Prakriye

Resource Centre for ICT-enabled, People-Centric Social Change

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are an integral part of life today and their creative potential for social change cannot be overlooked. In India, access to ICTs is still far from ideal; it remains extremely unequal geographically, economically and socially. This prevents a majority of the population from exercising their rights and achieving full citizenship – a big inhibitor of human development in a holistic sense.

Prakriye, a resource centre, based in Mysore, is working towards bridging this gap through people-centric approaches that aim at socio-political empowerment. *Prakriye* builds and advocates local ICT solutions that work for disadvantaged communities. In the past decade, the organisation has worked with a variety of stakeholders – community organisations, women's groups, other NGOs, local government institutions, etc., to bring valued information to marginalised communities.

Replicable Models

The essential qualities of our strategies are sustainability and replicability. Social change processes have to be nurtured and be scalable for impact. Our direct outreach efforts in Mysore have resulted in collaborations with seven *Gram Panchayats* and touched the lives of 500 women from 40 women's collectives and 56 elected women leaders in the district.

We have cultivated a wide network of like-minded organisations, within the state and outside. *Vikasana* in Mandya, *Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan* in Bhuj, ANANDI in Gujarat, Communication for Development and Learning in Bangalore, Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement in Mysore, are partners taking our vision forward, through their interventions.

Catalytic Action

Prakriye's vision is achieved by addressing the agenda of citizenship. We support people's endeavour to become agents of their own change through ICT pathways.

- Setting up ICT centres for access to public information and entitlements
- Using community media information sharing and local debates
- Making the voices of the marginalised heard through community radio
- Creating community-owned data through GIS mapping
- Enabling local community groups to connect and share through mobile networks
- Training youth from disadvantaged backgrounds in using technology for civic leadership
- Making elected representatives and *Panchayats* more responsive to local needs through ICT capabilities
- Providing technological expertise to other development organisations

Voices of Change

Work done at the field center has enriched the lives of many. Below are the voices nurtured at *Prakriye.*

Prakriye-mentored Infomediary Becomes EWR

Having worked as 'infomediary', or the manager of *Prakriye's* village information centre, one enterprising young woman has gained the confidence and support of the people, to become an elected representative of the *taluk panchayat,* to champion for women's rights.

"I find the work of IT for Change and Prakriye unique in that it covers the wide canvas of feminist organising for citizenship rights..."

Ms. Subhalakshmi Nandi, Programme Specialist: Women's Economic Empowerment, UN Women

Mahila Gram Sabha Facilitates Provision of Amenities

Prakriye's ICT interventions have galvanised women's participation in several village assemblies – a critical public space they didn't frequent previously. Women have interacted with local government authorities, successfully negotiating for personal and public amenities – construction of toilets, drainage maintenance, subsidies for housing, cowsheds, etc.

"After watching the film on the Panchayat Committees, I felt that we should not blindly go to Gram Sabhas, but be aware of our entitlements and ask questions about them and get them"

Parvati, a community member

Adolescent Girls Become Filmmakers!

Kishori Chitrapata, Prakriye's project funded by UNICEF, addressed the learning needs of out-of-school adolescent girls through innovative use of videos and photos for promoting critical thinking about their social and cultural environment.

"Having the camera in my hands was so thrilling. Earlier my mother used to say I have to learn to cook because I have to get married. I don't want to marry yet. I am a photographer. Why can't I also get a job like my brother?"

Manjula, a participant of *Kishori Chitrapata*

GIS Mapping Enables Collective Action in Gujarat

Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghathan (KMVS), a partner organisation in Gujarat, followed *Prakriye's* example to do GIS mapping of food grain allocation in 42 *panchayats.* The discrepencies made women come together and challenge the corruption in the public distribution system.

"As a project partner, they have continuously provided knowledge and have helped KMVS integrate newer ways of adapting to ICTs. So in Prakriye, we met not only partners, but great friends for life."

Preeti Soni, Executive Director, KMVS

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Prakriye is the field resource centre of IT for Change, an NGO with UN ECOSOC accreditation.
Donations to Prakriye are eligible for tax deductions under Section 80G.