

SOCIETY FOR RURAL INITIATIVE SUSTAINABLE & HOLISTIC THEMES IN INDIA

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2023-24



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CONVENOR'S STATEMENT



Dear Members,

In 2002, we established SRISHTI to focus on developing a strong local-level network in the local communities for addressing these concerns that still persist in the district. Over the last sixteen years, SRISHTI has focused on strengthening governance at the gram panchayat and gram sabha levels through its various projects. The main model of intervention has been on building community-level awareness and capacity for monitoring of government schemes and laws leading to their improved implementation. Through this model, we have worked on issues ranging from health and nutrition to sustainable use and marketing of non-timber forest products. We hope to build a healthier, stronger, sustainable, and self-reliant community in society.

Thematically organization focused on the following subject of rural/tribal community, Education, Livelihood, Women Empowerment, Environmental Sustainability, Agroforestry, and Conservation of Natural Resources like Soil, Air and Water, Rural Development Projects. Our organization, SRISHTI (Society for Rural Initiatives in Sustainable and Holistic Themes in India), is working for facilitating the process of recognition of the rights of rural and tribal people on natural resources to strengthen livelihood and conservation of natural resources. We are working in the tribal areas of Gadchiroli district in Maharashtra and Rajnandgaon district of Chhattisgarh. Capacity building of community institutions and facilitating them to implement different acts and schemes for livelihood security are the key areas of the work of the organization.

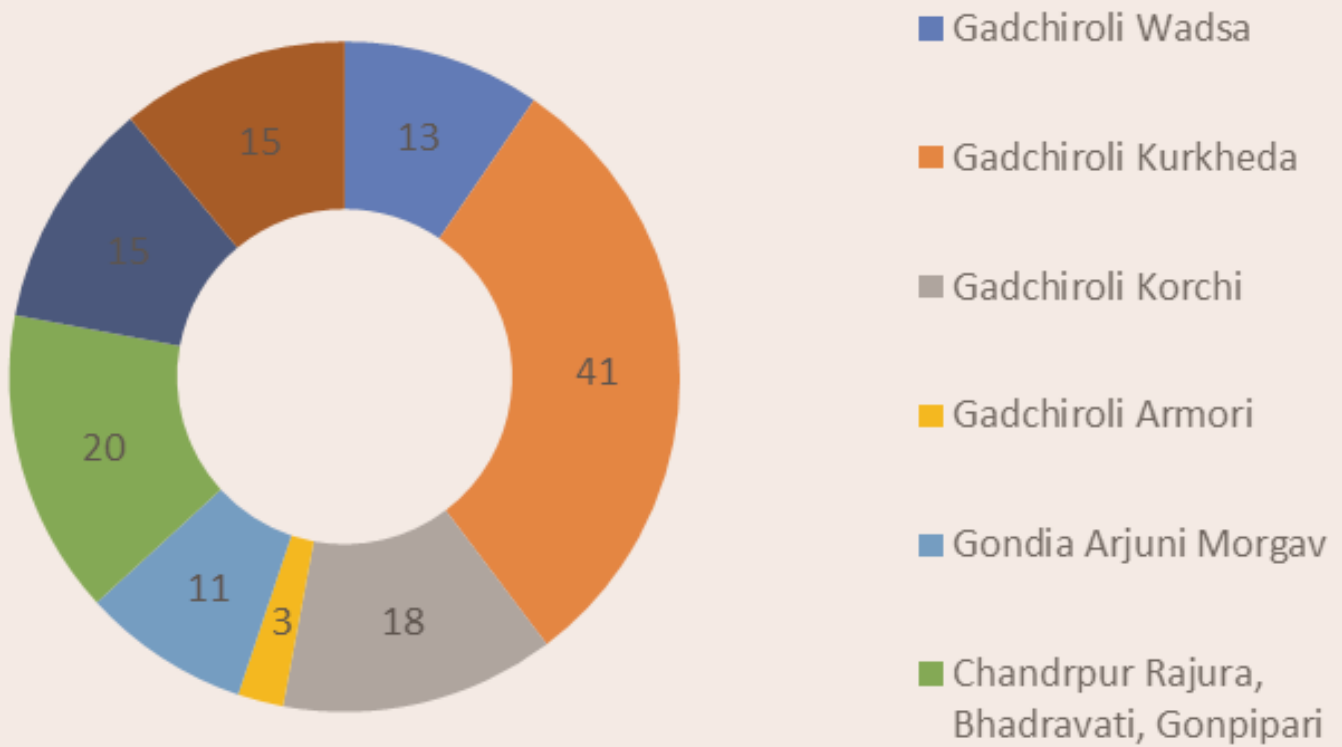


SRISHTI
Convenor

SRISHTI: How we work - Expansion- thematic, geographical

The organization's work has been focused on Education, Livelihood, Women Empowerment, Environmental Sustainability, Agroforestry, Conservation of Natural Resources, and Rural Development Projects. Geographically, SRISHTI's work currently spans five districts (Gadchiroli, Nagpur, Chandrapur, Gondia, Rajnandgaon, Mohla-Manpur- Ambagarh Chowki) across the two states of Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh. The organization's registration office and training center are in the Yerandi village of Kurkheda taluka of Gadchiroli district. The admin office is in Shankarpur, while the field office is in Kurkheda. Additionally, there is one field office in Chhattisgarh.

Total Number



RIGHT OVER NATURAL RESOURC ES

The project "Rights Over Natural Resources," implemented by Srishti and spanning from July 2019 to December 2023, aims to empower communities, particularly women and single women, in securing and managing their natural resources. The project focuses on advocating for the recognition of community rights over forest land cultivated for agriculture, promoting sustainable management practices, and enhancing the livelihoods of local communities. Through strategic interventions, the project has achieved several key outcomes. Project communities and households have successfully claimed their community rights, and community institutions have become robust, effectively managing natural resources with a high degree of participation. The vulnerability of these communities to climate and social shocks has been significantly reduced, and the organizational capacities of Civil Society Organizations have been strengthened, enabling them to deliver their respective mandates more effectively.

The project has directly benefited 283 men and 339 women, totaling 622 beneficiaries. Key achievements include successful community mobilization, legal advocacy for the recognition of community rights, implementation of sustainable resource management practices, and numerous capacity-building training sessions and workshops for community members. Despite facing challenges such as navigating complex legal frameworks, resource constraints, and ensuring consistent community engagement, the project has made significant strides. Looking ahead, the project plans to extend its reach to additional villages, influence policy at regional and national levels to support community rights over natural resources, and ensure the sustainability of its outcomes through continuous community engagement and capacity building.

1. Gram Sabha Federations Participation: In the year 2023, a total of 36 Gram Sabhas in Kurkheda taluka and 13 Gram Sabhas in Vadsa taluka participated in the Gram Sabha Federation. This initiative aimed to empower local communities and enhance their decision-making capacities.

2. Infrastructure Development: Funding of 20 lakh rupees for godowns and 10 lakh rupees as working capital were sanctioned for 3 Gram Sabhas of the project. This support from the Human Development Mission enabled the construction of essential infrastructure for storage and economic activities.

3. Tendu Collection and Auctions: The project actively engaged in tendu collection auctions, with 39 Gram Sabhas participating in the Tendu-Gram Sabha Federation. Challenges such as market conditions and reduced prices due to production issues were managed through strategic decision-making and negotiations with traders.

4. Forest Conservation and Management Plans: Forest action plans for 19 Gram Sabhas were prepared, with 13 plans approved by the District Level Convergence Committee. This process signifies progress in sustainable forest management and community-led conservation efforts.



HEALTH & NUTRITION

The "Health and Nutrition Project, Gadchiroli," is dedicated to ensuring healthy lives for children, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and adolescents by increasing access to essential health services in the target areas of Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra. The project, which operates in 23 villages within the Dhanora and Kurkheda blocks, sets out comprehensive objectives to enhance health and nutrition standards. Key outcomes include the preparation and utilization of baseline data, enrolling all children (0-6 years) and pregnant and lactating women in Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) to achieve 100% immunization over three years, and ensuring that 80% of AWCs provide five essential services as per Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) norms. These services include supplementary nutritious food, health checkups, immunization, referral services, and life skills education for adolescent girls. Additionally, the project aims to reduce malnutrition among 80% of children, promote kitchen gardens for targeted beneficiaries, and foster attitudinal changes in self-feeding practices among 70% of pregnant and lactating women.

Expanding its scope further, the project aims to ensure that 80% of adolescent girls are linked with AWCs and health services. It also focuses on raising awareness among community members, target groups, and stakeholders about appropriate child-rearing and healthcare practices through Interactive Voice Response Systems (IVRS). Another significant goal is to activate 60% of Primary Health Centers (PHCs), Health Sub-Centers (HSCs), and Child Malnutrition Treatment Centers/Nutrition Rehabilitation Centers (CMTCs/NRCs) in alignment with the National Health Mission (NHM). Capacity building of duty bearers and the project team is also emphasized to enhance the effectiveness of service delivery. Through these strategic interventions and comprehensive health and nutrition initiatives, the "Health and Nutrition Project, Gadchiroli" aims to significantly improve the health and well-being of the local communities, especially benefiting the vulnerable populations in the district

Health & Nutrition Project Core Achievements in 2023

100% children immunization-

0-to 5 Years children Immunization Status-

In 2023, 100% of children aged 0-1 year were immunized, including 27 newborns added from December 2022 to February 2023, who also received their vaccinations. For children aged 1 to 5 years, 95.69% were immunized, with 89 children vaccinated in 2023. All children aged 0 to 5 years in 23 villages were registered with the Anganwadi centers. Vaccination sessions were organized in each village according to the Health Department's timetable, ensuring all children were vaccinated during these sessions.

Pregnant Women Immunization-

In 2023, 96 pregnant women received complete immunizations. A total of 230 vaccination sessions were organized at the Anganwadi level across 23 villages in the project area. With the cooperation of the Health Department, Anganwadi workers, and ASHA workers, these vaccination sessions were successfully conducted, ensuring that both children and pregnant women were fully immunized.

Pregnant women enrolled in AWC with MCH cards received IFA tablets & ANC Completed -



In 2023, 98 newly pregnant women from all 23 villages in the work area were registered at the Anganwadi level. Each pregnant woman received an MCH card and regular IFA tablets. Additionally, 60% of these women completed their ANC check-ups during the year.

Lactating mother PNCs –

In all 23 villages of the project area, there were 29 existing lactating mothers and 97 new lactating mothers. Among these, the third PNC check-up was completed for 97 women. In 2023, 100% of the PNC check-ups for lactating mothers were successfully completed.

Strengthening/ activation of community-based monitoring groups for monitoring of AWC activities –

In 11 villages of the Kurkheda block, out of the 23 villages in the work area, a Water Supply, Nutrition, Diet, and Sanitation Committee has been established at the Anganwadi level. However, only the committee in Sonpur village is fully functional, holding regular monthly meetings and addressing issues at the Anganwadi level. No committee has been formed yet in the Dhanora block.

100% AWCs provide five services as per ICDS norms (Supplementary nutritious food, Health check-up, Immunization, Referral services, and Life skill education to adolescent girls) in 23 project villages.

children moved out of SAM to MAM & MAM to Normal–

In the 23 villages of the work area, there are 27 children identified as suffering from SAM. Through 223 home visits, parents and family members were educated on child care, nutrition, safety, and household cleanliness using BCC materials. In 2023, 9 children improved from SAM to MAM. Additionally, out of 72 children with MAM, 47 children, or 65.27%, transitioned to a normal health status.

referring cases of malnourished children to NRC/ CMTC.

In 2023, 9 SAM children were referred, admitted, and treated at the Human Development Mission check-up camp at Malewada PHC. Additionally, 2 children from Mangewada were referred to the Gadchiroli NRC. In total, 11 children were referred to NRCs during 2023.

KAP change towards PLW of their feeding practices & Colostrum Feeding –

In the 23 villages of the work area, 50 existing pregnant women (PW) and 98 newly registered PWs were recorded, totaling 138 PWs. In 2023, there was an 86% improvement in knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) among pregnant women and an 89% improvement among

lactating mothers. Lactating women were educated on breastfeeding their children 8 to 10 times a day, with nearly all practicing colostrum feeding within the first hour of birth. During village meetings, mother meetings, vaccination sessions, home visits, and through flip charts, pregnant women and their families were informed about the diet of pregnant and lactating women (PLW). The positive impact of this education is evident in the women's health and practices.



TO SECURE AND IMPROVE THE RIGHTS AND LIVELIHOODS OF ADIVASI AND FOREST DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

The project "To secure and improve rights and livelihoods of Adivasi and Forest Dependent Communities" with the support of Azim Premji Foundation is a comprehensive endeavor aimed at fostering positive changes in the lives of communities residing in 30 villages across Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh. Initiated in January 2023 and slated to continue until December 2026, this collaborative effort is designed to strengthen the foundational institutions within these communities, ensure the protection of their fundamental rights and entitlements, and enhance their economic well-being.

One of the pivotal components of this project involves empowering the Forest Rights Committees through a series of 30 training sessions. These sessions are instrumental in enlightening committee members about their roles and responsibilities, particularly in terms of advocating for community rights and navigating the intricate processes involved in individual claim submissions.

Furthermore, the project includes 30 Gram Sabha training sessions, which play a crucial role in guiding communities through the community claim processes. Gram Sabhas serve as vital platforms for communal decision-making and consensus-building, especially concerning land and resource management issues.

In addition to these training initiatives, welfare camps have been organized across the targeted villages. These camps serve as knowledge dissemination hubs, providing valuable information to individuals about various government schemes and programs related to livelihood enhancement, access to water resources through bore wells, housing initiatives, and other avenues for socio-economic development. This facilitates greater participation and benefit uptake among the villagers.

The project also includes specific interventions focused on Individual Forest Rights (IFR). Through 30 IFR camps, individuals are educated about pending claims, the necessary documentation, and the submission processes involved in securing their individual rights over forest land.

Moreover, the project extends its impact to the realm of community claims, formerly referred to as collective claims. In villages such as Madhopur and Bamani in Chhattisgarh, and others like Chirchari, Gallethola, Kodevada, and Nadekal, community claims have been facilitated and submitted for processing at the Sub District Level Committee. These community claims represent the collective aspirations and rights assertions of the villagers, highlighting the project's commitment to empowering communities as cohesive units in securing their land and resource rights.

Furthermore, the project team has been actively involved in facilitating and processing individual claims, with 68 submissions made and 44 currently in the processing phase. Once these claims are approved, individuals will gain rightful ownership of their land, enabling them to manage and utilize it for their sustenance and well-being.

In the project, cluster-level training is a significant component. By December 2023, four training sessions have been completed. The primary objective of these training sessions is to ensure that the village youth understand all processes and become active participants in these processes. These training sessions have shown remarkable results. For example, the Dhavali Gram Sabha has developed a forest management plan and obtained the approval of the Gram Sabha. Furthermore, the implementation of the plan is underway.

The exposure visits conducted for communities from Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra aimed to provide valuable insights into the claims process and post-recognition procedures related to land rights. Community members participating in these visits had the opportunity to learn about the necessary steps involved in filing claims for land rights, the processes undertaken after claims are submitted for recognition, and the subsequent rights and responsibilities associated with recognized land ownership. These visits were instrumental in equipping communities with the knowledge and understanding needed to navigate legal frameworks effectively, ensuring the protection and sustainable management of their land and resources.

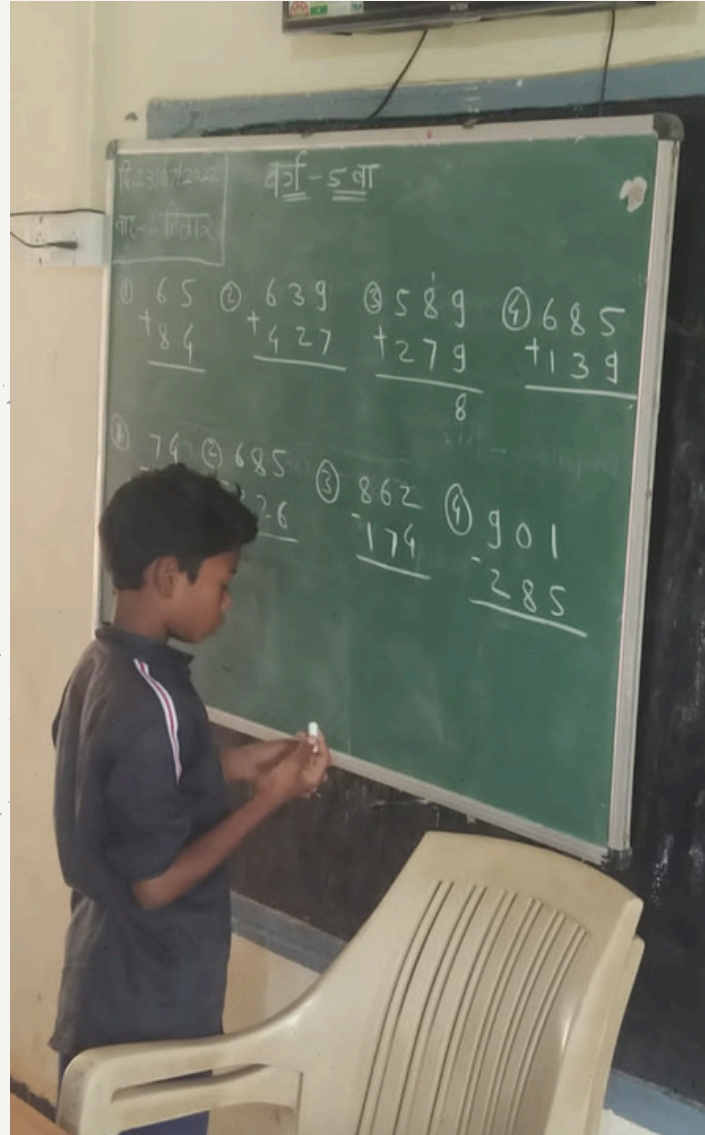
This ongoing support and facilitation in claim processing are vital components of the project's mission to empower individuals and communities towards self-sufficiency and sustainable development.

E-VIDYALOKA PROGRAM

Evidyaloka is an educational initiative providing free education to students in Zilla Parishad primary schools in rural areas. Based in Bangalore, the organization has been working in the Gadchiroli district through the Srishti Foundation since 2016. Although initially operational in 10 schools, some of these had to close for various reasons. However, as of 2023, the program is active in four schools: Gothangaon, Yengalkhedha, Shankarpur, and Chop.

The E-vidyaloka program leverages technology to deliver education, with teachers from various countries providing online instruction. Lessons are delivered through TVs, mobile phones, laptops, and tablets, making it easier for students to understand through engaging video content. This approach helps make learning enjoyable and accessible for rural children.

The program focuses on three main subjects: English, Mathematics, and Science. Alongside regular classes, various activities are organized to enhance learning, and students are awarded motivational prizes. Scholarship classes are also part of the initiative, further supporting the students' educational journeys. Through Evidyaloka, rural students are gaining new knowledge and skills, significantly enhancing their learning experiences.

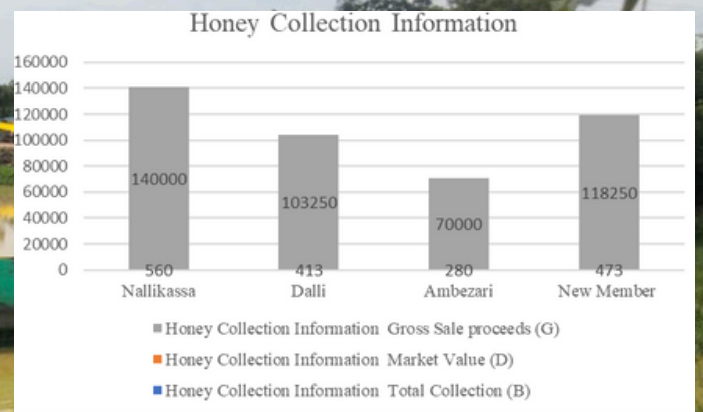
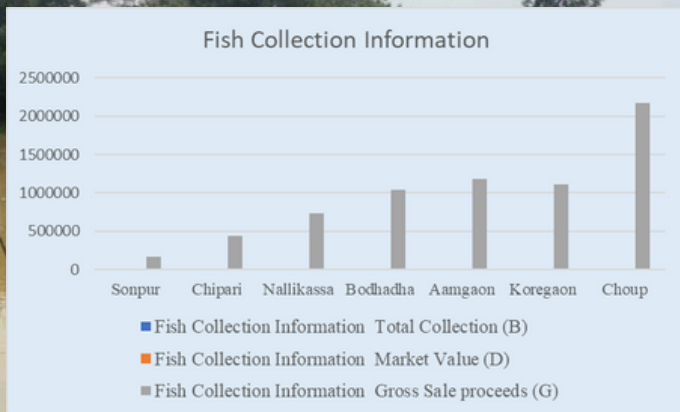


DEVELOP SKILL AND GENERATE SCOPE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF TRIBAL POCKET



The intervention in nine villages of Gadchiroli, in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, aimed to improve the livelihoods of forest-dependent local communities by engaging 681 households. Through the Honey and Fisheries intervention, beneficiaries' incomes were expected to increase by up to 15%. The project, supported by the PWC India Foundation and designed by Srishti, focused on scientific honey collection and fisheries activities, which included reducing fish mortality, ensuring cage culture, and restoring aquatic habitats. Over the past year, from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, the project worked to empower local communities, Gram Sabhas, and the Fish Society, conducting capacity-building programs, training sessions, and development activities. These efforts were aimed at strengthening local institutions and establishing sustainable market linkages for fish, fish pickles, and organic honey, ensuring a balanced environment for effective project implementation.

The project achieved significant milestones such as restoring 18 hectares of aquatic habitat, training 140 individuals on pen culture, and increasing household income by 15%. Training covered scientific honey harvesting methods and aquatic habitat restoration, benefitting traditional honey harvesters and fish farmers. Activities included identifying honey harvesters, constructing pen units, distributing fish seed and fish feed, and conducting marketing meetings. Unplanned activities, such as boat driving training and fish feed distribution, further supported the community. Overall, these comprehensive efforts aimed to enhance the technical efficiency of honey collectors, increase fish productivity, and strengthen market linkages for sustainable livelihood development in the region.



LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT OF THE FOREST DEPENDENT LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH IMPROVED ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND MARKETS.

Through the project intervention, SRISHTI will carry out the intervention in the 70 villages of Gadchiroli based on the selected villages that have the potential of improving the livelihood of forest-dependent communities. 10,000 beneficiaries will be benefited from the proposed engagement in these villages.

The project, spanning from April 23 to March 24, focused on collaborative efforts with the community and government in Gadchiroli district to ensure sustainable natural resource management. This period saw significant progress in community capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and the preparation of management plans. Activities such as community surveys, stakeholder workshops, and exposure visits were instrumental in enhancing local governance institutions' capabilities across 70 villages. These efforts aimed at empowering community members with knowledge and skills related to forest rights, management plans, and livelihood interventions.

One of the project's notable achievements was the extensive training provided to over 2400 community members, including CFRMC (Community Forest Rights Management Committee) members and Gram Sabha representatives. This training covered essential topics such as the Forest Rights Act, record-keeping, and the preparation of MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) work plans. Additionally, livelihood interventions like goat distribution and the establishment of Mahua Bank groups were initiated to support forest-based livelihoods and economic sustainability in the villages.

In terms of on-ground impact, the project successfully restored 43 acres of common land and regenerated a substantial area of 1193 acres. These restoration and regeneration efforts were crucial for enhancing ecological resilience and supporting sustainable resource utilization practices. Furthermore, the project leveraged significant funds amounting to INR 1.35 crores through collaborations with government schemes and departments, such as the Manav Vikas Mission, NAREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), and the District Transformation Committee. However, the project also faced challenges related to seasonal farming activities impacting community meetings and road connectivity issues affecting project monitoring and updates.

Overall, the project's comprehensive approach towards community empowerment, sustainable resource management, and leveraging government partnerships underscores its commitment to long-term environmental and socio-economic sustainability in Gadchiroli district.





HONEY

SRISHTI established a honey collection center and developed a brand called SRISHTI Honey. Over the years we have been successful in training more than 100 families in sustainable and non-violent methods of honey harvesting. At Dhanora, Vadsa, and Kurkheda, the youth generation is trained on how to collect honey, and its materials are also given to them so that they can extract honey in a new way and they are trained to produce it twice. These honey collectors have now secured a year-round market. We have a storage capacity of over 25 quintals of honey and a processing unit that ensures filtered and pure quality honey. Srishti Honey succeeds in its strategy of offering fair prices to honey collectors, developing strong local market linkages, pricing to enable better local sales and shipping our product to certain urban markets.



Honey training with scientific method, Dongarhur
Nov 30, 2023 4:26:21 PM

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH SELF-HELP FISHING GROUPS: A SRISHTI SANSTHA INITIATIVE IN SONPUR, MAHARASHTRA.

A Initiative of Gramsabha

WOMEN IN FISHERIES

YEAR 2023

Sonpur is a small size village situated 18 kilometers east of Kurkheda in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra. The village is heterogeneous and the Tribble community is one of the social groups in the village. It is heavily reliant on natural resources as well as fishing as its source of income and found itself entrenched in poverty. Traditionally, men have been controlling the finances. However, Women from the Sonpur, with determination and hard work, endeavored to ensure the sustainability of their household income. But, despite their efforts to save money diligently, they lacked the knowledge and expertise required to effectively manage and multiply their savings. Recognizing the urgent need to uplift these women from their economic hardships, Srishti Sanstha intervened to improve their circumstances.



Taking cognizance of the situation, Mr. Kunal Gurnule, a member of Srishti Sanstha based in Yerandi, initiated the establishment of a women's self-help group aimed at empowering women and enhancing their participation in economic activities. Through this initiative, Mr. Gurnule provided guidance and support to the women, enabling them to witness tangible improvements in their financial condition. Furthermore, he facilitated the formation of fishing groups within the self-help framework, encouraging women to actively engage in fishing activities to augment their household income.

To bolster their efforts, a diverse range of fish seeds was provided to the women, equipping them with the necessary resources to expand their fishing endeavors. Additionally, essential fish feed such as dehgo persod saba, ursodi, white lotus, dantya grass, and groundnut dhelp were distributed to enhance the productivity of their fishing operations. Moreover, materials crucial for fishing, including jackets and nets, were supplied, further empowering the women to maximize their participation in the industry.



Pen culture sonpur
Friday, 5 August 2022 at 11:46:20 AM

As a result of these interventions, the participation of women in economic growth within the community has witnessed a remarkable surge. Through the collaborative efforts of Srishti Sanstha and the proactive involvement of women in the self-help group, significant strides have been made towards socioeconomic empowerment. With newfound knowledge, resources, and support, these women are not only securing their financial stability but also playing an integral role in driving economic progress within their village. It is their first year to venture into this. They have developed the governing structures, benefit sharing mechanisms etc. This story could influence the neighboring villages and attract more women in the resource governance leading to diversified livelihoods.

The total population of Sonpur village which comes under Kurkheda taluka of Gadchiroli district is 307. Families of tribal community live in the village. There is Anganwadi center and education facilities from class 1st to 4th in the village.

Work area: Pratibha Nikesh Halami of Sonpur village lived at her father-in-law's house. Atya's son Nikesh Halami was living at home after completing his studies and this is where their love started. That love led to physical relations between them and she became pregnant. After becoming pregnant, she hid this fact from the family for 2 months. Later she returned to her mother's house, and after 3 months the mother came to know.

that the girl was pregnant. The mother asked the girl about the child. Then the girl told the mother the name of the father's son. The parents were not allowed to give the daughter to the father's house. Then the girl went to live in a field in the forest. The mother and father were trying to abort her without telling anyone in the village. And they kept trying but they did not allow the girl to have an abortion. But the parents tried to abort Pratibha's fetus by going to the village medicine, a private hospital, Vaidu, and midwife. But when the fetus did not come out, anger spread in the village and people in the village started talking, so they entered the mother's house in the village. Despite the girl being seven months pregnant, she has not been registered. To save the child from being malnourished, they were motivated to register themselves in the Anganwadi and on the day of vaccination in the seventh month, Pratibha and her mother-in-law were called to the Anganwadi and they were registered.

RESOLVING TRADITIONAL BOUNDARY DISPUTE AND SECURING FOREST RIGHTS IN VILLAGE NADEKAL

Village Nadekal, nestled in the tribal-dominated region of Vananchal, is home to 254 residents belonging to 43 families. The community primarily comprises Gond, Halba, Yadav, and Mahar castes. Rooted in their traditions, the villagers speak Gondi, Chhattisgarhi, and Hindi. They adhere to tribal customs, beliefs, and dress, maintaining their reverence for ancestral deities. Their livelihoods revolve around agriculture and forest produce. The village, enclosed by lush forests, retains its natural beauty but remains underdeveloped in terms of education and healthcare facilities.

Settlement of Traditional Boundary Dispute:

The Srishti Sanstha engaged with the Dakkotola project office in the village in 2018, setting the stage for community empowerment. A collective meeting involving eight villages, including Nadekal, was convened to discuss Forest Resource Rights Recognition Certificate. Through these efforts, awareness about forest rights beyond individual recognition was disseminated. The engagement faced a setback due to the pandemic but resumed in 2021. The village organized its organizational structure and endeavored to connect with dependent villages to align their understanding and mindset.

Initiating the Process in 2021:

The process of securing Community Forest Resource Rights Recognition Certificate commenced with a Gram Sabha meeting on August 29, 2021, attended by representatives from Nadekal, Bhojtola, Bamni, Chirchari, Marri, and Botejhar. The meeting yielded an agreement to visit Nadekal's traditional borders and initiate the completion of community claim forms.

Organizing a Special Gram Sabha:

A special Gram Sabha was convened on October 11, 2022, in Nadekal village. The presence of the Gram Panchayat Secretary and Sarpanch Sharar Santaram Hidame underscored the significance of the meeting. Unanimous approval was granted during the Gram Sabha for a claim letter to be demanded for community forest resource rights.



Traditional Boundary Demarcation:

Responding to Nadekal's guidance, Bhojtola, Chirchari, Bamani, and Madhopur's dependent villages jointly embarked on the task of identifying traditional borders on September 12, 2022. The exercise aimed to establish clear demarcations through mutual agreement. Visual maps were planned for processing, and a subsequent date was set for GPS mapping. Efforts to perform GPS mapping encountered challenges when Bhojtola Gram Sabha opposed the mapping process initiated by Nadekal. They raised concerns about jurisdiction and the suppression of their traditional boundary. They demanded the presence of both villages' Patwaris from the Revenue Department before proceeding with mapping. This led to a deadlock.

Resolution and Conclusion:

After attempts to mediate the dispute, Gram Sabha Nadekal sought guidance from Srishti Sanstha and involved the Gram Panchayat to address the issue. An official notice was served, leading to a joint meeting in Gram Panchayat Sabha's room. After deliberations, a committee was formed to decide the matter mutually, excluding the disputed villages. The committee's decision favored a fair and acceptable resolution, considering traditional practices and government regulations.

Srishti Sanstha played a pivotal role in facilitating these processes, leading to constructive outcomes. The case study emphasises the importance of community involvement, cooperation, and external support in resolving disputes and promoting sustainable practices. Gram Panchayat meticulously documented all activities and decisions, ensuring transparency and accountability. This example highlights the potential of collaborative efforts to overcome challenges and secure the rights of tribal communities while preserving the natural environment.



Organized events

GRAM SABHA SANWAD MELAVA EVENT SUMMARY

On October 18, 2023, the Gram Sabha Sanwad Melava was held at the Kisan Mangal Office in Kurkheda. This significant event focused on discussing rights and natural resources, bringing together various stakeholders to deliberate on crucial issues related to the Forest Rights Act (FRA). The discussions emphasized the importance of community participation in managing and conserving natural resources, addressing the challenges faced by local communities, and promoting sustainable practices. The event highlighted successful case studies and facilitated knowledge sharing among participants, contributing to the ongoing efforts to empower Gram Sabhas and strengthen the implementation of FRA in the region.



NTFP MARKETING AND BUSINESS PLAN DEVELOPMENT

From January 3rd to 5th, 2024, the NTFP Marketing and Business Plan Development event was successfully conducted at the Aamhi Aamachya Aarogyasathi Office in Kurkheda, in collaboration with Srishti Sanstha. Mentored by Adimalai CEOs Justin Pauls and Gokul Govind, the event aimed to enhance the participation of Maha Gramasabhas' presidents, secretaries, members, village leaders, and CBO staff in NTFP marketing and business plan development.

Key activities included hands-on experiments with honey, such as creating ginger, black pepper, and various flavored honeys, as well as producing beeswax products like soap, candles, and lip balm. Additionally, the event showcased the potential of processing amla into products like amla candy and amla powder, emphasizing the establishment of robust, employment-generating industries.

Hon. Keshav Gurunule, Convener of Srishti Sanstha, highlighted the empowering role of the Forest Rights Act of 2006 in enabling Gram Sabhas to manage and conserve local resources, ensuring sustainable livelihoods through the collection of secondary forest products. Participants developed marketing and business plans for various NTFPs, including tendu leaves, harra fruits, amla, mahua flowers, tamarind, bamboo, and beheda fruits. Detailed sessions focused on sustainable harvesting practices, procurement, value addition, storage, marketing strategies, and fair trade principles, enhancing the economic potential of NTFPs while promoting environmental conservation and community development.

Market expansion strategies were also emphasized, with discussions on market consciousness, e-commerce, and B2B transactions to broaden market reach. The event concluded with practical exercises and the development of actionable plans for future NTFP marketing and business initiatives. This event equipped participants with essential skills and knowledge, fostering community engagement and aiming to create sustainable, economically viable enterprises rooted in local resources.

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

The conservation and management plan review meeting, organized by SRISHTI at Mahatma Gandhi Sabhagruh, AAA - Kurkheda, brought together representatives from five Gram Sabhas: Shikaritola and Agari from Korchi Block, Parasvihir and Dhawali from Dhanora Block, and Kasari from Kurkheda Block. The meeting focused on reviewing the prepared plans to ensure they adhered to the template and guidelines from the Management Plan GR dated 06 July 2017. Expert opinions were sought to verify that the plans covered all necessary aspects and to provide constructive feedback for improvements.

Key highlights included the emphasis on attaching necessary resolutions, verifying data, ensuring gender equality, and advocating for government support for NTFPs and environmental loss compensations. Experts stressed the importance of the plans being flexible and regularly updated to reflect the Gram Sabhas' evolving needs. Participants also discussed the critical role of community involvement and the support provided by SRISHTI in preparing these plans, which aim to enhance livelihoods and employment opportunities through effective management and conservation strategies.



FRA DIALOGUE (SRUSHTI SAMVAD) – NAGPUR

The FRA dialogue in Nagpur brought together experts and practitioners to review the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) and address related issues. Key discussions highlighted the importance of integrating traditional knowledge with modern practices, focusing on community ethos rather than just economic development. Emphasis was placed on political mobilization, legal literacy, and capacity building, especially within forest bureaucracies. Participants discussed policy dilutions, the need for solution exchanges, and the importance of considering diverse forest produce. The event underscored the need for customized FRA strategies, addressing conflicting policies, and ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly from a gender perspective.



ASSOCIATES/ FUNDERS/ PARTNERS IN CHANGE



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CHILD RIGHTS
AND YOU



DASRA



e-VIDYALOKA
TRUST



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ECOLOGICAL
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FDCM

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERS IN CHANGE



TISS



GONDWANA
UNIVERSITY



KALPAVIRIKSH



Amhi Amchya Arogyasathi

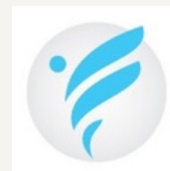
AMHI AMCHYA
AROGYASATHI



COMMUNITY
FORST RIGHTS
LERNING &
ADVOCACY



SATHI



FOUNDATION
FOR ECONOMIC
& ECOLOGICAL
DEVELOPMENT

THANK YOU



**FOR YOUR
CONSIDERATION**
