



Grameen Gyan Abhiyan

A Newsletter for the Rural Knowledge Movement

December 1, 2007 Vol. 1 No. 3

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.

Mission 2007 graduates as Grameen Gyan Abhiyan

Year	Event and Outcomes
Oct 2003	Policy Makers Workshop – organized by MSSRF & IDRC; Moots idea for Mission 2007.
Jul 2004	Mission 2007 was formally launched; Holds its 1st National Convention; DIT and TRAI formally join the Mission; TRAI accepts Mission 2007's recommendations.
Aug 2004	Microsoft announces its 'Saksham' program in support of Mission 2007 .
Sep 2004	ISRO's Village Resource Centre (VRC) project in support of Mission 2007.
Oct 2004	The Government announces its programmes of NeGP, SWAN and CSCs of reaching every village in India.
Dec 2004	National Commission on Farmers recommends Mission 2007 objectives as a part of its recommendations to the Government.
Feb 2005	As support to Mission, the Government allocates RS 100 crore to RIDF which State Government can use for telecentres; In his budget speech, the Finance Minister makes announcement about Mission 2007.
July 2005	The 2nd National Convention of Mission held in Delhi; The President of India announces his support and participates; Six ministers of Union Cabinet and two Chief Ministers of Indian States also join; Discussions among Mission 2007 grassroots leaders held.
Aug 2005	Mission 2007 stakeholders meet to discuss DIT's CSC scheme. DIT appoints NLSA for the implementation of CSC scheme.
Oct 2005	HCL-Microsoft announce \$250 Rural PC; International Support Group of Mission 2007 launched.
Nov 2005	Knowledge connectivity added to Bharat Nirman as a national program.
Jan 2006	Mission 2007 National Virtual Congress of farmers held in Hyderabad; The President of India participates in the meeting; Grassroots leaders meet to discuss Mission 2007.
Jul 2006	The 3rd National Convention of Mission 2007 held in Chennai. Microsoft-telecentre.org announce the Rural Innovation Fund in support of Mission 2007.
Sep 2006	Union Cabinet approves the budget for DIT's CSC program.
Oct 2006	Global leaders discuss Mission 2007 at World Congress on ICT4D in Italy.
Nov 2006	Mission Swaabhiman meeting held in Nepal to further discuss the process for replication of Mission 2007 in Nepal.
Jan 2007	Mission 2007 holds meeting on 'Content' and 'Capacity Building' in Kerala.
Feb 2007	Mission 2007 grassroots leaders meet in Coimbatore; Minister of State for Education joins.
Mar 2007	PhilCeCNet, a replica of Mission 2007, starts functioning in Phillippines.
May 2007	Mission 2007 Steering committee meeting held. Nepal Parliamentarians visit India to discuss with Mission 2007 stakeholders.
Jul 2007	Telecentre leaders from Rwanda visit Mission 2007 stakeholders.
Aug 2007	On 1-3 Aug, 2007 the 4th National Convention of Mission 2007 held at IGNOU. On Aug 15, 2007 Mission 2007 graduates to becoming a national movement called, Grameen Gyan Abhiyan.



We wanted to have on hand experience on how the "National Alliance for Mission 2007: Every Village a Knowledge Centre", comprising of Indian Government, Civil Society, Organizations and Private sector, is trying to fill in the knowledge and information gap in rural India through a combination of modern and traditional ICTs.



Shri Mahant Thakur
*Minister for Science & Technology
Government of Nepal*



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.
"Great dreams of great dreamers are always transcended."



Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam



We have to determine the linkages between the challenges of the farmers, baseline assessment of the training needs of all partners, care and management, and governance of the knowledge to discuss different models of linkages towards achieving convergence with the initiatives of Mission 2007.

Mr. S. Senthilkumaran

Secretary, Grameen Gyan Abhiyan (Mission 2007)

Programme Director - IEC, MSSRF

MEET YOUR MP

Shri. SACHIN PILOT

Elected from Dausa constituency in Rajasthan, Shri. Sachin Pilot, 30, represents a district, close to Delhi and Jaipur, that is primarily agrarian, comprised of about 3280 revenue villages and a population of nearly two million people. "It is a privilege and a big responsibility to represent the largest Panchayat in the country," he states. Fortunately for him, more than 90 per cent of the villages in his constituency are electrified and connected with roads. His constituency also has an above 60 per cent rate of literacy.

What is your most memorable moment as MP?

In 2004, while campaigning for my first elections as a candidate, in a small hilly village in the Aravalli's, an old woman, nearly 80 years old, stepped out of the shadows. She touched my head to bless me and in a totally unexpected move, removed a five rupee note from within her blouse and handed it to me with both hands. She told me, "You are fighting elections for the first time. Elections are expensive. Please take this money and use it. But do not tell my husband or sons."



What did you do with the money?

"I was extremely touched by this lady's act of kindness. I took the money and thanked her. I have not spent the money. I still have the five rupee note. I had not even mentioned that I needed help to contest the elections. I did not want to say that I don't need her money, especially when it was offered with such faith and trust. These people like you for who you are and that is how one reciprocates. Indian politics is based on emotions. It is not as sanitised as western politics."

What are the main challenges facing your district? What are you doing to overcome these challenges?

The major problems facing my constituency are water scarcity and unemployment. A lot of

our water is fluoride infected. The water table is diminishing. Ground water is at 800 feet. Water for drinking, agriculture and daily living is precious. But this is a problem that Rajasthan as a state and India as a country are facing primarily because we have no water management policy.

Another major problem is unemployment. We have over qualified people who are still looking for government jobs. The agenda of everyone who gets qualified with a degree is a government job. We have to change that mindset because government jobs are not going to be available for everybody. But for people surety of job is a primary concern. We have to change that mindset. It is happening in the cities but the villages still have to change.

Fortunately for me, today close to 94 per cent of my villages are connected through a pucca road or a gravel road. The road is there and it transforms everything. There is a bus, people can travel back and forth, there is economic activity, there is an interchange of ideas and information. A road breaks the barrier between a city and a rural area. We have also started two new railway lines. There are many trains, that I



"It is a privilege and a big responsibility to represent the largest Panchayat in the country,"



have persuaded Mr Yadav to stop in my district, which has been a political thing, new tracks, new bridges, new mobile towers, highway construction. We are also doing a major Rs. 700 crore four laning project in my district.

This road and rail connectivity has happened at the initiative of the central government. What have you done for your people?

In the last three and a half years, we have tried to put up as many WLL towers as possible, to enable mobile connectivity. We may not have landlines but we have WLL towers, put up by government companies and private enterprises,

so that we have leapfrogged from not having landlines to having an adequate number of mobiles.

Also, I, as a member of parliament have some funds. I make sure that these are spent on time and whatever is spent, the output is there for that amount of money. I have spent that money on my people providing drinking water, water tanks, bore wells, hand pumps, roads, schools, school boundaries, making graveyards, a shed that is important in the rainy season.

How do you decide how much and what to spend on from your MPLAD fund?

It depends on what people want. It is need based and driven by demand. For example, I want to make sure that there is a bathroom for every village girl in my constituency. Most of the girls stop going to high school after a time because of lack of toilets. It is not rocket science but there is no targeted project from any government so far. I make sure that I can use these funds to focus on the smaller things that change people's lives.

Whoever comes to me with any problem whatsoever, I make sure that I contribute from my MPLADS fund provided the people also make a token contribution. They mustn't feel that it is very easy to get that money. When they have their own contribution, they value their asset and look after it. Central government too does not give funds just like that. There has to be a lot of what shall I say, persuasion, that takes place, to convince that department and the ministers to allocate that money.

My MPLAD funds amount to Rs. two crores a year, spread between 3000 villages. You do the maths. It is not very much money.

What is your vision for Dausa, your constituency?

My agenda for Dausa is to somehow make every single of my 3280 villages a new place of growth. I want a developed Dausa with good connectivity, infrastructure facilities and means of education and livelihood for its people. We have more than 60 per cent literacy but lack job opportunities. The large divide between rural India and urban India, the rich and the poor has become wider. To bridge that, we have to make sure that people are getting the best returns for their efforts. And their children are able to get the best facilities.

We are entering a new era where the traditional forms of livelihood, like agriculture, are

changing. Many farmers are moving from the traditional harvesting of two crops a year to doing vegetables like broccoli, chillies and cash crops. They are enjoying the benefits and returns of this change. But farmers are still reluctant to get into horticulture or food processing or agro-based industries. This transition has to happen. We have to make sure that these people have the technical knowhow and the skillsets the knowledge and the flexibility to adapt.

So, it is important for my people to get connected, economically, physically, and hopefully soon get connected technologically too. This connect will give them a sense of being empowered and give them a sense of what India is doing.

How connected is Dausa at present?

My constituency is not far from Delhi. The state starts within two hours of starting time from Delhi and about 300 kilometres on the Jaipur road is Dausa district. This area is not backward. Land is good, agriculture is good, water is scarce, but people have access to good fertilisers seeds and, markets. Information is available and the institutions of harvest procurement are established already. Dausa is also archaeologically significant and has a tremendous potential for tourism. We have mega highways going through my district. We have mobile connectivity. There has also been a real estate boom and people have realised good profits on their sale of land. They don't feel disenfranchised from the rest of India. An NGO has also evolved a web portal on Dausa, creating a virtual market, thereby ensuring better prices.

Have you used technology to connect people to knowledge resources or initiated any ICT4D projects in your constituency?

No. We have *Krishi Vigyaan Kendras* in our area so the dissemination of knowledge is there but I am not really sure whether that has happened yet, using ICT4D to connect these kendras as knowledge based centres. There has to be a programmed sort of effort. Development in this area seems rather haphazard, unfortunately.

But I am trying to get the Lifeline Express into my constituency hopefully by the middle of next year. I am also talking to a large private hospital in Delhi to initiate telemedicine in my district. I have already organised a medical camp for which I contributed Rs. 20 lakh through my MPLAD funds. It was totally free and whoever came there to attend the camp for cataract surgery or child immunisation or polio drops was told about telemedicine. I think it is important to sensitise the people about the benefits of telemedicine before launching the project for the first time. Otherwise it lowers the motivation of the guy who is doing it and for those who come for the first time.

Have you thought about using ICT4D in your constituency? Would you be interested in setting up a Village Resource Centre in your constituency?

Yes, I would love to but it all involves money. My MPLAD funds, I would rather use it for immediate needs like providing drinking water to those who have to walk three kilometres for drinking water than to set up an infrastructure which would involve lots of reinvesting of money. I would be happy to help with the project. But it would involve a lot more investment than what I can afford from my MPLAD scheme. But if it does happen I would be very supportive of it. But as of now I have not invested any money in any kind of ict4d project.

(In conversation with Ms. Aasha Gulrajani Swarup)

YES Fund: ICT Business Plan Competition 2007

As one of the partner organizations of the Mission 2007, it gives me immense pleasure to contribute towards fulfilling the objectives of the Mission by announcing the YES Fund ICT Business Plan Contest, targeted at young people in India and organizations as well as experts in ICT Sector. YES Fund believes that the use of ICT can empower the vulnerable people by enabling them to gain rapid access to up-to-date

information and thus make informed decisions to take better control of their own development. Development of entrepreneurs in ICT will also facilitate the aim of Mission 2007 of creation of every Village a Knowledge Center.

Global Fund for Youth Entrepreneurship (YES Fund), a signature initiative of the YES Inc. seeks to create markets and unleash entrepreneurship in developing countries by helping young people to identify business opportunities, prepare their business plans and compete for the best ideas. ICT Business Plan Competition for 2007-2008 launched by YES Fund will support youth entrepreneurs between the age of 18-35 years for setting up new business and expansion of a budding business. The YES Fund will offer Rs. 80,000 as Prize money for each of the Award Winning Business Plan along with other crucial supports like mentoring by professionals from organizations and field Experts as they will venture to implement their business plans. Efforts will be made to increase their access to Financial institutions and venture capitalists or linkage with Investment partners. The entrepreneur will also be linked to Innovative Business development services and will be enrolled with YES entrepreneurial forum for learning and sharing experiences.

If you wish to promote **Youth Entrepreneurship in ICT sector**, you would find ample avenues to align with YES Fund as **Screeners and Business Coaches** and also refer young people for the Business Plan Contest. So, be a part of the global coalition to promote youth leadership, entrepreneurship and employment. Young people, who want to be **Entrepreneurs** and aspire to start their own ICT Business, could join the contest to win exciting awards and business development services. Visit www.yesweb.org/fund, to learn more about the Contest. Send in your completed application form or the registration form as applicable to yesfund@yesweb.org. before 19th January, 2008.

Ms. Poonam Ahluwalia CEO YES Inc.

Four Action Research Scholarships

Four Action Research Scholarships are available for five months' action research under the guidance of Mr Mukat Singh.

Rural life and studies is the theme. Research to be based on present-day society and to be useful, practical and not purely theoretical.



In his desire to stimulate rural prosperity, Professor Swaminathan is calling for a 'team India for new India'. When the concept of team India applies to Cricket and Industry, it may also apply to development. Team India for new India here comprises of all those who can contribute to re-vitalizing the rural economy, thus creating a conducive environment for the much needed inclusive growth during the 11th five year period. Each one of us is surely a member of the Swaminathan-led team India.

Dr. Basheerhamad Shadrach
telecentre.org, Representative for Asia



Research should include elements to build an egalitarian, humane and fair society. Approved abstracts and findings will be published in the International Journal of Rural Studies in English. Certificates of research experience and merit will be awarded by the Gramodaya College and Research Institute.

The duration is Five months beginning 1st February 2008. Applications in your own handwriting with handwritten bio data should reach the undersigned **by 7th December 2007**. So contact Mr. Mukat Singh, Director, Action Research, Gramodaya College and Research Institute, Amarpurkashi (Bilari), Distt. Moradabad – 202411, U.P. Mob: 094 11809030, 098 37781554

Current ICT World

ICT Academy To Come Up By September 2008

The State Government of Tamil Nadu, along with the Centre and leading Information and Communication Technology companies, will set up an ICT academy by September 2008 with an initial investment of Rs.20 crore. The academy would help bridge the talent gap and increase the employability of the State's graduates, not only from engineering courses, but also from polytechnics, Industrial Training Institutes and Arts and Science colleges.

The private-public partnership project is at an advanced stage of getting stakeholders together and incorporating the Section 25 company, which will run the academy, according to Information Technology Secretary C. Chandramouli.

The academy, to be called ICTACT (ICT Academy for Tamil Nadu), will develop and maintain "a world-class ICT industry-related curriculum and course content," and make it available to students and faculty through an online portal. ICTACT's main strategy, however, is not to reach students directly. It is to provide training to 5,000 faculty members across Tamil Nadu over the next three years, so as to benefit over 250,000 students indirectly. While ICTACT's research and training headquarters will be in Chennai, there will be regional learning centres where contact classes and residential summer training camps can be held.

Source: <http://www.hindu.com/2007/10/30/stories/2007103060150800.htm>

The Ripple Effect

The "Mission" Spreads from India to Bangladesh

The belief that we can accomplish more by connecting, sharing, and working together is fundamental to telecentre.org's work. This is why we support networks and face-to-face meetings, and why telecentre.org itself is organized as a network of networks. This story shows the impact of this approach. It shows what happens when we inspire each other and build on others' learning and accomplishments.

In January, 2007, more than twenty organizations joined together to launch the Bangladesh Telecentre Network. The network's primary agenda is "Mission 2011", which aims to establish 40,000 telecentres across Bangladesh by the 40th anniversary of its independence.

Mission 2011's structure, operational mandate, and vision is similar to India's Mission 2007 (<http://www.mission2007.in/>). "Mission 2007 has seen ripple effects in Nepal, Philippines, Sri



We want to take all those [outcomes] which worked in the implementation of Mission 2007 and avoid those which did not work."



Lanka, and now it's the turn of Bangladesh," explained Dr Basheerhamad Shadrach, a Senior Program Officer with IDRC, and the telecentre.org representative for Asia. "Members of telecentre.org, especially the MSSRF [www.mssrf-nva.org], have indeed had a great influence over Mission 2011. Yet it is a program in evolution, and a program with difference -- thanks to Ananya's leadership and the entire intellectual leadership lent by the founding partners."

"The inspiration for Mission 2011 came from the Mission 2007," said Dr Ananya Raihan, Executive Director of D.Net (www.dnet-bangladesh.org) and Secretary General for the Bangladesh Telecentre Network. "We want to take all those [outcomes] which worked in implementation of Mission 2007 and avoid those which did not work." And, although there not yet a formal linkage between the two initiatives, Dr Raihan emphasizes that there is "a spiritual linkage and a working relationship has been established already at bi-lateral levels."

Mission 2011 is now moving ahead at full speed. On April 10, Young Power in Social Action (www.ypsa.org), a network member and leader of its Institutional and Human Capacity Development task force, organized the first of a series of six division-level stakeholder consultations in Citation City, Bangladesh. Over 110 participants attended, including development organizations, social entrepreneurs, the private sector, and government. The event was supported by the UNDP and telecentre.org (read report: <http://community.telecentre.org/en-tc/node/31397>).

Dr. Basheerhamad Shadrach
telecentre.org, Representative for Asia



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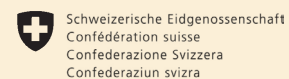
Dr. J. Mohan

Ms. Aasha Gulrajani Swarup

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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
Web: www.mission2007.in; www.gga.org.in

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