



An effort towards making Panchayats digital in Maharashtra



Members of PRIs learning about "Local Area Portal" developed by DEF



Presentations & sharing by Panchayat Pradhans



Session in progress ...

DEF launches "Towards Digital Panchayat" Maharashtra leads the way

by Osama Manzar

Febuary 16, 2008 may go in the history of "bottom up digital inclusion revolution" as Digital Empowerment

Foundation starts its concept of "Local Area Portal" through spearheading Digital Panchayat project from Maharashtra, where 50 Panchayats participated in a day-long workshop to find out what is "Digital Panchayat", what does it mean to them, how can they have a seamless website, in their language, which they can take charge of, which they can upload, maintain, manage, update, and convert the website into a digital home for all their activities, their grievances, their stories, their news, their needs, their business, their entrepreneurial opportunities, their RTIs, their schemes, their NREGAs, their health issues, their agri-infos, and so on

The entire experience of the workshop, which was organised by DEF, co-supported by Micro Associates of Mumbai, and Manthan Award winner of Pune SMSOne, and of course those Panchayat representatives, who came all the way from their villages, were extremely humble as most of these Panchayats were those which have been recognised by the government as Nirmal Gaons, and they all have computers at their disposal, they know what sanitation is all about, their understanding to make their villages self reliant, was an excellent experience to watch and hear. I must also mention Media Lab Asia for their buy-in of the idea and initiative.

An interactive session was organized for spearheading the concept of local area portal. Sarpanch and their representatives from 22 Panchayats were present for the session. The sessions were interactive where the participants shared the local knowledge, best practices from the respective villages.

- ☞ Maharashtra has been chosen to pilot the concept of Local Area Portal
- ☞ Selected Panchayat are partners in this innovative concept
- ☞ The portal having local content shall be ready Launched by May 2008

Most of the Panchayats had come with full documentation, their historical feats, their desires, shortcomings, and so on. They categorically said that they fully understood the meaning, need and future value of being digitally inclusive, and they certainly do not want to be consumers of ICT revolution, but they want to use the ICT to contribute their knowledge, their products and services, their wisdom and information which could bring them money, name and fame, and most of all they want to use ICT tools to make their next generation as active participants of the fast emerging knowledge economy that India is becoming.

The ability of ICTs to enhance the generation, dissemination and Consumption of content for local people is unbound.

Recently, DEF actively promoted the idea of Local Area Portal with UN's Solution Exchange Group of ICTD both in visioning workshop and also participated in the group discussion. Dr Megha Phanselkar who works with Micro Associates as Director, had a huge experience to work with most of the Model Villages of Maharashtra and she immediately facilitated to try out the idea of Digital Panchayat with Local Area Portal, to make it a reality and showcase at a scale which could then be replicated Pan India. Her interest and DEF's commitment towards this journey is the story behind this

This convergence for Sustainable development is inevitable and mutually Beneficial.



Enthusiasm among the participants towards collective efforts ...



Participants during the workshop



Dr Megha Phanselkar, Director, Micro Associates, Mumbai



effort, that is why Maharashtra Panchayats got ahead with Local Area Portal!

As a bonus, Manthan Awardees based in Pune came up to take up all hosting onus and thus we organised the workshop to start off the test bed of the LAP idea through Digital Panchayat project. The press went gaga over the idea and gave a widespread local coverage in total about 12 newspapers in all languages covered the idea/workshop.

And we hope to have 50 Panchayat websites with all interactive and proactive content ready in the next 3 months. So much so there is enthusiasm that entire Maharashtra may go ahead to adopt this idea and make all Panchayat digitally inclusive by the end of this year i.e. 2008.

I hope, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj will take cognisance of this small effort and help us to make this movement nationwide.

DEF with its partners would be happy to take this mission forward.



Session in progress ...

Digital Panchyat for..

- 👉 Promoting local content on web
- 👉 Showcasing the best of rural India to the world
- 👉 Facilitating Digital Empowerment in the rural villages
- 👉 Facilitating knowledge centers in selected Gram Panchayat
- 👉 Evolving strategy for scaling up the movement with the brigade of community resource persons as entrepreneurs



Committing towards common cause ... making Panchayats digital...

Rural Maharashtra has unlimited to offer, whether it is community mobilization, panchayat raj system, innovative implementation of rural technology, watershed management or natural resource management.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj may consider this effort as mandatory to make the entire Panchayati Raj Institutions of the country participatory with bottom up digital destination for all Panchayats.

- DEF introduced the concept with multimedia tools and providing answer to the issues raised by the GP members
- An introduction to the concept of community radio was also provided
- Micro Associates worked as a session facilitator and also helped in communication in local language
- Manthan Awardee, SMSOne, arranged all logistics and brilliant local network power
- Infrastructure support was extended by Vikhe Patil Foundation, Pune
- Dr. Ashok Patil, PVC Pravara Rural University was the chief guest for the session

I must emphasise that, DEF would be providing all hosting, technical support and capacity enhancement skills for making all Panchayats go for having digital content based website, thus making India a proud country for having the largest bottom-up content of its kind through having 265,000 Panchayat Portals online and that too managed and updated by the Panchayat.



Distinguished participant sharing his views

SUSTAINABILITY

- ✗ Selection of Gram Panchayats have community mobilization
- ✗ Involvement of decision makers from the Gram Panchayats
- ✗ Empowerment and involvement of local people as resource persons
- ✗ Ownership of Gram Panchayats due to investment of time and money
- ✗ Hardware support by the Gram Panchayats to ensure its maintenance
- ✗ Capacity building session for local content development
- ✗ Content Management System in local language
- ✗ Networking support from other partners
- ✗ Capturing learning to evolve a scaling up strategy

Sl. No.	Participant Name	Address	Phone No.	Signature
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6	Sanjay Kulkarni	11845 ETS, Pune C Common Services Paper)	9970099994	...
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Participants from Panchayats...

Following are the members of the PRIs participated, their signatures, their achievements, and their participation in the workshop and also press coverage.



Media's presence & coverage

Do let us know if in any way you would like to participate in this movement,

defindia@gmail.com

Panchayats Participated

- ✍ Total 50 GPs have been identified for local are portal
- ✍ For the first session 25 GPs were invited. Sarpanch or their representatives participated actively
- ✍ The GPs are representative in nature, with varied population size, from distant districts and social nature

S.No.	Gram Panchayat	Participant	Designation
1.	Bornar, Bhdgaon Jalgaon district	Pandit Dayaram Mali	Sarpanch
2.	Sangvi , Baramati, Pune district	Bhanudas Bhagwanrao Jagtap	Sarpanch
3.	Pimpelgaonjoga, junnar , Pune Distirct	Ravikant Sambhaji	Representative
4.	Sangavi, Baramati , Pune District	Anil Taware	Vice-Sarpanch
5.	Chincholrawwadi, Latur District	Ganesh Reddy	Representative

S.No.	Gram Panchayat	Participant	Designation
6.	Shindewadi , Haveli, Pune District	Vikash Lavade	Sarpanch
7.	Wanjharwadi , Baramati , Pune District	Dhamasi Choudhari	Representative
8.	Dhmaner, Koregaon, Satara District	Rahul Shelar & Chandrakant Shirsagar	Representative
9.	Katewadi, Baramati , Pune District	Sushil Buthade	Representative
10.	Waghadi, Dhanu, Thane District	GD Devare & Ramesh Sajavi Gram Sevak	Representative
11.	Ambadgaon, Badnapur, Jalna District	Rajesh Jahad Srinivas Jahad Jagdish Jahad	Representative Representative Sarpanch
12.	Nasadgaon, Jalna, Jalna district	Lahurao Deshmukh	Sarpanch
13.	Patoda Waduj, Aurangabad District	Manohar Shridhar Laghane	Representative
14.	Hol, Shirpur, Dhule District	Dinkar Choudhary	Representative
15.	Morane, Dhule, Dhule District	Pravin Rao Thakre Yuvraj Dhondhu Thakre Vijay Saidane	Representative Representative Gram Sevak
16.	Saigao, Javali, Satara District	Kedar Uttam Kadam	Representative
17.	Dhumalwadi, Baramati, Pune	Shri Sanjay Jagtap	Coordinator Community Service centers, VIIT, Baramati.
18.	Rui, Baramati, Pune	Shri Sanjay Jagtap	Coordinator Community Service centers, VIIT, Baramati.
19.	Dorlewadi, Baramati, Pune	Shri Sanjay Jagtap	Coordinator Community Service centers, VIIT, Baramati.
20.	Malegaon, district	Sandeep Kutwal	Representative , Common Service Project , IL&FS, ETS, Pune
21	Lasurene, Baramati, Pune district	Sandeep Kutwal	Representative , Common Service Project , IL&FS, ETS, Pune

Manna from heaven

GurujiWorld: Girish Prabhu of gurujiworld distributed their IT learning CD free to all Panchayat

FarmERP: Sanjay Borkar of Shivrai Technologies showcased their Farm management software which is also web enabled, and offered free to all the Panchayat and also to allow further integration with Local Area Portal



Gurujiworld distributing their IT learning CDs to Panchayat members. Osama Manzar, Director DEF had the honor



Happy moments during the workshop



Informal gathering...



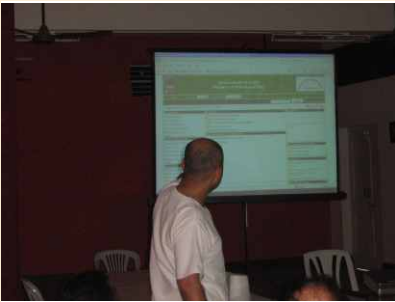
Efforts towards making dream a reality...

Action Plan 2008

- ☞ Conduct the second session on LAP for the GPs who could participate in the first session
- ☞ Network with Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Pravara Nagar
- ☞ Network with MKCL
- ☞ Send the resource kit to each participating GP for capturing GP content
- ☞ Organize the hands on training session on content management software
- ☞ Create a joint corpus for the local area portal project
- ☞ Launch the local are portal with domain registration and server support
- ☞ Disseminate the concept at national and global level
- ☞ Network with partner from other states
- ☞ Scale up the project to entire Maharashtra gram Panchayats



Supporters as a team during the workshop



"Local Area Portal" at a glance



Panchayat members committing their support



Participants of the Workshop

Come Join the Movement ...

We look forward to organizations and networks to join this innovative movement

Support can be extended through:

- ☞ Networking with Gram Panchyats to be included in the movement
- ☞ Organizing a session in Maharashtra for empowering the Gram Panchayats for this concept...
- ☞ Providing funds on the corpus for the project activities
- ☞ Any other support which helps in the project implementation

Contact:

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