



Grameen Gyan Abhiyan

A Newsletter for the Rural Knowledge Movement

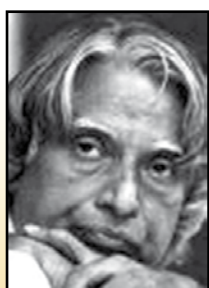
November 1, 2007 Vol. I No. 1



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



Prof. M.S. Swaminathan



I am sure that ultimately the National Alliance will be able to develop a user controlled, owned and managed network which will help to reach the rural population in terms of information, knowledge and skill empowerment.



Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam



L to R Veena Joshi, V. S. Hegde, M.S. Swaminathan, V.N. Rajasekharan Pillai, S. N. Batliwala

Evolution of Mission as a Movement

The idea of Mission 2007 was conceived by Prof. M.S. Swaminathan in 2003 during the Policy Makers Conference conducted by M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF). It promotes the principles of social inclusion by launching a Rural Knowledge Movement to bridge the urban-rural digital divide.

The Mission 2007 which successfully concretized the concept of the ICT enabling of all the villages of India has evolved into a movement. Today after 15th August of 2007, the Mission 2007 has been converted into the Grameen Gyan Abhiyan (Rural Knowledge Movement) which proudly holds hands with its 400 odd partners across the country with one intention of creating a Rural Knowledge Revolution.

The Grameen Gyan Abhiyan which has been working with an aim to achieve ICT enabling of 6,37,000 villages of India has built a multi stake holder partnership with the different ICT4D models present in India. They include the community based models, entrepreneurial models, government models, business models or the corporate models, cooperative models, and combinations of all these models in pairs or more. The movement hopes to provide an excellent means of reaching the goals, even as it serves as a tool for empowerment of the disadvantaged.

Grameen Gyan Abhiyan

Grameen Gyan Abhiyan (Village Knowledge Movement) launched this August 2007 by the Union Minister for Rural Development, by Professor Raghuvansh Prasad Singh is a multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to address

the knowledge gap there exists in rural areas, and the divide between the so-called Shining Urban India and the Suffering Rural Bharat. Of the course the UPA government in recent years has undertaken considerable measures to improve the situation in rural areas by investing over 175,000 Cr in its flagship Bharat Nirman program, the largest rural infrastructure development program the country has ever witnessed in its history of Independent India.

The Main Objectives of Grameen Gyan Abhiyan are:

To make a paradigm shift from resource-intensive agricultural practices to more of a knowledge-led movement for rural prosperity by making two-way knowledge linkages between the families living in rural areas and their service providers

To develop a knowledge-led rural society as the backbone for national productivity and growth in an inclusive and sustainable manner

To guide the functioning of village knowledge centres established through public-private partnership mode under the National eGovernance Plan and other schemes of Gol

To help develop appropriate services, content and solutions towards rural entrepreneurship, thus enhancing the rural GDP and rural prosperity in a sustainable manner.

To operate as an ally as well as a watchdog to monitor the progress and implementation of various government flagship programs in rural areas in health, education, nutrition, livelihood, finance, enterprise and agriculture sectors.

Current ICT World

Government Approves National e-Governance Plan

CBI gets a grant of Rs 3.5 crore to install the latest software tools.

Saturday, September 15, 2007: The government of India has approved the National e-Governance Plan. This Plan comprises of 27 Mission Mode Projects; 100,000 Common Service Centres; State Wide Area Networks to provide connectivity up to block level with provision for wireless connectivity from the block level to the village level; and State Data Centres. The Mission Mode Projects cover important sectors in Government domain such as banking, insurance, land records, police, e-courts, etc.

One of the key considerations in implementation of this plan is to define architecture, standards and policies addressing issues of security, privacy, etc. To address such issues, Department of Information Technology has worked out a strategy, which includes the security assurance framework, incident and alert system in respect of information security breaches for cyber community, legal framework, research and development and training awareness in the area of information security and cyber forensics.



Information and Communication Technology revolution holds a great hope for a better tomorrow and therefore, all out efforts need to be made to facilitate its furtherance."



During the closing session of 7th Interpol Cyber Crime Conference, held on 14 September, Hon' Union Minister of communications and information technology, Mr. A.Raja, said, "Information and communication technology has a great potential for improving the quality of life of citizens by lending transparency in Governance, cost-effectiveness of delivery of public services at a quick pace, informed decision-making, integration of remote areas with the business centres on the information highway, creation of wealth, creation of more jobs, etc. Information and Communication Technology revolution holds a great hope for a better tomorrow and therefore, all out efforts need to be made to facilitate its furtherance."

He added, "Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has been extending and will continue to extend all its support to CBI

to facilitate them to investigate cases of cyber crime effectively. My Ministry would be giving a grant of Rs 3.5 crore to enable CBI to install the latest software tools. This will help them to train their officials in investigating cases pertaining to cyber crimes and assist mutual exchange of information with Interpol."

The government has already requested critical sectors in the country to implement Security Best Practices based on ISO 27001 model. Department of Information Technology has already set up the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) at New Delhi. The said team coordinates with the cyber community in public and private and provides support for mitigation of cyber incidents. They also carry out the risk and vulnerability assessment and issues Advisories, vulnerability and alert notes to the cyber community in the country.

eGreen

Wipro a partner of the GGA Network goes green as India's e-waste mounts

More than 146,000 tonnes of e-waste are produced annually in India

India's Wipro has rolled out "green" PCs, but this move only tackles a very small part of the country's e-waste problem. Indian computer maker Wipro has introduced new PCs that are compliant with the European Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) directive.

The move by Wipro to offer RoHS compliant products follows a 2005 demonstration by environmentalist activists Greenpeace International who dumped old PCs outside the Bangalore headquarters of Wipro, one of India's largest computer manufacturers and IT service providers. In September 2006, the company announced an electronic waste (e-waste) disposal programme for its customers.

Wipro is the first Indian computer maker to offer products that are RoHS compliant, said Ramapati Kumar, team leader for toxics at Greenpeace's Bangalore office.

The RoHS directive, adopted in 2003 by the European Union, went into effect in July last year. This directive restricts the use of six hazardous materials in the manufacture of various types of electronic and electrical equipment.



Knowledge is important for all including grassroots and international communities. Having the right partners will enable to convert the Mission 2007 into a Movement. Knowledge Management needs to be put into practice and we have to explore the possibilities of Mass Learning.

-Dr. Basheerhamad Shadrach, Senior Programme Officer, IDRC



Government estimates that around 146,000 tonnes of e-waste are produced annually in the country.



How much impact the Wipro initiative will have on India's e-waste problem remains to be seen - but it's a start. The government estimates that around 146,000 tonnes of e-waste is produced annually in the country.

But Greenpeace's Kumar said the figure is actually twice as high because the government estimate covers only e-waste generated in big cities.

Moreover, about 150,000 tonnes of used PCs, printers and other IT devices enter India illegally each year, according to Kumar. Some of the equipment is intended as donations to local charities but is sold before reaching Indians too poor to afford a PC, he said. Indian government regulations on handling e-waste are notoriously lax and do not measure up to the RoHS directive, he added.

Wipro's entire PC line will be RoHS compliant by the end of this year, said Ashutosh Vaidya, vice president of Wipro's Personal Computing Division. The division, which targets primarily corporate customers, sold about 170,000 PCs last year, and expects sales of 250,000 units in the company's fiscal year ending March next year, Vaidya said. "It is a good start, but we still have a long way to go," Kumar said. The Indian government is still framing rules for proper handling of e-waste.

Ahead of those rules, Wipro has promised by 2009 to phase out the use of some hazardous chemicals still used in its products, including a brominated flame retardant (BFR) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC). These chemicals are not covered under the RoHS directive. (ashutosh.vaidya@wipro.com)

eFuture

Employment to 21 million by 2015

Centre to study hardware manpower scenario in India and look at the availability of educational infrastructure

The Government of India may align with hardware association MAIT (Manufacturers Association for Information Technology) to undertake a comprehensive study that would project the manpower skill-set demand and supply in electronics hardware manufacturing space, including IT hardware, consumer electronics, components and strategic electronics.

With electronic hardware identified by the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council (NMCC) as a thrust area, the sector is expected to generate a direct employment of 7 million and indirect employment of 14 million professionals by 2015.

The initiative spearheaded by IT Department to design India's success in positioning itself as a preferred destination for electronics hardware manufacturing would depend on the level of manpower preparedness.

"To meet the requirements, we have to look at issues such as manpower preparedness and skill-sets, be it at the shop-floor or marketing functions. The study would identify the areas where there would be a massive manpower requirement both on manufacturing and maintenance services," a source said, adding that the study would take 12-14 weeks to be completed. The initiative is being spearheaded by IT Department.

The study would take up eight upcoming manufacturing clusters in the country including Delhi-NCR, Chennai-Pondichery belt, Pune-Nashik-Mumbai belt, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Hyderabad and also look at the availability of educational infrastructure.

When contacted, the MAIT Executive Director, Mr Vinnie Mehta, said:

"Manpower will be the key to eco-system development in the country, especially at a time when the country is looking at the electronics hardware manufacturing in a big way." According to ISA-Frost & Sullivan estimate, the consumption of electronic equipment in India would rise to \$363 billion by 2015 from \$28.2 billion in 2005 at a compounded annual growth rate of 29.8 per cent.

(The Hindu, Business Line, Oct 15, 2007)



The Indian Model will serve as a model for many countries of the world. We should call for a new approach - inbuilt monitoring system for ensuring the success of the process. Trust and Leadership are also equally important.

- Dr. Gerolf Weigel, Head, ICT4D Division, SDC

Special Feature

NREGA -Largest Employment Program in India

Promising at least 100 days' employment to every household at a minimum daily wage prescribed in the state, The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), the largest employment programme in human history, designed by Mr Jean Dreze, a Belgian economist, along with the Delhi School of Economics, is a livelihood and poverty alleviation scheme, enacted in August 2005 and launched in 2006.

The NREGA also provides for unemployment allowances if the job, under the scheme, is not provided in any rural household. The programme is implemented through State governments, Panchayati Raj institutions and non-government organizations with the following objectives:

Providing lean season support to rural households

100 days employment supplement to existing resources

Reducing distress migration through local employment

Addressing the 'Geography of poverty'

Generating employment in the most deprived areas through productive works

Creating works that would rejuvenate the natural resource base of livelihood of poor communities.

In August 2006, this programme completed six months since implementation.

NREGA Score Card since implementation has been launched in 27 states covering 330 districts. 1.87 Cr households demanded employment in 8.62 works for the current year. So far 1.78 Cr households are provided employment in 2.05 lakh works and 6.57 lakh works are in progress.

(For details, see: <http://nrega.nic.in/>
<http://nrega.nic.in/news/0112092007.pdf>
http://www.cseindia.org/programme/nrml/pdf/E-pov-Oct-NREGA_half-yearly.pdf

Call for transition from a Mission to Movement using theory of social movement and their anatomy with the Bhoodan Movement as an example. Social inclusion of the poor, marginalized and women need to be the founding principle of Mission 2007. Upliftment of all (Sarvodaya), Spirit of sharing voluntarily, Compassion (Karuna) and Victory to the World (Jai Jagat) need to be the basic principles of the Mission for creating an Army of Knowledge Workers.

- Dr. Kirti Trivedi, IIT, Mumbai and Dr. Astad Pastakia, ICT Consultant

Event

A partner of the GGA Network Inaugurates a New Technology Hub

Vision on the transformational impact of technology on the collective future of HCL.

HCL Infosystems Ltd inaugurates a new HCL Technology Hub on November 1, 2007 at Noida in UP.

Hon'ble Former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has consented to be the Chief Guest and will deliver a special address on his vision on the transformational impact of technology on the collective future of HCL.

Hon'ble Union Minister of Finance Mr. P.Chidambaram presides over the function and Hon'ble Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Mr. Kamal Nath inaugurates the complex.



Not only is this going to be the hotbed for India's technology innovation; but with this new hub HCL will create 15,000 more technology opportunities in the NCR in the coming years. HCL already employs almost 20,000 people in NCR. Similar technology hubs will be set up in several parts of India, notably the smaller towns, which will truly take the future of technology innovation into India's hinterland. (akcd@hcl.in) (www.hcl.in/HCLTechnologyHub)



Invention

Hand-held Supercomputers

'on way'

Experts at a Scottish university say they have paved the way for the creation of tiny supercomputers which could fit in the palm of the hand.

Engineers at the University of Edinburgh studied the behaviour of wires which were 1,000 times thinner than human hair. They then created a tool which could help develop tiny microchips. German and Italian experts also worked on the project. Their findings will be published in the journal Science.

It is hoped that the discovery will eventually lead to medical advances, as well as hand-held PCs and mobile phones as powerful as laptops becoming available on the high street.



To create a powerful computer the size of a mobile phone, much smaller microchips with thinner wires are needed. The Edinburgh researchers teamed up with colleagues from the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology in Germany and the University of Rome, Italy, to look at how tiny wires behave when they are manipulated.

With the help of computers, they found that wires on a nanoscale, measured in millionths of a millimetre, behave quite differently from bigger wires.

Dr Michael Zaiser, of Edinburgh's school of engineering and electronics, said: "What we found is when we made these wires smaller and smaller they started to behave in a very funny way." The experts in Edinburgh have created a computer programme which allows engineers to predict when these problems might arise with the wires - and how to avoid them.

(news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/)



ICT in urban India is showing exemplary growth and rural India requires a strong democracy to fulfill it by decentralization of power generation. Corporate Social Responsibility will enhance decentralization of power. A keen sense of understanding between Social Science and Science is essential for reaching the unreached.

- Prof. Ashok Jhunjunwala, Faculty IIT Chennai

Rural Innovation Fund Winners

Rural Innovation Fund (RIF), the fund constituted by Microsoft and telecentre.org (a collaborative initiative of Microsoft, International Development Research Centre, Canada and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) for Grameen Gyan Abhiyan (Mission 2007) with the intention of:

Helping communities with limited access to technology to realize their potential

Promoting local IT based social entrepreneurial ventures

Fostering ICT based entrepreneurship in rural areas among the youth

Encouraging organizational, individual and local software entrepreneurial endeavors towards developing cost effective, practical and innovative applications and solutions benefiting society

Collaborating & supporting organizations specializing in service development with services to offer that lacks distribution channels to reach poor communities.

The following are the winning organizations and their titles announced by the funding partners:

1. Aravind Eye Hospital, Theni
'Primary Eye Care through Rural Vision Centre'.
2. Janastu, Bangalore
'School Management Software'.
3. Aruntec, Chennai
'e-Com Web Portal to facilitate flow of funds up to village level'.
4. SPRIT (Society for Participatory Research and Integrated training), Pudukottai
'Participatory Community Training and e-Commerce adaptation utility for Fisher-folk'
5. Vritti Solutions, Mumbai
'Village Centric Disaster Management System: SOS-ICS'.
6. Rajiv Gandhi College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (RAGACOVAS), Pudhucherry
'Preparation of Knowledge Kit For Goat Keepers'.

7. Manipal Centre for Information Science, Manipal

'BMDScan - Tool for Bone Mineral Density Scan'.

8. Andhra Pradesh Dairy Development Co-op Federation, Hyderabad

'Integrated Rural Milk Procurement' (IRMP).

9. School of Communication and Management Studies, Cochin

'Patient Logistics Management for Hospitals'.

To know more about Rural Innovation Fund awards and awardees please log on to www.mission2007.in



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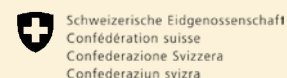
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