Kahan Ka Raasta?

SAVYASACHI ANJU PRABIR

DOCUMENTATION JOURNAL FOR THE FILM



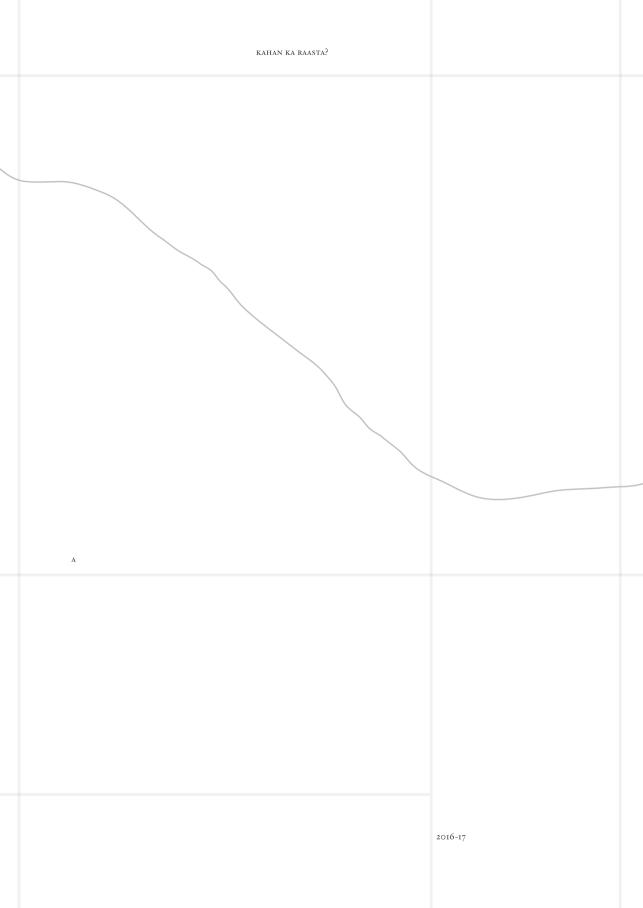
कहाँ का रास्ता?

AT THE CROSSROADS

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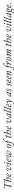
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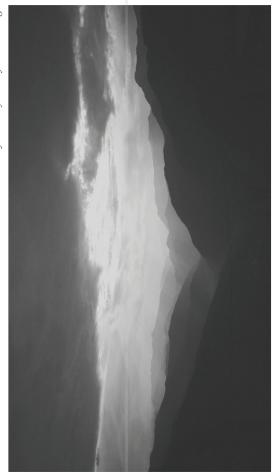
Introduction

In this country, at this time, there is extreme focus and resources being pulled into development especially with the 100 smart cities, make in India and many other such schemes and policies. Mainstream media also focuses on such topics that have the capacity to go viral and earn them points from their viewers.

It is honestly surprising and scary to an extent that a bullet train in one part of the country is able to make more news for people than the displacement of entire villages in another. In this day and age one has so much possibility and scope in cities that moving from the rural to the urban is considered progress. Sometimes the change is by choice but a lot of times it is due to certain unforeseen circumstances. This whole facade of development has hit all cities with immense force and one can see thousands of high-rise constructions and flyovers while in the rural areas, we see dams, mines and factories. Critics and freethinkers have often commented upon the skewed form of development and how the benefits are only accessible to the upper crust of society. This model of development has been followed since the Green Revolution and even during the British rule. The British had in-depth understanding of the importance of creating a road and railway network across the length and breadth of the country. The importance being that communication, travel and exchange of goods was made easier, cheaper, quicker, essentially all the requirements for the market, as we know it today. The roadways also happen to be one of the most appreciated and talked-about successes of our Prime Minister, Mr. Modi in his state, Gujarat. A village, unlike most in Gujarat, is in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand, completely off the grid and disconnected from the rest of the country. Kalap is situated near the source of the river Tons (one of the tributaries of the Yamuna) and is elevenkilometers by foot from the nearest road at Netwar town.

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Synopsis		
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	2016-17	





Nestled in the Himalayan range of Uttarakhand in India, Kalap may soon have a motorable road. Till then the village continues to be 10 kilometers uphill on foot from the nearest road.

The film delves into the lives of the people of Kalap, who for generations have been negotiating their own path for sustainable living. With increasingly easy access to the world beyond, will there be a gradual shift in social and cultural values across generations?

Kahan Ka Raasta is an immersive journey, in time and space, into the everyday reality of Kalap. It transpires at the pace of the village life, to unveil it's many facets.



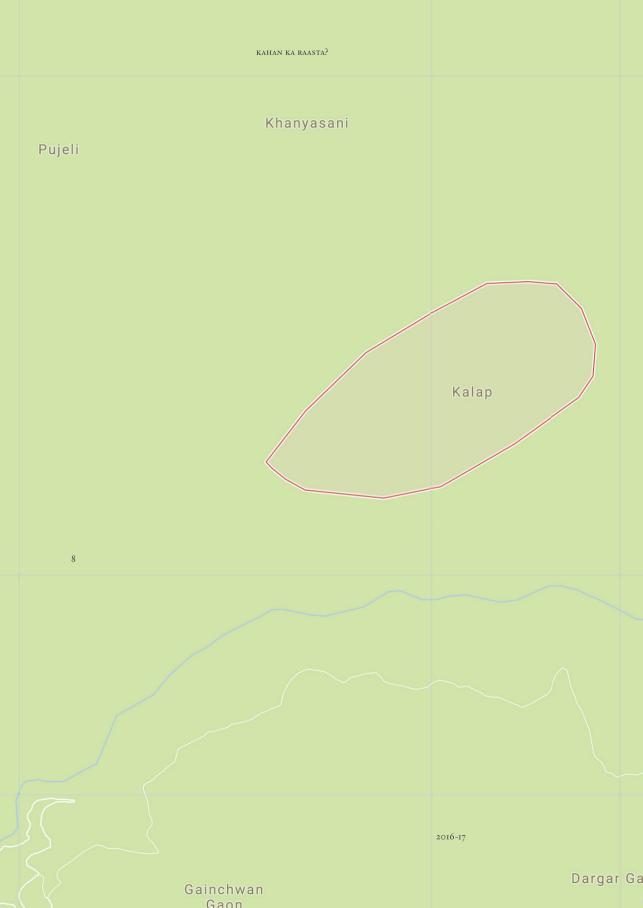


Netwar Market

(Overleaf)

Kalap, as seen on Google Maps.

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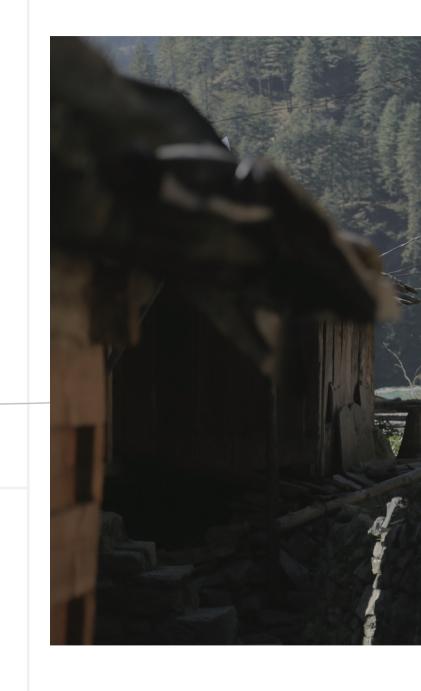




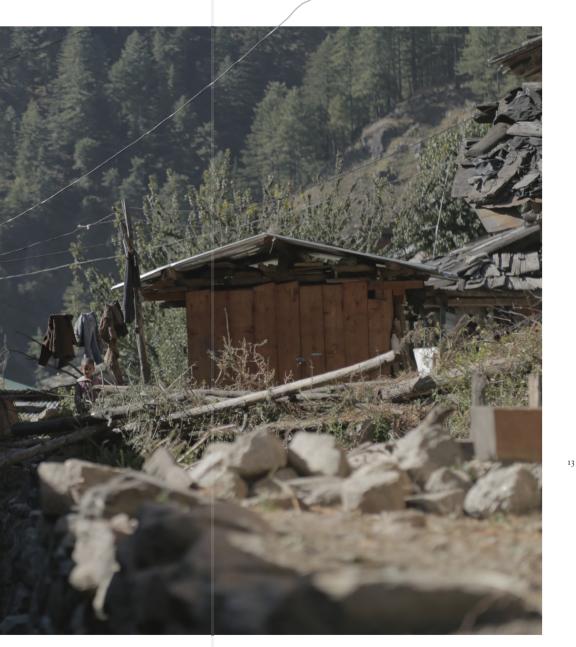
Kalap Village

The village consists of about a 100 households and occupies a portion of the hillside at 7500 feet. Surrounded by snow-covered peak on all sides through the year and itself receives almost up to 5-6 feet snowfall during the winters. All houses are constructed out of timber from the forest and have had slate stone roofs (some have recently got tin roofs from the market on mule backs). Primarily everyone in Kalap owns farmland where they grow mustard, millets, beans and vegetables that one would not have even heard of. Animal rearing is also one of the primary occupations where most own chicken and a few own goats and sheep. A few still live a nomadic life of rearing sheep and goats for meat consumption and sell wool for garment making. The village is entirely self-sustainable to the extent that most clothing, tools, houses, and every other thing that one needs can be produced in the village by the village itself. This is one of the benefits and/or hardships of being completely cut out from the rest of the civilization. The only mode of transport for people is by foot and for supplies are on mulebacks. The village does not receive any electricity from the board and is entirely off the grid.



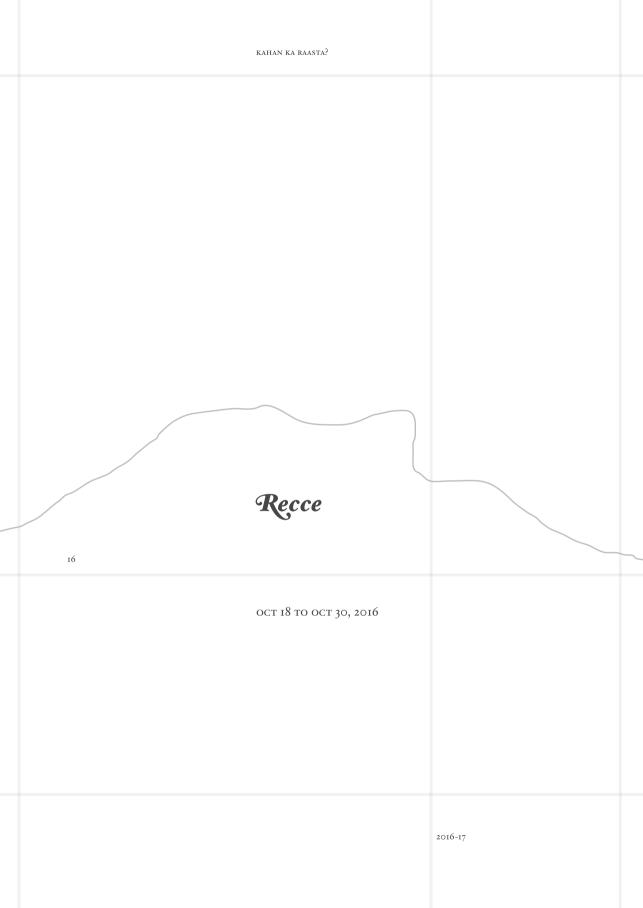






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Pre-production



Early October was spent in planning the recce trip to Kalap. The recce turned out to be much longer than we expected, but it helped greatly in terms of planning for the film and final production. We managed to capture a lot of activities in the village as well as grasp a sense of all that we would need when we return for production. Steps were taken towards identifying possible characters that would be comfortable with the camera as well as have interesting thoughts and opinions for the film.

The month of November was spent on trying to collate all the material collected from the recce trip. Logging all video as well as audio files was a major part of the work completed that month. During the recce trip over 200 GB of footage was shot that highlights the life in Kalap village as well as the activities such as grass cutting and collection, winnowing beans and amaranth from the recent harvest or collecting leaves and firewood, in order to prepare for the winter. We spent more than a day with at least 3 to 4 characters in order to have clarity on who and what activities would hold value for the film.



Patuli making rotis in her kitchen.

PATULI 30 YEARS OLD

Patuli is in her mid 30's, a mother of three, she has many responsibilities around the house and her apple orchard. We spent time with her and her husband while they collected rocks for a new construction around their house.

We also accompanied Patuli to her orchard (about 8km from Kalap) where we spent time with her talking about Kalap and the road. We also managed to capture conversation between her and her husband regarding the same.



Bana Singh making thread.

BANA SINGH 62 YEARS OLD

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Bana Singh is in his early 60's, yet he works harder than most young men and women in the village. In his free time he sits outdoors and makes wollen thread on a spinning wheel. We discuss life in a city and he talks about how it sounds very intimidating for him and is not his cup of tea.

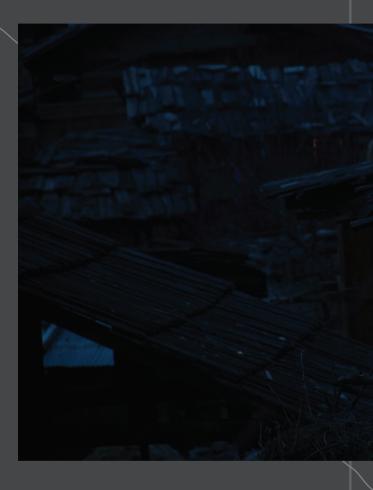
At another instance, we follow him to the forest far above the village to cut timber that he intends to use for the repair and maintenance of his house. He expresses his fear over being caught logging and therefore asks us to stop shooting him.



Anuj collecting veggies for dinner.

ANUJ II YEARS OLD

Anuj is a 12-year-old boy, very shy and quiet but quite inquisitive. We followed him and his friends while they went to the fields to collect vegetables to prepare for dinner. It was interesting to follow children around the village to look for vegetables that slowly transformed into playing games in the fields. On our last night in Kalap, we went to say bye to Anuj but ended up having dinner with them. Towards the end, Anuj almost took over the sound recorder to understand its works and ended up recording himself and his family. He was even excited enough to sing the song 'Yesterday' by The Beatles, recording himself.

















River Supin meets River Rupin.



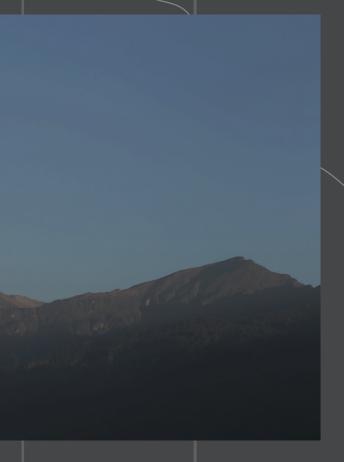


The town of Netwar lies at their confluence. The closest town to Kalap that is connected by road, and also the starting point for the climb.

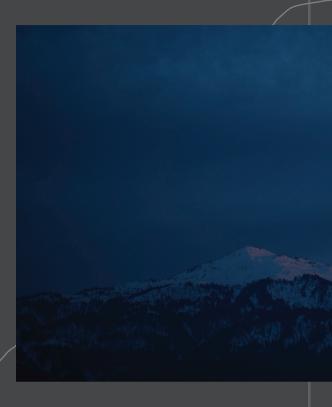
The framing and cinematography of the film compliment the hardship rather than take away from it. The film primarily tries to work with slow paced long shots in order to place the character in context and set the mood of the space. The camera follows the characters through the village and forests as they walk, talk, do their business or just quietly contemplate. There are very few talking heads, and the ones present are shot more as a documentation of a conversation rather than a typical interview. Although the approach was towards an observational piece, it is different from 'the fly on the wall' style of filmmaking. The film employs lots of silences (lack of human sounds) in order to try and give a sense of the real space with sounds of the village, forest, river and earth. The emphasis was also on trying to record songs and poetry from the village that gives a sense of their culture and traditions. The emphasis will be further on creating the environment through the use of sounds that are omnipresent in Kalap and its surroundings.























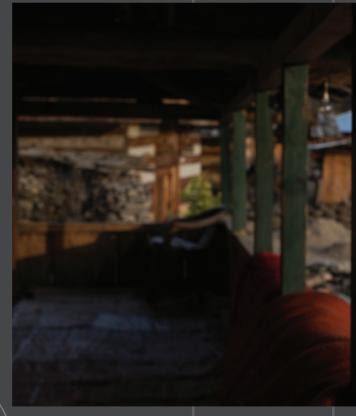






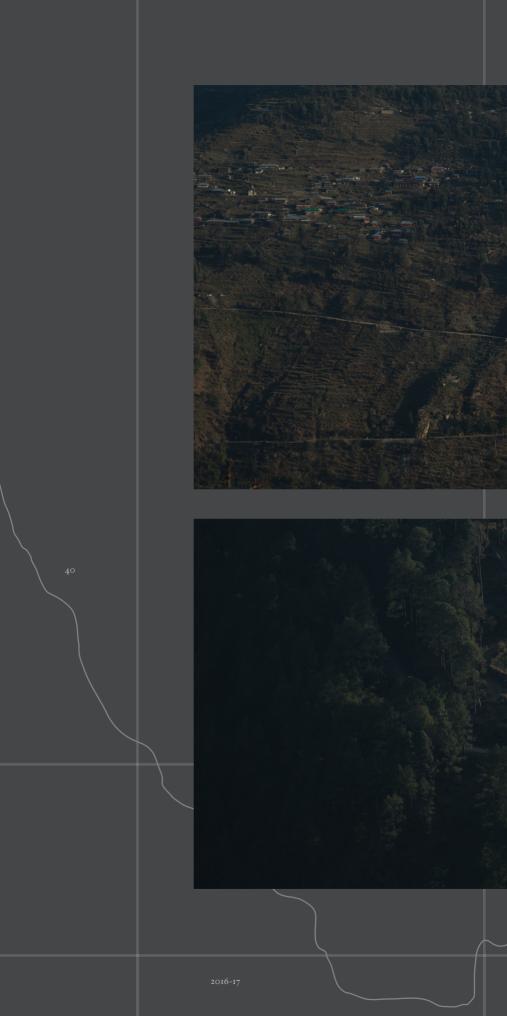




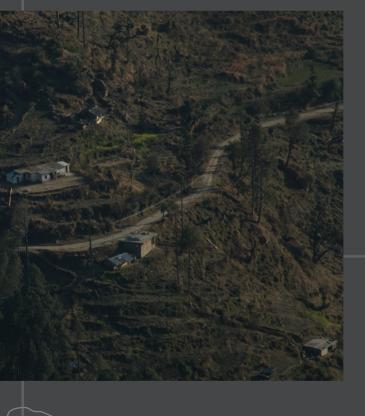










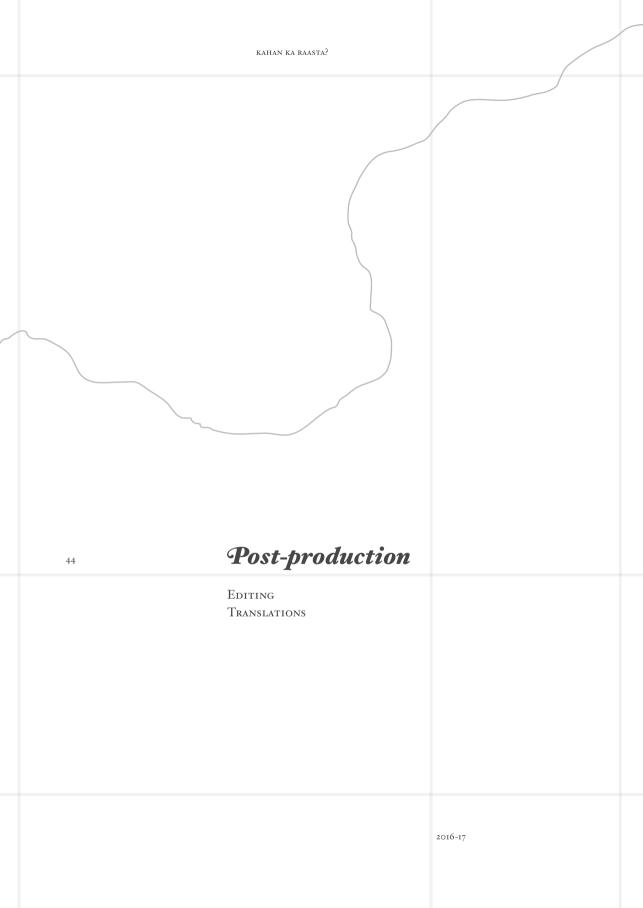


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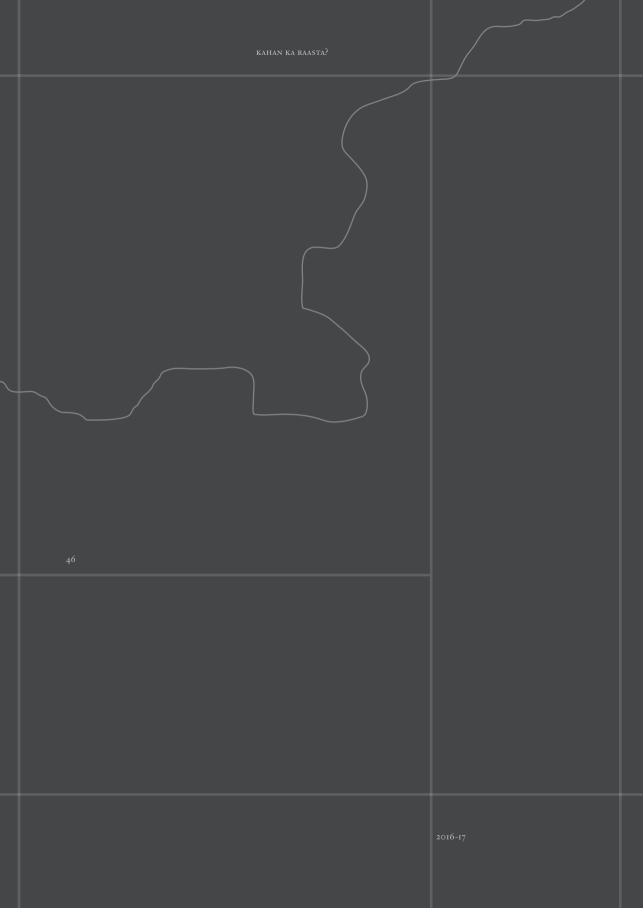


EDITING

The editing began in March. With about 800 GB of footage to work with, a lot of time was spent in transcribing and logging. The characters were at first separately compiled in their isolated stories and later interspersed with the parallels that were forming. The edit was carefully crafted to give the audience a holistic understanding of first, the absence of the road in the village and second, the possible need for one in the near future. The sound of the film has been designed to further establish a holistic outlook of the village and the life that exists there.

TRANSLATIONS

All the conversation that takes place with us was in Hindi and therefore was not an issue for translating. Although, a lot of the conversation that takes place amongst characters on screen is in Garhwali and was translated by Mukesh, once the edit was nearing rough cut.



The authors are indebted to Guddu Bhaiya and Pituli Bhabhi for looking after them during their stay and making the time and process of shooting in Kalap and Kotgaon as easy as it were. Many thanks remain due to the people and children of Kalap to have welcomed us without resistance.

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