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Introduction

India is turning amazingly ‘mobile’ with 850 million plus mobile users and still counting. It won’t be long that the 1 billion plus population will be the new ‘mobizens’. With unprecedented ‘man-mobile’ competition, we see a big push to infocom revolution and beyond that, what it signifies vis-a-vis our vast social, cultural and economic needs.

Do mobiles serve our larger social good, public good? Yes, but how? Sample these. Kisan Sanchar enables expert fed agriculture knowledge to reach out to lakhs of farmers on mobiles free of cost, in local language. “Hello Sakhi” (Hello Friend) provides free legal and counseling support to women in distress in Gujarat supported by a mobile phone helpline. ‘Tracking Livelihood Entitlements for Rural Communities’ in Odisha provides relief to poor families by tracking supply of basic food grains with mobile based tracking. Not many would know, these and other such practices are driving key social, behavioural and cultural changes, and albeit silently! And the ‘Mobiles for Good’ initiative by Vodafone Foundation in association with Digital Empowerment Foundation, since 2011, is about scouting such practices, selecting those, providing crucial grants to improvise and scale up.

Ignorance is certainly not a bliss, while mobile innovations having panacea to our social, development needs. If we agree, there is felt shortage to populate and share such practices. There is need of more of experiment sharing, so we can contribute to an enabling environment for learning and collaborative work. And a need of bigger push to the mobiles for good objective. This coffee table book attempts to serve this purpose, to provide a glimpse of 9 key mobile social projects for an invaluable takeaway for each one of us.
Kisan Sanchar

An agricultural knowledge centre project that assists marginalized farmers in communicating, sharing and connecting with useful information through multiple channels in the agricultural community.
producer: Sristi Gyan Kendra
location: Rohtak, Haryana
year: 2008
language: local languages
url: www.kisansanchar.com

name: Kamal Jeet
mobile: 9215514437
email: kamal@sgk.in
25 years ago, Ishwar started farming in his village in Haryana. The chemicals he used on his fields permanently damaged his land, and his health. Pesticides are responsible for 30,000 cases of poisoning and 22,000 deaths amongst farmers in India, every year. To put an end to these appalling conditions, he made a commitment to finding a better solution.

To spread the news of his invention, he joined hands with Kisan Sanchar, an NGO working to improve the lives of poor farmers using mobile technology.
With the support of SMS, voice and a dedicated helpline, Kisan Sanchar provides valuable, localized agricultural information to a network of over 35,000 farmers country-wide. Ishwar’s efforts and many more can now be shared across the nation, so everyone can benefit.
eduVARTA

Provides m-services to rural and semi urban college students and alert them about potential opportunities relating to a wide variety of education and career.
producer: SMSONE & Mobile Media Association
location: Pune, Maharashtra
year: 2010
language: English
url: http://eduvarta.brave-host.com/Home.html

name: Ravi G hate
mobile: 09822522333
email: smsone@smsone.in
My name is Varsha. I am a 20-year-old English college Science student in the Baramati district of Pune, Maharashtra. Since my childhood, I wanted to become an engineer. I worked very hard to pass my basic school qualifications to make my dream come true.

Unfortunately, there are no engineering colleges in my area and it is very difficult to keep track of what courses are available in the nearby towns. I didn’t get very far and settled with a job working in a small shop in my village. Not long ago, I received an SMS alert from eduVARTA asking me to subscribe to their information service via text to inform the youth on both educational and job opportunities in the surrounding areas.
eduVARTA uses the power of mobile technology to provide regular SMS alerts to students like me, living in rural and semi urban areas, with important information on colleges, courses, due dates and admissions and even jobs! The service also provides useful information on career events and festivals. After signing up for this SMS service, I received information about a prestigious educational scholarship. I decided to go for it and apply and was delighted to be accepted. Today, I am pursuing my engineering degree in Pune. I am now one-step closer to my dream.
Hello Sakhi

A helpline that provides, women who are victims of various abuse, a platform to seek immediate assistance, including special women cell at police station.
producer: Kutch mahila vikas Sangathan
location: Kutch, Gujarat
year: 2010
language: local languages
url: www.kmvs.in

name: Ms. Preeti Soni
mobile: 9427512958
email: kmvskutch@gmail.com
My name is Amina. I live in the Bhuj city of the Kutch region. As a teenager, I was married to Abu and always dreamt of a happy life. But that’s not how it turned out to be. As we did not have much money, life was a constant struggle and tensions ran high. Abu often got angry and started beating me, insisting that I bring home more money.

I worked hard with the Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS) a local self-help group, which helped a bit. Through them, I heard about ‘Hello Sakhi’, a helpline that provides support to women in distress from domestic violence, physical abuse and sexual harassment and works in partnership with the local police department.
One day, I came home with my weekly earning and Abu beat me badly and said it wasn’t enough. Battered and bruised, I looked for help and remembered the ‘Hello Sakhi’ helpline number. I called and within minutes, a friendly voice reassured me that help was on the way and I would come to no harm. An ambulance arrived and she was right. Those words stand true today.

Using mobile technology, the Hello Sakhi helpline has supported over 11,000 rural women like me across 940 villages in the time of need.
Empowerment of 25,000 rural women through mobile phones and Tilonia Community Radio

Connecting and enabling communities to share and create their own local news, establishing two-way communications using mobile phones and radio.
producer: Barefoot College Tilonia
location: Ajmer, Rajasthan
year: 2009
language: local languages
url: www.barefootcollege.org

name: Mr. Laxman Singh
mobile: 09414253025
email: barefootcollege@gmail.com
My name is Jokhim Chacha. I belong to the famous Barefoot College at Tilonia in Rajasthan. People here may not be as resourceful as the people in other parts of our country, but we understand well the power of mobile technology. We run operate and a community radio station that enables everyone in our rural district to stay connected with the latest information.

People can listen; call our dedicated helpline or SMS us using their mobile phone.
Our community radio, powered by solar energy, covers 15 villages, reaches over 100,000 listeners, and is growing day by day. Every day, I keep track of the local Panchayat news, the weather and enjoy listening to popular folk music in the evenings.
Mahila Shakti

Use of mobile and its diverse functionalities as a literacy and financial educational tool that empower the most disadvantaged sections of rural women.
producer: Human Welfare Association
location: Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
year: 2011
language: English
url: www.hwavaranasi.in

name: Dr. Rajani Kant
mobile: 09415304759
email: hwa@rediffmail.com
My name is Vijay Lakshmi. I am a Dalit woman who weaves handloom sarees in Varanasi, UP. I always dreamt of being a teacher and helping other people but I studied only until the fourth standard. When my husband died a few years ago, I was left all alone. I needed to find a new job which paid more, so I could take better care of my family of six.

I joined the local Mahila Shakti education programme, run by the Human Welfare Association for women like me to help improve skills sets using mobile technology. This dynamic programme is empowering artisan women through 100 self-help groups in 40 villages around Varanasi.
This programme taught me how to read, write, do basic math and have fun at the same time. I have even learnt to use the internet through my mobile phone to access important information. A new window of opportunity has opened.

I now understand my basic rights as a Dalit Woman. And today, I am using my new skills to teach other Dalit women what I have learnt and how mobile technology can make a difference to their lives.
TERComms

A mobile-based monitoring system that tracks the accuracy of important social protection delivery services that are entitled to the poor.
producer: WOSCA
location: Keonjhar, Odisha
year: 2008
language: English
url: www.wosca.org

name: Mansingh Durga Prasad
      Nayak
mobile: 09415304759
email: bubun@wosca.org
My name is Hariyan. I belong to the tribal community in the Keonjhar district in Odisha, one of India’s poorest states. More than 77% of the tribal community lives below the poverty line.

Due to lack of information, many of us are unaware of our status and rights to benefits from the public distribution system and pension schemes. Over the years, people from my community have been financially exploited and intentionally excluded from these government facilities.

One day, we had members from the Women’s Organisation for Socio-Cultural Awareness (WOSCA) visit us. With a
mobile EFFECT
mobile-based monitoring system, WOSCA tracks the accuracy of important social protection delivery services that are entitled to my community using mobiles. This innovative technology called TERComs helps volunteers to send SMS & MMS based reports on scheduled distribution dates to a central server. The server then generates reports, tracking the vital government schemes and is shared with government officials and village communities for full transparency.
Until now, TERComs has impacted 87,000 families whose access to public services has increased. 1234 community organisations are accessing information and receiving entitlements via TERComs. I am just one of those from my community who is aware of his rights and services from the government.
Meeting on Social Security Entitlements
PDS, Pension, MGNREGA and NFBS
under Mobile for Social Goods initiatives

(Replication of Tracking livelihood Entitlements of
Communities using Mobile Phone Based MIS in Odisha)

Implemented By: SCA Keonjhar, Odisha

Place : Harichandrapur
Date :
MHSM Toolkit

Provides important customized health information to pregnant and lactating women through mobile phones.
producer: Datamation Foundation Charitable trust
location: Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh
year: 2008
language: English
url: www.datamationfoundation.org

name: Chetan Sharma
mobile: 9811039482
email: csharma@nda.vsnl.net.in
26-year-old Ruby lives in Katari, a rural village in the district of Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. Like many other women in her neighbourhood, she is soon to have a baby. Access to proper medical care in this remote area is very limited. This means that many pregnant women like Ruby are unable to get the medical help that they need. More often than not, health problems can result with complications in the pregnancy.

One day, a health worker from the Datamation Foundation Trust visited Ruby in her village. She encouraged Ruby to sign up for Maternal Health Services on Mobile (MHSM) - a valuable information service for pregnant women using mobile technology. MHSM
provides Ruby with 2 valuable SMS alerts every day in her local language for the entire duration of her pregnancy. Ruby has now learning about nutrition, vaccines, necessary ante-natal care, and much more. A health worker also visits her weekly at home throughout the 40 weeks to check she is in maintains her good health throughout her pregnancy.

Today, Ruby is blossoming and looks forward to a healthy and timely delivery of her new baby, very soon.
Livelihoods 360

Supports market development in agriculture, resulting in an increase in income for the marginalized farmers involved in coffee plantation.
producer: Naandi Foundation
location: Araku Valley, Andhra Pradesh
year: 2010
language: English
url: www.naandi.org

name: Sunder Synis
mobile: 9885457056
email: jsunder@naandi.org
Nestled in the breathtaking eastern coastline of Andhra Pradesh, lies the majestic Araku valley. Somewhere deep inside Araku, Indu, a tribal coffee planter lives, loves and labors in his coffee plantation, like all others in the valley. Indu and his friends did not know much modern farming and continued to use traditional methods.

One day, Indu became a member of a cooperative society that works with the Naandi Foundation’s Livelihoods 360 programme and everything changed for the better. Using mobile technology, the Livelihoods 360 programme shared secrets of how to grow the best coffee and provided valuable market related updates on his crop.
With the support of localized SMS and voice alerts, this helped Indu understand, document and standardize the coffee making process so he could produce the best coffee crop. It also connected Indu directly to the market place, which helped him make more money. Today, Indu’s passion for growing coffee continues and his family enjoy a better, brighter future.
Mera Swasthya Meri Awaaz

Empowering maternal women by returning them their right to a free governmental health facility through customised message and IVR.
producer: Sahayog Society for Participatory Rural Development
location: Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh
year: 2010
language: English, Hindi, Bhojpuri
url: www.sahayogindia.org

name: Jashodhara Dasgupta
mobile: 09910203477
email: jashodhara@sahayogindia.org
My name is Pinki. I am 6 years old and I live in a village near Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh. I have two older sisters and younger brothers, who are twins and were born just a while back. Our village is far from the city and the nearest hospital is over an hour away. We can’t afford a car, so when I was born, my mother couldn’t go the hospital. I was born in the field, where my mother was working, looking after the harvest in the final month of her pregnancy. My mother says that she experienced a lot of pain giving birth to my sisters and me and there were some complications. She didn’t have the money to see a doctor, and life continued.
Thankfully, this time, when my mother was expecting my baby brothers, someone in the village suggested to my mom that she call the My Health My Voice (MHMV) helpline.

Through this helpline, my mother learnt about her right to free maternal health care provided by the government.
My Health My Voice helpline also uses an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system in the local language, to report illegal fees that may be charged for accessing critical care.

With one call, this helpline has meant that my younger brothers were delivered in a safe and healthy environment and my mother was looked after, too.