



DHAATRI

A Resource Centre for Women and Children

**A Report on
Dhaatri's Education Programme**

2024-25



Annual Education Report 2024-25

Dhaatri Trust

Introduction: Dhaatri is a resource centre for women and children's rights, with a primary focus on reaching out to remote tribal communities in Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. A key pillar of our work is advocating for the rights to education and healthcare for tribal (Scheduled Tribe) children – particularly in the emerald mining-affected areas of Madhya Pradesh, including the villages of Kaimasan, Baror, Madayan, Darera, Mainar, Madla, New Jhalar Khamaria, and villages such as Nahariya, Barodiya, Bhilai, Saheba, Khajuri, and Kucholi in Ganj Basoda (Vidisha) districts.

In addition to our work on education and health, Dhaatri promotes natural resource rights and gender equality through youth leadership. We believe that young people, when empowered, can become powerful agents of change in their communities. By creating safe and inclusive spaces for youth voices and encouraging intergenerational learning, we foster democratic participation in natural resource governance and promote sustainable futures. Our youth training programs aim to build knowledge, leadership, and collective action.

Recognizing that education is a powerful tool to prevent child labor, we have launched new Bal Anganwadi Centers in the villages of Pitlaguda, Pataguda, Peddaguda, and Devapur in Telangana. Our approach is not to replace government efforts but to strengthen them by empowering marginalized children to claim their constitutional rights to education, health, and social protection.

This report highlights Dhatri's interventions under the Ecology Education Program, which addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by tribal communities living in mining areas. Through our outreach in Madhya Pradesh, we work closely with children from the Gond and Sahariya tribes. A key initiative within this program is the Culture and Ecology Education Initiative, where we run educational extension centers known as Bal Anganwadis, which combine environmental education with academic support to create enjoyable, meaningful learning experiences.

Our Objective :

- Ensuring children are present in the school.
- To bring the child to the level of his class & age.
- Decreasing dropout rate.
- To make sure that children's education rights are achieved.
- Children's safety & Security

Introduction :

Through ecology education, Children's learning in Bal Angan became more joyful, meaningful, and connected to their everyday life and environment. By using a nature-based and culture-based

approach, children develop curiosity, observation skills, and creativity. They learn academic subjects like Maths, Hindi, and Art through activities such as counting seeds, measuring leaves, writing nature poems, and creating artwork using natural materials. Ecology education also teaches children about their surroundings—plants, animals, water, soil, and seasons—through hands-on experiences like nature walks, gardening, and traditional tribal practices. It helps children understand the importance of clean air, healthy food, and good hygiene. Children also learn about fairness, respect, and teamwork by observing how nature functions with balance and cooperation. The programme encourages children to protect nature, take care of their health, value their culture, and develop confidence to speak up and support their peers. By linking education with nature, ecology education helps children become more active, responsible, and caring individuals who can contribute positively to their families and communities.

Objectives of the Cultural Ecological Education Programme:

- Strengthening community education centres, Bal Angans and setting up habitat clubs as part of these centres to create inter-generational engagement for ecological education and behaviour.
- Retaining middle-level children in school to pursue higher education/vocational education.
- Building active peer-support and agency on gender-based violence, abuse and sexual health.

Nature-based and culture-based curriculum:

Over the past three years, we noticed that many children in our learning centres were losing interest in studies. Traditional textbook-based teaching methods, especially for subjects like math, Hindi and basic English, were not helping them focus. Young children would often bring their siblings to Bal Angan, which made it even more difficult for them to concentrate. Many children also come from households that lack proper nutrition, which affects their physical and mental development. Last year, we tried using games and activity-based learning to make the sessions more fun. However, this method did not help cover the curriculum effectively. Children, especially those in middle school, frequently got bored with the lessons and often lost motivation when the focus was on younger children. Attendance dropped and learning outcomes were poor.

To address this, we have now introduced a nature-based curriculum. This method connects learning to children's daily lives, surroundings, and natural curiosity. Children enjoy exploring their environment and when education is connected to nature, it becomes more engaging,

enjoyable, and relevant. Our curriculum is based on five major themes: biodiversity, nutrition and health, tribal culture, gender and equality, and environment. These themes help develop academic skills and also encourage critical thinking, emotional development, and a sense of responsibility.

Biodiversity: children observe plants, animals, and insects during nature walks or in gardens. These activities help them learn math by counting seeds, measuring leaves or identifying patterns in nature. In Hindi, they write poems or stories about what they see. In art, they create pictures using natural materials like leaves and stones. They also learn social science by understanding how local communities interact with forests and rivers.

Nutrition and health: children learn about the importance of food from plants and animals. They explore traditional tribal diets, understand the importance of clean water, air and soil.

Tribal culture helps children connect with their roots through folklore, art and storytelling. They learn about traditional practices like pottery, farming and festivals. These lessons instill pride in their culture, foster creativity and encourage respect for nature.

Gender and equality: Teaches children about fairness, cooperation and shared roles – both in nature and in human life. Why tiny insects need to come out of the soil every season They learn how male and female animals contribute to raising children. This helps children understand that everyone's role matters, which promotes equality and teamwork.

Environment: water, land and seasonal changes. Children explore these elements through hands-on experiments, drawing, graphing temperatures or learning about weather, farming and the global environment, which builds environmental responsibility.

Sr. No.	Day	Subject & Activities
1.	Monday	<u>Mathematics</u> - Teaching based on Nature and Natural Resources.
2.	Tuesday	<u>Language</u> - Nursery planting, Observation of plant growth, seasonal changes, Collecting local vocabs etc.
3.	Wednesday	<u>Storytelling</u> - Culture/ Traditions/ Daily life experiences.
4.	Thursday	<u>Drawing & Painting</u> - Based on story; use natural color.
5.	Friday	<u>Art and Craft</u> - Based on story.

6.	Saturday	Forest Walk - Observation, Documenting plants, types of plants, birds, animals, voices, claws etc.
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Table 1 : Timetable of the curriculum

Mathematics:

At the Bal Angans, educators use a multifaceted approach to support the holistic development of children. In mathematics, concepts like addition, subtraction, and measurement are taught through interactive activities involving tree leaves, stones, flowers, and birds. Children learn about increasing and decreasing numbers by observing the heights of trees, and natural colors are created using locally available resources such as mud, leaves, bark, and charcoal, adding an experiential element to their learning.

Language:

Language learning, including Hindi and English, is integrated into the curriculum through activities like planting nurseries, observing plant growth, documenting seasonal changes, and building vocabulary. These activities complement traditional teaching methods.

Storytelling:

In Storytelling sessions, Adivasi folktales are used to develop creativity and imagination. Educators also track and evaluate students' learning progress.

Craft and Painting:

Art and nature are intricately connected at Bal Angans, where children draw plants, flowers, and animals that they see daily by using natural colors. For instance, red is derived from soil or teak leaves, green from plant leaves, and yellow from flowers. These activities deepen the children's connection with nature.

Forest walks:

Forest walks further improve learning by teaching children about biodiversity. They identify flora, fauna, and medicinal herbs, document birds and insects, and learn to create home remedies. This knowledge is captured through writing, painting, crafts, and songs, helping children map their villages and preserve their ecological heritage.

A timetable ensures a balanced mix of subject-wise teaching and interactive activities. Mathematics and Hindi are taught alongside engaging sessions that explore nature, biodiversity, and traditional knowledge. For instance, students learn about the cultural significance of plants

like Mahua, which hold an essential place in their food habits and daily routines. This integrated approach enriches their learning experience while fostering a connection with their surroundings.

Teacher Training - The three-day teacher training workshop, held from August 3 to 5, 2024, aimed to enhance the skills of 11 community educators and 2 education coordinators from Panna and Vidisha. The focus was on integrating nature, tribal culture, and hands-on learning into everyday teaching practices. The workshop encouraged educators to create engaging, creative, and interactive environments that promote children's holistic development.

On the first day, the new Dhaatri syllabus was introduced, emphasizing the importance of tribal knowledge, nature-based learning, and child development. Activities included leaf identification, local naming of plants, and measuring objects using non-standard units like handspan and foot. Educators also explored seasonal changes in leaves and discussed analog forestry to teach math concepts using natural materials.

The second day involved clay and craft, where educators made jewelry and shapes to connect art with mathematics. They created tree art using soil, leaves, and flowers, and learned about primary and secondary colors.

On the final day, educators painted wood and stones, used body parts for measurement, and created stories using natural resources like mud and leaves. They concluded the day by writing and illustrating stories on chart paper, equipping themselves with nature-based teaching tools rooted in local culture and creativity.



Crafts made by the Educators

Ecology education Training

August 2024, our ecology education Training was held in Hyderabad in which our educators from panna, Ganj Basoda, and Adilabad were present and in this training, they were taken on a forest walk. During the ecology education training, the teachers were taught the sights and sounds of the urban forest, small insects, bird sounds, which season small insects come out of the ground, through Bal Angan, young tribals love to help children learn by integrating nature in their lessons. This training was a part of our regular training for young teachers, which equips them with the creative skills required to design engaging learning activities. Guided by nature educators Sharada Ma'am, the participants explored the forests, gained insights on biodiversity and innovative teaching methods. Discussed fun ways to help children connect with the soil, animals and trees around them. Despite challenges such as school dropout, malnutrition and deterioration of forest landscapes, our young teachers are dedicated to bridging the learning gaps for tribal children, as

well as rekindling their curiosity as well as love of nature. With the knowledge gained here, we aim to deepen their understanding of the environment.



Educators learning about biodiversity in a forest walk

Community educator Training in Hyderabad - A five-day workshop was organised for community teachers associated with Dhatri Trust working with Adivasi children from Panna and Ganj Basoda (Madhya Pradesh) and Adilabad (Telangana). These teachers are the key representatives of Dhatri in their villages and play a vital role in the education of children. The aim of the training was to strengthen their skills through theatre-based activities and curriculum planning. The first three days focused on confidence building, communication and community mobilisation through engaging activities like mirror exercises, puzzles, games and street play exercises. Warm-up tasks encouraged quick thinking and teamwork. Teachers participated in creative exercises to build trust, overcome hesitation and develop empathy. Interactive sessions like enacting daily routines, guessing true/false statements and dramatisation on Bal Aangan issues gave teachers a chance to reflect on their habits and challenges in their areas. Teachers from Panna, Ganj Basoda and Adilabad shared their routines and problems such as low attendance, migration and lack of teaching materials. Together they brainstormed solutions such as improving resources, engaging parents through meetings, using mobile groups, rewarding regular attendance, and adding inspiring guest sessions. Videos of street plays were shown to demonstrate effective storytelling and audience participation. On the third day, teachers developed and performed their own street plays based on real-life issues, receiving feedback and increasing their confidence in public expression. Nature observation walks helped them connect their surroundings to learning topics. They discussed how biodiversity walks could be conducted in villages, even where forests do not exist, and how children could learn English, math, and science through real-world experiences. The fourth day focused on the Bal Aangan curriculum. Teachers learned to connect observation to lesson plans and created self-introduction charts to help children learn English. On the final day, teams were given stories to analyze for two-letter, three-letter, and four-letter words, grammar elements, and meanings. They also enacted and presented slogan-based campaigns on children's rights, especially the right to education. Songs and chants made the session lively and inspiring. In the end, the teachers revised the street plays to make them more community- and school-focused and shared local songs related to education. The workshop concluded with the presentation of their improved plays and feedback sessions. Throughout the training, the teachers showed great enthusiasm, mingled with peers from different states, and gained practical experience in teaching through theatre, storytelling, and observation. The workshop not only improved their teaching skills but also prepared them to effectively mobilize their communities to support children's education. The experience was both enjoyable and empowering, helping the teachers to their Bal Aangan with more confidence, creativity, and clarity in their roles.



Educators from Madhya Pradesh and Telangana are preparing for a street play on the importance of education

Theater workshop - Panna and Ganj Basoda

From 22nd to 24th February, a three-day theatre workshop was organized in Panna and Ganj Basoda, with active participation from both youth and educators. The sessions for the youth mirrored those previously conducted with the teachers, ensuring a shared learning experience.

The workshop began with a voice modulation activity—participants practiced raising their voices loudly and then gradually lowering them. This was followed by a silent action game: participants stood in a line, and the last person silently passed an action to the person in front, continuing up the line until it reached the first person. This game highlighted how actions transform and communicate non-verbally.

Next, a series of movement games were conducted:

On the call of “100” participants had to walk fast, and on “10” they walked slowly.

On hearing “red,” they had to sit down quickly.

In the "In-Out" game, participants stepped into or out of a circle based on the command.

Everyone stood in a circle, placed their hands on their chest, and slowly raised and lowered their heads while counting from 1 to 10. This was followed by synchronized jumps with sound, and directional movements (in, out, left, right).

Then came a name-calling activity: everyone introduced themselves, and participants had to attentively listen and respond. One person would call out their name and quickly switch places with someone else by calling their name. If someone missed responding, they were out.

In a music-based game, one person started dancing, and the group mirrored their moves, building confidence and group energy.

Later, the youth were divided into three groups, each guided by two facilitators (educators and teachers). Each group identified a local issue and prepared a street play (nukkad natak) around it. After presenting their plays, one joint group worked on developing a script focused on raising community awareness about education.

Street Play on Education Awareness – Script Summary

The play begins with a lively introduction where educators assign aspirational roles (doctor, pilot, teacher) to children, highlighting the power of education. They introduce themselves as part of Dhaatri, committed to helping every child achieve their dreams through learning.

Through interactive songs and engaging games, the play brings attention to the reality—many children in the village do not attend school due to work responsibilities, poverty, family illness, and lack of support.

Children express their desire to study but also share the pressures they face: working in fields, factories, or taking care of sick family members. Educators respond with solutions like mid-day meals, free learning materials, and community support to encourage school attendance.

The play also addresses deeper issues such as substance abuse among youth and the influence of elders or peer groups. It emphasizes that education is the key to a better future, guiding children away from harmful paths and empowering families.

In the end, all characters unite with the message:

"Shiksha se hi nayi roshni aayega!"

(Education will bring a new light.)



Participants learning the skills required for writing and enacting a steer play in Ganj Basoda





Participants learning the skills required for writing and enacting a street play in Panna

Community Awareness Nukkad natak - Month of February

In the month of February, a theatre workshop was conducted in Panna and Ganj Basoda in which the youth of the village were trained for street plays at one place along with the children of five villages. During this time, we performed street plays in all the villages. We went to every village and through street plays we made parents aware about education and why education is important. In the villages itself, children from tribal and Sahariya communities leave school after 10th or 8th standard. And after leaving school, most of the children work in the mines. If children study, they will not have to work in the mines and their future will be bright.

Ganj Basoda



Panna





Street plays in villages

Planning Nutrition and Hygiene - Every year, a special orientation programme is held for the cooking staff, where all the teachers and cooks are invited. This programme serves as an important platform for community members, teachers and children to share and learn the importance of nutrition and healthy eating habits. The orientation is not just a regular training session but a lively celebration of local food traditions, health awareness and mass learning. The most important aspect of this orientation is to engage the children in practical nutrition training. Children actively participate in the preparation of nutritious traditional foods such as bajra laddu, besan laddu, boiled eggs, boiled chickpeas and khichdi. These foods are rich in nutrients and are especially beneficial for growing children. The process of making these items is taught in a simple and interactive manner so that children not only learn to make them but also understand their nutritional value. For example, jowar and bajra are rich in fiber, iron and essential minerals. Making laddus from these grains helps them recognise the importance of millets in daily diet. Gram flour is high in protein and energy, and laddus made from gram flour are both tasty and healthy. Boiling eggs and chickpeas teaches them simple cooking skills and helps them understand the importance of protein in physical and mental development. Khichdi made from rice, lentils and vegetables is introduced as a complete meal that is easy to digest and rich in nutrients.

During the orientation, teachers and experienced cooking staff guide the children step-by-step in preparing these foods. Parents also discuss how to ensure a balanced diet at home using local and seasonal ingredients. This session becomes a space for exchanging traditional knowledge and exploring new ways to improve children's health.

In addition, cooks are taught basic hygiene and safety practices in cooking – such as washing hands, keeping the cooking area clean, and using clean utensils. These life skills are important not only for health but for overall personal development.

The orientation also emphasizes the cultural and traditional value of food. By using local grains and ingredients, children stay connected to their roots and understand the richness of indigenous

food systems. This helps instill a sense of pride in their culture and encourages them to adopt healthy eating habits from an early age in life.

This annual orientation is a wonderful example of community-based education where cooks and teachers come together to create a meaningful learning experience. It supports the holistic development of our cooking staff by combining practical knowledge, health education, and cultural awareness. Through this program, they not only learn to prepare nutritious meals, but also grow in confidence, responsibility, and awareness about their own health and well-being.



Training for cooking staff

Interventions with people - To bring positive change in the village, efforts are being made with the support of children, parents, community members, women's groups, Gram Panchayat, and School Management Committees (SMCs). Monthly meetings are held with SMCs, women's groups, and other community members to discuss important issues and find solutions together. These meetings help build trust and encourage active involvement from everyone.

Special focus is placed on encouraging women to speak openly about their problems during group meetings. Many families have lost their loved ones while collecting firewood in the forest due to wild animal attacks. Water scarcity during summer is another major concern, as the water level in village wells drops very low. The problem of electricity is also serious—sometimes there is no power in the village for 15 to 20 days. This creates difficulties in daily life and affects the health, hygiene, and education of children.

Women are guided on how to raise these issues with higher authorities, such as the District Collector. Awareness is also spread about health and hygiene, helping families understand how small changes in daily habits—can protect children and improve their well-being.

Support is provided to women for starting and maintaining kitchen gardens. By growing vegetables at home, families get access to fresh, healthy food, which improves children's nutrition and reduces food expenses.

Through community participation, awareness-building, and collective action, the goal is to create a healthier, safer, and stronger village. Women are encouraged to take charge of their needs, solve local problems, and work toward a better future for their children and the entire community.





Dhaatri staff visiting the state run schools and women meeting

Assessment of the children

Children's progress through learning activities based on nature, birds and animals

Over time, children have shown significant progress in their academic, creative and environmental learning through a nature-based approach focused on birds, animals and the natural world. These learning experiences, deeply rooted in the local ecosystem, traditional knowledge and practical exploration, have brought curiosity to children's learning journeys while also building academic foundations.

Academic development through nature-based learning

In mathematics, children have made impressive progress. They now confidently recite and write multiplication tables up to 6, count to 100 and perform operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Some children are working with fractions - adding and multiplying them. These concepts are taught through nature: children count leaves, stones or petals, divide seeds into equal groups and use rows of trees to understand multiplication. Through such concrete experiences, abstract mathematics becomes meaningful and fun.

Language skills have improved. Children now read Hindi stories, write their own stories and create meaningful sentences. They have started to use grammar correctly, remember and introduce themselves. Many children create stories inspired by nature, birds or animals – such as the story of a squirrel hiding food in winter or a bird's journey across the sky. Through poems, slogans and word games related to animals and natural elements, their vocabulary and confidence have improved significantly.

Creative expression rooted in nature

Children's creativity is developed through arts, crafts and storytelling inspired by the natural world. Using natural materials such as leaves, bark, feathers, stones and flowers, they create

animals and birds, decorate them with natural colours and write imaginative stories around them. One group creates a peacock using leaves and then tells the story of its dance during the rains. Others paint scenes of forests or rivers filled with animal life. This deepens both artistic skills and their connection to nature.

Understanding birds, animals and nature

Children now have a growing knowledge of local birds and animals. They can identify birds by their common and scientific names, describe their feathers, beaks, legs, tails and calls. While walking in the forest, they look for signs of birds such as mynahs, parrots, sparrows and owls or animals such as squirrels, monkeys, deer or wild boars and foxes. They observe animal footprints, nests, burrows and behaviour patterns. They understand where animals live, what they eat, how they move and what sounds they make.

Children also learn to observe and document bird nests and animal shelters—whether it is a weaver bird’s woven nest or a small animal’s hiding place—and discuss the importance of these shelters for safety and survival. They examine different eggs—size, colour, shape—and try to match them to the birds they have seen.

Connecting with elders and local knowledge

In groups, children meet elders in the community to collect stories, folklore and information about seasonal birds and animals. They learn which birds come in summer or winter, which animals are seen near fields or rivers, and what traditional beliefs or stories are associated with them. These stories are then shared in the Bal Aangan, creating intergenerational learning that values local culture and memory.

Ecology, ethics and empathy

Children now understand food chains: what birds and animals eat, what eats them, and how they depend on each other and plants. For example, they explore how seeds are eaten by squirrels, which may be preyed upon by larger birds or animals. They learn how birds and animals help maintain forest balance. Discussions on bird trapping and animal hunting open children’s minds to the dangers of disrupting nature and promote empathy.

Games and group activities such as creating a bird or tiger shape using human structures, nature walks, bird and animal quizzes, storytelling circles and observation games make learning active and collaborative. Children not only learn about birds and animals but also learn teamwork, sharing and expressing their ideas with confidence.



Pictures of animals and birds made using stones by the Bal Angan students

चिडिया और मोर
21/3/25

एक समय की बात है एक चिडिया थी जो अपने जोखिल में रहती थी पर वो बहुत ही सुंदर और मधुर गीत गाती थी एक दिन एक मोर उस चिडिया के पास आया और बोला तुम्हारी आवाज बहुत ही मधुर है लेकिन तुम्हारे पास कोई भी संगीत वाद्य नहीं है। चिडिया ने जवाब दिया मेरी आवाज ही मेरा संगीत वाद्य है। मैं अपने गीतों से लोगों को खुसा करता हूँ। मोर ने कहा लेकिन मेरे पास एक सुंदर मधुर संगीत वाद्य है जो तुम्हारी आवाज से भी मधुर है चिडिया ने पूछा तुम्हारा संगीत वाद्य क्या वास्तव में बहुत ही मधुर है लेकिन फिर उसने जोचा कि इसकी अपनी आवाज भी बहुत ही मधुर है चिडिया ने सोचा मोर से क्या तुम्हारा संगीत वाद्य वास्तव में बहुत ही मधुर है लेकिन मेरी आवाज भी बहुत ही मधुर है। क्या दोनों ही आवाजें मिलकर एक सुंदर संगीत बना सकती हैं मोर ने चिडिया की अप्पन्न बात मानी और दोनों ने मिलकर एक सुंदर संगीत बनाया उनका संगीत बहुत ही मधुर था कि सभी जानवर उनकी ओर आकर्षित हुए।

Story written by a Bal Angan student

Nutrition Tracking - To keep the children in Bal Angan healthy, we give them nutritious food with the help of the community. During summer, under the weekly Timetabal program, women

are given seeds to grow vegetables like bottle gourd, pumpkin, okra, and other local vegetables in their kitchen gardens. The vegetables grown in these gardens are used to prepare food for the children. This helps provide fresh and seasonal vegetables in their diet.

Along with this, we also give children whatever healthy food is available in the area according to the season. One special item we give is amla candy, which is good for their health. It helps in improving digestion and increasing immunity. We also include healthy traditional snacks like millet ladoos, ragi ladoos, gram flour ladoos, a dish in South Asian cuisine made of rice and lentils, and boiled gram. These foods are full of strength-giving nutrients like protein, iron, calcium, and fiber, which are important for growing children.

All these foods are given to the children based on a fixed weekly and seasonal menu. This menu is planned to make sure children get a mix of different healthy foods in all seasons. The food given changes according to the weather, so children get the right nutrition for their growth and health.

Through this effort, we not only provide nutritious meals but also encourage families to grow their own food and take part in the health of their children. It also helps children learn to eat local and seasonal foods. These small but meaningful steps go a long way in keeping children healthy, strong, and active.

Table 2 - Nutrition Kit Menu Chat

Day	Menu
Monday	Egg or Seasonal Fruits
Tuesday	Boiled Chana
Wednesday	Moong Dal sprouts, Moong Kheer,
Thursday	Mahua Halwa, Puffer Rice Mixture, Tendu Keer, Mixture with Mahua,
Friday	Khichdi- Chawal, Mung daal, veg and palak- millet based
Saturday	Laddu— Bajara /Ragi / Besan





Children's nutrition according to the season

BMI Tracking -

At our Bal Angan centres, we regularly conduct BMI (body mass index) tracking for children aged 6 to 17 years as part of our health and nutrition monitoring initiatives. This practice is essential to understand the overall growth pattern and nutritional status of the children we work with. Many children in our communities come from economically weaker backgrounds where access to balanced nutrition is often limited. As a result, a large number of children are found to be underweight, some of whom fall into categories such as severely underweight, extremely underweight or moderately underweight. These conditions directly impact their physical growth, energy levels, academic performance and overall well-being.

To address this issue, we have developed a weekly nutrition timetable under which children are provided with a variety of healthy food options every day. These include items rich in protein, carbohydrates, iron and vitamins – such as fruits, jowar laddoos, besan laddoos, ragi laddoos, mung dals, eggs, mahua laddoos, khichdi, peanuts and seasonal foods that are locally available and affordable. The aim of this meal plan is to ensure that children get a balanced diet that can gradually improve their nutritional levels. To measure the impact of this intervention, we carry out BMI tracking at regular intervals.

This process involves measuring each child's height and weight using standard methods and then calculating their BMI. By tracking this data over time, we evaluate the effectiveness of our nutrition programme.

BMI tracking also helps us identify early signs of hidden hunger and malnutrition, which are not always visible to the eye. This is especially important in children who may appear active but have nutritional deficiencies. In cases where BMI levels do not improve over time, we visit and discuss with parents at home to make them aware of the importance of proper nutrition, hygiene and regular attendance at Bal Angan. We work with Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers and local health departments to provide iron tablets, deworming medicines to children through Educates.

Furthermore, BMI tracking is not just a technical exercise, but a tool for awareness, education and preventive healthcare. It empowers teachers, parents and community members to take informed action for the health of their children. It also instills a sense of accountability in our team, as we can see the real-life impact of our efforts on children's physical development. Through this systematic tracking and nutrition intervention, we aim to reduce the number of malnourished children and promote a healthier, stronger and more active younger generation.



Educator measuring the height of children

Health Assessment of the Children -

During the health assessment of children at Bal Angan, various physical health indicators were carefully examined. The condition of their teeth ranged from clean and white to pale yellow, with many children showing signs of minor dental problems that needed attention. Eye health was also assessed, where some children complained of excessive itching in the eyes. According to parents, most children had clear vision, and no signs of night blindness or visual impairment were observed. Skin problems were observed in some children, including mild rashes, itching and small pimples on hands and feet.

Some children showed signs of food allergies, especially to locally consumed vegetables such as bottle gourd, bitter gourd and brinjal. These allergies manifested as dizziness, vomiting or headache, and such cases were referred to the nearest health centre for further investigation and care. Some children also complained of general physical discomfort, such as dizziness or vomiting after being exposed to direct sunlight, headaches after prolonged exposure to sunlight, and occasional stomach pain. In some cases, minor physical difficulties like difficulty in walking or discomfort during physical activity were observed. No major speech or hearing problems were

found. Teachers also keep an eye on symptoms of gutkha or tobacco consumption as well as recurring complaints like headache and stomachache. Apart from this, the health of children returning from migration is closely monitored and they are taken for timely medical checkups to ensure their well-being.

Temperature Tracking -

At Bal Aangan, we conduct regular temperature tracking throughout the day to understand how changing weather conditions affect children's health and behavior. Temperature is recorded at four key intervals: between 9–10 am, 11 am–12 pm, 2–3 pm, and 5–6 pm. In the morning hours (9–10 am), the weather is generally pleasant, and children are active, alert, and participate enthusiastically in learning activities. As the day progresses and temperatures rise (11 am–12 pm), some children begin to show signs of fatigue, reduced focus, and discomfort. The afternoon hours (2–3 pm) are usually the hottest, and during this time, many children experience symptoms such as restlessness, headaches, dizziness, or reduced participation in physical tasks. By evening (5–6 pm), the temperature begins to cool down, and children gradually regain energy and interest in group activities and games. This systematic temperature monitoring helps educators plan the day more effectively, ensuring that physically demanding activities are scheduled during cooler hours and adequate rest, hydration, and shade are provided during hotter periods. It also helps in early detection of heat-related health issues and contributes to creating a safe and child-friendly learning environment.



Temperature Tracking Observations

Home Visit and School Visit -

During home visits, teachers actively engage with families, visiting each household to identify children who are not enrolled in school or Bal Angan, especially those who have recently returned from seasonal migration. They counsel and motivate parents to send their children to Bal Angan or school, emphasizing the importance of continuing education for their development. Special attention is given to children who have dropped out of school and have never been enrolled, and efforts are made to re-engage them in the education system.

During school visits, teachers create a friendly and engaging atmosphere by engaging children in interactive games and playful learning. These activities not only help maintain a positive mental state but also instill interest in education. While playing, teachers initiate informal conversations about the child's village, state, country, and local rivers to increase their general awareness and connect learning to their surroundings.

One such case was, during the migration period, personally visiting a child's home and family to understand that they should not take the child along and instead get him/her admitted in a local hostel. Also, whether the children have proper documents like Aadhaar card or birth certificate. Families were informed about the importance of these documents and were encouraged to arrange these as soon as possible.

During the school visit, Muskan Adivasi from Durga Nagar was spoken to about her school admission. A detailed conversation was held with her teacher to understand the status of admission and to find out whether the children listed in class 9 are attending school regularly. The children expressed their desire to attend school and showed positive intention to continue their studies.

A meeting was also conducted with the women of the village, where we discussed the role of education in household budget and long-term financial stability. Women were counselled and encouraged to send their children to Anganwadi centres for early childhood education and nutrition.

Also, coordinating with the Anganwadi worker. Discussing the distribution of iron tablets to adolescent girls and inquiring about the total population of the village. Collecting information about what subjects and activities are being taught at the Anganwadi centre and the monthly vaccination schedule and the weight of the children to monitor their health.

While visiting the school premises, assessing the infrastructure. Checking whether the building gets flooded during the rainy season, whether a playground is available, and whether essential facilities such as drinking water, electricity and toilets are in proper condition. Checking whether there are separate toilets for girls and boys, and whether there are enough classrooms for all students to study comfortably.

These collective efforts aim to ensure that every child in the village receives education and health services in a safe and supportive environment, and that the community as a whole becomes more aware and involved in the welfare and development of its children.



Convincing parents to send their children to school, Bal Angan

Ashram went to the school to conduct a career guidance session for the students, aimed at broadening their understanding of the different career paths and educational opportunities available after school. During the session, I interacted with the students to learn about their interests and aspirations and provided them with information about vocational training, higher education options and skill development programmes. We discussed various career options based on their strengths, such as teaching, nursing, agriculture, government services and technical trades. I also informed them about scholarship schemes, entrance exams and government initiatives that support students from tribal and rural backgrounds. The session aimed to inspire the students to dream big, set clear goals and plan their future with confidence. I shared real-life success stories from similar communities to help them feel motivated and believe in their potential. The students responded positively and expressed interest in learning more about different careers and educational paths.



Our representative interacting with the students and staff of the Ashram school



School Visit

Migration Tracking

Children's vulnerability is deeply linked to the harsh circumstances of extreme poverty experienced by their families. Many depend on unstable and irregular sources of income, often associated with labor in mining areas, which makes it difficult to fulfill even their most basic needs. Seasonal migration to other states in search of work further intensifies these hardships, leading to

unstable living arrangements and limited access to essential services like education and healthcare. As a result, children's schooling is often interrupted by frequent relocations, eventually causing them to drop out or lose interest in learning.

To tackle this issue, Bal Angans have introduced a migration tracking system through dedicated registers that help monitor and support families on the move. Educators systematically gather detailed information such as the names of migrating individuals, household size, age and gender of members, caste, and available contact numbers. They also document the date of departure, travel destination (including state, district, and village), mode of transportation, expected duration of stay, and nature of employment.

This information enables us to study migration trends and better understand the reasons behind these movements. Having contact details allows us to maintain communication with migrating children and their families, ensuring continuity in their education and supporting their overall development, even during periods of displacement.

A large number of parents migrate to states and cities such as Uttar Pradesh, Indore, Pune, Ajmer, Sanchi, Vidisha, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra in search of work. The nature of these jobs is mostly labor-intensive and includes brick-making, paddy harvesting, stone cutting, lime and cement production, and gram shelling. These forms of employment are often temporary and offer low wages, forcing families to relocate frequently in order to sustain themselves.

Typically, families return to their villages after working for 3 to 6 months, stay for a short duration—often just a month—and then migrate again. Unfortunately, this constant movement deeply affects the children. Many parents take their children along when they migrate, which disrupts the child's education, routine, and emotional development. School attendance becomes irregular, learning continuity is lost, and in many cases, children drop out entirely.

Only a small percentage of parents leave their children behind under the care of grandparents or other family members, allowing them to continue their education in a relatively stable environment. However, the majority of families migrate together, leading to large-scale child migration that directly impacts the children's academic progress and overall well-being.

This cycle of migration not only reflects the economic vulnerability of these families but also presents a major challenge to educational institutions and community learning spaces like Bal Angans. It underscores the urgent need for flexible, inclusive education models that can adapt to the needs of migrant children and ensure they do not remain excluded from learning due to circumstances beyond their control.

Population of the Migrant Children

Category wise migration in village

Age 6-14

Name of the Center	ST Student	Other Student
Nahariya	12	0
Barodiya	21	0
Bhilai	19	0
Kucholi	7	0
Khajuri	22	0
Total	81	0

Table 3 : Migration details in Ganj Basoda during the June 2024 to March 2025

Category wise migration in village

Age 6-14

Name of the Center	ST Student	Other Student
Madiyan	6	0
Kemasan	4	0
Bador	8	0
New Zhalar	4	0
Manor	6	0
Madala	12	0
Darera	4	0
Total	44	0

Table 4: Migration in Panna During the June 2024 to March 2025

Attendance level panna and Ganj Basoda : In Bal Angan the average attendance across Adivasi villages in the districts of Panna and Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh, reflects both the community's interest in education and the challenges they face—particularly due to seasonal displacement for work. Many families in these tribal communities are engaged in migrant labor. They often travel to other cities such as Indore, Pune, Ajmer, Sanchi, Gujarat, Rajasthan, or Maharashtra for work like brick making, stone cutting, paddy harvesting, cement and lime work, or gram shelling. This displacement usually lasts for 3 to 6 months, during which entire families—often including young

children—move away from the village. As a result, the regularity of children’s attendance in educational programs is affected.

From the data collected, the total attendance across six villages in Panna—Darera, Kaimasan, Madala, Madhaiyan, Manor, and Zalar—amounts to 145.4, with Manor and Darera showing the highest numbers. In contrast, the attendance in six Vidisha villages— Badodiya, Bhilay, Kajuri, Kucholi, and Nahariya—adds up to 108.8. When combined, the total attendance from all twelve Adivasi villages is 254.2, resulting in an average attendance of 21.18 per village.

This average demonstrates a moderate level of engagement; however, the reality behind the numbers reveals deeper structural challenges. Migration for livelihood is a necessity for many families, as local employment options are limited and income from farming or labor within the village is not sufficient. As a result, even if children are initially enrolled in learning centers or Bal Angans, their education is frequently interrupted. Some parents leave their children with grandparents or relatives while they migrate, but many take their children along. These frequent breaks in attendance make it difficult for children to maintain continuity in their learning and also place additional pressure on educators who must restart lessons or revise topics repeatedly.

The attendance trends also highlight the need for more flexible and community-based learning models that can adapt to the migratory patterns of tribal families. Education efforts should aim to build strong connections with the families, understand their seasonal movement patterns, and explore ways to provide mobile or seasonal learning opportunities. In villages like Manor, Kaimasan, and Darera, where attendance is relatively higher, it’s likely that parents are either not migrating as often or have support systems that allow children to stay back and attend regularly.

To improve attendance and reduce disruption due to displacement, programs must engage with the root economic challenges that push families to migrate. Linking families with local livelihood schemes, involving community elders in children’s education, and creating strong local support networks can help reduce the impact of seasonal work migration.

Panna	
Name of the Village	Attendance Average
Darera	27.6
Kaimasan	27.1
Madala	14.3
Madhaiyan	25.8
Manor	30.3
Zalar	20.3

Table 5 : Bal Angan in Panna Attendance Average

VIDISHA	
Name of the Village	Attendance Average
Kucholi	16.9
Badodiya	21.4
Bhilay	17.2
Kajuri	16.6
Nahariya	18.4

Table 6 : Bal Angan in Ganj Basoda Attendance Average



DHAATRI

A Resource Centre
for Women and Children



www.dhaatri.org



Plot No. 10,
Lotus Pond Colony, Military
Dairy Farm Road,
Trimulgherry, Secunderabad -
500015
Telangana, India



+91 40 29552404