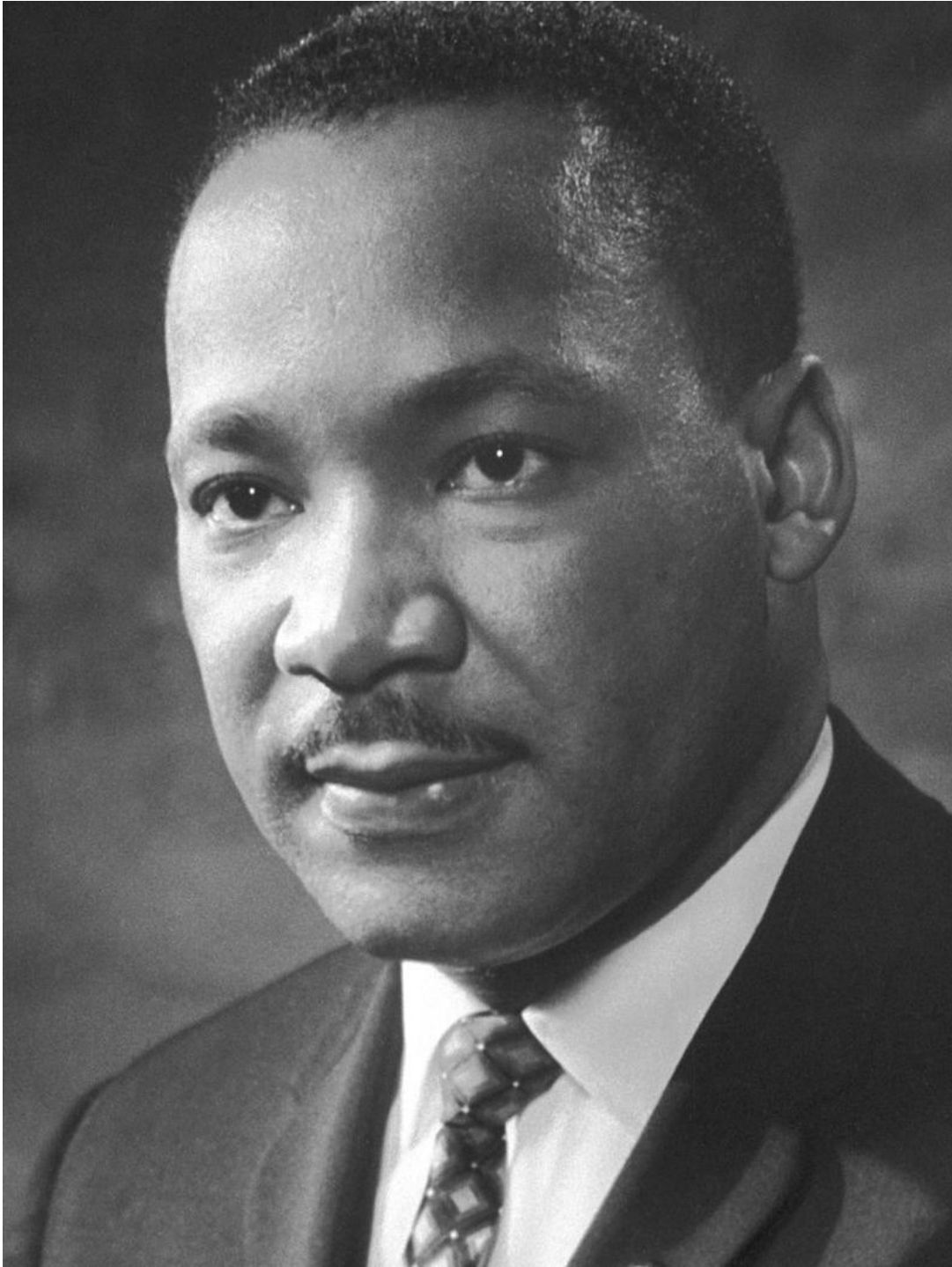


# **I have a Dream**

Freedom and Liberty

Edited by Viren Lobo

**An Especioza Trust Production**



Martin Luther King

# Foreword

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcnzz7-mCNA>

This talk by Depinder and moderated by Rajesh takes us back to the formation of an alternative discussion group in SPWD that sought to give a different perspective to the emergence of a Characteristically different type of NGO from the ones in the past.

Set in a period when the political charm of Socialism or the tasks emerging from the independence struggle were fading out a new type of service delivery mechanism to cater to those left behind in the market race. In addition the 70s recognised that massive deforestation was taking place as a result of development and hence sustainability questions came to the fore.

While this talk by Depinder, moderated by Rajesh provides a snap shot of what happened/ is happening to the sector, Vivekanand from the first batch and one of our blue eyed boys stepped into the fisheries sector (branching out from milk which was behind the creation of Irma). At the time he branched out a number of struggles for fisher rights had emerged too.

The work done some of us, strive to bridge the gap between the thrust given by political parties and movements and that which is visualised by the Government and NGOs.

As Rajesh aptly pointed out in his opening remarks, the resource constraints amidst plenty embracing this sector provides a lot of grey area to be explored if we are to even hope for a democratic process of unity capable of overturning the conditions being placed by Capitalism in the throes of one economic crisis after another and it's ideological prop Fascism to whip up a unity Characteristically different from the one we seek.

From the experience we now have in IAA led by an EC that made a call for Stronger together but denied it in practise we can see the need for a different kind of unity from the polarisation of ideas we now see.

This much for now. Will get back with more later.

Viren

# Background

## Tarun Kanti Bose's presentation in Proletarian People's Forum

Dear Comrades,

Thanks for inviting me for the first deliberation for the formation of Proletarian People's Forum. I represent Akhil Bharatiya Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Samiti (ABMKSS), an all India forum that acknowledges the relevance of the democratic content of the Constitution and the other a recognition of the forces who guided by the necessity of Capitalist exploitation of human beings and nature have not only undermined the Constitution but also the essence of the diversity that distinguishes the people and natural resources of this country on which they depend upon.

ABMKSS acknowledges the primacy of local struggles and the autonomy of organisations, hence this presumes an already on-going agenda to which ABMKSS is trying to find common cause with. ABMKSS is not a member-based organisation neither is it registered so its growth and progress depend on voluntary progress towards a common agenda. In a sense it is trying to find the practical resonance to theory and considering Marxist theory as being the theory of change, the practical response to the proletarianization of society we observe today. ABMKSS believes that till a People's Democratic Republic is set up, there is unity in the issues being faced by small, marginal and traditional farmers, fishers, forest dwellers, pastoralists and wage labour originating from the village, though it is manifest in many ways.

ABMKSS in association with All India Front for Forest Rights Struggle (AIFFRS) conducted a study **Forest Rights Act- Implementation and Violations**, which documented systematically the implementation of Forest Right Act 2006 in 12 states of India in 2019-20. It brought to the fore the gross violations of FRA in the sphere of conservation of forest and enhancement of forest based sustainable livelihood, which continues for long and demands immediate attention of legislative and judiciary.

In continuity with the study, ABMKSS published a book '**Marginalised But Not Defeated**', which traces the historical trend facing communities dependent on natural resources and shows their progressive marginalisation and deprivation from the natural resources they depend upon. It tracks the historical struggles made by them and repression they have faced. The book provides an overview of development in the States of Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Maharashtra and it covers adivasis, fishers, pastoralists and farmers progressive marginalisation joining the army of wage labourers in 75 years of Independence. The study points to movements for assertion of people's links with nature. The power and concerns of Finance Capital make it difficult for communities struggling for a living to stand concertedly behind nature despite many long and struggles related to the same. The book also covers farmers movement, covered in the book, shows how Capitalism is renegeing on its own pact with the big farmers of and despite the long and spirited movement of the farmers. Finance Capital would always create hurdle for any compromise with the Government. The book was published in 2023 and available in Amazon.

In continuity with the published book, ABMKSS is conducting a socio-political study on Haryana on its Role in 1857 revolt, Dalits, minority community and people's struggles as a ray of hope. The study on Haryana, the state brings to the fore the paradox of rapid-fire progress or a matrix of inequitable growth, which boasts of second highest per capita income in the country and also the second worst girl child ratio.

In Proletarian People's Forum Draft Fascism has been discussed. In the resolution, authored by Clara Zetkin, an eminent Marxist theoretician and leader, which was adopted on June 23, 1923, by the Third Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. I quote, "Fascism is a characteristic symptom of decay in this period, an expression of the ongoing dissolution of the capitalist economy and the decomposition of the bourgeois state. Fascism is rooted above all in the impact of the imperialist war and the heightened and accelerated dislocation of the capitalist economy that it caused among broad layers of the small and middle bourgeoisie, the small peasantry, and the "intelligentsia." This process dashed the hopes of these layers by demolishing their previous conditions of life and the degree of security they had previously enjoyed. Many in these social layers are also disillusioned regarding their vague expectations of a profound improvement in society through reformist socialism. The reformist parties and trade-union leaders betrayed the revolution, capitulated to capitalism, and formed a coalition with the bourgeoisie in order to restore class rule and class exploitation as of old. All this they did under the banner of "democracy." As a result, this type of "sympathizer" with the proletariat has been led to doubt socialism itself and its capacity to bring liberation and renew society. The immense majority of the proletariat outside Soviet Russia tolerated this betrayal with a weak-willed fear of struggle and submitted to their own exploitation and enslavement. Among the layers in ferment among the small and middle bourgeoisie and intellectuals, this shattered any belief in the working class as a powerful agent of radical social change. They have been joined by many proletarian forces who seek and demand action and are dissatisfied with the conduct of all the political parties. In addition, fascism attracted a social layer, the former officers, who lost their careers when the war ended. Now without income, they were disillusioned, uprooted, and torn from their class roots. This is especially true in the vanquished Central Powers [Germany and Austria-Hungary], in which fascism takes on a strong anti-republican flavour."

Are we in such a condition in India, we need to discuss thoroughly and arrive at consensus prior to using the term 'Fascism'. ABMKSS recognises contradictions within Capital and hence wants to evolve a nuanced strategy that would help isolate Monopoly/ Finance Capital in General and Crony Capital in particular. The Crisis of Capitalism also means that Capitalists stand in sharp contradiction to each other and hence it is possible to ensure that democratic strategies within Capitalism are also relevant.

**TARUN KANTI BOSE**

**ABMKSS**

## Dedication



Srikanth Bolla

*Sight is for the eyes, vision is for the mind*

Srikanth Bolla is MIT's first international blind student and the co-founder, Chairman and CEO of BOLLANT Industries Private Limited.

Bollant is a fast-growing, eco-friendly disposable paper and packaging products manufacturing company based in Hyderabad, India.

As a passionate learner, dynamic leader and social entrepreneur, Srikanth leads his team to create eco-friendly, sustainable paper products while employing persons with various abilities.

Srikanth is a sought-after motivational keynote speaker who has also worked extensively in the fields of entrepreneurship development, empowerment of the youth and for the betterment of persons and children with multiple disabilities. He has been associated with organizations like Lead India Foundation 2030, Samanvai Centre for Children with Multiple Disabilities, and Surge Impact Foundation.

In 2017, Forbes Asia had named him in the 30 under 30 List of Emerging Entrepreneurs under the age of 30. He has received numerous prestigious awards from various organizations. Some of them are:

- Pratibha Excellence Awards, awarded by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for academic excellence.
- Pride of Telangana Award in the Emerging Business Entrepreneur Category by Round Table India - 2018
  - Young Change-Maker of the Year by Hindu Business Line – 2018
    - Nava Nakshatra Sanmanam by TV9 media group, 2019
- Social Entrepreneur of the Globe by Youth Business International, Uganda – 2016
  - Emerging Leadership Award by ECLIF, Malaysia – 2016
    - Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year by CII – 2016
      - Indian of the Year Award - 2015 by NDTV
- Best Youth Leader Award from the former President of India – 2012
- Youth Leadership Award presented by New Jersey Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula – 2011
- Honored Member, National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS), a renowned college honor society – 2011
  - National Entrepreneurship Award by the Government of India, 2019
    - Entrepreneur of the Globe by One Young World, UK, 2019
  - Finalist in Emerging Entrepreneur by Financial Times, UK, 2018

- Youth Excellence Award presented by the Telugu Fine Arts Society of New Jersey - 2010.
- Distinguished Youth Service Award presented by Dr. J. Bapu Reddy for Outstanding Academic Performance - 2010.
- All India Silver Medal for Fractional Distillation of Petroleum Project in 93rd Indian Science Congress – 2007
  - Outstanding Person in Business Category, JCI India
- Listed in Young Global Leaders List, 2021, World Economic Forum.

To connect with Srikanth, please email [srikanth@bollant.com](mailto:srikanth@bollant.com)

## Part I

# Facets of an Ecosystem Approach to Sustainable Development



A glimpse of the distribution of elephant corridors in India: Credit Anjali Oraon



A brief report on the *Discussion on Facets of an Ecosystem Approach to Sustainable Development: Case Studies from four Districts of Jharkhand and one from West Bengal.*

While opening the discussions, Viren Lobo, Managing trustee provided a background to the work of IELA in general and the events emerging from the workshop in Udaipur where for the first time, IELA tried to consolidate the experiences over the last forty years with the help of SPWD and Prayatana Samiti (being put in more depth here for the information of all).

Following a request from Foundation for Ecological Security, IELA participated in a process to provide recommendations to the task force on Grazing Ecology in Rajasthan. This and other processes helped IELA prepare a policy brief on the Ecosystems approach to land use ecology in Rajasthan.

[https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Ecosystems-approach-to-land-use-ecology-and-livelihoods-in-Rajasthan\\_A-policy-brief.pdf](https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Ecosystems-approach-to-land-use-ecology-and-livelihoods-in-Rajasthan_A-policy-brief.pdf)

Following this consultants from the world bank held a consultation on the relevance of forests for social security. In order to place the consultation in a larger perspective to the specific case studies that were discussed, IELA provided inputs to the consultant team

<https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Discussion-on-the-role-of-Forest-in-Social-Security-and-as-a-Social-Safety-net-for-local-communities.pdf>

Separately IELA at the request of Echo network prepared a note on the Valuation of Echo Network to be presented to its partner organisations during the session on Ecosystem Stewardship

[https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Valuation-of-Ecosystems\\_-\\_IELA\\_Habitat\\_Case-studies-from-different-States.pdf](https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Valuation-of-Ecosystems_-_IELA_Habitat_Case-studies-from-different-States.pdf)

This process put us in touch with Dr Sourya Das a faculty at XISS, Ranchi who invited us to participate in the Summer Internship Programme of XISS. IELA saw this as an opportunity to put together its work in Jharkhand on a more theoretical plane than it has before integrating theory and practise. Will not into the details of the events leading up to this presentation but will share them at a more opportune time when we are able to engage more meaningfully on the process of preparing a strategy for Jharkhand underlying the relevance of the ecosystems approach for the livelihoods of local communities in which the case studies developed by the students is but a first but vital step.

**Presentation by Ravindra Kumar on The Hidden Impact of Coal on the Communities in Ramgarh District Jharkhand**

<https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/The-Hidden-impact-on-Coal-mining-compressed.pdf>

The study takes into account the positive impact of mining of coal for the development of human society while looking at the impact on health, environment and local livelihoods of the rural communities. Given this it tried to examine the relevance and significance of the District Mineral Fund as a way of mitigating these negative effects. The case study examines the CSR programme of Central Coalfields Limited and Tata Steel foray into Coal in Ramgarh ( known as West Bokaro Coal Mine) . In comparison to CCL, Tata seems to have performed better but as suggested in the meeting there is a need to look at Coal in the larger context of its overall impact on Society and the Global move to phase out Coal production. Given these, the fact Jharkhand is lagging behind on the production of renewable energy and that the Jharkhand Government is using coal to deny rights to forest dwellers and Forest dependant communities is inexplicable.

The study findings will be taken up further in the context of the larger livelihood scenario of tribals for which the ecosystem approach will be used to examine the various interlinkages identified.

### **Presentation by Anjali Kumari Oraon on Elephant Corridor and Local Communities at Bundu Block, Ranchi**

<https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ELEPHANT-CORRIDOR-compressed.pdf>

Anjali's presentation tried to place the issues of the elephant corridor in Bundu in the light of the larger question of corridors facing India in general and Jharkhand in particular. Her presentation showed the following

- a. Elephant Corridors are on the rise in India.
- b. There is deterioration in the conditions of a large number of corridors
- c. All corridors from North to South are on the Eastern side of India and linked to large forest regions in these areas. The reason for a total lack of corridors in the Western Region are still to be explored. Fragmentation and hence disconnectivity could be a major cause. it will be looked at in more detail over the next six months.
- d. The conditions in the Bundu corridor indicate that there are pressures to divert the elephants to the more dense forests, putting extra pressure on the people living and dependent on these forests. Despite this, people want solutions that are harmonious for elephants and human beings as well.

Sanjay Basu Mullick while explaining this said that its origins lie in Munda folk lore where elephants are considered another form of human beings who live in the deep jungles (recent development of our understanding of elephants as pointed out by Prof Prakash Das of XISS indicate that they not only have a historical memory this is intergenerational as well ). Prof Praksh Das also pointed out the need to look at what is happening around (namely Dolma forests near Jamshedpur, Ayodhya Hills in West Bengal . Anjali confirmed that the railway line and other measures were preventing elephants from moving towards Ayodhya hills in West Bengal. The fact that West Bengal has the largest number of elephant corridors could

account for its reluctance to allow free movement of elephants into West Bengal . This aspect also will be studied over the next six months. Her study also pointed to the diversion of elephants into Garh Chiroli and other such diversions in Jharkhand and other States as well, accounting for the large increase in corridors over the last twenty years.

While not presented fully, her study has also covered the kind of feed liked by elephants and the link between this and the food of human beings. She pointed out that some crops were not being grown due to them being liked by the elephant. The community elephant interface, escalation of man- animal conflict and the possible short term and long term solutions will be taken up in greater depth over the next six months.

**Niraj Kumar: Study of Fluoride Contamination in Water Resources of Pratapur Village, Garhwa, Jharkhand.**

<https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Garhwa-ppt-compressed.pdf>

The study *Study of Fluoride Contamination in Water Resources at Pratappur Village of Garhwa, Jharkhand* tries to set a background for examining a burning issue namely fluoride contamination and its impact on society. The issue came to the limelight in 2012 when there were shocking reports of sixty deaths due to Fluoride in Pratapur village of Garhwa. Twelve years down the line nothing substantial has been done to address this with various measures adopting either failing or facing constraints during implementation.

While solutions exist, given the current level of implementation it is impossible to address without proper awareness of the local community and a robust monitoring method for managing and implementing the solutions being examined. Given the time frame of the study it was only possible to develop the range of issues that need to be studied and examined so that graded targeted solutions can be arrived at.

The study points to a need to critically examine the relationship of fluoride contamination to groundwater depletion and recharge during the monsoon. How deforestation has impacted the groundwater regime and the relevance of the diet to prevent and control fluorosis in the early stages itself.

While the study focuses on the findings of one village, it tries to present the larger picture in relation to Garhwa and its relevance to other parts of Jharkhand and India as well. It is proposed to understand the various factors affecting control of this menace at the village level itself and provide pointers to a more robust system of water governance that would help address this issue in partnership mode with the government at the District level .

**Mayank Khandelwal: Issues related to promotion and restoration of Millet Cultivation in Jharkhand : Case study of Ranchi and Gumla - exploration of promising leads.**

<https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Millet-Revival-in-Jharkhand-Exploring-Opportunities-for-Promotion-and-Restoration-compressed.pdf>

Mayank's presentation covered a global historical overview of millet cultivation and placed millet production in India in this larger context. It could be clearly seen that India and Africa were the major producers of millets. While millet production has suffered from low productivity and lack of technology advancement in processing, putting barriers on its production (despite awareness of its benefits) , the two case studies from Ranchi and Gumla

pointed to the fact that an appropriate support systems could help address a large number of these problems as could be seen from the significant jump in the area covered and productivity of millet cultivation in these two locations.

Inputs from Sewa Bharat Hazaribagh indicated that tremendous additional possibilities existed if women could be involved in the programme and modifications made to the traditional methods of cooking millet to suit some of the modern tastes that have been developed. More importantly the discussions observed that the current focus was on the market while there was a need to enhance self consumption of millet for which some of the policy frameworks related its availability and price considering the Public Distribution Scheme were not conducive (low priced cereals under PDS diverted millets to the market while the farmers consumed poorer nutritional quality grains under the PDS).

The need for a graded and targeted approach for different sections of the community namely children between 1-6, children under the mid day meal scheme, families would need a more in depth study with the local communities over the next six months.

### **Shahishta Noor: Study of Climate Change and Climate Resilient agriculture**

<https://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Shahista-Presentation.pdf>

This presentation focussed on the man made changes being brought about to the very complex interactions taking place in nature leading to what is generally known as climate change. Large Increases in extreme events like high and low temperatures, high intensity rainfall, changes in the rainfall pattern, droughts and floods, cyclones, sand storms are among the major impacts on climate while deforestation, forest and agricultural fires, industrialisation are among the major causes. The study tried to examine the linkages between what was happening in Australia with that in India due to the vast ocean separating the two and the interseasonal impact that global polarity brought into play. Though not adequately studied, Increase in winter temperatures in India due to burning of rice straw in the cold North could one of the possible reasons for disruption of the rainfall in Australia, it could also be the reason for unseasonal winter rains in India. The impact of the large-scale snow melt of the Himalayas, the third largest snow cap (now down to 40% of its original size seventy years back is also a major cause of disruption in the wind currents in the Indian subcontinent and its subsequent impact on climatic factors.

Moving to Chhota Nagpur plateau and Purulia where SPWD's work in twelve villages of Pundag region (covering Joypur and Jhalda Blocks) was studied. The interventions were placed in the context of the topography and the suitable soil and water conservation measures needed to offset the impacts of deforestation and loss of soil moisture and nutrients. Given the conditions, right now the work of SPWD is mostly adaptive with focus on reducing cost of production so as to lessen impact of crop loss during a drought year.

Further studies need to be done to see how we can move from adaptation to mitigation of impacts. SPWD is looking at the relevance of kitchen gardens in the urban areas (as well) so as to move towards a zero organic waste regime and take the benefits of recycling.

### **Conclusion:**

The findings are being discussed at various levels with XISS faculty, SPWD, Badlao Foundation, Jharkhand Jungle Bachao Andolan and others to see how a concerted effort could be made at local, district and State levels to identify the areas of study, nature of policy interventions possible and targeted interventions on the ground.

## Part II

### A Perspective on Ecology and Livelihood



The majestic Teesta River and the Fambong Lho Wildlife sanctuary in Sikkim

## **Essence of Ecosystem Stewardship**

In terms of approach the following proposition has been spelt out by IELA

- Gram Sabha is the smallest unit of governance.
- Ecosystem is the smallest unit to understand the dynamics of larger phenomena like climate change etc.

Hence we need a federation of gram sabhas at the ecosystem level to provide community perspective to issues relating to ecosystem stewardship.

b. In terms of communities, we engage actively with the following

- Small farmers ( as they depend on commons)
- Small and traditional Fish workers
- Pastoralists
- Tribals (and other forest dependant communities)
- Wage labour originating from the village

Cross cutting these and other stakeholders within the ecosystem are women and children

This is the group that is most affected by adverse changes in the ecosystem and hence amenable to participating in a programme for change.

For now the following

Given the approach of decentralised governance we are not talking about a data system managed by us but a framework where the data can be generated and managed by the individual / community. IELA is working on doing this with an organisation called Ashankur based in Bhokar near Srirampur and working in Ahmednagar District.

In terms of valuation our choice of topics is helping us understand how market based valuations superimpose on the larger questions and concerns IELA is dealing with, the kind of corrective factors communities apply to this valuation. As 'scientists' our vision is broader, so the kind of valuation defined by science (laws of nature for now) is different from both of these. This ideal is placed to the community in some way so that the current valuation reflected by market/ community can be tweaked in some way to come closer to the values which we understand through science.

The proposal below got grounded due to lack of funding support post COVID19 and the silo based approach of different organisations. Since it was IELA's first attempt to upscale experiences related to federation approach in a particular sector (forestry) across the country it might be useful for you to just glance through. It also incorporates the five policy briefs related to different types of forest lands which might be useful for others as well.

<http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Facilitating-Development-of-Federations-for-Local-Self-Governance-in-Three-States-of-India-Case-study-of-Forestry.pdf>

COVID also stalled my first association with the Echo network as the workshop planned by them got cancelled. When I shared the proceedings of a workshop organised by IELA in Rajasthan, Shannon invited me to present my views at a zoom meeting on ecosystem valuation being organised by Echo network. I used this opportunity to concisely put together our experiences across the country with the help of my two colleagues Dr Sunil Dubey and Dr Leena Gupta. The url of the paper is given below

[http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Valuation-of-Ecosystems\\_-IELA\\_Habitat\\_Case-studies-from-different-States.pdf](http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Valuation-of-Ecosystems_-IELA_Habitat_Case-studies-from-different-States.pdf)

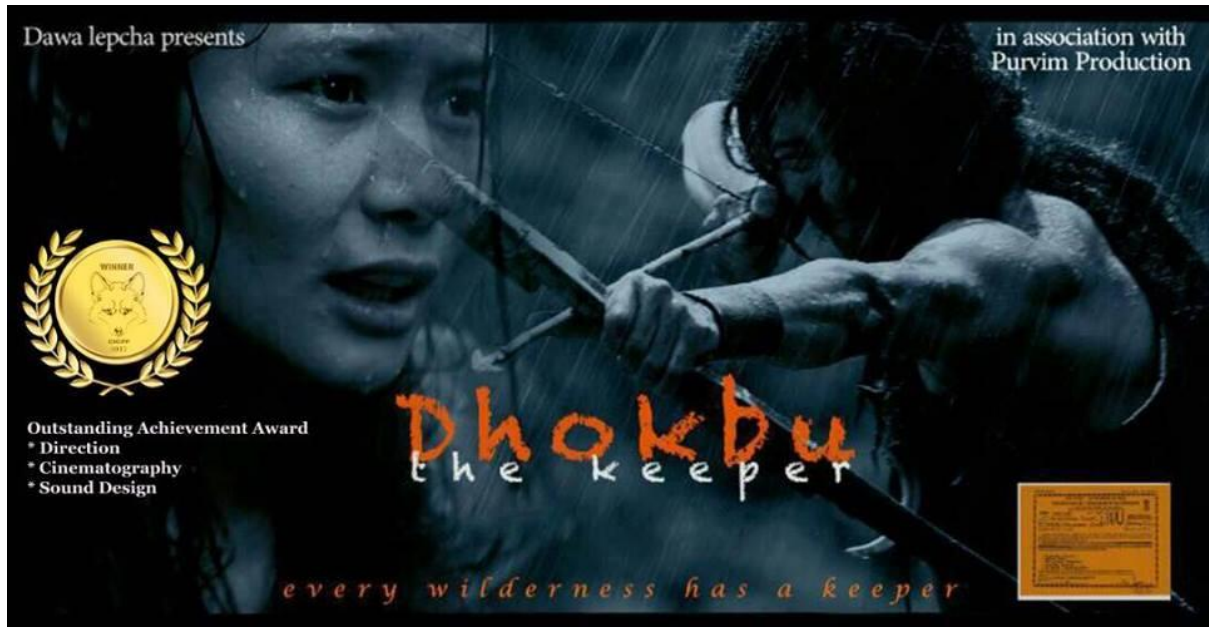
In this paper we have pointed out how economic decisions based on market operations (cash based economy) have resulted in the destruction of ecosystems. Based on our experiences we pointed out how ecosystems approach with the help of the local community could help reverse this process. What we look forward to now with the help of all of you is to use this understanding to help develop an approach for ecosystem stewardship where communities are the driving factor behind stewardship.

The paper below shows how we are trying to bring this understanding to bear on the development of a policy and strategy paper for Rajasthan.

[http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Ecosystems-approach-to-land-use-ecology-and-livelihoods-in-Rajasthan\\_A-policy-brief.pdf](http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Ecosystems-approach-to-land-use-ecology-and-livelihoods-in-Rajasthan_A-policy-brief.pdf)

## Part III

### Spiritual/Ecological Connections & Our Common Home



Dokbu: The Keeper



Dhokbu (which translates as ‘the keeper’) represents Dawa’s understanding of what it means to be a Lepcha. In an interview with Darjeeling Chronicle, he said, “Like every tribal community around the globe, we Lepchas also believe in natural deities and protectors of wild forest and wilderness. This film is about a mythical character, who is the guardian of the wilderness of the Sikkim Himalayas, who rescues and protects a young university student who gets lost in the wild while on a research recce, and helps her return to civilization. The film reflects a few of my own thoughts influenced by what I went through during my days of intense activism.” (“Sikkimese Filmmaker Dawa Lepcha Nominated for Golden Fox Award - The Darjeeling Chronicle”, 2017). Dawa continues to record the disappearing ways of life through a medium that he is confident in. Reviving memories of food, the process of preparing it and sharing it with others, also underlines Dawa’s goal of retaining the link with the land and his people. His documentary, Finding Pushen, records the all but forgotten food, an ingredient derived from a species of palm that grows in the jungles of Dzongu. Through his research he found some elderly people who knew about it.<sup>1</sup>

“Dhokbu – the Keeper” is a film that showcases the beautiful scenery of the Himalayan state Sikkim, India. The movie is filled with adventure and interesting plot twists. Stories of local folklore, with which many Sikkimese generations have grown up, make up the background of the film. The storyline follows the journey of a research scholar on fieldwork who gets lost in the wild and encounters a guardian deity who protects her in the wilderness, while narrating stories and myths of the land. Kikee D. Bhutia is the film’s lead actor. She is also currently a PhD student in the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu. Her research interest includes the belief narratives related to the supernatural landscape, pilgrimage, and relationship between humans and deities in Sikkim<sup>2</sup>.

[https://scholar.google.co.in/citations?view\\_op=view\\_citation&hl=en&user=a2vm87kAAAAJ&citation\\_for\\_view=a2vm87kAAAAJ:u-x6o8ySG0sC](https://scholar.google.co.in/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=a2vm87kAAAAJ&citation_for_view=a2vm87kAAAAJ:u-x6o8ySG0sC)

Brief Description provided by K D Bhutia the author

This article engages with the presence, personalities, and lives of yul lha gzhi bdag (protective and guardian deities) who reside with the Lhopo (Bhutia) community in Sikkim, India. Informed by fieldwork, and through narratives, observations, and experiences, I illustrate and discuss how interactions and connections between villagers and deities are shaped by principles of relationality and mutuality. After discussing the various meanings and manifestations yul lha gzhi bdag take on in diverse Himalayan contexts, I illustrate through discussions of rituals, practices, beliefs, and narratives how the ‘mundane’ routines and lifeworld of the Lhopo villagers variously connect with, and derive meaning from, the supernatural world that surrounds them. I argue, however, that this is not a one-way process but that deities similarly rely on villagers to derive and validate their existence in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sikkimproject.org/making-of-a-sacred-land-and-its-guardians/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://aasiakeskus.ut.ee/en/content/feature-film-dhokbu-keeper-1606>

**Part IV**  
**Politics of different kinds**



**Comrade Padmaja: The Struggle within and Without**

## **Women, Slave, Concubine: Harking back to an era long forgotten**

Tarun Kanti Bose's 4<sup>th</sup> chapter on Haryana, *Bride Trafficking or Marriage of Inconvenience turning women into Silent slaves* brings out the dark underside of Haryana which shot into the limelight with their sparkling performance in sports on the World stage. While there too, women have raised the # Me too slogan regarding sexual molestation in a still unfulfilled struggle for justice, the ramifications of the horrifying conditions facing women due to infanticide and other steps taken reflected in the lowest women to male sex ratio in the country brings back macabre image from a long forgotten era where women were traded/objects of desire of conquering hordes.

In his third chapter on Dalits too, Tarun Kanti Bose has highlighted the plight facing economically upcoming Dalits women who have faced the wrath, been paraded naked by the upper classes primarily Jats for no fault of their own. However these very same Jats facing a shortage of women to marry within their own community have purchased brides primarily from the tribal regions of Jharkhand and North East. While fulfilling their duty towards carrying on the family name and tradition, their conditions are worse than slaves, being beaten, tortured and misused by all and sundry in the family.

The conditions facing these women reflect the dark underbelly of the beast within, one which modernisation has failed to correct. Considering the conditions leading to the farmer's struggle the reasons are not hard to find. With the upper class Jats facing an unprecedented economic crisis born from cultural restrictions ( which restrict the type of employment avenues they can seek), refuge is sought in asserting dominance of the women members of the household as also similar treatment meted out to upcoming Dalit communities described by Tarun in his earlier chapter on Dalits.

That the Jats have lost faith in the traditional regressive leadership of the State is reflected in the electoral results where a new type of alignment seems to be emerging. Given the traditional history of repression, other communities are still wary but a sliver of hope has indeed emerged. How this can be carried to its logical conclusion remains to be seen.

## Part V

### Health, Happiness and the Hope Gene



[Our Lady of Fatima Church Udaipur](#)

## **Report of Udaipur Diocese on implementation of Laudato si to be presented at the Joint Northern Region meeting on Integral Ecology at Delhi on 25<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

The following is report of Udaipur Diocese for the Joint Northern Region meeting on Integral Ecology on 25<sup>th</sup>- 26<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

Following the publication of the Pope's encyclical Laudato meetings of priests, laity and people from other religious denominations were held in the Diocese. Viren Lobo who is working on these issues and who studied the document carefully presented a gist of the document highlighting two major aspects

- Sin means distance from God, neighbour and nature
- The need to rebuild broken community ties

The detailed presentation by him is given in the url below

<http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/A-Call-for-restoration-of-broken-societal-threads-as-a-precondition-for-ecological-democracy.pdf>

Given this understanding, Udaipur Diocese has acted proactively in building up local communities around the activation of the parish council. In a number of parishes, the call for synodal church was used to have a discussion with the parishioners as to how to activate the participation of the parishioners and reach outward as well. They are as follows

a. During COVID 19, a series of seven plays were written placing different aspects of the issues related to establishment of ecological democracy at the local level. These have been published in two volumes, url given below

<http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/A-Tryst-with-Mother-Nature-and-the-Beast-within.pdf>

<http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Think-Globally-Act-Locally-The-Family-within-the-world-without.pdf>

b. Following this there was an attempt to develop an understanding on the SDGs. An intern with Institute for Ecology and Livelihood action (IELA), Anjali D'Cunha prepared slides on each of the 17 Sustainable development goals (agenda 2030 which emerged as sequel to the Millenium Development Goals and was the concrete way outlined by the UN to take forward the Sustainable development agenda (SDGs). The slide presentations can be viewed at the following url

<http://ielaind.org/internship-by-anjali-dcunha/>

c. Considering the deep knowledge of IELA on the SDGs , St Mary's of the Angels Fatehpura and a part of Udaipur Diocese asked them for assistance in developing their response to the same. This resulted in a plan for St Mary's to operationalise the SDGs given in the url below.

[http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Operationalising-the-plan-of-action-for-development-of-of-Childrens-parlaiments-around-the-SDGs-by-SMA\\_Fatehpura-and-IELA\\_Udaipur.pdf](http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Operationalising-the-plan-of-action-for-development-of-of-Childrens-parlaiments-around-the-SDGs-by-SMA_Fatehpura-and-IELA_Udaipur.pdf)

St Mary's also partnered with IELA to celebrate world Wetland Day, the reports are given in the urls below

<http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/The-Wetlands-of-Menar-beckon.pdf>

[http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Report-of-World-Wetland-Day2024\\_IELA-Partners\\_FINAL-compressed.pdf](http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Report-of-World-Wetland-Day2024_IELA-Partners_FINAL-compressed.pdf)

Further plans are being developed which will be reported as they develop.

d. In Rajasthan, IELA is developing partnerships with organisations across the State around issues related to the Aravallis, this is being mentioned as the work being done in udaipur Diocese will be formatted in this framework. The url of the policy document prepared by IELA in this regard is given below

[http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Ecosystems-approach-to-land-use-ecology-and-livelihoods-in-Rajasthan\\_A-policy-brief.pdf](http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Ecosystems-approach-to-land-use-ecology-and-livelihoods-in-Rajasthan_A-policy-brief.pdf)

e. Recently Grandparents day was celebrated by a number of parishes across the diocese. As part of its preparation Udaipur Cathedral parish prepared a video reaching out to 45 families with the help of the area representatives and others.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKxLG3HwDCK>

How this initiative can be used to develop the agenda to rebuild broken community ties will be taken up over the next year.

f. In the schools of Banswara, Udaipur, Kankroli, Bhilwara Chittaurgarh solar panels have been installed to reduce electricity consumption. In Gogunda school a solar pump set has been installed.

g. St Mary's and St. Anthony's Schools from Udaipur also participated in a training programme called Pragati media shala organised by Sceince Centre Bhopal and support of the National Council for Science and technology. This programme involved how to use the Eco Eureka kit a tool kit for children to study soil, water, biodiversity, atmosphere and other aspects related to nature. Both schools are actively involving school children in developing an appreciation of science through study of nature.

h. Udaipur diocese has a majority of tribals and this representation is among the priests of the diocese as well. Education has been the main reason for the upliftment of tribals in the diocese. Considering the tribal deep relation with nature and ecology, how this strength of the Udaipur can help respond to the agenda of integral ecology will be explored further.

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Viren Lobo who was influenced by liberation theology during his college days did an MBA from Institute of Rural Management Anand. He has been working the development sector since he passed out from there in 1985. Employer, employee and other contradictions observed by him during his thirty year stint at Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD) forced him to examine the relevance of Marxism as a way of looking at reality in relation to change he sought to bring. During the course of his work covering more than twenty States, he noticed a link between the livelihoods and ecology which he pursued strongly as Executive Director SPWD. The limitations of existing organisations to deal with the complex questions society posed motivated him to set up Institute of Ecology and Livelihood Action as the transition needed to address issues he was looking into at that time. The contradictions arising out of the a series of Bills that were passed during the last five years encouraged him to use the enforced sedentary life imposed on him to use his creativity to write plays. These were the first of a series which have helped serve the purpose of putting on paper the complex dilemma and diverse social opinions he came across.



## About Especioza Trust:



Especioza Trust is named after my great, great grandmother who widowed at an early age brought up her only son Aogustinho (seated in centre). Shortly after a family reunion in December 2013, we got news that the family home at 84 Porvorim had been illegally sold to a builder. My aunt Marie stepped in and after getting the required mandate from the family not only got the family home back but the previous ancestral home of 85 Porvorim as well. Since then it became her project in memory of her widowed great grandmother till her death on her mother Amy Lobo's 117<sup>th</sup> birthday (25<sup>th</sup> July 2019). Since the informal trust set up by her could not achieve fruition I decided to keep the struggle and memories alive by carrying on her mission to bring unity within the family and dedicate the work of the Trust to all widows and single women of the world. My Aunt/Cousin Hazel Cardozo the daughter of Liban Pinto one of the two brothers born on my birthday (6<sup>th</sup> September) has helped me to give this project shape. The other brother Lucian in whose name the house was, also happened to be born on my birthday as well. The spiritual connection and the necessity for me to step in also come from a lot of other quarters which need not be documented here.

Viren Lobo