



# Research Report Series

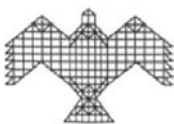
Research Report No. 1

## Connecting India

Virtual and Real Linkages between the Telugu  
Diaspora and their Home Region in Andhra Pradesh

Maudi Heerink

January 2012



National Institute of Advanced Studies  
Bangalore, India



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

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University of Amsterdam

# CONNECTING INDIA

## VIRTUAL AND REAL LINKAGES BETWEEN THE TELUGU DIASPORA AND THEIR HOME REGION IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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This research report is a slightly revised version of the author's Master's thesis in Contemporary Asian Studies, submitted to the Graduate School of Social Science, University of Amsterdam, in June 2011.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research report studies a specific group of Indian migrants -- the Telugu diaspora from the Guntur region -- and follows their online interactions with people residing in Guntur. The main purpose of the study was to chart out online networks that link the two groups and, using select case studies, to examine the developmental outcomes of these online networks in the 'real world'. The intercultural 'bridgespace diagram' is used as a method to visualise the range of websites that are visited, created and maintained by Telugu migrants and Telugus living in their home region, in order to study their connections. The main research question addressed is: How do Telugu migrants and Telugus living in their home region in India use the internet to create new ties or to strengthen existing ties, and to what extent is this use of 'virtual space' related to their activities in 'real space'?

## **PREFACE**

This research report is a revised draft of my Master's thesis based on the research I conducted in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India in 2011. I want to thank the people who inspired and motivated me during my research and writing phase. I am most heartily thankful to Prof. Mario Rutten, whose encouragement, patience and support from the initial to the final level enabled me to develop an understanding of the subject. His guidance helped me at all stages of research and during the writing phase. I would also like to thank the Provincial Globalisation research team and the people of the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) in Bangalore, in particular Prof. Carol Upadhy, for the encouragement and insightful comments she gave me as local supervisor during my stay in India. I thank Dr. Bhaskar Teegela for his guidance and for sharing his knowledge with me. My special thanks goes out to my fellow-student Wanda van Kampen, for sharing a room with me for three months in India, for the stimulating discussions, for all the support when we were working together to meet our deadlines and especially for all the fun we had in India.

Maudi Heerink

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet is providing a constructive platform for the Telugu diaspora to interact, not only among themselves and with other migrants in other parts of the world, but also with the Telugus back home (Bhat and Bhaskar 2000: 113).

This quote emphasises how the internet provides a possibility for migrants to not only communicate with other migrants, but also to interact with people living in their home region in India. The specific group discussed here, the Telugu diaspora, is a group of migrants originally from the south of India. This report focuses on connections via the internet between Telugu migrants and people in their home region.

The literature on the use of the internet by migrants discusses the different ways in which they make use of the internet, also often called the ‘virtual space’. One way in which they use this virtual space is by visiting websites in search of information about their home country, or more specifically about their home region. This type of information includes news items, information about music, films, etc. A second way in which migrants make use of virtual space is by visiting interactive websites like blogs, chat rooms and forums. On most of these websites they interact with other migrants. Research on these kinds of interactive web spaces has shown that in these interactions the migrants often discuss identity issues.

Both ways of utilising the internet deal with migrants who collect and share information and feelings about their home region with other migrants. Much is not known about connections in virtual space between migrants and those living in their home region. Neither do we have a good understanding of the relation between activities on the internet and activities in the ‘real’ world. This report deals with the way in which ties between migrants and the people living in their home region are created or strengthened in the so-called ‘bridgespace’. The concept ‘bridgespace’ stands for the space between the migrant and the home region and between the ‘virtual’ and ‘real’ spaces in which they operate.

The research report is based on a combination of web-based research on Telugu migrants and the people from their home region and empirical fieldwork on philanthropy organisations in Guntur district in the state of Andhra Pradesh in South India that receive donations from NRIs. Guntur district is characterised by a long history of international migration. Over the past few decades there has been large-scale movement of highly skilled people to Western countries, mainly to the USA. Especially since the last decade migrants from Guntur district are increasingly donating money back to their home region. Philanthropy organisations are actively raising funds from Telugu migrants’ contributions and the internet is



used to inform about projects and to encourage donations. Many of these organisations have been initiated by Telugu migrants, but an increasing amount of such projects are now being started by Telugus living in India. This report explores the whole range of websites utilised by Telugus and then focuses on websites that connect the Telugu diaspora and Telugus living in India.

Chapter 2 starts with an overview of the literature on the use of the internet by migrants as a platform to create ‘a sense of community’ and ‘a sense of identity’. Although not much is written on virtual links between migrants and their home region, a study describing the ‘intercultural bridgespace’ of Indian migrants and their home region is presented. This concept is also applied in the empirical part of this report.

In chapter 3, the research methodology is described and general information on the Telugu diaspora and Guntur district is presented. Following this, the outcomes of the web-based research on Telugu websites and the empirical fieldwork on diaspora philanthropy organisations are discussed in chapters 4, 5, and 6. In chapter 4 the whole range of Telugu webspaces used by Telugu migrants as well as by Telugus in India is described. Chapter 5 further analyses websites that are created to inform about philanthropic activities and encourage migrants to donate. Chapter 6 subsequently discusses the active role of Telugus in India in creating these websites. Exploring these issues can tell us more about the impact of virtual spaces on the changing ties between migrants and people from their home country.

## **2. TRANSNATIONALISM AND CYBERSPACE**

The lives of many migrants have been influenced by the quick development of communication technology. This has turned them into more 'transnational' people, as these technologies enable migrants to maintain close ties or re-strengthen ties with their places of origin (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1). Transnational migrants can be described as migrants who 'construct and reconstitute their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society' (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1995: 48). Scholars of transnational migration argue that, due to these changes, the lives of migrants should no longer be studied by merely looking within the boundaries of the host country.

As the lives of many migrants have become more transnational, the meaning of the term 'diaspora' has changed accordingly (Navarrete and Huerta 2006: 1). In the academic field, 'diaspora' used to refer to 'the dispersion from one place to another with a permanent settlement in a host society by adopting a new language, culture and lifestyle' (Sahoo 2006: 285). This meaning however, no longer prevails. In current-day literature the term 'diaspora' refers to those migrants who remain aware of their origin and identity and thereby maintain varying degrees of linkages with their mother country, although living permanently in the host countries (Soni and Soni 2006: 272).

In the academic field of transnational migration, the impact of the internet on the lives of transnational migrants has received quite some attention (Panagakos and Horst 2006: 111). The following section explains important issues on 'migrants in cyberspace' that have been studied and discussed by scholars from various disciplines.

### **2.1 Migrants in cyberspace**

During the last decade the internet has become a central component in the lives of many migrants. For migrants who have moved to distant places and live in unfamiliar surroundings, the internet can have a huge impact on their lives as it can 'reduce separation through space and time' (Mitra 2003: 6). Ways in which migrants use the internet have been studied widely. A large number of these studies are focused on the Indian diaspora. This could be due to the fact that Indian migrants are relatively comfortable with new computer technologies (Adams and Ghose 2003: 415). Important to mention is that the focus actually is mainly on 'a part of the Indian diaspora' as most studies are restricted to the migrants who moved to Western countries, predominantly to the United States (Gajjala 2008: 7). The studies discussed in this section also

mainly focus on the Indian diaspora in cyberspace, added with findings from studies on diasporas from other parts of the world.

The issues discussed in most of these studies focus on ways in which migrants use the internet to interact with other migrants to contest and share their cultural values (Skop and Adams 2009: 127). The studies also show how their practices in cyberspace can create a 'sense of community' and a 'sense of identity' (2009: 131). A study on a group of Indian migrants living in the United States shows that some Indian migrants use information and communication technologies for the purpose of 'virtual gathering'. The internet in this context can create a 'sense of togetherness' and it offers a 'space' where migrants can exchange information with each other (2009: 132).

The Indian migrants participating in this study by Skop and Adams were divided into two user groups and questioned through an online survey. The people in the first user group regularly visited India-oriented websites, in contrast to the people in the second user group, who never visited such websites. The study showed that the 'non-visitors' of India oriented websites often remembered India as an 'India that was frozen in time' after they migrated to the USA. The group that did visit India-oriented websites were more supportive of cultural preservation as they 'actively created a more dynamic conceptualisation of Indian culture' (Skop and Adams 2009: 143). These findings showed that visiting India-oriented websites influenced migrants' emotional ties with their home country. It also emphasised, however, that this use of the internet can have consequences on the migrant's position in the host country. Indian migrants who visit ethnically oriented websites often seem to 'resist the force of assimilation and they maintained values and beliefs distinct from the mainstream American culture' (2009: 142).

The use of the internet by migrants can be studied by directly questioning the users, but another possibility is to study the activity and the content of the websites. This methodology was chosen for a study on Filipino migrants and their use of cyberspace, in which an online newsgroup (soc.culture.filipino) was analysed daily for a period of two years. The users of this newsgroup, Filipino migrants living in the USA, mainly visited this website to discuss identity issues. On most of the forums in the newsgroup the visitors discussed the issue of what it means to be a 'real Filipino' (Ignacio 2005: 9). The analysis of the discussions showed that among the Filipino migrants, multiple images of the 'authenticity of a Filipino' existed. Studying discussions on these kinds of interactive websites can give us more insight on the ways in which 'diasporic identities' are constantly being contested (2005: 55).

This process of the continuous reshaping of identities on the internet can affect the daily lives of migrants in their host countries. A related study focusing on a specific website concluded that websites can function as 'discursive comfort zones' in which migrants can speak safely and

for themselves (Mitra 2005: 383). This study examines an NRI website called Non-Resident Indian Online (NRIOL; [www.nriol.com](http://www.nriol.com)). It emphasises that the open character of the internet offers a 'cultural space where they are able to represent themselves' (2005: 379). The internet therefore, can help to 'empower the marginal' which, as a consequence, can transform the real life experiences as well. The study concludes that 'producing and sustaining identity in the virtual can make it possible to better negotiate identity issues in the real life' (2005: 368).

In order to further theorise the impact that interactions in the 'virtual world' can have on people's lives in the 'real world', it is important to first understand how this new 'virtual space' and existing 'real space' are related to each other. The following section examines several 'notions of space' that have been discussed in earlier literatures, to provide insight into the relation between virtual and real spaces.

## **2.2 Changed notions of space**

Nowadays, the presence of the internet in everyday life seems to be taken for granted in developed countries and increasingly in developing countries. The enormous transformations in societies, caused by information and communication technologies during the last fifteen years, almost seem to be forgotten (Mitra 2003: 1). One of these transformations - that is caused by the invention of the World Wide Web - is people's 'notions of space'. After the emergence of the internet, scholars have divided the concepts of 'society' and 'technology' into two different spaces: 'real spaces' and 'virtual spaces'. In the beginning, the 'virtual space' was perceived by scholars in a similar way as the 'real space'. Ziauddin Sardar for example, compared real and virtual space and argued that 'cyberspace only provides a surrogate for community, because communities are shaped by a sense of belonging to a place, a geographical location, by shared values, by common struggles, by tradition and history of location and cyberspace provides none of these things' (Sardar 1996: 29, in Skop and Adams 2009: 128).

Not long after the internet was introduced, however, this division between real and virtual spaces was heavily criticised. The critique was that understanding the real and the virtual as two different spaces creates a 'dualistic worldview' and 'conceptually dividing society from technology, human from machines, reduces the power to understand and affect both technology and society' (Skop and Adams 2009: 129). Other scholars argued that dividing the virtual and the real is a 'false binary' (Gajjala 2008: 38) and that holding virtual and real communities apart is unsustainable because online networks always have stakes in real-life communities. The relation between these two spaces should be seen as interwoven: 'real communities are made up of group practices, discourses, and structures and virtual communities likewise are made up of group practices and discourses fully embedded in offline community formations' (2008: 44).

Several scholars have pleaded for a new kind of literacy to understand what virtual space is. Ananda Mitra compares interpretation of the virtual space with perception of real space and argues that the virtual should be interpreted differently. He argues that virtual space does not exist, but can only be interpreted: 'The meaning of the space is not produced by the physical process of touching and smelling but by the interpretative process of negotiating through the texts that produce the place' (Mitra 2003: 4).

In this real versus virtual discourse Mitra goes one step further by not only criticising earlier notions of space, but also calling for a new conceptualisation. He emphasises that individuals and institutions that are beginning to embrace the virtual space often find themselves 'dwelling in a synthetic world made up at the intersection of the real and the virtual' (2003: 1). In this 'duality of existence' both the real and the virtual can transform as they influence each other (2003: 1). He calls this 'the process of synthesis', in which one cannot exist without the other and where we constantly live in both. This process of synthesis produces a new space that he argues should be called a 'cybernetic space' (Mitra and Schwartz 2001: 15).

In sum, the notion of space has changed from understanding the real and the virtual as two separate spaces to the notion that both the real and the virtual can transform as they influence each other. The virtual for example, cannot be experienced without being physically grounded in the real and one needs a 'real' tool, a computer with an internet connection, in order to enter the virtual space.

Especially in countries where information and communication technologies are highly developed, individuals and institutions are continuously being encouraged to live in cyberspace (Mitra 2003: 5). People have to constantly redefine the real to make it more 'virtual-friendly' (2003: 5), for example by buying a better computer or by switching to a faster internet connection. The internet today, is fully embedded in the daily lives of many people as a result of which many activities in the daily lives of people somehow lead them into virtual space (Gajjala 2008: 1). The following quote describes several random online activities of an Indian migrant living in the United States:

Visiting websites, clicking on links, meeting friends online, chatting with a sister or brother in India, shopping, sending e-gifts for Christmas, Diwali, or 'going' to work while hanging out with family during Thanksgiving break, e-mailing a colleague on mobile phone while running to get the children to school on time. (Gajjala 2008: 1)

The description above highlights different activities that people carry out through the internet. One of the activities described in the quote is 'chatting with a sister or brother in India'. In this case, the use of the internet can reduce the feeling of separation between geographically distant

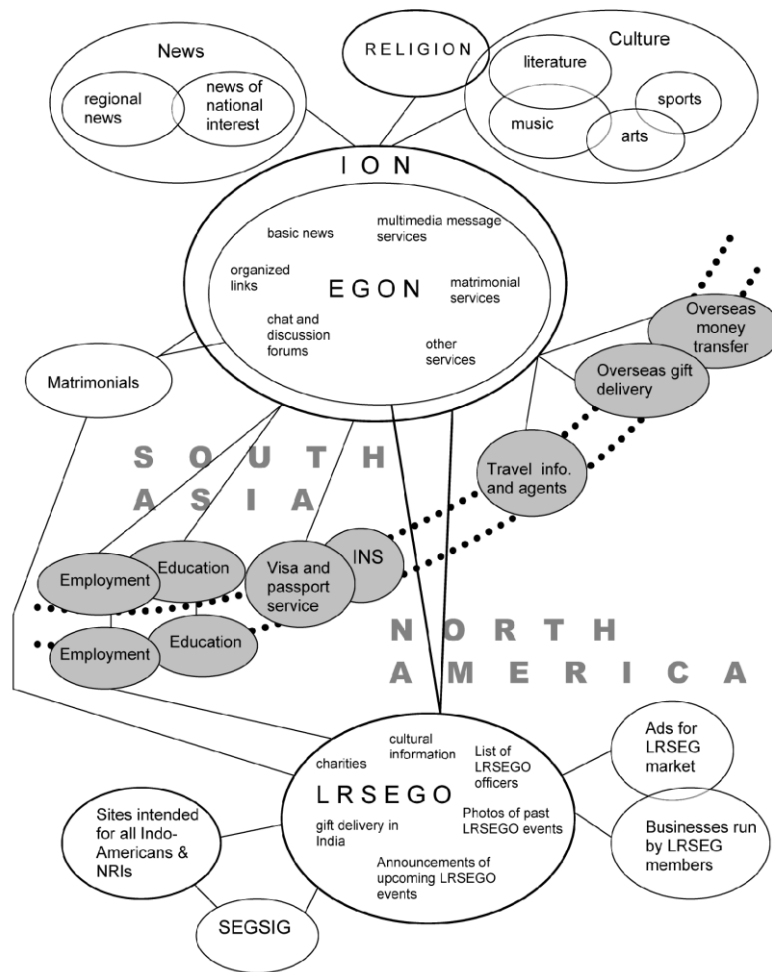
people as the internet is a 'place-transcending' technology. Virtual space, in this perspective, can metaphorically be understood as a 'bridgespace' (Adams and Ghose 2003: 415).

### 2.3 Bridgespace: a space in between

The term 'bridgespace' was introduced by Adams and Ghose in their study on the use of the internet by Indian migrants living in North America. Indian migrants are also often referred to as Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). A large part of the NRI community, particularly those individuals working in computer-related fields, have good access to new communication technologies, which helps to explain why the amount of websites that cater to these NRIs are numerous (Adams and Ghose 2003: 415).

In their study, Adams and Ghose show how NRIs visit and maintain all sorts of websites for different purposes like 'cultural preservation' and 'maintenance of ethnic identity'. These websites are usually created by NRIs, although some general websites, for instance dealing with news or business, are created in India. This complex of interlinked websites, used by both the Indian diaspora and also by residents in India, is part of what is called by the authors a 'bridgespace'. A bridgespace not only incorporates the internet, but also other media such as music CDs and films. A bridgespace can be described as 'a virtual space that supports flows of people, goods, capital and ideas, between two geographically disparate centers' (2003: 414). The bridge metaphor applies in the more general sense as a bridge that supports movement in both directions (2003: 423). Likewise, bridgespace does not act, but it enables certain kinds of movements to occur (2003: 416). Bridgespaces do not create links between places: links are created by people. Therefore, an important issue when studying bridgespaces is to question *who* is constructing the bridgespace and for *what* reasons and purposes (2003: 420).

Adams and Ghose show how a range of websites that have been constructed by NRIs living in the USA feature in a so-called 'intercultural bridgespace diagram'. These websites are often linked to a great number of sites that have been created in India, for example online versions of Indian newspapers, business sites, cultural sites and sites supporting the search for marriage partners (Adams and Ghose 2003: 415). The intercultural bridgespace diagram, as shown in Figure 1, visualises how these different virtual spaces relate to each other and how they together provide a 'bridging function'.



**Figure 1: The intercultural bridgespace diagram (Adams and Ghose 2003: 422)**

In the intercultural bridgespace diagram three different ‘nodes’ can be distinguished: Indian Online Nodes (ION), Ethnic Group Online Nodes (EGON) and Local/Regional Sub-Ethnic Group Organisations (LRSEGO). Before further analysing the diagram, it is important to explain the concepts ‘ethnic’ and ‘sub-ethnic’. The concept ‘ethnic group’ implies a group of people sharing a place of origin and being characterised by genetic and cultural similarities. The diversity in this group can be employed by the term ‘sub-ethnic’ which indicates smaller groups defined by language, culture and home region (2003: 415). An example of an ethnic group would be ‘Indians’ and an examples of a sub-ethnic group could be ‘Gujarati’ or ‘Telugu’ communities.

The Indian Online Nodes (ION) are ‘multipurpose sites with high numbers of links designed for a non-specific Indian audience throughout India and overseas. They help users to navigate quickly to other more specific sites of interest’. The Ethnic Group Online Nodes (EGON) are ‘multipurpose sites dedicated to a particular ethnic group in India and they are usually written in the language of the group mixed with a little English’. The Local/Regional Sub-Ethnic Group Organisations (LRSEGO) are websites that are ‘constructed by local or regional organizations in the USA. The primary purpose of these websites is to support and encourage the

maintenance of sub-ethnic identity as opposed to assimilation in US culture or dissolution in a generalized Indo-American ethnicity' (Adams and Ghose 2003: 421). Apart from the nodal sites, the bridgespaces consist of more specialised websites called Sub-Ethnic Group Special Interest Group (SEGSIG) sites. These sites are limited in connectivity and they serve special-interest groups of ethnic and sub-ethnic minorities (2003: 428).

The most obvious element in the diagram is the divide between North America and South Asia running across the middle. This space must be understood as 'a space in between two places that supports movement in both directions' (2003: 423). The websites shown in this space directly address the experience of moving through space or between cultures. These websites are dedicated to visa and passport services, travel agents, overseas money transfers or overseas gift delivery services (2003: 423).

After mapping a full range of websites, Adams and Ghose focus particularly on 'matrimonial sites' in their study. These websites are designed to search for and support identification of marriage partners (2003: 414). Matrimonial websites are often used by families located in India to look for eligible marriage partners abroad or in India. The websites have the ability to integrate the domestic and international marriage market. With the support of these websites, new links are being created between people living in India and the Indian diaspora as they 'accelerate intercultural contact and diffusion into India' (2003: 432).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In the academic field of transnationalism and cyberspace, a large amount of research has been done on the Indian diaspora. This is partly due to the fact that a relatively large amount of Indian migrants are comparatively comfortable with new technologies, in particular with computers (Adams and Ghose 2003: 415). Most studies in this area focus on the way that migrants use the internet and the impact this has on their lives. Often discussed issues in the literature are 'identity' and 'virtual communities' and it mainly focuses on the interaction within diaspora communities.

Online interaction between migrants and the home region is not often discussed, which makes the approach by Adams and Ghose on the so-called 'intercultural bridgespace' a unique study. This study offers a concept that helps to understand the relation between the virtual and real space. Adams and Ghose emphasise the linkages between Indian migrants and their home country instead of only looking at virtual movement within the migrant communities.

This report focuses on a particular group of Indian migrants: the Telugu diaspora. In line with the study by Adams and Ghose, it also focuses on linkages between the migrant and the home region. The intercultural bridgespace diagram is used as a method to visualise the range of



websites that are visited, created and maintained by Telugu migrants and Telugus living in their home region. In this report the following research question will be answered:

How do Telugu migrants and Telugus living in their home region in India use the internet to create new ties or to strengthen existing ties and to what extent is this use of 'virtual space' related to their activities in 'real space'?

The following chapter provides general information on the Telugu diaspora and their home region, and discusses the research methodology used.

### 3. RESEARCH ON THE TELUGU ‘BRIDGESPACE’

Today the Indian diaspora numbers over 20 million (MEA 2002), which makes it the second largest diasporic group in the world. An important feature that distinguishes the Indian diaspora in Western countries from other groups of migrants, is the concentration of highly skilled professionals such as engineers, doctors, scientific researchers and computer professionals (Adams and Ghose 2003: 420). Because of their technological orientation this group is particularly interesting for studies on the use of the internet. Although the Indian diaspora has been described as one group, it is not a homogeneous entity without diversity (Bhat and Bhaskar 2007: 89). Sub-ethnic groups can be distinguished on the basis of the period during which they migrated, their region of origin and the place they migrated to. One of the many sub-ethnic groups of Indian migrants is the Telugu diaspora. This research report is based on web-based research and empirical fieldwork on the Telugu diaspora and in particular on Telugu migrants from Guntur district and the people living in their home region. The choice to conduct fieldwork in this region is based on two considerations. The first consideration is that Guntur district is one of the three regions of focus of the research programme *Provincial Globalisation: The Impact of Reverse Transnational Flows in India's Regional Towns*. The programme focuses on transnational connections and reverse resource flows from migrants to their region of origin. Within this programme comparative fieldwork will be conducted in three different regions, one of them being Guntur district. The research project described in this report is linked to this programme and conducting fieldwork in the region of Guntur was beneficial as the people committed to the programme offered guidance and introduced important informants during my fieldwork in India. The second consideration is that Guntur district has a long history of high-skilled international migration and a great amount of Telugu migrants originating from this area have relatively good access to the internet. This research focuses on the range of websites that are used by Telugu migrants and Telugus living in India. The following paragraph will further describe general information on the Telugu diaspora and subsequently on Guntur district.

#### 3.1 The Telugu diaspora

Approximately 60 million Telugu-speaking people live in India (Bhat and Bhaskar 2007: 92) and it is estimated that over 2 million Telugu-speaking people live overseas.<sup>1</sup> The Telugu diaspora is the largest group of people from South India to have immigrated to different parts of the world

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.telugudiaspora.com/telugudiaspora-telugu-diaspora.html](http://www.telugudiaspora.com/telugudiaspora-telugu-diaspora.html) (visited on 20-01-2011).

since the 19<sup>th</sup> and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bhat and Narayan 2010: 18). Members of this community predominantly originate from the state of Andhra Pradesh and smaller numbers originate from the neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The Telugu diaspora formed through three different phases of time. The first phase was during the colonial period (1830s to 1920s), which was marked by labour migration to the British and French colonies like Fiji, Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore and South Africa. In the second phase, after Independence, a large amount of urban, middle-class, professionally skilled Telugus moved to developed countries such as the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to work as doctors, engineers or scientists. During the third phase, after 1980, Telugus migrated mainly as software professionals to Europe and even more so to the USA and Canada (Bhat and Bhaskar 2007: 93).

The present day community of Telugus living in the United States and Canada can be divided into three categories of migrants. The first category consists of people who migrated as professionals in search of a job and the second category are the families of these migrants. The third category consists of undergraduate students who, especially in the field of software engineering, go to the USA to pursue higher education (2007: 95).

An important aspect of the lives of many Telugu migrants is the articulation of cultural identity. An important carrier of culture and identity is language, which is visible in the United States where the Telugu language is being taught in special Telugu schools. Especially the second and third generation of Telugus, who were born in the USA, can learn the Telugu language here (2007: 103). Most Telugu language schools are established by Telugu associations. Many Telugu NRI associations<sup>2</sup> exist in different host countries, especially in the USA. The initial aim of the Telugu NRI associations is to 'preserve and promote Telugu culture and to pass it on to next generations' (2007: 106). Another aim is to 'reinforce the community networks by bringing people together who are dispersed throughout the world' (2007: 111). The associations organise activities like conferences, celebrations of important festivals or fundraising activities. There are 'local' Telugu associations that have members in diasporic communities living in one particular country of settlement as well as 'global' Telugu associations that provide a forum for Telugus worldwide. The networks between all the associations 'facilitate the relations within the diaspora and also with the home country' (Bhat and Bhaskar 2007: 111).

Telugu migrants have contributed to their motherland to a great extent and they play an important role in the 'all-round development of Andhra Pradesh' (2007: 112). Several

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<sup>2</sup> The meaning of the abbreviation NRI is Non-Resident Indian, so a Telugu migrant is also often referred to as Telugu NRI.

associations have expanded their activities beyond socio-cultural activities to develop political and economic networks with the home region. Over the last two decades an increasing amount of philanthropic projects have been organised, resulting in a flow of resources into the home region. These ‘diaspora philanthropy projects’ usually support rural infrastructure development, education, and health. Apart from helping their families by sending remittances, most Telugu migrants therefore maintain cultural and economic links to their land of origin (2007: 103).

The Telugu migrants who are most important for the research that is described in this report are those migrants from the second and third migration stream, consisting of high-skilled Telugus living in the USA, Canada and Europe. These migrants in particular are very active in virtual space (Bhat and Narayan 2010: 19).

### **3.2 The home region: Guntur District**

Most Telugus find their roots in the state of Andhra Pradesh, which is the fifth largest state in India. The state consists of twenty three districts divided into the three regions called Coastal Andhra, Telangana and Rayalaseema. The local language spoken is Telugu and this is the second most widely spoken language in India after Hindi. The Telugu language is spoken by nearly 88 per cent of the population in Andhra Pradesh and this linguistic group consists of people of different religions. The dominant group is Hindu (88 per cent), followed by Muslims (7 per cent) and Christians (4 per cent) and only a small part are Sikhs, Parsees, Buddhists or Jains (Rao 1983). Next to language and religion, caste is also a binding factor for Telugu networks in India and overseas. Telugus can be divided into different caste groups. The most important castes are Brahmin, Komati, Reddy, Kamma, Kapu, Naidu, Mala, Madiga, Yeraka and Yanadi (Bhat and Bhaskar 2007: 111).

Several districts of Andhra Pradesh have a long international migration history. One of these districts in the region of coastal Andhra Pradesh is the Guntur district. Guntur town has an estimated population of around 800,000 (514,707 as estimated during the 2001 census), which makes it the fourth largest city of the state.<sup>3</sup> Figure 2 shows Guntur district (the green area), which covers an area of 11,391 square kilometers, and has a population of 4,106,999 people (1991 census). The main agricultural products cultivated in this district are paddy, tobacco, cotton and chilli.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Source: [www.telugupedia.com/wiki/index.php?title=Guntur](http://www.telugupedia.com/wiki/index.php?title=Guntur) (visited on 25-05-2011)

<sup>4</sup> Source: [zpguntur.ap.nic.in/guntur.html](http://zpguntur.ap.nic.in/guntur.html) (visited on 05-04-2011)

As mentioned earlier, Guntur district has a long history of high-skilled international migration. More recently the impact of this migration has become visible through a large amount of transnational ‘reverse’ flows of people, money and also knowledge. Studies on the impact of remittances as a result of globalisation usually focus on national levels or on megacities. At the same time, the impact of migrants is visible at the local level, especially in the rural areas and in small urban cities. This study focuses on one such particular local level, the town of Guntur (see Figures 2 and 3).



Figure 2: Map of South India



Figure 3: Andhra Pradesh and Guntur town

### 3.3 From Bangalore to Guntur and back

During my three-month stay in India I lived for six weeks in Guntur town. Before and after this period I stayed for three weeks in Bangalore at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS). As mentioned before, my research project is linked to the *Provincial Globalisation* programme, which is a collaborative international research programme between the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam (UvA) and the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) in Bangalore. The coordinators of the programme are Prof. Mario Rutten (UvA) and Prof. Carol Upadhyia (NIAS). In Bangalore, Carol introduced me through e-mail to Dr. Bhaskar, a researcher from Hyderabad who has wide research experience on the Telugu diaspora, especially in Guntur. The following paragraphs will explain how I conducted my research and the methodological issues I faced.

### 3.4 The Telugu ‘bridgespace’ as object of analysis

Mapping and studying the Telugu bridgespace required offline and online research methods. Table 1, below, shows the combined methods that I used in my research on Telugu migrants and Telugus living in India. During my stay in Guntur I conducted a total of eight semi-structured

interviews in 'the real space'. To be able to communicate with NRIs, I gathered information through 'the virtual space' as I sent questions through e-mail to four informants as well as an online survey to e-mail addresses of sixty five Telugu NRI associations.

<b>Who</b>	Migrant: Telugu NRIs		Local: Telugus in India
<b>Where</b>	Virtual (online)		Real (offline)
<b>Method</b>	E-mail interviews (4)	Mapping Telugu bridgespace	Semi-structured interviews (8)
	Online survey (65: 11)		

**Table 1: Methodology schedule**

### **Mapping the Telugu bridgespace**

I started my research by listing Telugu oriented websites. Before going to India I conducted a pilot study and I continued the listing in Bangalore. I searched the internet with search engine Google and started web search queries<sup>5</sup> with six obvious keywords. These web search queries resulted in a large amount of search results of Telugu related websites. It was not possible to view all the search results, as one web search query already resulted in more than 5 million search results (see table 2). Nevertheless, in search engines like Google the most important and most visited websites are always shown in the first few result pages.

<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Amount of Google search results</b>
People of Telugu origin	5.300.000
Telugu abroad	5.240.000
Overseas Telugu	5.160.000
Telugu immigrants	1.230.000
Telugu diaspora	942.000
Non-resident Telugu	407.000

**Table 2. Search keywords and search results in Google on 12-12-2010**

Many of the websites that I entered through Google contained a number of hyperlinks that directed me to a wide range of more Telugu websites. I described all these websites in an Excel sheet and classified them in the categories that are used in the study of Adams and Ghose (Adams and Ghose 2003: 422).

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<sup>5</sup> A web search query is a query that a user enters into web search engine to satisfy his or her information needs (source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\_search\_query, visited on 18-05-2011).

Web-based research can be very valuable as the internet is an enormous source of information, but methodologically it is important to be aware of the limitations. A difficulty in my research was that most websites are ephemeral, which means that content is constantly updated, expanded and contracted without any apparent schedule, so it is important to make notes of the visiting dates. Another limitation is working with search engines. A scholar who also did internet research with the help of search engines compared it with dragging a net across the surface of the ocean (Assisi 2007: 148). The following quote explains that one can never find all existing websites in a certain category, but only the websites that the search engines can find.

While a great deal may be caught in the net, there is still a wealth of information that is deep, and therefore, missed. Most of the web's information is buried far down on dynamically generated sites and standard search engines never find it (Assisi 2007: 148).

After I created a list with a range of Telugu websites, I continued with a content analysis. I focused on a specific category of Telugu websites: the websites that connect Telugu NRIs with their home region. I was struck by the amount of websites of philanthropic organisations that came out of my web search. These websites are generally directed to Telugu NRIs, in order to raise donations for development projects in India. When studying these websites more thoroughly, I discovered that many of the organisations were based in India and are initiatives of people living in Andhra Pradesh. Before leaving to Guntur I listed all the names and contact details of the organisations based in Guntur district that came out of the web search.

### **Online survey of Telugu associations**

The process of listing Telugu websites resulted in sixty five websites of Telugu Associations from all over the world. I studied the content of these websites and I described the name, the URL, the location, year of creation and contact information (e-mail addresses) in an Excel sheet. I subsequently created an online survey with questions about online activity in the internet survey program Thesis Tools and I sent it to the e-mail addresses that were shown on most of the websites of the associations. Unfortunately the response was not very high (one hundred e-mails with eleven respondents), but the outcomes confirmed my most important hypothesis, that the activity among the members of almost all the associations increased after the introduction of the website.

### **Semi-structured interviews in Guntur**

I came to Guntur with a list of local philanthropic organisations to find out how they use the internet to connect with Telugu NRIs in order to raise donations for development activities in their home region. I expected most organisations to be represented on the internet, but during

my stay in Guntur I also found organisations that did not have a website or hardly used the internet. Although these particular organisations were not or hardly represented in virtual space, I discovered that they still raise huge amounts of NRI donations for development projects. I decided to study these organisations more closely as well, to find out how they reach NRIs and how they are able to receive large amounts as donations.

I created an overview of all the types of organisations in Guntur district that are receiving NRI donations and selected four organisations for in-depth research. To be able to make comparisons I chose an organisation that does not have a website (Tenali Prabhata Sangham), an organisation that utilises the internet in a passive way (Zilla Parishad), an organisation that has an active website that is created by NRIs (Guntur Medical College Alumni North America - GMCANA) and an organisation that is based in India and that has an active website created by people in India (The Sankara Eye Institutions); and conducted semi-structured interviews with people from these organisations. Apart from the interviews with people from philanthropic organisations, I conducted two semi-structured interviews in Hyderabad with website designers.

### **E-mail interviews Telugu NRIs**

During two of the semi-structured interviews, the informants provided me with e-mail addresses of NRIs connected to their organisation for further questions on their website. I sent five e-mail interviews to different NRIs, two informants from the Guntur Medical College Alumni North America, Sankara Eye Institutions, and to the owner of a Telugu portal called TeluguPeople.com. A difficulty with asynchronous e-mail interviews in contrast to 'real life' interviews is that it is not possible to directly anticipate on the given answers. To respond on the given answers I had to send new questions, which was time-consuming as I had to wait for answers for a few days sometimes.



## **4. TELUGUS CONNECTING IN CYBERSPACE**

NRIs who migrated from India to the United States, Europe and other Western countries during the past two decades are predominantly software engineers or young graduates from leading institutes of engineering and technology. The major part of this group consists of Telugus from the states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu (Bhat and Bhaskar 2007: 92). This ‘new’ Telugu diaspora is very present in cyberspace. Their professional skills may help explain their high receptivity to the adoption of computer technologies, not just at work but also for personal and community use (Adams and Ghose 2003: 420). As computer professionals they spend a lot of time online for work, but many of these migrants are also actively creating online platforms to interact with other Telugu NRIs and with Telugus living in their home region. On these online platforms they communicate about various issues like Telugu culture, politics, economics and entertainment (Bhat and Bhaskar 2007: 113).

The first section of this chapter examines the most notable changes that the range of Telugu oriented websites have undergone since the internet was introduced twenty years ago. In the second section of this chapter the current ‘Telugu bridgespace’ is visualised in the ‘Telugu bridgespace diagram’ and explained and illustrated with concrete examples. In the third and fourth section only a specific part of the websites in the ‘Telugu bridgespace’ is further analysed.

### **4.1 Development of Telugu websites**

In the year 1991 the first website appeared on the World Wide Web. A few years later, around the year 1996, the first specific Telugu websites were put online. Around the year 2000 the presence of the Telugu diaspora in cyberspace was seen on various webpages. Mr. Bhaskar, who analysed the range of Telugu websites around this time, explains that ‘the Telugu related websites back then were mainly of news portals, personal sites, Telugu association websites, literary and entertainment sites, but also some interactive virtual spaces like discussion forums, thread messages, list forums and Usenet existed online’. On these interactive platforms Telugu migrants exchanged and expressed their views on issues concerning Telugu culture, politics, economics and entertainment (Bhaskar 2000: 6).

Especially during the last ten years, these Telugu oriented websites have undergone several changes. The first change is that the amount of Telugu websites has increased significantly. There is no statistical data available on this increase. However, on many websites the year of creation is shown at the bottom of the webpage. With this data the recent increase can be illustrated by tracing the Telugu NRI association websites. It appears that a large number

of these websites have been created in the last five years. From the sixty five websites viewed, thirty four show the year of creation and twenty nine show that they were created in the last five years (see Appendix 1).

Factors that influenced the increase of Telugu oriented websites were explained by Mr. Rajasekhar Reddy Allipuram, a software engineer from Andhra Pradesh who started his own Telugu website in the years after the internet was introduced.<sup>6</sup> Mr. Allipuram argues that ‘in the starting years around 1996 only a few big Telugu portals existed and they were all created by NRIs. The websites were not specifically directed to NRIs, but at that time most of the visitors were NRIs because they had better access to the Internet’. Mr. Allipuram further explains that until the year 2000 not many people in India owned a computer, even less people used the internet and when they did, the internet connection in India was poor: ‘In 1997 we weren’t able to check e-mails during daytime so we had to work in the nighttime. After 2000 this situation slowly started to change as internet access in India improved and currently 50 per cent of my clients are from abroad and 50 per cent are living in India’. Today, almost every organisation owned by Telugu NRIs, and also organisations based in Andhra Pradesh have created their own websites. The introduction of social media websites in the last five years has also caused a rapid increase in active users of cyberspace.

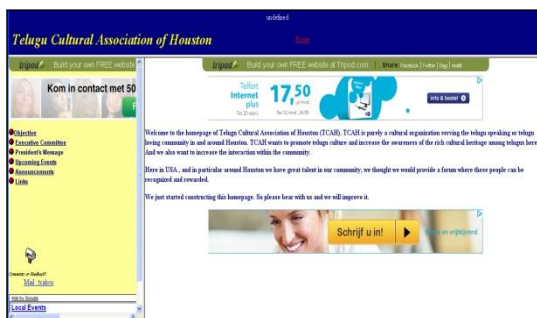
A second change in the Telugu oriented websites can be seen in the content as most websites today have a more professional appearance than the websites that were created in the years soon after the introduction of the internet. This professionalisation of appearance is due to improved website design technologies and an increasing amount of websites are created by professional companies. Mr. Bitra N. Rao, also owner of a website company in Hyderabad, argues that ‘most Telugu websites in the “beginning years” were started by NRIs as a hobby. Slowly the amount of visitors went up and the owners found out that they could earn money with advertisement’. When these NRIs discovered that they could make profit, they became more professional and started website businesses. Today, many organisations hire a professional website company to create their website, a phenomenon called ‘outsourcing’.

Several Telugu associations ‘outsourced’ the creation of their websites to professional companies. The following two print screens show two websites of Telugu NRI associations. The left website belongs to the Telugu Association of Houston and was created by a member with an amateurish designing program. This website gives an idea of the appearance of websites that were started in ‘the beginning years’ of the internet. The image on the right shows the website of the

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<sup>6</sup> Mr. Allipuram worked in the United States for twelve years and started his own website business in 1996. Currently he lives in Hyderabad and is the owner of a leading software company called the Brio Group.

Telugu Association of San Antonio, which was professionally designed by Bitranet, the website company of Mr. Bitra N. Rao.



URL: [www.tcahoo.tripod.com](http://www.tcahoo.tripod.com)



URL: [www.tasatexas.org](http://www.tasatexas.org)

As the number of Telugu oriented websites increased, the content also changed. According to Mr. Rao the content of the websites that were created in the years after the internet was introduced, consisted mostly of general information about Andhra Pradesh and Telugu culture. Today the range of websites is much more specific and Telugus NRIs as well as Telugus in India visit the internet for numerous purposes, to read the news, watch movies, listen to music, banking, send gifts, find marriage partners, engage in political discussions, donate money, etc. This current range of Telugu oriented websites is further explained in the following section.

## 4.2 The 'Telugu bridgespace diagram'

In this section the outcomes of the web-based research on Telugu websites are described. The most important and prominent Telugu websites are listed and categorised and subsequently visualised in the Telugu bridgespace diagram (Figure 4). In chapter 2 this diagram as Adams and Ghose have drawn it, has already been explained. In this section the diagram is applied to the 'Telugu bridgespace' and the fundamental question by Adams and Ghose, 'who is constructing the bridgespace and for what purpose?' (Adams and Ghose 2003: 420) is answered throughout the research report. The 'Telugu bridgespace diagram' is shown on the following page and is further explained and analysed in the rest of the section.

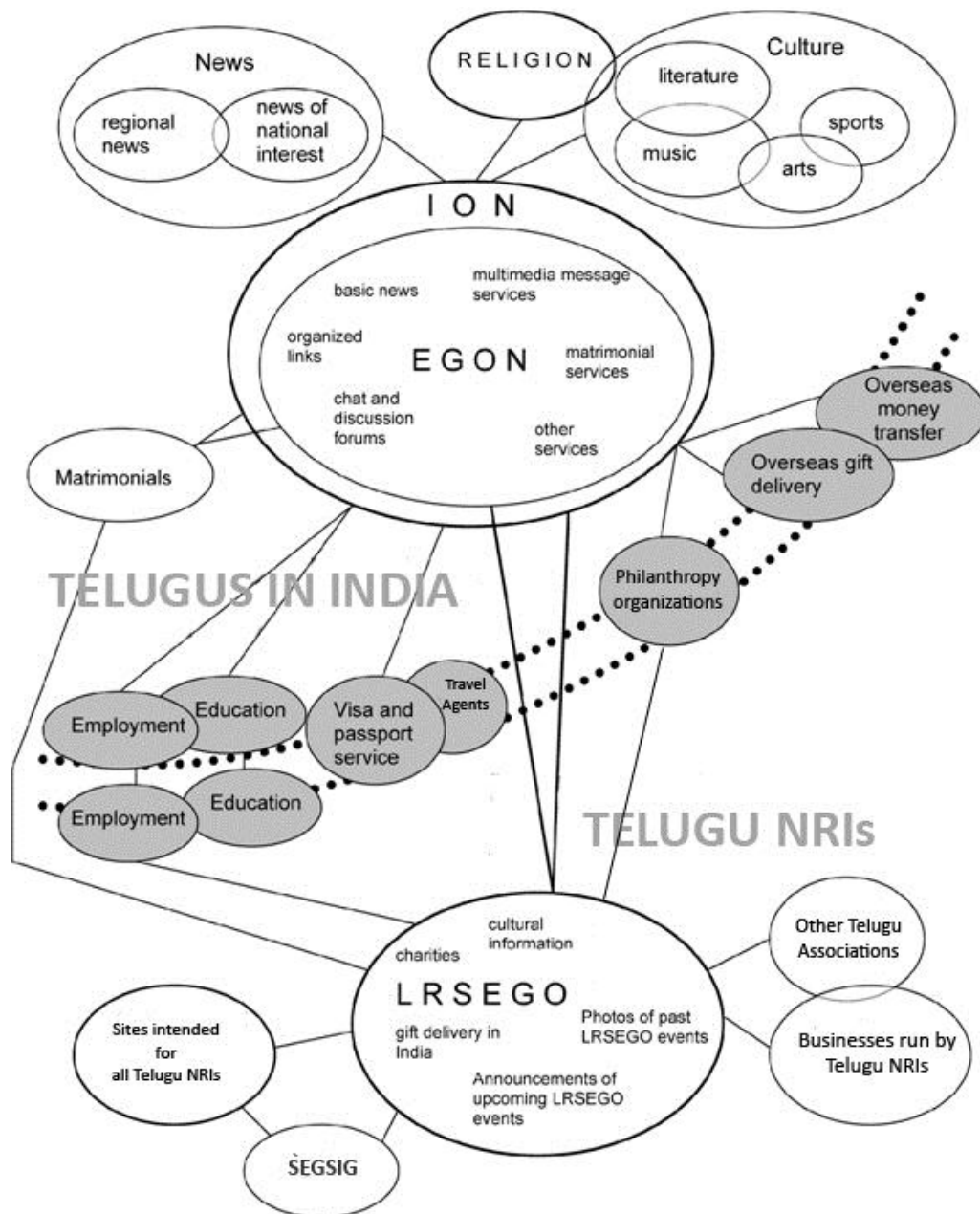


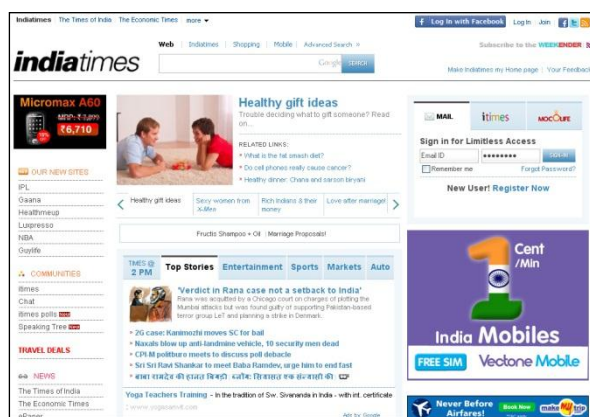
Figure 4: The Telugu bridgespace diagram

The most important categories that can be distinguished in the diagram are the so-called 'Nodal sites'. The nodal sites are the websites that are classified in the three largest circles in the diagram (the categories ION, EGON and LRSEGO). Websites in these categories usually offer a general platform to attract visitors and these websites show links to more specialised websites. The Telugus that occupy the 'Telugu bridgespace' are likely to enter the space via one of these nodes on a regular basis. In the following part of this section the 'bridgespace categories' are explained and illustrated with examples of Telugu websites. It has to be noted that a bridgespace diagram can never show all the existing categories of websites in a certain bridgespace. The aim of this

diagram is to give an idea of the most important webspaces in the Telugu bridgespace and to show how these websites form an interlinked complex on the internet.

## Indian Online Nodes (ION)

The websites in the category 'Indian Online Nodes' (ION) are visited by a broad public and are designed for NRIs as well as people living in India to help them navigate to more specific sites of interest. Some of the websites in this category are news portals that provide hyperlinks to more specific news websites. Examples of ION websites are [www.indiatimes.com](http://www.indiatimes.com); [www.gatewayforindia.com](http://www.gatewayforindia.com); [www.indiainformation.com](http://www.indiainformation.com). The print screens below show all the hyperlinks that are provided on these kinds of 'portals'.



URL: [www.indiatimes.com](http://www.indiatimes.com)



URL: [www.indiainformation.com](http://www.indiainformation.com)

## Ethnic Group Online Nodes (EGON)

The websites in the 'Ethnic Group Online Nodes' category are usually designed for a sub-ethnic group, in this case the Telugus. The EGON websites in the Telugu bridgespace only deal with topics of concern for Telugus and often a part of the content is written in Telugu language. Examples of these websites are [www.telugupeople.com](http://www.telugupeople.com); [www.telugufirst.com](http://www.telugufirst.com); [www.andhrapradesh.com](http://www.andhrapradesh.com). These 'Telugu portals' provide information on subjects such as news, entertainment, business, sports, movies, lifestyle, health, recipes and some websites have an interactive part. Telugupeople.com provides an interactive option for chat, discussion and blogs. The blue buttons on the websites in the print screens give an impression of the subjects of interest on these portals. Both portals shown in the print screens have a separate button that links to a webpage with specific news items for Telugu NRIs.



URL: [www.teluguppeople.com](http://www.teluguppeople.com)



URL: [www.telugufirst.com](http://www.telugufirst.com)

## Local/Regional Sub-Ethnic Group Organisations (LRSEGO)

The 'Local/Regional Sub-Ethnic Group Organisation' websites are usually constructed and maintained by NRIs for specific groups of NRIs. They often serve a 'community support function' (Adams and Ghose: 428). The most obvious examples of these websites are the 'Telugu Association websites'. In almost every state in North America and also in Europe, the Gulf, Africa and Asia, Telugu associations are active. Most associations serve the whole Telugu NRI community in a specific region. The websites shown in the print screens give an impression of the online presence of two Telugu associations that are very active in North America (TANA and ATA). Most associations are very professional which shines through in their websites (see print screens). Below additional information on Telugu associations is given.



URL: [www.tana.org](http://www.tana.org)



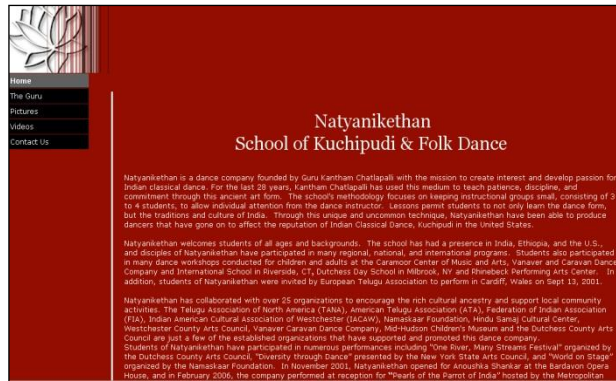
URL: [www.ataworld.org](http://www.ataworld.org)

## Sub-Ethnic Group Special Interest Group (SEGSIG)

Websites in the category 'Sub-Ethnic Group Special Interest Group' are usually constructed and maintained by Telugu NRIs, and they serve the 'special interest' of a segment of the Telugu diaspora. Below is an example of a SEGSIG website constructed by a school for traditional Kuchipudi dance in the United States ([www.natyanikethan.com](http://www.natyanikethan.com)). In this example the special



interest is Kuchipudi dance and the segment of the Telugu diaspora consists of Telugu migrants that practice or are interested in this traditional dance. Another example is the website of the Telugu Christian Fellowship of New Jersey (wn.com/Christian\_telugu\_devotional). The print screens show that these ‘more specific’ websites generally have a quite basic appearance.



URL: [www.natyanikethan.com](http://www.natyanikethan.com)



URL: [wn.com/Christian\\_telugu\\_devotional](http://wn.com/Christian_telugu_devotional)

This section explained the range of websites that are part of the Telugu bridgespace and the different purposes these websites serve. The diagram showed the importance of the websites in the three largest categories (the nodal sites) as Telugus in cyberspace mostly enter the internet through these websites. The websites in these categories provide links to a range of more specific websites.

The diagram and the categories in this section broadly give an overview of the activities of Telugus in virtual space, which enables us to better understand the role that the internet plays in the lives of many Telugu migrants. The following sections first explains the role that the internet plays in strengthening emotional ties with the home region. Section 4.4 continues on the role that the internet plays in strengthening the direct ties between Telugu NRIs and their home region.

### 4.3 The ‘home region in virtual space’

The websites in the Telugu bridgespace often associate the migrant with their home region. For the Telugu diaspora the internet serves as a useful platform to communicate and interact with other diaspora members. The static websites provide information and interactive websites offer a ‘sense of community’ among migrants originating from the same home region. It can make the Telugu diaspora community feel more close-knit as it offers a way to communicate more regularly and more interactively. The Telugu oriented websites also can make the migrants feel ‘closer to home’ and strengthen their emotional ties with their home region, without actual interaction with people living in the home region. Websites of Telugu associations (as shown in the print screens in the former section) in particular serve this purpose within the diaspora

community, in that the content of these websites is specifically directed to Telugu diaspora communities living in different countries.

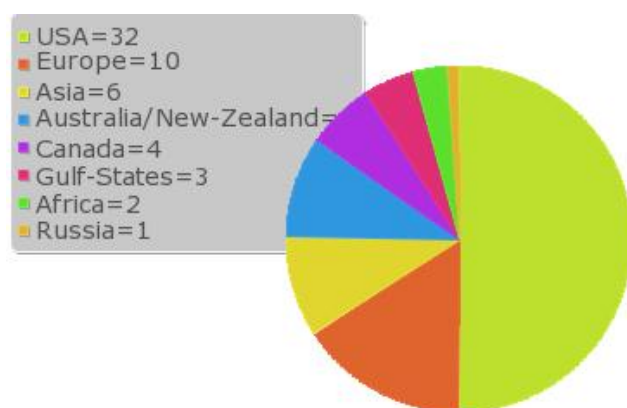
The Telugu diaspora community is known for its large number of associations (Bhaskar 2000: 4). Most of these associations already existed before the internet was introduced, so these networks have not been created in virtual space. However, the outcomes of the online survey show that the creation of a website has had a huge impact on most of the Telugu associations. For some associations, starting a website has resulted in a significant increase in the amount of members. Another consequence was many existing members became more active within the association. The following section describes the Telugu associations and their presence in virtual space.

### **The Telugu associations in cyberspace**

A large number of the websites in the Telugu bridgespace are websites of Telugu associations. These associations are formed by Telugu NRIs in the host nations where they migrated to. For Telugu migrants the Telugu associations offer ‘common platforms where the members can actively participate to preserve the Telugu culture through literary, cultural and social interaction’ (Bhaskar 2000: 4). All Telugu associations have their own executive committees. Such committees are elected annually and they organise activities like conferences and performances, send newsletters and magazines, etc.

Most of the Telugu associations have their own websites. Although they focus on a particular group of the diaspora and some information is for members only, most of the pages are open to anyone who visits the website. The information varies generally from cultural, political, economic, literary and matrimonial subjects. The web-based research on Telugu websites resulted in a list of sixty five websites of Telugu associations around the world (appendix 1). The following figure shows where most of the Telugu associations with website are based in the world. It is clear that most of the associations are based in the United States.





**Figure 6: Telugu associations around the world**

Telugu associations claim to be non-religious, non-profit and non-governmental, and they are formally formed to act as ‘common platforms for the whole Telugu diaspora’. However, caste and political differences have encouraged the formation of Telugu associations (Bhaskar 2000: 5). The most prominent Telugu associations today are TANA (Telugu Association of North America) and ATA (American Telugu Association). TANA is dominated by members of the Kamma caste and ATA is dominated by the ‘rival’ caste called Reddy.<sup>7</sup>

Besides activities within the Telugu diaspora, many associations play an important role in creating links with the home region through their involvement in philanthropic activities in the home region. Through the associations, donations are raised and invested in development activities in Andhra Pradesh. In particular the caste-based associations that have political and caste-based ties with Telugus in India raise substantial amounts of money for development projects in their home region. The internet forms a platform to create awareness and to inform about activities in order to raise donations for the projects. The following section elaborates on the websites of philanthropic organisations that receive donations from Telugu NRIs.

#### **4.4 Exploring the ‘bridges’**

The Telugu bridgespace diagram visualises different types of websites that are part of the Telugu bridgespace. The grey space in the middle of the diagram visualises the websites that directly link Telugu NRIs with their home region. The following section discusses these particular websites. An observation made in the research on Telugu related websites was that many Telugu oriented

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<sup>7</sup> This general information on castes has repeatedly been discussed in conversations with Mr. Bhaskar and also in the interview at the Zilla Parishad in Guntur. It is not mentioned on the website of the associations.

websites inform about philanthropy projects. The content of these websites is mainly directed to Telugu NRIs. These websites inform about development activities in Andhra Pradesh and encourage NRIs to donate money. This section elaborates on the websites shown in the middle of the bridgespace diagram.

### **General bridges**

The websites shown in the middle of the Telugu bridgespace diagram connect the Telugu diaspora with their home region. As many migrants moved to their new country of residence for work or study, it is not surprising to find ‘employment websites’ and websites of ‘educational institutes’ in the Telugu bridgespace. These websites are usually created in the USA and the content is directed towards people living in India to attract new employers or students. Other websites that connect the Telugu diaspora directly to their home region are for example visa- en passport agents, travel agents and websites for overseas money transfer.

### **Matrimonial bridges**

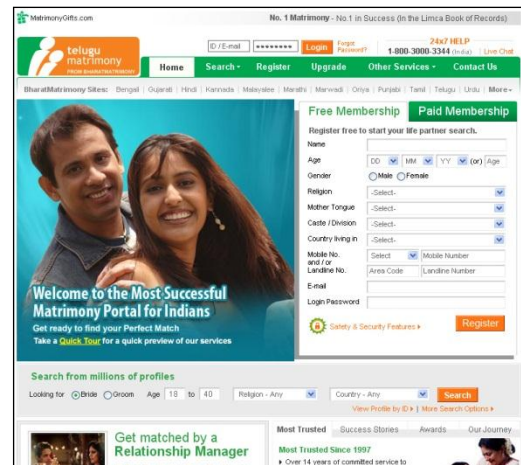
There are a number of websites that are specifically designed for ‘matrimonial services’ that serve the Telugu community.<sup>8</sup> The following print screens show two of these Telugu matrimonial websites. Matrimonial websites always contain a search engine to select potential brides or grooms on specific features like caste, religion and also age and place of residence. People looking for a marriage partner can create their own profile and describe their ‘wishes’ for qualities in a potential marriage partner. With the support of these platforms new connections are created between Telugus living in India and Telugu NRIs, connections that sometimes even result in an ‘overseas marriage’.

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<sup>8</sup> When searching for Telugu websites, I found eight specific matrimonial websites serving only the Telugu community.



URL: [telugu.matrimonialsindia.com](http://telugu.matrimonialsindia.com)



URL: [www.telugumatrimony.com](http://www.telugumatrimony.com)

## Overseas gift delivery services

Websites for overseas gift delivery services are also popular among NRIs and among people living in India who have overseas relatives and friends. These 'gift portals' are designed for migrants to send gifts to India or to send gifts from India to NRIs. Mr. Allipuram explains that the first NRI gift portal was started in 1997 ([www.countryoven.com](http://www.countryoven.com)). In the following years they changed the URL to [www.giftagift.com](http://www.giftagift.com). He argues that 'around 2005 they got around 200-300 online orders a day and now it increased to more than 1000 orders a day and during special holidays like Diwali, Holi etcetera these websites get even more orders'.

A gift portal that is designed to send gifts from India to NRIs is the website [www.gifts2nri.com](http://www.gifts2nri.com) (only to the USA, UK and Canada). A gift portal that was specifically created to send gifts from the USA to people in Guntur was created in 2000 by an NRI with the URL [www.us2guntur.com](http://www.us2guntur.com) (see following print screen). The website shows the 'encouraging' quote: 'Us2guntur helps you pamper your beloved ones pleasantly with your wonderful gifts and convey to them, your heart-felt emotions in a memorable manner'. Us2Guntur is part of the portal [www.us2ap.com](http://www.us2ap.com) (US to Andhra Pradesh), a gift portal that sends gifts throughout the entire state. As can be observed in the print screen the website Us2Guntur offers many kinds of gifts for different occasions. Products like cakes, flowers, sarees and mobile phones can be ordered online and the gift will be delivered the next day to the specified address in Guntur.



URL: [www.us2guntur.com](http://www.us2guntur.com)

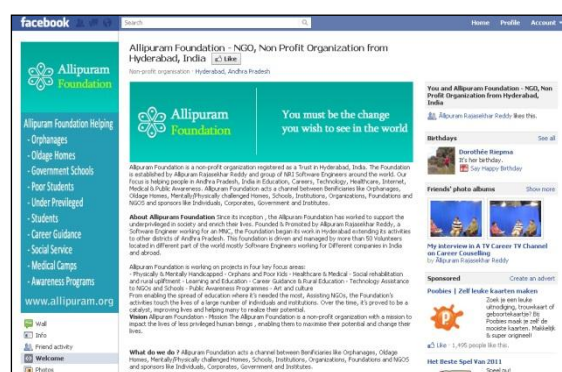
### Online fundraising: diaspora philanthropy

Many Telugu oriented websites inform about philanthropy projects in Andhra Pradesh.<sup>9</sup> The content of these websites is mainly directed to Telugu NRIs. The websites inform about development activities in Andhra Pradesh and encourage NRIs to donate money. Many organisations that raise money from NRIs were started by NRIs themselves. However, since the last decade there is a growing number of philanthropic organisations that have been initiated in India. These organisations are increasingly using cyberspace to connect with the Telugu diaspora to promote their development activities among NRIs.

According to Mr. Bitra N. Rao, a computer professional from Hyderabad, the increase of these websites is a quite recent phenomenon as, he states, 'in the beginning years of the internet there was not much information about development and philanthropy projects in Andhra Pradesh online'. He continues that 'a few years after the emergence of internet this phenomenon slowly started developing on the general Telugu portals. Some portals started a fund or they provided some information about a project in order to raise money from NRIs through a simple payments gateway'. Mr. Rao further explains that 'starting the fund didn't cost extra money as they were legally allowed to keep 15 per cent of the donation money as admin costs and the efforts were limited'. Mr. Rao calls the last five years 'a transition period'. He states that 'the amount of websites and information on philanthropy activities in Andhra Pradesh has increased extremely fast, especially with all the new possibilities for organisations on social media websites, like Facebook for example'.

<sup>9</sup> I did not trace the websites of all the philanthropic organisations that are based in Andhra Pradesh, as my research mainly focused on organisations in Guntur town. The statement that 'many Telugu oriented websites inform about philanthropy projects in Andhra Pradesh' is based on a general observation in my web research. This observation was also confirmed by both Mr. Bhaskar and Mr. Allipuram.

As Mr. Rao explains, NGOs and foundations developed their own websites, and an increase in these websites has especially been visible in the last five years. These websites developed from basic pages that only provide information to professional active websites with different online payment tools and possibilities. They are advertising to reach NRIs on other websites and they use internet marketing tools to get higher rankings in search machines like Google. Another trend that Mr. Rao explains is the increase of the webpages in the social media in the last few years. The largest social media platform in virtual space is Facebook. According to Mr. Rao this medium is becoming an extremely important communication tool, especially for organisations that can't afford the costs to develop their own website. The following print screen shows an example of such a Facebook page: the Allipuram Foundation. The general information on these kinds of pages is open to the public. Facebook users can become 'members' of this group, so they can view more specific information and leave messages.



URL: [www.facebook.com/allipuramfoundation.com#!/allipuramfoundation](http://www.facebook.com/allipuramfoundation.com#!/allipuramfoundation)

## 4.5 Conclusion

The range of Telugu websites that were created in the years after the emergence of the internet is different from the current range of Telugu websites. Firstly, the amount of Telugu websites increased heavily. Secondly, the content and appearance of the website have become more professional. The third change that can be observed is the increased online presence of Telugus living in India. Telugu migrants and people from their home region connect particular websites, which are visualised in the middle of the Telugu bridgespace diagram. This 'middle space' consists of websites for matrimonial services, international job agencies, overseas gift delivery services and websites of philanthropy organisations. These organisations aim to connect with Telugu migrants in order to raise donations for their projects in their home region.

## **5. THE IMPACT OF DIASPORA PHILANTHROPY WEBSITES IN 'REAL SPACE'**

The previous chapter explained that an increasing number of websites that are related to diaspora philanthropy have been created in the last decade and especially in the last five years. This chapter further examines these websites, by analysing the content and the strategies that are used to raise donations from Telugu NRIs. It highlights the advantages of virtual space for philanthropic organisations, but it also gives insight into the limitations that these organisations deal with when communicating through the web. Section 2 of this chapter explains the importance of existing 'real life' networks among Telugu migrants and their home region. This is illustrated in section 3 and 4 by describing two cases studies of organisations that deal with philanthropy activities in Guntur district. Before that, the following section gives insight into the phenomenon of diaspora philanthropy and the initiatives that are taken up in Guntur district.

### **5.1 Diaspora philanthropy in Guntur District**

The emergence of the internet has strengthened the ties between Indian migrants and their home country, resulting in an increasing amount of contributions from NRIs to philanthropy projects in their home regions. Over the last two decades there has been a conspicuous change, not only in the intent and form of Indian diaspora philanthropy but also in the amount of philanthropic initiatives (Shiveshwarkar 2008: 138). An important factor that influenced these changes is the 'new' attitude of the Indian government towards overseas Indians: 'After years of sluggish indifference, the government is enacting policies and programs to encourage diaspora investments and to create an enabling environment for strategic philanthropy' (Shiveshwarkar 2008: 141).

The increased willingness to provide support to their home regions by the Indian diaspora made the Indian government realise that 'an enormous reservoir of skills, talent, technology, and resources were available within its diaspora that could contribute to India's growth and development' (2008: 141). As a consequence several schemes to provide benefits to NRIs were put in place and meetings were organised to honour the contributions of the NRIs, such as the annual Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (2008: 139).

The government of Andhra Pradesh has also recognised the willingness of the Telugu diaspora to support its home region. Telugu migrants are now playing an active role in the developmental activities of Andhra Pradesh. Within the state of Andhra Pradesh, Guntur district is a recipient of various forms of diaspora philanthropy. Many of these philanthropic

organisations are marked by a professional approach and they 'focus on capacity-building and direct involvement in development activities, as well as effective networking and fundraising through the Internet' (Bhat and Bhaskar 2010: 19).

In Guntur town a considerable amount of development projects are carried out by organisations that receive donation money from mainly NRIs, such as alumni organisations, company donations, governmental initiatives, NRI parents associations, political organisations, foundations started by individuals, etc. Many of these organisations are represented on the internet. The following section analyses how these organisations use the internet to create awareness and raise donations.

## **5.2 Raising donations in virtual space**

Before the internet existed fundraising from NRIs was very much based on personal connections. According to Mr. Bhaskar 'communication was more direct, person-to-person, and based on already existing networks. People usually paid with a cheque or in cash and the networks were so close they always heard how it was spent'. From the moment that the internet was introduced, the situation has changed: 'people can now donate online, which is much more convenient, but it also creates a certain distance. NRIs were first hesitant about using online payment tools, but once they became more familiar with this new technology, more people started donating online', Mr. Bhaskar explains. He continues that these direct payment tools are not the most important reason for organisations to create a website. A more important purpose is to create awareness about projects and to inform about the proceedings of projects. Mr. Bhaskar explains the four most important purposes for philanthropy organisations to create a website. These purposes are explained below, starting with the most important one.

### **Informing**

For philanthropy organisations the most important purpose of creating a website is to be able to inform about projects to a wide range of people. The internet can be used as a 'platform for disclosure'. To provide information about projects increases the level of accountability of the organisation. To inform about the proceedings of the project helps to create transparency as people can see how their money is spent.

### **Promoting**

The internet can be utilised as a marketing tool to promote a project. Organisations advertise on other websites, for example on Telugu association websites or on Telugu portals, to create

awareness and to attract people to their websites. Organisations also promote their websites by advertising in search engines.

### **Donor advertisement**

Most Telugu NRIs are more willing to donate when they get recognition for their donations and for some donors this even is a condition. NRIs often donate within their existing networks, for example to their alumni organisation or to a project in their home village. Usually their names and the amount of the donation are shown in ‘real space’, for example on buildings or newspapers or in ‘virtual space’, for example on the website of the philanthropy organisation.

### **Online fundraising**

A recent phenomenon that has been developed in the last ten years by banks worldwide are ‘payment gateways’. In the Telugu bridgespace, payment gateways were first visible on Telugu portals (for example on [www.telugupeople.com](http://www.telugupeople.com)). Implementing a payment gateway on their website cost the website owners little effort and it was beneficial for their name as they were associated with a charity. They usually earned money with it, because everybody who runs a charity is legally allowed to keep 15 per cent of the donation money for ‘administration costs’. More recently, instead of advertising on general portals, philanthropy organisations started to create their own websites with payment gateways.

Telugu NRIs hardly donate big amounts of money (more than 100 dollars) through payment gateways. It is not beneficial for tax exemption and especially if there is an already existing link with the project in ‘in the real space’ they do not prefer to donate anonymously. The following section will further emphasise the importance of the ‘existing networks in the real space’.

## **5.3 The importance of existing networks**

The virtual space can be a useful tool to connect with Telugu NRIs, but rarely can websites directly motivate NRIs to donate without having an existing link with that organisation. The internet is most effective when it builds further on these existing links (for example religious networks, caste networks, associations). The previous section showed four main reasons why websites are an effective medium for philanthropic organisations in raising donations from NRIs. This section shows that for these organisations the web can also have limitations.

Existing networks among the Telugu diaspora are a crucial factor for philanthropic organisations to take into account. The internet cannot be understood as a ‘homogeneous platform’ full of an unlimited amount of potential donors. The owner of the website



Telugupeople.com, Prasad Kunisetty, argues that ‘websites may help spread the news about projects, but donations will happen only with a personal reference or when a close friend recommends’. He also states that ‘most NRIs are donating to the projects in their own villages and more than 95 per cent of such donations have political reasons’. Mr. Kunisetty argues that Telugu NRIs only donate when they have a personal reference from someone in their existing networks. He also states that NRIs usually have their own agenda when donating, which can help to explain why for this group the recognition for donations given through ‘name advertising’ are important.

Another factor that is important for donors when choosing a project is the place where their names are shown. This ‘status enhancing’ is common in virtual space as well as at the location of the projects. When a Telugu NRI wants another Telugu NRI to see that they made a donation, they generally choose to donate through an organisation that shows their names online. While they prefer to get recognition in their home village it is more important that their name be shown ‘in the real’ world on a building or wall at the place where the projects that they donated their money to was executed. If they prefer to get this recognition locally the NRIs often choose to use the name of a relative who still lives in the village and has close ties with the people living in the village.

The two cases described in sections 4 and 5 of this chapter illustrate the importance of existing network links in fundraising from Telugu NRIs. Many donations that support projects in Guntur district are ‘caste-based donations’. Large amounts of money are often donated through Telugu NRI associations. Some of these associations are dominated by one particular caste. The dominant caste-group in Guntur district is Kamma and the NRIs belonging to this caste are donating most of the money to projects in their home villages. The most important reasons to donate, according to Mr. Bhaskar, are social prestige and gaining influence in local politics.<sup>10</sup> The cases described in sections 5.4 and 5.5 show the essence and the importance of caste-based networks in Guntur district. They illustrate how these networks influence the links between Telugus in India and Telugu NRIs. The cases also show that the use of the internet is not necessarily required for local organisations to raise donations from NRIs.

#### **5.4 The NRI Cell Zilla Parishad Guntur**

The Zilla Parishad (ZP) in Guntur is a local government body. They describe themselves as a ‘preponderant democratic body empowered to review the development of the district besides

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<sup>10</sup> Most Kammas are active in the political party Telugu Desam (TDP). The party also has many NRI members.

giving direction'.<sup>11</sup> They have an annual budget of Rs. 150 crores (more than 33 million dollars) for providing major services, road communication, drinking water and education infrastructure. In 2003 the ZP started an NRI Cell (the first NRI Cell in India) under Chairman Sri. Pathuri Nagabhushanam. The initiative came when the Chairman visited the USA to meet several NRIs.

The aim of the NRI Cell is 'to encourage NRI donations and offer matching funds for the development of rural areas in Guntur district'.<sup>12</sup> In a promotion leaflet for the NRI Cell the Chairman states that 'his interactions revealed that the NRIs feel for their motherland and are committed for its overall development by participating in the various development programs by generously contributing for the various schemes that are taken up in the rural areas'.<sup>13</sup> After the Chairman returned from the USA, the ZP approached the Government of India through the Government of Andhra Pradesh, seeking permission to receive foreign contributions from NRIs/ PIOs for the benefit of the rural masses. The Government of India not only permitted the ZP Guntur to receive foreign contributions but also extended guidelines for receipt of inflow of funds by every ZP Chairman in Andhra Pradesh and created 'a path for rural uplift'. They decided that all works would be financed with a share of 35 per cent from NRIs and 65 per cent from a ZP matching fund.<sup>14</sup> Mr. Veeraswamy, who has been working for the NRI Cell since the beginning, explains that starting the NRI Cell resulted in many donations from Telugu NRIs.

### **NRI Contributions**

The donations from NRIs are used for the development of rural areas, for example the renovation of school buildings, road construction, drinking water, construction of community halls.<sup>15</sup> Mr. Veeraswamy explains that 'most NRIs that donate have been encouraged by people within their existing networks, for example by family members, caste members, political parties and other members of Telugu associations'. Usually they come with ideas for projects themselves, but sometimes they choose to donate money for one of the projects taken up by the Zilla Parishad. When NRIs want to donate they have to send a proposal form to the NRI Cell of the ZP. The form can be downloaded from the ZP website.

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<sup>11</sup> Source: <http://zpguntur.ap.nic.in/aboutzp.html> (visited on 10-03-2011)

<sup>12</sup> Source: <http://zpguntur.ap.nic.in/aboutnri.html> (visited on 10-03-2011)

<sup>13</sup> Source: Leaflet NRI Cell (2003) Zilla Parishad Guntur

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Leaflet NRI Cell (2003) Zilla Parishad Guntur

The ZP contains fifty seven members who are divided over different committees. They have to accept and approve the projects. Mr. Veeraswamy explains that once a project is approved, the donor has to select a local contact person for the project. Often this is a relative and this person will be very involved in the project. The NRI Cell will constantly provide the donor with information on the development of the project through e-mail or phone. They usually also take pictures of the development work and send this through e-mail to the NRI donor. '65 per cent of the donations are paid by cheque, 10 per cent is paid through banks (because of the extra costs) and 25 per cent is paid in cash. Often the NRIs send somebody to bring the money or they will come to India themselves', Mr. Veeraswamy states.

### **Status enhancement**

An important motivation for NRIs to donate is the fact that their names will be published on for example the website (see figure 7: the complete list contains 144 names), in newspapers, on leaflets and most important physically on the building in the village (see figure 8). Mr. Veeraswamy argues that 'NRIs hardly ever donate anonymous as they want recognition for their contributions'. He explains two reasons why the recognition is important for NRIs. In the first place people in India in general are quite skeptical about NRIs and often it is said that 'they are doing nothing for their motherland'. By donating for a communal project NRIs want to prove the opposite and get recognition for it. Another reason that Mr. Veeraswamy explains is that donations are often given to gain political influence. He explains that 'around 50 per cent of the donors have "hidden ideas". Sometimes donating is beneficial for a relative's political name as NRIs themselves cannot directly participate in local politics. Still, they can be a member of a political party and often the party encourages them to donate. Through this way NRIs themselves can have influence in a party and in politics'.

SL No.	Address	American Dollars/England Pounds	Name of the Work Proposed by the NRI	Photo
1	Gangadhar Nadella, 3358 Indian Summer Dr Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302, U.S.A.,	8497 U.S. Dollars	1. Community Centre, School Compounded & C.C.Road across the school for Pedapulivarru Village 2. Constn. of C.C road in Garudhachala- palem H/o.Takkellapadu of Phirangipuram Mandal. 3. Providing C.C.road from R&B road to Nimmagadda Bullaiah House in Pedapulivarru Village of Battiprolu Mandal.	
2	Nannapaneni Ankineedu Prasad, MD, 204, Royal Parkway, Dothan, AL 36305	4200 U.S. Dollars	Pilot Water Project at Kakumanu (V &M).	

Figure 7: Donors list ZP (Source <http://zpguntur.ap.nic.in/donar.html>. Visited at 18-02-2011)



Figure 8: Buildings showing the NRI donors names<sup>16</sup>

### Declining NRI contributions

For two years now, NRI donations to the NRI Cell have been on the decline. Mr. Veeraswamy points out two reasons for this decline. Firstly, the NRI Cell decreased the matching fund from a percentage of 65 per cent to 50 per cent, because of changes in the government of Andhra Pradesh. Secondly, since there was a new chairperson chosen in 2007, the NRI Cell decided to

<sup>16</sup> (Source: <http://zpguntur.ap.nic.in/Works.html>)

limit the amount of donations per region, as a consequence of uneven division of projects in Guntur district.

Many of the NRIs who donate through the NRI Cell belong to the Kamma caste mainly from the town Tenali. This is not a coincidence, as the former chairperson Sri. Pathuri Nagabhushanam is also Kamma and was born in Tenali. Around 90 per cent of the donations to the NRI Cell come from 'Kamma NRIs' as he promoted the NRI Cell mainly within his own network (for example during conferences of TANA, a Kamma-dominated Telugu Association in North America). Most NRIs are only willing to donate to projects in their own home villages. They can dedicate the projects to themselves or to their families by putting their names on the building. This has resulted in a large amount of development projects in the rural areas of Tenali region and less in the other regions.

In 2007 a new chairperson, Mrs. Kuchipudi Vijaya, was elected and the policy was reformed. The NRI Cell restricted the amount of funding per region. Mr. Veeraswamy explains that 'before this reform, 90 per cent of the NRI donations went to the Tenali region, so limitation caused a huge decline in donations'.

### **Website**

The website of the ZP Guntur (as shown in Figure 7) is not actively used for raising donations from NRIs. The website is very basic and several hyperlinks are not working and information is missing. According to Mr. Veeraswamy the most important purpose of the website is providing contact details of the ZP members, explain 'how to start a project' to NRIs and upload the forms and inform about donors. He states that the main reason for having such a basic website is the lack of knowledge of the chairperson and the CEO. He explains that there will be new elections in the next year and if there will be a new chairperson who possibly has more IT knowledge and sees more possibilities for the website, the current website will most likely be renewed for more active use. But this is only up to the chairperson and the CEO.

### **Conclusion**

The website of the Zilla Parishad Guntur only provides limited information. The information is static so there is no interaction. This case shows that 'real life' linkages are crucial for raising donations. Most of the donations to the NRI Cell are caste-based and given to projects in the home village of the donor. Most of the NRIs that donated were directly linked to the former chairperson who personally encouraged them to donate. This former chairperson belongs to the Kamma caste and comes from Tenali, so a great amount of development projects are beneficial to the Kamma community of this region. Under the current chairperson, who belongs to a different caste, the policy of the NRI Cell was reformed and as a consequence the donations

declined. New donations are not actively being raised with the help of a website, as the website is only used to share limited information and as a practical tool for uploading a donation form.

The organisation described in the following section is related to the NRI Cell of the Zilla Parishad, which again illustrates the close caste-based networks in Guntur district.

## **5.5 The Tenali Prabhata Sangham (NRI Parents Association)**

In several villages of Guntur District, the parents of NRIs form networks, or so-called NRI Parents Associations. One such association is the Tenali Prabhata Sangham. It was started in 2002 with Dr. Vasireddy Nageshwara Prasad as president. The official statutes of the association state that ‘any person whose blood relative or spouse is living abroad as an NRI for the purpose of job or higher education or business or profession is eligible to become a member’ (Statutes TPS No. 2.1, page 2). The general aim is to create an interactive forum for the NRIs of Tenali and the general public of this area. In the statutes, twenty six ‘aims and objectives’ are described that mainly focus on connecting with NRIs and strengthen the ties with the diaspora from Tenali. The main goal is to raise donations for development and philanthropic activities and to seek matching funds. One of the aims described is to create an interactive website that can be downloaded across the world (Statutes TPS No. 3.2.9, page 5), but until now, nine years later, they have not created a website.

### **The initiative**

The Tenali Prabhata Sangham was officially started in 2002. The person who came up with the idea was Prof. Gali Sambasive Rao, a good friend of Mr. Nageshwara Prasad. He lived in the USA for forty years where he worked as a professor of linguistics (Sanskrit, Telugu and English). When he came back to live in Tenali he did not have a lot of local contact, so he asked Mr. Nageshwara Prasad to be the president of the association. Unfortunately Prof. Gali Sambasive Rao passed away last year.

### **The association and the projects**

The Tenali Prabhata Sangham is the official name of the association but according to Mr. Nageshwara Prasad most people call it NRI parents association, because most of the members (in total forty five) are NRI parents. ‘Prabhata’ means ‘no distance’ and ‘Sangham’ means ‘association’. The main aim is to help NRIs who want to invest in development projects in their home villages. The projects that the Tenali Prabhata Sangham has been involved in are mostly projects in rural areas, small villages that are the home villages of the NRIs who donate. Mr. Nageshwara Prasad explains that most of the NRIs from Tenali come to India once every two

years ('due to their busy schedules') and they usually stay for two or three weeks. When they come to India they often want to make a contribution. They have a certain amount of money they want to donate for their home village but usually it turns out to be more difficult than expected because of local issues and local politics.

There are many different communities and castes in the villages with different interests that make donating often more complicated than expected. In many cases the NRIs are willing to donate during their stay, but often it doesn't happen because of the situation locally. This problem was one of the main reasons that the NRI parents association (TPS) was started. They first started by making a directory of the contact details of the NRIs and they also approached all village elders to inform them about acute needs to provide information about what projects were needed in specific areas.

Mr. Nageshwara Prasad describes their role as mediator. He further explains that during the same time the NRI Cell of the Zilla Parishad Guntur was started and because they offered matching funds it became more attractive for NRIs to donate. However, to get a matching fund a lot of paperwork was required and the proposals had to be approved by the whole board. Mr. Nageshwara Prasad mentions that he knows the person who was Chairman at that time very well (which probably made it much easier to get the funds from the ZP). The Tenali Prabhata Sangham helped the NRIs and the villages by doing all the necessary paperwork so the NRI only had to bother about transferring the money and deciding whose name they wanted on the project.

### **Current activities**

Over the last few years the association has not been as active as it used to be. This change is related to the event described in the previous case. Mr. Nageshwara Prasad explains: 'since a few years the NRI Cell of the Zilla Parishad doesn't provide the matching grants anymore so in 2008 they completed their last development project'. Although the TPS is not involved in development projects anymore, the members still come together every two or three months to conduct other activities. Mr. Nageshwara Prasad explains that the active members are helping illiterate parents who want to visit their children abroad with paperwork, booking tickets, the English language, etc. They send e-mails to their networks in the USA in the states where the parents are headed, for guidance when necessary. Another activity is to interfere with wedding matches: 'we often track the details of a potential wedding candidate for both NRIs as for the people here with the contacts in our broad network'.

### **Website**

From the start of the TPS they were planning to start a website to inform about the development

projects. Since the need was never really the website was never created. Without the promotion on the website there was already enough interest from NRIs in donating money. Usually there were encouraged within their family network. Now that they have completed the last project in 2008, a website will be of no use anymore.

## **Conclusion**

In a few villages in Guntur district, parents of NRIs have formed associations. The first association is the Tenali Prabhata Sangham. Their general aim is to create an interactive forum for the NRIs of Tenali and the general public of this area. Since they started, they ‘mediated’ between a lot of NRIs and projects. For all these projects they use the matching grant of the NRI Cell of the Zilla Parishad and the president had a close connection to the Chairman (same caste, same home village). Direct connections and networks have been important to start projects. Since the ZP decreased the matching funds from 30/70 to 50/50 and restricted the amount per region, the Prabhata Sangham is also less active in philanthropic activities. They still are involved in more practical matters as they have close direct networks with a large amount of NRIs from Tenali and they keep an address directory of the NRIs that they share with village members when needed. They form a platform for communication and information for both NRIs and the community of Tenali. They never developed their plans to create a website for linking up with NRIs, so virtual space has not been a crucial factor for the association.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Websites can be used as a tool to create more awareness and to inform about the development, but not directly for raising donations. The important purpose of websites is providing information about a project online. This increases the accountability and informing about the development of the project creates transparency. Online tools like payment gateways are only used for small donations (usually less than USD 100). Donations of more than USD 100 are very seldom given by NRIs without an already existing link with the project ‘in the real world’. The importance of these existing links is proved by the amount of donations given to caste-based organisations. Virtual space can be a useful tool to strengthen existing ties with Telugu NRIs, but rarely websites can directly motivate NRIs to donate without having an existing link with that organisation.



## **6. A SHIFT IN USERS OF THE TELUGU ‘BRIDGESPACE’**

The fourth chapter of this research report already highlighted the development of Telugu websites since the emergence of the internet around 1991. During the first ten years after the internet was introduced these websites were mainly created and visited by Telugu migrants living in Western countries. Mr. Allipuram explains that during that time Telugu NRIs mainly visited general news portals, general websites on Andhra Pradesh and other websites that provide cultural information on language, music, films, etc. When comparing the Telugu oriented websites that were active at that time with the current range of Telugu oriented websites, an increase in amount and changes in content can be observed (this is illustrated in chapter 4).

This chapter describes another change in the Telugu bridgespace. There has not only been a shift in the people that visit the Telugu websites, but also a shift in the people that create and maintain these websites. Internet access has improved in India and now an increasing amount of Telugus living in India are actively using the internet. Today, several organisations based in Andhra Pradesh are directing their online communication towards ‘their NRIs’.

This chapter illustrates the ‘shift of users’ by describing two case studies of Telugu philanthropy organisations that are active in Guntur. The first case, describing the NRI Alumni organization GMCANA, shows an organisation that was started by NRIs living in North America. They have been active in virtual space since the emergence of the internet. The second case deals with the organisation Sankara Eye Care Institutions and shows an example of an organisation that became active in virtual space more recently. Although Sankara Eye Institutions is initiative of people living in India, they receive a huge amount of donations from NRIs, which they actively raise by using the internet. This case illustrates ‘the local as active participant in Telugu bridgespace’. Before continuing on the two cases, the following section will shortly explain factors that contributed to the fact that Telugus living in India are increasingly trying to link with their diaspora.

### **6.1 Re-strengthening ties with the diaspora**

The Indian diaspora is different from other groups of migrants as they demonstrate an unusual concentration in highly skilled professions (Adams and Ghose 2003: 420). These migrants have a distinct edge in the promotion of their culture and economy, especially under the conditions of contemporary globalisation (Bhat and Narayan 2010: 13). In many parts of the world, the Indian community has become an influential minority, one that ‘is known for their professional

accomplishments as IT professionals and entrepreneurial skills as big businessman' and they are seen as a well-educated and well-earning group (Soni and Soni 2006: 272).

The Indian government officially acknowledged the presence of Indian diaspora during the new millennium. The previous chapter already explained that the Indian government puts effort in re-strengthening the ties with the diaspora by taking up all kinds of initiatives and changing current policies. In a book called 'The idea of giving' published by the India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians, the Indian government acknowledges the contributions of their diaspora:

*The Idea of giving* celebrates the power of giving. It pays tribute to some of India's illustrious sons and daughters, who having forged their destinies in different parts of the world, chose to give back to our country, in part of substantial measure, the fruits of their fortune (Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs).

Not only is the government increasingly trying to involve the Indian diaspora in the Indian economy, but their potential has also been 'discovered' by people living in India. The following quote was published on an Indian-based website called 'Wake up call for India'. It illustrates how several of these websites try to convince readers of the economic potential of the Indian diaspora.

There are two Indias, one where we live and the other is the Virtual India, with an estimated GDP of US \$ +240 billion per year, where about 20 to 25 million NRIs and PIOs live. Their hearts are in India and they are emotionally tied to India. If we can attract them and woo them, they could be a good source of funding projects for India's growth plans.<sup>17</sup>

In the quote 'two India's' are distinguished, 'the India where we live in' and 'the virtual India'. As it is written from the point of view of somebody living in India, 'the virtual' refers to the Indian diaspora that can be reached in cyberspace. This quote is very applicable for the general attitude of the people living in India that have acknowledged the potential of the Indian diaspora. The quote can also be matched with the increasing amount of philanthropy organisations based in Andhra Pradesh that raise money from Telugu migrants.

These philanthropy projects are initiated by different kinds of organisations. One such organisation is the political party Telugu Desam. Since three years this party created a website

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<sup>17</sup> Source: [www.wakeupcall.org/administration\\_in\\_india/the\\_virtual\\_india.php#top](http://www.wakeupcall.org/administration_in_india/the_virtual_india.php#top) (accessed on 18-01-2011)

that is specifically directed to NRIs. The following text that was written by the president of the party has been published on the website:

The number of Telugus living abroad has made TDP rethink on reaching out to the Telugus overseas. In the 25th year of TDP, has been envisaged as a platform to reconnect Telugus with the culture, traditions, progress and growth of their Telugu homeland. It facilitates the involvement of Telugu people living and working away from their homeland, in getting closer to Andhra Pradesh, their home, through the various programmes in the fields of health, education, rural development relief measures being implemented by Telugu Desam the Party under the leadership of its President, Shri Nara Chandrababu Naidu.<sup>18</sup>

The quote illustrates the changed attitude towards NRIs, in this case towards Telugu NRIs. As a consequence of this changed attitude and the willingness of NRIs to provide financial support, a large amount of philanthropic projects have already successfully been taken up. The organisations in the following two sections are both examples of successful initiatives.

## **6.2 NRI alumni organisation: GMCANA**

GMCANA (Guntur Medical College Alumni North America) is an alumni organisation that was started by NRIs living in North America. The members all studied at the Guntur Medical College and migrated to the USA to work as doctors. Their mission is ‘To help develop Guntur Medical College and Government General Hospital Guntur, as premier modern Medical Education facilities for undergraduate and postgraduate medical students, staff, and medical community at large’.<sup>19</sup> GMCANA was formally incorporated as a general non-profit corporation in 1981 and Dr. Ravikumar Tripuraneni,<sup>20</sup> former president of GMCANA, states that there are about 1500 alumni of Guntur Medical College living in North America. He explains that GMCANA today has over 1200 alumni who are active members.

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<sup>18</sup> Source: [www.telugudesam.org/nritdp/aboutnritdp.php](http://www.telugudesam.org/nritdp/aboutnritdp.php) (visited on 21-05-2011)

<sup>19</sup> Source: [www.gmcana.org](http://www.gmcana.org) (visited on 20-02-2011)

<sup>20</sup> Dr. Ravikumar Tripuraneni was the Chairman of Communications Committee in 1996 and he took the leadership in developing the website which has now become the major communication tool for the organisation. In the year 2000 Dr. Ravikumar Tripuraneni was inaugurated as GMCANA president and now he is still very involved in the website’s activities.

## The contributions

The members of GMCANA donated money for various projects like building operating rooms, a new wing at the fever hospital, furnishing urgently needed equipment, supplying books and journals to the library, providing scholarships, rewarding deserving students and building a new auditorium.<sup>21</sup>

The amount of donations per year varies significantly. Over the last two years we raised around 2 million dollars. At the moment the most important project is the Podila GMCANA Superspeciality Center and we want to raise about 20 crore (200 million rupees) for this project.<sup>22</sup>

When entering the auditorium of Guntur Medical College, the contributions of GMCANA directly become visible, through eight big black marble templates on the wall showing names and categories with different amounts of money (varying from USD 100 to USD 50,000) that members donated. On the first floor in the auditorium there is a large marble logo of GMCANA on the floor with the words ‘we care’ in the middle (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Auditorium Guntur Medical College

The contributions to Guntur Medical College and Guntur Medical Hospital (GMC) are not only financial, but ‘experience and knowledge also play an important role in our contributions’, Dr. Chowdary Jampala<sup>23</sup> explains. Some dedicated members are deeply involved in policy issues and

<sup>21</sup> GMCANA brochure 2002: page 14

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Chowdary Jampala is a former president of GMCANA and he was inaugurated in 1996. During his term GMCANA entered the World Wide Web with its own website [www.gmcana.org](http://www.gmcana.org).

they share their ideas about development. They write extensive advice reports and proposals for changes and reforms. In 1997 Dr. Chowdary Jampala wrote a strategic improvement plan where he sums up several points of improvement including a concrete budget plan. The following quote from the plan shows how committed some GMCANA members are:

As alumni, we have both philanthropic and vested interests in ensuring that educational standards at GMC are on par with or exceed accepted standards. We feel an obligation to our alma mater to ensure it remains a prestigious institution and that its graduates are treated with respect worldwide. We can achieve this only if we ensure that the educational facilities available to the trainees are adequate and are of the state of the art.<sup>24</sup>

### **GMCANA in the virtual world**

GMCANA has a very active website<sup>25</sup> that was created in 1998. Dr. Chowdary Jampala explains that ‘the activity and involvement of the alumni members increased significantly after launching this website’. Dr. Ravikumar Tripuraneni, who has been responsible for the website for ten years already, states that ‘the whole organization revived and activated and we have been able to take up so many projects and programs since the website and electronic communications started’. The impact of the websites is also reflected by the increase of members, since ‘in two to three years, the amount of members increased from around 400 to more or less 1200 members’, as he explains.

Since they launched their website in 1998, there have not been big changes in the layout and the content: ‘It has been expanded and improved somewhat, but, the basic features remained the same’, Dr. Tripuraneni explains. ‘Currently we are in the process of revamping and changing the website’ he states. Before the end of 2011 the look of the website had to be changed a bit, because ‘as we are becoming more professional the website has to look more professional as well’. Also ‘unnecessary links have to be removed as well as old documents and we want to make it a bit easier to navigate’.

Dr. Tripuraneni explains that the GMCANA website serves as a very important tool to inform about the projects and how the donation money is spent. Accountability is created as ‘it is important for members to see and to read how their money is spent. This increases the chance that they will donate again’. The most important content on the website according to Dr. Tripuraneni is the ‘alumni news’ and the ‘database search tool for members’. One part of the

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<sup>24</sup> Strategic plan by Dr. Chowdary Jampala, 1997

<sup>25</sup> URL of the website: [www.gmcana.org](http://www.gmcana.org) (February 2011)

website is open to the public and one part is only accessible with a log-in. He further explains 'the log-in part is only meant for executive committee and communications committee members to enter and to update the database, alumni news and to do email updates etcetera'. To the question whether a website is a useful tool for raising money in GMCANA his answer is 'absolutely'. He explains that 'it is much easier to reach hundreds of alumni with very little expenses and that it is also quicker than earlier communication channels'. Moreover, 'it is easier to post pictures of the projects at various stages on the website or send them through emails or email newsletters'. The members don't make donations directly through the website as there is no payment gateway. Dr. Tripuraneni says that they 'did not set up to donate through the website as the need is not there, because most members prefer to pay with cheques'.

Another advantage of being active in virtual space is that it creates possibilities for 'donor advertisement'. For each project it is shown exactly who donated and what amount they have given. Dr. Tripuraneni adds 'they also show this information in the semi-annual newsletter and in the digital alumni news e-mail'. He argues that it is very important for the donors to 'get this recognition' and 'very rarely members do anonymous donations'.

## **Conclusion**

The emergence of the internet has been of major importance for the Guntur Medical College Alumni North America. There was already a strong 'real life' connection, but the 'virtual space' helped increase the amount of members. Due to better communication tools and an own virtual platform members started feeling more close and involved in GMCANA. A lot of members started visiting the (real life) biannual conferences and reunions, where they met other members (some members only 'met' or read about each other in virtual space before on the website, in a newsletters or on donation lists). Therefore, at these occasions 'virtual contacts' turn into 'real life' contacts. Due to better communication, the website and e-mail donations increased. GMCANA became more professional and created higher accountability which is very important for fundraising. The GMCANA members are not just passive givers, but (as they themselves describe) 'participating members'. So a 'real-life consequence' of the internet is more activity within the organisation in the form of online communication and real-life meetings. Another real-life consequence of this increased activity are the development projects in the home region at the Guntur Medical College and the Guntur General Hospital.

## **6.3 The Sankara Eye Care Institutions in India**

The Sankara Eye Care Institutions are based in India and they run eye care hospitals and eye camps. The mission statement is 'to reach out to the rural poor and provide quality eye care free of cost to the needy by building operationally self-sufficient super specialty eye care hospitals

across India' and their goal is to 'eradicate curable blindness in India by the year 2020'. Annually they perform over 105,000 eye surgeries and weekly there are rural outreach camps being organised<sup>26</sup>. The first Eye Hospital was founded in 1977 in Coimbatore and currently there are nine hospitals all over India, one is in Guntur. Sankara Eye Hospital Guntur was opened in 2004. Chief Executive Officer of Sankara Eye Hospital, Dr. Ram Parthasarathy, explains that 90 per cent of the money that is invested in the hospital in Guntur is being donated by NRIs, mainly from the USA. A large amount of money that is flowing directly to the hospital every year is donated in name of TANA (Telugu Association of North America). 'Last year TANA gave us 1.7 million dollar' he told me. Sankara Eye Hospital Guntur sends what he calls a 'wish list with specific goals' to TANA and they ask for a certain amount of money to accomplish these goals.

To be able to better reach NRIs the Sankara Eye Foundation was started in 1998. This foundation was started by three NRIs living in California and currently the foundation has more than 100 active volunteers. The majority of the money is raised through their own events, booths at other events, donations including Founding Memberships and advertising. Dr. Parthasarathy explains that the big donations are directly donated to the hospital in India, while smaller amounts from individuals are not donated to the hospital directly, but usually come in through the foundation as this is more beneficial for tax purpose. The website of Sankara Eye Care Institutions ([www.sankaraeye.com](http://www.sankaraeye.com)) is, in contrast to the website of the foundation, not used as a payment gateway. Its main purpose is however, to provide general information on treatments for patients and to provide information on activities to the donors. 'The website of the foundation ([www.giftofvision.org](http://www.giftofvision.org)) is a very important tool for raising the donations', Dr. Parthasarathy explains.

Mr. Venkat Madipatti, who is responsible for the website of the foundation, explains that they have been growing progressively in the last ten years: 'We crossed a million dollars in 2003 (it was about USD 1.1 million) and last year's revenue was about USD 4.0 million'. He says that 90 per cent of this money is donated by NRIs living in the USA, the other 10 per cent by NRIs from other countries or non-Indians. Most of the donations come from individuals. On top of that, organisations like TANA help to promote the cause among its members and they organise fundraising events as well as directly sponsor the Guntur Hospital and their eye camps around Guntur district. He explains that donations mostly come in through mailed cheques and about 25 per cent of the donations come online through the payment gateway. In general these amounts are smaller (up to USD 200). Dr. Parthasarathy tells that 'particularly for bigger donations NRIs find it important to get recognition'. They want their names to be published somewhere. He

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<sup>26</sup> Source: [www.giftofvision.org/aboutses/WhoisSEF.htm](http://www.giftofvision.org/aboutses/WhoisSEF.htm)

explains that ‘it’s important for their status and the people of Andhra are very politically minded’. Mr. Madipatti explains that they usually recognise the donors in the hospitals with their names in the rooms or at the Wall of Founders (see Figure 10) and also whenever they do fundraising events, they issue a press release and in that press release they invite big donors.



Figure 10: ‘Walls of founders’ and wall plate in Sankara Eye Hospital Guntur

The Sankara Eye Foundation actively advertises to connect with new donors and to promote their activities. Mr. Venkat Madipatti lists a few channels they used in the past: Namaste America TV, Zee TV, KLOK Radio in San Francisco Bay Area, Sulekha website (sulekha.com) and during their ‘end of the year campaign’ in October to December they also advertise in few additional local Indian magazines. With existing donors they mainly communicate through newsletters: ‘we publish four newsletters, one per quarter and it is a paper booklet which contains the past events, details from India on the number surgeries performed, future events, any mile stones achieved etcetera’.

## Conclusion

The Sankara Eye Institutions raise 90 per cent of their donations from NRIs. Although the initiatives and the decisions are made in India, they are also being supported by the two NRI organisations, more in particular the Sankara Eye Foundation USA and TANA through which most of the donation money comes in. The Sankara Eye Foundation actively uses virtual space to provide information and to raise donations. Online payment gateways are only used for small donations. A more important function of the website seems to create awareness and accountability among NRIs and another important function is giving recognition to the donors.



## 6.4 Conclusion

The first ten years after the emergence of the internet, the Telugu bridgespace was mainly used by Telugu migrants to communicate with other migrants and to share and search for information on the home region with an eye to preserve and strengthen emotional links with their home region. Today, this bridgespace is also increasingly inhabited by Telugus in India who actively search for ways to connect with their diaspora, mainly for fundraising.

The case of Guntur Medical College Alumni North America is an example of an organisation that was initiated by migrants themselves. It shows how the internet can be used to increase activity within an existing organisation. For GMCANA the internet has been crucial and this case clearly shows that the real and virtual world constantly influence each other. There is a continuous interplay of different communication channels. The case also shows that many donors are not just passive givers, but they are also very much involved in the activities in their home region. The GMCANA members describe themselves as 'participating members'. One could therefore argue that a 'real-life consequence' of internet is more local development activity. In this case the internet, thus, has been a crucial factor for local development at Guntur Medical College and the General Hospital.

The case of Sankara Eye Care Institutions shows how an organisation that is based in India actively uses virtual space to raise donations from the diaspora. Like the GMCANA case, this case is also an example of how the virtual is used to bring about changes in the real world. It therefore can be seen as an example of how the local community in India has changed into 'active recipients' in the last ten years.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This report shows that many Telugu migrants and Telugus living in their home country interact in ‘virtual space’. This interaction influences their lives in what can be seen as ‘real space’. In this report, the impact of diaspora philanthropy websites in the ‘real space’ has been examined.

When comparing the range of Telugu websites that were created in the years after the emergence of the internet with the range of Telugu websites that exist today, several changes can be observed. The first change that has taken place is the strong increase in the amount of websites. Secondly, the layout of most websites now has become more professional. The content of these website furthermore, has significantly altered. A third notable change is a shift in the users and creators of the ‘Telugu bridgespace’ as Telugus living in India have become more prominent in virtual space. The websites that were set up for Telugu migrants in the years after the emergence of internet in 1991 were predominantly created by the Telugu migrants themselves. Nowadays however, an increased number of these websites are created and maintained by Telugus living in India.

Many websites in the Telugu bridgespace have been created with the purpose of raising donations from Telugu migrants. Philanthropic organisations initiated by both Telugu migrants and Telugus living in India make use of the internet in order to raise donations. The ‘NRI donations’ collected by these organisation are usually spent on development activities in Andhra Pradesh. The amount of ‘diaspora philanthropy websites’ is growing rapidly, especially since organisations can create free webpages on social media platforms like Facebook. For some organisations, like the NRI alumni organisation: Guntur Medical College Alumni North America, launching a website has caused an enormous increase in the amount and the activity of its members. For other organisations, like the Sankara Eye Institutions in India, the consequences of starting a website have become visible in the high numbers of donations.

The internet, therefore, can be an effective medium for diasporic philanthropic organisations. A website can increase the level of accountability of an organisation by providing information on projects in order to increase transparency. Websites can also be useful as they can simplify the donation process for migrants through online payment gateways. These tools however, usually attract smaller donations (less than USD 100). Another advantage of the use of websites can be found in their functioning as platforms, by showing the names of the donors and the amount they donated to a wide audience, which has proved to be an important motive for Telugu migrants to donate. The fact that this ‘donor advertising’ is an important motivation

shows that Telugu migrants usually have their own agenda when donating money to their home region and they carefully choose the channels and organisations that they give their money to.

Because of the importance of existing networks, websites are generally not used for creating 'new links'. Although the internet can 'bridge' the physical space between two geographical places it must not be understood as a 'homogeneous common platform' where all users of the bridgespace interact with each other. There has to be a 'real life connection' and this connection can be strengthened through the internet.

By exploring the relations between real and virtual spaces in the lives of a group of migrants and the people from their home region, we can get a better understanding of the way these spaces influence each other. Scholars argue that we should not think of the real and the virtual as two totally separate worlds as this creates a 'false binary' (Gajjala 2008: 38). The findings presented in this report show that when people or organisations use the internet more frequently, the real and the virtual become more synthesised. In the case of Guntur Medical College Alumni North America the internet plays a crucial role. Since this organisation started a website, the real and the virtual world constantly influence each other. And like the literature suggests, they cannot be seen as two separate worlds as they cannot exist separately for this organisation.

The literature on Indian diasporas in virtual space has mainly focused on migrants interacting with other migrants on the internet. For the Telugu diaspora this one-sided focus can be explained by the fact that it is mainly the migrants themselves who were active in cyberspace in the years after the internet emerged -- many moved to Western countries where the internet access was relatively good. The findings described in this report have shown the virtual spaces that Telugu migrants create and maintain in order to share information and to interact online with other Telugu migrants. It also showed how, more recently, Telugus living in India also create and maintain virtual spaces in order to interact with their diaspora.

As this study only focuses on the Telugu community, it would be interesting to examine whether this kind of online interaction also takes place in other ethnic or sub-ethnic groups of migrants and the people from their home regions. If it does, there should be more attention for this 'shift of actors' in the academic field. Adams and Ghose (2003) already acknowledged the role of the 'home region of the migrant' in the bridgespace. This research has taken it one step further as it described organisations from the 'home region of the migrant' that create websites addressed to NRIs. It has shed light on the consequences of this 'shift of users' within the virtual space, and their lives in the 'real space'.

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## APPENDIX I: WEBSITES OF TELUGU NRI ASSOCIATIONS

	Website name	URL	Location	Created in year
1	World Telugu Association (WTF)	<a href="http://www.worldtelugu.org">www.worldtelugu.org</a>	WORLDWIDE	not visible
2	Telugu Association of North America (TANA)	<a href="http://www.tana.org">www.tana.org</a>	USA - North America	not visible
3	America Telugu Association (ATA)	<a href="http://www.ataworld.org">www.ataworld.org</a>	USA - General	not visible
4	Telangana NRI Association (TeNA)	<a href="http://www.telangananri.com">www.telangananri.com</a>	USA - General	not visible
5	North American Telugu Association (NATA)	<a href="http://www.nataus.org">www.nataus.org</a>	USA - North America	not visible
6	North American Telugu Society (NATS)	<a href="http://www.natsworld.org">www.natsworld.org</a>	USA - North America	not visible
7	Telugu Association of Greater Delaware Valley (TAGDV)	<a href="http://www.tagdv.com/newweb">www.tagdv.com/newweb</a>	USA - Delaware Valley	2010
8	Arizona Telugu Association (ATU)	<a href="http://www.aztelugu.org">www.aztelugu.org</a>	USA - Arizona	1999-2002
9	Bay Area Telugu Association (BATA)	<a href="http://www.bata.org/site">www.bata.org/site</a>	USA - Fremont California	2005
10	Colorado Telugu Association (CTA)	<a href="http://www.coloradotelugu.org">www.coloradotelugu.org</a>	USA - Colorado	2010
11	Telugu Association of Jacksonville Area (TAJA)	<a href="http://www.taja.us">www.taja.us</a>	USA - Jacksonville	2006-2010
12	Telugu Association of Kentuckiana (TAK)	<a href="http://www.kytelugupeople.org">www.kytelugupeople.org</a>	USA - Kentucky	not visible
13	Telugu Association of Metro Atlanta	<a href="http://www.tama.org">www.tama.org</a>	USA - Atlanta	not visible
14	Detroit Telugu Association	<a href="http://www.detroittelugu.org">www.detroittelugu.org</a>	USA - Detroit	not visible
15	Telugu Cultural Association Austin Texas	<a href="http://www.austintelugu.org">www.austintelugu.org</a>	USA - Austin Texas	2010
16	Telugu Association of Bloomington	<a href="http://www.tabil.org">www.tabil.org</a>	USA - Bloomington	2007
17	Telugu Association of San Antonio (TASA)	<a href="http://www.tasatexas.org">www.tasatexas.org</a>	USA - San Antonio Texas	2004-2009
18	Telugu Association of North Texas (TANTEX)	<a href="http://www.tantex.org">www.tantex.org</a>	USA - Texas	2011
19	Greater Washinton Telugu Society	<a href="http://www.gwtcs.org">www.gwtcs.org</a>	USA - Washinton	2006
20	Telugu Association of Greater Chicago	<a href="http://www.tagc.org">www.tagc.org</a>	USA - Chicago	2010
21	Tri-State Telugu Association	<a href="http://www.telugu.org">www.telugu.org</a>	USA - Chicago	2010
22	Telugu Cultural Association of Houston	<a href="http://tc Hou.tripod.com">tc Hou.tripod.com</a>	USA - Houston	not visible
23	Telugu Association of Greater Kansas City	<a href="http://www.tagkc.org">www.tagkc.org</a>	USA - Kansas	not visible
24	Telugu Association of Greater Boston	<a href="http://www.tagb.org">www.tagb.org</a>	USA - Boston	2007
25	Telugu Association of South Carolina	<a href="http://www.tasus.org">www.tasus.org</a>	USA - South Carolina	not visible
26	Harrisburg Telugu Association (HTA)	<a href="http://www.ourhta.com">www.ourhta.com</a>	USA - Pennsylvania	2010
27	Telugu Association of Greater Sacramento (TAGS)	<a href="http://www.sactelugu.org">www.sactelugu.org</a>	USA - California	2010
28	Telugu Association of Greater Greenville (TAGG)	<a href="http://www.taggsc.org">www.taggsc.org</a>	USA - Greenville	not visible
29	Telugu Association of Central Ohia (TACO)	<a href="http://www.tacosite.com">www.tacosite.com</a>	USA - Ohio	2008-2011
30	Telugu Association of Greater Charlotte Area (TAGCA)	<a href="http://www.tagca.org">www.tagca.org</a>	USA - Charlotte Area	not visible
31	Troy Telugu Association Michigan	<a href="http://www.troytelugu.org">www.troytelugu.org</a>	USA - Michigan	not visible
32	Telugu Association of Greater Orlando (TAGO)	<a href="http://www.orlandotelugu.org">www.orlandotelugu.org</a>	USA - Orlando	2005
33	Telugu Association of South Florida	<a href="http://www.tasf.net">www.tasf.net</a>	USA - South Florida	not visible
34	Telugu Canada Foundation	<a href="http://www.telugucanada.com">www.telugucanada.com</a>	Canada	2010
35	Telugu Cultural Association of Greater Toronto (TCA GT)	<a href="http://www.telugutoronto.com">www.telugutoronto.com</a>	Canada - Toronto	not visible
36	Andhra Cultural Association of Ottawa	<a href="http://www.pardesi.org/ottawaandhra">www.pardesi.org/ottawaandhra</a>	Canada - Ottawa	not visible
37	Telugu Montreal (not official association)	<a href="http://sites.google.com/site/telugumon">sites.google.com/site/telugumon</a>	Canada - Montreal	not visible
38	Telugu Association of Australia Inc. (TAAI)	<a href="http://www.taai.ozind.com">www.taai.ozind.com</a>	Australia - Melbourne	2010
39	Queensland Telugu Association	<a href="http://www.qldtelugucommunity.org">www.qldtelugucommunity.org</a>	Australia - Queensland	not visible
40	Western Australia Telugu Association	<a href="http://www.perthteluguwaru.com">www.perthteluguwaru.com</a>	Australia - Perth	2009
41	Telugu Association Sydney (TAS)	<a href="http://www.sydneytelugu.org">www.sydneytelugu.org</a>	Australia - Sydney	2009
42	Telugu Association of South Australia	<a href="http://www.tasa.asn.au">www.tasa.asn.au</a>	Australia - Adelaide	2010
43	New-Zealand Telugu Association	<a href="http://www.nzta.org">www.nzta.org</a>	New-Zealand	2008
44	European Telugu Association (ETA)	<a href="http://www.eurotelugu.org">www.eurotelugu.org</a>	Europe	not visible
45	Belfast Telugu Association	<a href="http://www.belfastteluguassociation.co">www.belfastteluguassociation.co</a>	Schotland	2010
46	Denmark Telugu Association	<a href="http://www.denmarkteluguassociation.co">www.denmarkteluguassociation.co</a>	Denmark	2010
47	Telugu Velugu Germany (TVG)	<a href="http://www.teluguvelugu.de">www.teluguvelugu.de</a>	Germany	2006
48	Telugu Association of Germany	<a href="http://thettag.tripod.com">thettag.tripod.com</a>	Germany - Hamburg	not visible
49	United Kingdom Telugu Association	<a href="http://www.uktas.org.uk">www.uktas.org.uk</a>	UK	2010
50	Telugu Association of London	<a href="http://www.taluk.org">www.taluk.org</a>	England - London	2005-2009
51	Telugu Association of Scotland (TAS)	<a href="http://www.teluguscot.org.uk">www.teluguscot.org.uk</a>	Scotland	2010
52	Ireland Telugu Association	<a href="http://www.itaireland.org/ita1">www.itaireland.org/ita1</a>	Ireland	not visible
53	Sweden Telugu Community	<a href="http://www.swedentelugucommunity.co">www.swedentelugucommunity.co</a>	Sweden	not visible
54	Telugu Andhra Community in the Republic of South Africa	<a href="http://www.telugu.co.za">www.telugu.co.za</a>	South Africa	not visible
55	Telugu Association of Botswana	<a href="http://botstelugu.blogspot.com/2007/08">botstelugu.blogspot.com/2007/08</a>	Botswana	not visible
56	Singapore Telugu Samajam	<a href="http://www.singaporetelugusamajam.org">www.singaporetelugusamajam.org</a>	Singapore	2007
57	Telugu Association of Malaysia	<a href="http://www.telugumas.org">www.telugumas.org</a>	Malaysia	2010
58	Telugu Association of Malaysia (YOUTH)	<a href="http://tamyouth.blogspot.com">tamyouth.blogspot.com</a>	Malaysia	not visible
59	Telugu Association of Japan	<a href="http://www.thkts.com/index.html">www.thkts.com/index.html</a>	Japan	not visible
60	Telugu Association of Thailand	<a href="http://www.teluguthai.org">www.teluguthai.org</a>	Thailand	2010
61	Blogspot Thailand	<a href="http://telugutanam.blogspot.com/2010/">telugutanam.blogspot.com/2010/</a>	Thailand	not visible
62	Rasamayi Telugu Association	<a href="http://www.rasamayidubai.org">www.rasamayidubai.org</a>	UAE - Dubai	not visible
63	Telugu Sama Samithi Kuwait	<a href="http://www.tkskuwait.com">www.tkskuwait.com</a>	Kuwait	2007
64	Telugu Kala Samithi (TKS)	<a href="http://www.telugubahrain.com">www.telugubahrain.com</a>	Bahrain	not visible
65	Telugu association of Russia (Vedika)	<a href="http://wn.com/Vedika">wn.com/Vedika</a> The Telugu ass	Russia	not visible

# ABOUT THE PROVINCIAL GLOBALISATION PROGRAMME

The Provincial Globalisation research programme ('ProGlo') explores transnational connections between Overseas Indians and their home regions, especially the effects of 'reverse flows' of resources, including remittances, philanthropy, investments, and knowledge.

The programme consists of five independent but interlinked research projects (three PhD and two postdoctoral) located in three states of India – Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Gujarat. The research documents a broad range of resource transfers by migrants, including economic resources (such as household remittances, investments in land), social remittances (including flows of ideas, support for NGOs), and cultural flows (such as religious donations), and their influence at the regional level.

The PhD projects are intensive studies of three selected regions – Anand District in Gujarat, Guntur District in Andhra Pradesh, and Dakshina Kannada District in Karnataka – focusing on the effects of resource transfers by migrants in the key provincial towns and their rural hinterlands. The two post-doctoral projects provide macro- and meso-level mappings of transnational linkages and flows at the regional, state, and national levels. By tracing these transnational networks and the modalities and destinations of resource transfers comparatively across three regions, the research programme provides insights into the economic, social, political, and cultural consequences of Overseas Indians' engagements with India.

*'ProGlo' is a five-year collaborative research programme of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore, India, funded by the WOTRO Science for Global Development programme of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), the Netherlands, initiated in 2010.*

[www.provglo.org](http://www.provglo.org)

## **Programme directors:**

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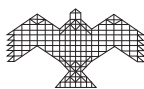
Provincial Globalisation is an international collaborative research programme of



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