

**Internet Rights Human Rights Workshop**  
**DEF CIRC in partnership with Tarang NGO**  
**Kapashera, New Delhi**  
**July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Introduction**

Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) Communication Information Resource Centre (CIRC) and IMPACT team conducted the Internet Rights Human Rights (IRHR) at the CIRC in Kapashera, New Delhi on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The team of trainers from DEF area as follows:

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
1	Niki A. Shah	Country Research Coordinator - APC IMPACT
2	Rajat Kumar	Trainer - APC IMPACT
3	Pawas Suren	Trainer - APC IMPACT
4	Rahul Choudhary	Trainer-APC IMPACT
5	Bijo Abraham	Trainer-APC IMPACT
6	Monika Sharma	CIRC
7	Maubani Dutta	Trainer APC IMPACT

The team initially introduced the IRHR initiative and what it meant within the context of freedom of expression, both offline and online and particularly how individuals and communities behave and express offline and how it translates to online communication and behavior. It was explained that this workshop was meant to be interactive and that both the trainers and the participants were to learn from each other.

**Session 1: Deconstructing Internet Rights Human Rights (IRHR)**

In this session, the objective was to:

- Educate participants and raise their level of awareness about FoE as a basic human right and its applicability in the online sphere
- Encourage citizen journalism: The team of trainers encouraged the residents of Kapashera to share their issues and challenges and specifically positive stories, ideas, acts that have influenced the community in some way. We also encouraged them to express themselves or share stories related to culture, art, language, religion, history, politics, medicine food, and other community members, as part of FoE

This was achieved by first engaging a group activity to set a context about internet and deconstruct its meaning and also deconstructing their perceptions, views, experiences and observances around basic human rights. In this, we specifically asked participants: **What does the word internet mean to you? What are the purposes, benefits, challenges, or negative effects they can think of?**

In response to this question, the majority of the participants indicated that they used the internet, mostly on mobile phones, or in the newly established CIRC to search information on Google, book rail tickets, conducts net banking, play video games, download songs and movie for

entertainment purposes. Students said that they used the internet to seek education related tools and information and job seekers said that they looked for job opportunities online.

Some of the other responses received are as follows:

- Online shopping
- Express our problem through FB
- Filling forms
- Online recharge
- Stay abreast of current affairs
- online business, online banking, online marketing, and online shopping



## The next question focused on: **What are human rights?**

We received a range of responses from the participants which include the right to life, right to education, right to health, being able to find a job, taking care of the elderly people, and being able to communicate and interact with the local government to find solutions to existing problems within the Kapashera community.

Thereafter, we delved into what **freedom of expression** meant for the individuals and the community at large. At first, we received no responses from the participants. But, after few moments of silence, a participant, Bharti, spoke out.

She said that freedom of expression is an undeniable human right for each and every individual, specifically women in the community—in terms of being able to attain an education, have equal status with the man of the family and the household, being able to provide for a decent education for their children. She further stated that freedom of expression is necessary for any prosperous democracy to function and that every individual can and should express their opinions freely in a way that does not diminish one's dignity and ensures respect for all. In short, the opinion should be constructive to be sensitive and respectful to others opinions and views as valid opinions.

## **Do these human rights, particularly apply offline?**

Majority of the participants said that freedom of expression is a right that translates online, but are unaware of the legal parameters and implications in case of any violence. While some said that through the internet we can share videos and share our thoughts and can get solutions for the social problems, others were much knowledgeable about current affairs around FoE on Twitter like actor Salman Khan's twitter post on the hanging of Yakub Memon.



Although freedom of expression is a human right guaranteed by the Indian government, some participants felt that the right is denied in the Indian society in cultural and social ways. Moreover, other development priorities are more important for the participants since it is crucial to daily life:

- Poverty, unemployment, rent, and private school fees for children's education
- Food and sanitation and skills deficit

- Landlords are rude over the people who live in their houses at rent

## **Session II: Importance of ICT tools and internet access for FoE online**

In this session, we sought to inquire about ICT tools individuals accessed to go online. We screened the video of ICICI digital village in Akodara in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat. Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the ICICI Digital Village at Akodara in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat to the nation.

The ICICI Digital Village enables the people of Akodara to use technology in various aspects of life including banking, payments, education and healthcare among others. ICICI bank is digitizing school attendance and school records and implementing school management software in the village school. The bank is providing smart boards, integrating projector and computer at the school and the Anganwadi, with audio-visual digital content for classes 1 to 10. It will provide digital access to telemedicine via mobile or video conference, giving villagers access to medical expertise. The aim is also to create enabling infrastructure to make technology available, and access and disseminate information.

Some of the major questions were:

- Do you access the internet?
- What tools do you use to access the internet?
- Why do you access the internet?
- What don't you access on the internet? Why?
- What would you like to access on the internet?
- Do you use social media? And what are its purposes?
- How do you use social media to express yourself online?

Participants shared the following during this session:

### **Tools**

- Mobile
- Laptop
- Personal Computer
- Tablet
- Television
- Magazine and newspapers

### **Access social media**

- Facebook
- Google
- Gmail
- WhatsApp
- Hike
- We chat
- Line

- Skype
- You tube
- eBook
- Twitter

It is important to note that community radio or radio did not come up once during the entire workshop. It raises questions about the level of radio usage in Kapashera, if any.

### **Testimonials**

“This [IRHR Workshop] is a kind of unique initiative for the Kapashera community we are working in and since social media is a great tool of expression and reaching out to the world. I got some very positive responses from participants and this was one of the most liked activity at CIRC Kapashera.” **Pravin Kumar, Project Associate Tarang**