



## **The Year that Was April 24 to Mar 25**

The year began with a workshop , ended with a workshop with lots of activities packed in between. Several exciting initiatives and events kept us busy including the first pastoralist census in the country coinciding with the livestock census . Another exciting event was the “Living Lightly” exhibition in Bangalore where several of us from the organisation participated . Our field teams were busy through the year navigating trips through inclement weather conditions while conducting research for our project on one health. We also wrapped up projects , reviewed our work and hosted interns . All in all a busy year.

It is thirty years since Anthra was registered as an NGO. It has been a long and incredible journey with its share of ups and downs . Each programme, each project , each event has been an important learning. As we look back we realise that the world is a very different place from where we began three decades ago .

Anthra was registered as an NGO in Pune Maharashtra in May 1995. We were unique in being an organisation led by women veterinarians . We were amongst the first groups to train animal health workers ( AHW'S) and conduct participatory action research in the country We were one of the first to work on documenting and validating traditional knowledge systems in livestock care. This work still remains a keystone programme finding relevance and application thirty years later .We were also amongst the first groups to account for women's knowledge and contribution to livestock systems in the country and look for ways to address gaps we found in development programmes. Our research led us to exciting new discoveries including working with healers and women livestock rearer's who were not recognised as “knowledgeable” people . We advocated for recognition of peoples knowledge and practices and how this knowledge was in danger of being lost through the application of poorly conceived development projects. We began our work with indigenous and pastoralist communities several years ago and today are proud to be part of the international movements bringing visibility and recognition to pastoralists especially women pastoralists through the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) 2026 and International year of Women Farmers (IYWF )2026.

Over the years we got drawn into national and international debates and movements including the organic movement which advocated for less chemicals in agriculture and livestock rearing . Into this discussion we were able to add value through the knowledge we had documented on medicinal and fodder plants, local breeds of livestock and local production systems , value addition and markets. We questioned the introduction of GMO's in to the country and the excessive use of antimicrobials. We found our values largely resonating with the principles of agroecology .



We backed small scale farming systems and agroecology even as the climate debates globally began to amplify . We continued supporting indigenous communities and pastoralists who remain invisible to policy makers .

The world is beset with fresh problems . Planetary boundaries and climate change force us to find fresh ways to farm and raise animals. Misuse of natural resources as well as imprudent use of chemicals and antimicrobials compel us to look at plant and animal health differently. Rapidly growing cities and demographic shifts from the rural to urban , leave villages and farm lands abandoned and an increase in the number of unemployed and undernourished in urban areas.

Can farming be made attractive and viable once again ? Can villages come alive again ? We raise this question and look for answers as we step into our 31<sup>st</sup> year .

Nitya Ghotge  
Director Anthra



## Our Projects and Programmes

### One Health

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

This year saw a significant amount of work . A workshop was held in April 2019 to familiarise and orient the field research team and the community with the reason for conducting these studies and different research methods . Different approaches such as photo-elicitation, household surveys were discussed and later conducted by our field researchers with support from other project collaborators .Educational material created by the project which include a poster and a small video have been shared at the community level in health centres, schools and panchayat offices

In February, representatives from the communities we work with visited NIVEDI ( National Institute of Veterinary Epidemiology and Disease Investigation ) along with the Anthra team to see how field samples were studied in laboratories . It was a particularly enriching experience for the women from the community .

A stakeholder workshop was held in Pune in March 2025 to share findings with a wider group .

#### **Livestock in Agroecology : an action research project to document and share different ways livestock contribute to promote agroecology**

The critical role of livestock in agriculture was explored and mapped through different lenses in different parts the country . The project looked at interactions between buffalo herding communities living on the edge of forests as well as duck rearing communities in paddy fields and wet lands.

Region	Type of livestock	Community
Uttarakhand	Buffalo herders	Van Gujjars
Maharashtra	Buffalo herders	Gawli Dhangars
West Bengal	Duck rearers	Mixed group
Tamil Nadu	Duck rearers	Mixed group

The project looked at these livestock rearing systems from an agroecological perspective and looked at the challenges being faced . For the buffalo herders who live in forests or close to forests changes in forest use and type , restrictions on grazing , infrastructure changes including dams and roads are creating pressures on livestock production forcing these groups to look for alternate means of livelihood . The value of grazing by ruminants and their contribution to maintaining biodiversity and forestscapes is poorly understood by policy makers . In the case of duck rearer’s the



contribution of ducks to paddy cultivation is acknowledged but needs to be strengthened. Small scale duck farmers receive little support, are tied to contract farming systems and the threats of diseases such as highly pathogenic avian influenza are a big concern.

The project has documented the challenges as well as gaps in research . The findings will be shared with other practitioners in a workshop which will also look for collective solutions to address these problems .

The project is supported by Bharat Agroecological Foundation .

### **Developing a Gender Handbook**

The aim of this project is to design a gender tool kit of evolving methodologies to enable young researchers and practitioners from different disciplines related to ecology , livestock , agriculture , development work to incorporate gender in their work. A write shop was organised in June 2024 in Bangalore to bring the different elements of the tool kit together . The final editing is underway .

The project is supported by Swissnex

### **Interns**

We have been receiving interns for many years now and this year too we hosted a few. Gayatri Khapare, Prajakta Ambekar, Charushila Lohar , Pooja, Londhe and Snehal Ambekar students of Karve Institute of Social Work ,Pune interned with Anthra for two weeks as part of their rural immersion programme.

### **Women in Livestock Care Awards**

The award ceremony took place on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2023 in Pune . Dr. Vinita Bal and Sushma Iyengar were chief guests . Three women received awards as champions in livestock care. The programme was well attended.

### **Participation in different forums**

Anthra took active part in getting pastoralists enumerated in the 21<sup>st</sup> All India Livestock Census which was conducted between Sep and Dec 2024. Our team coordinated with the State Animal Husbandry Department and pastoralists to ensure correct enumeration .

The Anthra team participated in the Living Lightly exhibition which was held between 31<sup>st</sup> Jan and 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025 in Bangalore. Several pastoralists associated with Anthra also took part in the programme in the different sessions. Sangita and Nitya coordinated a lively session with women pastoralists from Tamil Nadu , Karnataka and Maharashtra



Nitya Ghotge was invited to facilitate a session on “Medicinal Plants in Animal care” at the “Agriculture Conference”, the annual event of the biodynamic movement in Dornach, Switzerland. The programme was very well received.

### **Our staff**

Manasi Paranjpe, Sangita Khapre , Palash Ghugne , Ovee Thorat , Gayatri Khapre and Rashmi Gokhale helped and supported the projects.

