



The year that was

The year began with the second wave of COVID which swept across India creating a fresh wave of panic, fear and loss . New lockdowns were imposed even as people were getting immunized and shortages of vaccines , oxygen cylinders , hospital beds and care givers was felt across the country . We worried about our friends from pastoralist , farming and , Adivasi communities , tucked away in remote villages with little access to formal health care . We reached out to these communities through our partner networks and to our friends in for support.

We were able to support 42 villages with sanitizers , masks , solar lamps , foldable black boards , mobile tablets so children could log on to online classes last year .

By October we thought things were getting back to normal . The rains had been good . People began venturing out. Schools were scheduled to reopen when a fresh disaster struck our shepherd friends . On 1st December 2021 it rained all day and all night . A chilling cold rain which struck down young lambs and sheep who were penned for the night in enclosures . Several shepherds faced enormous losses . Once again friends came to support us and the team and we were able to make a short film and share it with the animal husbandry department . Entitled “A shepherds request “ it highlights the problems faced by shepherds on migration and the kind of support they would like from the State .

In between these waves of disaster, we did have bright moments . Moments of joy , of laughter, of excitement and sharing .

5 women from amongst the partner network were selected for the women livestock owner awards .

We took part in seminars and conferences and papers were accepted for publication . When possible, we made field visits and met up with pastoralists and farmers . Young interns joined us and kept us busy and active .

The world seems more challenging than ever before as a war in distant Europe affects economies globally but in our homes and villages and within our office, we have grown to appreciate our friends , family , networks and support systems more than even before .

Our Projects and Programmes

Bringing Visibility and Recognition to Women Livestock Farmers and Pastoralists & Their Knowledge.

This project began in September 2020

The main objectives of the project are to :

- *Increase research and scholarship on women livestock farmers especially women from migratory pastoralist families ,*
- *Document their knowledge , and give it value and recognition*
- *Create platforms for sharing this knowledge*

Ashwini Labde was selected as our first fellow under our fellowship programme . Ashwini belongs to the Dhangar community and brought immense value to the research and studies Together with Krittika Suratkal and Sangeeta Khapre they documented women’s knowledge in livestock care especially the care of pack horses, poultry , the processing of dung .

Awards for women livestock owners

Women’s work often goes unnoticed and undervalued and this holds true for the livestock sector too. In an effort to bring visibility to women’s knowledge and recognise their contribution to livestock care and livestock farming, Anthra has instituted awards called “Women in Livestock Care “. These annual awards are to be given to women from marginalised groups who rear animals to ensure that women get accounted for and their knowledge and contribution is acknowledged and shared . This initiative is part of the project "Bringing Visibility and Recognition to Women Livestock Farmers and Pastoralists & Their Knowledge."

Livestock care is more than mere mechanical tasks of cleaning , feeding and watering . Traditional livestock rearing societies often consider their animals as family members and are desolate when they lose an animals or are required to spend some days away from their animals . Most women from traditional pastoral societies in India have not had the opportunity to receive a formal education but have learnt to care, tend and cater to their animals needs by observing their parents , grandparents and others around them. Love and compassion for other beings have been values which they have been brought up with . This knowledge is gradually being replaced by “modern” methods of care and industrial processes of livestock rearing as robots and machines replace humans. These awards have been instituted to recognise and celebrate some of these values of care and compassion .

Award selection process



Each year, five women will be selected to receive the award . Women who are eligible for the award have to be nominated by others in their community or by an NGO working closely with the community . A selection committee will review the nomination and make the selection .

2021 is the first year of the awards and the 5 winners are

Mrs. Ranjana Kargal

Ranjana belongs to the Hatkar Dhangar community and herds sheep with her family under migratory pastoral systems . She is from Narayangaon a village north of Pune in Maharashtra state of India . Ranjana is about 38 years and has never been to school . She has been nominated and selected for her knowledge and care in tending to her sheep especially lambs and her skill in making bags which are loaded on horses when they go on migration .

Ranjana is especially fond of caring for young animals and lavishes love and attention on them as a mother would on her children . She talks to them as she goes about her daily tasks. Having grown up with animals she is sensitive to their needs and is able to ensure that her animals are well cared for. Ranjana has also shown considerable foresight in ensuring her animals do not fall ill due to pesticide poisoning . The area she lives in is an area of intensive crop farming and fields are often sprayed with pesticides. Ranjana regularly checks if fields have been sprayed with pesticides prior to taking her sheep especially lambs to graze.

Ranjana's packed day includes , cooking , collecting water , cleaning , washing , tending to children and young animals . In the little free time she gets she manages to convert scraps of cloth into intricate patch work quilts and bags which are used by the family . The bags are also placed on top of pack horses and the families possessions are packed in these as they migrate from one place to another .

Ranjana's , foresight and abilities in tending to her stock made her an extremely suitable candidate for the award/

Mrs. Sou Tai Diwakar Dankarwar

Mrs. Sou Tai Diwakar Dankarwar belongs to the Kurmar community. Sou Tai also tends to sheep as her family traditionally herds sheep under nomadic migratory conditions in eastern Maharashtra .

Sou tai , understands that new born lambs are delicate and need special care and attention . She takes care of these young ones by feeding and watering them carefully for a month or more after they are born . Sou tai is extremely knowledgeable about medicinal plants and has learnt this skill from her mother in law and her husband . There are no formal veterinary services near her area and she has to fall back on this knowledge when her animals fall sick . For her animals are family and she has been tending to them from the age of 5



^{*} antra

She has been migrating with the flock from a young age and is fearless even camping out in the forests and she is alone tending to a large flock when the others leave for other work . She protects her animals from predators like foxes and hyaenas by being watchful day and night. Sou tai's courage , strength and knowledge of livestock made her a ver suitable candidate for the award

Mrs. Shubhadra Yeole

Shubhadra Yeole is a Nanda Gaoli, a community of cattle herders who migrate short distances with their cattle . The Nanda gaoli community are proud of the cattle they rear and sell , milk , butter and ghee .

Shubhadra bai is responsible for the sick , pregnant , lactating cows who stay back home , while the men take the other animals out to graze. Shubhadra bai says she understands the language of animals and is able to communicate with them and identify the problem the animal is facing and it's condition by the sounds they make and the tone of their bellowing . She is especially good in caring for new born calves. Because of her efforts and the special care she takes of all the animals in their herd , they have a healthy and happy herd .

She credits her mother in law for training her well and teaching her various skills . Having grown up amongst animals and having spent all her life with them her animals are like family and she would hate to be separated from them . For her it's not just a livelihood but her love and affection for animals which makes her special and this is what made us select her for the award

Mrs. Poonam Jograna

Poonam Jograna is originally from Gujarat, and belongs to the Bharwad community who came to Maharashtra in search of fodder during the drought of 1972 . Poonam and her husband herd about 350 Gir cattle . Amongst the Bharwads, men generally take the cattle out for grazing while women deal with other tasks related to animal care such as cleaning cattle sheds , making dung cakes, gathering additional fodder and grass , milking animals and processing milk into different products including ghee. Women also tend to sick animals and offer first aid with medicines available at home .

Women also sew quilts by hand using special thread and quilting techniques. It's a collective activity where several women sit together and sew quilts for their households.

As they are a migratory community they do not have easy access to water , education for their children and health care . Poonam's husband Ramji has recently been active trying to ensure these facilities are made available for the community . He is busy setting up schools for children of the community with the support of different organisations. As Ramjis work takes him away from the hamlet for several days he is unable to spend time tending to his



stock . Rather than reduce the size of their herd , Poonam has taken over this extra responsibility and is dealing with it confidently .

Poonams quite strength and capabilities in handling the animals well and her other responsibilities led us to select her for receiving the award

Mrs. Laxmi Lakade

Laxmi Lakade is from the Dhangar community and belongs to village Wadhane e near Baramati. Her family for several years has been migrating east to Bopgav village near Saswad Pune. They own a small patch of land they farm and it is usually Rattan Lakde who attends to this patch of land . When her husband is busy taking care of the crops , Laxmi single handedly takes care of the flock and her children. Her days are busy beginning with animal care like milking ewe , feeding the lambs , attending to sick one . Next she attends to cooking, fetching water, collecting firewood, . Through the day she is watchful about not letting the lambs stray into fields under crops , ensuring young lambs are taken care of. She also tends to the horses and feeds the dogs and chicken who travel with them . When she has some moments to spare she sews special bags which are placed on top of their horses and are used for carrying their belongings .

Laxmi is the person who takes care of the horses and her knowledge on horse care , made us select her for the award .

The award ceremony was held in Pune in March . The women travelled to Pune with their families and were felicitated. They were each given a sari, a solar lamp and a mobile tablet. The women spoke about their work and their lives and shared their experiences. Ms. Medha Kale (PARI) and Dr. Gayatri Rajurkar Auti (Livestock Development Officer)were guests of honour and also spoke about the need for initiatives like this where women's work was truly recognised and valued .

One Health Project

“India Zoo Risk+: Using One Health approaches to understand and co-develop interventions for zoonotic diseases affecting forest communities in India”

Anthra is partnering with UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, ATREE, VGKK (Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra) in this project on one health . This project responds to the global health system challenge of **the high and evolving burden of zoonotic diseases** in tropical forests linked to complex socio-political, ecological and environmental change drivers. Through strong engagement with affected forest communities including pastoralists , cross-sectoral policy makers and practitioners, and novel interdisciplinary methods.

The project seeks to

- *understand complex and interacting impacts of biological and socio-economic drivers (forest degradation, land tenure, human mobility and policy, power dynamics and knowledge sharing, belief systems and seasonal ecology) on health outcomes and spread of zoonotic diseases*
- *co-develop improved interventions, health system coverage and One Health capacity.*

The grant was awarded in 2020 but because of the pandemic it was decided to postpone activities especially field based activities by a year .The total duration of the project is 36 months

Anthra’s role in this interdisciplinary project is to document the perception of disease especially zoonotic diseases by pastoral communities of western Maharashtra . These include beliefs related to diseases and their origin, local nomenclature, symptoms , season of occurrence , climatic factors and their influence on spread of disease . Anthra will also document community knowledge related to vectors transmitting disease , association of disease with vegetation present , preventive methods including management practices like herding and grazing areas for livestock , time line of known instances of disease and treatments used to treat the disease.

The documentation is being done using participatory methods and it is expected the knowledge generated from this project will be used to inform policy as well as create educational material for the community by which they can prevent future outbreaks.

Radhika Kanade joined the team on the project and along with Sangeeta Khapre and Ashwini Labde located sites for project work and conducted several field visits to begin the documentation process .

The project is located in the districts of Sindhurg and Kolhapur in Western Maharashtra and will work with different communities of livestock owners including Gavli Dhangars and Dhangars.

Main Support : UKRI (UK research and Innovation)

Support to our Partner Network during COVID

Anthra's partners are a group of community based organisations working in different districts of Maharashtra . They include the Bamboo Resource Centre, Raigad District, Shoshit Mukti Abhiyan Sindhurg District, Janwadi Gram Vikas Pratishthan, Parbhani District, Dharamitra, Wardha and Amaravati Districts and CPC which is active in 5 districts of Vidarbha

They work with different Adivasi and Pastoral groups such as Thakar , Katkari , Mahadevkoli, Korku, Gond, Gawlis, Lamhan, Dhangar , Kuruma and Bharwad on issues related to natural resources , forest and land use , sustainable livelihoods , livestock care , human health , education and gender . Anthra supports them in different ways besides support in the field of livestock health.

As the second wave of the pandemic swept through India we grew increasingly concerned about the effects of the pandemic and how it would affect these groups . We reached out and asked them how they were faring and what support they would need. While several villages reported that covid committees had been set up in their villages and people from outside had to quarantine before coming back to the village due to the lockdown there were still several problems . In villages such as Tarwal in Ratanagiri with whom Anthra has been associated for over 25 years after the initial fear , people realised that they needed to handle this situation themselves . They became extremely careful and cautious . Sanitation and hygiene in the village improved . People were careful to quarantine visitors. They boiled their drinking water and took other measures to ensure health such as drinking teas with medicinal herbs (kadhas) . In April 21 Tarwal was one on the 42 villages in Ratnagiri which had no case of Covid .

However, this situation may not continue as the virus and its variants are proving to be difficult to control even in societies with well developed medical systems. Medicines such as paracetamol , sanitisers and masks are difficult to purchase in these villages which have no medical shops . Schools have been shut for several months . many of these communities cannot access online education . In several villages , informal spaces have been created where educated adults in the village are conducting informal classes for these young children, social distancing and other covid norms are being followed .



42 villages across the state have come with their lists of what their village would require and we have begun the process of ordering and sending these items out .

We are extremely thankful for your support and so are the Partners .

Climate change

On December 1, 2021, North and West India experienced unusual weather and unprecedented rainfall. The rains continued well into the night and flattened crops. A group severely affected were migratory shepherds. These shepherds who pen their animals for the night on farmers' fields were caught unawares. Several sheep especially young ones succumbed to the incessant rain and cold

In response to the situation, Anthra decided to initiate a fact finding mission . Jitendra Maid, Ashwini Labde and Sangeeta Khapre made up the team who visited villages where several shepherds had reported loss to establish the main reasons for the death of sheep . Shepherds , farmers and veterinary officials were interviewed to assess loss and damage . The team also visited a couple of villages which had sheep but did not report significant loss. consultations were held with experts in the field of livestock especially small ruminants.

Although shepherds are a generally resilient group and capable of withstanding shocks, the unexpected rains of December 1st left them shattered. That night, they had to deal with multiple challenges - of protecting themselves and their families, especially infants and small children, their possessions including food supplies, firewood, mobile phones as well as their animals, especially the weak and young . Several animals could not be saved .

Being in a remote location they could not call witnesses to initiate the process of registering loss and damage. Many of them did not know how to file a "pachnama" or a claim form .

We decided to make a short video clip to highlight the unique situation of migratory shepherds who face disaster due to climate change . A young team of movie makers helped us in the initiative. The movie is entitled "Shepherds request" . The video and the report of the fact finding mission were shared with the Ministry of Livestock and Animal Husbandry Maharashtra state who told us they would look into the matter.

The video was also aired by the group CANSA (Climate Action in South Asia) and received a good response.

Other Highlights

Workshops organised

Regional Multi stakeholder Partnership meeting of the Global Agenda of Sustainable Regional Consultation (South Asia): “Embracing Change and Harnessing Diversity: The Roles of Livestock in Sustainable Food Systems in South Asia” .

This meeting was held on 26 May 2021 and Anthra along with LIFE Network coordinated the online discussion which saw over 30 participants from several countries in South Asia and South East Asia take part.

Workshops attended

Nitya Ghotge represented Anthra and participated in the Global online meetings “**Embracing change and harnessing diversity: Regional perspectives on the roles of livestock in sustainable food systems**”.

Ashwini Labde represented **Anthra at the** IIT Gandhinagar Human-Animal relations Workshop held in August 2021 and presented a paper titled “**Nomadic Tribes and Animal: A case of the relation of Dhangar community with their Animals**”

Stop ASF: Public and Private Partnering for Success

FAO-OIE Global Webinar on PPP for ASF Control Multi-stakeholders collaboration for sustainable pork production and ASF control

Dr. Nitya Ghotge made a presentation in this meeting which was held on 21 June 2021

Several members of Anthra participated actively in the webinar “**Understanding the status and viability of Sexed Semen Technology for the Indian Dairy Sector**” held on 16th and 17th July and organised by The Rainfed Livestock Network and Life Network. Anthra is a partner of both networks

Dr. Nitya Ghotge participated in the virtual sessions of the Organic World Congress 2021 which were held in Rennes, France from 6th to 10th September 2021, She was invited to moderate and facilitate a couple of sessions in the Stakeholder Workshop of the International Animal Health Alliance .

Nitya Ghotge was also invited as a Key Note Speaker at the National Conference-cum-Seminar “**One Health Approach : Veterinary Perspective**”



Conducted by Indian Veterinary Association Bihar & Bihar Animal Science University on
26th Dec. 2021



Publications

Articles that were published in the past year included

Authored by Ashwini Labde

Nomadic Tribes and Animals : A case of the relation of Dhangar community with their
Workshop Animals” has been accepted for publication as part if the proceedings of the IIT
Gandhinagar Human-Animal relations

“Case Studies on pastoral social and cultural transformation across the Indian sub-
continent” has been accepted for publication in the Special Issue on “Pastoralism in South
Asia”, for the Journal Pastoralism - research, policy and practice.

Marathi article was published in the newspaper Agrowan titled, “पशूंची भाषा जाणणारे धनगर”

English article published in Pastoral Times titled “Talking with Sheep

Authored by Nitya. Ghotge

Paper entitled “EDUCATION POST COVID: ONLINE BUT OFF GRID FOR INDIA’S MIGRATORY
PASTORALISTS” was published in In: Z. Adil (ed.), AMPS Proceedings Series 23.2. Online
Education – Teaching in a Time of Change, Virtual. 21 – 23 April (2021). pp.[87-93]

Movies and videos made

Healing Hands

Anthra supported the making of Healing Hands a short dance film choreographed by
Radhika Muley . The movie was used to highlight the importance of Care in a post COVID
world .This dance was presented online at the 8th International degrowth Conference in a
session entitled” A world without Care : Fault Lines from the Covid 19 pandemic. The
session was an interactive session under the theme Feminist Political Ecology . “The
session asked the question *Could we look at society differently? Could we imagine a world
where “care” isn’t pushed to the margins and the peripheries but is firmly brought to
center?* and proposed an exchange on how the post-pandemic era could link movements



currently working separately to jointly create an integrated approach to care and public well-being

Anthra is collaborating with Access agriculture in making movies on livestock care . They deal with common diseases of livestock and how they can be cured using herbal medicines . These movies are accessible on the websites of access agriculture (www.accessagriculture.com) and of Anthra . Nitya Ghotge and Sangeeta Khapre helped write the scripts of the movies and identifying movie locations along with farmers. The movie titles are “natural ways to keep Chicken healthy , calcium deficiency in Dairy cows , Increasing production of local chicken .

Anthra also supported the making of a movie Shepherds of the Deccan which was submitted to the “Perspectives on Pastoralism Film Festival “.

Krishti Rudra and Bhumika Galani , interned with us in December January . Both girls are Masters students from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences . They participated in Field based activities as well as documenting Women’s knowledge

Governing Board

Online Board meetings were regularly held and the Board also met online informally several times to discuss and plan projects and programmes.

Dr. Patricia Gokhale Member of Anthra stepped down from the Board . We are extremely grateful to her for her several contributions and valuable support since 2009 when she joined the Board