

# STRC NEWSLETTER

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It is a completely free online platform for farmers, rural entrepreneurs, farmer producer organizations, and self-help groups to advertise their products online. Launched with the slogan "Mera Mobile, Mera Market"...

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Vice Chancellor, Gondwana University, Gadchiroli, Dr. Prashant Bokare greets the Chairman, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Shri S. Somanath, with a bamboo bouquet and artifacts created by STRC trained artisans.

Technology | Enterprise | Development



## Science & Technology Resource Centre Gondwana University, Gadchiroli

A centre of excellence for sustainable value creation, conceived and funded by Rajiv Gandhi Science and Technology Commission (RGSTC), Mumbai, Govt. of Maharashtra.

STRC is a registered society, 'Science & Technology Resource Centre Foundation Gadchiroli', under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (XXI of 1860).

# Mission MarketMirchi

## Mera Mobile, Mera Market



**Smt. Pragati Gokhale**

Mission MarketMirchi is a completely free online platform for farmers, rural entrepreneurs, farmer producer organizations, and self-help groups to advertise their products online. Launched with the slogan "Mera Mobile, Mera Market" the movement was supported by the IIT Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG) an initiative under Principal Scientific Advisor, Govt. of India.

Through this initiative rural community may now sell or buy their items both domestically and internationally without any intermediary through mobile devices to make appropriate profit by resolving the problem caused by dealers or brokers in traditional markets.

Farmers are primarily dependent on traditional and local markets due to rural constraints, which prevents them from presenting their products on a large scale. Due to this brokers, middlemen, and local organized dealers, this is taken advantage of. Therefore, to overcome this issue I have made the decision by giving them a solution they

need to sell their produce digitally for free using mobile devices. In 2014, I developed an online MarketMirchi portal which offers free marketing services. Afterwards, the 'Mera Mobile, Mera Marketing' movement spread across the country by RuTAG and this platform selected by Niti Ayog in the best Agri Innovations list.

### Completely free and direct marketing facility by MarketMirchi

Available as a mobile app and website, MarketMirchi is an indigenous marketplace that facilitates the sale and purchase of rural products, agricultural products, and rural services.

This platform offers free advertising facility for rural jobs as well as for buying, selling which includes 26 main categories such as Grains & Pulses, Vegetables, Fruits, Flowers, Spices, Cash Crops, Oilseeds, Bamboo, Herbal, Forestry, Animal Husbandry, Dairy, Rural Products, Lands, Agricultural Machinery, Agricultural Processing, Irrigation, Seeds, Nursery & Biotech, Fertilizers, Pesticides, Contract Farming, Animal Feed, Bio-Fuel-Bio-Waste etc.

Where seller can mention product type, name, price, and other additional details. Once post, seller may always access a new call list of buyers for that product by clicking the link labelled "Link to Call Buyers" on the home page. Similar to this, buyer can advertise the product name, quantity, and expected price for the products they wish to purchase. Once post, buyer may always access a new call list of seller for that product by clicking the link labelled "Link to Call Sellers" on the home page.

In this approach, direct communication is maintained between sellers and buyers. All things considered, this is not a business strategy that charges for displaying the connections of buyers and sellers. This platform is accessible in all Indian languages, its use has grown throughout the country.

## Helpful assistance from IIT-B RuTAG

RuTAG has worked very diligently to advertise the MarketMirchi portal so that community can use it easily. IIT-B has created instructional videos in 11 Indian languages that cover posting advertisements as well as to communicate and deal with buyers.

With the assistance of IIT-B, MarketMirchi successfully offers B2B and B2C services utilizing artificial intelligence to market rural products online.

To establish a network with rural agricultural institutions around the country, I am able to provide online and offline trainings to organizations, self-help groups and rural entrepreneurs. Also, to reach the producers in different states, special attention is being paid through training camps. The work of MarketMirchi trainings was ongoing through webinars during the COVID-19 pandemic time.

As a result, a large number of farmers and rural business owners have benefited immensely from this dire situation. Over 25,000 rural entrepreneurs, farmers, FPOS, and SHGs from across the country have connected with MarketMirchi and successfully sold their products.

A special session called MarketMirchi was arranged for the aimes to empower farmers by enhancing their digital presence and facilitating online marketing, along with the opening of STRC Gondwan Vanaushadhi Ropvatika (Experimental Community Herbal Nursery) at Kharakadi (Block Dhanara) and under the Gondwana University's EKAL project.

*Shri. Santosh Sharma, Farmers Producers Association, Nagpur states with great satisfaction; My nursery is filled with fig trees. Sales of our trees were not good. We were aware of MarketMirchi and used it for advertising. Following this, there was a demand for trees not just within the state but also outside of it, in places like Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.*

*Thus, even in hard times like the COVID-19 pandemic, we managed to turn a profit of between INR 40,000 and INR 50,000. This was only possible because of marketmirchi."*



**Smt. Pragati Gokhale**

Founder marketmirchi.com

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## Valedictory Function of ISRO's SPACE ON WHEELS Held At Nagpur

### STRC Felicitated as Host of ISRO's SPACE ON WHEELS Program

Shri Ashis Gharai, Chief Program Officer & Head, STRC was invited to be felicitated in a function organised by Vidhyan Bharati Vidarbha Pradesh Mandal at Nagpur on March 21, 2024, in the august presence of the Chairman, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Shri S. Somanath, for hosting the Space on Wheels event. On the day, Chairman ISRO was greeted by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Gondwana University, Gadchiroli, Dr. Prashant Bokare. Dr. Bokare presented a bamboo bouquet and artifacts created by STRC trained artisans.

The flagship program of the ISRO, Govt. of India, 'Space on Wheels' with its well-equipped mobile exhibition depicting the history and current development of the Indian space program had arrived at STRC, Gondwana University, Gadchiroli on February 16, 2024. Over 1250 enthusiastic children from 12 peripheral schools assembled at STRC premises for the day-long event.



## Maharashtra Government Launches Acharya Chanakya Kaushlya Vikas Kendra (ACKVK) Scheme

On 13th March 2024, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister inaugurated Skill Development Centers in 100 colleges of the state online, through an online event in presence of the Minister of Skill Development and other eminent office bearers. With this, the first phase of setting up skill development centers in eligible colleges in Maharashtra has been initiated.

In his inaugural address, Deputy Chief Minister said, Skill Development Centres have been established to meet the need of education, training and skill development of today's youth and to provide opportunities for self-employment. He urged the youth to take advantage of this.

On the occasion, STRC, one of the two designated ACKVKs under Gondwana University Gadchiroli, organised an event under the Chairmanship of Dr. Prashant Bokare, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Gondwana University, Gadchiroli in presence of Shri Ashis Gharai, Chief Program Officer and Head, STRC and Shri Yogendra Shende, District Skill Development Officer. About 40 aspiring student trainees have gathered for the event at STRC.

STRC is entrusted to initiate two training programs namely Bamboo Grower and Bamboo Basket Maker to develop a cadre of skilled workforce in the Bamboo sector.



## 'STRC Vaidya Chikitsalaya' In South Gadchiroli May Be A Reality Soon

The first meeting of the Advisory Council, Gondwana University, Gadchiroli, was held on March 19, 2024, under the Chairmanship of Shri Balasubramanian Prabhakaran, Managing Director, Thriveni Earthmovers Pvt. Ltd. With due cognizance and permission of Dr. Prashant Bokare, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Gondwana University, Gadchiroli, Shri Ashis Gharai, Chief Program Officer & Head, STRC, participated in the said meeting.

While the discussions centered around the prescribed agenda items, Shri Gharai was given an opportunity to showcase STRC's on-going efforts in a nutshell, especially on the initiatives to conserve and scientifically document Indigenous Medicinal Knowledge. A documentary on 'STRC Vaidya Chikitsalaya' drew attention of the esteemed members. Appreciating the efforts, the Chairman, Advisory Council, Shri Prabhakaran urged STRC to take this initiative to southern blocks of Gadchiroli and immediately asked to plan a visit to explore opportunities. Taking immediate action, led by the Resident Director, Lt. Col. Vikram Mehta, a daylong visit to Lloyds Metals mining sites and facilities at Surjagarh, Tal. Etapalli was carried out on March 21, 2024.

On the day, Shri Ashis Gharai, Chief Program Officer & Head, STRC and Shri Gandharv Pilare, Scientific Officer, STRC, visited Lloyds Kali Ammal Memorial Hospital to explore the feasibility of setting up 'STRC Vaidya Chikitsalaya' and interacted with the chief functionaries. A visit to witness Lloyds Metal's fast-paced mining activities at Surjagarh Iron Mines was quite an experience. STRC team also visited the newly established Garment Factory, designed to employ young local women, as part of the CSR efforts of the mining company.

The support and enthusiasm expressed by the hospital and other entities indicate a positive outlook for the establishment of the 'Vaidya Chikitsalaya'. We look forward to further collaboration and successful implementation of the initiative.



## STRC Participated At The Glittering Tadoba Mahotsav

*Tadoba Mahotsav aims to celebrate the success story of Tadoba and bring it on the global stage.*

A glittering three-day Tadoba Mahotsav was organized during 1st to 3rd March 2024 at Chandrapur by Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR), to promote wildlife conservation sustainable tourism and local art-forms.

STRC, under its 'Gondwana Craft' initiative, exhibited artefacts of various traditional art-forms of Gadchiroli region such as Bamboo Craft, Rock Dhokra, Gond Paintings and Earthen Pottery at the three-day extravaganza. The interesting product mix generated a lot buzz among the visitors.



## Project 1 : Bamboo Common Facility Centre (CFC)

A one-day training program and exposure visit for 50 traditional bamboo artisans under the Manav Vikas Mission funded project 'Establishment of Bamboo Common Facility Center (CFC) in Kurkheda Block, Gadchiroli as a Rural Enterprise for Skill Upgradation and Livelihood Generation of Traditional Bamboo Artisan' was organised at STRC, Gondwana University, Gadchiroli, on March 20, 2024. Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Dr. Prashant Bokare, as the Chief Guest of the event, addressed the gathering of artisans and encouraged them to remain committed to learning and producing bamboo craft items as it STRC would facilitate developing a sustainable business and sale of their products through proposed STRC product outlets in future. He also distributed Bamboo Tool Kits (designed and developed in-house at STRC) to the project beneficiaries.

Shri Ashis Gharai, Chief Program Officer & Head, STRC, informed the gathering about the upcoming Common Facility Centre (CFC) at Maldugi, which would be a reasonably equipped facility for training and production. Pro Vice-Chancellor Dr. Shriram Kawale, as the Guest of Honor, was also present at the event.

The visiting artisans were exposed to the industrial functioning of the Model Production Unit at STRC such as bamboo processing, treatment and production of various bamboo products. They were also exposed to other facilities such as treatment, storage and newly erected bamboo polyhouse in STRC premises.



## Project 2 : Integrated Fish Farming (Fish and Poultry)

The Manav Vikas Mission Funded Project titled 'Integrated Fish Farming (Fish and Poultry) project for Livelihood Development of Local Community in Medpalli Cluster, Aheri', is being implemented by STRC, Gondwana University, Gadchiroli. To achieve one of the project objectives with regard to capacitating local farmers on modern fish farming with an integrated approach, STRC, distributed and installed low-tech Bamboo Composite Poultry Sheds (designed and developed in-house at STRC), chick drinker, chick feeder, brooder, hapa, fish feed, poultry feed etc. to the beneficiaries of the project. This integrated farming approach will enable local fish farmer to enhance their income.



## STRC Erects Its First Bamboo Polyhouse In The University Campus

A Rajiv Gandhi Science and Technology Commission (RGSTC), Mumbai, Govt. of Maharashtra initiative on development of Bamboo Polyhouse in collaboration with Center for Technology Alternatives for Rural Areas (CTARA), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay and Synthetic & Art Silk Mills' Research Association (SASMIRA). The first polyhouse of 125 sq. mtr. size has been erected at STRC premises. STRC wishes to demonstrate these for controlled farming and nutri-garden purposes.



## Shri Girish Sohani Oversees The Newly Erected Bamboo Polyhouse And Discussed Its Future Scope



Shri Girish Sohani, Principal Advisor and Trustee, BAIF, eminent member of STRC Program Advisory Board paid a courtesy visit to STRC on March 9, 2024 to oversee the newly erected pilot initiative of bamboo polyhouse and to discuss potential improvements.

Shri Sohani, shared his ideas on bamboo polyhouses across the state and discussed possible improvements in construction and its effective utilization. He also emphasized that STRC must take this experiment forward to demonstrate controlled agriculture practices and make it more accessible and develop cost-effective replicable models to suit local conditions.

## Dr. Chaaruchandra Korde, Assistant Professor, CTARA, IIT-B Proposes Academic Courses On Bamboo As A Structural Material

On March 5, 2024, Dr. Chaaruchandra Korde, Assistant Professor, Center for Technology Alternatives for Rural Areas (CTARA), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay, visited Gondwana University to meet the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Dr. Prashant Bokare. During the brief interaction, Dr. Korde put forth his ideas on various scope of designing and delivering structured academic / skill courses on bamboo as a structural material through STRC, Gondwana University. Dr. Korde, also informed that, multiple courses in line with the Skilled Human Resource Building for Rural Infrastructure (SHBRI) project at IIT-B, dedicated to teach engineers, architects, and artisans to build infrastructure based on bamboo can be designed under this model. Shri Ashis Gharai, Chief Program Officer and Head, STRC also participated in the discussion.

Later in the day, Dr. Korde, visited STRC to oversee the newly erected Bamboo Polyhouses and touched upon the future possibilities of using bamboo as a structural material.

## Delegates From Shiksha Sankruti Uthan Nyas

On March 19, 2024, delegation from Shiksha Sankruti Uthan Nyas visited STRC and expressed their keen interest in learning more about the work that STRC is engaged in.

The visiting team received a comprehensive briefing on STRC's initiatives towards fostering Science and Technology-centric development in the area. While at STRC, they also had the chance to visit STRC's Vaidya Chikitsalay facility, interacted with and availed services of the Traditional Healers.



## Faculty Group From Jalgaon University Appreciates STRC's Progress As A CILLAGE Initiative

This year's Maharashtra Inter-University Vice-Chancellor's Cup T20 tournament, was hosted by Gondwana University, Gadchiroli during March 2024. Along with delegations from across the state, a 14-member team from Jalgaon University took part in the ten-day sporting event. Being a RGSTC funded CILLAGE project, the team expressed their willingness to visit STRC and understand the area of work STRC. On March 13, 2024, a team of faculties visited STRC and interacted with Shri Ashis Gharai, Chief Program Officer and Head, STRC who gave an overview about the organization's special efforts and ongoing projects. STRC sees a lot of scope for cross-learning in future.



## Joint Director, Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)



On March 27, 2024, Dr. Rahul Mhatre, Joint Director, Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), Mumbai, Maharashtra Government along with Pro Vice Chancellor Dr. Shriram Kawale, and Dean of Science & Technology Dr. Anil Chitade from Gondwana University have visited STRC.

In addition to expressing his appreciation for STRC's efforts, Dr. Mhatre showed plenty of interest in Vaidu Directory. Furthermore, certain recommendations on excessively promotional and outreaching STRC initiatives have been made, along with suggestions to improve the current efforts.

He wished us success and urged that we keep our great work.





## Science & Technology Resource Centre Gondwana University, Gadchiroli

Conceived and funded by Rajiv Gandhi Science and Technology Commission (RGSTC), Mumbai, Government of Maharashtra, Science & Technology Resource Centre (STRC) is an autonomous institute established in concurrence with Gondwana University, Gadchiroli in 2014. As a centre of excellence for sustainable value creation, STRC is leveraging local resources, relevant knowledge and appropriate technologies for human capacity development. STRC acts as a catalyst to science and technology based development of the under-served tribal communities of the Gadchiroli region and as a bridge between knowledge activities of the University and enhanced livelihoods in the neighborhood.

### Core Verticals

- » Aquaculture & Livelihoods
- » Bamboo Craft & Livelihoods
- » NTFP Medicinal Plants and Other Livelihoods
- » Applicable R & D and Academic Program Development
- » Communication for Development through ICT



### STRC Offers :



STRC Assistance for S & T  
Application Scheme  
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Vaidya Chikitsalay  
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traditional healers and healing  
practices*



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