

A quick update from the field, while I have a few days of good internet connectivity. Sarbari and I have completed a couple of trips, one to Tripura (cultural preservation) and one to IIT Kharagpur (CPR related), and I am writing this from Gauhati where we are meeting with RGVN (Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Nidhi) about possible cooperative projects in the village environment.

In the meanwhile Madhav, Maha and the ASU team are busy working with Celtic on the SPECS system, and Maha and Tery have conducted their initial analysis on the survey data.

Tripura (Cultural Preservation):

The trip to Tripura saw us visit a large number of villages in search of the Alponas done during Makar Sankranti. We went of this trip with documentary film maker Premendu Bikas Chaki, and have collected a range of footage on the alponas and accompanying customs. Some of these pictures have been update on our website in the SPICH web page: <http://serviceplace.org/spich.html>

It is amazing how much effort goes into this creative alpona making effort, and no wonder that such practice is dying out in the fast-pace modern world. In addition to the Alponas, we spent considerable effort researching another part of Tripura's dying culture – the Jhum Cultivation cycle that used to be practiced by the local tribals, and the accompanying seasonal art and rituals. This might be another documentary project we consider undertaking in the future...

IIT Kharagpur (Health/ Medical – CPR):

The CPR instruction and booth setup (for two days) was done in conjunction with the annual KSHITIJ conference held in IIT Kharagpur. A Whatsapp group has been formed with the all the people that are active in the CPR (and related Medical Awareness) efforts in an around Kharagpur, and includes the St John Ambulance team that conducts regular awareness and training events in the region. We have also left a sensor equipped CPR dummy at Kharagpur (Electronics and Electrical Commun. Dept.) for further development work on producing an improved version for India. If this project is successful, we will be looking at similar efforts to design and implement devices like AEDs in India.

Gauhati RGVN:

It is an eye-opening experience coming to Gauhati and visiting the various rural oriented initiatives in Assam. RGVN is led by a good friend of mine from St. Edmunds School, Dr. Amiya Sharma. As usual, we started off with a comprehensive CPR training, including hands on training and training on the Celtic CPR app. We are planning to leave one of the sensor equipped mannequins here, for use in demonstrations and training in the local villages.

RGVN has just moved to a new building, and there is a tremendous need to set it up with the IT infrastructure to serve a 300+ organization of service professionals, and a much larger group of associated service workers in and around Assam. We had a short conversation with Ryan and Tarak at CSPL about it, but there is much more discovery to be done. Since this trip is still ongoing, we will have more to report on this later.

My apologies for being so out-of-contact during this visit – it is not often that we find good connectivity while out travelling. I am planning to be back in the States around April 10th, and Sarbari by the end of April. Bye, till then...