our environment; the floods in Germany; the lockdown in New Delhi in November last due to the high concentration of toxic particles in the air, etc.

During the Glasgow COP26, the paradox was obvious: more than 400 private jets to find out solutions.

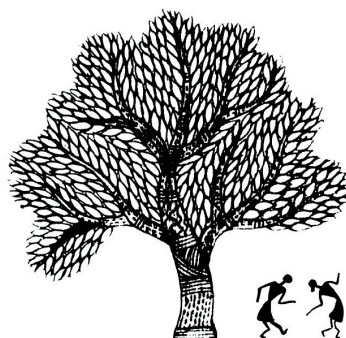
We ask ourselves whether we should change our approach and look for solutions in the communities that apply sustainable actions in their everyday life and leave behind a very small ecological footprint: the communities most affected by climate change. Why native communities such as the Adivasis are not actively taking part in the debate and decision-making process regarding those subjects that have a direct impact on their means of subsistence?

Intensive agriculture represents almost 25% of CO2 emissions; in particular, monocultures and the intensive use of pesticides provoke a loss in biodiversity. On the contrary, native communities teach us that another way of approaching agriculture is possible. They diversify the harvests, both as regards their location, crops and income, and use a clever way of collecting water.

The increasing role played by women in the agriculture that is being produced in India, as well as in many other countries, may allow us to understand the gender dimension of climate change, which affects differently men and women. Studies such as the one carried out by UNIFEM (*United Nations Development Fund for Women*), among others, base it on a greater dependence on the natural environment, less land rights, a limited access to arable land and reduced purchasing power to adjust to the new needs.

Based on this approach, in this bulletin we will discover the MPSM project on women and sustainability. We will also explain (and thank) the donation from the Vila Llorens' family and the exhibition displayed in Utopia 126 with the works by Carme Llorens and Jordi Vila. We would like to give them all our best appreciation.

To conclude, we wish you a healthy New Year to share, learn and love.



*Merry Christmas and
happy New Year!*

Nashik women through

the eyes of MPSM

-Fr. Joel Noronhas-

Father Joel Noronhas is the Director of the Maharashtra Prabodhan Seva Mandal (*MPSM) in Nashik. From May last and over the next three years, ADA-Mon Adivasi has been collaborating in the project "Sustainable life for the Adivasi women". There are approximately 200 women organised in self-help groups (SHG). We have spoken on-line with him to get a closer look at this project.

Why did you decide to focus on women?

Throughout the years and thanks to our experience, we realised that women are at the centre of the family, the community and the society. Women hold up and intertwine all the elements of life, because men migrate according to the seasons looking for work.

It is the woman who takes care of the children, the land and the herd when the man is away. Women are the real agents of change. This is why, if they are educated and trained, everything else falls into place. In addition, we have realised that they have a vast entrepreneurial spirit, they face adversity with courage and have the ability to adapt and incorporate sustainable practices into their daily lives. This is why they are the ones who watch over the family and the environment.

What is the profile of women in the projects?

Generally speaking, their academic knowledge is poor, some are illiterate, but some are not; very few have completed their graduation or equivalent studies. It is a good mix.

Younger women usually have higher levels of education, but no job opportunities. And this is one of the main reasons for this project: to foster the generation of their own income in their rural environment, so that they can



support their families with small businesses. None of the women speak English fluently, and in fact very few of them understand it.

In our educational programmes we try to improve their knowledge. On the other hand, they have a very good command of their mother tongue and occasionally also of Marathi (especially those who have made academic studies). More than 7,500 women are involved in the livelihood project and the education project.

Any examples of leadership among Adivasi women?

In the communities where we work, some of the teachers or trainers in the Resource Centre have been elected *Gram Sarpanchs* (person in charge of

local government, equivalent to mayor). And some women members of the *Panchayat* (local government) have become opinion leaders. Women are continuously showing that change is possible. And this has a multiplier effect.

Recently, in one of our programmes on forest and vegetable nutrient recovery, many of the young women participants said that they did not want to be like their mothers and mothers-in-law: they reject patriarchal traditions and want to stand up for their rights.

What changes have you noticed since MPSM has been working in Nashik?

Women have been incorporated in government administrations

(*anganwadi sevikas* - primary school teachers -, *Arogya sevikas* - health workers -, etc.). More and more women are becoming a mainstay in local politics. All the workers in the Community Resource Centres are women, all the teachers in the community education programmes are women, and the person in charge of the dairy is also a woman. They are creating a change that did not exist in previous generations, even though tribal communities are already quite egalitarian. But we still have a long way to go.

How is the role of women in the community changing?

When we hold meetings in villages to mobilise the population, we address women as well as men. And then we explain to them why women are key. Also, for example, when we organise school meetings with parents, we emphasise the role of women. Men are more and more receptive to change. In fact, in the everyday life of the villages, women are the decision-makers and men cooperate. I think that transformation is led by women with the cooperation of men.

How does your microcredit programme work?

Micro- and nano-credits are an excellent way to help women start small businesses. It is also a way to circulate money in the local economy, which in turn will contribute to development. Most of them are unable to progress because of the lack of money in their hands. That is why we, at MPSM, provide them with this money, which enables them to start small businesses: grocery

stores, restaurants, tailors, dairies, etc.

Microcredits can also be made between individuals. For humble projects, these can be between 2,000 rupees (23.8 €) and 15,000 rupees (179 €), while for agricultural infrastructure the figure can be as high as one lakh rupees (1,192 €). Businesses that have started up have seen a 15-20% growth in income. Women often buy poultry and goats for their meat and then sell it. But from time to time they also buy cows or buffaloes to sell their milk to dairy cooperatives (some of them also led by Adivasi women).

What are NTFPs and why are they so important?

NTFPs are Non-Timber Forest Products, which are also called minor forest products. In the old days, forests were the mainstay of tribal life from a nutritional, medicinal, agricultural and economic (food, fodder, fuel, etc.) point of view. There were many trees whose by-products provided a regular source of seasonal income. Today, many of these tree species are extinct as a result of deforestation. This has created an imbalance in the local ecosystems, which in turn has triggered an even greater imbalance in the indigenous economy. Without tree species, seasonal income has disappeared. The forests are threatened. This is why with our "NTPF" project we want to restore the biodiversity of these local ecosystems and support the Adivasis in the development of their communities and their economy.

Final thoughts to share?

At MPSM we are of the opinion that changes in societies depend on actions that are egalitarian and humanitarian. And we do this strategically through our different projects.

Right now, we want to focus on young, single women with higher education, but without a livelihood, so that they can be the generators of their own income. However, we still have a lot to explore.

The Aadhaar system.....

Aadhaar is a 12-digit personal identification number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). The Aadhaar card serves as proof of identity and address wherever you go in India.

It requires demographic and biometric information (fingerprint of all 10 fingers, 2 iris scans and a facial photograph). When biometric informations cannot be completed it is called biometric exceptions. This is the case for example for children under 5 years of age (only their facial photograph is recorded, and the rest of the parameters correspond to those of their parents), people who suffer from a digital amputation, or people who have a damaged iris or finger.

In fact, all users of the Aadhaar system are obliged to update their biometric data on a regular basis as it changes over the course of an individual's lifetime. The Aadhaar system is also linked to the user's fiscal data.

It is important to underline that Aadhaar is not a citizenship document and, according to the Supreme Court of India, persons in an illegal status cannot apply for it.

The introduction of the Aadhaar system started in 2009 with the aim of creating a centralised system to improve administrative efficiency, reduce

corruption and promote access to state programmes and social benefits, replacing birth certificates and ration cards. According to the Modi government, "the Aadhaar system is the path to development and poverty eradication". The UIDAI's annual reports state that 92% of the Indian



population is already registered. Therefore, to date, it is the largest and most sophisticated people identification database in the world.

Its massive and exponential use has made opening a bank account or buying a mobile phone almost impossible without your Aadhaar number. Multiple public protests put pressure on the Supreme Court, whose verdict in 2018 was that private companies could not require their customers to have an Aadhaar ID. However, living in India without Aadhaar is an arduous task.

Since its implementation, it has been widely criticised because in its actual application it hinders

and even prevents access to social benefits (widows' pensions, orphans' pensions, etc.) for people from lower castes, who paradoxically are the ones who need them the most. Cases have been reported on many occasions of pregnant women who, because they did not have their Aadhaar, gave birth in the cul-de-sac closest to the hospital; or of Adivasis and Dalits who, despite having their ration cards, were not distributed grain because they did not have their Aadhaar either.

Although its use is theoretically voluntary, it is strictly necessary in order to benefit from government subsidies and for tax purposes.

Problems with the use of the Aadhaar system are frequent, multiple, recurrent and, all too often, very difficult and time-consuming to solve. These problems arise already in the process of obtaining the Aadhaar, or during the authentication of the user with her biometric data; for example, when users are unable to go to the registration offices due to illness or immobility, or when the birth certificate is not available, or when the Aadhaar card is lost and a duplicate cannot be made, etc. Months of procedures during which the individual cannot receive any of the social benefits!

...a piece of cake?



Cases of authentication errors are more frequent among the elderly and the people who register under biometric exclusion criteria. These are often the result of non-recognition of the fingerprint as a result of its "transformation" through manual work. Theoretically, a one-time password can be

provided in these cases, but these are also difficult to obtain.

Another concern of the Aadhaar system are issues regarding individual privacy and citizen control. There have been reports of leaks of user data information to private third-party companies; UIDAI representatives deny this, stating that the "Aadhaar system is a secure and impenetrable system". However, historical cases of massive leaks of information (supposedly confidential) question it.

Furthermore, IT experts point out that once digital identification systems are hacked and the user's identity has been

breached, it is almost impossible to repair.

The Aadhaar system is therefore a system with benefits, but with alarming shortcomings and raises larger ethical questions. Moreover, its implementation to date has accentuated social differences.

Aadhaar in hindi means foundation

Aadhaar and the Kathkaris = Vaishali Patil=

As you know, the Kathkaris are part of the PVTG (Particular Vulnerable Tribe Group of India); their livelihood often depends on working on small farms, seasonal work or other paid activities such as making rope or soup.

Food insecurity is rampant among PVTG families. School attendance is very low and many of these families turn to the village Anganwadi (a government-run Resource Centre, which provides basic health activities for the youngest children, as well as pre-school activities and food distribution).

Public infrastructure in Kathkari villages is scarce and often in poor condition. For these reasons, many PVTG families

depend on social assistance for their survival, as well as on social security pensions and food rations distributed by the PDS (public distribution system).

Since the introduction of the Aadhaar system, the Kathkaris have stopped receiving many welfare benefits for various reasons such as non-possession of the Aadhaar card or defective or damaged cards.

Obtaining *Matrutv Labh Yojana* (MLY) - maternity allowance - is also difficult as tribal women often keep the father's name on the Aadhaar card, but in order to get MLY the surname has to be that of the husband. So, they have to change the name on the card: a time-consuming process.

Three years ago in Pen, Raigad, we organised a conference on health rights and the health benefits people could apply for. It was then that we became aware that many Kathkari women could not profit from any of these benefits. Another not uncommon problem is when their grain allowance is cancelled because their fingerprint (thumb print) does not match with their Aadhaar card as a result of manual labour.

Vaishali Patil is an activist and associate director of the NGO Ankur Trust. Ankur trust is a non-governmental, non-political and secular organisation started in 1993 in Raigad District.

DIWALI



For us, Diwali is a celebration of light and happiness.

Our family gathers to celebrate, exchange gifts and eat the typical sweets of this festival. Laddu, made from roasted chickpea flour, is our favourite, bringing happiness to all faces. The beautiful lights, coloured lanterns and firecrackers make this festival a magical celebration.

Diwali brightens up our lives, takes away sadness, worries and frustration from the minds. We should all enjoy Diwali every day.

Ana and Mayra Dhairyawan, 9 years old

EXPOSICIO



On Friday 19 November, we inaugurated the Pinacoteca Solidària (Solidarity Art Gallery) (with the legacy of works by Carme Llorens and Jordi Vila, donated by their children. The exhibition was held at Utopia 126, an unbeatable venue lent by Quique Camin, a regular collaborator of the Foundation since its very beginning.

Ramon Garriga, president of the ADA-Món Adivasi Foundation, as well as representatives of Sonrisas de Bombay and the Vicente Ferrer Foundation made brief speeches. Finally, the children of the artists spoke about their parents and their commitment to solidarity. Over two days, friends and relatives were able to visit the exhibition.

We would like to thank all those who made it possible! We would also like to underline that the exhibition was a very warm welcome, both for the works on display and for the premises in which they were exhibited. We remind you that the Pinacoteca is still open on our website!

And finally, a good piece of advice: don't miss the opportunity to give solidary art as a gift in the coming Christmas holidays!

Mint or coriander chutney recipe, by Reyes Rigo

This is also a recipe from my friend Geeta.

Ingredients: 1 bunch mint, spearmint or coriander (whichever you prefer); - 3 tablespoons grated coconut; - 1 garlic clove; - 1 cm fresh ginger, peeled and chopped; - ½ green chilli (small thin ones), chopped and seeded; - ¼ teaspoon cumin seeds; - ½ teaspoon salt; - 2 tablespoons lime or lemon juice - 3 tablespoons water or a little more, if necessary.

Mix with a blender until creamy. If too dry, add a little more water. Serve in a bowl with warm onion fritters. **Enjoy!**



A universal Indian writer

=Reyes Rigo i Lila Tomas=



Arundhati Roy, writer, actress and activist, was particularly involved in anti-nuclear and anti-globalisation work, and a critical voice against the current far-right government.

Arundhati is best known for her first novel *The God of Small*

Things (1997), which was awarded the Booker Prize.

She has written essays and a long list of articles reporting various issues, such as the construction of a dam in the Narmada River Valley, which is an environmental disaster and a social catastrophe affecting more than half a million Adivasis. Public support for this cause cost him a sedition charge, a fine and a day's imprisonment.

The Ministry of Supreme Happiness (2017) is his second novel. The first half of the novel is narrated through the eyes of Anjum, a transgender woman and former sex worker. She shows the inequalities, the violence and the abuse to which they are subject. The other half portrays different characters involved in Kashmir's struggle for independence. Arundhati illustrates the many ways in which different groups of the Indian population have felt let down and oppressed by their leaders after the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. The Indian Army receives most of the criticism for unfettered corruption and unwarranted violence against the citizens of occupied Kashmir.

In *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (2003), she invites us to actively intervene in a world that is too often dominated by passivity and despair.

Arundhati is a universal writer; through her novels we both get to know the world of India and to see the reality of the lives of so many women around the world.

We would like to recommend her novels, as well as her books where she analyses the reality of capitalism, this profoundly unjust system that condemns people to poverty, marginalisation and misery.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The annual accounts for the 2020-2021 period have been obtained from the Foundation's accounting records.

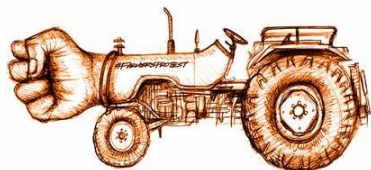
1. INCOME	
1. Periodicals.....	40.630,50euros
2. Activities.....	4365.84
3. Public subsidies.....	0
2. EXPENDITURE	
Grants awarded.....	27,8000,00euros
- Vasai Project	-10.800,00
- Vedrunes.....	-8.800,00
- P. Karazgaon.....	-8.200,00
Other operating expenses.....	-4.383,91
- Bank comissions.....	-1960.71
- Publicity, advertising.....	-617.99
- Other expenses (office material, lottery, etc.).....	-1805,21 euros
Total any 2020-2021.....	12.812,43euros

The positive result of this year allows us to compensate the negative result of the previous year (15,767.93).

As you know, we have a collaborator in India, Clarence J Robert, who supervises the projects on a quarterly basis. Clarence's expenses are included in the project expenses, as his supervision enables us to keep the projects running and the link with ADA-Món Adivasi.

The bank charges are fees charged to us for making transfers, which we have been unable to reduce, despite having explained to the bank the charitable nature of the Association.

PAST



Since November last, **protests and encampments of farmers and Indians** have been repeated in Delhi. Peasants from Punjab and Haryana have been the protagonists of these demonstrations. Although agriculture accounts for only 15% of the GDP, 1.3 billion people depend on it in their daily lives. Finally, on November 20, Modi agreed to withdraw the three most controversial laws that opened up the farm to industry and private companies, but farmers in Delhi are still resisting until they see the promise written on paper!

FUTURE

If you haven't yet visited the **Pinacoteca Solidària** (Solidarity Art Gallery) with the works by Carme Llorens and Jordi Vila, don't wait any longer! They are the perfect gift for Christmas celebrations and the Adivasis will thank you, too!

Do you already have a **Christmas lottery**, a lottery for *La Grossa*? Do you know that at least one out of your 5 euros contribution will go to the Adivasis!

Remember: contributions made before December 31st are tax deductible in the next income tax declaration. **Think of ADA!**



WOMEN'S DAY 8th OF MARCH

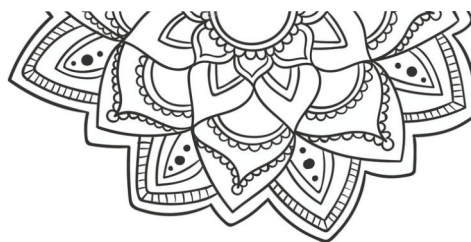
*they start the story of our lives
till we emerge more strong to be
in their nurturing we grow
and father our identity*

*through moments that are charged with love
and even those that seem so lost
they've kept with us to see us through
no matter what the moments cost*

*if we know God as One who stays
so close despite our wayward flood
we've known in their friendship's trust
we've known the mystery of God*

*and so on every Women's day
the cause is once again unfurled
they are our allies in the strife
to build a better human world*

Godfrey D' Lima SJ, 8th March 2013



Happy Christmas!!

Send the below form to Fundació ADA-Mon Adivasi . C/ Francisco Giner 42 àtic. 08012- Barcelona. Phone: 697 395 144.

ADA-Mon Adivasi Foundation is registered in "Entitats jurídiques de la GENCAT" (N.Registre 2248, NIF: G64281579)

Name: _____ **Surname:** _____ **Eircode:** _____
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Frequency: Monthly Trimester Annual Siingle donation
Import: _____

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L'ART GRÀFIC