List of Acronyms

**DEF**- Digital Empowerment Foundation

**ICT**- Information and Communication Technologies

**ITU**- International Telecommunications Union
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1. Executive Summary

Digital literacy empowers people to take part in social causes, enables them to learn skills and helps in augmenting income and savings.

Digital Empowerment Foundation in partnership with Warstila India Private Limited has been working towards supporting the active participation of students from Government Sr. Secondary School, Karnawas, and the local community for their mainstreaming in society and the economy. The Digital Literacy Classroom-DigiGyan program strives to accomplish this goal through the START-based model, which is being facilitated through workshops and practical activities. As a part of induction to the urban digital community, the participants were given exposure as well as a series of training in handling digital tools. It helped them to build a basic understanding of how these tools work.

This report reveals that the digital revolution is a pivotal means to empower the community. Their participation in this journey has increased their self-confidence as well as their self-esteem.
2. Program Overview

The Digital Literacy Classroom Program envisioned towards promoting and inculcating digital literacy among the students of Government Sr. Sec School, Karnawas, and the local community of Karnawas and empowering them to access, analyse, consume, produce and leverage information using digital interventions and ICT.

The project aims to enhance the capacities of these students as well as the community from their respective areas to access and avail information related to health, education, social and financial inclusion, livelihood and employment. This was done through intensive training, community meetings, and workshops to strengthen their knowledge and capacity to understand the basic functionality of digital tools.

It supports the efforts and interests of the community and students to ensure that the information and knowledge to access and operate the ICT reaches every individual as they have been designed and implemented for. Since January 2020, the program has made constant efforts to create a digitally-enabled environment. It is being implemented in a Government School of Karnawas, Bawal in Rewari District, Haryana. A baseline survey was deployed using a specially designed survey, among the selected participants of the digital literacy imparting programme, where the digital penetration of school students and community members stand at 84% and 21% respectively i.e. a low level of digital penetration among community members. This indicates that along with students, there is a greater need for digital skilling and training among the community members. This is because this will be a more sustainable way of imparting any kind of knowledge due to its trickle-down impact on other hierarchies of society.

This study led to setting up a digital classroom at the identified places, the center was equipped with basic digital tools, and apparatus. A center coordinator cum teacher was hired to ensure the day-to-day activity of the digital classroom.

The program aims to provide digital literacy, information services, training, and various other digital services in an effort to help people fight information poverty. Many activities were conducted from December 2020 to March 2022 which had a positive impact on the community. This report highlights the key activities, key issues faced on the ground, and steps taken to overcome such challenges.
3. Introduction

Digital literacy is an umbrella concept for important skill clusters—just like traditional literacy and numeracy. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have penetrated all areas of contemporary life. In this context, digital literacy has become much more than the ability to handle computers, it comprises a set of basic skills which include the use and production of digital media, information processing and retrieval, participation in social networks for creation and sharing of knowledge, and a wide range of professional computing skills.

As we are moving towards a more digitized world, it becomes imperative to connect all the sections and sub-sections of the society with Information Technology infrastructure as well as digital literacy that works within that sphere. And, as the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns coerced the world to shift its operations to the digital space, it also widened the creaks of the inequitable society that makes up the marginalized and unconnected ones. Within the marginalized sections, children were the most vulnerable ones, for the entire education system got confined to computer and/or mobile screens. As people from all sectors of life tried to grapple with the digital world and work from home set up, data revealed that in India over 29.6 million school students in India do not have access to digital devices.

Moreover, schools largely being shut in several parts of India created a dependency on mobile phones and/or laptops with active internet connections in order to attend classes and continue with their education, the lack of which has forced them to drop out of schools. This has actively led to a widening disparity of access to education. A report by the Ministry of Education too revealed that only 22% of government schools had access to the internet in 2020.

Digital Empowerment Foundation and Wartsila India Private Limited are conducting a digital skill training and capacity building program for more than 300 individuals (81% students; 19% neighboring community). Reaching out to the community at the bottom of the pyramid requires more than merely ensuring access to ICTs and broadband networks. Women and men need the training to become digitally literate. Digital literacy training opens the door to other essential skills needed to operate in an internet-friendly environment, including financial literacy skills and career training, and ICT-enabled career training. Such training enables the weaker section of the society to set up online businesses or use broadband services, such as social networking sites, to enhance their ongoing livelihood and economic activity. ITU has developed a range of training materials to promote digital literacy and the use of ICTs to promote economic activities.


The concept of delivering to the last mile has been a challenge that India has not yet been able to overcome — and this reflects in the lack of Internet penetration in rural regions. The government needs the support of NGOs and other private establishments to make the youth and people of rural India part of India’s modernisation by empowering them with digital literacy — not only changing their lives but the fortunes of India’s economy as a whole.

The digital literacy classroom program aimed to bring attention to the impact broadband has on our lives, our health, our government, our jobs, and our education while considering who among us does not use the internet and who does not have home broadband access. The program addresses the gaps in information and empowerment to help where some communities are being excluded.

This digital literacy classroom has emerged as a viable model for the delivery of digital literacy and lifelong learning opportunities for the students and people from the community. This project has helped empower the disadvantaged through imparting skills and computer literacy.
4. Project Implementation

Digital Literacy Classroom at Government Sr. Sec. School undertook different kinds of activities and facilitated digital access for students and allowed the community to avail their daily needs using digital and communication tools. Digital Literacy Classroom enable DEF to undertake a multi-dimensional approach to the task of digital inclusion. They also provided with the basic infrastructure needed to roll out various activities to address the program verticals.

1. Activities and Results

1. Digital Literacy Training

Digital literacy is expounded as a set of skills, required using tools such as computers, smartphones, the internet, and any other information technology. It is pertinent that knowledge of digital tools is augmenting as a pre-requisite among all the sectors whether it’s private or public. And interestingly a large population base, comprised of rural as well urban population has been found completely devoid of it. Information-deprived sections of societies need interactive platforms to learn, grow, adapt and compete with the cut-throat competition in this world. In order to achieve that, both the Community Information Resource Centres (CIRCs) make sure that digital literacy reaches every individual possible. Certain community meetings were conducted to spread awareness about the program. Community mobilisers went door to door, distributing pamphlets and informing people about the importance of digital literacy. As a result, numerous people turned up to register themselves for the program.

The classes were scheduled on a shift basis, where the first half was dedicated to the students of Govt. Sr. Sec. School and the other half for the community classes. The classes took place in 7 batches with 30 students in each batch, following all the COVID-19 safety protocols. Students were given basic computer training which includes...
handling and using digital tools and their applications to impart awareness about financial literacy, the program covered both theoretical and practical approaches.

2. DEF’s Smart Tool Kit

The Smart Tool Kit, developed exclusively by DEF, was used to educate the participants. The kit consists of images and cut-outs of commonly used icons like computer monitors, keyboards, mouse, and speakers for better understanding. Tools like icons for MS Word, MS Excel, PowerPoint, and popular mobile apps were also used during training. DEF observed that the participants found learning through the Smart Tool Kit easier and more interactive. People lacking basic literacy can develop an understanding of what these tools and applications stand for and how they can be used in their day-to-day activities.

3. Career Counselling Workshop

A session on career counseling workshop was conducted in the digital literacy classroom. The objective of the workshop was to help students to identify career goals, set education milestones, and derive clear pathways to achieve them.

Since career decisions play a pivotal role in shaping the future growth and development of students. History has proved time and again how several career fields became obsolete over the years. With advanced technologies, some jobs vanish while new ones emerge. The one who can keep up with the trends is definite to ace the competition. Similarly, as the new career options emerge, new skills are demanded in the industry and a student needs to be aware of these advancements.

Ms. Preeti, an eminent career counseling expert facilitated the session where she talked about the possible career opportunities available and what could be the steps to achieve that. The session began with an ice-breaker that required the participants to speak up about their interests in general. Ms. Preeti also talked about various industrial advancements and new career options and skills to develop which will help the students.
get a clear perspective for the long run. The workshop alternated between presentation, plenary and group discussion.

The session worked as an ultimate torchbearer for the students who can be made aware of the industrial changes in advance to refine their skills accordingly and be prepared for the upcoming changes.

4. Monitoring and Reporting

Weekly meetings with the trainer were conducted throughout the project to monitor the program status. Fortnightly meetings with Wartsila Team were also done throughout the year to discuss the program’s status and challenges and make strategic plans to tackle them.

Monthly visits to the school were done to ensure the smooth running of the program along with meetings with the school administration as well as the local stakeholders and discuss the possibility of engaging more students within the program.

Regular follow-up calls with the trainer as well as with the security personnel were done to solve the challenges faced by them and to get the required information timely.

Reporting on a monthly basis was done by the DEF team to monitor the day-to-day activities.
6. Outcome

Digital Literacy Classroom at Government Sr. Sec. School, Karnawas- Bawal is bringing quality digital education to the students as well as the people of the community. This robust program run by Digital Empowerment Foundation along with Wartsila Private Limited seeks to remedy this deplorable situation by providing them with an alternate and more gratifying future through elementary and advanced digital literacy. DEF aims to foster not only a sound knowledge of digital tools but also provide employment along with expanding avenues of livelihood for the underserved and marginalized communities with the help of dedicated trainers who worked hard to nurture these bright young students into future digital leaders.
7. Impact Stories

Case Story 1

Sara, a 13-year-old girl, is full of enthusiasm. She is a student of class 9 in Government Sr. Sec. School at Bawal. Her father, who is the sole earner of the family works in a cycle manufacturing company and earns very low wages. She has a brother and three sisters who also study in the same school.

“In Digigyan Program, I showed my interest in computers and got to learn about them. I was a shy girl at first, but our teacher’s support helped me gain the confidence to stand and speak in front of people. As I have seen hardships since childhood, I learned at a very early age that the only way out is to work hard and be determined. After a few weeks in the programme, I recognised that my true calling is to teach primary school students Science, Mathematics, and History.”

Sara has been working with us for the past year, and her growth is praiseworthy.

“I am so glad that I joined this program. It has helped me expand my skills and has also built my overall personality”.

Case Story 2

“"I could only dream of using a computer”, said Rahul, a 17-year-old boy from Karnawas District at Bawal. Rahul lives with his parents and two elder brothers. His father is an electrician by profession and his brothers help their father in his shop. After completing his 12th, Rahul was also expected to follow in his father’s footsteps and assist him.

“Before joining the Digigyan Program, I was clueless about my career and passion. It seems that a particular role is set for me and I have to do that only. There is no second option for me”, said Rahul. He got to know about this program from a friend and quickly enrolled himself.

With the help of this programme, he got a chance to attend classes and learn about the basic functionality of digital tools, MS office, and attend a workshop on career counselling which helped him to get an insight about various career opportunities.

He decided to upgrade his skills and believed that acquiring computer skills would help him get a job where he could accomplish something he was interested in.
8. Annexure

Annexure 1: - Branding and Communication Technique

1. Pamphlet printed and distributed in the community for outreach to create awareness about the Digital Literacy Classroom program.

2. Banners used for branding of the program
Annexure 2: Registration Form used for enrollment
Some Glimpses