

# Moving Around the Himalayan

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22 December 2011

**GHANDRUK, 22 December 2011** – most of the villagers come to tele-centre at downtown to make a photo copy, they are not really aware of internet and internet phone, and other application of computer – stated by tel-centre officer. Tele-centre is now operated by an entrepreneur of the village since the tele-centre is not sustainable without commercial prospectus so the first owner of the tele-centre one of the schools has been handed over to the entrepreneur in contract basis. The tele-centre has been serving photocopy, phone, internet but occasionally, VOIP occasionally and other information to the villagers. Due to irregular internet service from service provider tele-centre is helpless to serve internet facility to the villagers. Such irregular consequences of services made villagers to lose the faith of the services provided by tele-centre and decreases the people coming for internet related services.

The officer of the tele-centre states “The cost of the internet provide by Mahabir Pun is expensive and it’s not affordable for villagers for home uses.” They have to pay two thousand rupees per month. If there is any other internet service providers which can provide in affordable price, other people can use it in their daily life but it is pity sad that no one has internet connection their home in Ghandruk except some of tourist hotels. It is also result of unaffordable price of internet in Ghandruk as lack of awareness of benefits from internet and its applications.

Ghandruk is in-front of Annapurna and Machhapuchhre himalayan to face the frozen windblown by the ranges, obviously it is moving around the himalayan to search potential possibility of e-government in future. Nepal telecom and Ncell have established their own tele-communication towers in Ghandruk town. Both of telecom service providers have provided internet facility via General Packet Radio Service (GPRS). The connection of internet is also sufficient to surf the web services. But, it is pity that only some of villagers are aware of GPRS services. Even school students from grade ten are not aware of internet via any media – computer or mobile phone. It seems they had not really needed such facility in their entire life yet though they are regular user of mobile. Most of the people in Ghandruk have not access of Information and Communication Technology infrastructure – internet, GPRS, mobile due to expensive services. One of students stated they are not aware of such facilities since even there is nothing about computer concepts and internet in their course curriculum and text book. He suggested including such knowledge and information into education materials for knowledge management in long run. They have forgotten even how to start computer since they have not gotten any opportunity for computer class since last class seven and eight, two years ago.

Most of the stakeholders and villagers have once voice on ICT infrastructure. That is effective and sufficient electricity in village. There is no national electricity grid whereas only micro hydro is serving electricity around the village. One of the government schools in Ghandruk draws their helpless situation suffered by lack of electricity that they cannot operate more than five computers among thirty computers at a time due to limited electricity power provided local micro hydro – called Hydro of Shaila. Nepal telecom and Ncell have also arranged alternate energy like solar panels for their own telecom repeater tower.

While we are on the way of talking with some student one of the students commented she knows some about the internet since one of her friends' usually surfed social media such as facebook. It seems increasing uses of social media is one of the way to let people know about the internet and its applications. Most of the students and people from cities – Hetauda, Naranghat, Bhairawa, and Pokhara – demonstrated their capacity of internet suffering with our dummy portal experiment. They did remarkable job on the portal using different modules – online citizenship application, online driving license, online passport, and online voting of e-government dummy application developed by Kathmandu University. In response they stated their experience of operation of portal is very simple and user friendly since they are familiar with internet and its consequences using internet application like facebook, email, and other websites.

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