

KATHA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
AUGUST 1993

INTRODUCTION

This year brought Katha, once again, the excitement of exploration and creativity.

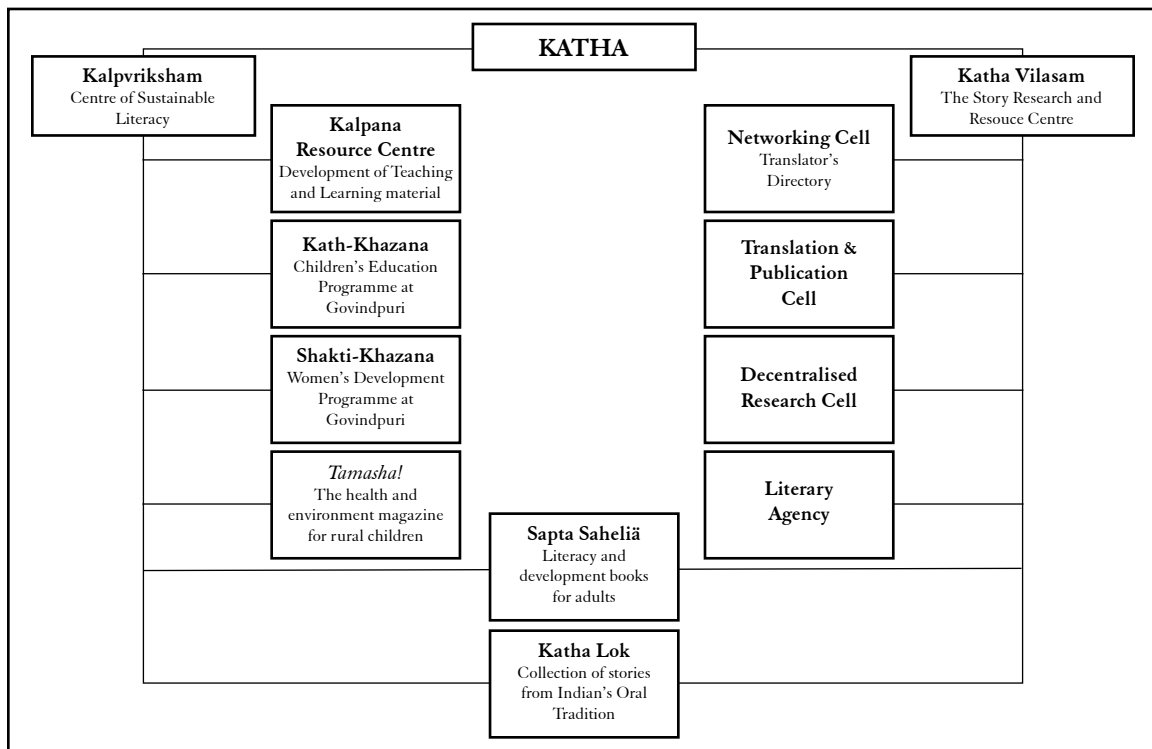
As the Council may remember, in 1991, we had decided that we have to make long term plans more comprehensively and long term if Katha was to keep faith with itself. Today, almost four years since we got registered, I am happy to say that Katha is considered a group which is quality-conscious, dependable and, as some people complain, a trifle too serious about fun.

We took on projects not because we had the resources for it, but because there was a need, directly arising from the work that we did. This meant that each one of us was extended, work-wise. Somehow though, to the Katha family, this has never been a problem.

This may be due to the fact that the people we 'work with, the children, the women, the teachers, have beef' great to be with.

Till last year all of us associated with Katha would get tongue-tied when casual visitors asked us 'So, what do you do in Katha?' None of us really managed to start with Tamasha! and wind our way through Kalpavriksham, Katha Vachak, Katha Lok, Kathop-Kathan, Katha Vilasam to Khazana, our field project with children and women of one of the largest juggi-jhompri settlement in Govindpuri, Delhi – Bhumiheen, Navjiwan and Jawahar Camps.

This year, in the process of consolidation, we have grouped all the work under two major projects: Kalpavriksham and Katha Vilasam.



HIGHLIGHTS

- Katha was one of a select group of Indian publishers invited to the Paris Book Fair, 1993. India was the Guest of Honour.
- Katha has agreed to collaborate with Grund, publishers of books for children in France to publish Indian stories for French children. Grund is a publishing company that was started in 1888.
- Katha was asked to make a half-hour presentation on our activities at the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) International Congress, held in New Delhi in 1993.
- Katha has been expanding! We now operate out of 46 rooms in Khazana, our field project, in Govindpuri. While, in our Nizamuddin Office, we have just rented additional space.
- Khazana now has a lively population of nearly 1100 children. About 80 women are part of our income-generation and skills-up gradation programmes.
- 125 children wrote entrance exams and got into formal schools/The National Open School in 1993. About 70 of these were students who are between 7-14 years of age and had never been to school or had dropped out some years ago. 55 were from our preschool. Renu, a child who had stopped going to school when she migrated to Delhi some years ago, qualified for the 8th class!
- In July 1993, we held the first Khazana Mela where our women displayed and sold their products and we had an impressive 'Graduation Ceremony' for our young graduates.
- It Khazana the 'deschool' for children helms been chosen as a India Country programme by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva. Thus the Khazana Experiment moves from being a pilot project to a full-fledged programme for working children.
- If any recommendation for peace has to be given in the country in the aftermath of the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi Issue, it must be to the people of the community we work with in Govindpuri. We have a mixed population, consisting of Hindus, Muslims and Christians. But, peace prevailed through those worrisome days.
- The President of India, Shri Shankar Dayal Sharma, gave away the 1992 Katha Awards to writers and translators on October 30, 1992. The Katha Awards this year was made possible, once again, by a grant from the Indian Tourism Development Corporation, Ltd.
- The Katha Colloquium: Language, Culture and Translation was cosponsored by India International Centre and the North Zone Cultural Centre. The two-day get-together saw more than 60 participants who participated fully and enthusiastically.
- *Tamasha!* now goes out regularly to 10,000 ICDS Centres in Rajasthan. This is in addition to individual subscribers. 15,000 copies go out free of cost to rural schools.
- Rockefeller Foundation has given us a grant for *Tamasha!* This will help us strengthen our marketing strategies.

KALPVRIKSHAM

The centre for Sustainable Literacy

Over the last four years, one of the major concerns of Katha has been to make our operations sustainable. Rather naively, we had thought this was all to do with fund-raising. Last year was a year when the various activities of Katha fell into place, jigsaw-puzzle-like. All that we have been doing can be seen not just as making Katha sustainable but also as ways in which literacy itself can be made sustainable.

Kalpavriksham and Khazana, which we had been seeing as two projects in the areas of children and women and development began to gain strengths when we saw them together, as a centre for sustainable literacy.

We firmly believe that literacy in India will be sustainable only if we see it in an integrated way, with

Literacy, with its concomitant values like building of leadership qualities and an ability to be assertive;

Income-generation and skills upgradation, with its related skills of accountancy, quality-control, packaging and marketing of wares; the strengthening of skills needed to be a good entrepreneur, consumer and, most importantly a responsible and responsive Citizen;

Family wellbeing, especially the health of the children and the woman's reproductive health. This also includes the physical and natural environment.

Empowerment enabling women and children, otherwise marginalised in a community, to appropriate space for their own decisions, to use knowledge to grapple with choices and ultimately take life in their own hands.

Over the last year we have seen sustainability as comprising of not just these four linked LIFE components but also of many others.

We believe these linkages may answer the question which we are often asked: Why literacy? What is the use of literacy?

But the underlying philosophy of Katha is – if I may call it that – happiness. We see happiness as the main ingredient – not just personal happiness, but happiness that comes through the development of the community and friends; a sense of satisfaction and contentment that comes from a value-added life style; a seeking after excellence, a desire to be creative and find happiness in creativity.

We strongly believe that this will be the single most important element that will make sense of all the effort, time and energy we want people to put into the act of becoming literate. We believe that true development for our people can come only if we have enough information and wisdom to preserve what is best of Indian thought and tradition and look for a merger of all that is best in Western medicine and practices.

We hope we can learn from the experiences and mistakes of other countries who have been where we are today, many years ago.

It is in an effort to carry these ideas forward in as effective a way as possible for a small organisation like Katha that we started Kalpavriksham.

We have chosen this name, because we see literacy and basic education as the 'Kalpavriksham' in today's India. Kalpavriksham is the wish-fulfilling tree in Indian mythology.

The main concern of Kalpavriksham remains the child. But since the people who have power over the child is the teacher and the adult, most often the mother, many of our programmes in Kalpana Resource Centre and in Khazana, our Govindpuri. Field Project, focus on these important people.

TAMASHA!

Tamasha! is the health and environment funbook. A quarterly magazine, it reaches out to nearly 30,000 schools in rural India. Even if only 10 children/school see our magazine, *Tamasha!* reaches out to 3,00,000 children!

Over the last year, results of a survey on 'Print Communication and the Rural Child' which Katha has just finished in Rajasthan and Bihar have spurred us on to see *Tamasha!* as the possible fountainhead for our literacy and child-education work.

A whole series of curriculum development and teaching/learning approaches are being developed, based on *Tamasha!*, especially for use in nonformal education.

Tamasha! also plans to carry illustrations in a style which can be adapted/adopted by the teacher for immediate classroom use.

Tamasha! is what it is because of its design, its illustrations. Full of colour, bursting with joie de vivre, larger than life, really. We are happy we have a widening circle of friends, among world class illustrators: Atanu Roy, Suddha Sattwa Basu, Sujata Singh, Vandana Bist, Neeraj Sahai, Tapas Guha, Taposhi Ghoshal, Damayanti, Sumati, Sujasha Dasgupta, Subba Ghosh, Arvinder Chawla. Our printers have always done us proud, too.

Shahila Habibullah, and now, Ena Mehra have been enthusiastic and creative fund-raisers for *Tamasha!* We are lucky to have them with us.

Print Communication and the Rural Child: A Survey

In spite of the electronic media's inroads into rural areas, the benefits of print communication cannot be gainsaid. And, with the massive programmes in literacy, more children are becoming literate, turning to print media for information and entertainment. But, what do we know about the rural child and what she/he needs or asks for?

When we started *Tamasha!* I had given form to an idea that was more of a gut feeling, an educated guess, based on knowledge gained from writing for children. Therefore, after three issues of *Tamasha!* we did a small survey in the hills of U.P. to find out answers for some of the questions that nagged us. This made us realise that a more in-depth survey was needed to assess the needs of children and to situate print communication within the larger field of communication, ranging from folk to the electronic media.

Hence, with UNICEF support this project was launched. The first stage of this survey has been conducted in two blocks of Bihar and two of Rajasthan, in rural primary schools this year.

The survey was done in two distinct rounds, with a gap of about one month between the two visits. This enabled us to distribute our magazine, *Tamasha!* and then see what children remember, what kind of messages they get, what characters they remember, etc. We were also seeking answers for questions like: Do they like fantasies? Do they find the type of reversal of stereotypes in *Tamasha!* disturbing? Do they see such characters as role models? Certain questions on design, the invisible element of the magazine, have also been looked into. The report is ready.

Researcher: Rashmi Rana

Place visited as part of the survey:

BIHAR: Madhubani Block

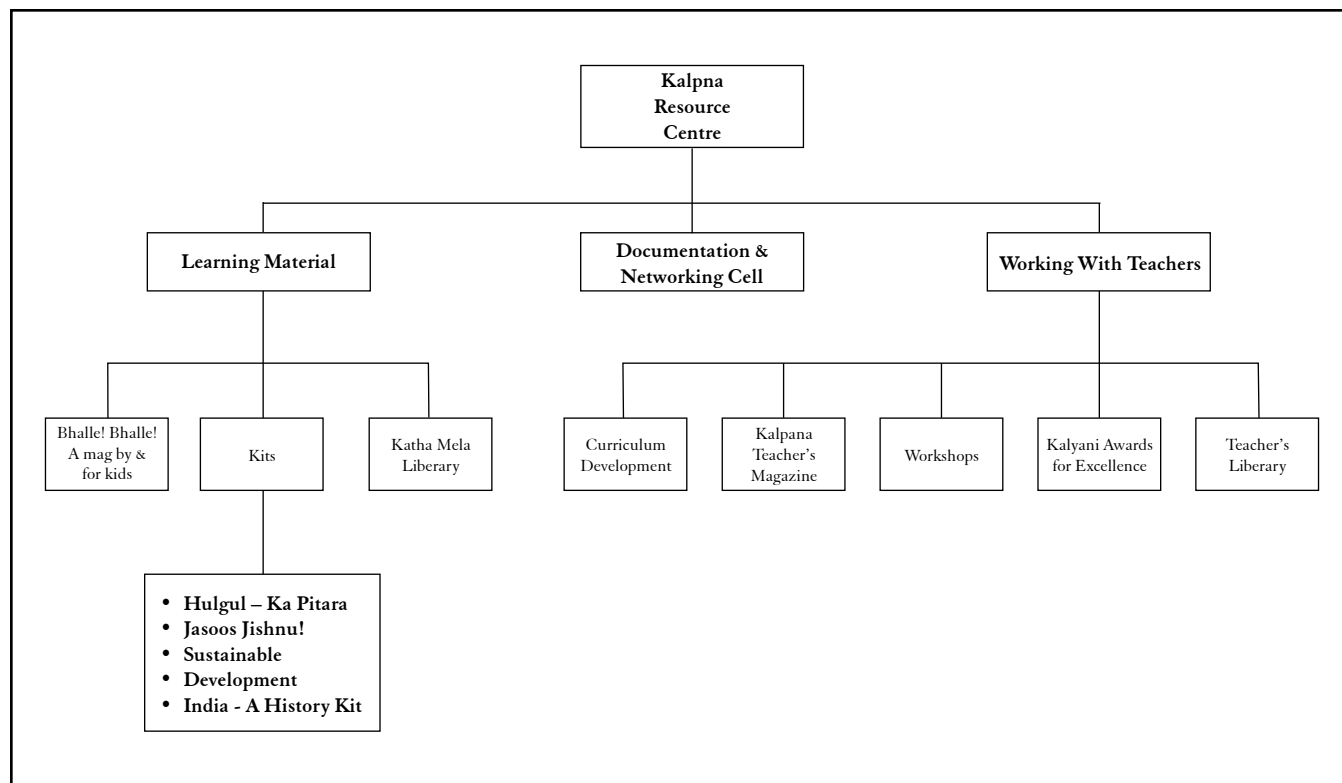
Madhubani, Pilakhwar, Rampani,
Jitvarpur, Rahika.
Dumka Block
Kaladumari, Shikaripara, Gopikandar,
Gangwara, Kakni.

RAJASTHAN: Bikaner Block Sharera,

Surdhana, Chautrana, Duera Station,
Kakku, Siyana.
Ajmer Block
Lamana, Paharganj, Aakodia,
Byavar, Bandanwada.

KALPANA RESOUCE CENTRE FOR NONFORMAL EDUCATIION

Coordinator: Churu Anand



Kalpna believes sincerely that the future of our children lies in nonformal education. Much as we'd like to see all Indian children getting their full quota of 12 years of schooling, we do not know how this could be made possible. Moreover, Government schools, with their tenured teachers, lack of facilities and a general sense of apathy of administrators and teachers has, unfortunately, led to schools becoming ineffective. The answer may lie in nonformal education being done by scrupulously-committed non-government organisations and individual teachers. Katha strives to identify and applaud good educators.

Kalpna networks, researches and develops teaching/ learning material for children, women and teachers.

Learning Material Development: Last year we started working on a follow-up for the HulGul ka Pitara which we had put into the market in February, 1992.

The Pitara is presently being used in about 300 NFE centres all over the Hindi-speaking belt.

The follow-up is a kit on sustainable living. It is funded by the Tarawati Ramgopal Trust. The kit will talk about the various aspects of sustainability (population education, land and water issues being given importance), through games, puzzles, stories and factsheets.

There will also be a 'manual' for teachers. It will contain success stories garnered from various villages of India; a simulation game; a book of 'survival words' or politically loaded words that will start the children off into reading, discussion, awareness. There will also be a Kids Environment Book – a book bursting with facts, figures and ideas on how to keep Planet Earth healthy and smiling.

We see this kit not only as fun-filled reading. It has, built into it, an action programme for sustainable living and an exciting Contest to motivate teachers to put the plan into action. The incentive scheme, we hope, will attract teachers to innovative Ways of teaching and keep them motivated and committed to creative teaching!

Jasoos Jishnu – A Teach Yourself English Kit: We believe that English is a language of power. Those who have it are the ones who get into the better-paying service and manufacturing sector where English skills are needed. We believe that it would be foolish to turn our backs to English. Rather, we should dissipate the power base that English has by having a larger number of people using the language with greater degrees of competence.

The other day when we had gone to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, we were appalled to see how many medicines are identified only in English; how many medicine bottles have their expiry date and other important information only in English; how many doctors use code like t.d. for twice day. In fact, AIIMS has a board which gives the code and an explanation in Hindi. As if a nonliterate or even a neoliterate person can really make sense of English abbreviations! For more reasons than one, we thought English had to become as much common currency as possible.

Hence, two years ago, an English Kit for use in nonformal education was mooted. Due to lack of money we could not do much about it till now. Now, with more staff and a little money to spare, we hope to put this kit into the market early next year.

This kit draws on Katha's philosophy that education should start with what the child knows and sees, and with the belief that, in nonformal education where the student is a working child, what can and will make education and learning sustainable is when the child and the teacher can see the village/town! city as the class room, as resource. Hence, the kit Starts

with advertisements that all children see and which invade their lives whether they like it or not, through television, films, hoardings and posters and consumer items they buy.

Using advertisements to help a child to learn how to read English is exciting in itself with a million possibilities. But, the kit also quite adequately puts to rest doubts like - Should we use advertisements to teach children to read? Would it not make them crass, consumeristic, greedy? We feel not. We feel the kit could help the child become a more responsible and knowledgeable consumer.

We have seen the joy with which children in Khazana learn English; with how much pride they talk to you in English! If English gives them nothing more than confidence, it would be still worth learning. And, in the last two months, our stand has been vindicated. The West Bengal. Government and Delhi Administration have restarted English in their schools; even the Bihar Government has reintroduced English in their secondary schools!

Balle! Balle! This year we started work on a magazine made by children for children. The experiment started in Khazana and today the initiative rests with Kalpavriksham whose young and enthusiastic research assistant, Meenakshi Sharma, has taken on the awesome task of attracting contributions from various nonformal education centres in Delhi. The magazine will have an editorial board made up almost completely of children (from Khazana to start with). We hope this will include interviews with people who have control over their lives; ideas for better living; stories, poems, anecdotes from children and their drawings. They also solicit articles from 'Correspondents' – children in nonformal schools in Rajasthan, Bihar etc. We are all very excited about this effort to make children more creative, fun-loving, more responsive and responsible adults.

Working With the Teacher: The centre of our attention

is the child. But since the adults who have control over a child's life are her/his parents and teachers, we have always seen these adults as important to our plans.

One of the main question in Katha has always been: How do we motivate teachers in government schools/ nonformal education centres? We believe that there is no way of getting a better deal for our children if teachers are dispirited, unhappy, frustrated, if they have a limited resource and information base, if they don't feel comfortable in the classroom. Two years ago, we started examining Katha's role in awareness generation in teachers.

With Charu Anand moving over from Khazana in 1991 to the material development wing of Katha, thinking on the programmes restarted. Charu's sense of fun, her ability to work with people add to' Kalpana's success.

Towards fostering, helping and applauding excellence, Katha has started initiatives this year, besides our ongoing programme of developing fun material for use in nonformal education.

1. Curriculum Development: For long we have questioned the legitimacy of *Tamasha!* as a children's magazine if it does not, at the same time, help teachers. We needed ways and methods of making it more visibly 'useful' to them in the classroom. Out of a teachers idea was born the idea that *Tamasha!* would make an ideal 'textbook' for use in NFE. It is colourful, easy to read and covers a variety of topics. Maybe this would excite teachers to project-oriented teaching?

Saraswathi and the teachers in Khazana, Anita, Sarita, Nirmala, Sushila, Jyoti, and Kiran were the first people to get excited about the prospect and to actually try out the magazine in their classrooms in this way. They looked at science, maths, civics, health, community development, history etc. in an integrated way, using nothing else but *Tamasha!* It was a roaring success. The children loved the experiment. The teachers, too!

The idea having worked, we are busy developing and putting on stream a curriculum for teacher in nonformal education, based all *Tamasha!* We hope this will help the child get more out of his/her school, and help the harassed government-school teacher become more competent and happy with each day planned for and under control!

2. Integrated Learning: To help disseminate ideas of the *Tamasha!* curriculum and other modern ideas on education (like group work), we have stanced working with teachers through workshops and networking.

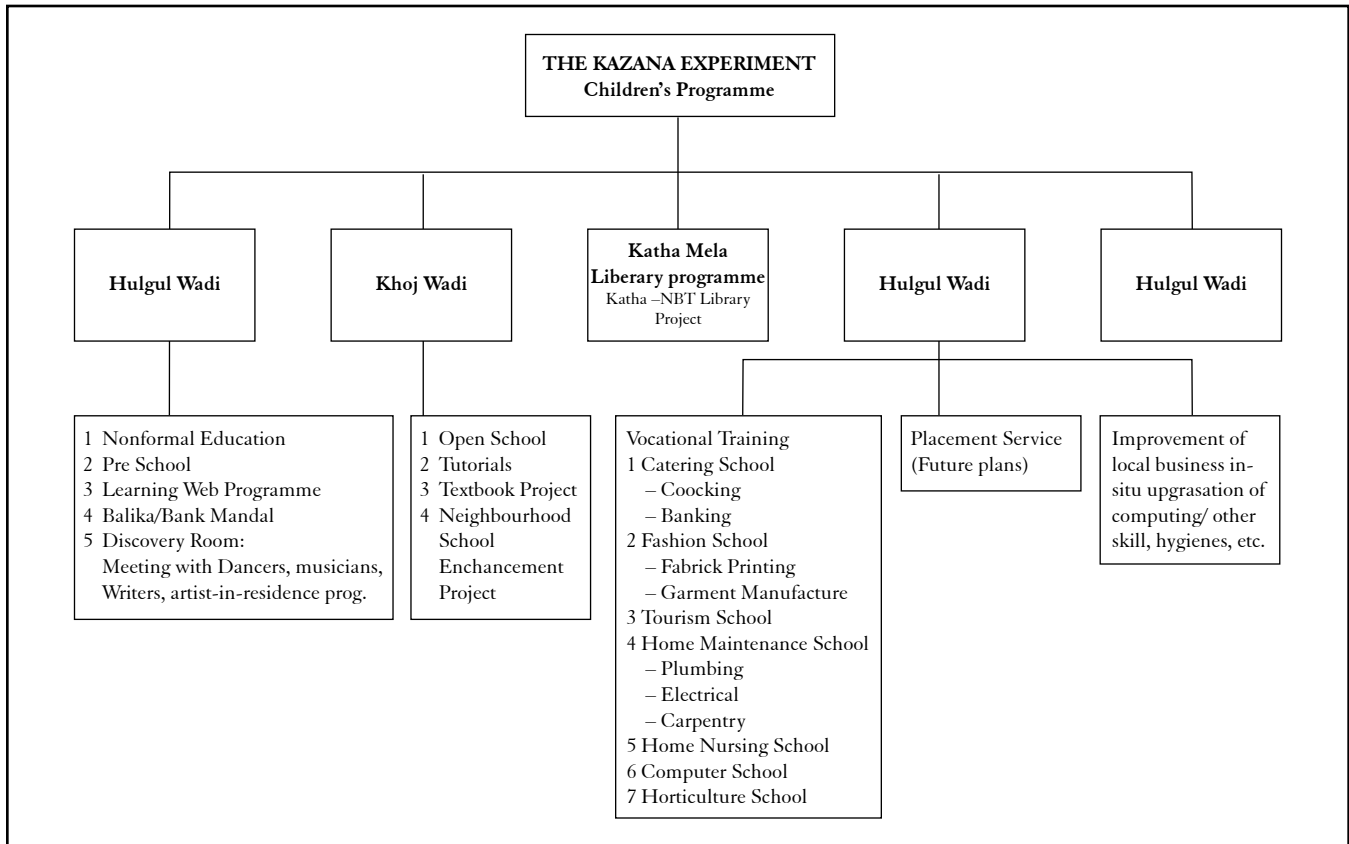
The few workshops we've done seem to say were on the right track. Once our teachers in NFE understood the ideas, the --philosophy of Katha, the response was spontaneous. They adopted/ adapted it. As pan of the total teaching/learning concept, we have run three workshops this year to put teachers in touch with some interesting methods of teaching and material development. ODA (UK) had invited us to do workshops for their education projects in Calcutta and Indore. They hope to have a more sustained relationship with us.

3. Kalpana, the interactive magazine on creative teaching:

We have also started work on Kalpana an innovative interactive magazine for teachers. The main objective of Kalpana is to propagate and make available nonformal ways of teaching to teachers in formal schools and nonformal education centres. The first issue of Kalpana should be out on September 5, Teachers' Day – hopefully!

4. The Kalyani Awards For Excellence are a way of applauding excellence amongst teachers in nonformal education. The Award has been made possible by a grant from a private donor and will carry a cash prize for the best teacher in a nonformal education centre. Initially, though, while we network, the Award will be exclusively for the staff at Khazana. Next year, hopefully, we should be able to enlarge its scope.

KHAZANA
Director: Indira Varadarajan



Khazana is seen as a deschool where education is an integration of learning to read and write, with learning to be a good citizen. A keen awareness on individual's values, ethics and obligations are a part and parcel of its curriculum and its day-to-day life. Khazana, amongst other things, sees the whole city as a classroom; motivates our children to learn in a fun, child-centred education centre; talks of and strives to integrate ideas of excellence, creativity, with an ability to cope, to find solutions, to trouble-shoot as a team. We hope these and other related skills will encourage our children to demand and get true empowerment.

HulGul Wadi or the **Lab School** focusses on nonformal education, preschool education. Last year 125 children were prepared for and sent off to formal schools!

Khoj Wadi works with older children. It provides tutorial support and prepares children to take the 8th, 10th and 12th class exams directly. It also hopes to work with government schools in the neighbourhood in an effort to share our excitement in teaching and learning. Vocational training, working at family businesses are given importance.

The idea of training our children for the National Open School came when some of our children started coming back to Khazana. They missed the personal care and child-centered education that had made it possible for them to enter the formal stream of education. Renu, who wrote her entrance exams and entered right royally into class VIII last May, was back with us again, not able to cope with formal school. It was a heartbreaking-experience for her.

Children were encouraged to join Khoj Wadi. If it were not for the dedication and enthusiasm of Saraswathi Subramaniam who has been with us right from the beginning, such a programme would have never taken off the ground!

Tutorials: We have about 120 children who come to us for tutorials. Children's marks were recorded when they first join this programme. Today, many of these children are getting twice the marks they were getting previously.

This year 7 girls (Parul, Sonia, Razia, Khushnuma, Bawanti, Sarita and Tabassum) were prepared for the Medhavi Examinations for scholarships.

January – February, 1993 saw Kusum, Chaman and Padmaji working overtime with students who came to our Khoj Wadi. The results in the annual examinations were good. Padma Vats has been very important to us as a teacher of Hindi, but more as a caring mother figure in Khazana.

Positions of outstanding students: (These are not necessarily in the same school as our children come from at least four different neighbourhood government schools).

Class VIII 1st in class : Ashok
2nd in class : Narayan & Lalitha
3rd in class : Dilip

Class VII 1st in class : Mehmood

Class VI 1st in class : Gayatri
2nd in class : Lalita & Sunil Kumar

Class V 1st in class : Razia Begum
2nd in class : Sonia
3rd in class : Tabassum

Class IV 2nd in class : Rinku

The number of children who availed of tutorial support were 151 children 60 boys and 91 girls.

Textbook Project: Khazana has given many directions to the development at approaches we should take in Katha. One of these has been in the area of textbooks. We found that many of the traditional textbooks used by formal schools are too difficult for children who are first-generation schoolgoers. With illiterate parents at home and a crowded environment in the government school she/he attends, the child invariably gets pushed into child labour.

In 1990 it was to avert just such an eventuality that Katha started a tutorial programme. This, we found, needed support of self-help textbooks. This project has garnered the generous help of Ms Maya Chakravarthy, former Principal of Naval School, Delhi. We do not intend our books to be recommended for school use. But we hope it will help the child feel a little less frustrated and anxious; a little more comfortable with school and schooling as we have it in India. Rajeev, a Ph.D student of history at the Jamia Millia has been invaluable to this project.

Hunar Wadi puts many aspects of Gandhi's view of education into practice. It focuses attention on vocational training of young children, balikas and balaks; it strives to work with business in the locality for in-situ up gradation of skills, and selling techniques. It also hopes to run a placement service for our children.

Hunar Wadi has an innovative way of looking at vocational training. Seven professionals have been identified and all children will go through the necessary scholastics and skills-training needed to make them successful and competent practitioners of their chosen vocation.

It was the enthusiasm of Suparna Malhotra which first made the vocational stream possible at Khazana. It today includes classes in agarbatti & candle-making for our younger children. Now Veena Nanda looks after it, Veenaji joined Khazana in 1990 to look after the Teacher Training Programme and is one of our

most precious teachers. Adding to the effectiveness of all these people and programmes, are Anjira (Woman Friday) and Jasveer Kaur (accountant/trouble shooter); Bala and Ramkumar.

Creche and Preschool: We also run the creche and preschool components that will help children move into formal school without swelling the ranks of child-labourers. The creche and preschool children have the love and care of Durga, Saraswathi, Uma, Geeta, Jagdish, Manjula, Meena, Harpreet and Santhosh. This is funded by ICCO.

The Learning Web Programme

Since India cannot afford 12 years of schooling for all her children, education should make free and good use of all the resources that the city has to offer. This is what Khazana does. It has established its learning webs – resources in the form of people and places.

Children visited the following places this year: 1. The Natural History Museum; 2. Gallery of Modern Art; 3. The National Museum; 4. National Craft Museum; 5. Red Fort; 6. Railway Museum; 7. Humayum's Tomb; 8. Planetarium; 9. Khilji's Fort; 10. Tuglakabad; 11. Teen Murti Bhavan; 12. India Gate.

The following workshops were conducted by various organisations/resource people:

1. Paper Toy-making (CCRT)
2. Clay modelling (Bal Bhawan)
3. History (Narayani Gupta)
4. Mathematics (Usha Gopalakrishnan)
5. Craft in Education (Prof. Soni)
6. Tamasha! (Kalpana Resource Centre)
7. Magic! (Bal Bhavan)

The Balika Mandal programme was started as a direct outcome of our concern for the safety of our children in the crowded environment of an inner-city slum. From last January, about 150 adolescent girls learn self-defence and yoga; they talk about/listen to lectures on family education and they attend

literacy/open school education.

Discovery Room activities lead the child into the visual, written and plastic arts. Meetings with writers, palmers, dancers and musicians are part of the activities here.

Swarnambika Science Lab is a new addition to Khazana. Science experiments which are important elements of formal learning will become part of an action programme in Science in Khazana thus making the child's scholastic progress smooth.

Gani Kendra brings out the magic of maths. One of its projects is a 'bazaar' where children actually buy, sell and record, thus learning the basic math concepts naturally.

THE KATHA-NBT LIBRARY PROJECT

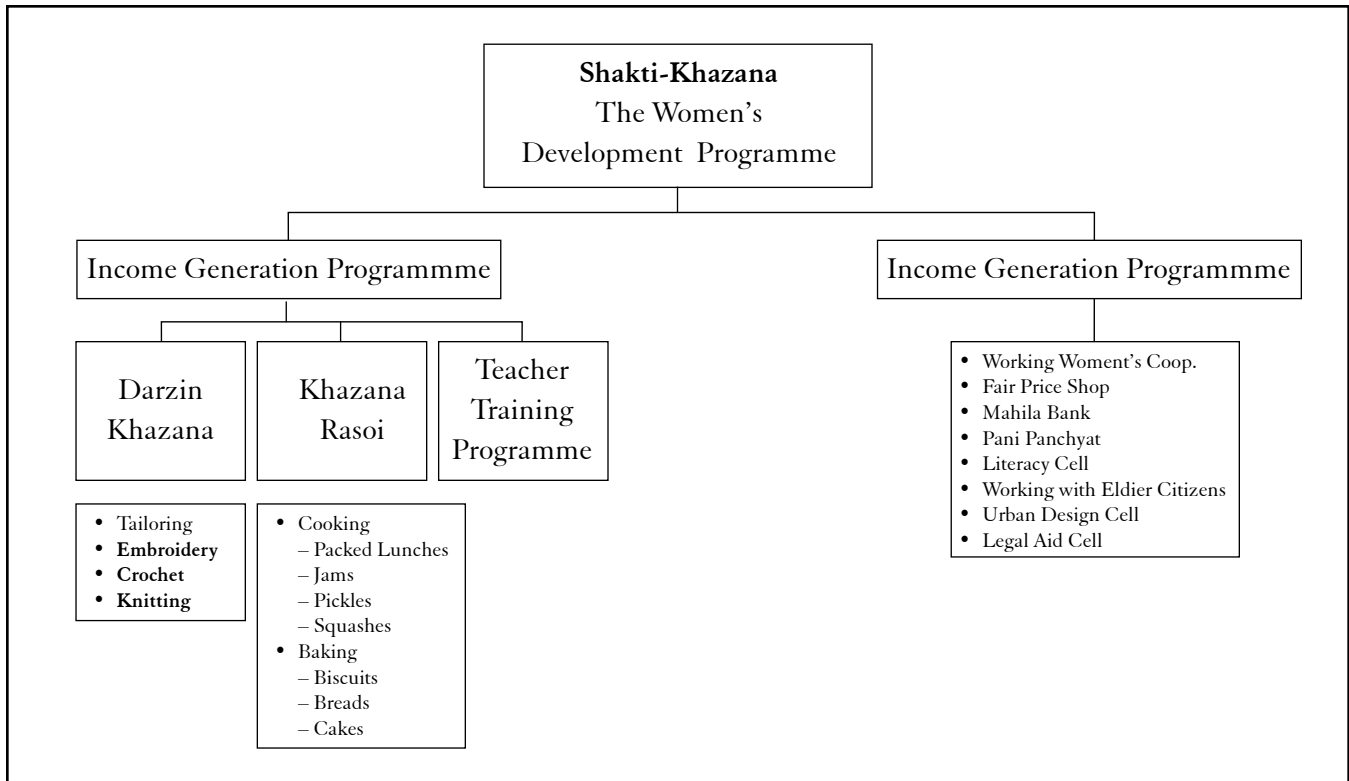
This was started on a pilot basis to see if we could enthuse children in formal government schools to become bookworms.

Because of the lack of the necessary letters etc. from NBT, our school programme has not yet taken off, but we have a vibrant community library programme. Today, nearly 500 to 600 children are members of this very innovative library movement.

The idea was to have eight adolescents as group leaders, directly under Farah (who looks after this project). Each of these eight Group Leaders have eight children whom they have inducted into reading/borrowing books. Each of these second tier of eight work-with another eight children. And so on ... The ripple effect which had been planned and executed by Indira Varadarajan seems to be really working! We hope this is the beginning of the Roving Library Movement, Katha Mela.

Ujala: A preschool we started in Nizanuddin last year has taken root, Shailender and Prem Lata (two women from Bhumiheen who underwent our 1-year teacher training programme) look after it most efficiently, creatively.

SHAKTI-KHAZANA
The Women's Development Programme at Khazana



One of the most satisfying programmes in Katha this year has been the women's programme. After many hiccups, change of staff etc., it has finally taken off. Shri Mahendra Rai, the Pradhan of Bhumiheen Camp, who had once threatened to throw us out as he thought we were bungling, interfering do-gooders, is now one of the most supportive people of the basti.

The women have not just gained skills. They have gained self-confidence, self-esteem; they are looked up to by their community; many of them take home today almost as not much more than what the whole family aid three years ago before Katha started working with them.

The friendship that has developed between the Katha staffers and the women of the community is something that is most heart-warming. Today somany of these women are teachers in Katha! And we hope, the day,

all our other teachers would have worked themselves out of their Katha-Khazana jobs!

Many of them have picked up computing skills; they have painfully learnt to read and write; they have left us to set up their own small business - entrepreneurship of a kind which we find exciting. For the last two years we have been telling the women that Katha would like to hand over the whole project to them and move out, when they are ready.

This year, our vocational training programme brings in many adolescent boys and girls into the various programmes of Shakti-Khazana.

Action Aid, a funding agency, has shown keen interest in helping the women start a community development programme. If this comes through, Katha would be stepping into a whole new area of operation. But,

with Indira Varadarajan with us, as the full of life, innovative Project Director of Khazana, we have nothing to worry. Indira comes with many years of experience and we are indeed fortunate to have her with us.

Khazana-Rasoi

With about 30 women in various stages of training, the women are now producing and selling about 150 Kg of biscuits/month. The organizer of the baking and cooking programme is Shabana. She is from Bhumihien Camp who, came to us for training and now, we are lucky to have her looking after her programme. The women are itching to make more. But how do we sell them? And where? Marketing is a special skill and now, with a British High Commission's grant coming in, we should move forward.

Khazana Foods has been marketing its biscuits and squashes with greater confidence. In the Oxfam Mela in Bombay, they sold stuff worth Rs 8000/- and a British buyer has shown interest in their pickles. (Though we do not as yet have the capacity to produce for an export market.)

The cookery section has a major project in hand: packed lunches for office goers. The packed lunch programme (on the lines of the Annapurna Project in Bombay) is ready to take off now – with funds, people and a telephone available. We have been working on this project for the last one year. With proper marketing support we should be more successful.

Darzin – Khazana

Forty-eight women have been exploring various aspects of garment manufacturing, with soft spoken Madhu as organiser and teacher, from drafting to choosing the right material, quality control to marketing.

An Oxfam (Bridge) Grant made it possible for us to have Radhika Jaswal who has infused new life into the programme. This year, our women made and sold

salwars, kameezes, lehengas, cholis, children's clothes, men's trousers and shirts. They've got one export order, two bulk orders for uniforms and frocks. The women are happy and excited about working together – and that is just one of the good things happening in Darzin – Khazana.

Teaching-Training Programme

This is the most 'formal' training programmes we have in Katha. The 20 women who graduated last year are now all settled and earning well. The new batch of 16 had some exceptionally bright young women who were confirmed into jobs even before their training was over! They each earn between Rs 600 and 1000 per month. Nine of them have joined the B.A. course. Harpreet has been invited to the National School of Drama for conducting workshops on origami, collage, etc.

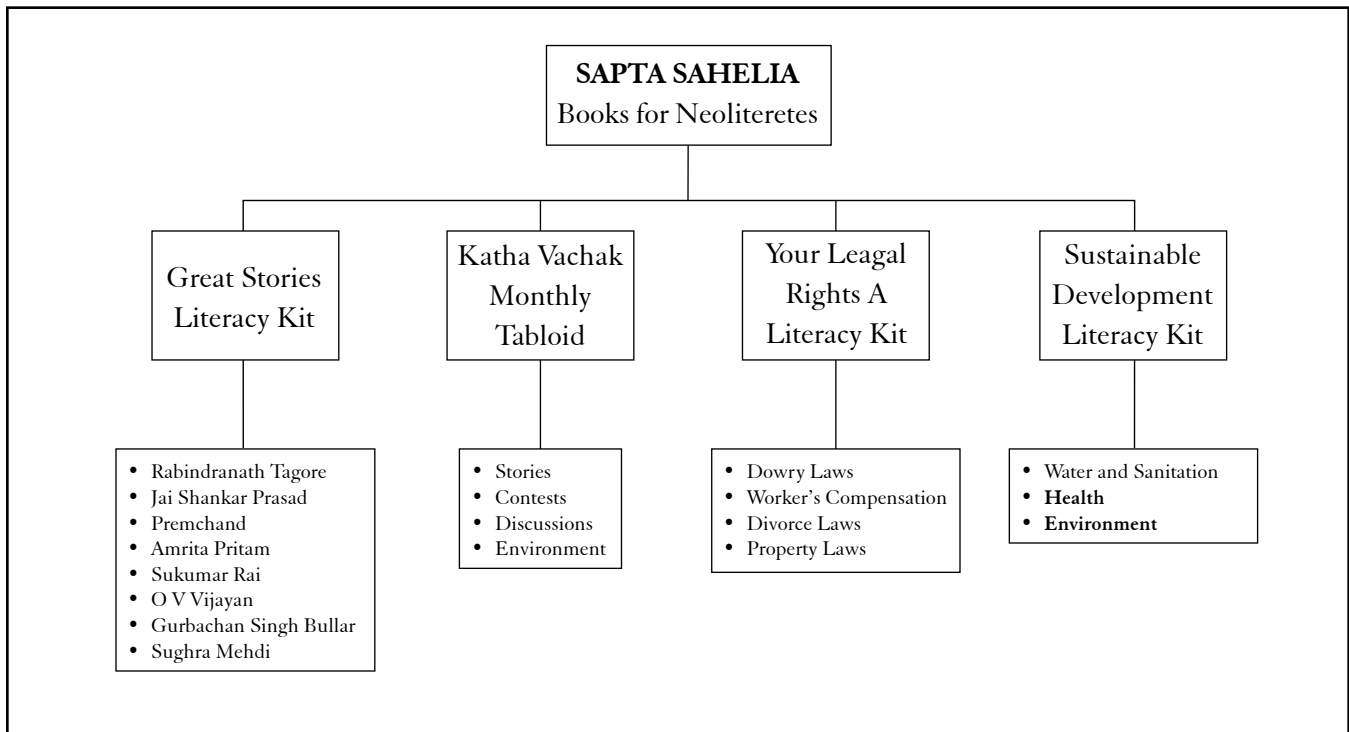
This project has unfortunately been suspended due to lack of funding.

Govindpuri Working Women's Cooperative

After a lot of legwork from Suparna, the Working Women's Cooperative is in the final stages of registration. We sometimes wonder how our women can manage with a Government which seems tied up in a lot of procedures that are time-consuming, clumsy. But maybe, once the registration is through, we shall not have so much work with the authorities concerned ...

A working women's forum, the cooperative hopes to address various issues and will be the fulcrum of a community development programme which will consist of a Fair Price Shop run by the women; a Mahila Bank; an Urban Design Cell which will help our women explore their homes and designing the interiors efficiently; a Legal & Counselling Cell; a Working with Senior Citizens Cell; and the formation of a Pani Panchayat which will work for better hygiene, sanitation and water for the people of the community.

SAPTA SAHELIA BOOKS FOR NEOLITERATES



'Investment in women's literacy will pay itself back in financial terms at 20% a year while also lowering infant and maternal mortality and improving equality,' says Worldwatch, but, Katha has been finding it difficult to find people to invest in basic literacy material for women and for post-literacy material.

We believe that sustainability III female literacy can come only if there is at least some choice in basic literacy material so that the women can choose the method/books that will excite them to start reading and keep reading and, research and production of post-literacy material starts alongside with the production of basic reading material.

This year funding for a whole series of books in simple Hindi for neo-literates, based on stories by some of India's best writers took off. Funding from Department of Education, Government of India has come through.

By the end of 1993 we should have the first four books ready for release. Starting with a simple story by Gurbachan Singh Bullar, we move on to stories by Sukumar Rai, Prem Chand, Jai Shankar Prasad, Amrita Pritam, Sughra Mehdi and O.V. Vijayan (Rabindra Nath Tagore's 'Streer Patro' was released in Hindi last year).

Madhulita Mohapatra has been honing her skills in retelling stories in very simple Hindi. Her work has garnered a lot of praise from women, neo-literates all of them, who are fascinated with how easily they can read.

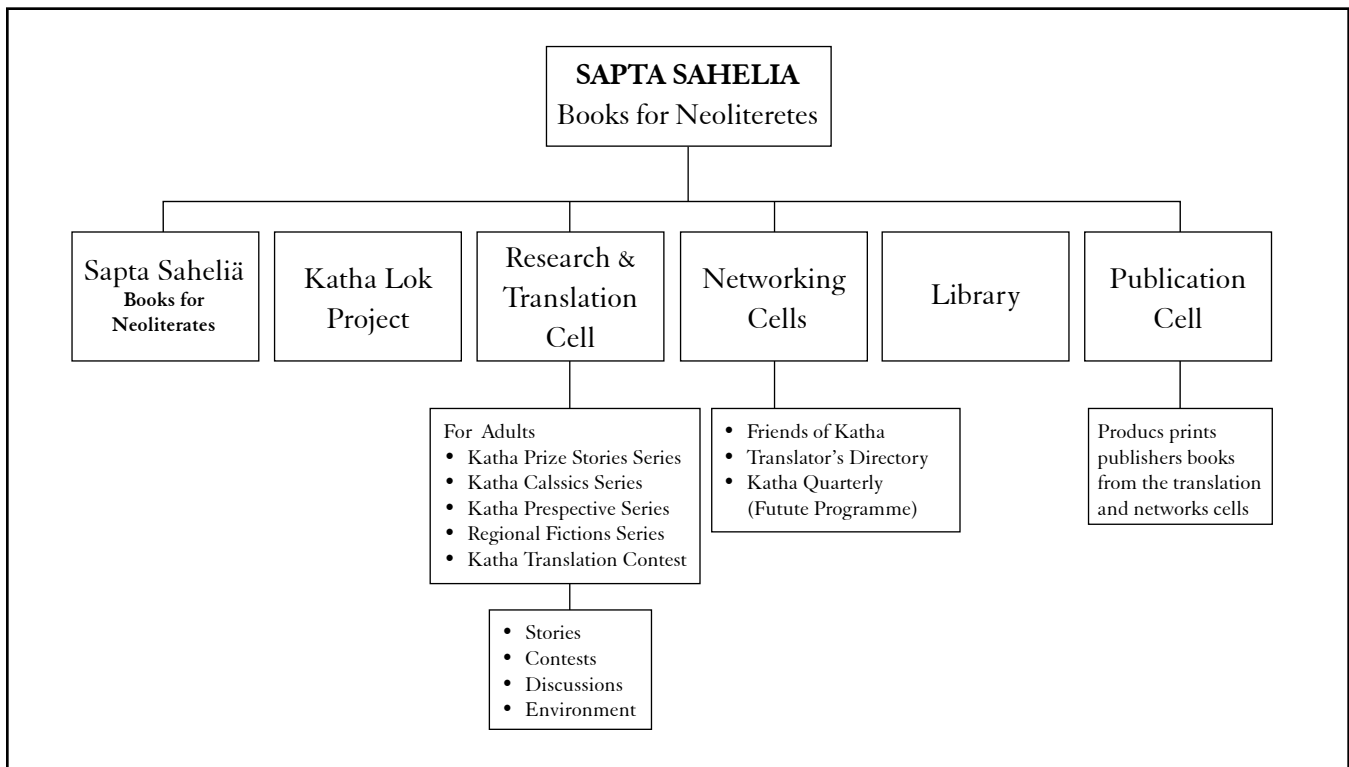
We hope to start off our three-level story-paper by the end of this year which will have humour, stories, human interest anecdotes and contests that will encourage women readers to write in. A pilot issue, released last year, has generated interest. OXFAM-AMERICA has promised us funding.

A Legale-Literacy Kit is in the pipeline. A proposal has been sent and seems to have been accepted. We see this as a set of books and games that will take a non-literate person right on to knowledge on her rights, leading to action and true empowerment. With emphasis on gender politics, and starting off with words and phrases that are important in the life of an assertive woman, we hope this will serve as the prototype of the kind of adult literacy knowledge kits that Katha hopes

to research, develop, design and publish. The basic Hindi kit will lead on to some issues like workers' compensation, dowry laws, etc. Which are necessary if we want empowerment for women.

The development programme focussing on sanitation, water and hygiene which ACTIONAID has shown interest in funding also envisages a literacy kit on sustainable development.

KATHA VIALASHAM
Coordinator: Meera Warriier



Katha Vilasam, the story research and resource centre is our translation project. It strives to support, foster and applaud quality translations from and into the various Indian languages. Katha Vilasam has a decentralised research programme which often leads to publications.

The Katha Awards

Every year the Katha Awards for Creative Writing are given to the best stories published in the previous year in magazines and journals in various regional languages.

The Katha Awards for Translation are given to creative and sensitive practitioners of the art in each language chosen that year.

For 1993-94 we invite the Katha Awards for Publishing to publishers of quality short fiction. This year's Awards go to the publishers of the stories, that win the Katha Awards for creative writing.

The A K Ramanujan Award to a translator who has proven skills in more than one language.

This year's Award goes to M Asaduddin who skillfully translates in and out of Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu and English; and to Aditya Behl who translates with ease from Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu into English.

The 1992 Katha Awards Function

This was held in the Rashtrapati Bhavan on October 30, 1992. Shri M O H Farook, the then Minister of

State for Tourism and Civil Aviation who had made it possible for us to receive a grant from ITDC for the Awards was present. He released the book, *Katha Prize Stories: Volume 2*. While Shri S V Giri, Secretary, Department of Education, Government of India, released a story-paper for neoliterates called *Katha Vachak*.

The Workshop on ‘Language, Culture and Translation’

Katha, in collaboration with India International Centre and the North Zone Cultural Centre, conducted a two-day workshop on Language, Culture and Translation. Among the 60 odd people who actively participated were Prof T N Madan, Shri U R Anamha Murthy, Shri Ashok Vajpeyi, poet; Prof Indra Nath Choudhury, Secretary, Sahitya Academi; and Dr Pramod Talgeri of the Jawaharlal Nehru University. This was besides the recipients of the Katha Awards, who attended.

It was exciting days for all of us. We were lucky to have a dozen or so students from Jawaharlal Nehru University and Delhi University. They were full of enthusiasm, going to meet the various writers at the station, escorting them to various places, and generally seeing that things happened.

If IIC and the staff of Rashtrapati Bhavan and the various participants said that Katha had made ‘excellent arrangements,’ much of this praise must go to our young friends. Our heartfelt thanks to them! A special thanks to Meera Warriar, who compered the Rashtrapati Bhavan function to perfection! Meera is in charge of this project and we know that Katha Vilasan I is in good hands.

Our Publishing Programme

Regional Fiction Series

A Southern Harvest: A collection of 16 stories four from each of the four southern states. The volume carries a comprehensive introduction to the literature of these

languages, written by people who are established scholars,

Edited by Githa Hariharan.

Katha Classics

These books will contain stories, autobiographical and/or travel pieces by a writer who has made a landmark contribution to the development of short fiction in his/her language. The book will also contain an indepth introduction, photographs, a detailed bibliography of all the books written by the writer.

- Vyankatesh Madgulkar. A writer of ‘grameen katha’, he is an established contemporary Marathi writer.

Translated by Sudhakar Marathe.

- Masti Venkatesha Iyengar. Hailed as the ‘Father of the Kannada Short Story’ wrote more than 100 stories in his lifetime. He made landmark contributions to the Kannada short story and many of the writers writing today see him as a pioneer.

Translated by Ramachandra Sharma.

Four more books by Kannada writers has been commissioned. With Prof D R Nagaraj as the editor for these volumes, they promise to be exciting.

- U R Anantha Murthy
- Lankesh (if we get permission)
- Poorna Chandra Tejaswi
- A collection of plays. Chandrasekhara Kambar, Girish Karnad, Lankesh and Prasanna, four of the most important playwrights in Kannada today have given us permission to translate and publish their plays. Each play would be introduced by the dramatist himself.

Balkatha Series

Stories in translation for the adolescent who studies in English-medium schools. With the large-scale invasion of Hardy Boys and Enid Blyton, and a lack

of 'Indian' books that are not clones of these western stereotypes, Indian children who will grow up to have control over many lives, are totally western in outlook and thinking. This series is a small effort to bring the best of Indian writing to children who at the moment probably do not get anything in English which is truly indigenous.

Katha Prize Stories Series

The third of the series has some excellent stories which, we hope will make a volume as interesting and absorbing as last year's collection.

Last year was especially gratifying. *Katha Prize Stories* – 1 headed for its third printing; *Katha Prize Stories* – 2 for its second.

Katha Prize Stories : Volume 2 was released into the market on November 1. It has reaped a number of accolades and reviews that have boosted its sale. We reprinted the book in February 1993. No mean feat, that, our distributors, Rupa & Co., tell us!

We got some excellent notices from the press for our second volume of *Katha Prize Stories*.

"Prize Catch . . . The Best of India Translated."
– *India Today*

"... an exciting, sometimes disturbing, vision of the complex fabric that is India."
– *Times of India*

"... a clutch of excellent translations from the regional languages."
– *Business Today*

"... translated with felicity ... eminently readable and give a flavour of the region from which they have been picked."
– *Sunday*

"[A] literary symphony."
– *The Daily*

"... a publishing feat ... The stories ... have the earthy vitality of a live language, and the advantages of a

refined narrative technique that is a recent acquisition of [regional] language writing ... "
– *The Daily*

"Fastidiously hand-picked with an accent on the inherent heterogeneity and cultural complexity of contemporary India ... "
– *Sunday Chronicle*

"... Katha is a welcome venture into Indian fiction."
– *The Hindu*

The Katha Translation Contest

(in association with the British High Commission – British Council Division)

This is an effort to encourage and applaud newcomers in the field of translation of stories from regional languages into English. Press announcements were out in early July. We have received more than 1000 entries. The book is to be ready, if possible, for the World Book Fair, '94.

It seems that Katha is always taking on work that demands more than we had anticipated. This has been so with the Katha Translation Contest. We are lucky to have Renuka and Tulsi with us who have cheerfully and competently helped Meera with the work. Without them, we'd be lost!

God willing, the Ford Foundation grant for a tri-language translation project should start in November, 93. Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil may be the three languages chosen, after discussions with the Foundation, for various reasons, including proximity to one another. The project will foster and develop translations between these three languages. Active workshops and discussions are seen as a vital part of the programme.

KATHA LOK

This started off as an idea tucked away somewhere in the future of Katha. Avik Ghosh of the National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) has dragged it into the present. And, frankly, we are quite happy he

did – though the work involved was more than we bargained for.

Our objectives were, inter alia, to document the oral tradition of narration of tales by kathaks, grandmothers, village elders and children, as also poems, riddles, jokes, proverbs and idioms of particular dialects. We have tried to collect the real-life ‘stories of some of the story-tellers and biographies of women achievers in these villages also.

We had chosen Ph.D students from Delhi University, J N U and Jamia Milia to do the field visits and collect the stories. They were the ones who researched into existing material on oral traditions in their respective languages and wrote out their languages report for us.

Each of the group leaders were asked to take another person with them for the survey. They were provided with cassette recorders by Katha so that we could also have the stories collected in audio form. Though the recordings are not very clear, it still is nice listening to katha vachaks and village elders reciting stories and singing songs!

The teams were full of the exciting adventures they had had. There had been problems of course. Stories were not always available in the villages to which they had been directed; many times the men and women were in no mood to start spinning yarns; sometimes the season dictated that they sing only certain songs that pertained to that particular season. There were other anxieties like places to stay, transport, etc., but the main thing was that, each and every group was invited back by the villagers. In most languages they were told that no one had collected these stories and songs before, that they (the villagers) did not even think these tales were worth collecting.

In Tamilnadu, for instance, the Chakkiyar community shared much of their heartaches and aspirations with Aloysius that he, in turn, shared with Katha and now we are trying to see if we can help this marginalised

community start a small newspaper that would be for and by neoliterates and become

I wish Katha had more money in hand to start projects where such efforts are needed!

Team Leader: Renu Bhanot

Bengali: Somnath Mitra (Leader)

Villages visited in Districts Jalpaiguri and Purulia

Bhojpuri: Zafar Imam (Leader)

Villages visited in Districts Patna, Arrah, Barh, Motihari, Chapra, Siwan and Gopalganj

Chattisgarhi: Renu Bhanot (Leader)

Villages visited in Districts Bilaspur, Raipur, Rajnandgaon, Durg, Sarguja. And urban centres in Raipur, Bhilai, Pamgarh, Bilaspur, Ratanpur, Dalli Rajhara.

Mythili: Umesh Jha (Leader)

Villages visited in Districts Darbhanga, Madhubani, Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur and Gaya.

Tamil: Aloysius (Leader)

Villages visited in Districts Coimbatore, Periyar, Anna Chengalpet and Tirunelveli.

Telugu: Prasanna Kumar (Leader)

Villages visited in Districts Prakasam, Krishna, Nellore, West Godavari and East Godavari.

The National Institute of Adult Education were unhappy about the stories collected because they wanted something that was never, more interesting but this unfortunately, was not in our hands. But, the report has been uniformly liked by all.

FRIENDS OF KATHA

Over the last year, we have made many, many wonderful friends who gave so generously and spontaneously of their time and energies.

We'd like to thank:

- Dr R K Pachauri, for his friendship; and especially for introducing us to Dr Binger of the Rockefeller Foundation and for actively helping us to get the Grant for *Tamasha!*
- Matthew Cheri an of OXFAM-BRIDGE who has not only given us two grants, but has always been a good and steadfast friend on whom we can always depend.
- Anuradha Kaushik & Amita Joseph, for their friendly legal advice, whenever we have wanted such advice.
- Rajesh Chaudhuri & Dinesh for so generously helping us out with the production of *Katha Prize Stories: Volume 2* (Reprint)
- Viji Ghose for always being there for Katha, as friend, guide and adviser; and, especially, for accepting to be the Guest Editor of *Tamasha!* Special Volume on Environment, in spite of her other work.
- Prof D R Nagaraj, Prof Ganesh Devy, Rani Sharma, Vijayalakshmi Quereshi, Prof U R Anantha Murthy, Vakati Panduranga Rao, Prof Sudhakar Marathe, Sarat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Atulnanda Goswami especially for stepping in when emergencies arose in Katha Vilasam.
- Friends in the Railway Ministry; in the Rashtrapati Bhavan and TIC who made the Katha Awards Function and Workshop possible.
- Ashok Vajpeyi of the Department of Culture, Government of India for helping us get funding for our Workshop; and for being a part of it.
- Prof Indra Nath Choudhuri of the Sahitya Academi, for always being available for us.
- R M Kapoor of Times Research Foundation for his concern, his help in reaching new friends, and especially for funding the purchase of bags for the Katha Awards Winners, 1992.
- Rajesh Sharma of the French Embassy in Delhi for being a staunch friend.
- Genevieve Patte for her encouragement, her spontaneous praise for the work we have undertaken in Katha, for her very precious vote of confidence in us!
- Sunil Madan, Swarnar Mange Ram, Joon, Lakhan, Rajkumar & Dogra for going out of their way to be helpful.
- Rajeev Ghosh who looks after our production. He has a heightened sense of perfection which suits us just right!
- I would especially like to thank all the staff members of Katha. Many of them have stayed with us since we started, we are indeed lucky to have such an excellent; dedicated, enthusiastic team! Inshallah (as Shahila Habibullah would have said) we shall continue to stay together! P P Sharma has been a quiet source of strength. M R Gupta (we are sorry to see him go) has been a caring accountant; Ajith, with his evident mastery over the computer, has eased out many stressful moments. Our Design Unit consists of joyfully creative Taposhi Ghoshal; Arvinder Chawla, our skilled and good-to-be-with designer; and patient, cheerful, Poonam Joshi. No words of praise will be enough for Sarnam Singh, our peon and messenger who, after coming to us has learned to operate the computer and is registered with Khazana Khoj Wadi for 12th Class. Harswaroop and Gopu are last but not the least, hard-working family members of Katha.

FUNDING

New Sources of Funding

Last year, when UNICEF changed its policy and voluntary agencies had to go through Govt. of India to get project funding, we thought we were really in trouble. This was, rather, a blessing in disguise. Though we have not been able to stand on our feet (and with the kind of work we are doing, I wonder if we ever can, fully), we have attracted a lot of different funding agencies.

Amongst these are:

Funding Agency	Project for which grant given
1. Rockefeller Foundation	<i>Tamasha!</i>
2. Tarawati Ramgopal Trust	Kalpana Resource Centre
3. British High Commission-ODA	Kalpana Resource Centre
4. ICCO	Creche & Preschool, Khazana
5. OXFAM	Darzin-Khazana
6. ILO	Khazana Children's programme
7. Dept of Women & Child Development, GOI	Cooking & teacher training programmes, Khazana
8. British High Commission, British, Council	Katha Vilasam

For the coming year, we have given proposals to:

1. ILOI	Kalpana
2. Boeing Corporation	Kalpana
3. National Geographic	Kalpana
4. Government of Bihar	Tamasha!
5. Government of Karnataka	Tamasha!
6. World Bank for U P Education Project	Tamasha!
7. ActionAid	Kizhana & Kalpana
8. British High Commission-ODA	Khazana-WDP
9. ICCO	Khazana-WDP
10. ILO	Khazana-CP
11. Rockefeller Foundation	Kalpavriksham
12. MacArthur Foundation	Kalpavriksham
13. Ford Foundation	Katha Vilasam
14. Department of Culture, GOI	Katha Vilasam
15. India Tourism Development Corporation	Katha Vilasam