

STRC NEWSLETTER

October 2023 | Issue No. 49

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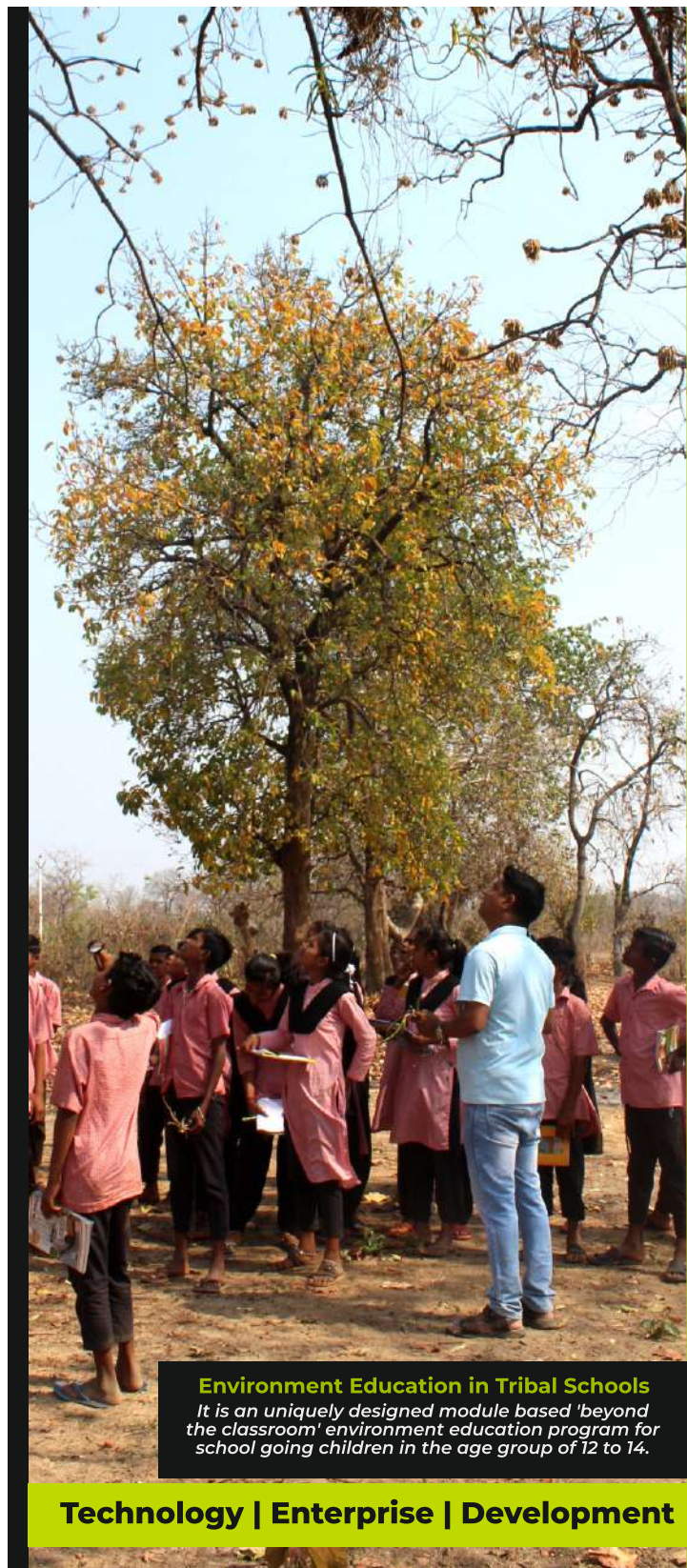
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Technology | Enterprise | Development



**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).

Organised Social Entrepreneurship as an enabler of 'Artisan Economy'

STRC is greatly inspired and sincerely acknowledges the outstanding work carried by Priya Krishnamoorthy and Aparna Subramaniam (The Jugaad Project / www.thejugaadproject.pub/activating-handmade [Date of access 30th Oct 2023] along with the 200M Artisans / Business of Handmade initiatives). This article is a direct reference of the same.

The artisan ecosystem as it exists today in India is deeply linked to our agricultural ecosystems. While agriculture remains the largest source of raw materials, the artisan economy is where much of the value-add happens. Often, those who farm during the day are also artisans in their spare time. Today, this ecosystem in India supports traditional and non-traditional artisans and creative producers, a multitude of small businesses (artisan-led enterprises, social / creative enterprises), nonprofit organisations, producer companies and self-help groups, small and large marketplaces and many others. However, the informal nature of India's artisan sector for instance, comes through in the absence of reliable figures on how many artisans or craft-based enterprises operate in this sector.

Enterprises in the artisan sector are differently motivated and cannot be reverse engineered to meet traditional definitions of growth; scale is definitely possible but is achieved via decentralised collectivisation. For example, true inclusion of women in the workforce cannot happen without acknowledging that much of their labour within the artisan sector (and otherwise) remains invisible. The decentralised approach significantly lowers entry barriers for differently skilled communities; especially women. As Judy Frater puts it so eloquently, "Because commercialisation of craft has been based on an industrial model, the assumption is that craft must scale up to succeed. But when craft is pushed into the world of industrialised production, the structure of artisan societies inevitably changes from horizontal to vertical. Economically stronger individuals become "Master Artisans," employ previously equal status artisans as workers, and gain higher social as well as economic status. The perception of the artisan as a worker is thus reinforced in a new, socially threatening form." (Business of Handmade 2021: 47)

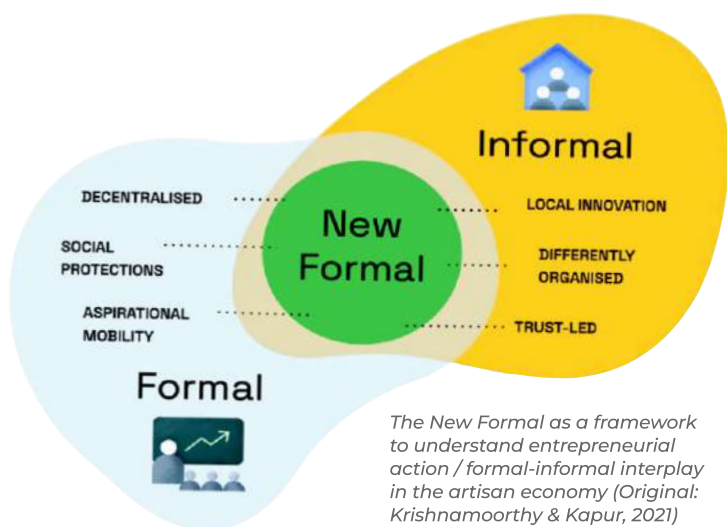
Given the myriad political, socio-cultural, linguistic, and historical realities in India, a one size approach cannot cater to the diverse needs and requirements of diverse artisan enterprises. This applies to policies and interventions aimed at both informal artisan communities and formal enterprises working in the artisan sector. Market-based solutions do not recognise that craft production cycles are unique and seasonal, often part-time, rural and decentralised, women-led and creativity-based; unlike assembly line manufacturing models.

Science and Technology Resource Centre (STRC) through its 'Gondwana Craft' initiative, is striving to bring all traditional art forms of the region under one umbrella, with an artisan centric approach to preserve and promote these unique yet dying art-forms on a sustainable and viable social entrepreneurship platform.



Shri Ashis Gharai

Chief Program Officer & Head,
Science & Technology Resource Centre
Gondwana University, Gadchiroli



Inculcating Environmental Awareness in Young minds

In a world dealing with the challenges of climate change, the factors such as continuing loss of bio-diversity and environmental degradation are becoming increasingly evident. Considering the long-term implications of the depleting environment and its immediate impact on the young and upcoming generation, it is important to inculcate the idea of a sustainable environment among young minds to help them become more responsible adults.

Science and Technology Resource Centre at Gondwana University has been engaged in taking up vital steps in this regard with special emphasis on tribal school going children of the region by implementing an Environment Education for School Children (EES) program. This uniquely designed module based 'Beyond the Classroom' initiative has young minds in the age group of 12-14 as its primary stakeholders and is aimed at imparting knowledge through the experiential learning methods to help children grow up to become responsible citizens concerned about the issues of a sustainable planet earth.

Implementation of this program serves as a vital bridge between science and society, as it equips students along with teachers and parents, the knowledge and skills necessary to address pressing environmental challenges. This approach fosters a sense of environmental stewardship and empowers students to take proactive steps in their communities and beyond.

Furthermore, the program aligns with the sustainability and environmental conservation, ensuring that the next generation is well-prepared to tackle the alarming environmental issues that is faced by the planet earth. Overall, the efforts of the Science and Technology Resource Centre at Gondwana University in promoting environmental education beyond the classroom exemplify a forward-thinking approach to education that can have a profound impact on the future of our planet. STRC strives to strengthen the initiative further by enriching it with a more practical and scientific approach.



Kajal Khevale

Jr. Scientific Officer,
Science & Technology Resource Centre
Gondwana University, Gadchiroli



STRC exhibits its range of products at Chitnavis Centre, Nagpur

Chitnavis Centre, Nagpur extended an invitation to STRC to showcase wide range of products and promote the bonafide brand, 'Gondwana Craft' during two prominent events; *Hum Hasthashilpi* and *Arc The Exhibit*, spread across the week, 11th to 16th October 2023.

STRC has initiated its efforts to bring in all traditional art-forms such as Bamboo Craft, Rock Dhokra, Gond Paintings, Earthen Pottery along with a few natural edible products of Gadchiroli region under an umbrella brand, '**Gondwana Craft**' leading to establishment of outlets for promotion and sale of products across the region. STRC's product range generated a lot buzz among the visitors and corporate houses alike. Considering the need to expose the range of products to a wider audience including corporate houses, such platforms can give the initiative a lot of boost.



Status of Adivasi Livelihoods (SAL): A State-Level Consultation Meeting held at BAIF, Pune

On 17th October 2023, STRC was invited to participate and share its experience in a State-level consultation meeting on the 'Status of Adivasi Livelihoods (SAL) in Maharashtra'. The event was jointly organised by BAIF Development Research Foundation, Pune and Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) at the BAIF campus in Pune. The discussion was centred around aspects that needs to be incorporated in to the SAL (Maharashtra) to make the report more scientific, comprehensive and inclusive. Keeping in mind, the current scenarios under various aspects of Adivasi livelihoods such as their culture and tradition, factors directly impacting their livelihoods, education and health facilities, road and transport infrastructure and the status of forest dependancy etc., the SAL- Maharashtra report is expected to garner wider acceptance.

Furthermore, special attention was given to the unique context of Gadchiroli region. The event brought organisations working in varied development sectors, research agencies and universities on to one platform such as; Gokhale Institute, VANARAI, North Maharashtra University, Centre for Peoples' Collective, AROHAN, Foundation of Ecological Securities, TISS, TRTI etc.

Especially for STRC, the workshop provided a great platform for networking, exchange of ideas and scope of collaboration with organizations and individuals working in the sector. It is expected that the insights and recommendations from this workshop will contribute to policy changes and development initiatives to better the lives of Adivasi communities in Maharashtra. STRC is

committed to working towards the welfare of Adivasis and looks forward to actively participating in future initiatives aimed at their betterment.



A new scope of collaboration emerges with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), New Delhi

On 5th October 2023, subsequent to an interaction with the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Gondwana University Gadchiroli, the Consultant, National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Dr. Kapil Chandrayan, visited STRC for a detailed discussion on STRC's mandate and range of activities under S&T and Skill based

development undertaken till date to assess scope of collaboration. During the visit Dr. Chandrayan interacted with STRC officials, visited the Skill Centre (Model Production Unit), and Bamboo Diploma related facilities. Dr. Chandrayan was particularly interested about the skill development programs in bamboo craft and social entrepreneurship models being developed and executed by STRC. He also expressed his keenness to understand other science and technology-based livelihood enhancement verticals of STRC such as; scientific fishery and Non-Timber Forest Produce.



The following discussion points emerged out of the interaction:

1. The recently launched central sector scheme; Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojna which directly provide end-to-end support to artisans and craftspeople who work with their hands and tools, can be one of the points of collaboration through NSDC. Through this scheme, STRC Bamboo Artisans can avail loans up to INR 3.0 lakh with a rate of interest of 5%
2. STRC is expected to lay out exact line of support expected from NSDC for that NSDC sought access to STRC website, reports, brochures, strategies of entrepreneurial ecosystem etc.
3. A concept paper on scope of bamboo based rural enterprise catering to 25,000 artisans including 50% women, to be submitted to NSDC

'Integrated Treatment of Cancer Combining Principles of Ayurveda and Allopathy' : Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai comes forward to collaborate with STRC

ACTREC / Tata Memorial Centre (TMC), world renowned cancer hospital and research centre, has recently embarked on to explore traditional medicinal knowledge for treatment of cancer under an experimental project; 'Integrated Treatment of Cancer Combining Principles of Ayurveda and Allopathy'. TMC also has a project in Gadchiroli on similar lines. Considering the efforts undertaken by STRC in the past few years, the TMC team led by Prof. Pankaj Chaturvedi, Surgeon, Department of Head Neck Surgery and Deputy Director, Centre for Cancer Epidemiology, following the advice from Dr. Anil Kakodkar, Chairman, RGSTC Mumbai, Govt. of Maharashtra, expressed desire to collaborate with STRC.



After a series of email conversations and exchange of information with the TMC team, a virtual meeting was held on 17th October 2023. During the hour-long meeting, Dr. Vikram Gota, Professor, Clinical Pharmacology, TMC, gave an overview of the Tata Memorial Centre along with a brief of the project. Subsequently, Shri Ashis Gharai, Chief Program Officer & Head, STRC, briefly explained STRC's core mandate with special emphasis on activities under Indigenous Medicinal Knowledge. The TMC team discussed and expressed their desire to understand how STRC can lend their expertise in creating a solid database on plant species, existing methods of treatment by traditional healers and also to understand the perspective of Traditional Healers (THs) engaged in treatment (or claim to treat) of cancer. A possible scope for ex-situ conservation/propagation/ cultivation of selected medicinal plants in collaboration with Gondwana University Gadchiroli on a suitable piece of land in Gadchiroli, was also discussed.

At the end, the team of doctors expressed their desire to visit Gondwana University, Gadchiroli in December 2023 to have a first-hand experience of the geography and have further discussion to develop a roadmap of collaboration.

Miyawaki Plantation Project : STRC Offers a Research Grant under S&T Application Scheme

One of the research grants awarded under the STRC Assistance for S & T Application Scheme to Dr. Chetan Warde, Anandwan College, Warora delved into a comparative study between traditional plantation methods and the innovative Miyawaki plantation technique. The primary objective of this project was to establish a demo plot featuring 400 plants of 64 diverse species of indigenous trees and shrubs within the premises of Ashramshala, Chandala, Gadchiroli. This initiative not only aimed at developing a sustainable micro green-cover but also intended to serve as an educational resource for students. The comparative study is seeking to understand the ecological, economic, and educational benefits of Miyawaki plantation, with the goal of creating replicable models for residential schools and other institutions, contributing to both environmental conservation and hands-on learning opportunities for students.



Project Update: Environment Education in Tribal Schools (EES)

An uniquely designed module based 'Beyond the Classroom' environment education program for school going children in the age group of 12 to 14.

Two EES modules namely; Introduction to Biodiversity (Module I) and Understanding the Ecological Processes through Nature Trail (Module II) have been successfully delivered in 10 selected Ashramshalas. The Module III, which is based on the theme of 'Developing Medicinal Plant Gardens in Schools', is currently being implemented in Chandala (Gadchiroli Block) and Sode (Dhanora Block). This marks a significant step forward to promote sustainable practices of biodiversity conservation in these schools.



Exposure Visit to Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune

On 17th October 2023, STRC team visited the Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune to explore research facilities and to assess the scope of collaborating with ARI as a knowledge Partner for all herbal plant related initiatives of STRC. With regard to STRC's proposed National Conference cum Workshop on Indian Knowledge System to be held in January 2024, STRC wishes to bring the expertise of ARI on board. During the discussion with Dr. Mandar Datar, Scientist- D, Plant Science Division at ARI, several areas of common interest were identified where both the organization could collaborate effectively, including phytochemistry and pre-clinical trials to validate medicinal properties.



In the near future...

STRC under the aegis of Gondwana University Gadchiroli proposes to organise a National Workshop on **Indian Knowledge System with special emphasis on Indigenous Medicinal Knowledge and Traditional Bamboo Craft** during January 2024, involving multiple stakeholders such as Agharkar Research Institute, MGIRI, RARI, Ministry of AYUSH, BRTC, Chandrapur Forest Academy, Samporn Bamboo Kendra, Bamboo Development Board etc.



About STRC

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. STRC is entrusted with generating livelihood opportunities by deploying appropriate science and technology, particularly for the under-served tribal communities of the Gadchiroli region since 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 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
Research Grants



Vaidya Chikitsalay
*A unique platform to promote
traditional healers and healing
practices*

WE ARE
HIRING
Admin and HR Associate

For more details please visit STRC website
<https://strc.org.in/opportunities>