



Grameen Gyan Abhiyan

A Newsletter for the Rural Knowledge Movement

November 15, 2007 Vol. 1 No. 2

This newsletter is a voice for the multi-stakeholder network. The content will be on activities of the partners, News on trends in the ICT4D world in the areas of Content Creation, Capacity Building, Technology, and New Partnerships. All our partners may share their views and ideas.

Significance of Grameen Gyan Abhiyan (GGA)

The Green Revolution helped to increase the productivity of crops like wheat and rice. The Knowledge Revolution, on the other hand, helps to enhance human productivity and creativity in several dimensions. Grameen Gyan Abhiyan will be based on the following organizational structure.

Every Block will have a Village Resource Centre with the help of ISRO

Every Panchayat will have a Gyan Chaupal or Village Knowledge Centre with the help of the Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Civil Society Organisations, multilateral donors, the academic and private sectors and bilateral and multilateral donors.

The last mile and last person connectivity will be achieved through combinations of internet and community radio, and internet and the cell phone.

While connectivity can be achieved, content creation and capacity building will be the greatest challenges. The content has to be dynamic, demand driven, locale specific and in local languages. The Grameen Gyan Abhiyan Partners will help in Capacity building and Content Creation with Various funding agencies like Tata Trusts, Microsoft, IDRC, SDC and other national and bilateral development agencies.

A major role of the Grameen Gyaan Abhiyan movement will be the establishment of linkages between scientific know-how and field level do-how. For this purpose, VRCs and VKCs will have to be intimately linked with appropriate programmes such as Sarva Siksha Abhiyan for

literacy, Yuva and Mahila Sakthi Abhiyans of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, National Rural Health Mission, National Horticulture Mission, National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, etc.

In order to accelerate progress in reaching the unreached in terms of relevant information and services in retail trade in fruits, vegetables and grains as well as on methods of safe handling, packaging and marketing, a Quality Literacy Movement based on Codex Alimentarius standards of food safety will be launched in association with the Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore. GGA has launched a Knowledge on the Wheels Programme for accelerating progress in the dissemination of information and the provision of relevant services.

The range of services will be gradually increased under the auspices of the Grameen Gyan Abhiyan, which will be managed by the National Alliance for Mission 2007. The Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy will host the Secretariat for GGA. As a single step, the Rural Knowledge Revolution is likely to have the largest beneficial impact on the physical, economic and social well being of over 700 million people living in villages.

Special Feature

RTI Into Rural India

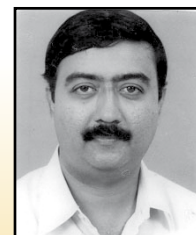
Programme in Action (PACS) has launched an action research project in six villages of Uttar Pradesh to motivate people to use the RTI Act, for better governance, accountability and access to entitlements. Around 300 RTI applications are expected to be filed from each of these villages by the end of 2007. The problems in these rural pockets relate to non receipt of voter identity cards, denial of minimum wages in public works, no scholarships for children and a dysfunctional aanganwadi with no benefits to the people.



The vision of what rural India could or should look like practically provides a way forward for all of us to share. The plurality of (ICT) models has enriched the choices available.



Ms Aruna Sundarajan
CEO, CSC Programme



Developing dynamic content relevant to the needs of local communities, is possible by establishing area-wise consortia of research institutions, which would commit to interact with local communities on an on going basis.



Dr. V. Balaji
Head,
Knowledge Management and Sharing,
ICRISAT

Greater awareness of the RTI Act is certainly expected to bring transparency and accountability into public dealings but it is a means not an end for change and good governance.

Relevant Links

www.humanrightsinitiative.org
www.iipa.ernet.in
www.hindustantimes.com
www.indiatogether.org
www.cmsindia.org
www.empowerpoor.org
delhigovt.nic.in/rti/spio/dept_wise_stat.asp

Current ICT World

The e-Granary Digital Library

<http://www.widernet.org/digitalibrary/>

This digital library provides millions of digital educational resources to institutions lacking adequate Internet access. Through a process of garnering permissions, copying Web sites, and delivering them to intranet Web servers INSIDE to their partner institutions in developing countries, they deliver millions of multimedia documents that can be instantly accessed by patrons over their local area networks at no cost. The WiderNet Project, The University of Iowa, 201 Communications Center, Iowa City, IA 52242, U.S.A., Telephone: 319-335-2200, Fax: 319-335-5374, www.widernet.org.

Mr. Shawn Sebastian, WiderNet Partnerships, shawn@widernet.org, 319-335-2200

The GGA Secretariat requests its partners to find out the relevance of the content so as to make it useable in Indian context.

MEET YOUR MP

Shri. KUNWAR JITIN PRASADA

In May 2004, Shri. Kunwar Jitin Prasada, 34, became one of the youngest members of Parliament. He won the Lok Sabha elections in his father's name from Shahajahanpur, Uttar Pradesh. More than three years as an MP has neither diminished his idealism nor his enthusiasm. This young Congress MP hails from a farming family of Shahajahanpur, and is working towards bringing about changes.

<http://www.shahjahanpur.nic.in/> (more about the constituency)

[http://164.100.24.208/ls/lsmember/bidata.asp?mpsno=4065,](http://164.100.24.208/ls/lsmember/bidata.asp?mpsno=4065)

What are your primary concerns for your constituency?

Shahajahanpur is well connected. Although far from an airport, it is on the national highway and well connected with the rail network. Mobile connectivity is also there. There are industries too but my constituency is primarily agrarian. It comes in the sugar belt and there are many sugar industries. The land is fertile, there are many rivers flowing through it. But irrigation remains a problem. People still depend on rains.



There is no rain water harvesting. Even today, there are villages in the interior where there is no electricity. The basic priorities remain power, water, education and health. There is an urgent need for local schools and medical practitioners.

What are you doing to meet these challenges?

- Infrastructure is a priority and most of the development funds that I control have gone into building roads.
- There are 10 private primary schools being set up in the villages that will start in the next few months. Children will get their class books, uniforms, teachers, meals and computer connectivity. These private schools will be in addition to the government schools in the area.



I want to work for my people and see the work percolate down to impact the last villager in my constituency



- There is also a Thermal Power Plant coming up. All clearances are through, construction has started and the Rosa Power Supply plant should become functional by 2010.
- In association with the Shroff Eye Centre, we are offering the villagers free cataract surgery. We give wheel chairs to villagers who need them. With Fortis Hospital, we have started a telemedicine centre that is currently running from my house in Shahajahanpur. We hold

the health camps and all the test reports are shown to doctors who give the right advise. Surgery is needed in very few cases. We are not charging the people anything.

- I have the equipment for four other telemedicine centres to be started from the villages. But there is no one to run it. We have VSAT connectivity, ECG machines, generator, computer, x-ray scanner but we do not have the building for housing the telemedicine centre, no doctors or technicians and no finances for recurring expenditure like salaries or fuel to run the generator.
- Whether health, education or adult literacy, I want to work for my people and see the work percolate down to impact the last villager in my constituency.

Is there anything that the state or the centre can do to alleviate these local problems?

- There is a rural electrification programme wherein all villages will be electrified in the next two years. But all central schemes are routed through the state government. Irrigation, power, drinking water supply, health and education are all state subjects. Power is a big problem. In the city, there is not more than 10 hours of electricity per day. These problems have to be addressed by the state government on a priority basis but there is an element of step motherly treatment for Shahajahanpur. Even problems like child labour in the carpet weaving industry have to be enforced by the state government.
- The NREG scheme will soon become functional in Shahajahanpur. There is no e-governance and I have yet to see any example of corporate social responsibility in Shahajahanpur. Most of the work is happening through non governmental organisations.

Is there anything the people can do to help themselves?

People need to vote right. If the government is not giving them even basic amenities, then the people can vote the government out. There are elections at various levels, the parliament, assembly, zilla parishad, gram panchayat and the power lies with the people. They need to realise this.

(In conversation with Ms. Aasha Gulrajani Swarup)

Invention

Mobile Journalism Project

Reuters and Nokia have joined hands for what they call is "Mobile Journalism Project" that could transform the way journalists file news reports when on the move.

The new mobile application is the first project to be showcased from a long term research collaboration that has been established between Reuters and Nokia Research Centre (NRC), the world's biggest handset maker.

It is all about a lightweight toolkit that provides everything journalists need to file and publish stories from even the most remote regions of the world.



We may edit, combine and file text, images, sounds along with live and recorded video streams as well as producing and publishing multi-media stories of broadcast quality without needing to return to the studio or office



The mobile journalism application uses the multimedia capabilities already available in existing smart phones and combines these to produce a toolkit that fits intuitively with the way in which journalists want to use it.

Metadata facilities automatically combine every piece of information the device already has about the context for the story - location, time, date and so on.

Running on handheld devices, rather than on bulkier laptop computers, the mobile journalism application enables Reuters to create complete stories and file them for distribution, without leaving the scene.

We may edit, combine and file text, images, sounds along with live and recorded video streams as well as producing and publishing multi-media stories of broadcast quality without needing to return to the studio or office.

Reuters have also developed a mobile editorial interface that links the toolkit developed by Nokia Research Centre to the in-house editorial process, allowing stories to be published almost instantly from the field.

While the application's most immediate use would be for professional journalists, the

implications of the research could be much wider in the long term.

The GGA Secretariat wishes to suggest it to our partners as a best mode of documenting traditional Knowledge especially the ones which would die out with an existing generation.
read on more @ bdnews24.com

eFuture

New Wave of Change

Biometric Tracking Gives Tamper Proof Identity to villagers

Recently under the directive of Mr. Nitish Kumar, the Chief Minister, the Minister for Rural Development, Mr. Vaidyanath Mahto, the State Administration headed by Shri. A.K. Chaudhary, IAS, Chief Secretary and Department of Rural Development headed by Mr. Anup Mukherjee, IAS, Principal Secretary, embarked on a plan to root out corruption in its grass root poverty alleviation programme - National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, a centrally sponsored scheme, for generating employment opportunities in rural districts, for creation of assets for sustainable living, to alleviate poverty. An article in the e-World of a leading daily on the topic "Biometric Tracking Gives Tamper Proof Identity to villagers" by Jaya Menon, featuring Kris Dev, a Management and ICT Consultant, said "Kris is still waiting with crossed fingers for the first invitation to a village in India for implementing the project".

This article set the ball rolling and Mr. Anup Mukherjee wrote to Mr. Kris Dev as follows: "Just read about your exploits, Very exciting. It says, you are still waiting for the invitation to a village in India for implementing the project. If your solution does all that the article describes, it would be ideal for Bihar where people find ways to beat all systems. In fact we are also thinking of biometric muster rolls for our Rural Employment Guarantee schemes. Would you be ready to start a pilot project in Bihar"?

In the meantime, more articles appeared in leading Indian newspapers and magazines.

Bihar State Electronics Corporation Ltd., (BSEDC), a Govt. of Bihar Undertaking, invited Life Line to

Business (LL2B) to give a demo of the biometric tracking to the officials of Rural Development Department. Based on the satisfactory demo, Life Line to Business (LL2B) was recently asked to conduct a proof of concept for 100 NREGP beneficiaries in a rural block of Bihar, between June 5 and 8, 2007. Kris Dev and Ashwin V.G. of Life Line to business (LL2B), went from Chennai to Patna to do the field work, carrying their laptop, web cam, scanner, biometric device, etc.

The villages identified for the proof of concept was Kurkuri and Dhuparchak Musahari, most under developed, in Gonpura Panchayat, Phulwarisharif Block of Patna district. The proof of concept was done among 170 men and women who are registered beneficiaries and having NREGP Cards with photographs. The registration and verification was done using different optical biometric devices.

The first biometric device used was a Fingkey Hamster computer linked optical finger size biometric device for registering all the ten fingers (twice each finger for getting the best value of minutiae counts) and a photograph of the beneficiary taken and all his personal data such as name, father / mother / husband name, date of birth, address, etc. registered and their NREGP Card with the photograph and details was scanned and attached to their details, for creating a permanent database.

After the registration process was completed, the verification was done immediately,



by entering the NREGP ID number and the beneficiary was asked to place any finger on the biometric device. Lo, the individual's photo would instantly pop up from the database on the computer monitor. This gave a high level of confidence to an illiterate labourer, as seeing their own photo popping up on placing any finger, was believing that biometric registration of all ten fingers gave them unique identity.

The photograph would pop up in the computer monitor, every time any finger was placed on the biometric device, by entering their NREGP



"Our primary focus is to have the best minds of the world to create computers that can be affordable for India's one billion population. We are not looking at one computer per village or family, but at an individual level. Be it raw material or any other factor, we are exploring all possibilities to make this happen."

Mr Steve Ballmer, CEO, Microsoft

ID number, when a one to one match of any of the ten fingers takes place. Simultaneously, the attendance was



marked as 'in' or 'out' depending on whether it was the first or second entry and a permanent record created in the database, for attendance tracking. The photo popping up on placing a finger and the attendance tracking, and a simultaneous print out of the attendance could also be made available.

For the field work, it was desired that a mobile optical biometric device with its own battery power back up would be more suitable for daily attendance tracking. A stand alone hand held biometric device that can run with rechargeable batteries and store 1,500 finger prints was used for the registration and verification. The device also had the capability to register the NREGP ID and all the ten fingers (each 3 times for getting the best minutiae count).

Registration and verification of finger prints was 100% successful with both the devices. It is also possible to integrate finger print registration with a smart card which can store the finger prints and personal data for use any time any where. If the smart card is linked to the post office or bank account, then the payments can automatically credited into the post office or bank account and the multipurpose smart card used as a biometric debit card for making purchases or for drawing money from ATMs.

The poor citizens can track by themselves the attendance, the work done and the payment received. No one would be able to cheat them, as the smart card and the print outs are



permanent records of all transactions.

Bihar would have the unique distinction of becoming the first state in India to introduce biometric tracking for NREGP to root out corruption, empower the poor and alleviate stark poverty.

The citizens of India are now waiting with crossed fingers for Nitish Kumar to show the way, for the transformation of Bihar that could pave the way for empowerment of poor citizens in all sectors such as health, education, noon meal scheme, employment, old age pension, etc. This could be the beginning of a long path of epoch making change in the offing in India.

For more details contact the Partner Organisation of GGA network Life Line to Community & Life Line to Business, Mr. Kris Dev, ICT & e-Gov Consultant, President & CEO, 91 98 408 52132, <http://ll2b.blogspot.com>.

Repository

Open Licensed Resources

UNESCO facilitates a collaborative access to existing free training courses and promotes open licensed resources to specialized groups and local communities for development.

The objective behind this platform is to empower trainers or/and trainees with free resources, offer them a structured collaborative space to share their training but also to promote and value the "open" training materials, which are freely and openly accessible for trainers and self-learners to use and re-use for non commercial purposes such as teaching, learning and research.

The Communication and Information Sector of UNESCO has been developing this open training platform available on line, to build capacities of:

local people

specialized communities (Trainers, educators, decision makers & policy makers, entrepreneurs, farmers, scientists, media people, librarians, archivists & information specialists, cultural actors, health specialists, environment specialists, development & social worker or civil servants) through ICT-enhanced training.

It offers a central access point to non-formal education resources and training which may be relevant to them according to their needs, knowledge, language and culture, with special emphasis on developing countries' people.

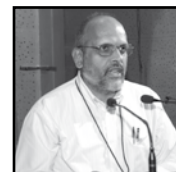
The GGA partners may access these free training courses at the URL www.opentrainingplatform.com



CDMA technology will be able to bring seamless connectivity in rural India.



Mr Parag Kar, QUALCOMM



By the end of the 11th Five Year Plan ISRO intends to set up 4000 VRCs across the country such that there is one in each block of the country. These VRCs will be equipped with full video-audio interactivity.



Dr V.S. Hedge, ISRO



GGA Secretariat & Editorial Board

Chairman

Dr. M. S. Swaminathan

Advisor

Dr. P. C. Kesavan

Secretaries

**Dr. Basheerhamad Shadrach
Mr. S. Senthilkumaran**

Coordinator

Ms. N. Ganga Vidya

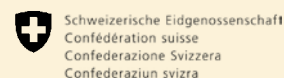
Editorial Team

**Dr. J. Mohan
Ms. Aasha Gulrajani Swarup**

A Fortnightly Published by

Grameen Gyan Abhiyan Secretariat
M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation
3rd Cross Street, Taramani Institutional Area
Chennai -600113, India
Tel: 044-22542791
email: gga@mssrf.res.in
skype id: grameen

Supported by



Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

