

Connecting Generations:

Creation of Web based Virtual Communities for
Imparting Formal and Informal Education
to the Underprivileged Children by Elderly Community

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Connecting Generations

“Solidarity between generations at all levels—in families, communities and nations—is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages.”



- Connecting generations implies **more social inclusion** among old and young
- **Older members in a joint family system act as teachers** who guide the young members to choose correct path in life and also try to ingrain in them values, modes and norms of the society.
- **Multigenerational families** i.e. number of generations living together is important for the proper development of a young individual and for restoration of the traditional culture.



Breakdown of intergenerational ties



*In developed and
developing nations*

Disvaluing of elders in society



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Current Status of Elderly in Society

- Elderly are **withdrawing** from being active members of society
- This has led to feeling of **social isolation** among them
- They are **passively active** which means spending time watching TV, listening to music etc.
- Elderly of today do not engage in **active activities** much which means going out to do work, purposive social interaction, community work, etc.
- Unaware** of their productive role in society



Productive ageing

**organisation
of lifestyle**

**Senior's active
participation in
nation's socio-
economic
improvement**

**ensure they are
contributors
rather than
dependants**



Redefining Role of Elderly in Society

- Elderly can feel **more socially included** by way of interacting with younger generation vice- versa.
- They can play an important role in **contributing to the knowledge capital** of the society, by imparting their wisdom and knowledge to those deprived of it.



Elderly as Knowledge Providers

Wellbeing of a community demands expansion of knowledge based development



- **Social Inclusion** can be achieved through education
- Empowerment through education must start from a **grass-root level** (education to underprivileged children) using an Internet based teaching model
- Educated senior citizens can act as **remote teachers** and grandparents to nurture the youth with their wisdom



Virtual communities

- Also called **online community** reflects the social impact of information and communications technology (ICT) **changing the architecture of interaction.**
- Consist of **geographically separated members**, sometimes grouped in small clusters or individually interacting with each other having common interest through Internet.
- Virtual communities are online social networks in which people with common interests, goals, or practices interact to **share information** and knowledge, and engage in social interactions.



Virtual community facilitating proper learning environment



- Trust, social interaction and mutual reciprocity via online community **create an interactive environment for children.**
- Lack of adequate, quality teachers in rural areas is a **threat to quality of education of the underprivileged children of the society.**
- **Elderly** who are generally less mobile and more enthusiastic and knowledgeable can act as **remote teachers** to these students via ICT leading to enhancement of quality of education of the children and improvement in quality of life of the elderly.



Objectives of the study

- *To enhance productive wellbeing of elderly and quality of education of underprivileged children* by connecting both the generations by enhancing social capital via virtual community.
- *To architect a social media based virtual community using web 2.0 technologies like Skype, Google Plus Hangout* to assimilate a group of isolated but educated elderly from parts of urban Kolkata to disseminate formal and informal knowledge to a group of underprivileged children from remote rural areas of West Bengal.
- *To train interested educated elderly* with the use of these web based social media tools.
- The elderly teachers would in turn form a *virtual staffroom* where they would interact among one another.



Role of Elderly as Knowledge Providers using internet based web2.0 technology

- **To share wisdom** of elderly in form of informal knowledge to young generation.
- ICT has potential for **developing flexible learning** approaches for both generations
- A Social Media Platform through Web 2.0 technology help in **‘Connecting generations’**



Empirical Study

- A study on Productive well being of 100 educated elderly from urban parts of Kolkata has been conducted.
- 20 of them have shown keen interest in getting trained in social media tools and ultimately teach underprivileged children online
- 10 of them are already been trained and have started teaching children online



Our Social Experiment at a Tribal School

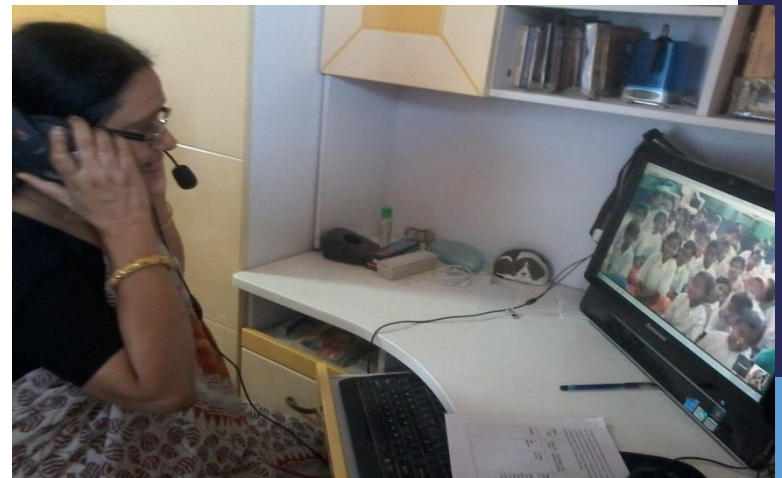
- We are aiming at improving quality of education in a tribal residential school named **Ma Sarada Sishu Tirtha** in remote area of **Krishnanagar, West Bengal** using Internet based remote teaching methods.
- **Two of the trained and experienced elderly** are teaching English and Mathematics to class 1 students from the school. One elderly is engaged in **grand-parenting** these children online
- **‘Abheda Foundation’** an NGO is participating in our venture of remote teaching



Learning Methods in social knowledge management platform

1. Curriculum based teaching (formal education)-

- Elderly teachers are provided training in using digital *content from free cyber space* in the web based social media platform to impart curriculum based education to underprivileged children online thus forming a virtual community
- The content comprise of PowerPoint presentations, video based material, interactive learning material (games).



Elderly teacher teaching Mathematics online



2. Supplementary based teaching



- Children who are already students of any school can avail the help of remote teachers (desirably elderly) as tuition/supplementary teachers through web 2.0 technologies.
- Elderly teachers are been trained to *provide online learning assistance (tution) to underprivileged children*



3. Grand-parenting (informal education)

- In the era of nuclear families, children can receive the affection, guidance and care that they deserve from their grandparents
- To fill in this void we would like to cultivate an environment where underprivileged children can get all that they are deprived of from our ‘Global Virtual Grandparents’.
- *Maintaining Intergenerational ties via knowledge management framework*



Effectiveness of internet based teaching

- Internet based 2.0 technology helps extending **quality education in inaccessible rural areas**
- To bring forth a **knowledge revolution** and spread education to the remotest corners of the country
- **Interactive learning process** through Internet based teaching



Need of elderly as remote teachers to underprivileged children

- **Lack of quality teachers and absenteeism** in schools of remote areas
- Educated and enthusiastic elderly can be **remote teachers** using internet based web2.0 technology to needy children
- **Proper training** to elderly would ensure quality teaching



Moving towards Connecting Generations

- The proposed model of creating a web based virtual community would bring together the two generations and ultimately enhance social capital formation.
- Internet based web 2.0 technology forming a purposive virtual community is a substitute to a participating community in the society.

