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SRISHTI Annual Report

The Annual Report of SRISHTI is a comprehensive account of the organisation's activities, progress, and impact over the preceding year. It serves as a transparent reflection of our ongoing commitment to empowering tribal and rural communities through sustainable development, rights-based interventions, and participatory governance.

This report is intended for our supporters, partners, community members, and all stakeholders who are invested in SRISHTI's mission. It highlights the key milestones achieved across thematic areas such as forest rights, women's empowerment, sustainable livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, agriculture, health, education and digital inclusion. The report also captures the innovative strategies, collaborations, and grassroots stories that define our approach.

While not a statutory requirement, SRISHTI prepares and shares this report annually as part of its values of openness and accountability. It is a means to reflect on our journey, share learnings, and reaffirm our dedication to strengthening community-led development and social justice.



Convenor's Statement



Dear Readers,

As we reflect on our journey and the year gone by, we are reminded of the founding vision that led to the establishment of SRISHTI in 2002—to create a strong, community-rooted network that addresses the persistent challenges faced by tribal and rural communities. Over the past two decades, and particularly through the work of the last year, SRISHTI has continued to strengthen local governance structures like the Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha, anchoring our interventions in community awareness, rights-based facilitation, and the effective implementation of government schemes and laws.

In 2024–2025, our focus remained on empowering communities by building their capacities to sustainably manage natural resources, improve access to entitlements, and enhance livelihoods. Our model prioritizes participatory development, drawing strength from community knowledge and leadership. From health and nutrition to the sustainable use and value addition of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP), our thematic areas include Education, Livelihoods, Women's Empowerment, Environmental Sustainability, Agroforestry, and the Conservation of Soil, Water, and Forest Resources. Operating in the tribal regions of Gadchiroli (Maharashtra) and Mohala Manpur Ambaghar Chouki & Rajnandgaon (Chhattisgarh), SRISHTI remains deeply committed to strengthening the rights and resilience of indigenous and rural populations. We believe that the path to a just and equitable society lies in building healthier, stronger, and self-reliant communities—and this report captures the progress, partnerships, and people behind that vision.

With gratitude and hope,



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Who We Are

Srishti Organisation is a non-profit organization established in 2002 by Keshav Gurnule with the vision of developing a strong grassroots network among local communities and addressing their challenges effectively over the past 23 years.

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 Mohala Manpur Ambagharh chouki 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.



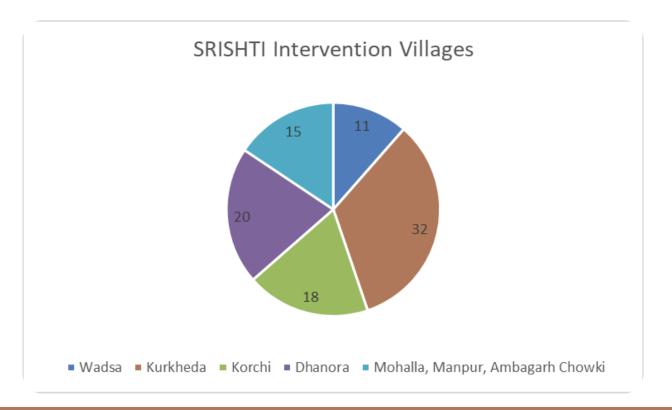
SRISHTI: How we work - Expansion-Thematic, Geographical

SRISHTI's interventions are thematically centered around Education, Livelihoods, Women's Empowerment, Environmental Sustainability, Agroforestry, Conservation of Natural Resources, Health and Nutrition, and Rural Development. These themes form the backbone of the organization's holistic approach to community-led development. Geographical Reach

SRISHTI currently operates across two states—Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh—with activities spread across the districts of Gadchiroli, Rajnandgaon, and Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh Chowki. The organization's registered office and training center are located in Yerandi village, Kurkheda Taluka, Gadchiroli district. Administrative functions are carried out from the Shankarpur office, while field offices operate in Kurkheda (Maharashtra) and Chhattisgarh.

Community-led Governance and Forest Trade

A significant milestone in the organization's work has been the formation of Maha Gram Sabhas by federating multiple village-level Gram Sabhas. These larger governance bodies have enabled more effective decision-making, especially around the collective trade of tendu leaves (NTPFs). Through this process, villagers collectively negotiated and fixed fair prices, demonstrating the power of decentralized, people-led forest governance and sustainable livelihood practices



Introduction

The year 2024 witnessed a deepening of our collective journey toward securing the rights, resources, and resilience of forest-dwelling communities across Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh. Building on the foundation laid in previous years, this reporting period marked a strategic shift from a project-centric framework to a thematic approach, allowing us to capture the interconnected dimensions of community forest governance, ecological restoration, and livelihood enhancement.

This report presents a comprehensive narrative of the year's work, thematically structured around six core pillars: Forest Rights Recognition, Management Plans, Convergence, Livelihoods, Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFPs), and Capacity Building and Empowerment and Health and Nutrition. Each of these themes reflects not only the progress made but also the evolving aspirations of the communities we work with—communities that are steadily asserting their constitutional and ecological rights over land, forest, and decision-making.

Through sustained facilitation, participatory planning, and institution building, we supported Gram Sabhas in transforming legal entitlements into living realities. From filing and securing CFR claims to preparing community-led management plans, leveraging government schemes, and establishing decentralized market systems, the work this year has demonstrated the power of organized communities and responsive governance in creating inclusive, sustainable development.

The shift to thematic reporting not only offers a clearer understanding of our strategic priorities but also captures the synergy between rights-based frameworks and ecological well-being. It is a reflection of the growing maturity of community institutions, the emergence of local leadership, and the collective vision for self-reliant and just forest governance.



Forest Rights Recognition

The recognition of forest rights formed a critical pillar of our work throughout the year, with efforts spanning across Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh to secure both Individual Forest Rights (IFR) and Community Forest Rights (CFR) for Adivasi and forest-dependent communities. This process involved consistent coordination with Forest Rights Committees (FRCs), Sub-Divisional Level Committees (SDLCs), and District Level Committees (DLCs), along with comprehensive grassroots mobilization and evidence-building. In Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, dedicated camps were organized in various villages to address both new and pending IFR claims. These camps enabled villagers to collect and present the necessary evidence, including forest dependency and proof of cultivation, which are essential for claim approval. The staff played a crucial role in guiding community members through the process of form filling, documentation, and submission to the respective authorities. A special focus was placed on sensitizing FRC members about their roles and responsibilities in the verification and endorsement of claims, ensuring transparency and adherence to legal mandates.

One of the notable aspects of this year's work was the continued emphasis on participatory mapping using GPS technology. Training sessions were held across project villages in both states, where local youth and FRC members were equipped with GPS devices and trained in practical mapping techniques. This enabled communities to demarcate claimed lands accurately and prepare comprehensive maps to be attached with claim applications. Demonstrations and hands-on mapping exercises were conducted in villages like Kermaryan and Bamani, fostering local ownership and precision in evidence collection.



Significant progress was made in the recognition of CFRs as well. Villages were supported in compiling historical and customary use records, documenting community dependence on forest resources for fuel, fodder, grazing, and NTFP collection. The process also included consultations with Gram Sabhas, where CFR claims were collectively discussed and resolutions passed to be forwarded to the SDLCs. Regular follow-ups with administrative bodies ensured timely processing of claims, while visits from SDLC and DLC members provided further validation and guidance on pending cases. The impact of these sustained efforts was evident in the increasing number of approved claims and the growing awareness among community members about their entitlements under the Forest Rights Act (FRA). The strengthened participation of local institutions in the claim process is gradually transforming the dynamics of forest governance, placing decision-making back in the hands of the communities. This work also laid the foundation for the next thematic focus-management and governance of the recognized forest areas through Conservation and Management Plans.

Management Plans

With the successful recognition of Community Forest Rights (CFR) in multiple villages, the focus naturally extended toward the development and implementation of Conservation and a Management Plans (CMPs). These plans are essential not just for sustainable forest governance but also for asserting the role of Gram Sabhas as primary custodians of the forest resources.

Throughout the reporting period, intensive efforts were made to support villages in preparing detailed and context-specific management plans. These plans were prepared in collaboration with the Community Forest Resource Management Committees (CFRMCs), with an emphasis on participatory planning.

The preparation of the plans followed a structured and inclusive approach. Detailed resource mapping was carried out, followed by focused group discussions with community elders, youth, and women's groups to identify challenges such as forest degradation, overharvesting, and invasive species. Community members also prioritized areas for conservation, afforestation, and regulated harvesting based on traditional knowledge and ecological insights.

Several training sessions were organized specifically for CFRMC members to equip them with the skills needed to draft and implement these plans. These sessions covered ecological monitoring, protection practices, community-based forest fire control, and rotational harvesting methods. In Maharashtra, training was held for members to understand their roles as Implementing Agencies under various schemes like MGNREGA, linking conservation activities with possible wage employment opportunities.

These steps were mirrored in Chhattisgarh, where similar plans were customized for local forest types and village-specific conditions.

The importance of preparing and submitting CMPs was also emphasized in interactions with government stakeholders. As a result, many villages progressed toward formalizing their plans and receiving administrative acknowledgment. In some cases, the CFRMCs were able to leverage their approved CFR titles to initiate forest-based activities through state schemes, signifying growing institutional recognition of community-led forest governance.

This year's work in management planning not only demonstrated the communities' readiness to steward their forests but also served as a practical model for integrating traditional ecological knowledge with formal governance processes. These efforts were often supported and amplified by convergence with external schemes and departments, which forms the next focus area in our report.

Convergence

A major thrust of this year's work was to bridge the gap between recognized community rights and the actual realization of benefits through effective convergence with various government schemes. The objective was not only to channel resources into CFR areas but also to ensure that community priorities—such as forest conservation, water security, land development, and livelihoods—were integrated into the implementation plans of different departments.

Efforts were made to support Gram Sabhas and CFRMCs in understanding the spectrum of schemes available under departments like Tribal Development, Forest, Rural Development, Agriculture, and Women and Child Welfare. This process began with detailed orientation meetings in the villages, where communities identified needs such as construction of check dams, farm bunds, compost pits, water conservation structures, solar lighting, and bamboo plantations—many of which were then translated into proposals for MGNREGA and other departmental programs.

With technical assistance from the team, 90% of villages across both project regions successfully registered themselves as Planning and Implementing Agencies (PIAs), thereby gaining direct access to submit their works under MGNREGA and other schemes. This autonomy marked a significant shift, positioning Gram Sabhas as proactive actors in local development. In Maharashtra, around 74 conservation and management plans were officially submitted by the Gram Sabhas to the district administration, many of which formed the basis for convergence proposals.

As a result of these efforts, 68 Gram Sabhas were successfully registered as PIAs under MGNREGA. Among these, 35 Gram Sabhas have already initiated MGNREGA works linked to the implementation of their Conservation and Management Plans, while 33 additional Gram Sabhas are ready to commence implementation as PIA bodies. Collectively, these initiatives facilitated the mobilization of \$\pm\$6,10,32,161 under MGNREGA for the implementation of works directly aligned with village conservation priorities.

To facilitate this process, formats and manuals were developed to simplify the submission of project plans and utilization certificates. Trainings and follow-ups ensured that community institutions could track the progress of their proposals and address procedural delays. In Chhattisgarh, similar success stories emerged where convergence was used for irrigation infrastructure and the promotion of agroforestry under the CFR governance framework.



Livelihoods

Securing forest rights and institutionalizing community governance naturally led to renewed focus on enhancing livelihood opportunities for forest-dependent families. The livelihoods component of the program emphasized both traditional occupations and innovative interventions that could improve income security while preserving ecological balance.

In several villages across both Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, Gram Sabhas prioritized activities that would not only utilize their forest rights but also ensure economic stability for their members. One of the key livelihood strategies included supporting land development work under MGNREGA for smallholder and marginal farmers. This included bunding, farm pond excavation, and compost pit construction, all aimed at increasing agricultural productivity. These activities were linked with long-term conservation goals outlined in the Community Forest Resource Management Plans.

Agroforestry and seasonal plantations emerged as a major focus area. Bamboo, custard apple, and other native species were promoted both for ecological restoration and income generation. Community members participated in plantation drives on CFR lands, particularly targeting degraded patches identified during the management planning process. In Maharashtra, the integration of bamboo management into CFR implementation not only contributed to soil regeneration but also opened possibilities for craft-based livelihoods.



In addition, the initiative encouraged women-led livelihood activities. Self-help groups (SHGs) received capacity-building support to initiate small-scale enterprises such as processing of Mahua, tamarind, and other NTFPs, as well as production of leaf plates, herbal products, and value-added food items. In many areas, SHGs were connected with local markets and support institutions to improve their income-generating potential. Training on packaging, pricing, and branding were offered to improve market access and competitiveness. In Chhattisgarh, the focus extended to supporting families in accessing government schemes related to poultry, goat rearing, and horticulture. Linkages were established with departments such as Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, and NRLM to secure subsidized inputs and technical support. Several families benefitted from vermi-composting units and improved breeds for livestock rearing, leading to gradual but significant enhancements in household income.

These diverse livelihood efforts were directly supported through convergence, technical inputs, and institutional facilitation. The foundation laid through the recognition of rights and formation of strong community institutions created an enabling environment where people could confidently pursue secure, sustainable, and self-reliant livelihoods.

The role of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) in this livelihood landscape, both as a source of daily sustenance and potential economic value, forms a central theme in the next section.

Goat Forming:

Forty-six women received support for their livelihood interventions through a goat-rearing initiative. After a six-month waiting period, these women received 60 goats in total. It is anticipated that they will be able to sell the goats within the next two months, providing them with an important source of income and enhancing their livelihood. As part of the form-based livelihood activity, goats were distributed to 46 single women-headed households. During the distribution, beneficiaries contributed 50% of the cost of the goats, while SRISHTI covered the remaining 50%. The total amount paid by SRISHTI for this initiative was \$1,05,300, matching the beneficiaries' contributions, bringing the total cost of purchasing the goats to \$2,10,600. After a six-month waiting period, the beneficiaries received 60 kids from the 46 adult goats. It is expected that they will be able to sell these goats within the next two months, providing a valuable source of income and improving their livelihoods.

Kitchen Garden:

A total of 670 women, particularly single women, received kitchen garden kits from the project team to promote sustainable livelihoods. These kits included 11 types of vegetable seeds, which the women used to establish kitchen gardens on their personal land. This initiative aims to enhance food security and provide an additional source of income, contributing to the women's self-sufficiency and well-being

Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFPs)

Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFPs) remain central to the sustenance and livelihood of Adivasi communities, providing both nutritional and economic security throughout the year. In 2024, work around NTFPs became more organized and strategic, with a clear focus on value addition, fair pricing, collective action, and institutional development aimed at empowering communities to manage and benefit from forest-based economies. A structured series of capacity-building sessions was conducted for Community Forest Resource Management Committees (CFRMCs) in both Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh. These trainings, held in Yerandi village, covered scientific methods of harvesting, processing, and trading forest produce such as tendu leaves, bamboo, and mahua flowers. Led by subject expert Shri Manoj Chavan, the sessions emphasized sustainable collection techniques, quality control, packaging methods, and strategies for negotiating better prices. Participants were introduced to improved practices for sorting and grading tendu leaves, preparing them for market sale, and connecting with larger procurement platforms. One of the year's key innovations was the creation of "Moh Banks" in the villages of Chirchari, Kodewada, and Mardel. This was the first instance of Gram Sabha-led collective mahua flower collection and sale. Previously, individual families sold mahua at low prices, but under the new system of aggregation and group negotiation, the community secured ₽47 per kilogram. The collective achieved impressive initial volumes: 110 kg in Chirchari, 63 kg in Kodewada, and 32 kg in Mardel. These initiatives not only ensured better income but also laid the groundwork for community-run enterprises based on forest produce.



Another noteworthy achievement was the significant increase in tendu leaf prices, facilitated by strong Gram Sabha representation and collective bargaining. In Dhavali village (Dhanora taluka), tendu rates rose from \$\text{P6},050\$ in 2023 to \$\text{P9},415\$ per standard bag in 2024. Similar progress was made in villages like Kavdikasa,

Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFPs)

demonstrating that organized Gram Sabhas—especially those part of Mahagram Sabhas and recognized under CFR—were better positioned to advocate for fairer compensation. In Wadsa taluka, tendu was sold at \$\textit{P6},330\$ per standard bag, while in Kurkheda the rate reached \$\textit{P8},950\$. Additionally, three Gram Sabhas in the project area conducted tendu sales in accordance with the PESA Act, collectively earning \$\textit{P4}.02\$ crore (\$\textit{P4},02,87,247) in 2024. The year also saw progress in awareness generation around Minimum Support Prices (MSP). Communities were trained to understand government procurement processes and their entitlements under these schemes. Training modules expanded to include identification of medicinal plants and lesser-known NTFPs, with an aim to diversify the forest-based economy in the coming years.

Looking ahead, federations like those in Wadsa (13 Gram Sabhas) and Kurkheda (41 Gram Sabhas) resolved to conduct a comprehensive survey of families involved in mohua collection. This data will support future planning and strengthen the collective bargaining power of forest-dependent families.

In summary, the year's work around NTFPs combined traditional knowledge with modern practices, fostered institution-building through innovations like Moh Banks, and built stronger market linkages. These steps not only enhanced economic returns for forest dwellers but also reinforced ecological responsibility and decentralized forest governance. The success of these initiatives depended greatly on the community's preparedness, skills, and leadership—enabled through robust training and empowerment processes explored in the next section of this report



Fisheries

The Fisheries group has made significant progress in their water bodies., all the fishermen were actively engaged in fish collection efforts. During this period, they successfully collected a total of 14650 kg of fish. The dedication and hard work of the fishermen contributed to this achievement. This collection has not only improved local livelihoods but also demonstrated the potential of the fisheries sector in the region.

Aquatic habitat restoration was carried out in the water bodies of three societies: Koregav, Chop, and Amgaon. In this effort, we restored six hectares of water body land through two types of initiatives: 1) plowing and 2) planting.

For the plowing initiative, we sowed nine types of seeds in the water bodies:

- 1) Datya,
- 2) Denhago,
- 3) Sava,
- 4) Kamal (red),
- 5) Kamal (white),
- 6) Shivani,
- 7) Parsod,
- 8) Kasai,
- 9) Harak.



For the planting work, we sourced plants from the Ramgad water bodies, transporting various species including Kamal Kand, Chila, Ursudi, Sava, Parsod, and Bhishi Kanda. These plants were then planted in the water bodies of our project villages.

Through this initiative, we expect to expand our efforts to other societies, enhancing the natural habitat for fish and providing them with a sustainable food source. This will contribute to a healthier aquatic ecosystem and support the overall biodiversity in the area.

The establishment of pen culture units has been successfully implemented to enhance local fisheries. These units create controlled environments for fish farming, allowing for the optimal growth of species. Key activities included site selection, construction of enclosures, and stocking with high-quality fish seeds. This initiative aims to improve fish production and boost the income of local fishers. Continuous monitoring will be conducted to assess the growth and health of the fish, ensuring long-term success. A total of 12 pen culture units have been established in collaboration with four societies and three Gram Sabhas in the project villages.

In this pen unit we sold the two types of species, 1. Rohu fish seeds & 2. Katla fish seeds. The low fish productivity in local watersheds is primarily due to two factors. Firstly, the loss of biodiversity or degradation of fish habitats has diminished the capacity of these water bodies to sustain fish populations. Secondly, there is a lack of adequate natural fish feed.

To address these challenges, SRISHTI provided external fish feed to fish seeds in pen culture units for 45 days. External resources were supplied to the community to ensure daily feeding during this period. In FY 2023-2024, 35 community members were trained in administering the fish feed, equipping them with the necessary skills to effectively support fish growth and enhance productivity.

The low fish productivity in local watersheds is primarily due to two factors. Firstly, the loss of biodiversity or degradation of fish habitats has diminished the capacity of these water bodies to sustain fish populations. Secondly, there is a lack of adequate natural fish feed.







Boat Distribution to Community

We have planned to distribute two boats to the society members of Chop and Ammgaon societies. This initiative aims to increase fish collection from water bodies and enhance the annual fish yield. Generally, fish societies carry out fishing activities rigorously starting in April when the water levels are high. However, they are unable to venture into deep waters for fish collection.

This initiative will support society members by enabling fish collection from deeper areas of the water bodies. The ordered boats are designed for durability and can carry up to 200 KG of fish, ensuring efficient operations. This aligns with the societies broader goals, such as improving livelihoods and promoting sustainable fishing practices.

We have placed an order for the two boats with the vendor, and they are expected to be delivered in December 2024. By utilizing these boats, society members can significantly increase their fish yield, thereby boosting their income and contributing to the overall development of the community.

Enhanced Fish Production with Hatchery Systems:

The establishment of mobile fish hatcheries in Chop and Bodadha societies, supported by PWC India Foundation, aims to significantly boost local fish production. These hatcheries, with the assistance of a specialized consultant, will enhance fish seed production, promoting sustainable and modern fishing practices while increasing local employment and income opportunities.

Improved Fishing Practices: The transfer of fish seeds from pen units to water bodies after 45 days of care ensures better fish survival rates and sustainable farming practices. Regular checks on water quality and growth, along with support from field workers, ensure that the fish grow in optimal conditions, ultimately enhancing the community's fish production.

Ongoing Support for Fish Seed Growth: Regular visits and hands-on guidance from field workers ensure the proper growth of fish seeds in pen units. This support addresses any emerging issues and provides solutions to improve fish health, ensuring a successful



Scientific Honey Collection

To protect bees, the environment, and the food ecosystem, we trained individuals in traditional methods of scientific honey collection in two talukas of Gadchiroli district. In this quarter, the trained candidates collected 1970 kg of honey from the forest. They harvested the honey at night and brought it to SRISHTI, as summer honey primarily comes from the flowers of the Parsa, Moha, etc tree.

Capacity Building in Honey Harvesting:

The scientific honey collection training for 50 traditional honey harvesters in the Korchi block will empower youth with modern, safe, and sustainable harvesting techniques. This training supports biodiversity conservation and offers participants improved skills for income generation, enhancing both their livelihood and environmental stewardship.

Honey Kits Distribution for Sustainable Practices:

Distribution of honey kits to youth trained in sustainable harvesting methods ensures safe and efficient honey collection. By reducing environmental impact, these kits will help youth continue their work in a sustainable manner, increasing honey production while promoting ecofriendly practices.



Capacity Building and Empowerment

At the core of all progress witnessed during the reporting year—be it in forest rights recognition, management planning, or convergence—was the sustained focus on capacity building and empowerment of community members and grassroots institutions. The approach adopted was both decentralized and layered, ensuring that knowledge and leadership were distributed across different levels of community structures.

The capacity-building work began with the identification and training of a cadre of 129 local trainers, who were drawn from various villages and designated as Master Trainers, Field Trainers, Sahayogi Mitras, and Gram Sabha mobilizers. These individuals underwent rigorous Train-the-Trainer (ToT) sessions designed not just to equip them with content knowledge but also to enhance facilitation skills, planning techniques, and problem-solving abilities. They were oriented on legal provisions under the Forest Rights Act, steps for CFR claims and CFRMC formation, roles and responsibilities of Gram Sabhas, as well as tools for convergence and monitoring.

Special emphasis was placed on building confidence among women, who were trained in leadership roles within CFRMCs and SHGs. Several trainings included sessions on public speaking, negotiation skills, and understanding land rights, allowing women to take active roles in Gram Sabha decision-making. These interventions paid off during the Mahagram Sabha meetings, where women emerged as key speakers, negotiators, and resolution-makers.



In addition to building village-level leadership, district-level and block-level orientations were conducted with administrative officials, ensuring shared understanding between communities and government departments. This multi-stakeholder learning helped create a more enabling environment for institutional collaboration. For example, convergence workshops with MGNREGA and Forest Department staff clarified procedures for submitting Gram Sabha-led plans, thereby reducing bureaucratic hurdles.

To reinforce these efforts, resource materials were developed and circulated, including a comprehensive manual on the preparation of Conservation and Management Plans, 24 visual posters for training sessions, and a PowerPoint presentation to standardize messaging across sessions. These tools played a vital role in demystifying complex procedures and making the processes more accessible to grassroots functionaries.

Exposure visits were also organized between villages and across states, allowing peer learning and cross-pollination of best practices. Community members who had successfully implemented management plans or accessed convergence funds were invited to share their experiences in other regions, further inspiring collective action.

By investing deeply in building knowledge, confidence, and agency at the grassroots, the program ensured that communities were not merely beneficiaries but active planners, decision-makers, and implementers of their own development. The spirit of empowerment was visible in how communities took ownership of forest governance, navigated administrative systems, negotiated with markets, and stood united in asserting their rights.



Health and Nutrition

The Health and Nutrition Project, Gadchiroli is committed to ensuring healthy lives for children, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and adolescents by improving access to essential health services in the target areas of Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra. The project operates in 15 villages across Dhanora and Kurkheda blocks, with well-defined objectives aimed at enhancing health and nutrition standards.

Key outcomes include the development and use of baseline data, enrollment of all children (0-6 years) and pregnant and lactating women in Anganwadi Centers (AWCs), and achieving 100% immunization over three years. The project also aims to ensure that 80% of AWCs deliver five essential services as per ICDS norms: supplementary nutrition, health check-ups, immunization, referral services, and life skills education for adolescent girls.

Additionally, the project works to reduce malnutrition among 80% of children, promote kitchen gardens for target beneficiaries, and instill attitudinal changes in feeding practices among 70% of pregnant and lactating women. It also seeks to ensure that 80% of adolescent girls are linked with AWCs and health services.

Awareness is raised through Interactive Voice Response Systems (IVRS) among community members, target groups, and stakeholders regarding proper child-rearing and healthcare practices. Another major 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 a core focus to ensure the effective delivery of services.

Through these strategic interventions and a holistic approach, the project aims to significantly improve the health and well-being of vulnerable populations in the district.





Health & Nutrition Project - Core Achievements in 2024

1. 100% Child Immunization (0-5 Years)

In 2024, 100% of children aged 0-1 year (total: 66) and 22 children aged 1-5 years were fully immunized. All children aged 0-5 years across the 15 project villages were registered at Anganwadi Centers. Vaccination sessions were organized in each village according to the Health Department's timetable, ensuring full immunization coverage.

2. Immunization of Pregnant Women

In 2024, 30 pregnant women received complete immunization. A total of 180 vaccination sessions were conducted at the Anganwadi level in the 15 villages. These sessions were successfully implemented with the collaborative efforts of the Health Department, Anganwadi workers, and ASHA workers, ensuring complete immunization for both children and pregnant women.

3. Pregnant Women Registered at AWCs with MCH Cards, IFA, and ANC Completion.

All 30 newly registered pregnant women from the 15 villages received MCH cards and regular Iron-Folic Acid (IFA) tablets. Each of them also completed their Antenatal Checkups (ANCs) during the year, achieving 100% ANC coverage.

4. Postnatal Care for Lactating Mothers (PNC)

In 2024, a total of 106 lactating mothers (38 existing and 68 newly identified) were recorded in the project area. All these mothers completed their third PNC check-up, resulting in 100% PNC coverage for lactating women across the 15 villages.

5. Strengthening of Community-Based Monitoring Committees

Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs) have been formed in all 15 villages of the Kurkheda block to monitor AWC activities. However, such committees are yet to be established in the Dhanora block.

6. 100% AWCs Providing Five Essential ICDS Services.

All AWCs in the 15 project villages are currently delivering five essential ICDS services: supplementary nutrition, health check-ups, immunization, referral services, and life skills education for adolescent girls.

7. Improvement in Malnourished Children (SAM to MAM & MAM to Normal)

Out of 7 children identified with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), 4 improved to normal health status, and 3 shifted from SAM to Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM). Among 72 children identified with MAM, 43 recovered and moved to normal nutritional status. These improvements followed 223 home visits focused on child care, nutrition, hygiene, and safety, using BCC (Behavior Change Communication) tools.

8. Referral of Malnourished Children to NRCs/CMTCs

In 2024, a total of 11 SAM children were referred for treatment. Nine children were treated at a health check-up camp held by the Human Development Mission at Malewada PHC, and two children from Mangewada were referred to the NRC in Gadchiroli.

9. Positive KAP Changes in Feeding Practices and Colostrum Feeding

In 2024, all 30 registered pregnant women demonstrated improved Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) regarding nutrition and feeding. An 86% improvement was noted among pregnant women and 89% among lactating mothers. Mothers were guided to breastfeed 8–10 times daily, and nearly all practiced colostrum feeding within the first hour of birth. Awareness activities through village meetings, mother group meetings, vaccination sessions, and home visits helped families understand the importance of nutrition for pregnant and lactating women (PLWs), leading to visible health improvements.









Training & Awareness on Child Sexual Abuse and Sanitation

In 2024, under the TACSAS (Training and Awareness on Child Sexual Abuse and Sanitation) Scheme, SRISHTI conducted a vital series of workshops aimed at adolescent girls from rural, marginalized communities across Maharashtra. Spanning three districts – Dharashiv, Gadchiroli, and Beed-the initiative reached over 390 participants, including teachers, facilitators, and local stakeholders. The workshops addressed key issues such as menstrual and personal hygiene, identification and prevention of child sexual abuse, psychological impacts, and legal protections under the POCSO Act. Each session was tailored to break social taboos and foster safe, informed environments. Notably, the final workshop in Beed featured a peer-to-peer learning model, empowering trained girls to serve as junior facilitators. This approach not only deepened community engagement but also laid a foundation for sustainable awareness and self-advocacy among young girls in some of the state's most underserved regions.







International Women's Day Programmer







On the occasion of March 8th, Women's Day programs were organized in both Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh. The main objective of these events was to bring women together and create a platform for meaningful discussions on important issues. One of the key topics discussed was the importance of women's participation in local selfgovernance. It was emphasized that during Gram Sabha meetings, there should be at least one-third representation of women. This ensures that women have a voice and can express their opinions in villagelevel decision-making processes. Participants were informed about the legal provisions and rights related to this, as well as the need to ensure that these rights are implemented effectively at the grassroots level.

The program not only celebrated women's contributions but also aimed to increase their involvement in community governance and empowerment.

Raksha Bandhan Program

On the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, women tied rakhis on trees to learn about the importance of forests. They were told how social customs and traditions deny women the same right to sit, speak and express themselves as men. As a result, women are unable to express their views in the Gram Sabha (Gram Sabha). Keeping this in mind, the idea of using Raksha Bandhan as a unique initiative to increase women's organization and participation in Gram Sabhas was born.

However, initially there was confusion about who this event is for and what its objective should be. Traditionally, sisters tie rakhis on their brothers for protection. But the question arose – what or who are we protecting here?

Then the thought came: We work in villages and people here help us or protect us when they visit us, so we can tie rakhis on people. But later, Kunal sir suggested tying rakhis on trees to protect forests and guide women in this direction. The idea of tying rakhis on trees had never occurred to me before. And even if we organize such a program in the village, there was uncertainty about whether both women and men would agree to participate.

After that, this Raksha Bandhan program is to be organized in all the villages of Srishti Sanstha. Everyone took this program in each and every village.







A One-Family Village Leading Sustainable Forest Management

Nestled in the dense forests of Gadchiroli, the tiny village of Parsavihir is home to just one family—the Waralu Kolu Uike family. Despite its size, the village has emerged as a model for sustainable forest management. In 2011, Parsavihir secured Community Forest Rights (CFR) over 143 hectares of forest under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), with support from SRISHTI. This marked the beginning of a transformation, as the family developed and implemented a 10-year forest management plan focusing on conservation, biodiversity, and sustainable use.

Through controlled harvesting of timber, fuelwood, and minor forest produce like medicinal plants and fruits, the family enhanced their income and improved self-reliance. Under MGNREGS, they carried out water conservation work, helping recharge groundwater and ensuring water availability for both agriculture and livestock. They also documented local biodiversity and planted native species to protect wildlife habitats.

Their efforts have not only brought economic stability but also inspired surrounding villages to adopt similar practices. Parsavihir today stands as a powerful example of how even a single family can lead the way in protecting natural resources while ensuring intergenerational benefits and ecological balance.

Empowering Kavadikasa: A Journey to Rights and Resilience.

Kavadikasa, a remote tribal village in Gadchiroli district, faced challenges like poor connectivity, illiteracy, and lack of access to government systems. With only 32 Gond families, the village struggled with filing their Community Forest Rights (CFR) claim. Initially hesitant, the villagers gradually trusted SRISHTI Foundation, which helped them understand the CFR process, identify errors in previous submissions, and collect missing documents like Form A, compartment maps, and survey explanations. SRISHTI organized exposure visits, IFR camps, and accompanied villagers to government offices, empowering them with knowledge and confidence. Despite long distances, poor communication, and unclear processes, the villagers persisted.

Thanks to the continuous support from SRISHTI and the determination of the community, Kavadikasa successfully submitted their CFR claim—becoming an inspiring example of how collective effort and guidance can lead to empowerment and justice.

Transforming Breastfeeding Practices: A Case Study from Kurkheda & Dhanora, Gadchiroli

Breastfeeding is crucial for infant health, but in the tribal blocks of Kurkheda and Dhanora in Gadchiroli district, traditional beliefs and limited awareness often hinder optimal practices. Customs such as discarding colostrum, prioritizing work over feeding, breastfeeding while lying down, and isolating mothers post-delivery in unhygienic "zopadis" contribute to malnutrition and poor health outcomes. To address these issues, SRISHTI launched a targeted initiative to improve breastfeeding practices through home visits, mothers' meetings, and awareness sessions. The team offered personalized guidance on proper feeding techniques, maternal nutrition, and the importance of early initiation of breastfeeding. They used IEC materials and collaborated with ASHA and Anganwadi workers to counter harmful traditions and promote the benefits of colostrum and hygiene during the postnatal period. These efforts led to improved infant health, better maternal awareness, a decline in post-delivery isolation, and a noticeable reduction in malnutrition. While cultural resistance and difficult terrain posed challenges, SRISHTI's sustained and culturally sensitive interventions brought significant improvements, demonstrating that community-driven approaches can transform maternal and child health outcomes in remote tribal regions.

Empowering Women through Self-Help Fishing Groups:

A Srishti Sanstha Initiative in Shankarpur, Maharashtra Shankarpur, a village in Gadchiroli district, faced economic hardship, particularly for women in the Dhiwar community, who lacked the knowledge to effectively manage their savings despite their hard work. Recognizing this need, Srishti Sanstha, led by Mr. Kunal Gurnule, established a women's self-help group to empower them economically. The initiative encouraged women to engage in fishing, providing fish seeds, essential feed, and fishing materials like jackets and nets. This intervention significantly boosted women's participation in the local economy, improving their financial stability and contributing to economic progress in the village. The women have successfully set up governing structures and benefit-sharing mechanisms, setting a positive example that could inspire neighboring villages and attract more women to resource governance and diversified livelihoods.

Summary and Conclusion

The reporting year marked a significant shift in the program's structure and outcomes, with a thematic focus offering deeper insights into the interconnectedness of forest governance, community empowerment, and rural development. Organized under six core themes—Forest Rights Recognition, Management Plans, Convergence, Livelihoods, Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFPs), and Capacity Building and Empowerment—the year's work demonstrated how legal rights, when meaningfully implemented and institutionally supported, can lead to transformative change at the grassroots level.

The recognition of Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights set the foundation for democratic forest governance, empowering Gram Sabhas to assert control over forests that are vital to their cultural, ecological, and economic wellbeing. With focused facilitation, 129 CFR claims were filed and processed, laying the groundwork for long-term autonomy in resource management. Building on these legal recognitions, communities prepared and submitted detailed Management and Conservation Plans, many of which have been officially accepted by district administrations. These plans were not only visionary but rooted in local knowledge, ecological assessments, and community aspirations. They acted as a blueprint for further action and engagement with the state.

The process of Convergence emerged as a powerful strategy to operationalize these plans, translating rights into resources. With 90% of the villages registered as PIAs and \$\frac{1}{2}.5\$ crore mobilized across regions, convergence enabled communities to align government schemes with forest and livelihood priorities, reinforcing the relevance of the FRA as a developmental framework.

Livelihoods were addressed through a dual lens of sustainability and innovation. Agroforestry, SHG-led enterprises, and value addition to local produce created new income streams while respecting traditional ecological relationships. These initiatives deepened the communities' sense of stewardship and offered alternative paths to economic security.

The work around NTFPs exemplified the potential of collective action and market engagement. From establishing Moh Banks to securing higher prices for tendu and mahua, communities demonstrated how decentralized systems of trade and processing can challenge exploitative market structures and return control to forest dwellers.

All of these achievements were made possible by an ongoing investment in Capacity Building and Empowerment. The training of 129 community-level trainers, creation of user-friendly materials, and sustained engagement with women and youth ensured that rights were not only recognized on paper but actively realized on the ground. Communities emerged not just as rights holders, but as capable planners, negotiators, and custodians of their own forests and futures.

In conclusion, the year's work affirms that when rights-based approaches are combined with robust community institutions, strategic planning, and state collaboration, they lead to resilient, self-reliant, and ecologically secure villages. This thematic articulation not only showcases the depth and breadth of the work undertaken but also sets a strong precedent for replicability, policy advocacy, and long-term sustainability.

मच्छीमार संस्थांना वाटप केल्या किट





मोहेकर महाविद्यालयात मृलींचे आरोग्य आणि स्वछता या विषयावर एक दिवसीय प्रशिक्षण

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आदिवासी समुदायातील लोकांना कल्याणकारी योजनाचा लाभ

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वेशोन्तती

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मोहेकर महाविद्यालयात मुलींचे आरोग्य आणि स्वछता या विषयावर एक दिवसीय प्रशिक्षण

मनरेगा के क्रियान्वयन पर कार्यशाला

असुरक्षित प्रथांचे पालन करण्यास प्रवृत्त करू शकतात असे प्रतिपादन केले ,तसच क्ल गंकरात अस प्रातपादन कल ,तसच कार्यशाळेच्या दुसऱ्या सत्रात बाल लैंगिक शोषण कायदा आणि जागरूकता बदल मंदा केळझरकर मॅडम (सृष्टी संस्था गडिबरोली) यांनी माहिती दिली -झझश्री खज्ख-ज- पिंश या संस्थेने सॅनिटरी किट चे वाटप करून कशी काळजी घायची आणि बाल लैंगिक शोषण याला कसा प्रतिबंध घालता येईल आणि आपली भूमिका काय असायला हवी याबद्दल मत मांडले.कार्यक्रमाचे अध्यक्ष प्राचार्य डॉ.स्नील पवार यांनी बाल लैगिंक शोषणाच्या आणि परिणामांबद्दल लोकांना शिक्षित करण्यासाठी जागरूकता मोहिमा राबवणे यासारख्या उपायांचा समावेश अस शकतो माहितीच्या प्रसाराची आणखी एक प्रभावी पद्धत म्हणजे शाळांमध्ये, शिक्षकांना, काळजीवाह्ना आणि अल्पवयीनांना गैरवर्तनाचे प्रकार, उपाय आणि अधिकार याबद्दल कार्यशाळा तयार करणे आणि जागरूकता निर्माण करणे महत्वाचे आहे असे आवाहन केले, कार्यक्रम समन्वयक प्रा.अर्चना मुखेडकर यांनी प्रास्तविकातआपले मनोगत व्यक्त केले आणि गंगितले की महाविद्यालयात महिला आणि किशोरवयीन मुर्लीसाठी आरोग्य जागृती कार्यक्रम नेहमी राबवत आहोत ज्यामध्ये हिमोग्लोबिनआणि वॅल्शियमची कमतरता इत्यादी चाचण्या केल्या जातात.कार्यक्रमाचे सूत्रसंचालन डॉ.मीनाक्षी जाधव यांनी केले तर आयोजन महिला सक्षमीकरण कक्ष सदस्य डॉ. प्रक्लयी उंदरे यांनी केले, तर आभार प्रदर्शन अमर ताटे (लोकहीत सामाजिक विकास संस्था, कळंब) यांनी

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मासेमारी सोसायटी , ग्रामसभांनी केला मत्स्यबीज निर्मितीचा अभ्यास



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