

# Workshop Design

Feminist investigation of women's access to ICTs in  
sensitive geographies

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This document delineates the design of a two-day interactive workshop held in 2017 in Manipur, India by The Bachchao Project with the support of Integrated Rural Development Service Organisation (IRDSO). The workshop was a part of a pilot project to research the effects of unreliable mobile networks and intentional Internet shutdowns on the lives and livelihoods of women in Manipur. 16 women activists, NGO workers, and entrepreneurs from Manipur participated in this workshop designed in keeping with the cultural, social, economic, and political contexts of the state. A report entitled “[Of Sieges and Shutdowns](#)” comprising the findings from this workshop and subsequent research activities was released at RightsCon 2018 in Toronto, Canada.

Chinmayi S K and Rohini Lakshané of The Bachchao Project developed this design and facilitated the workshop. Feedback, suggestions and comments that could help us enrich this design for future use are welcome and much appreciated. If you would like our help in applying this design to the context of your research or advocacy, please email us: [theteam \[at\] thebachchaoproject \[dot\] org](mailto:theteam@thebachchaoproject.org)

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This document is available at

<http://thebachchaoproject.org/workshop-design-for-feminist-investigation-of-access>

## Accompanying texts

Research methodology

<http://thebachchaoproject.org/research-methodology-of-sieges-and-shutdowns>

Protocol for the workshop [PDF]

[http://thebachchaoproject.org/wp-content/uploads/Annexure-2\\_-Protocol-for-the-workshop.pdf](http://thebachchaoproject.org/wp-content/uploads/Annexure-2_-Protocol-for-the-workshop.pdf)

Consent form [PDF]

[http://thebachchaoproject.org/wp-content/uploads/Annexure-1\\_-Proforma-consent-form.pdf](http://thebachchaoproject.org/wp-content/uploads/Annexure-1_-Proforma-consent-form.pdf)

Research report <http://thebachchaoproject.org/of-sieges-and-shutdowns>

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## Aim of the workshop

To explore and document:

- a. How intentional Internet shutdowns in Manipur have affected the work, lives and livelihoods of women activists and entrepreneurs in the state.
- b. Manipuri women's access to and use of the mobile phone and the Internet.

## Day 1

### Introductions

**Description:** The participants are seated in a circular arrangement. Every participant introduces themselves with the name they are comfortable to be addressed with. They briefly speak about their professional work and mention one significant achievement of theirs in the context of using technology.

**Duration:** 30 minutes

### Setting the tone of the event

**Description:** The facilitators pitch what they hope the event would achieve. The participants are requested to express what they expect from the event. A designated note-taker writes down all the expectations. The group agrees upon a common minimum set of expectations.

Setting the values of the space and the event is extremely important because the two-day event involves intense interactions. This process begins with one of the facilitators reading aloud a set of values that could be based on the Code of Conduct and the workshop protocol set by the organisers. The group is then given an opportunity to add more values or debate the existing set of values. This step is expected to last for about 10 minutes after which the group arrives upon a common minimum set of values it would abide by for the rest of the event.

### Facilitators' pitch for doing this activity:

- To understand and document the use of the Internet in Manipur in the professional work, lives and livelihoods of diverse groups of women.
- To brainstorm potential ways of circumventing barriers to Internet access and creating awareness among the participants about their digital rights, privacy and online security.

- To understand and document how frequent intentional Internet shutdowns in Manipur have been affecting the work, lives and livelihoods of various women.

**Duration:** 25 minutes

## Session 1: Use of the mobile phone and the Internet

### **Title: A day in your Internet life**

*Materials:* Sheets of blank A4 paper, drawing materials such as Sharpies of different colours and ball pens, Post-its.

**Description of activity:** Participants to individually write down or sketch or draw their everyday use of the mobile phone and the Internet. Facilitators will ask about five people to volunteer to present their work to the group.

**Brief for the participants:** On a typical day from the time you wake up to the time you go to bed, think about all the different activities you do with the mobile phone and the Internet. Jot down the activities either as a descriptive note or as a drawing or a sketch or a mix of drawing and writing. Break them into discrete steps as much as possible. Use blank A4-sized sheets to draw or write about your typical day. You could attach Post-its to write or elaborate on specific instances of mobile phone and Internet use during your typical day. You can choose to be as creative (or not) as you like and express yourself the way you feel the most comfortable. You may use additional sheets if necessary. Do not feel concerned if you believe your drawing is poor. After you are done, we will ask some of you to volunteer to present your stories to everyone in the room.

**Duration:** 1 hour and 15 minutes

## Session 2: Trace the history of their usage of the mobile phone and the Internet

### **Title: The timescale of technology**

*Materials:* Flip charts, Sharpies, Post-its

**Description of activity:** Participants collaboratively write their collective and individual memories of significant milestones in their usage of ICTs and the Internet.

**Brief for the participants:** Tape a few flip charts together in a way that one edge of a sheet is connected to another to form along, continuous sheet of paper. Draw a timeline on it starting with the present and ending with the time of the group's first memory of using mobile phones and the Internet. You are encouraged to write your individual or community stories on Post-its and affix them to the corresponding markings on the timeline. Share your first memory, and its corresponding year, of using an information communication technology or witnessing someone in your community use it. Share the time of your first learning curve or difficulty with using mobile phones and/ or the Internet.

**Notes to the facilitator:** Ask questions as suggested below and let the participants respond to each question by themselves. This exercise is to be performed individually and not collectively.

Round 1: Memory of usage of all technology

Round 2: What was your first mobile connection and when did you get it?  
When did you get your first email account?

When did you first create a social media account?

Round 3: Modes and sites (that is, locations such as homes and cyber cafes) of Internet access in each decade  
What software applications did you use and when? [Apart from social networking applications]

Round 4: What were your difficulties in accessing the Internet and mobile services?

Collective exercise: Once the participants enter the answers on the paper timeline, they work in groups to create stories about their ICT access as observed from the timeline.

**Duration:** 1 hour and 30 minutes

### Session 3: Leisure activity for the group

**Description:** This activity is ideally playful, humorous or lighthearted but does not digress from the topic of access to the Internet and mobile technology. It is meant for:

- a. the group to take a break from the previous sessions that are long and intense.
- b. establishing an environment of comfort and familiarity with the facilitators and among the members of the group.
- c. getting any shy/ uncomfortable/ reticent members of the group who have been, by and large, quiet during the day to open up. Some participants are more skilled with using technology or have more acquaintance with using different gadgets/ technologies than others. The comfort level in the group increases and keeps the less skilled or acquainted people from getting intimidated. This establishes a balance among the different voices in the group despite a difference in their individual levels of confidence or privilege.
- d. enabling the facilitators to set the "trust level" with respondents for subsequent inquiry and interviews with more serious research goals.

### Questions for participants to mull over after the end of the first day

**Description:** Give the participants a peg to ponder over after the end of the first day's proceedings and to prepare for the next day. Participants will get a printed sheet with the questions to think about. Some may not be able to complete the "homework", so the sheet contains a mix of questions that can be answered quickly, e.g., questions for which answers can be marked from a set of options, and questions requiring subjective and descriptive answers.

**Brief to the participants:** Answer the questions on the sheet and bring it back the next day. The questions on the sheet are intended for you to consolidated the day's knowledge-sharing and for the facilitators to understand the specific requirements of the group for the next day's proceedings.

----End of day for participants----

**Facilitators' activity:** Debrief and brainstorming for the next day based on the findings of the first day.

## Day 2

### Title: Stories of resistance

**Description:** Pick three instances of activist/ public resistance to intentional Internet shutdowns around the world and elaborate on them. Additionally, speak about the technologies used by or against the respective public movements and the ways they used to circumvent shutdowns.

Facilitators ask the participants if there are any past or ongoing stories of resistance from their communities. Has technology influenced how these movements have taken place? Has it caused more turmoil for them? Have the movements of resistance resulted in positive change in their lives and did a part or whole of the change occur from/ translate to technological benefits or access?

**Duration:** 1 hour 30 minutes

*(Coffee Break)*

### Title: Mapping personal stories to civil and digital rights

**Description:** The facilitators connect the personal accounts shared in the session titled "Stories of resistance" with their civil and digital rights. The facilitators present short contextual examples of the violation of the specific rights of the participants as apparent from the stories as an abstraction derived from those accounts, without making a reference to the individuals or their stories. They ask the participants to individually draw a connect between the examples and their stories, e.g., blocking of their website without due process.

<List of human rights as reference for the participants>

Human rights:

- Right to privacy
- Right to freedom of expression
- Right to non-discrimination
- Right to equal protection
- Right to political participation
- Right to participate in cultural life, arts, and science
- Right to education
- Right to (online) freedom of assembly
- Right to (online) freedom of association
- Right to security (includes right to seek a safe place to live)

**Duration:** 1 hour and 30 minutes

*(Lunch break)*

### Session: Training based on the participants' needs

**Description:** This time can be used as a way to give back to the participants by way of knowledge-sharing or training. The facilitators could identify the participants' needs during the course of the workshop or explicitly ask the participants about them.

-----*End of the day and event*-----