

Maitri Shaala

Renewal August 2026

Total Education for
Tribal Children of
Melghat



Maitri Shaala at Melghat



- Geography : Tribal villages of Melghat on border of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Satpuda Mountain Range.
- Demographics : Tribal Korku (85%) Madia, Gond and others (15%)
- Site Visit :
 - Projected next visit: Dec 2026
 - In person: Dec 2025 by Medha Joshi

Melghat Problem

Problem : Severe Malnutrition causing high mortality among children and women

- Grassroot NGO Melghat Mitra (Maitri) started its work around 28 years back to address the problem.
- Realized that health issue due to lack of resources which is because of extreme poverty. Extreme poverty because of limited opportunities which is due to lack of education and isolation from the outside world. A vicious circle.
- Other issues identified
 - Lack of awareness regarding health, hygiene, sanitation
 - Severe weather conditions, primitive farming methods, limited crop and crop yield
 - Girls in poor health getting married as early as ages 11 to 16 and having children
- Decided to take a holistic approach. To eradicate the malnourishment from the root, a consistent and long term approach was required.

Solution : Education, empowerment through Education as one of the long term solutions

- ❖ Melghat Mitra (Maitri) works for community building, agriculture, healthcare, and education (Maitri Shaala)
 - Started work in Melghat for malnutrition 28 years back initially through various health initiatives
 - Maitri Shaala started in 2012 which is a **supplementary school and works along with Government school** with objective of improving quality of primary and secondary education.

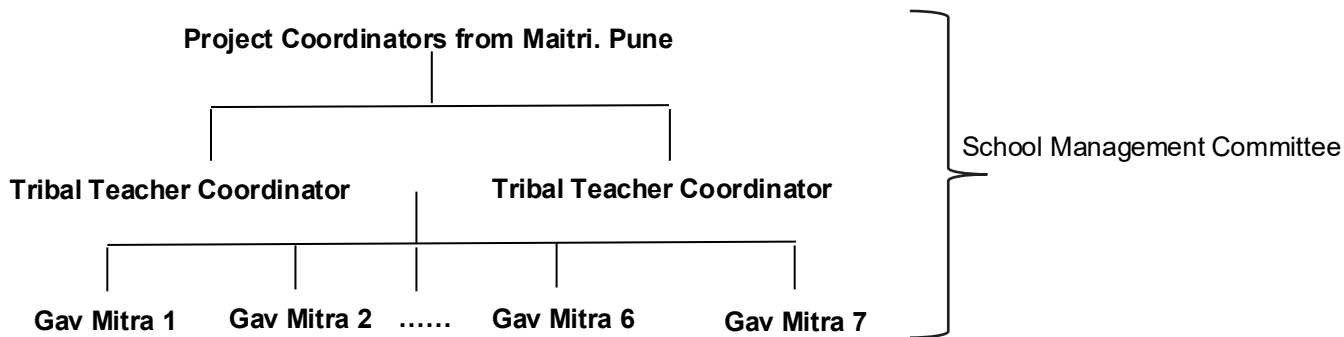


Glimpses of Melghat



❖ Maitri Shaala (Primary)

- Started with direct intervention : 100-day residential school with 40 dropout children. Enrolled them back in school in 2012
- Bottom-up approach. Supplementary school, trying to improve existing government school system.
- Based on principal of **active participation** from the tribal community
- Works with three key elements : Maitri project **coordinators**, **tribal coordinators** and **tribal executors** called Gav Mitra (friends of the village)



❖ Challenges when Maitri Shaala started

- Tribal people having their own language (Korku), customs, not trustful of outsiders
- Low literacy, parents not educated, apathy towards education
- High dropout rate : children busy in farm work, herding cattle, collecting jungle products, looking after younger siblings
- Government schools but teachers unmotivated, not accountable, absent many times
- Vicious circle : children absent so teachers absent....goes on
- Government Functionaries not actively involved in the process.
- Government funds not distributed completely and in time because of malpractices in the bureaucracy.

Maitri Shaala In Nutshell



❖ Maitri Shaala (Primary)

- Nearly 279 children (currently 137 girls, 142 boys) in 10 villages
- Tribal coordinators and Gav mitra :
 - Counsel parents, spread awareness, participate in School Management Committees (SMC)
 - Daily 2 hours before school
 - Motivate children by songs, stories, bilingual (Korku-Marathi) language games, activity based learning (cards, pictures, charts, games for learning, craft Activities, puppets, drama, miming songs)
 - Help with their schoolwork: basic reading, writing, science, mathematical skills
 - At least 1 outdoor activity per month in the village

Maitri Shaala In Nutshell



❖ Maitri Shaala (Primary)

- Efforts to make government ZP schools more efficient and accountable
 - School Management Committee (SMC) with all stakeholders representation from school, village head (“Sarpanch”), Maitri coordinator, tribal coordinators, and parents.
 - Because of local representation understand local needs : festivals, crop season, weekly bazaar day

Latest Photos



Latest Photos



Latest Photos



Maitri Shala - Review



Review because of the following reasons

- Listening to experiences of Maitri Shaala alumni students in Pune who came for higher education
- Feedback Ashram Shaala volunteers about quality of education (especially 8-10 standard students)
- Youth have aspirations for further education after 10th but struggle to cope up in college
- Difficulty in adjusting with a different environment (district place, city)
- Not enough vocational training and career opportunities at home
- Difficulty in adjusting at home giving rise to frustrations and addictions

Review Outcome

- The first six years are crucial for the child for developing its brain, motor, language and other developmental skills
- Korku children do not have the benefit of pre-school
- The transition from Korku to Marathi needs special support
- Lack of learning environment in the community
- Parents find it challenging to support their children's learning – culture of silence, alienation impediment to language skills
- Weak foundation, language challenges (articulation, comprehension, vocabulary), shortcomings in quality of education amplified later

Total Education:

A Program to Build Capabilities of People and Communities through a process of Continuous Learning - in school and outside of School

20 villages, 6500+ children from 2000+ families.

A 20+ year plan

Expand the program to cover –

Foundation Stage – 0 to 6 years

Preparation Stage – 6 to 18 years (Right now, 279 children from primary and 100 from secondary)

Rise Stage – 18 to 30 years

Language learning across these stages

Foundation stage

To work in partnership with mothers and families to provide optimal care, nutrition ensuring the holistic growth of children from conception to six years of age

Family Engagement

- Focus areas: Brain development, early language acquisition, nutrition and physical growth, emotional security, social skills and positive behaviour etc.
- Sessions conducted at community centres or in homes for greater accessibility.

Strengthening Early Childhood Services

- Collaborate with government, parents, village leaders to strengthen Anganwadi system
- Support transition of children (3+ years) into local Anganwadi centres

Implementation Timeline

Year 1: Curriculum development and training.

Year 2 onwards: Full-scale program implementation

Preparation stage

- To enable parents and the wider community in actively participating in the education of children enrolled in primary and secondary schools, covering the age group 6 to 18 years of age, thereby strengthening school engagement and learning outcomes

Empowering Parents

- Build parents' awareness, and capacity to support their children's education
- Structured sessions on: effective teaching-learning practices, understanding classroom processes, constructive engagement with teachers etc.
- Parent-child activities to promote learning at home.
- Develop bilingual learning materials with the community to improve comprehension.

Supporting Students

- Primary school program expanded to more villages
- Continued support and targeted engagement for secondary and higher secondary students
- Career counselling for Class 10 and 12 students.

Implementation

Phased roll-out (2-year time frame for total launch):

- Baseline survey
- Training design, recruitment and training
- Develop bilingual, contextual curriculum and learning material
- Support community to develop more detailed, elaborate school development plans
- Evaluation strategy

Maitri Shala – Total Education



What will be different ?

- Start from age zero
- Ensure pre-school through Anganwadi system
- Focus on language transition
- Extensive use of bilingual, contextual learning material
- Creation of a learning environment in the entire community
- Dedicated, full-time team: two community animators for every 500 population and a full-time program lead for each vertical

Guiding Metrics



- ✓ 100% enrollment and attendance in primary school with close to zero dropout rate
- ❖ Majority of students adept with reading, writing, mathematical skills measured by ZP school results after primary school (independent evaluation in progress)
- ✓ Number of students going to secondary school (100%)
- ✓ Number of students completing primary school (100%)
- ❖ Number of students going for higher education after secondary school
- ❖ Number of students utilizing education for vocational training, getting jobs, earning livelihood

In nutshell, Melghat education quality and metrics on par with good rural area education

Maitri Shala Budget 2026-2027



Sr No.	Items	Amount (in Rs)
1	Tribal coordinators @ Rs. 15,000 per month for 12 month plus 1 month bonus	3,90,000
2	Gav Mitra - 10 nos. @ Rs. 7000 per month	8,40,000
3	Travel between villages @ Rs. 5000 per month for 12 months	60,000
4	Monthly review and teachers' training	37,800
5	Student kits @ Rs. 500 per student for 279 students	1,39,500
6	Creative workshop - 5-day workshop of 20 persons @ Rs. 300 per day per person and resource person charges (@ Rs. 70,000)	1,00,000
7	Learning activities for students @ Rs. 21,000 per village for 10 villages	2,10,000
	TOTAL	17,77,300

Maitri Shala One time Budget 2026-2027



Sr No.	Items for Chilati Training Center	Amount (in Rs)
1	Laptops – 2 @ Rs. 75,000 each	1,50,000
2	Printer – 1	50,000
3	Digital display and writing board	1,50,000
4	Microphones and speakers for training	50,000
5	Solar lights for the training and residential areas	1,00,000
6	Repairs and upgrade of kitchen and residential area	5,00,000
	TOTAL	10,00,000

Maitri Shaala Budget 2025-2026



Budget Summary - Primary School + Primary school extension (250 children)		
1	Infrastructure/ Set up cost (Books for libraries 7 schools)	1,70,000
2	Administrative Cost (Office, accounting expenses, electricity, communication)	36,000
3	Primary School - Student/Learning Expenses (Tribal Coordinator and Gav Mitra Salaries, Travel, Training, Workshops)	10,18,500
4	Primary School – Extension Program at Jarida Ashram Shaala (Monthly Sessions Material Cost, Science Workshop & Competition, Local Travel, Food & Logistics)	2,82,000
		15,06,500

Glimpses of in person Site Visit 2025 and 2020

Site Visit - 2025









Year End Milestones / Achieve

- 3 School Development Plans formed and budget raised
- Contextual bilingual material developed and used. Evaluation of the effectiveness
- Outside school learning activities and evaluation