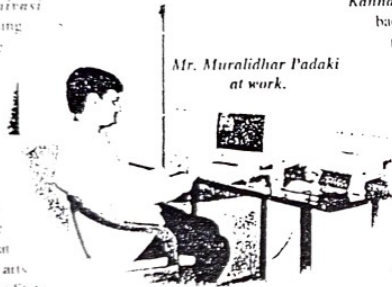


THE WORLD OF LOVE, LIFE AND LIVING OF BANGALORE

Do you remember the famous *Ghazal* sung by Pankaj Udhas which goes thus... "Chitti strong feeling for their home country and reminds them of their folks back home. Anything, however small will move them if it is Indian. Trying to make such people more at home is the PADAKI INTERNET VALUE, a part of the PADAKI Display Systems. This young group of entrepreneurs have ventured into a new way of communicating Indianism, to NRIs. They particularly target at the Non-Resident Kannadigas who stay abroad, far from their very own soil.

Mr. Muralidhar Padaki and Mr. Deepak Mavinkurve hit upon a novel idea of making such people feel at home. They brought out a home page in Kannada on the Internet. This home page deals with the happenings in Karnataka and keeps the ANTRASI Kannadigas informed of what is happening back home. Every day the dailies are thoroughly scanned and interesting pieces of news are picked up. A team works on matter more to make this page just and interesting. Just in the morning, the news they pick up is mainly on arts and cultural happenings in the State.



INNOVATION Kannada on Internet

The web site named mybangalore.com welcomes the surfer with the opener which reads thus - "The World Of Love, Life and Living Of Bangalore." This site which is four months old runs free of cost and can be accessed all over the world. The team has done a special page on the Kannada World, the Spastics Society, the MES College, which is the alma mater of Deepak and Murali. It also contains a profile of Prof. Parthasarathy who is a Dasa Sahitya Exponent and who travels round the world giving lectures on his subject. It carried a report on Prasiddha Foundation's two-day cultural, musical and dance extravaganza - Vijayotsava which went on at Hampi. It carries an introduction of the Kannada University at Hampi. It even exhibits paintings by Mr. Ravi Kumar Kasli.

Apart from the political, sports and economic news, it also highlights cultural, and literary happenings in Karnataka. The team worked hard and collected information on the State Budget which was put forth a month ago and uploaded the important points of the Finance Minister's speech. By 8:00 the very same evening, most of it was on-line.

The page carries profiles of famous personalities in cultural and literary fields like late

G.P. Rajarathnam, Dansense Prathibha Prahad, The Kannada kootas abroad who are interested in using their services contact the Padakis, who interact with the concerned persons and fix up their programmes abroad. In short, the Padakis act as the event managers of these personalities through the internet. There are many instances where enquiries have been sent regarding certain personalities like Manjula Gururaj, Hirannaiah etc.

Murali briefs us on the visions of their organisation, the prime one being - "Say it with pride, it's mybangalore". Murali opines that the feeling of oneness with the surroundings is necessary. "Attaching oneself to one's city, and to the values there is very important. A relationship should be nurtured." Keeping this in mind the Padaki team offers features and facilities on their site on a personal basis, to make the NRIs feel at home. There are many number of people who do a lot of plain - talking about Kannada. The Padakis have indeed done a commendable job for the sake of the beautiful language called 'Kannada'.

The other part of their vision is - "Info at your fingertips." In line with this vision, the Padakis have taken up a new project where in the NRIs get information about the services in Bangalore. They are starting off by making an exhaustive listing of all the rented premises in Bangalore for social and cultural functions. This home page will have the required information and can be accessed at the click of a button. Keeping in mind the different categories of surfers, this information can be surfed under different heads like area-wise, facility wise or money wise classifications which immensely help the NRIs who are in need of such information. Unlike usual directories and yellow pages, this medium also provides, along with the address, telephone, fax, even information like hall capacity, dining room capacity, road map, photographs of the hall, the charge and the key person to be contacted. This is a unique concept developed by the Padaki team and is going to be launched very soon.

The response the Padakis have received till now is tremendous. Deepak claims that not less than 2000 people visit the site every day. Not just this, they even have received many mails which offer them suggestions, congratulate them on their venture, wish them luck and express their happiness. They have preserved around 2000 such mails and say that it is very encouraging to go through these pieces of communication from people in Montreal, California, Singapore and the like.

The kind of response the organisation has evoked among the NRIs and the reputation they have made for themselves has given them recognition from many sides. The Manipal printers and publishers, who bring out the Kannada daily 'Udayavani' have entrusted the responsibility of uploading their publication on to the net daily, to the Padakis. It has been just over a month, but has received very good response. Udayavani is the first Kannada newspaper to have gone on to the net.

The Pai family from Sydney has sent a message to the Padakis which reads thus - "My mother is visiting from India to stay with us permanently in Australia, and access to Udayavani has helped her a lot in keeping in touch with the happening in South Kanara." One other message reads thus, "We are really enjoying the above home-page. You guys have done a tremendous job of publishing such a wonderful page. We just want to say THANK YOU." These are just a couple of messages received by the Padakis everyday.

When asked, how they earn, Deepak smiles and tells that from the past five months they have been having a great time and they plan to eventually create home pages on a commercial basis. He opines that internet is a great technology which should be used to help people and is not an end in itself. They are absolutely non-commercial right now and want to establish their credibility before getting down to business. Their Website address is <http://www.mybangalore.com>. Their address is - #81, 6th Main, 18th Cross, Malleshwaram Ph: 3340036.

The Bangalore