

Ek jagah apni si

Informal learning centres as
spaces for meaningful and
relevant science learning

Eklavya Foundation, Bhopal



What we set out to do?

Work towards a culturally-relevant,
meaningful and transformative
science education



Our location and people

Kesla block in Narmadapuram district, Madhya Pradesh

Prominent Adivasi communities- Gond and Korku

15 Mohalla Learning Activity Centres

17 facilitators from the community; 200+ children

Spaces for “learning by doing”, “learning from the environment” “learning from each other”

A space to explore the communities’ funds of knowledge



Picking Mahua and other forest produce is a necessity for many children in the region

Our work

- Informal learning spaces in the community to support children's learning, bridging the gap between children's lifeworlds and the school-world
- Work around topics of science which give opportunities to connect with students' rich knowledge about their surroundings - their village, forests, farming...





- ❖ Learning the mathematics involved
- ❖ Also, work on language with a small library and activities like read-alouds
- ❖ Art, craft and theatre to foster self expression
- ❖ Building a rapport with the community as a base of work for the educational research





*Some
glimpses of
children
engaged in
various
sessions*



Inklings of change

- ❖ Increase in children's literacy and numeracy levels, engagement with academic learning and confidence
- ❖ Learning centres as meaningful, vibrant spaces where children ask questions and share about their lives
- ❖ 'Bal Vigyan Mela' as good opportunities to showcase children's learnings and connect with the school and the community
- ❖ Forming a reflective community of youth who are concerned about their community and children's education



*Children and
community members
during Bal Vigyan
Melas*



Facilitators' experience

- ❖ Freedom to initiate questions, to talk with children in a candid manner, make connections with the context
- ❖ Friendly, fear-free environment
- ❖ Not limited by any syllabus, or time restrictions, so can pace it according to the needs of all children
- ❖ No rote learning, learning by doing
- ❖ Confident to take on teaching challenges during sessions with rigorous academic support
- ❖ Have themselves learnt from interactions with the children





Some glimpses of building capacities together

Learning centres also provide a context to conduct research in the region

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TE|SF India
Transforming Education
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HOME TEAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE RESOURCES EVENTS COMMISSIONED PROJECTS

Voices from the margins: Exploring possibilities of connecting formal education to the Funds of Knowledge owned by Adivasi communities in the Kesla block of Madhya Pradesh



Children observing diversity among leaves

Key Themes:
Climate Action, Indigenous Knowledge

Project Site:
Kesla, Madhya Pradesh

Principal Investigator:
Aisha M Kawalkar

Co-Investigator:
Himanshu Srivastava

[Project Report](#)

[Learning Module](#)

Publications:
[हाशिये की आवाज़: अस्मिता और बर्बादी की शिक्षा पर मंडराले खतरों से जुड़ा रहे केसला के आदिवासी](#)

Researchers often point out a gap between school culture and students' home culture, which needs to be bridged for meaningful and relevant learning. This gap is wider for students from tribal communities whose culture, language, and knowledge systems are undervalued and denigrated. To counter such deficit perspectives, this research adopts the Funds of Knowledge approach and



 Restricted access | [Research article](#) | First published online December 3, 2023

Yeh Toh Ulto Hi Ho Gayo! Juxtaposing Educational Discourse on Forests and Conservation with Everyday Discourses of Adivasi Communities of Central India

[Aisha Kawalkar](#), [Himanshu Srivastava](#)  , and [Ruchi Shevade](#) [View all authors and affiliations](#)

[OnlineFirst](#) | <https://doi.org/10.1177/09731849231213159>


 Contents

 Get access

 Cite article

 Share options

 Information, rights and permissions

 Metrics and citations

Abstract

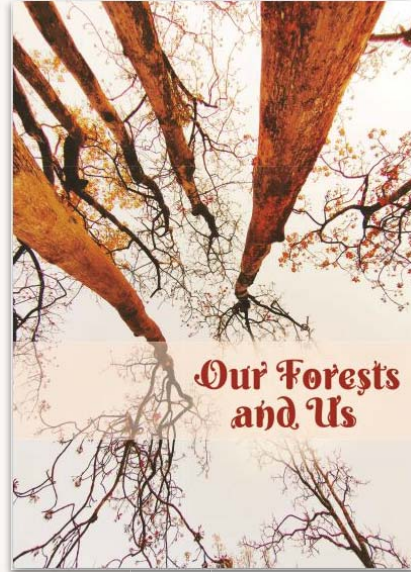
Researchers often point out a wide rift between school culture and students' home culture, especially for Adivasi students whose culture, language and knowledge systems are played down by the mainstream discourse. We believe that such deficit perspectives must be countered to work towards an equal and just society. For this purpose, in this study, we explored the funds of knowledge of Adivasi communities of Central India with regard to forests and conservation. We also examined school textbooks from the standpoint of these communities to understand how connected or disconnected they are to the life-worlds of Adivasi students. The study adopted a participatory design and drew upon the principles of critical ethnography. For data collection, we used a strategic combination of ethnographic observations, informal interactions, focus group discussions, personal interviews and field notes. The findings indicate a strong need for developing learning material that is contextually relevant, meaningful and transformative for students.



Ways forward



Fostering a synergy between the learning centres and the local schools



Developing learning resources on culturally relevant themes



Building a network of government teachers

Thank you!

