Mobile Vaani
- A Social Media Network for the Bottom of the Pyramid -

A QUICK PEEK INTO DISCUSSIONS ON MOBILE VAANI

FEBRUARY 2013

VOICE OF THE VILLAGE
What is the Mobile Vaani network?

- Network of voice-based community media stations in rural and suburban India
- Mobile radio
  - Interactive radio over phone technology pioneered by Gram Vaani
  - Jharkhand Mobile Radio: Over 2000 calls per day, 20000+ callers
- Community radio
  - Gram Vaani’s GRINS automation system enhances community engagement over FM community radio
  - UP, MP, Uttarakhand, Haryana, AP, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan
Mobile Vaani’s flagship deployment: Jharkhand Mobile Vaani

- Mobile phone based platform for crowd-sourcing local information from remote villages, and making it available for anyone to access over phone.

Village groups call into a toll-free number to tell stories and experiences.

The submitted stories are validated and moderated by a trained editor.

Validated stories are published online.

Validated stories are also published for access on same toll-free number.

Content on Mobile Vaani

- 90% community sourced content
  - Local news
  - Interviews and informational services
  - Opinion on topical issues
  - Guided discussions and campaigns
  - Grievances and feedback on government schemes
  - Cultural artifacts including folk songs and poems

- Propagation through word-of-mouth and field partners
  - Gram Swaraj Abhiyan
  - Public Health Resource Network
  - Leads Trust
  - JSACS
  - Red Cross Society
  - PRADAN
A barometer to assess the delivery of government schemes

**Chilga panchayat, Jamua Block, Giridih:** Electricity distribution infrastructure funded under RGVY two years back but no power provided as yet.

**Mahuda panchayat, Baghmara Block, Dhanbad:** Only 1 month ration disbursed with 4 months pending, villagers go on a protest and call the MO for inspection.

**Chauda panchayat, Kukar Block, Saraikela-Kharsawan:** MNREGA job-cards distributed to 80 year olds and also to 14 year olds. Families have 2-3 jobcards each.
Successful projects and community initiatives

Migration: Labourers saved from middlemen

Jaisaran Puri from Bhandaridah, Bokaro called to share with the listeners of JMR, how the labourers were saved from the hands of middleman. He said that, 1500 hundred labourers were being taken by the middleman from Ranchi to Tripura. In the history of Jharkhand for the first time such a huge number of migrants were saved, among which males, females and children were also there. These people were taken by the middleman to make them bricklin workers and pay very less wages. He said that this news is a happy news for the state as so many people were saved for the live of hardship and torture.

Feb. 2, 2013, 8:17 p.m. | Location: Bokaro,Bhandaridah,Not Known | Tags: migration campaign

Bhandaridah Block, Bokaro: 1500 people were being taken to Tripura by middlemen to work as brick labourers. Highlights the need for MNREGA-like schemes to create livelihoods

Chaita Panchayat, Dhanbad:
Villagers have since the last 5 years regularly been creating checkdams during the monsoons to divert water to their lands. The water table has risen and it does not dry up as quickly now. A great example of community driven initiatives to protect the environment

Farkeshwar Mahto's response on Water Campaign

Nov. 19, 2012, 3:37 p.m. | Location: Dhanbad,Topchanchi,Kherabera Village, Chaita Panchayat | Tags: water MNREGA PNW campaign

Mobile Vaani: Technology. Media. Development
Research and recommendations

- Instrument the state of water bodies in the villages. Findings with data from 30 panchayats
  - MNREGA has indeed reached remote areas and funded several works
  - But due to bad engineering and maintenance problems, none of the works are being used for livelihoods via aqua culture or irrigation
  - Recommendation sent to several district authorities

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<td>Number of water bodies per Panchayat?</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<td>Drinkable water?</td>
<td>None. Used for bathing, washing clothes, water for animals</td>
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<td>Were some water bodies funded under MNREGA?</td>
<td>Yes, each village had at least one MNREGA funded body. Around 30% of the water bodies had been funded under MNREGA and RRR</td>
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<td>Renovations required?</td>
<td>Yes. But no maintenance funds had been sanctioned by the government</td>
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<td>Used for pisciculture? Agriculture?</td>
<td>A few small scale setups for pisciculture, but none of the bodies are perennial and hence <strong>not suitable</strong> for pisciculture and agriculture</td>
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Awareness and information

- Spread of HIV/AIDS
  - Awareness limited, but people willing to discuss prevention methods openly
  - Recognize the importance of open discussions to tackle this problem

Dr Virendra Singh, Project Director, JSACS spoke to JMR and shared with the listeners of JMR various information related to AIDS. He said that AIDS is an infection not a disease. HIV is transmitted by three main ways: unprotected sexual contact, exposure to infected body fluids or tissues, and from mother to child during pregnancy, delivery, or breastfeeding. With medical technology improving very fast these days, the child in the womb of the mother can be protected from being infected. WHO has a programme of awareness called ABC, which means A for abstinence, B for being faithful to your partner and C for condom, as explained by NACO. Person infected by AIDS can stay healthy by regular treatment and proper lifestyle. He said one should have a positive attitude towards life even after being infected by AIDS, as AIDS doesn’t mean the end of life.

Dr Virendra Singh, Project director
JSACS: About the ABC approach to avoid AIDS, infection Vs disease, and government run ICTC centers for free ART treatment and medicines
Topical discussions

**Jharkhand, state wide:** Month long para-teachers strike paralyzes all schools across the state. Demand for permanent positions and increased salaries. Parents rebut with accusations of negligence of duty. Teachers send their petition to the government. District administrators respond with their point of view. A great example of multi-stakeholder discussions on the platform.

**Chatra:** Witch hunting is still prevalent. How do we put an end to such myths?

**Simaria block, Chatra district:** People tell their stories with migration, sing poems, and discuss how to stop migration.
Resource exploitation

Baghmara block, Danbad: Locals report illegal mining in progress in Baghmara. Verified by local NGO.

Nawadih block, Bokaro: Due to extensive mining, water streams have been diverted and houses are developing cracks.

Bermo block, Bokaro: Recent mining accident leads to deaths. No response from authorities causes great agitation among the people.
Folk songs and poems

Interesting mimicry of Mithun!

A poetry on the woes of migration

Migration: A poetry by Prem Kumar Parmeshwar from Surat

A poem for our mothers
Upcoming discussion topics

- Cash transfer
  - Is it working in your village? Working for YOU?

- Financial inclusion
  - Options available for loans and savings? Are SHGs functional?

- Maternal mortality
  - Experiences and stories from your village… how can this be improved?

- School meals programs
  - Do your children get hot food? Nutritious food?

- Suggest more topics, more questions, and help us work on these issues

Mobile Vaani: Technology. Media. Development
Rural communities are segmented on the basis of gender, caste, and power equations. Very hard to break out of these vicious structures.

Access to community driven media forums can help

- Contextual sharing of stories within communities improves their awareness of rights and entitlements, more than external forms of communication.
- Free and transparent medium improves accountability by holding institutions and service providers answerable, which helps in better delivery of services.
About Gram Vaani
About us

- **Vision:** “Build citizen-driven media platforms that give communities a voice of their own”

- **Working at the interface of**
  - Technology | Media | Development

- **Strategy**
  - Evolve synergies between communities, the government, large development institutions, and media agencies

- We work all across India with more than 30+ non-profit organizations, and now in Africa too

- **Awards and recognition**
  - mBillionth award 2012
  - Rockefeller Challenge 2012
  - Finalists in Vodafone Mobiles for Good 2012
  - 10 most innovative companies in India (*by Fast Company*)
  - Economic Times Power of Ideas 2010
  - Manthan Award 2009
  - Knight News Challenge 2008

Mobile Vaani: Technology. Media. Development
Our projects

1. **Goonj.Net: Social media for the BoP**
   - Voice-based social media platform, currently in Jharkhand

2. **GRINS: Automation system for community radio stations**
   - 32 deployments across 12 states in India, 6 deployments in Africa

3. **vApps: Community engagement tools**
   - Indian deployments: UP, Bihar, AP
   - International: Afghanistan, Pakistan

4. **FullCircle: Social audit tools for communities**
   - A voice and SMS based community audit framework to review the performance of public services
Thanks

Gram Vaani Community Media

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