

Click and check out development work in India's villages

How many villages does India have? What kind of developmental work is going on there? And are the local politicians there doing enough? Soon you can find out by clicking on www.638387.org!

An initiative of IndianNGOs.com, a platform of NGOs working in different spheres, www.638387.org focuses on the tiny hamlets of the country - all the 638,387 of them.

'IndianNGOs.com was a big platform in which NGOs, nearly 35,000 of them, working on a range of issues were registered. But our latest initiative focuses on the villages. What are the NGOs, MPs and corporates doing at the village level - that's what the website highlights,' Sanjay Bapat, managing director of IndianNGOs.com, told IANS.

'Using this website will be like using the Right to Information Act. Sitting just about anywhere you can find out details about the growth rate of a village in any district. If you want, you can even volunteer to help by getting in touch with the NGO concerned ,' he added.

So if you want to know what kind of work - in any field, say education, health or environment - is being done in the Dibrugarh district of Assam, what the challenges there are and the contact of the local MP, it's all there at the click of a button.

'The basic information is being given to us by the collector of each district while other facts like the literacy rate, population and male-female ratio is from the census data.

'About 300-350 collectors from districts spoke about the societal and developmental changes taking place in their areas,' Bapat said.

The website, which is still under construction and will be updated as and when more information comes in, will be launched May 19.

'We are also in touch with corporates like the HSBC bank which has its branches in many villages, rural BPOs and the WWF India in supplying us with information and updating our database. In return we give them free publicity on our website,' he said.

Bapat is now in touch with MPs and political parties so that they put the amount of funds used in a particular place over a particular project on the website.

'This would work in two ways. During elections this would help the MP gain positive publicity and keep the public abreast of the proper utilization of funds. I am in touch with Jyotiraditya Scindia and some other MPs in this regard.

'We will start with the use of funds in various spheres of work by late Thane MP Prakash Paranjpe on the website,' Bapat said.

The website also aims at helping communities cope with their region-specific challenges by emulating other communities. They plan to upload a notice board in which a community can write their challenges to which anyone can reply.

'Perhaps one of the most exciting features of this website would be if our talks with Google come through successfully.

'They will then give us their technical support and the website, in a way, will function the way Google earth functions now - showing three-dimensional satellite images of places,' Bapat said.

Azera Rahman (© IANS / India eNews)