

Internet Society (ISOC) and Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) initiated a project called, 'Wireless for Communities' in 2010. The project aims to provide a holistic, community-empowered approach to connecting rural communities to the Internet. The motivation for the W4C project by ISOC and DEF is twofold. One is to totally democratize the availability of connectivity and enable access to information at the will of citizens outside urban centres – and remote rural areas in particular; second is to address the lack of content, product and services originating from rural areas which affects the economy from percolating to the bottom of the pyramid.

Recently Wireless for Communities project installed wireless in three locations of the country and was revamped in Tura (Meghalaya). Due to Tura being a hilly area it is prone to rain and thunderstorms, which damages the equipment, used to provide Internet connectivity in the area. This time security measures have been taken care of to prevent buildings and human beings from thunder stroke. The other problem with connectivity in Tura is because it is hilly area connectivity is not uniform in the whole of Tura. People living on the side of the hill, where the equipment was placed received good connectivity while the other side of the hill received minimal or no connection only receive any times the signal. To overcome these problems better and more powerful equipment was placed in a place, which caters most of the population. This is a point to multiple set up where connectivity has been taken from VSNL and been provided to people in Tura.

The setup has also been installed in School for Democracy and Chandauli, Rajasthan. School for democracy is 5 kilometres away from Bhim, which is the nearest possible location where Internet connectivity is available. Being located in a remote area the School For Democracy had been struggling for an Internet connection since a long time. Digital Empowerment Foundation provided Internet connectivity to School for Democracy under Wireless for Communities project by using rural ISP.

Chandauli is 7 kilometres away from the nearest connectivity area, Vijay Mandir. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in partnership with Digital Empowerment Foundation has launched a project Minority CyberGram. The Minority Cyber Gram programme seeks to introduce digital literacy skills in identified minority clusters in India through designated Digital Fellows towards knowledge empowerment and entitlement gains of minority focused groups and beneficiaries. The project was to be implemented in Chandauli, which has 80 percent minority population. In order to run the project smoothly Internet connectivity was brought into the village through the Wireless for Communities Project.

The biggest problem in both these areas is that the temperature there is 48 to 49 degrees while the temperature generated by the equipment is 35 to 40 degrees. In total the temperature reaches to almost 85 to 90 degrees and damages the device. This time insulators and thermocoat has been used to prohibit the instrument from damage.

Another place where connectivity has been provided to people through Wireless for Communities project is in the head office of Barefoot College in Hauz Khas, Delhi. The area has a number of providers but the service is not good. Connectivity has been provided to them for better access and smooth usage.

The Wireless for communities project helps people in the remotest area with access and connectivity. The project takes Internet to the areas where people could not even dream of Internet till a few years back.

