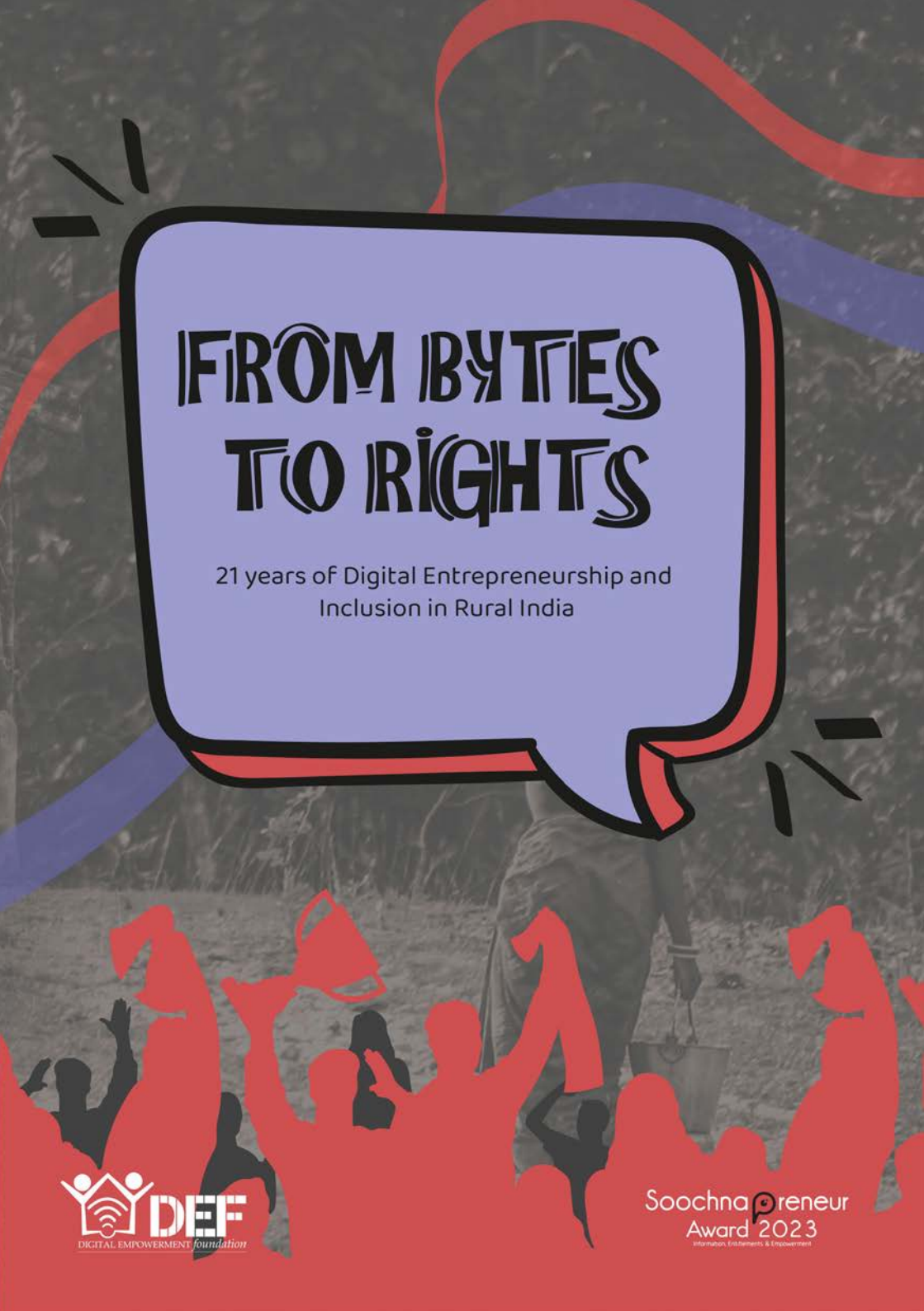
FROM BYTES TO RIGHTS

21 years of Digital Entrepreneurship and Inclusion in Rural India



DEF
DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT foundation

Soochnapreneur Award 2023
Information, Entitlements, & Empowerment

FROM BYTES
TO RIGHTS
21 years of Digital Entrepreneurship and
Inclusion in Rural India

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Chairperson's Note

As I stand at the threshold of this remarkable journey chronicled within the pages of this book, there is a profound sense of admiration and gratitude towards the digital leaders and heroes who have shaped the narrative of rural empowerment and digital innovation in our society.

This book is an odyssey into the heart of grassroots transformation and digital empowerment through the SoochnaPreneur Award 2023, an initiative born from the vision of Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF). Within these narratives lie the stories of individuals who have emerged as catalysts for positive change, illuminating the path towards a more inclusive and digitally empowered future.

At the core of this initiative lies the recognition of exemplary efforts in uplifting rural communities through digital interventions. From mobilising communities to empowering women, enhancing skills, and disseminating vital information, the SoochnaPreneur Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements that harness the potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools for an equal digital future for all.

As you delve into the extraordinary journeys of the SoochnaPreneurs or our information entrepreneurs, you will witness firsthand their dedication and steadfast commitment towards bridging the digital divide. These individuals not only serve as beacons of change but also exemplify the core objectives of the awards - recognizing excellence, providing a platform for initiatives promoting digital empowerment, and inspiring the replication of best practices among underserved populations.

This book outlines the importance of strengthening the poor information ecosystem in rural communities in India, especially in the backward Districts

that have alienated a majority of India's population from social and economic entitlement gains. Our objectives are rooted in a multifaceted approach aimed at catalysing positive change within rural India. Firstly, we endeavour to ignite a new era of social entrepreneurship by empowering unemployed youths with opportunities in rural information services. Concurrently, we are dedicated to bridging the substantial gaps in public scheme information accessibility and delivery, particularly in underserved Districts, ensuring that citizens can access their entitled benefits. Moreover, we recognise the critical need to decentralise and democratise information in India, where vital resources remain centralised and controlled. Through these concerted efforts, we aspire to foster an environment of inclusivity and empowerment, where every individual can access the information necessary for their socio-economic advancement.

This book serves as a testament to their transformative journey, celebrating digital entrepreneurs and showcasing their substantial contributions to digital empowerment and upliftment of marginalised sections of society, village by village, impacting 10,000 villages across 200 Districts and 26 states of India.

Through the lens of these narratives, we are reminded of the power of information as a dynamic tool for empowerment, capable of transcending barriers and fostering meaningful change. The SoochnaPreneur program stands as a testament to the belief that information is not merely a resource but a catalyst for social and economic transformation.

This book is to celebrate the spirit of rural entrepreneurship, innovation, and empowerment embodied by the SoochnaPreneurs, whose tireless efforts continue to shape the landscape of rural development and digital inclusion in our nation. I hope this book inspires the youth of India to follow the footsteps of digital changemakers and take India's story of digital development forward.

Osama Manzar,
Founder-Director, DEF

Acknowledgements

This book is an outcome of the visionary efforts of the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) and its Founder-Director and the Chairperson of the SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 Committee - Mr. Osama Manzar, in conceiving and leading the SoochnaPreneur Awards - an initiative that passionately celebrates innovation and digital empowerment at the grassroots level. Special appreciation is extended to the discerning Internal Jury as well as the Grand Jury panels, whose expertise and commitment played a crucial role in meticulously selecting exemplary individuals, ensuring the awards acknowledge those making a significant digital and social impact in their communities. Many thanks to Pankaj Adhikari and Pavan Kumar for extending their help in organizing the Jury.

The success of this endeavor is owed to the invaluable support and collaboration of the SoochnaPreneur community representing more than 2000 Communication Information Resource Centers (CIRCs) in the country. We are profoundly thankful for the passion and dedication demonstrated by the individuals and communities across the country striving for social change and development. A special gratitude to the applicants who generously shared transformative projects, spotlighting a diverse array of initiatives dedicated to improving lives through information dissemination and technological innovation.

Heartfelt acknowledgement is extended to the Research and Writing Team, including Sana Afreen, Shrishti Sinha, Mili Dangwal and Arpita Kanjilal for their significant contributions in curating and compiling the contents of the book. The editorial work by Arpita Kanjilal and Sana Afreen has been instrumental in ideating, structuring, shaping and finalizing the book. Special recognition is extended to Satish Kumar for designing the layout of the book and Suhasini Thapliyal for the cover design. Their creative contributions have played a vital role in bringing the visual elements to life and enhancing the overall aesthetic appeal of this publication.

Lastly and most importantly, sincere appreciation is offered to the unsung heroes - the awardees, finalists, members of the DEF community, and all those actively contributing to the digital empowerment and upliftment of underserved and marginalized communities in the rural landscape of India. This book stands as a testament to the collective efforts and commitment of everyone involved in the SoochnaPreneur journey, and this publication is an attempt towards capturing and sharing these impactful narratives that propel the mission of SoochnaPreneur Awards.

Abbreviations

B2C	-	Business to Consumer
CRM	-	Customer Relationship Management
CSR	-	Corporate Social Responsibility
CIRCs	-	Communication Information Resource Centers
CSCs	-	Common Service Centers
DEF	-	Digital Empowerment Foundation
DS	-	Digital Sarthak
e-MITRA	-	Electronic Master of Information Technology Resources and Applications
FEC	-	Farmer Engagement Center
HD	-	Haqdarshak
HRMS	-	Human Resource Management System
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
ICT4D	-	Information and Communication Technologies for Development
IEC	-	Information, Education, and Communication
IIJNM	-	Indian Institute of Journalism and New Media
ITU	-	International Telecommunication Union
MBA	-	Master of Business Administration
NCAER	-	National Council of Applied Economic Research
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
PDO	-	Public Data Office
PM-WANI	-	Public Wi-Fi Network Initiative
PNB	-	Punjab National Bank
PWDs	-	Persons with Disabilities
SBCC	-	Social and Behavior Change Communication
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development
VLEs	-	Village Level Entrepreneurs
WFP	-	World Food Programme

SoochnaPreneur Award 2023: Origins and Objectives

SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 is an initiative by the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF), conceived to honor and recognize those individuals that have showcased exemplary work at the grassroots level for leading positive transformation and digital innovation, intervention and empowerment among the rural communities of the country. The SoochnaPreneur awards celebrate outstanding achievements in community mobilization, sustainability goals, women empowerment, skill enhancement, and information dissemination with the most effective utilization of ICT tools. In this way, the award identifies and facilitates those individuals who extended their capacities to work for the upliftment of the underserved, helped them connect with mainstream progress and improve lives.

The main objectives of the SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 are as follows:

- To recognize and acknowledge the excellence at the village level in the realm of digital empowerment, with an aim to highlight and celebrate the impactful contributions of individuals who have made a difference in the lives of people at the grassroots level.

- To provide a platform for the facilitation of the initiatives that promote digital empowerment, innovations, and inclusion, with an aim to encourage the replication of successful models in underserved and unconnected regions in the country.

The Awards play a crucial role in advocating and supporting digital initiatives and solutions. They function as a platform to identify and facilitate individuals who have gone above and beyond in extending their capacities to uplift underserved communities. In essence, the SoochnaPreneur awards serve as a beacon, guiding and appreciating those who are making significant contributions to the digital empowerment and upliftment of the marginalized sections of the society.

Behind the Scenes: The Jury, Award Categories, Nomination Process and the Application Diversity

The Grand Jury

Osama Manzar
Co-Founder & Director,
DEF

Osama Manzar, Chairperson of SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 Committee, co-founded the Digital Empowerment Foundation in 2002 to address information poverty in India due to the digital divide. With over 25 years of experience, Osama had worked in the areas of journalism, new media, and software enterprise before he established DEF. He was a British Chevening scholar, an International Visitor's Leadership Program Fellow of the United States state department and an Ashoka fellow. Osama played an influential role in developing India's National Digital Literacy Mission and the Common Service Centre initiative. He is part of the advisory committee of several national and international organizations working on digital rights.

Shalini Kala
Rural Development &
Agriculture Specialist

Shalini Kala holds an Advanced Degree in Economics, and has worked on issues of agricultural policy reform in India for her M.Phil dissertation. She has 20 years of professional experience in the field of rural development, particularly in the areas of food and agriculture, focusing on knowledge networking, livelihoods and capacity building both in India and the Asia-Pacific region. Most recently, Ms. Kala was at the World Food Programme (WFP) where she worked on design, testing and advocacy of innovative approaches for food aid as a tool of development. She has also been associated with the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and has worked on various USAID projects.

Shobitha Kedlaya
Social Entrepreneur

Shobitha Kedlaya holds a textiles degree and a masters in Management studies. She worked in the corporate sector with J.K (Bombay) Ltd and Huhtamaki Van Leer, post which she embarked on an entrepreneurial journey. She set up a corporate gifting company and a designer brand called Inspira. She then moved on to the social sector to join Protovillage – an intentional community based in Andhra Pradesh. Here, she practices permaculture and works on building an education model based on "context enabled purpose oriented learning". Shobitha is also a Bharatnatyam dancer and an author.

Shahid Ahmad
Chief Operating Officer, DEF

Shahid Ahmad is a seasoned professional with a rich background in technical architecture and project management. His impactful contributions extend across diverse projects in India, where he played a pivotal role as a Technical Expert. Planning and executing software solutions such as HRMS, social welfare applications, survey automation, award management, CRM, and the Learning Management Systems are some examples. Shahid's proficiency in software product development and delivery has been a cornerstone of success. As a dedicated expert, he is committed to setting expectations, designing FEC solutions, and guiding pilot implementations. His ultimate goal is to ensure seamless ICT tools, reaching 250,000 farm beneficiaries in the second phase of deployment over two years.

Saurabh Srivastava
Deputy Director, DEF

Saurabh K. Srivastava is a development professional and information designer, having experience of more than 14 years in the development sector in the avenues of IEC and SBCC. His area of education lies in social development and he holds a postgraduate degree in Multimedia Technology. In his 14 years of work experience, he has extensive and in-depth experience in the areas of digital inclusion, ICT4D and community network-building.

Arpana Sharma Singhal
Deputy Director, DEF

Arpana Sharma Singhal has 20+ years of work experience in the development sector. Currently, she is the Deputy Director of DEF and leading the operations vertical. Prior to DEF, she worked in organizations such as PRADAN, RGF and donned the cap of Implementer, Funder, and consultant and was part of micro and macro-level development work. She has sound experience of working with multiple stakeholders- department officials, local representatives, Civil Society Organisations, and communities across Pan India.

Shruti Narula
Project Manager, DEF

Shruti Narula holds a Master's degree in Philosophy from University of Delhi. She is passionate about community development and has about five years of experience of working in development sector and educational institutions. Some of the thematic areas in the social sector that she has contributed and made an impact include youth empowerment, gender equity and digital literacy. Her skillsets include project management, Networking and Collaborating with various stakeholders. Prior to DEF, she has worked with Centre for Youth, Ennovate Global, Amity University and implemented pan India programs.

Akanksha Ahluwalia
Deputy Manager,
Communications & Media
Department, DEF

Akanksha Ahluwalia is a Deputy Manager in the Communications and Media Department at Digital Empowerment Foundation. She holds a Bachelors and Masters in English Literature from Delhi University. Her areas of interest lie in gender studies, studying misinformation and hate speech patterns, new media platforms and intersectionality. In her free time, she likes watching crime documentaries, chase cats and paint tote bags.

Anupriya Sinha
Program Coordinator, DEF

Anupriya Sinha has been a part of the development sector for the past five years, actively engaging in the areas of health and education. With experience in program coordination and strategic communications, and her genuine passion for social impact, she has made significant contributions in the thematic areas she has focused on. Before joining Digital Empowerment Foundation, she has also worked with organizations such as Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and HelpAge India.

Mohd Irfan Khan
Senior Program Manager, DEF

Mohd Irfan Khan the project lead hails from Uttar Pradesh, India. He has a Master's degree in Human Rights from Aligarh Muslim University. He has dedicated the last 12 years to the development sector. His focus is advocating for and safeguarding child rights, working towards the empowerment and development of women, and actively engaging in community mobilization initiatives. Throughout his career, he has contributed significantly to projects and programs that aim to create positive and sustainable impacts on individuals and communities. He brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to promoting social justice and enhancing the well-being of vulnerable populations. His journey in the development sector reflects a continuous dedication to fostering positive change and addressing key issues affecting society.

Hamid Ali
Senior Manager, Finance and Accounts Department, DEF

Hamid Ali is a seasoned financial professional with over 15 years of experience in the field of finance and accounting. He brings a wealth of expertise in financial management, strategic planning, and risk analysis to his role as Senior Manager of Finance and Accounts. As Senior Manager of Finance and Accounts, Hamid oversees a team of dedicated professionals responsible for financial reporting, budgeting, treasury management, and compliance. His strategic leadership and collaborative approach have been instrumental in driving sustainable growth and maximizing shareholder value for his organization. Outside of work, Hamid is passionate about giving back to his community. He volunteers his time and expertise to local nonprofits, providing financial guidance and support to help them achieve their missions.

Rahul Karanpuriya
Social Entrepreneur &
Co-founder, Travellers'
University

Rahul Karanpuriya, an MBA walkout and former 'Khoji' at Swaraj University, is a passionate advocate for self-learning and cultural regeneration. Born in 1987 in Bhiwara, Rahul actively explores alternative education as a learning activist at Shikshantar Sansthan. His love for cycling led to impactful initiatives, including Udaipur's first cycle marathon. Co-founding Vinayak Enterprises with a mere Rs. 3,000, Rahul turned a profit of almost Rs. 1,00,000. His diverse experiences range from textile companies to soft skill training at Jaipur Rugs. Rahul's mission involves discovering 52 innovators or "52 Parindey" across India, encouraging alternate careers for a more fulfilling life.

Udita Chaturvedi
Digital Innovation
Ecosystem Expert,
International
Telecommunication Union

Udita Chaturvedi is a Digital Innovation Ecosystem Expert at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). With over a decade of experience, Udita brings a blend of expertise to her role as a former journalist and development communications professional. In her work with various nonprofits in India and abroad, she has led research and advocacy projects focused on meaningful digital connectivity and digital transformation. She has also extensively documented the socio-economic impact of digital inclusion and the effects of digital exclusion, especially among marginalized communities. Udita holds a degree in Journalism from Delhi University, and a specialization in Print Journalism from IIJNM, Bangalore. She was a Jigsaw Fellow at Alphabet (Google) in 2018.

Rakesh Pawara
Co-founder, Aadiwasi
Janjagruti

Rakesh Pawara, a distinguished figure and one of the founding members of Aadiwasi Janjagruti, brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the realm of community development and social empowerment. With a robust professional background, Rakesh has served with reputable organizations, including UNICEF, Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF), and Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM), contributing significantly to the advancement of rural communities. Having completed his Master's degree in Economics, Rakesh possesses a strong academic foundation that he has translated into practical and impactful initiatives throughout his career.

The Internal Jury

Pratiksha Kamble
Digital Swaraj Fellow

Pratiksha Kamble was born and brought up in the Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra. Since childhood, she loved studying and educating herself on different subjects. To go for higher studies after Class XII, she pursued Biotechnology for graduation and then went on to complete her Master's with a course in Marine Biotechnology from Goa University. She has always been open to learning new things to upskill herself at every stage of her life. Additionally, she is an enthusiastic traveler and explorer. She loves exploring off-beat places. Moreover, her interest areas include reading books, meeting new people, and trying new technologies for the best use.

She started a website, NotesPlayer, to provide students with study resources free of cost. Her vision is to create a resource pool of dynamic study material with this website. She herself faced this problem of not finding accurate and specific study material to prepare for the exams and now she is working towards it to solve the problem. She is looking for an opportunity to work at the grassroots level through the Digital Swaraj Fellowship and to impact those who are partially or completely away from digital advancements.

Punti Kumari
Digital Swaraj Fellow

Punti Kumari belongs to the Tadwan village in the Patna District of Bihar. She was keen on pursuing education since childhood, but her schooling started late due to the poor financial condition of her family. Along with her education, she has worked with many social organizations, which helped develop her understanding of the issues prevailing in society. She had to go out of her village to work for these organizations. The people in her village started taunting her for this, and her family also started

putting pressure on her to marry. Her family even tried keeping her captive in the house.

This was the time when Punti started raising her voice for her rights in front of the family as well as her village. With the help of her elder brother and the social organizations she has been part of, she faced all those challenges. Since then, she started making decisions in her life by overcoming the pressures from society as well as family. With her dedication and hard work, she completed her graduation and made a mark for herself. She works as a social activist and is rooted on the ground. Through the Digital Swaraj Fellowship, she wants to enhance her knowledge of digital interventions, so that she can take this work to more people at the grassroots level.

Maitri Singh
Digital Swaraj Fellow

Maitri Singh, hailing from Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh, and raised in Delhi, is a post-graduate in English Literature from Ambedkar University, Delhi. As one of the founding members of the non-profit organisation 'Association for Parivartan of Nation,' she combines her literary insights with a minor in Political Science to delve into the realms of politics, history, and social work through research. Driven by a profound desire to create a lasting impact, Maitri aspires to utilize the power of technology and digital platforms as catalysts for social transformation. Her active participation in the Digital Swaraj Fellowship serves as a crucial milestone, propelling her closer to her long-term vision of becoming a policymaker.

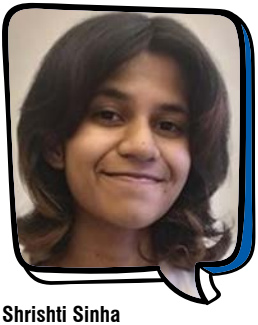
Vikas Chinchkar
Digital Swaraj Fellow

Vikas Chinchkar is a development sector professional. He hails from the Beed District of Maharashtra. Since his early days, he has been exposed to grassroots-level issues. Recently, he completed his Master's degree in Urban and Rural Community Development from the renowned CSRD-ISWR institute in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra. During his academic years, Vikas volunteered in the Sanjaynagar slum area and Grampanchayat Kapurwadi in Ahmednagar District. This gave him the opportunity to interact with farmers, and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) of women and children in the village. He worked on various areas such as education, gender differences, and health. Vikas is particularly passionate about education, digital literacy, environmental sustainability, and social work interventions.

He also volunteered with the Kanyaka Foundation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, he recently completed an internship at Shantiwan, an orphanage and rehabilitation centre in Arvi. Vikas has always been open to learning new things and upskilling himself at every stage of his life. He is adaptable to different environments and is eager to join the Digital Swaraj Fellowship. Through the Digital Swaraj Fellowship, he aims to apply his academic learning skills to experience grassroots realities in the digital world. This experience will help him achieve his long-term vision of working at the policy level.

Mili Dangwal
Digital Swaraj Fellow

Mili Dangwal was born and brought up in Srinagar, Uttarakhand. She completed her graduation in Political science honors from Delhi University. Having a keen interest in the social sector she has been part of many projects related to education, women welfare, etc. She intends to explore innovative ways to contribute to the Digital Swaraj Fellowship and various issues in general. She is looking forward to working with a talented team and other fellows, to engage, learn new things and absorb the nature and process of change via digital empowerment. She aspires to grow and move ahead in administrative services which share the same sphere of executing innovative ways for the welfare of the people.



Shrishti Sinha
Digital Swaraj Fellow

Shrishti Sinha graduated with a combined Humanities degree from Azim Premji University, where she developed a passion for exploring the intersection between digital technology and socio-economic inequalities. Through the Digital Swaraj Fellowship, she aims to delve into the policy sphere and identify necessary interventions that can harness the potential of the digital realm to empower all individuals, rather than benefiting only a select few. She hails from Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Digital literacy serves as Shrishti's primary area of interest. She recognizes its importance on two distinct levels. Firstly, she seeks to address the lack of understanding among the general population regarding the broader implications of the digital age, such as the nature of data and how it is collected. Secondly, she focuses on those who lack access to digital resources altogether, aiming to bridge the gap by providing them with the necessary skills to utilize and navigate the digital landscape effectively.

Award Categories

The SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 established three distinct categories to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive recognition of outstanding contributions in the field of digital empowerment. The categories are as follows:

'Male' Category: This category is dedicated to acknowledging the exemplary work and achievements of male individuals who have demonstrated exceptional efforts in promoting digital empowerment at the grassroots level. By recognizing the contributions of men, the awards aim to showcase diverse role models and inspire others to actively participate in initiatives that drive positive change through digital interventions.

'Female' Category: Similarly, the Female Category is designed to honor and celebrate the remarkable efforts of women who have played a pivotal role in digital empowerment initiatives. Recognizing the achievements of women is crucial for promoting gender equality and highlighting the significant impact that women can have in driving positive transformations in rural communities through the effective use of digital tools. This category serves to inspire and empower more women to take active roles in digital innovation and community development.

'Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)' Category: The inclusion of a category specifically for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) underscores the commitment to inclusivity and recognizing the unique challenges and contributions of individuals with disabilities in the digital empowerment landscape. This category aims to highlight the achievements of PWDs who have utilized digital tools to overcome barriers and make meaningful contributions to the betterment of rural communities. By doing so, the awards promote the idea that digital empowerment should be accessible and beneficial to all, regardless of physical abilities.

Diverse Avenues of Digital Empowerment: Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for applying for the SoochnaPreneur Awards were open to individuals actively engaged in the field of Digital Empowerment and Innovation. The scope of eligibility was defined based on the projects, mediums or channels through which these individuals have been making significant contributions among their communities. Following were the diverse avenues of digital empowerment and stated eligibility criteria:

Community Information Resource Centers (CIRCs)

CIRC (Community Information Resource Centers: Community Information Resource Centres (CIRCs) are community-oriented infrastructure and information hubs built to create digitally literate, information-empowered and equitable communities across the country. A typical CIRC is enabled with computers, cameras, printers, projectors, scanners, internet, Wi-Fi and broadband.

Common Service Centers (CSCs)

Common Service Centres are the access points for delivery of essential public utility services, social welfare schemes, healthcare, financial, education and agriculture services, apart from host of B2C services to citizens in rural and remote areas of the country.

Digital Sarthak

Digital Sarthak are the foot soldiers who are identified and selected from Districts to run Digital Resource Centres to build the capacity of women entrepreneurs and women-led CDOs and provide digital services and government schemes to the community.

SoochnaPreneur

They are women, youth and young entrepreneurs who work for the well-being of the community. Acting as local service providers, SoochnaPreneurs will serve various information services needs of citizen consumers, especially at the Village, Panchayat and Block levels in more than 135 Districts in India.

PM-WANI

Facilitators of setting up public Wi-Fi networks and access points by local Kirana and neighborhood shops through public data offices that will not involve any license, fee or registration.

Public Data Office (PDO)

Village Level Entrepreneur (VLE), grocery shop owner, tea stalls, kirana shops, vegetable shop, restaurant owner who have installed Wi-Fi access point at your premises and start selling the internet broadband over Wi-Fi.

Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs)

VLE's are Village Level Entrepreneur who deliver various government and non-government services to the end consumers from the CSC outlet (mostly owned).

e-MITRA

eMitra is an ambitious e-Governance initiative of Government of Rajasthan. Under eMitra initiative, Common Services Centres (CSC) or Kiosks are set up across Rajasthan to provide different services related to the government departments without the need for the people to visit the government sectors.

Haqdarshak

Haqdarshak is the first ever enterprise to digitize welfare schemes and provide application support to beneficiaries of these schemes in low-income areas in both rural and urban communities.

Computer Training Institute

Individuals who are running a Computer Training Institute in their villages as a livelihood option and serve the community by catering to digital literacy, digital financial literacy, government schemes and entitlements.

Digital Library

Enabling public libraries with ICT tools and technology so online books can be accessed and libraries can be utilized as digital centers.

Nomination Process

The SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 received nominations from several states and regions across India, indicating a widespread and diverse participation in the recognition of efforts in the field of Digital Empowerment and Innovation. The nomination process was open to individuals actively engaged in initiatives aimed at leveraging digital technologies to bring about positive change and empowerment in their respective communities. By following the comprehensive nomination guidelines listed below, the SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 ensured a fair, transparent, and rigorous process that recognizes and celebrates outstanding contributions in the field of digital empowerment across various categories.

- **Initiation of 1st Level Application:**
  - » The nomination process commences with the 1st level application.
  - » A nominal fee of Rs 100 is charged to ensure commitment and sincerity among applicants actively involved in Digital Services and Innovation in their respective fields or communities.
- **Nomination Guidelines:**
  - » Each applicant is allowed only one nomination/application in any one category.
  - » Only individuals meeting the eligibility criteria's specified forms can apply for the SoochnaPreneur Award 2023.
  - » Once a nomination is submitted, no alterations can be made.
  - » Nominee submissions containing false information regarding the individual's role result in immediate and permanent rejection.
- **Acknowledgement and Confirmation:**
  - » All applicants receive an acknowledgment email confirming the successful submission of the Nomination form to their provided email address.

- **Mandatory Fields in Nomination Form:**
  - » The nominee is required to fill in all fields marked as mandatory in the nomination form.
- **Eligibility for Applicants:**
  - » Any individual actively working in the field of digital intervention, innovation, and services is eligible to apply for the SoochnaPreneur Award 2023.
- **Geographical Eligibility:**
  - » Applicants from any part of India working in the field of digital intervention, innovation, and services are eligible to apply.
- **Emphasis on Implementation and Impact:**
  - » Entries are encouraged to prioritize the implementation and impact of their projects rather than focusing solely on audience size and interaction.

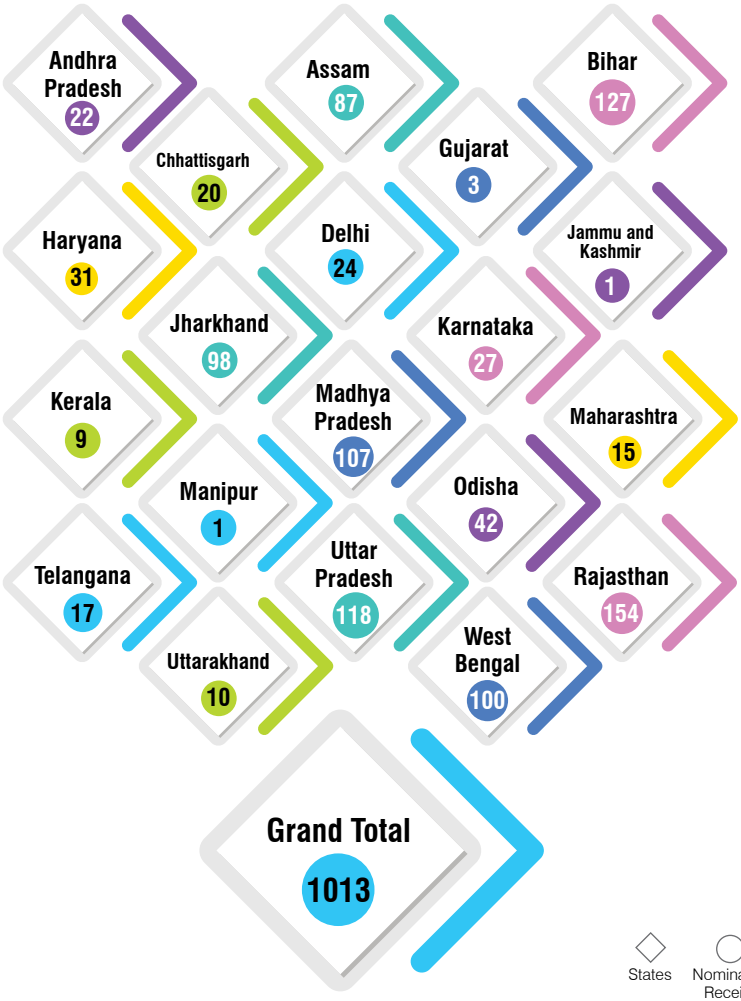
Nomination Process Overview:

Nominees participated in two levels for the SoochnaPreneur Award 2023.

Level 1 Nomination:

In this initial phase, nominations were invited from individuals nationwide actively engaged in Digital Empowerment and Innovation.

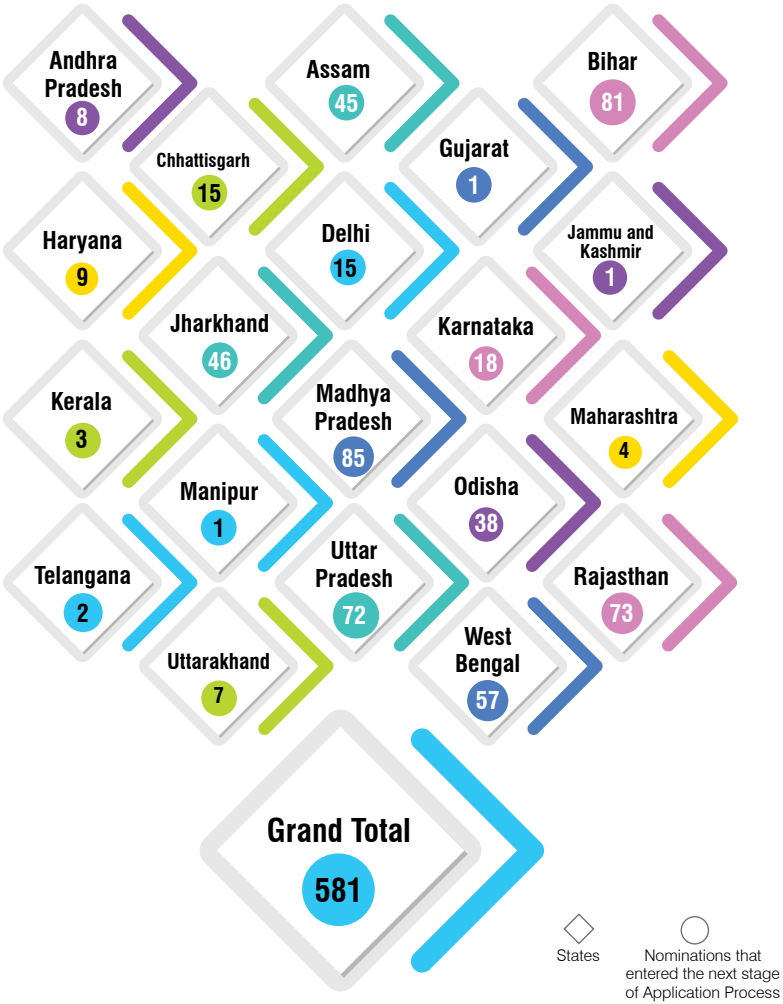
The statewise nominations filed are as follows:



Level 2 Nomination:

At this stage, the nominees selected from the first round were required to complete an additional form.

The statewise nominations that entered the next stage of the Application Process are as follows:



Level 3 Final Stage:

Internal Juror Review:

- An internal team of jurors was assigned to meticulously review the nomination forms.
- Nomination forms were evaluated based on a grading sheet to ensure a fair and systematic assessment.
- The objective was to select the top 200 nominees who would proceed to the next stage.

Nominee Shortlisting for Grant Jury:

- Following the internal jury assessment, a comprehensive list of shortlisted nominees for the final round was compiled.
- Nominees were categorized by gender and disability status for effective organization.
- The shortlisted nominees for the Grand Jury review were as follows:
  - » Nominations under the category 'Male': 71
  - » Nominations under the category 'Female': 84
  - » Nominations under the category 'Persons with Disabilities (PWD)': 45

This meticulous and transparent process ensured that the final nominees are a distinguished group representing excellence in the field of digital empowerment across various categories. This constituted the nomination process that led to the final selection of awardees for SoochnaPreneur Award 2023.

APPLICATION DIVERSITY

The SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 called for nominations from individuals nationwide who are making exceptional contributions to the Digital Empowerment of their communities and villages. This initiative successfully transcended regional boundaries, motivating people to showcase their remarkable projects that address the information gap caused by a lack of digitalization. The nominations received for the SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 reveal a noteworthy and inclusive participation from various states across India, reflecting a comprehensive regional representation. While states like Rajasthan, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh demonstrate heightened engagement, others such as Gujarat and Jammu and Kashmir display comparatively lower representation. This diversity underscores inclusivity, with a diverse group of participants contributing to the event's vibrancy from different geographical regions. The nominations not only highlight regional diversity but also offer insights into potential trends or patterns, indicating areas that have attracted more attention or where specific achievements are particularly prominent. Notably, a significant portion of the nominations falls under the categories of 'Female' and 'Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)'. These trends underscore the growing need for platforms that recognize and celebrate the work, talent, and dedication of individuals, transcending social, cultural, and economic barriers that might otherwise impede their growth and development. The SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 serves as a beacon for acknowledging and fostering the potential within the aspiring masses of the country.

DIGITAL CHAMPIONS:

UNVEILING THE NOMINEES IN THE 'MALE' CATEGORY

Abdhesh Dhakad
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Abadesh Dhakad, a 30-year-old resident of Mundol village in Guna District, Madhya Pradesh, stands as a catalyst for rural empowerment, steering positive change in his community. The village is immersed in a socio-cultural context that reflects the rich tapestry of rural life in central India. Similar to many other rural areas in the state, the local communities face challenges such as limited access to education, healthcare, and digital infrastructure. Over the past five years, he has taken the lead in driving initiatives that aim to bridge the digital gap and contribute to overall community development.

Abadesh operates from his center in Bishnavada, strategically positioned to impact 12-15 neighboring villages, positively influencing the lives of over 25,000 individuals. His dedicated efforts center around the empowerment of women, with a focus on facilitating essential services such as establishing savings accounts, pensions, and Aadhaar cards. Abadesh's initiatives extend beyond mere financial transactions; he actively promotes women's financial independence through the formation of self-help groups and facilitating access to government loans. Through these means, he creates avenues for women in the community to achieve autonomy and economic self-sufficiency, embodying the essence of rural empowerment in action.

Abdul Munaf
Founder & Director, Gully Classes Foundation

Abdul Munaf is the Founder and Director of Gully Classes Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to providing education to underprivileged children. Based in Chirag Nagar Slum, Ghatkopar West, Mumbai, Abdul's leadership shines through the Soochnapreneur Centre, a digital excellence center that directly influences the lives of over 100 students on a daily basis and extends its benefits to more than 1000 local residents. Notably, 12 students receive scholarships, fostering their educational

pursuits. The slum is situated within a socio-economic context that reflects the complex dynamics of urban poverty and informal settlements in India. The limited access to education and lack of formal employment opportunities contributes to a cycle of economic vulnerability for many families in the community. It is in this context that initiatives led by individuals like Abdul Munaf, contribute towards breaking the cycle of poverty and enhancing educational opportunities for the residents.

Abdul's transformative initiatives have also turned dormant government schools into vibrant libraries, impacting the lives of over 60 students hailing from nine neighboring villages in Basni Belima, Rajasthan. Beyond the immediate community, Abdul's organization has leveraged digital tools to generate over 5 lakh in revenue, enabling support for non-profit organizations across India. The focus lies on students aged 5 to 22 and non-profit entities lacking essential certifications, demonstrating a commitment to broadening educational horizons and uplifting communities nationwide. Abdul Munaf's impactful work exemplifies the potential for positive change when education and digital empowerment converge for the greater good.

Ajay Chauhan
Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh

Ajay Chauhan, a resident of Khudabakspur in Badagaon, Ghazipur District, Uttar Pradesh, is a committed individual managing a public service center located in Jalalabad, Gazipur. Agriculture is the backbone of the economy of the District. The shortage of enterprises and lack of technical knowledge, including digital literacy among the local communities are the core obstacles in the way of industrial growth. In this context, with a setup comprising two laptops, two printers, and a desktop, Ajay diligently oversees the operations of the SoochnaPreneur Center. His primary focus is on providing essential digital services to the local communities, including availing schemes such as PMJI DISHA, PM KISAN, old age pension, disability pension, etc., among other social benefits and entitlements.

Ajay's dedication extends beyond mere management; he is actively involved in the establishment and efficient functioning of the service center. Through constant innovation, he strives to ensure that the digital services, schemes and entitlements reach the community. Ajay Chauhan's efforts cater to the diverse needs of his community and exemplify a commitment to public service by making sustainable and impactful contributions to the digital empowerment, welfare and growth of his fellow residents in Gazipur.

Akram
Alwar, Rajasthan

Residing in Rabhana, Tehsil Tijara, Alwar District, Rajasthan, **Akram** plays a pivotal role, overseeing operations at the Gram Chavandi Khurd Stand center and digitally empowering the local communities. In this capacity, he efficiently manages tasks related to governance and finance, streamlining processes for the convenience of all villagers. Akram's center serves a diverse section of the community, encompassing students, men, women, and the elderly from various communities. Meticulously handling tasks such as cash withdrawal and deposit, Aadhaar enrollment, ration cards, form filling, Aadhaar card, PAN card, and other related services, the center acts as a reliable hub for essential administrative functions.

With operational hours from 7 AM to 8 PM, Akram ensures consistency and reliability in service delivery. Beyond managing day-to-day operations, he is dedicated to keeping villagers well-informed about available government schemes, ensuring they can access benefits in a timely manner. Customer work is prioritized, reflecting Akram's commitment to prompt and efficient completion of tasks, ultimately contributing to the well-being and empowerment of the local communities in Rabhana.

Arbab Khan
Barmer, Rajasthan

Arbab Khan, hailing from Sedwa village in Barmer, Rajasthan, is at the forefront of a center dedicated to delivering crucial government services. Overcoming initial hurdles marked by limited customers and bureaucratic delays, Arbab implemented the 181 helpline to streamline processes, resulting in a notable increase in customer numbers and

operational efficiency. Despite working with basic equipment, Arbab's center has successfully served over 8000 beneficiaries, facilitating access to various government schemes. His commitment to ensuring timely benefits extends beyond conventional methods; he personally reaches out to eligible individuals through his app, demonstrating a personalized approach to service delivery.

Arbab Khan's dedication goes beyond routine tasks, as he actively engages in providing relief to individuals affected by disasters. His multifaceted efforts showcase a deep commitment to community welfare, utilizing technology and personal outreach to make a positive impact in Sedwa village, Barmer.

Ashok Kumar
Muzaffarpur, Bihar

Ashok Kumar, a 25-year-old graduate, is the driving force behind Ashok Enterprises & Digital Seva in Bangra Nizamat, Muzaffarpur, Bihar. With a strategic focus on engaging young girls, women and individuals aged 15 to 50, recognizing their significant roles at home and their potential as valued customers, Ashok has carved a niche for his enterprise.

To amplify his business reach, Ashok actively networked with the District Coordinator and Manager of CSC, establishing key connections for collaborative ventures. Emphasizing community well-being, he organizes health camps and webinars in government schools and rural areas, forging partnerships with Asha Workers and Gram Panchayats. Ashok's implementation plan involves the meticulous mapping and scheduling of monthly health camps, ensuring sustained impact.

Beyond his business pursuits, Ashok Kumar extends his influence to healthcare accessibility through the operation of a DigiSwasthya Foundation Telemedicine Centre. This initiative aims to bridge gaps in healthcare services and promote well-being within his community. Ashok's multi-faceted approach exemplifies his commitment to holistic community development and the advancement of healthcare accessibility in Bangra Nizamat, Muzaffarpur.

Ashok Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Ashok Kumar, a SoochnaPreneur hailing from Salempur in West Champaran, Bihar, has dedicated himself to the service of rural communities. Operating with a focus on assisting communities in navigating various government schemes, Ashok has become a crucial resource for the residents of his region. His comprehensive range of services includes support with obtaining caste certificates, residence certificates, income certificates, ration cards, PAN cards, Ayushman cards, farmer card registrations, farmer honorarium, railway tickets, voter cards, photocopies, laminations, crop insurance, widow pensions, disability pensions, electricity bills, consumer issues, passports, Aadhaar cards, and more. The impact of his services is reflected in the fact that people are willing to travel up to four kilometers to avail themselves of his assistance. In situations where individuals are unable to reach him directly, Ashok goes the extra mile by organizing camps, extending his services to over 5000 individuals. Equipped with a laptop, printer, lamination machine, desk, and three phones, Ashok ensures the accessibility of government schemes to those who need them. Moreover, he keeps the community informed by utilizing technology effectively. When new government schemes are introduced, Ashok communicates their eligibility criteria and benefits through his app, ensuring that the residents of Salempur stay updated and informed about the opportunities available to them. Ashok Kumar's unwavering commitment exemplifies the impact that an individual with dedication and resourcefulness can have on enhancing accessibility to government services in rural Bihar.

Bablu Lodha
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Bablu Lodha, the son of Darshan Lal, is the driving force behind Bablu Online Center situated in Khedi Kala, Kumbhraj, Guna, Madhya Pradesh. Operating within a 10-kilometer radius, his center is equipped with essential tools, including a laptop, printer, and fingerprint machine. On a daily basis, approximately 15 to 25 individuals visit Bablu's center seeking assistance with various online tasks. Going beyond the conventional role of an information provider, Bablu

actively engages with the community, personally reaching out to members to disseminate information about diverse government schemes and ensuring they reap the benefits they are entitled to.

Recognizing the importance of financial inclusion, Bablu extends his support by assisting community members in opening bank accounts and keeping them well-informed about the array of available schemes. His commitment to stability and consistency is reflected in the daily operations of his center, which opens regularly, completes tasks promptly, maintains a standard of good behavior, and educates people about the welfare schemes that can enhance their lives. Bablu Lodha's proactive and community-centric approach embodies the impact that an individual, armed with dedication and essential resources, can have in fostering digital inclusion and facilitating access to government schemes in rural Madhya Pradesh.

Bhagwati Prasad Soni,
Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh

Bhagwati Prasad Soni, a dedicated volunteer hailing from Gram Panchayat Chharchh in Tehsil Pohri, Shivpuri District, Madhya Pradesh, is actively involved in community service. With a primary focus on Gram Chharchh and the surrounding villages, Bhagwati Prasad employs computers, printers, and other essential equipment extensively to facilitate the timely dissemination of updates and information.

Recognizing the prevalent lack of information among rural residents, Bhagwati Prasad takes a proactive approach, promptly responding to the needs of the community. His commitment extends beyond information dissemination; he is dedicated to bridging the gap in education and employment opportunities within the area.

Bhagwati Prasad Soni's volunteer work exemplifies the positive impact that an individual can have in empowering and uplifting a community. Through the effective use of technology and a commitment to addressing local needs, he contributes to the overall well-being and development of Gram Chharchh and its neighboring villages in Shivpuri District.

Birendra Prasad Bediya
Ramgarh, Jharkhand

Birendra Prasad Bediya, a resident of Murpa village in Ramgarh District, Jharkhand, holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and belongs to the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category. Ramgarh District, with its long history of coal mining and coal-based industries, has been generating employment opportunities in the region. It has also created a socio-economic dependency on coal, which poses significant challenges in terms of long-term sustainable development and climate change mitigation. In this context, the government and local organizations are looking towards economic diversification as a viable solution in the face of a coal phasedown. In this context, the lack of digital literacy among local communities especially in the rural areas as well as the necessary digital infrastructure are serious concerns at hand.

At this critical juncture, Birendra's efforts as a SoochnaPreneur has played a key role in digitally empowering the local communities and enabling them to avail entrepreneurial and other employment opportunities. He started his journey with operating a small digital resource center with limited outreach. However, his trajectory took a transformative turn when he started running a Digital Excellence Centre. As a Soochna Preneur, Birendra embraced digital service delivery strategies, equipping his center with essential digital tools such as computers and printers. Despite facing technical challenges initially, his center underwent a remarkable evolution, becoming a hub of learning with broadband internet connectivity. His journey exemplifies how access to digital resources and effective training programs aimed at enhancing their literacy and skills, can empower local communities and make a significant impact in society.

Brij Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Brij Kumar, a resident of Bakheri village in Panchayat Siththi, West Champaran, Bihar, has devoted himself to serving rural communities by facilitating access to various government schemes, including caste certificates, residence proofs, ration cards, and more. Engaged with DEF since 2016, Brij encountered numerous challenges on his journey but

remained resilient in his commitment to community service. Starting with just a tablet, Brij conducted a comprehensive survey in his village, revealing a widespread lack of awareness about essential government schemes. Undeterred, he sought support and established an online center, becoming a valuable resource for his community. Leveraging his association with DEF, Brij organized camps, expanding his outreach and significantly improving the livelihoods of those he served.

Brij Kumar's relentless efforts have uplifted many in Bakheri village, exemplifying the transformative impact of digital empowerment in rural Bihar. His story highlights the potential for positive change when individuals like Brij are equipped with the tools and support to bridge information gaps and enhance the well-being of their communities.

Chetana Kumar U. M.
Tumkur, Karnataka

Chetana Kumar U. M., an MA (English) graduate, underwent a remarkable transformation from being a clerk at Vikas Soudha in Bangalore to becoming the driving force behind the Online Service Centre in Ujjaini village in Tumur, Karnataka. His journey is marked by fluency in Kannada, proficient English skills, CSC certification, and an unwavering commitment to social issues, showcasing a rare blend of dedication and adaptability.

Situated in Ujjani, Tumkur District, Karnataka, Chetanakumar's establishment, named "Chethan Digital Seva Kendra," stands as a testament to his passion for serving rural low-income families and seniors, transcending societal segments. In just 18 months, his center has left an indelible impact on 8000 locals spread across 7 villages, providing crucial government and digital services.

Chetanakumar's center goes beyond mere service delivery; it actively bridges gaps in information and resources, empowering communities and serving as a beacon of grassroots leadership. His efforts exemplify a holistic approach to societal upliftment, demonstrating how dedication, knowledge, and adaptability can create meaningful change in the fabric of rural communities in Karnataka

Devkinandan Lodha
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Devkinandan Lodha, hailing from Hilagna in Guna, Madhya Pradesh, is committed to the service of rural communities, playing a pivotal role in facilitating access to various government schemes such as ration cards and pensions. His dedicated service extends across a wide radius of 10 to 17 kilometers, covering multiple village panchayats in the region.

Equipped with essential digital tools, including printers, laptops, and biometric devices, Devkinandan has made a significant impact, reaching over 10,680 beneficiaries in the process. His efforts actively bridge the digital divide, ensuring that even marginalized groups have seamless access to essential government services.

Devkinandan Lodha's focus on community welfare goes beyond routine tasks; he embodies grassroots leadership, empowering thousands by providing them with access to vital resources and government assistance. His exemplary commitment to serving rural communities in Guna, Madhya Pradesh, underscores the transformative impact that dedicated individuals can have in bridging gaps and fostering inclusive development.

Dharmendra Rojwal
Jaipur, Rajasthan

Dharmendra Rojwal, the son of Shri Bhagirath Prasad Bunkar, is a dedicated advocate for digital education in Chharsa Village, Jaipur District, Rajasthan. His mission centers around empowering rural communities, with a focus on providing computer literacy and essential digital skills to youth, students, and women.

Operating from his village, Dharmendra leads the Dharmendra Digital Seva Kendra, a center that serves as a hub for cyber awareness and digital education. His initiatives are inclusive, reaching various sections of society, including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Through door-to-door campaigns and personalized assistance, he ensures that everyone, especially those in marginalized groups, can conveniently access government services.

Dharmendra's commitment to community empowerment goes beyond education; he actively works to enhance center facilities and connectivity, making digital services more accessible to all. His efforts exemplify the transformative impact that digital education can have in bridging gaps and fostering inclusivity in rural Rajasthan.

Dooda Satyarao,
Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

Dooda Satyarao, a graduate of Andhra University (AU) in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, has been dedicatedly serving as a SoochnaPreneur for over five years. In this time, his impactful contributions include facilitating the issuance of more than 4600 PAN cards, over 6800 e-shram cards, and 3000+ voter cards. He has also provided essential PF services to over 7000 individuals.

Beyond these achievements, Satyarao's multifaceted efforts extend to community development. He has printed 130+ rice cards, facilitated bike insurance for 650+ people, and captured 3000+ photos for various purposes. Actively engaging in the welfare of the community, he organizes medical and eye camps for fishermen, contributing to their well-being. Furthermore, Satyarao conducts career counseling sessions for students, with a special focus on those in the fisheries sector.

Satyarao's commitment to community welfare is also evident in his awareness programs. Covering crucial topics such as fake news on WhatsApp, sanitation, hygiene, and government schemes, he reaches rural communities through door-to-door initiatives and community meetings. His holistic approach showcases the significant impact that an individual, equipped with knowledge and dedication, can have on the well-being and empowerment of the community.

Equbal Ansari
West Champaran

Equbal Ansari, a dedicated Common Service Center (CSC) operator in Bihar, is the driving force behind the Digital Sewa Kendra, providing a range of services encompassing banking, agriculture, digital literacy, and printing to serve his village. Situated in Khairatiya Baldiha, Post-Shivarajpur, Thana-Navalpur, District-West Champaran, Bihar, Equbal has evolved his center to meet diverse needs, from assisting with pensions to facilitating insurance services.

Despite starting on a small scale, Equbal's center has grown to benefit various demographics, with a particular focus on marginalized groups within the community. Facing challenges such as financial constraints and power shortages, he exhibited resilience by implementing innovative solutions like installment payment options and battery backups.

Equbal's commitment to customer satisfaction is evident through his proactive measures, including weekly offers, the provision of RO water, and regular equipment upgrades. By striving to minimize returns and maintaining his center as the go-to solution for villagers, Equbal exemplifies how dedication and adaptability can contribute to the success and sustainability of community-focused initiatives in Bihar.

Ganesh Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Ganesh Kumar, a disabled person and resident of Laukar operating from Mainatand block, West Champaran District, Bihar, has been working with DEF for two years. Despite facing challenges, especially mobility, Ganesh actively engages in educating villagers about various government schemes, assists in filling online forms, and provides photocopying services. Operating in an environment with minimal internet connectivity and electricity, he perseveres, attributing his success to the support from Prabhu and guidance from Akshay, who have been associated with DEF.

In addition to offering essential banking services, Ganesh goes beyond by supplying additional items like bulbs, wires, and fans to cater to the diverse needs of his community. With a monthly earning of

around ₹12,000, Ganesh expresses gratitude for the transformative journey from a previously aimless path, to establishing and running a full-fledged digital resource center, empowered by the digital tools and resources facilitated by DEF. Ganesh Kumar's story exemplifies the transformative impact it can have on individuals and communities, empowering them to overcome challenges, pursue goals, and make meaningful contributions to society.

Gurulingaiah G. M.
Tumkur, Karnataka

Gurulingaiah G. M. , initially a BA-educated farmer, has undergone a transformative journey into a dynamic entrepreneur, successfully operating a thriving digital kiosk in Handanakere village. With fundamental computer skills, fluency in Kannada, and a newly acquired acumen for customer service, Gurulingaiah embodies resilience and dedication in his pursuits.

His center, Sri Ram Samanya Seva Kendra, located in Gungurubhagi, Handanakere C N Halli, Tumkur District, Karnataka, caters to a diverse community. This includes farmers, low-income families, and women's self-help groups. Over the past 18 months, Gurulingaiah has made a significant impact, reaching 6000 community members across 8 villages. His proactive approach includes conducting door-to-door campaigns to raise awareness about the various government welfare schemes he provides.

Gurulingaiah's services extend to meeting the needs of all sections of society, reflecting his commitment to inclusive community development. His journey from a farmer to an entrepreneur highlights the transformative power of dedication and adaptability, showcasing how individuals like Gurulingaiah can positively impact their communities in Karnataka.

Irfan
Alwar, Rajasthan

Irfan, a devoted community worker hailing from Raybaka village, Alwar, Rajasthan, has been actively engaged in grassroots initiatives in Alwar since 2016. Overcoming initial skepticism, he has steadily gained the trust of the community through his unwavering commitment to providing accurate information.

His primary focus is on promoting government schemes among villagers, with a particular emphasis on reaching out to marginalized groups such as women, the elderly, and children. With a mission to ensure that no one is left behind, Irfan operates a center facilitating Aadhaar card services, staying abreast of relevant developments to better serve the community.

Beyond his role in government scheme promotion, Irfan champions digital literacy and actively dispels misinformation, serving as a beacon of awareness in the community. His dedicated efforts showcase the transformative impact that a committed individual can have in fostering community engagement and empowerment in Alwar.

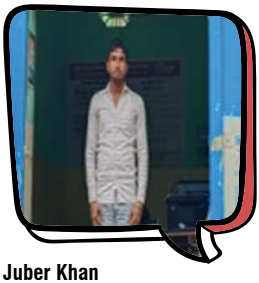
Jarjesh Ahmad
Alwar, Rajasthan

Jarjesh Ahmad, a resident of Daika Post Baghor in Tehsil Tijara, Alwar District, Rajasthan, serves as a SoochnaPreneur in his community. His center, strategically located near the police station in Tijara, plays a crucial role in providing various government-related services to both urban and rural residents, ensuring accessibility for all.

With an impressive community reach extending up to 12 km, Jarjesh's center is well-equipped with essential digital tools. These include a laptop, a Mantra device, two printers (one color and one black), a lamination machine, and two tablets. Operating from 7 AM to 8 PM, the center prioritizes stability and consistency in service delivery, with a primary focus on educating locals about government schemes and facilitating timely benefits.

Jarjesh Ahmad's center efficiently handles all customer tasks, with a specific emphasis on Common Service Center (CSC)and e-Mitra services.

His commitment to serving the community in Tehsil Tijara showcases the positive impact that well-equipped and strategically located centers can have in making government-related tasks more accessible to residents in both urban and rural areas.



Juber Khan
Alwar, Rajasthan

Juber Khan, a resident of Nimbahedi village in Tehsil Tijara, Alwar District, Rajasthan, holds the crucial role, with responsibilities extending to managing finance and governance tasks, running operations from various locations to ensure convenient digital services for the local population. Currently, Juber's focus is on ensuring that all rural residents have access to essential government services, fostering education and awareness among them. The center, equipped with essential digital tools such as a laptop, tablet, mobile phones, camera, Mantra machine, and printers, has a substantial social impact on approximately 16,000 individuals within a 5 km radius.

The center, under Juber's management, strives to fulfill diverse document-related demands, including Aadhaar updates, PAN cards, birth certificates, ration cards, NREGA cards, and voter ID cards. Stability and consistency in service delivery are paramount, with Juber's efforts directed at attracting people to the center by providing quality services. These services encompass facilitating bank account openings, fostering social engagement, securing pensions for the elderly, ensuring food security benefits, and disseminating vital information on healthcare and education.

Juber Khan's commitment exemplifies the transformative role that a well-equipped and community-focused center can play in enhancing the well-being and accessibility of essential services for residents in Tehsil Tijara, Rajasthan.

Juned Khan
Alwar, Rajasthan

Juned Khan, a resident of Patan Khurd village in Tehsil Tijara, Alwar District, Rajasthan, is a graduate with technical skills acquired through various digital programs. He operates in the domain of daily conveniences, managing the Royal Robin Computers center in Patan Khurd, specializing in providing digital and financial services. The center serves as a hub for students seeking assistance with school document-related work, while elderly individuals visit for pension-related matters. Additionally, adults frequent the center for a range of digital services. Juned ensures the center caters to individuals from all communities, ensuring they benefit from the available digital and financial services.

Initially equipped with a laptop, color printer, and a 1000 VA UPS, the center commenced its operations with e-Mitra services and Aadhaar enrollment. Later, recognizing the evolving needs of the community, they applied for Common Service Center Village Level Entrepreneur (CSC VLE) to expand their services, including PAN card issuance. The center consistently adapts to changing requirements, transitioning from an Aadhaar enrollment center to a CSC Aadhaar Update Center, ensuring stability and continuity for both the public and the center. To support this transition and maintain uninterrupted service, the center received digital equipment, a static IP, internet connectivity, and a 1-kilowatt solar system from DEF. This infrastructure ensures that the Royal Robin Computers center under Juned Khan's management continues to provide essential services seamlessly to the community in Tehsil Tijara, Rajasthan.

Kalicharan
Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh

Kalicharan, a devoted SoochnaPreneur, is steadfast in promoting literacy, health, governance, finance, and various other services from Smartpur Shankar Singh Dullahpur in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh. His center caters to the needs of women, the elderly, and youth, with a community reach extending approximately 40 km.

Welcoming around 2,000 beneficiaries seeking digital and financial services, Kalicharan's efforts are dedicated to consistently sharing information with the

community. His initiatives include raising awareness among women and providing essential information about health and healthcare services, contributing to the overall stability and continuity in the region.

Kalicharan's role as a SoochnaPreneur reflects a commitment to community development and empowerment in Ghazipur, showcasing the positive impact of providing diverse services and fostering awareness in the local population.

Kaptan Chandel
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Kaptan Chandel, a resident of Myana village in Guna District, Madhya Pradesh, is a dedicated information entrepreneur delivering essential digital services to rural communities in the region. Operating from the New Sarai Road center, located approximately 30 kilometers from the District headquarters, Kaptan's outreach spans a radius of 3 to 10 kilometers, impacting around 2000 individuals. The presence of a SoochnaPreneur like Kaptan Chandela indicates efforts to bridge the digital divide, offering opportunities for digital literacy and access to information.

With a bachelor's degree and equipped with essential digital tools such as a mobile, computer, tablet, printers, and more, Kaptan's consistent efforts have significantly improved lives in the region. His commitment to expanding digital services has played a pivotal role in enhancing livelihoods in remote areas, contributing to overall societal progress and development of the region.

Kundrapu Sridhar
Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

Kundrapu Sridhar, a resident of Naidupalem Village in Paravada Block, Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, adeptly juggles his final year of degree studies with his pivotal role at the Digital Center. Operating the State Portal and Meeseva, Sridhar plays a crucial role in facilitating various community applications, including income, caste, FM, and Panchayati certifications.

Armed with 2 laptops, black & white and color printers, a thumb device, solar power, and an inverter, Sridhar extends his services within a radius of 15-20 kms,

encompassing surrounding villages and block levels. His commitment to consistent and diligent service delivery is evident through close communication with beneficiaries and establishing linkages with other government services.

Sridhar's target groups include a diverse demographic, ranging from fishermen and agriculturists to farmers and daily wage earners. His strategic implementation plan involves leveraging digital media outreach, creating WhatsApp groups, and collaborating with Panchayati for effective scheme information dissemination. Through his multifaceted approach, Kundrapu Sridhar is actively contributing to the empowerment and welfare of the communities he serves in Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh.

Kripal Singh Lodha,
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Kripal Singh Lodha, a committed community organizer, channels his efforts towards rural development in Madhya Pradesh, India. Armed with a background in Social Work (MSW) and a Diploma in Computer Applications (DCA), he operates the Information Service Center in Binkhyai village, Guna District.

Offering a range of services including photocopying, digital printing, and laminating, Kripal's center goes beyond conventional offerings. It serves as a vital hub for disseminating information on education, health, and government schemes such as MGNREGA. Committed to the empowerment of marginalized communities, Kripal strategically focuses on raising awareness among individuals from ST, SC, OBC, and the general category, particularly in the field of agriculture. His efforts extend to minimizing chemical usage and promoting digital literacy.

The impact of Kripal's center is evident in the positive outcomes it has brought to over 70,000 people, showcasing his unwavering dedication to grassroots development in Guna District, Madhya Pradesh.

Lakhana Khan
Barmer, Rajasthan

BEST SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL CHANGEMAKER

Lakhana Khan, hailing from Sarna Ki Dhani, Sedwa, Barmer, Rajasthan, faced employment challenges until he crossed paths with Shakti Singh Dhanau, who introduced him to DEF (Digital Empowerment Foundation). Initially tasked with disseminating government scheme information in rural areas, Khan's journey evolved as he received a tablet and later established a dedicated center.

Joining DEF in 2017, Khan actively visited households, recorded data, and assisted in pension and welfare applications. With DEF's support, his income improved, and he went above and beyond by distributing free masks during the pandemic. His app, boasting over 2000 entries, became a catalyst for facilitating job card registrations, and he continues to play a vital role in assisting with various government schemes, earning heartfelt gratitude from his community. Lakhana Khan's transformative journey exemplifies the positive impact of digital empowerment in rural Rajasthan.

Lala Ram
Barmer, Rajasthan

Lala Ram, a resident of Barmer, Rajasthan, has been actively involved in social work with DEF for the past 5 years. Amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, he actively participated in UNICEF's prevention programs. Lala Ram conducted awareness campaigns and created impactful wall paintings across various government departments. To ensure comprehensive outreach, he organized door-to-door surveys, educating people on COVID prevention measures.

Lalaram went beyond conventional efforts by organizing youth meetings to foster awareness, finding fulfillment in his work with DEF. Building a robust network, he played a crucial role in facilitating crop insurance claims and advocating for farmers' rights. Lalaram's relentless dedication to aiding the underprivileged earned him recognition, expanding both his outreach and the trust placed in him within the community.

Lala Ram continues to ensure farmers' welfare through various government schemes, overcoming

challenges with perseverance and determination. His impactful contributions highlight the positive outcomes that dedicated individuals like Lalaram can achieve in community development and support during challenging times.

Mahesh
Alwar, Rajasthan

Mahesh, a resident of Rasgan village in Alwar District, Rajasthan, has been actively collaborating with DEF for the past 3 years. His community engagement involves going door-to-door, spreading awareness about various government schemes such as pensions, Aadhaar card registration, and welfare programs tailored for widows and their children.

Mahesh's commitment extends beyond mere awareness campaigns. He actively contributes to food security by assisting with the application process for needy and widowed women in the village, ensuring they receive essential provisions like wheat. One day, he encountered a poor family from nearby Munpur Karmala village facing severe difficulties, despite having applied for food security assistance. Witnessing their dire situation, Mahesh took personal initiative, liaising with local authorities and submitting applications to ensure their inclusion in the food security program.

Thanks to Mahesh's unwavering efforts, the struggling family received 35 kg of wheat, bringing them immense relief and gratitude. The community deeply appreciates Mahesh's dedication as he continues to work tirelessly to support those in need, showcasing the positive impact that grassroots efforts can have on the well-being of individuals and families.

Malaram Meghwal
Barmer, Rajasthan

Malaram Meghwal, based in Dheera village, Sivana block, Barmer District, Rajasthan, is dedicated to serving rural communities by providing essential services such as caste certificates, income proofs, ration cards, voter IDs, and more. Situated 10 kilometers away, his center caters to a community of approximately 100 individuals.

Equipped with a laptop, black & white printer, laminator, and biometric machine, Malaram efficiently assists with various government schemes and

documents, including electricity bills, passports, and Aadhaar cards. His collaborative approach ensures close engagement with diverse groups, tailoring digital service delivery to the specific needs of his village. Malaram's efforts focus on facilitating access to government schemes through the E-Mitra platform, showcasing the positive impact of localized services on rural communities in Barmer District, Rajasthan. His role as a service provider in leveraging digital tools to benefit his community is certainly significant and commendable.

Manjur Ansari
Ranchi, Jharkhand

Manjur Ansari, a dedicated Information Provider hailing from Baski in Ranchi, Jharkhand, has been actively serving his community since 2021. Initially focusing on his village, he expanded his services to Murdma, located 10 kilometers away. Handling a diverse range of tasks, including financial transactions and photocopying, Ansari ensures seamless access to essential government schemes such as job guarantees and pensions.

Equipped with a desktop, photocopier, and printer, Ansari's center functions as a comprehensive solution for the varied needs of villagers. His outreach extends to elderly individuals, ensuring they navigate the process of receiving their pensions with ease. Despite facing challenges such as power cuts and security concerns, Ansari's commitment to community service remains unwavering, fostering trust and empowerment of the communities and the region.

Manoj Ojha
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Manoj Ojha, a dedicated Information Promoter, operates in rural areas, specifically from Gram Barakheda Haat, Tehsil Aroon, Guna District, Madhya Pradesh. His center serves a community within a 20-kilometer radius, equipped with essential digital tools such as laptops, computers, mobiles, and printers.

With a comprehensive approach, Manoj has successfully facilitated over 50,000 individuals from 20-30 villages, ensuring they benefit from various government schemes. His meticulous planning

and documentation processes play a crucial role in promoting understanding and engagement among stakeholders, simplifying complex procedures for the community.

Manoj's efforts go beyond mere service provision; he actively bridges the gap between marginalized communities and government initiatives. Through his work, he provides economic assistance and sustainable solutions, thereby transforming lives in rural India. His commitment fosters stability and contributes to the overall well-being of the communities he serves.

Mausamdeen
Alwar, Rajasthan

Mausamdeen, a resident of Guwalda, Tehsil Tijara, Alwar District, Rajasthan, serves as the SoochnaPreneur in his community. His center, situated at Gram Guwalda Stand, efficiently manages tasks related to governance and finance, simplifying processes for rural residents.

Operating from 7 AM to 8 PM, Mausamdeen's center prioritizes stability and consistency in service delivery. Keeping villagers well-informed about various government schemes is a key aspect of his work, ensuring they receive timely benefits. Recognizing the importance of prompt service, especially for elderly clients, Mausamdeen has acquired an IRIS device to overcome challenges and streamline operations.

Investing in essential tools such as IRIS devices, keyboards, mice, and desks further enhances the efficiency of the center, allowing it to effectively cater to the diverse needs of the rural populace. Mausamdeen's commitment to providing accessible and efficient services contributes to the growth and development of the community.

Muhammad Aslam
Bharatpur, Rajasthan

BEST COMMUNITY LEADER

Muhammad Aslam, a resident of Ladmaka village, pursued his education up to graduation and completed a computer course. After facing challenges while working as a guard in Gujarat, struggling to adequately support his family, Aslam made the transformative decision to become an Information Promoter. This career change has significantly improved his ability to sustain his family. Presently stationed at the Smartpur Hub Center in Ladmaka, Bharatpur, Rajasthan, Aslam collaborates with Self-Help Group (SHG) women and aspires to work with Anganwadi workers and school staff. His overarching goal is to extend the reach of government schemes to every household in his Panchayat.

Utilizing the DEF app, Aslam identifies eligible beneficiaries and strives to connect them with various government schemes. Despite initial skepticism, he gradually gained the trust of the community by educating them about the center's services. Starting with just a laptop and a black-and-white printer, Aslam's center's income increased over time. This allowed him to upgrade equipment and expand services to include eMitra licenses, banking points, AEPS, and Aadhaar corrections. Through these dedicated efforts, Aslam has positively impacted approximately 35,000 individuals from Ladmaka and the surrounding areas. His commitment ensures stability and consistency in service delivery, contributing to the overall well-being of the community.

Mazharul Islam
Ranchi, Jharkhand

Mazharul Islam operates an information center in Bazar Tad, Itki, Ranchi, Jharkhand, focusing on providing online services and digital literacy to the local community. His outreach spans across diverse demographics, including students, women, the elderly, and disabled individuals. Under Mazharul's leadership, the center plays a pivotal role in disseminating information about various government schemes, facilitating processes such as PMUY gas connections and Ladli scheme enrollments. Additionally, the center actively assists with pension withdrawals, scholarship applications, and conducts computer classes to promote digital literacy.

Functioning as a one-stop solution, Mazharul's center offers a comprehensive range of services, from cash withdrawals to document printing. This approach fosters trust within the community, positioning the center as a reliable resource for various needs. Equipped with essential assets like a desktop and a photocopier, Mazharul's center actively promotes digital literacy across education, finance, social security, livelihood, health, and women empowerment. Through these initiatives, Mazharul contributes to enhancing the overall growth and well-being of the region.

Mohammad Asik
Tijara, Rajasthan

2nd
PRIZE WINNER

Mohammad Asik has been the dedicated operator of an eMitra center in Tapukda, Khairthal, Tijara, Rajasthan, for the past decade, catering to a cluster of approximately a dozen villages and serving around 15,000 residents. His center is a hub of over 50 services encompassing e-governance, finance, health, and education.

Equipped with three laptops, a tablet, printers, biometric devices, and cameras, the center extends its services to rural communities, actively creating awareness about various government schemes among approximately 10,000 individuals. Mohd Asik identifies the unique needs and capacities of the communities he serves, facilitating development initiatives that emphasize crucial skills such as problem-solving, risk assessment, teamwork, and community assistance.

His overarching goal is to contribute to the reduction of anger and wastage while fostering resilience and purpose within the communities he engages with. Mohd Asik's decade-long commitment to his eMitra center has made a significant impact on the socio-economic landscape of the region, improving access to essential services and empowering residents through knowledge and awareness.

Waheed Hasan Raza
Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh

Waheed Hasan Raza, a graduate with humble beginnings, operates the Moiz Communication center in Fazilnagar, Dhanouji Road, Kushinagar District, Uttar Pradesh. Dedicated to serving his village and the surrounding areas, he provides a range of government and non-government digital services to address diverse needs, including tasks related to agriculture, widow and elder pensions, mobile recharge, railway tickets, and photocopying.

Recognizing the absence of local markets for such services, Waheed took the initiative to open the center after discussions with his parents. With their support, he secured the necessary finances and gradually equipped the center, ensuring stability and consistent service delivery. Building trust among the locals was a priority for Waheed, and he achieved this by offering fair prices and expanding his services gradually.

As word spread about the reliability of his services, the center experienced a significant increase in footfall. This growth not only enhanced community engagement but also contributed to higher levels of satisfaction among the residents he serves. Waheed Hasan Raza's commitment to providing essential digital services has made a positive impact on the accessibility of various services in his community.

Mohd Shadab
Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh

Mohd Shadab, a dedicated SoochnaPreneur, operates in Rampur Bhawanipur, Barabanki District, Uttar Pradesh, with a mission to enhance the lives of the local community. His center, reaching a substantial audience of 10,000 individuals, efficiently addresses queries within a 10km radius. Leveraging digital tools, Shadab has significantly reduced government service wait times by 15%, ensuring prompt assistance to those in need.

In addition to providing digital services, his Mobile Repairing Centre has successfully serviced over 250 devices, contributing to the technological well-being of the community. Shadab is focused on expanding his user base through a referral program, fostering a supportive community that benefits from the services offered.

To achieve this, his strategic plan involves thorough research, seamless integration of services, and comprehensive staff training, overcoming any resistance to change. Shadab recognizes the importance of careful evaluation and continuous upgrades to ensure sustained effectiveness and evolve as a responsive community service provider. His commitment to improving local lives is evident in the proactive measures taken to enhance the accessibility and quality of services in Rampur Bhawanipur.

Mukesh Kumar
Samastipur, Bihar

BEST SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Mukesh Kumar, operating in Birsinghpur, Samastipur, Bihar, stands as a dedicated information entrepreneur who has successfully navigated initial challenges to establish a center that acts as a crucial link between rural communities and government schemes. Within a 5 km radius, Mukesh's center has positively impacted over 1000 beneficiaries, most of whom come from agricultural backgrounds.

Despite facing challenges associated with low literacy rates, Mukesh remains committed to providing essential e-governance services, educational support, and digital facilities. His monthly average income of Rs. 3500 reflects the tangible impact of his efforts. Equipped with essential assets such as a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, and printers, Mukesh's center has evolved to effectively meet the evolving needs of the community.

His vision is deeply rooted in the stories of transformed lives, serving as a continuous source of inspiration that propels him to persist in his impactful social work, making a meaningful difference in the lives of those he serves.

Mukesh Yadav
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

BEST PRESENTATION

Mukesh Yadav, a resident of Barkhedi Ram village, Tehsil Maksoodangarh, Guna District, Madhya Pradesh, has been an integral part of the DEF community since 2014. Operating an information service center in Madhusudangarh, his services extend to approximately 20 rural panchayats in the vicinity. Over the years, the center has played a pivotal role in benefiting around 61,000 individuals, with a predominant focus on those from SC, ST, and OBC communities.

Equipped with essential digital tools such as one computer, two laptops, one color printer, one black printer, one tablet, one mobile, two fingerprint devices, and one inverter, Mukesh's center has emerged as a hub for digital education in the region. Despite facing challenges, including initial unfamiliarity with the work and limited footfall, Mukesh displayed resilience and determination, eventually gaining recognition through successful collaborations with various government departments.

Actively participating in government camps and expanding the range of services to include banking transactions and document-related tasks, Mukesh has consistently enhanced the offerings of the center. His dedication to providing quality services, coupled with an innovative approach to community engagement, continues to make a significant impact in Madhusudangarh and the surrounding areas.

Mustkeem Khan
Bensi, Haryana,

3rd PRIZE WINNER

Mustkeem Khan, a resident of Bensi village in Haryana, has been at the forefront of a digital center initiative since 2018. His comprehensive services span education, finance, and governance, benefitting approximately 40,000 individuals across several villages in the region. Armed with essential digital equipment, Mustkeem offers diverse services, ranging from basic computer courses to facilitating financial transactions.

His commitment extends to community empowerment, with a special focus on engaging women, men, and children in the learning and utilization of digital services. Mustkeem's vision revolves around the

expansion of services and ensuring the continuity of efforts to bring about sustained betterment in his community. Through his dedication and the varied services provided, Mustkeem contributes significantly to the digital empowerment and overall development of the region.

Narendra Kumar
Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh

Narendra Kumar, operating from the Smartpur Center in Barabanki District, Uttar Pradesh, stands as a dedicated community service provider. Since 2016, his center has been a hub for a wide range of services, covering education, health, employment, and financial assistance. Equipped with crucial digital tools, including laptops, printers, and solar panels, Narendra extends his services to benefit over 15,000 individuals residing in rural areas.

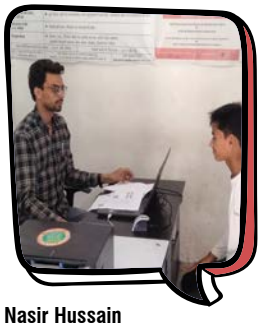
Despite encountering challenges, Narendra remains steadfast in his commitment to expanding the reach and impact of his center. His primary objective is to ensure that the local community gains access to various government schemes and essential services that can significantly improve their quality of life. Through persistent efforts and collaborative initiatives, Narendra's center has become an instrumental force in making a positive impact on the lives of the individuals it serves. His unwavering dedication contributes to the empowerment and well-being of the community, creating a lasting and beneficial influence on the socio-economic landscape of the region.

Narpat Balwan
Barmer, Rajasthan

Narpat Balwan, affiliated with DEF since 2014, initially oversaw activities at the Bhamashah Camp, facilitating applications for Bhamashah cards, pensions, and food security schemes. Progressing to the Information Service Center, he now imparts computer literacy and basic courses to students, continuously evolving his range of services to include labor cards, ration cards, Aadhaar cards, and various other essential services.

Operating in the Baytu block, Barmer, Rajasthan, Narpat's center has been a significant source of benefit for the community, providing crucial services

like food security, Aadhaar, and labor cards. With a robust infrastructure of 12 digital tools, including computers, color and black & white printers, Narpat's center serves individuals within a radius of 20-25 kilometers. The social impact is evident as people prefer visiting his center over others, appreciating the comprehensive information and prompt service provided.



Nasir Hussain
Alwar, Rajasthan

Nasir Hussain, a dedicated SoochnaPreneur based in Jakhopur Village, Tijara, Alwar, Rajasthan, plays a crucial role in providing governance and financial services to the local community within a 7 km radius. His well-equipped center includes essential tools such as a laptop, Mantra device, printers, lamination machine, and tablet, enabling efficient service delivery to approximately 4000 individuals. This demographic includes students, men, women, and elderly residents.

The center offers a comprehensive range of services, covering cash transactions, Aadhaar and PAN card assistance, and form filling. With operational hours from 8 AM to 6 PM, Nasir ensures stability and consistent service delivery, addressing the diverse needs of the community.

Actively engaging with the rural population, Nasir is dedicated to disseminating information about various government schemes. His goal is to ensure that the community is well-informed, enabling them to avail timely benefits from the schemes. Emphasizing prompt service completion for all customers, Nasir's commitment and efficiency contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the center, playing a vital role in the empowerment of the local communities in the region. Through his efforts, Nasir strives to enhance the lives of those he serves, promoting accessibility to essential services and fostering community development.

Parvez Alam
Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh

1st
PRIZE WINNER

Parvez Alam plays a pivotal role in operating the Smartpur Center located in Shahabpur village in Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh. The center is dedicated to meeting the daily needs and facilitating the benefits of government schemes for an estimated 60,000 to 70,000 rural residents residing within a 6 km radius.

One of the key initiatives of the center is its active promotion of financial literacy and government schemes. This is achieved through organized camps and comprehensive door-to-door awareness campaigns conducted by the center's team. Despite facing challenges, such as network issues and gender disparity in education, the team is committed to community education. They distribute informative pamphlets and masks as part of their outreach efforts, emphasizing the importance of continued engagement and awareness.

In order to enhance financial services for the community, the center collaborates with banks and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This collaboration ensures the promotion and implementation of safe digital banking practices, contributing to the financial empowerment of the local residents.

The commitment to community development goes beyond financial literacy, with the center actively contributing to the holistic development of the community it serves, embodying a dedication to improving the lives of rural residents through various impactful initiatives.

Purushottam Dhakad
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Purushottam Dhakad, affiliated with DEF for the past decade, runs a center in Negama Vikas Khand, Guna District, Madhya Pradesh. Dedicated to serving rural communities, the center provides essential digital services to diverse demographics, including SC, ST, OBC, and JAN beneficiaries. With 8 digital devices at its disposal, the center focuses primarily on farmers, assisting them in accessing government schemes such as PM Kisan Samman Nidhi and agricultural grants.

Collaborating closely with block and village-level officials, the center plays a crucial role in facilitating online form filling and other administrative tasks. Overcoming challenges, including building trust and addressing social barriers, is achieved through proactive engagement and coordination with various stakeholders. To further enhance its capabilities, the center has obtained CSC and MP ONLINE IDs, and stationery has been introduced.

Future plans for the center include offering computer courses to both adults and children, thereby contributing to digital literacy in the community. With a beneficiary count of 66,568, the center showcases a significant social impact, reflecting its dedication to improving the lives of those it serves.

Raghav Mahto
Vaishali, Bihar

Raghav Mahto leads the Mansoorpur Center, providing a diverse array of digital services to the community in Vaishali District, Bihar. Located in Mansoorpur village, Vaishali block, the center serves residents within a 5-kilometer radius, covering 5 panchayats. Equipped with essential digital infrastructure, including laptops, desktops, projectors, and printers, the center offers digital skills training, access to government services, online education, and mock tests to meet various community needs.

With a social impact that is evident in its service delivery, the Mansoorpur Center has benefited approximately 15,000 individuals. Services such as health card registration, Ayushman card enrollment, and government scheme registrations have contributed to its outreach. The center is committed to serving people from diverse social groups, including general, BC, EBC, SC, and ST, ensuring stability and continuity in addressing community needs.

Established in 2007, the center embodies Raghav Mahto's vision to provide comprehensive support and eliminate challenges within the community.

Through its efforts, the center has empowered hundreds of children, who, after receiving training, have started their own centers, showcasing the sustainable impact of Raghav Mahto's leadership.

Rahul Kumar Munda
Ranchi, Jharkhand

Rahul Kumar Munda, at 31 years old, has been steadfastly running a Soochnapreneur center in Bakshideeh, Anagada Panchayat, Ranchi, Jharkhand, since 2017. His center serves as a cornerstone for providing crucial digital literacy, online services, and the dissemination of information on government schemes, extending its influence up to the block level. Actively participating in USAID and Digital Sarthak projects, the center is committed to catering to a diverse demographic, ensuring tailored solutions that meet the unique needs of all individuals.

The services offered by Rahul's center are extensive, covering essential tasks such as residence certificates, Aadhaar-related services, financial transactions, and document services. Equipped with fundamental infrastructure elements like desktops, printers, and laptops, the center operates with efficiency, serving approximately 10,000 individuals within a 5-10 km radius and effectively addressing a myriad of needs. The impactful services of the center extend beyond basic transactions, embracing critical areas such as education, women's empowerment, social security, and more. As a result, the center significantly contributes to the development of the community, fostering positive change and improvement in various aspects of the residents' lives.

Rajaram Dhakad
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Rajaram Dhakad, aged 30, has been the driving force behind a Sujhnapreneur center in Tongra, Raghaugad Block, Guna District, Madhya Pradesh, for the past 5 years. Strategically positioned 8 kilometers from his village, the center serves as a pivotal hub for 25-45 neighboring villages, reaching out to diverse demographics within the community. Offering a spectrum of online services and disseminating crucial information about government schemes, the center effectively addresses various needs prevalent in the region.

With a particular emphasis on women, RajaRam's center provides services that encompass opening bank accounts, initiating pension schemes, and facilitating the application processes for Aadhaar and PAN cards. The center goes beyond basic services, actively contributing to the empowerment of women through the establishment of self-help groups and facilitating access to government loans, thereby creating avenues for employment opportunities. RajaRam Dhakad's strategic choice of location for the center, in an underserved area, underscores his commitment to ensuring maximum outreach and delivering impactful services that uplift and positively transform the local community.

Rajesh Gour
Hailakandi, Assam

BEST PRESENTATION

Rajesh Gour, a skilled frontend web developer residing in Serispore Tea Garden, Hailakandi District, Assam, holds a B.A. degree, showcasing his educational background. With a focus on digital empowerment, Rajesh utilizes Roshni and the Common Service Center to offer a diverse array of digital services, encompassing health, ticket booking, and government schemes.

Operating from the Raj Computer Shop near Kalimandir, Serispore T.E, Rajesh strategically positions himself to serve the residents of Chandpur West, identified by the pin code 788152. His center is equipped with essential tools, including a laptop, desktops, printers, biometric devices, and a laminating machine, ensuring efficient service delivery. Rajesh's outreach extends to a radius of 6-7 kilometers, covering a substantial area.

In addition to serving his immediate community, Rajesh goes beyond geographical boundaries by extending assistance to customers from other Districts through mobile communication. This reflects his commitment to bridging digital divides and ensuring that individuals from various locations have access to essential digital services. Overall, Rajesh Gour's center stands as a beacon of digital empowerment in the Serispore Tea Garden area, contributing to the well-being and convenience of the local residents.

Rajeshwar Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Rajeshwar Kumar, a passionate Digital Enabler hailing from Bainbairiya, in West Champaran, Bihar, is deeply committed to advancing the efficiency of digital systems within his community. At the core of his mission is the goal to digitize tasks, simplifying processes and significantly reducing the time required for various activities from an hour to just 20 minutes. Rajeshwar is actively dedicated to ensuring that the benefits of DEF India, designed for everyone, are accessible even in remote areas such as his village.

His unwavering dedication finds its roots in personal experience, having witnessed the transformative impact of digital initiatives in his own village. Rajeshwar's commitment is fortified by the support of mentors and programs, including UNICEF and DEF India. With a forward-looking vision, he harbors the aspiration to establish a dedicated center in Bambairiya, equipped to digitally empower the local population. His ultimate goal is to create a meaningful and positive impact on their lives through comprehensive access to digital resources and services.

Ramavtar
Alwar, Rajasthan

Ramavtar, a dedicated community leader hailing from Nirbhaypura in the Gram Panchayat of Parsa, Alwar, Rajasthan, has showcased unwavering commitment since joining the organization in July 2020. His active engagement in various programs reflects his dedication to community service. Initially traveling 5 kilometers to reach villagers, Ramavtar has expanded his services to cover people from 6 surrounding villages. He is particularly attentive to the needs of differently-abled individuals, going the extra mile by facilitating pension services at their doorstep. His impact is evident in serving over 3000 beneficiaries from Nirbhaypura, Parsa ka Baans, Chand Pahadi, Kohti ka Baans, Siya ka Baans, and Baldev Pura. The range of services provided by his center includes essential services and digital literacy programs.

Amid the challenges posed by the pandemic, Ramavtar played a crucial role in motivating people to get vaccinated and ensuring accurate information dissemination. His credibility has

earned him the trust of the community, as he guides villagers through various services and dispels misinformation. Ramavtar places special emphasis on prioritizing the needs of women, children, the elderly, and differently-abled individuals, ensuring they benefit from government schemes and digital literacy programs. Through constant updates and personalized assistance, Ramavtar maintains his center as a beacon of empowerment and reliable information dissemination, contributing significantly to the community's overall well-being.

Saheb Kumar
Champaran, Bihar

Saheb Kumar, hailing from Manchangua, Panchayat Manchagua, Champaran, Bihar, is dedicated to serving rural communities by providing a myriad of essential services. His comprehensive assistance ranges from facilitating caste certificates, residence proofs, and income documents to ensuring access to vital government schemes like the Ayushman Card, Farmer Registration, and Railway tickets for villagers. Saheb goes above and beyond by aiding with voter ID applications, photocopying, laminating, and handling insurance for all types of vehicles.

His commitment extends to assisting with widow, disability, and family pensions, along with labor registration, girl's marriage schemes, and fisheries management plans. Saheb also takes charge of tasks such as managing electricity bills, passport applications, Aadhar cards, and various other initiatives that benefit the community. To ensure stability and consistency in his services, Saheb has obtained CSC and CSP licenses, enriching his business with center services like the Aadhaar Correction Center, WiFi for internet access, and becoming a bank BC to facilitate account openings.

Sandeep Kumar
Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh

BEST COMMUNITY LEADER

Sandeep Kumar, a resident of the rural area of Amara Katehra in Barabanki District, Uttar Pradesh, embarked on a project entrusted to her by the Digital Empowerment Foundation. Equipped with a printer and smartphone, her primary goal was to digitally empower 100 women within her community. In pursuit of this objective, Sandeep established her Digital Resource Center, strategically located in a rural setting.

The center's impact became evident as individuals started traveling 8-10 kilometers to access the services she provided. Over time, with a steady stream of project income, Sandeep expanded her center's capabilities. Presently, her center stands as a well-equipped hub with 5 laptops, 2 color printers, and an array of electronic devices. It serves as a central point for various community services, showcasing the transformative support provided by the Digital Empowerment Foundation. The strategic location and continuous growth of Sandeep's center underscore its role in fostering digital empowerment and community development in the region.

Santhosh Kumar
Tumkur, Karnataka

BEST SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL CHANGEMAKER

Santhosh Kumar, a postgraduate with an MA in Economics, embraced a transformative journey as he transitioned from urban to rural landscapes to establish the Om Shanthi Namma Seva Kendra in Dabbagunte village in Tumkur, Karnataka. Proficient in both Kannada and English and certified by CSC, Santhosh is a fervent advocate for community engagement and entrepreneurial drive. The center, equipped with essential digital tools, plays a pivotal role in serving a substantial population of 20,000 individuals across 15 villages, with a particular emphasis on addressing the needs of low-income families and women's groups.

Throughout its 18-month tenure, the center has been instrumental in disseminating critical information related to government welfare schemes, spanning crucial areas such as PAN, Aadhar, and ration cards. Through proactive door-to-door campaigns, the center actively raises awareness among 150 households monthly, contributing significantly to digital empowerment and societal inclusivity in rural Tumkur. Santhosh Kumar's unwavering dedication,

coupled with the center's strategic initiatives, highlights its steadfast commitment to fostering positive change and enhancing connectivity within the community.

Santhosh Ojha
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

BEST SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Santhosh Ojha, based in Padrayai Tehsil, Aron District, Guna (M.P.), operates a service center within a 30-35 km radius, focusing on providing online services to farmers. His center is a hub for various online services, attracting individuals from distant areas with simplified processes. Equipped with five essential digital tools, the center has a significant impact on its engaged community members. The primary objective is to ensure universal access to government schemes, leaving no one behind.

The center actively implements various governmental initiatives, including the Prime Minister's Agricultural Irrigation Scheme, income certificates, and domicile certificates. Upholding stability and consistency, ongoing learning initiatives ensure the center's continued progress and enhance its service delivery capabilities. Santhosh Ojha's commitment to facilitating online services for farmers reflects his dedication to empowering the community and fostering inclusivity in accessing vital government schemes.

Shakir
Alwar, Rajasthan

Shakir, a dedicated digital professional with an impressive 11-year tenure, focuses on serving marginalized areas facing challenges like limited internet access, low computer literacy, and educational gaps. Operating from Milakpur Turk in Alwar District, Rajasthan, he covers approximately 6 km, impacting the lives of around 10,000 community members. Shakir's center plays a pivotal role in providing essential services, ranging from e-governance and financial assistance to healthcare, education, and awareness campaigns.

Through proactive initiatives like Aadhar enrollment camps and educational sessions, Shakir actively works to bridge the digital divide and empower his community. Positioned conveniently on the

roadside, his well-equipped center serves as a beacon of positive societal impact, reflecting Shakir's unwavering commitment to serving society and addressing the unique challenges faced by his community over the course of 11 years.

Shibu Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Shibu Kumar operates a digital service center in Sherpur Colony, West Champaran, Bihar, addressing a diverse range of online needs, including banking and government services. Located in a strategic position where people from a 5-kilometer radius and across 3-4 panchayats seek assistance, his center is equipped with essential tools such as a laptop, color printer, laminating machine, and smartphone. The center has served over 4000 beneficiaries, facilitating essential services like ration cards, PM Kisan, e-Shram cards, and Ayushman cards.

With a strong focus on stability and consistency, Shibu Kumar has effectively tackled various challenges, from KYC verification to promoting girl child education and facilitating services like vehicle and health insurance. His efforts have contributed to making life easier for many individuals, irrespective of their background.

Shivam Chauhan
Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh

Shivam Chauhan, driven by a fervent desire for social service, has been operating the Anuradha CSC Center for two years. Located in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, he primarily serves rural areas, working to dispel fears about online services and facilitating access to government schemes such as pensions and agricultural subsidies. Equipped with essential tools, including printers and biometric machines, Shivam extends his services within a 10-12 kilometer radius.

Over this period, he has successfully addressed the concerns of 3000 to 5000 individuals, swiftly earning their trust. Offering free online transactions and personalized assistance, Shivam remains dedicated

to fostering a strong bond with the community, contributing to the center's positive impact on the lives of those it serves.

Shyam Prakash Ojha
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Shyam Prakash Ojha, residing in Gram Barkheda Haat, Guna, Madhya Pradesh, faced a decade of unemployment and poverty. Despite lacking a computer diploma due to financial constraints, he transitioned from running a small grocery shop to establishing an information service center, which still operates alongside his grocery shop. Serving over 5000 residents across 15-20 nearby villages within a 12 km radius, the center provides various services, including Aadhaar printing, Ayushman cards, and more.

Through door-to-door surveys and community engagement, Shyam has successfully connected with around 10,000 individuals. His efforts particularly focus on empowering women and informing them about government schemes like Ujjwala Yojana and Kisan Samman Nidhi. Shyam's journey reflects resilience and commitment to community development, making a positive impact on the lives of those he serves.

Shyam Sharma
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

BEST SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Shyam Sharma, a resident of Gram Myana in Guna District, Madhya Pradesh, shares his home with his parents, two brothers, and a sister. Armed with a postgraduate degree and a PGDCA diploma, Shyam juggled part-time work while pursuing his studies. His village, Myana, is located 30 kilometers from the District headquarters and serves approximately 10,000 residents from 30-35 surrounding villages.

Operating an Information Service Center near Shri Jagdambika Public Higher Secondary School, Shyam's center, supported by DEF, provides a comprehensive range of services. These services include Aadhaar printing, education awareness programs, and facilitation of government schemes. Starting with just a laptop and a printer, Shyam's center has expanded to include separate rooms for computer classes, study, and work. His journey exemplifies growth and dedication to serving the community's needs.

Shyamsundar Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Shyamsundar Kumar, an Information Presenter hailing from Sirisiya Panchayat, Matiariya, West Champaran, Bihar, dedicates himself to serving rural communities. His center facilitates a variety of services, including caste certificates, residency proof, income certification, ration cards, PAN cards, Ayushman cards, farmer card registrations, and more. Despite being located ten kilometers away, people actively travel to his center for assistance.

In addition to providing services at his center, Shyamsundar organizes camps in remote areas, ensuring that he reaches individuals who may face challenges accessing his center directly. This proactive approach has earned him recognition from over ten thousand individuals. Equipped with a laptop, two printers, a laminating machine, a morpho device, and a phone, Shyamsundar efficiently implements government schemes, benefiting over a hundred people and making a positive impact in the community.

Sonu Yadav
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Sonu Yadav operates a home-based center in Sarasahela village, Guna District, Madhya Pradesh, with a primary focus on catering to the needs of OBC and SC communities. The center offers a range of services, including pension assistance, balance checks, fund transfers, and photocopying, all aimed at simplifying rural life. Its impact extends to serving 5-6 nearby villages, attracting 20-30 visitors daily within a 5-7 km radius.

Equipped with essential tools such as a desktop, color and black-and-white printers, a mantra device, mobile, projector, and laminating machine, Sonu Yadav's center has significantly benefited around 1500 individuals. By providing these services locally, the center has spared residents the need to travel to the tehsil for essential services, contributing to the convenience and well-being of the community. The diverse range of services offered underscores the center's commitment to addressing the unique needs of the OBC and SC communities in the region.

Suresh C. R.
Tumkur, Karnataka

Suresh C. R., a graduate with a degree in BBM, underwent a transition to establish an online service center in Cowlakatte village, Tumkur District, Karnataka. Proficient in both Kannada and English and holding CSC certification, he is dedicated to providing vital services to the community. Over the course of 24 months, his center has effectively served 20,000 community members, spanning across six villages in the region.

Situated 9 km from the village, the K R S Digital Seva Kendra is equipped with essential tools such as a laptop, fingerprint scanner, color printer, and lamination machine. Suresh's commitment goes beyond the center's physical location, as evidenced by proactive door-to-door campaigns that raise awareness among 30 households monthly. This reflects not only his entrepreneurial spirit but also his strong engagement with the community, ensuring that residents are well-informed about the government schemes and digital services available to them. Suresh's multifaceted approach underscores the center's positive impact on the local community.

Tarachand
Balotara, Rajasthan

Tarachand, originally from Sevaniyala village in Baytu tehsil, which was formerly in Barmer District and is now located in Balotara, Rajasthan, has overcome familial challenges to pursue education until Class 10. Transitioning to sewing for his livelihood, he acquired expertise in the craft, subsequently empowering numerous women with similar skills in his community.

Introduced to DEF by Narpat Ji Balwan, Tarachand received invaluable support, including a smartphone and photocopy machine. Leveraging these tools, he has taken on the role of an educator, particularly focusing on informing women about various government schemes and digital platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram.

Today, Tarachand serves as a pivotal resource within his community, with 100-150 women actively seeking direct solutions from him. His impactful contributions are a testament to the positive change brought about by DEF, fostering gratitude among the community

members for enabling Tarachand's significant and empowering endeavors.

Vaga Ram Dhatrawal
Barmer, Rajasthan

BEST SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL CHANGEMAKER

Vaga Ram Dhatrawal, a BA graduate originally from Din Garh, embarked on a transformative journey inspired by witnessing the bureaucratic hurdles that people faced in accessing essential government schemes. Driven by a motivation to bridge this gap, he took the initiative to establish a digital service center in Dhanau village, Chohtan Tehsil, Barmer District, Rajasthan, in 2016. Although initially uncertain, Vaga Ram gradually mastered the intricacies of the system, emerging as a beacon of assistance for his community.

By 2022, his center had made a significant impact, reaching approximately 50,000 individuals and offering vital services such as pensions, NREGA, caste certificates, and RSCIT courses. Vaga Ram finds fulfillment in the recognition from those who confidently direct others to "Go to Vagaram's center; work will be done." His journey exemplifies a commitment to community service and a dedication to overcoming bureaucratic challenges to ensure essential services are accessible to all.

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH DIGITAL INNOVATIONS: NOMINATIONS FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE 'FEMALE' CATEGORY

Anita Devi
Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh

Anita Devi, a dynamic entrepreneur residing in Bahamau village, Kinhauli Panchayat, Barabanki District, Uttar Pradesh, has successfully set up a SoochnaPreneur Center, where she offers a range of services aimed at benefiting the local communities. Anita's center provides essential services, including photo printing and online assistance for results, admit cards, and other information. Using Mera App, she extends her support to the community by assisting in form filling and connecting individuals with relevant government schemes. Under Anita's leadership, the center, situated around 5 to 6 kilometers away, has served more than 1500 individuals. The center, equipped with essential tools like a printer, Samsung tablet, and fingerprinting machine, caters to the diverse needs of women, children, and the elderly.

Anita focuses on providing crucial information about government schemes, with a special emphasis on benefiting the OBC and SC communities by facilitating access to pensions, PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi, and other entitlements. The center actively supports the online application process for children's scholarships, ensuring that education remains accessible to all. To enhance the center's capabilities and facilitate financial transactions, Anita has secured a CSC ID and a DigiPay ID. Anita has also conducted comprehensive courses on digital safety for girls and women, contributing not only to her income growth but also enabling her to invest in a color printer. Addressing challenges such as network and power disruptions, Anita has installed a battery and inverter at the center, ensuring uninterrupted services. Additionally, she has acquired a fingerprinting machine, further expanding the capabilities of the

center and solidifying its success in the community. Her profile exemplifies a tireless entrepreneur making a significant impact on her community's digital empowerment and overall well-being.

Anita Pani
Cuttack, Odisha

Anita Pani is a resident of Rayagada village in Cuttack, Odisha whose journey from a homemaker facing a dearth of basic facilities to becoming a transformative force in her community is truly inspirational. Her evolution began with obtaining a CSC ID, marking the onset of a three-year tenure at CSC before progressing to the role of a Digital Beti within the CSC network. Anita's collaboration with UNICEF and RCC opened doors to diverse projects, where her active engagement proved instrumental. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the consequences of misinformation and superstitions within her community. Leveraging her connection with DEF through the CSC center, Anita embarked on a mission to counter these challenges. Through innovative mediums like wall paintings, announcements, and door-to-door interactions, she disseminated vital information, contributing significantly to awareness campaigns. Anita's impact extended beyond awareness as she played a pivotal role in convincing hesitant individuals, including her sister, to get vaccinated. Her intervention not only ensured proper treatment but also addressed the isolation and discrimination faced by her sister after a COVID-19 diagnosis.

Under the UNICEF Project, Anita harnessed digital tools, particularly smartphones, reaching out to approximately 8000 people within a 10 km radius. Her focus on empowering women, especially in the SC and ST communities prevalent in her area, demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and social welfare. Despite not having a dedicated center currently, Anita aspires to establish one in the future, envisioning the introduction of new services like banking facilities for her village. Anita's commitment to sustainability is evident in her efforts to provide cost-effective education, ensuring efficient time utilization and reduced expenses. The ecosystem

she has cultivated enables local students and individuals to pursue learning and work within their community, fostering both skill development and digital literacy. Her journey stands as a testament to the transformative power of determination and community engagement.

Anita
Alwar, Rajasthan

Anita, a resident of Tilwad village in Alwar, Rajasthan, is at the forefront of providing essential digital services to her community. Her proactive approach, particularly during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, underscores her unwavering commitment to the well-being of those around her. Anita's dedication has not only played a crucial role in countering the spread of misinformation but has also empowered individuals to make informed decisions about their health and safety.

In Tilwad village, Anita has become a pivotal figure, eliminating the necessity for residents to travel to distant places to access the benefits of the digital world. Villagers now turn to Anita for fundamental services such as photocopying, mobile recharges, bill submissions, student applications, online banking transactions, and more. Her role has significantly simplified the lives of the community members, providing them with convenient access to essential digital services right within their village.

Anita takes immense pride in her role as a provider of crucial services, and she aspires to expand her contributions over time, further enhancing her capacity to serve the community. Her story exemplifies the transformative impact one dedicated individual can have on the accessibility of digital services and the overall empowerment of a community.

Anju Sen
Durg, Chhattisgarh

Anju Sen, hailing from Durg, Chhattisgarh, stands as a testament to determination and unwavering commitment in her pursuit of community betterment through digital empowerment. Currently, she serves the needs of five villages in the vicinity, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to assist women with disabilities from diverse backgrounds, including SC, ST, in accessing essential services. Anju is also dedicated to raising awareness among them about digital security and other relevant aspects.

Operating under her CSC ID, Anju is actively engaged in providing services to the communities within a 5-kilometer radius from her center. She envisions expanding these services further to address the unique needs of the community members. Anju's center plays a crucial role in connecting rural communities with government schemes, ensuring that they can avail themselves of the benefits designed to uplift their lives.

The range of services offered by Anju's center is comprehensive, covering essential aspects such as banking services, digital services, photocopying, and more. As part of her community outreach initiatives, Anju is committed to ensuring equal service provision to individuals from all sections of society. This includes marginalized groups like SC, ST, OBC, and others. She actively assists them in obtaining vital documents such as PAN cards, smart cards, Ayushman cards, and facilitates the opening of zero balance accounts. By doing so, Anju ensures that members of her community have access to various government schemes and programs, fostering inclusivity and empowerment. Her efforts showcase the transformative impact that digital services can have in bridging gaps and creating positive change within communities.

Anusmita Roy
Silchar, Assam

BEST DIGITAL CHANGEMAKER

Anusmita Roy, a 25-year-old resident of Silchar, Assam, emerges as a digital beacon of hope for her community, diligently addressing the diverse needs of all age groups. Whether catering to students requiring assistance with applications and computer knowledge or aiding adults in bill payments and accessing government schemes, Anusmita's enthusiastic and visionary spirit serves as a guiding light for the community. Operating from her dedicated center, Anusmita provides a comprehensive array of digital services. These include photocopying, printing, online job applications, mobile recharge, project assistance, and more. Her center functions as a centralized hub, offering a convenient solution for villagers to access essential digital services without the need for extensive travel.

Anusmita's passion extends to creating awareness within the community about the myriad advantages of digital services and the internet. She actively engages in educating villagers on effective utilization of digital tools in their daily lives, empowering them with valuable skills and knowledge. Her initiatives not only provide solutions to immediate needs but also address broader societal challenges by opening up new opportunities for personal and professional growth. Her unwavering dedication to bridging the digital divide and fostering empowerment reflects a profound commitment to creating a brighter and more inclusive future for her community.

Arpitha G. R.
Tumkur, Karnataka

BEST SUSTAINABILITY MODEL

Arpitha G. R., hailing from Gubbi village in Tumkur, Karnataka, is a former computer teacher whose commitment to digital empowerment goes beyond providing services to actively educating her community through classes and awareness programs. Her multifaceted approach plays a pivotal role in uplifting low-income families, particularly those from SC, ST, and OBC communities, by facilitating their access to various government schemes. Collaborating with local panchayats and Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Arpita aims to extend the benefits of these schemes to as many people as possible, leveraging her CSC ID to streamline the process.

One noteworthy instance of her impactful contributions involves assisting Lakshmamma, an 80-year-old senior citizen unable to travel to cities. She went the extra mile by visiting Lakshmamma's house, collecting necessary details, and applying for a senior citizen card on her behalf. Lakshmamma now possesses a senior citizen card, thanks to Arpitha's intervention. Furthermore, Arpitha facilitated the acquisition of income and caste certificates and a PAN card for Lakshmamma, ensuring she receives her old-age pension regularly.

Beyond her individual efforts, Arpitha actively works to empower local women by serving as a Digital Didi, providing essential health awareness. Her initiatives are designed to uplift and advance both women and youth in her community, fostering positive change and progress. Arpitha's dedication and impactful contributions have garnered appreciation from the beneficiaries and their families, instilling a sense of pride in her for providing essential digital services to her village. Her holistic approach reflects a deep commitment to not only bridge the digital divide but also contribute to the overall advancement of her community.

Asma Bibi
Murshidabad, West Bengal

Asma Bibi, a 31-year-old resident of Murshidabad, West Bengal, is dedicated to providing digital, financial, and health services to her community, with a predominant focus on the OBC community in the area. Her commitment to holistic well-being is exemplified by the inclusion of basic health services such as BP and sugar tests in her center.

Asma's primary objective revolves around raising awareness among the local population about digital devices, financial literacy, and healthcare. While actively engaging with diverse communities, she places special emphasis on serving the OBC community while extending her services to ST, SC, and General communities.

Healthcare forms a central focus of Asma's services. Acknowledging the challenges faced by women in her village who had to travel to the city for minor

health issues like blood pressure and sugar tests, Asma strategically designed her services to address these needs locally.

To ensure the sustainability of her program, Asma has implemented measures to provide education to the majority at minimal cost, thereby reducing expenses and optimizing time utilization. Through her ongoing efforts, Asma continues to empower her community, enhancing their access to essential services and contributing to their overall well-being.

Ataiya Bano
Bharatpur, Rajasthan

GIRL ICON

Ataiya Bano, hailing from Bharatpur, Rajasthan, is an enthusiastic Soochnapreneur dedicated not only to providing services but also to educating and raising awareness in her community. Her center caters to the needs of residents within a radius of 10-12 kilometers. Notably, her efforts in spreading awareness about menstruation and breaking taboos have earned her the title of 'Digital Didi,' a moniker embraced by everyone in her community.

With unwavering dedication, Ataiya has expanded the capabilities of her center by incorporating more digital tools. Additionally, she has acquired an E-mitra ID, enhancing the range of services she can offer to the community.

Ataiya is committed to connecting people with various government schemes, facilitating applications for pensions such as Single Women Pension, Widow Pension, and Old Age Pension. She also assists community members in enrolling for health insurance schemes like Ayushman Bharat. Beyond this, Ataiya plays a pivotal role in tasks such as obtaining ration cards, filling out scholarship forms, facilitating Aadhaar enrollment, and creating Jan Aadhaar cards.

Residing in an area predominantly inhabited by marginalized communities, including SC, ST, and OBC, who often face economic challenges and lack education, Ataiya has made it her mission to reach out to them. Conducting surveys to assess their needs, she ensures that they benefit from

essential government schemes covering pensions, health insurance, and ration distribution. Despite the challenges posed by her location, situated far from the main market, Ataiya remains steadfast in her commitment to fulfilling the needs of her community by providing essential services right at their doorstep.

Baby Kumari
Nalanda, Bihar

BEST SUSTAINABILITY MODEL

Baby Kumari, hailing from Itasang village in Nalanda, Bihar, stands as a beacon of visionary leadership, dedicated to enhancing the lives of community members. With an active role in providing essential services such as online banking facilities, PAN card assistance, and access to various schemes, her center serves three panchayats. Notably, Baby Kumari has become a source of inspiration, motivating many young girls in the village to envision opening their own centers.

In 2021, she joined RCCE – 2 with a profound vision to serve her community, especially during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond COVID-19 awareness, Baby Kumari's center offers a spectrum of online services, including E-Shram cards, scholarships for children, PM Kisan Yojana, and e-benefit KYC verification. Through these thoughtful initiatives, her aim is to empower the community by efficiently addressing their needs and solving problems.

The impact of Baby Kumari's efforts extends beyond her immediate community. Many young girls in her village have not only been inspired by her endeavors but have also been encouraged to establish their own centers, thereby fostering a cycle of empowerment and service. Baby Kumari's unwavering dedication and commitment to serving her community showcase exemplary leadership and compassion, contributing to the creation of a better and safer environment for all.

Banita Sahoo
Cuttack, Odisha

Banita Sahoo, a dedicated individual hailing from Cuttack, Odisha, has actively participated in various projects, including Digital Sarthak and AI for All. At present, she is immersed in the crucial task of fostering digital and financial literacy within her community, covering a diverse spectrum of individuals spanning over 7 kilometers, including OBCs, SC, ST, and more.

Residing in a village with around 1500 inhabitants, engaged in activities like farming and weaving, Banita recognized the initial unfamiliarity of many women with mobile phones, the internet, and social media, leading to their confinement within homes. In response, Banita initiated outreach efforts, personally visiting these women to educate them about online businesses and the vast potential of the internet. The positive outcome of her endeavors is evident as many women have now ventured into starting their own online enterprises.

Motivated by the transformative impact witnessed in her community, Banita is resolute in continuing her collaboration with DEF, extending her assistance to more individuals. Her vision includes the establishment of a dedicated center in her village, ensuring the provision of essential digital services to residents. To sustain the program effectively, Banita has implemented cost-effective measures, providing education at minimal costs, thereby reducing expenses and optimizing time utilization for the majority. Banita's commendable dedication to empowering her community through digital literacy reflects her unwavering commitment to their overall welfare.

Barsharani Rout
Cuttack, Odisha

Barsharani Rout, an empowered Soochnapreneur from Cuttack, Odisha, is at the forefront of enhancing digital literacy within her community. Her center offers essential services like online form applications and Xerox facilities, catering to the diverse needs of the residents. Notably, women form a significant portion of her clientele, relying on her center for various services.

Barsharani envisions expanding her services and diversifying her center by obtaining a CSC ID in the future, a testament to her commitment to providing comprehensive assistance to her community. The fulfillment she derives from her work extends beyond financial stability; it enables her to ensure a quality education for her children. Her active participation in the Soochna Preneur project has been a catalyst for positive change in her village. The residents, now well-versed in internet usage, recognize its significance in their daily lives.

The convenience brought about by Barsharani's services, including photocopying, printing, mobile recharge, and bill payments, accessible right at their doorsteps, has streamlined tasks for the community, resulting in significant time and cost savings. Barsharani Rout's impactful contributions showcase her dedication to leveraging digital literacy for the collective betterment of her village.

Bishnupriya Rout
Cuttack, Odisha

Bishnupriya Rout, hailing from Cuttack, Odisha, embarked on her impactful journey by acquiring training to serve her community during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Armed with this knowledge, she returned to her village, becoming an advocate for health awareness and education about the virus among the residents.

Bishnupriya's efforts have not only led to increased awareness but have also inspired her community to adopt healthier lifestyles, mitigating the risks associated with COVID-19. Her commitment extends beyond health-related services to encompass digital literacy initiatives. Recognizing the significance of catering to the predominantly OBC-dominated community, she actively provides essential health services such as basic sugar and blood pressure tests. Simultaneously, she strives to enhance digital literacy within her community.

Bishnupriya Rout envisions establishing her own center, aiming to create a bridge connecting the community to essential digital services. Her involvement in various projects, including UNICEF,

Digital Sarthak, Digital Didi, Chatbot, AI, DFI, and Online Safety and Security, showcases her diverse skill set and commitment to community welfare. Working tirelessly as a bridge to connect her community to digital services empowers Bishnupriya, reinforcing her determination to establish her own center soon. Her journey reflects a dedicated Soochnapreneur actively contributing to the well-being and empowerment of her community.

Chanchal Sen
Rajsamand, Rajasthan

Chanchal Sen, a resident of Rajsamand, Rajasthan, operates a center that draws customers from a remarkable distance of 8 miles. Equipped with an array of digital tools, including a computer, color printer, and printer machine, Chanchal is dedicated to raising awareness and fostering empowerment within her community.

Actively engaged in her work, Chanchal goes beyond serving her community to provide training to others. In her role as a Digital Didi, she takes on the responsibility of educating women in the community about menstruation, dispelling taboos, and promoting healthy practices.

Motivated by the desire to empower people, especially women and those with disabilities, Chanchal actively addresses the diverse needs of her community as a Soochna Preneur. Her mission goes beyond providing services; she aims to transform the mindset of every individual in the village.

Chanchal Sen's overarching goal is to encourage women to embrace digital literacy for a wide range of tasks. Despite encountering skepticism from some quarters, her dedication remains unwavering as she persistently works towards her transformative goals. Chanchal's journey exemplifies a Soochnapreneur committed to instigating positive change and fostering digital empowerment within her community.

Dharitree Sahoo
Cuttack, Odisha

Meet **Dharitree Sahoo**, a 22-year-old from Cuttack, Odisha, actively involved in promoting digital literacy within her community. While she doesn't have a designated center, her passion drives her to make significant contributions to the community, targeting primarily women. Dharitree aligns her efforts with DEF projects related to women's empowerment, focusing on the predominantly OBC community in her locality, while also collaborating with General, SC, and ST communities. In a village where many women were initially unfamiliar with mobile phones, Dharitree seized the opportunity to introduce them to the world of technology. Through her enthusiastic teaching, all the women in her village are now well-versed with the internet.

Dharitree goes beyond basic digital literacy by educating 100 women in her village on the use of a smartpad, witnessing some of them adopting this technology. Not stopping there, she extends her impact by educating 12-13-year-old girls about menstruation, prioritizing their safety and well-being. While Dharitree's efforts have earned the support of her entire village, she remains inspired to initiate more social initiatives. Her dedication to digital literacy and women's empowerment serves as a beacon of positive change within her community.

Durga Banjare
Betul, Madhya Pradesh

In the heart of Prabhat Pattan, Betul District, Madhya Pradesh, **Durga Banjare** operates a thriving center that focuses on providing essential banking and digital literacy services. Her well-equipped center boasts 4 computers, a printer, a laptop, and a scanner, serving as a hub for educational and skill-building activities.

For the past four years, Durga has been actively raising awareness, particularly among low-income families, about the myriad opportunities in banking services and low-interest loans. Her commitment extends to empowering women from both low-income and middle-class families by providing them with crucial information on employment opportunities and facilitating access to low-interest loans.

Beyond offering computer education, Durga's

center serves as a knowledge hub for essential skills, especially in the realm of banking. This comprehensive approach has attracted people from five nearby villages to join her center, benefiting from the diverse educational and skill-enhancement opportunities she provides.

Durga's dedication has not only established her center as a beacon of learning but has also contributed to her positive reputation among the youth and community members. She takes pride in feeling empowered through her work and actively contributing to various projects aimed at uplifting the community. Durga Banjare stands as a testament to the transformative power of education and empowerment.

Gayatri Patra
Cuttack, Odisha

WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

Hailing from Cuttack, Odisha, **Gayatri Patra**, a 36-year-old visionary, has dedicated herself to fostering digital literacy, livelihood, and awareness of government schemes in her rural center. With a specialized focus on serving the OBC, SC, and ST communities, Gayatri's center has become a hub for various essential services, including digital literacy, financial education, and government scheme awareness. Her inclusive approach welcomes women, students, youth, and senior citizens, offering computer education programs like PGDCA, Tally, and DCA.

In the heart of her bustling center, Gayatri manages a dynamic space where individuals come not only to acquire computer skills but also to engage in a spectrum of learning opportunities. Two notable success stories within her community are Subhashree Yadav and Runa Naik, initially timid students who, with consistent attendance, transformed into confident, active contributors to the community. Inspired by Gayatri's leadership, they have actively participated in designing and implementing new programs, showcasing personal growth and development.

Gayatri's center stands as more than just a place for computer education; it serves as a transformative platform for individuals like Subhashree Yadav and

Runa Naik, providing them with essential skills and fostering an environment conducive to personal and communal development. Through her unwavering commitment, Gayatri Patra continues to make a significant impact on the lives of those she serves.

Geeta Baytu
Balotra, Rajasthan

Geeta Baytu, a dedicated digital champion for the past 2 years, has emerged as a passionate advocate for technology adoption in her community. With a keen focus on women's empowerment, Geeta actively conducts meetings in every village panchayat of her tehsil in Balotra, Rajasthan, spreading awareness about smartpads and various digital services. Her impactful efforts have not only made the smart pad a household name but also addressed health challenges faced by women, earning her gratitude from the community.

Despite societal norms and challenges like the prevalent ghunghat tradition, Geeta has organized women's meetings, gradually building a strong network and fostering a sense of empowerment. Her commitment to breaking barriers and embracing digital literacy has left a lasting impact on the lives of many. Geeta's association with DEF has further expanded her outreach. Equipped with BP and sugar testing machines, Geeta, along with other volunteers, visits households in her village, particularly those inhabited by elderly or ill individuals, to conduct crucial health tests. This initiative reflects her dedication to the holistic well-being of her community.

Currently serving as a District worker under the SAR campaign in the Balotra District, Geeta's journey began with DEF, and today, she stands as a prominent figure not only in her tehsil but across the entire District. Her story exemplifies the transformative power of digital advocacy and community engagement, showcasing Geeta Baytu as a beacon of empowerment and positive change.

Goldi Kumari
West Champaran, Bihar

Goldi Kumari, a dedicated community leader hailing from Gaunaha in West Champaran, Bihar, has been at the forefront of positive change for the past three years. Through her committed efforts, Goldi operates a community center that serves as a hub for various digital services, bringing convenience and empowerment to her village.

Armed with just one printer and a mobile device, Goldi efficiently manages tasks such as photocopying, disseminating information about government schemes, and facilitating enrollment processes. Her proactive approach extends beyond mere service provision, as she actively engages in raising awareness among diverse groups, including women and persons with disabilities. Goldi has successfully cultivated a culture of information entrepreneurship within the community, addressing their needs and imparting valuable training to others.

Goldi's center stands out as a beacon for women's education and empowerment, ensuring they are well-informed about various aspects of life. Beyond that, her passion extends to guiding and encouraging the youth to navigate and thrive in the digital world, equipping them with essential skills and knowledge for a brighter future.

The array of services offered by Goldi's center includes Aadhar card printing, PAN card application, Xerox, printouts, photocopying, and assistance with job applications and school admissions. What sets Goldi's center apart is its accessibility – situated right in front of people's homes, making these services convenient and readily available to the local community. Furthermore, Goldi places a strong emphasis on affordability, ensuring that her services are accessible to everyone in the community, fostering inclusivity and digital empowerment. Goldi Kumari's journey exemplifies the transformative impact of dedicated digital leadership on community development and progress.

Gorle Varalaxmi
Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

1st
PRIZE WINNER

Gorle Varalaxmi, a proactive leader from Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, is making significant strides in digital empowerment through her community center located at Garlivanipalem Paravada. Her focus on providing essential digital services and information has transformed the lives of the locals, predominantly comprising agricultural and daily wage earners.

In an environment where digital literacy was once unfamiliar, Gorle took the initiative to bridge the gap, particularly targeting the youth and women in her impoverished village. Through her center, she offers crucial digital services such as downloads, printing, and imparts valuable information on schemes and online safety. Gorle's center has emerged as a vital educational hub, attracting local students eager to acquire computer skills and navigate the digital landscape.

Recognizing the prevalent lack of awareness among women concerning health issues, Gorle has assumed the role of a Digital Didi. Actively engaging with the community, she educates women on various health-related matters, utilizing her position to empower and inform. Her efforts go beyond traditional digital services, extending into areas that contribute to the overall well-being of the community.

Gorle Varalaxmi's commitment to digital literacy and community welfare exemplifies the transformative impact that dedicated individuals can have on the lives of those they serve. Through her endeavors, she not only facilitates access to digital resources but also contributes to the holistic development of the community she passionately serves.

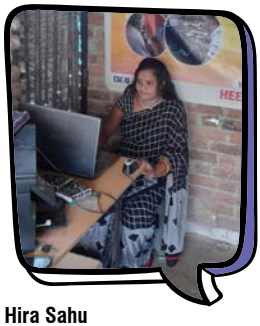
Hasina Khatun Bibi
Nadia, West Bengal

Hasina Khatun Bibi, hailing from Nadia, West Bengal, is a dedicated digital champion running a center in Panditpur village. Her center, strategically located within a 2.5-kilometer radius, focuses on digital literacy, government schemes, and financial services. The primary beneficiaries of her efforts include women, students, youth, and senior citizens from the local community, with a predominant emphasis

on serving the OBC and general communities, occasionally extending support to SC and ST members.

Driven by the inspiration to earn a livelihood and fueled by the joy of interacting with diverse communities, Hasina's commitment to digital empowerment has significantly impacted the residents of her village. Since the initiation of the Soochna Preneur project in Panditpur, Hasina has witnessed a notable transformation among the locals. The community has become more internet-savvy, understanding the significance of digital tools in their daily lives.

Through her center, various internet-related services, including photocopying, printing, mobile recharge, and electricity bill payment, are now conveniently accessible to villagers at their doorsteps. This accessibility has not only streamlined these tasks but also eliminated the need for residents to travel elsewhere, saving valuable time and resources. Hasina Khatun Bibi's dedication to digital and financial literacy underscores the positive impact individuals can have on their communities. By facilitating access to essential services, she contributes to the empowerment and progress of those she serves.



Hira Sahu
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Hira Sahu, a dedicated resident of Sabra Modi village in Guna, Madhya Pradesh, is actively involved in uplifting rural areas by focusing on raising awareness, particularly among women, about government initiatives related to health, education, and employment. Her center serves as a hub for various digital services, including photocopying, printing, laminating, and assisting in the creation of essential documents. Additionally, Hira facilitates CSC and MP Online services, extending her support to a community within a 5 to 10-kilometer radius.

To enhance the capabilities of her center, Hira invested in a laptop and obtained IDs for CSC and MP Online services. These tools enable her to assist people with online applications and document creation. Recognizing the diverse needs of her community, she acquired additional items to cater to specific requirements.

Hira's commitment to the continuous operation of her center is evident through the array of digital services she provides, ranging from photocopying and printing to facilitating online applications through CSC and MP Online services. Periodically engaging with community groups, she ensures a comprehensive understanding of their issues, aiming to address them effectively. Looking ahead, Hira envisions a future where digital literacy becomes widespread in her community. Her focus on education aims to make individuals digitally literate, empowering them to navigate the digital landscape confidently.

One notable success story from Hira's efforts involves beneficiary Latabai, who faced challenges in receiving installments under PM SAMAAN NIDHI. Hira took proactive steps, contacting the authorities to identify the issue—land records not being recorded. She initiated the online updating of land records for Latabai, ensuring all documents were successfully submitted within a month. As a result, Latabai's application was processed, and the pending installment was credited, showcasing the impactful outcomes of Hira Sahu's dedicated efforts.

Hemlata
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Hemlata Sharma, a dedicated resident of Guna, Madhya Pradesh, has been actively serving her community for the past five years. Her impact extends to 15-16 surrounding villages, reaching individuals within a 12-15 km radius. Hemlata's commitment spans across all communities, with a significant emphasis on empowering women.

At her center, Hemlata has played a pivotal role in facilitating financial services for women. She has assisted in opening savings accounts, initiated pension schemes for elderly women, and facilitated the issuance of Aadhar and PAN cards, significantly benefiting a substantial number of women in the region. Recognizing the importance of financial literacy, Hemlata has organized campaigns to educate women, enabling them to make informed decisions about their finances. Moreover, she has created avenues for women to withdraw money from their accounts at her center, fostering financial independence.

Through Hemlata's dedicated efforts, a substantial number of women have been integrated into self-help groups, contributing to community growth. Many have successfully obtained government loans, empowering them to start their own businesses and achieve financial independence.

One noteworthy success story involves Kalabai, a 56-year-old beneficiary who faced an unexpected discontinuation of her PM SAMMAN NIDHI payments. Hemlata identified the issue – payments redirected to another account – and promptly assisted Kalabai in filling online applications to rectify the account details. This proactive intervention ensured that Kalabai received the targeted financial support, highlighting the positive impact of Hemlata Sharma's commitment to community welfare and financial inclusion.

Joytsna Khatun
Murshidabad, West Bengal

Joytsna Khatun, a dedicated Soochnapreneur, operates a center in Miyarbagan, Murshidabad District, West Bengal, offering a comprehensive range of digital services. Her offerings include Xerox, photo services, Aadhar correction, voter services, and banking-related tasks. Committed to advancing digital literacy, Joytsna provides certificate and diploma courses through the Indian Youth Computer Literacy Mission, ensuring her services cater to a diverse community.

The community served by Joytsna's center primarily comprises individuals from Muslim communities, along with SC/ST and the general population. To optimize service delivery, she has acquired various IDs and portals, including a broadband connection, Bank CSP Portal, E-District Portal, PAN Portal, and Insurance Portal.

Sharmishta Das, a beneficiary of Joytsna's initiatives, enrolled in a Digital Literacy Course through Accenture Track 1. This program allowed her to pursue computer learning free of cost, equipping her with essential digital skills. Sharmishta's success story exemplifies the positive impact of Joytsna's commitment to providing accessible digital education.

In Joytsna's community, a notable challenge was the lack of familiarity with digital payment platforms among women, including tools like PhonePe, Google Pay, and ATM cards. Addressing this gap, Joytsna initiated a financial literacy drive through which women gained knowledge about UPI and ATM card usage. This initiative has empowered them to embrace digital financial services, fostering financial inclusion and independence. Her centre stands as a beacon of empowerment, combining essential digital services with impactful literacy programs to uplift and enrich the lives of individuals in Miyarbagan, Murshidabad District, West Bengal.

Kalyani Tandan
Raipur, Chhattisgarh

BEST DIGITAL CHANGEMAKER

Kalyani Tandan, a resident of Mohadi village in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, is the driving force behind a service center situated near the Gram Panchayat. Her center serves citizens within a 6-kilometer radius, with a special focus on providing essential services to diverse categories of individuals, including the elderly, differently-abled, and those who may feel abandoned. Kalyani's services encompass a wide range, from online banking transactions to facilitating access to government schemes.

In her pursuit of enhancing the quality of life in her village, Kalyani recognized the need to bring convenience and facilities closer to her community. Despite the challenges of village life, she committed herself to bridge the gap between disappearing amenities and the necessities of her fellow villagers. This endeavor not only brought convenience but also contributed to her personal growth and boosted her confidence.

Kalyani's service center serves as a hub for the community, where individuals can converge to fulfill their essential tasks. Moreover, she goes beyond the conventional by providing on-site and at-home services, especially catering to the needs of differently-abled individuals and those dependent on others. This commitment to offering home services has not only alleviated the troubles of many but has also garnered blessings and gratitude, bringing Kalyani a profound sense of peace and tranquility.

The transformation initiated by Kalyani's efforts extends beyond her household, influencing the lives of her fellow villagers and introducing new perspectives digitally. Her dedication to fostering digital convenience has become a significant catalyst for positive change in Mohadi village, exemplifying the impact one individual can make in bridging gaps and uplifting a community.

Kamini
Jaipur, Rajasthan

Kamini, a resident of Jaipur, Rajasthan, has emerged as a beacon of community service through digital initiatives, focusing on providing essential services and raising awareness about government schemes, banking facilities, and more. Her proactive approach extends beyond individual services to community mobilization, actively engaging more people in the digital realm.

Under the umbrella of programs initiated by DEF, Kamini orchestrated various community-oriented activities, including community meetings, wall writings, WhatsApp outreach, announcements, and youth meetings. These efforts were dedicated to dispelling myths and rumors surrounding COVID-19, emphasizing preventive measures, and fostering a sense of awareness among community members.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kamini assumed a pivotal role in addressing misconceptions related to vaccination. She played a key role in promoting vaccination drives, organizing camps in her locality, and administering both doses of the vaccine to residents, especially during times when government hospitals were overwhelmed. Beyond her contributions to COVID-19 initiatives, Kamini actively participates in DEF's programs on Digital Financial Inclusion (DFI), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and digital safety. Her role includes facilitating courses on artificial intelligence and educating individuals on digital safety measures to shield them from online fraud.

Kamini's unwavering dedication to community welfare and her adept use of digital tools for social empowerment position her as a valuable asset to her

community. Her efforts not only serve the immediate needs of residents but also inspire others to harness the power of digital mediums for the greater good.

Kiran Kumari
Giridih, Jharkhand

3rd
PRIZE WINNER

Kiran Kumari, a resident of Brinda in Giridiha, Jharkhand, serves as a catalyst for rural employment and women's empowerment through her Common Service Centre in the remote areas of Giridih. Her impactful contributions to Digital India services, including Jeevan Praman, Aadhar enrollment, Banking, Railway Ticketing, and Stree Swabhiman, have earned her recognition, including the prestigious Digital India Award in 2015 presented by the Prime Minister of India.

Kiran's commitment extends beyond conventional digital services as she actively collaborates with Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to raise awareness among women and generate income. A notable aspect of her work revolves around menstrual hygiene management, where she addresses the prevalent silence, lack of awareness, and limited accessibility to menstrual hygiene products in the community.

In alignment with the Digital India Programme, Kiran spearheads community initiatives focusing on Menstrual Hygiene Management. She tackles issues related to poor awareness and associated taboos surrounding menstruation, playing a pivotal role in the production of sanitary napkins through collaboration with Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Kiran's efforts transcend traditional boundaries, as she actively contributes to digital services in her village and initiates programs to empower girls through employment opportunities in rural BPOs and Telemedicine services developed within the village. Kiran Kumari stands as a beacon of digital empowerment, breaking barriers, and fostering positive change in her community.

Kiran Kumari
Champaran, Bihar

Kiran Kumari, a resident of Champaran, Bihar, has been an integral part of DEF for over 4 years, spearheading digital services and education in her village. Operating from her center in Nautanwa Panchayat, Kiran goes beyond providing digital services; she actively engages in training women and girls in various fields while imparting essential computer skills to children. Her involvement in projects like Digital Saarthak, Artificial Intelligence, and online computer classes has earned her the esteemed title of "Digital Didi."

Kiran's journey is not just about personal growth; it's about making a lasting impact in her community. Recognized and respected, she has become a symbol of self-reliance in her society. Her contributions extend to various DEF projects, including Digital Sarthak, PM Mani, Mera Bill, Digital Didi, and Accenture Track-1, each fulfilling and rewarding in its own right.

Beyond DEF projects, Kiran actively raises awareness about health, education, and digital literacy in her village, catalyzing positive development. Her dedication has rightfully earned her the affectionate title of "Digital Didi" in her community. People rely on her expertise, approaching her whenever they encounter challenges, and she finds immense satisfaction in solving their problems. Kiran Kumari stands as a beacon of empowerment, embodying the positive impact of digital initiatives in Champaran.

Lachchho Devi
Alwar, Rajasthan

In 2021, **Lachchho Devi** embarked on her journey with DEF in Alwar, Rajasthan initially stepping into the world of work with no prior experience. Over time, her transformation has been remarkable, evolving from a novice to a trusted source of accurate information in her community.

Lachchho's pivotal role revolves around disseminating crucial information about various government schemes to the villagers, with a particular focus on those who are often deprived of facilities – women, the elderly, and children. Her commitment lies in ensuring that people comprehend

the benefits of these schemes. Her center, located in Jahanpur village, serves a radius of about three to four kilometers, bringing essential services closer to those who struggle to access government initiatives in urban centers.

One of her notable contributions is facilitating the annual pension verification at her center, eliminating the need for beneficiaries to travel outside the village. Lachchho actively assists in form filling, imparts digital literacy education, and maintains constant communication with the villagers. Her commitment to the community goes beyond fixed hours; she accommodates people whenever they seek services at her center.

Lachchho Devi's goal is clear – to bridge the gap for those who face challenges in reaching urban centers for government schemes. Through her efforts, she empowers her community, making a significant impact on the lives of those she serves. Her center is not just a service hub; it represents independence and empowerment for both Lachchho and the community she serves.

Lija Naik
Cuttack, Odisha

In the vibrant community of Cuttack, Odisha, **Lija Naik** stands as an active force, dedicated to providing essential digital services and skills to community members. Engaged in various projects such as Digital Sarthak and Digital Didi, she extends her services to cater to the diverse needs of society, including the OBC, SC, ST communities.

Lija's impact is particularly evident in her village, where she encountered women unfamiliar with mobile phones. Taking a proactive approach, Lija reached out to them, patiently explaining the nuances of mobile technology. Through her efforts, these women grasped the concept for the first time, marking a significant step toward digital inclusion. The implementation of the Soochna Preneur project brought transformative changes to Lija's village. The residents, once unfamiliar with the internet, became proficient in its usage. They now recognize the pivotal role the internet plays in their daily lives, a testament to Lija's commitment to digital literacy.

With various internet-related tasks now accessible to everyone, from photocopying and printing to mobile recharge and electricity bill payments, the village experiences newfound convenience. Lija takes pride and joy in providing these services, acknowledging the positive impact on the community. Her aspirations extend further as she looks forward to personal growth, aiming to establish her own center soon. Lija Naik's journey exemplifies the transformative power of digital literacy and community engagement, bringing positive change to the lives of those she serves.

Madhu Kalwar
Bhilwara, Rajasthan

Hailing from Bhilwara, Rajasthan, **Madhu Kalwar's** journey as a Soochnapreneur initially began with her involvement in Sakhi Seva Kendra, managing digital devices. With the support of Manjari Foundation and DEF Foundation, she underwent training, equipping her to embark on her digital service endeavors. Madhu is now dedicated to providing essential digital services, including banking facilities and government scheme entitlements to her community.

Upon joining DEF, Madhu's horizons expanded, presenting her with diverse employment opportunities. Organizing an artificial intelligence course facilitated by DEF, she not only gained valuable skills but also had the opportunity to train others, contributing to her income. The establishment of Sakhi Seva Kendra brought increased recognition and presence in the village. Women in the community began working remotely using their phones and WhatsApp under Madhu's guidance.

The joy Madhu derives from her work is immeasurable. Beyond personal satisfaction, she earns a fair income, and her approachable nature encourages women to approach her freely, seeking information about various schemes. DEF's initiative in facilitating a Google security course further empowered women, and Madhu actively assisted them in the enrollment process.

Madhu Kalwar stands as a beacon of inspiration for women in her community, exemplifying how

an empowered woman can play a pivotal role in facilitating essential services and digital literacy. Her journey underscores the transformative impact of digital empowerment on individuals and communities alike.

Mala Jha
Darbhanga, Bihar

Residing in Rasalpur village of Darbhanga, Bihar, **Mala Jha** has emerged as a catalyst for change by providing a spectrum of online government services, alleviating the inconveniences faced by the locals. Witnessing the challenges people encountered in accessing digital services, Mala envisioned opening a center to offer essential facilities to the community.

Mala's center is a hub for a myriad of services, ranging from digital banking, AEPS transactions, Ekyc, NPS, to facilitating life, vehicle, and health insurance. Additionally, she handles Aadhar enrollment and updates, along with various prints and online tests. The center's outreach extends to the surrounding villages within a 10km radius, ensuring that even marginalized communities receive the benefits of digital services.

A driving force in her community, Mala is committed to ensuring that every available scheme, whether government-funded or from non-governmental initiatives, reaches the masses. Her center actively engages in processes such as farmer registration, PM Kisan registration, various agricultural subsidies, Ayushman card distribution, facilitating old age pension applications, and supporting various vaccination programs. Mala Jha's dedication to bridging the digital gap in Rasput village is evident in her comprehensive range of services that empower the community and foster digital inclusivity.

Mala Khatun
Murshidabad, West Bengal

2nd
PRIZE WINNER

Mala Khatun has been an integral part of the Soochnapreneur network for the past 2 years, making a significant impact in Jhanjha Rukanpur, Murshidabad, West Bengal. Her center is a beacon of empowerment, primarily catering to the Muslim community and offering a diverse range of services encompassing digital literacy, government entitlements, and banking services through AEPS.

Mala's outreach extends to various segments of her community, with a focus on women, students, and senior citizens. Her center plays a pivotal role in addressing the multifaceted needs of the community, offering essential services such as Xerox, photo services, money withdrawal, assistance with train ticket bookings, and disseminating crucial information about government schemes.

To enhance the efficiency of service delivery, Mala has seamlessly integrated various IDs such as the Digital India Portal for PAN Card services, the e-District Portal for streamlined access to government schemes, Bank BC for comprehensive banking services, and IRCTC for facilitating train ticket assistance. This integration not only augments the scope of her center but also ensures that the community receives services with precision and effectiveness. Mala Khatun's commitment to digital empowerment and community service exemplifies the spirit of a Soochnapreneur, making a positive impact on the lives of those she serves in Jhanjha Rukanpur.

Mamatavati
Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh

BEST SUSTAINABILITY MODEL

Hailing from the village of Maraucha village in Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh, **Mamatavati** stands as a dedicated Soochnapreneur, operating an information center that serves as a vital hub for various government-related information and digital services. Her commitment to community welfare is evident through the array of services offered, including PAN card facilitation, income and caste certificates, electricity bill transactions, widow and elderly pensions, Aadhaar card-related services, and the creation of E-shram cards.

Recognizing the unique needs of her community, Mamatavati goes beyond traditional services by actively promoting health awareness, with a particular focus on addressing issues related to gender-based violence. Her center becomes a comprehensive resource not only for essential government transactions but also for fostering a culture of well-being and awareness.

In her efforts to enhance accessibility to banking services, Mamatavati employs mantra fingerprint scanner devices, ensuring that senior citizens are spared the inconvenience of waiting in long queues at banks. Furthermore, she goes the extra mile by providing doorstep banking services for differently-abled individuals, eliminating travel barriers and making essential banking facilities easily accessible to all through DEF.

Looking towards the future, Mamatavati envisions expanding the scope of her center by offering a broader range of services at the grassroots level. She maintains consistent communication with lower-level officials to address various issues, including pensions, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, and e-Shram cards. Particularly committed to the agricultural community, she actively assists farmers in applying for the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, providing valuable insights for stability and continuity in their endeavors. Mamatavati's tireless efforts exemplify the spirit of community service and empowerment.

Manisha Naik
Cuttack, Odisha

Residing in Cuttack, Odisha, **Manisha Naik** has dedicated herself to fostering Digital Literacy, Livelihood, and Government Schemes within her community. Her center, strategically located in a rural area, has become a cornerstone for providing crucial digital and financial services to the local population, with a particular focus on empowering women. However, the reach of her services extends to students, youth, and senior citizens, ensuring a comprehensive impact on the community.

At the heart of Manisha's efforts lies a commitment to digital empowerment and financial well-being. Her center, once a modest establishment, has now evolved into a vital resource that addresses a spectrum of needs for the local residents. From basic digital services to facilitating government schemes entitlements, Manisha's center plays a pivotal role in saving people's time and money, eliminating the need to travel to distant locations for essential services.

To enhance the scope and effectiveness of her center, Manisha has strategically acquired essential IDs, including the Indusind Bank CSP ID for community needs, Digital India Portal ID for PAN Card facilitation, and e-District Portal ID. These credentials not only streamline the provision of services but also enable her to cater to a diverse range of requirements efficiently.

Manisha Naik's journey stands as a testament to the transformative power of digital literacy and financial inclusion. Through her unwavering dedication, she has turned her center into a beacon of empowerment, uplifting the community and contributing significantly to their digital and financial well-being.

Manju
Khedi, Rajasthan

Hailing from Khedi village in Rajasthan, **Manju** embarked on a transformative journey through the Internet Saathi program, eventually becoming a dedicated Soochnapreneur. Her mission revolves around ensuring that villagers receive accurate and essential information, unlocking the benefits of various government plans. With a primary focus on aiding those deprived of conveniences, including women, the elderly, and children, Manju actively engages in online processes, contributing to digital empowerment and information accuracy in her community.

One of Manju's key contributions lies in assisting marginalized students with scholarship forms and caste certificates, streamlining the process through online platforms. Recognizing the challenges faced by elderly individuals, she facilitates easy access to pension funds by conducting annual verification locally, sparing them the need to travel long distances.

Manju's commitment extends beyond the walls of her center, as she travels to villages within a 5-kilometer radius to provide information and assistance to those who come from far-off places. Her center caters to the diverse needs of women, the elderly, children, disabled individuals, and youth, ensuring that facilities are accessible to everyone. For those unable to visit due to age or disability, Manju goes the extra mile,

ensuring that scheme benefits reach their homes. In cases where challenges persist, she accompanies individuals to the relevant departments, providing comprehensive assistance. Manju's journey exemplifies the impactful role that a Soochnapreneur can play in bridging gaps, empowering communities, and fostering digital inclusion in rural Rajasthan.

Manju Rani Sharma
Murlipura, Rajasthan

In the heart of Murlipura village, Rajasthan, **Manju Rani Sharma** has been a dedicated force within the organization since September 2019. Initially serving as an Asha worker, Manju has overcome challenges, including the absence of a phone and technical skills, to become proficient in various tasks. Today, she stands as a pillar of support for her community, providing essential digital services and accurate information while fostering awareness about online safety.

Committed to enhancing the accessibility of benefits for the people, Manju keeps herself and the center updated with eMitra IDs, BC IDs, and CSC IDs. Her focus on people's convenience extends to ensuring equitable purchases at the center. Actively engaging with the community, Manju goes beyond information provision – she accompanies individuals to block or District offices when needed, facilitating a seamless process for those seeking assistance.

A champion of digital literacy, Manju directs her efforts towards raising awareness among women in her village. Through education on digital literacy and insights into identifying fake news and rumors, she empowers the women in her community to navigate the digital landscape with confidence.

One notable beneficiary, Munita Sharma, experienced the positive impact of Manju's assistance. Through Manju's online application, Munita availed benefits under the Matru Vandana Yojana and the JSY scheme after the birth of her daughter. Manju continues to be a guiding force for Munita and her family, ensuring they stay informed about various government schemes and receive their entitled benefits. Manju Rani Sharma's journey exemplifies the transformative role

of a dedicated community worker, making strides in digital empowerment and ensuring equitable access to essential services in MurliPura village.

Meera
Alwar, Rajasthan

Meet **Meera**, a dedicated information promoter residing in the quaint village of Ronpur in Alwar, Rajasthan, actively contributing to government schemes and digital literacy initiatives for the past four years. Meera's commitment goes beyond the conventional as she provides doorstep services, bringing the benefits of digital literacy and the Smart Panchayat initiative directly to the doorsteps of her community.

Engaging in various community development activities, Meera actively participates in NREGA work, conducts awareness announcements in the village, and organizes vibrant wall paintings to disseminate crucial information. Her mission includes serving the elderly by offering assistance with banking procedures, photocopying, and comprehensive education on various government schemes. She takes her knowledge to the grassroots level, visiting Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, and even the Collector's office.

One of the beneficiaries of Meera's dedicated efforts is Sukki, who, before discovering Meera's services, struggled with household chores and faced challenges applying for pension online. Multiple rejections left Sukki disheartened until she learned about Meera's assistance. Upon contacting Meera, her pension application was successfully processed online, and Sukki began receiving her pension regularly. This monthly support of one thousand rupees has brought immense happiness to Sukki, providing financial relief for her personal expenses. Meera's tireless efforts in promoting digital literacy and ensuring access to government schemes have transformed the lives of individuals like Sukki in Ronpur, Rajasthan, making her a beacon of empowerment and support in the community.

Mini Behera
Cuttack, Odisha

Meet **Mini Behera**, a 23-year-old resident of Kunarpal, Cuttack, Odisha, on a mission to bridge the digital divide and promote digital literacy in her community. Mini's dedication extends to providing essential digital services, covering a radius of 5 km, making a significant impact on the lives of those she serves. Mini's journey in the realm of digital empowerment has seen her active involvement in various projects, including UNICEF, Digital Sarthak, Digital Didi, Chatbot, AI, DFI, and Accenture Track-1. Her expertise shines through as she conducts enlightening training sessions on digital skills, empowering individuals with the knowledge needed to navigate the digital landscape effectively.

A key aspect of Mini's approach is her proactive advertising of the services offered at her center. She goes beyond conventional methods, engaging in door-to-door visits to personally connect with the people in her community. This personalized touch not only enhances the accessibility of her services but also fosters a sense of trust and connection within the community. Mini Behera stands as a torch bearer of digital empowerment in Kunarpal, contributing to the growth and development of her community through education and valuable digital services.

Moushumi Halder
Nadia, West Bengal

In the heart of Palashipara, Nadia, West Bengal, **Moushumi Halder** stands as a driving force behind digital empowerment and access to essential services. Operating a digital service center with a focus on government schemes, Moushumi's journey is marked by her commitment to addressing the challenges faced by women in her village. Recognizing the hurdles women encountered, having to travel to the city for crucial digital and document services essential for their businesses, Moushumi took initiative. She envisioned and established a local center, offering a comprehensive range of services. This strategic move not only saves valuable time but also conserves resources for the women in her community.

While Moushumi's primary focus is on empowering women, her center extends its services to students,

youth, and senior citizens. The array of services includes digital literacy, information on government schemes, and financial literacy, catering to the diverse needs of the community. To further enhance the range of services, Moushumi has actively pursued various IDs, including IndusInd Bank CSP ID for community needs, Digital India Portal ID for PAN Card, and e-District Portal ID. These efforts signify her commitment to expanding the scope of services and ensuring the sustainability and growth of her community.

Moushumi Halder's digital service center serves as a beacon of empowerment, fostering digital literacy, financial inclusion, and easy access to essential services for the residents of Palashipara, Nadia, West Bengal.

Murshida Khatun
Murshidabad, West Bengal

Murshida Khatun, a dedicated resident of Padmanabpur rural area in the village of Hariharpara, Murshidabad, West Bengal has been an integral part of the DEF community as a SoochnaPreneur for the past two years. Her relentless efforts in digital literacy and services have made her center a hub of empowerment, serving a radius of 3 kilometers.

Specializing in digital literacy, Murshida's center plays a pivotal role in breaking down digital divides and ensuring that essential services are accessible to all. Her primary focus encompasses students, youth, and senior citizens, catering to the diverse needs of the Muslim community, OBC, and General Community in her vicinity.

Murshida's commitment goes beyond just providing basic services. She actively engages with the community, conducting training sessions, and raising awareness about the significance of digital literacy. Her goal is not only to offer immediate assistance but to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the digital landscape effectively.

By focusing on key demographics such as students and seniors, Murshida ensures that her services leave a lasting impact on the educational and societal

well-being of her community. Her center stands as a symbol of progress, breaking barriers, and fostering a sense of digital inclusion in the rural landscape of Hariharpara, Murshidabad.

Namita Kumar
Ramgarh, Jharkhand

Namita Kumar, a resident of Hargadhadih, in Ramgarh, Jharkhand, has transformed her vision of financial independence into a reality by establishing a community-centric center. Her center is more than just a physical space; it is a symbol of empowerment for Namita and the entire village.

Namita's active engagement in digital education has become a cornerstone of her center's offerings. She passionately provides computer education to the youth, extending her services to various demographics, including the elderly, women, and school kids. Beyond education, Namita acts as a bridge between the community and government initiatives, offering assistance with various scheme applications to ensure that the benefits reach those who need them the most. Through her efforts, she has significantly increased the accessibility of digital tools within her community. Her center is a one-stop destination for essential services such as banking, caste certificates, Aadhar cards, and more. Namita's commitment is evident in the comprehensive range of services she provides, making a positive impact on the lives of villagers within a 6-kilometer radius.

Namita's journey from envisioning financial independence to becoming a beacon of determination and public service is truly inspiring. Her center not only reflects her personal success but also serves as a catalyst for positive change and empowerment in Hargadhadih, Jharkhand.

Naurin Banu
Barmer, Rajasthan

WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

In the heart of Barmer, Rajasthan, **Naurin Banu** stands out as a digital trailblazer and an advocate for positive societal change. As a dedicated digital didi with DEF, Naurin's impact goes beyond the realms of digital services.

One of Naurin's notable achievements is the authorship of the book "Udriya," a powerful narrative challenging societal taboos surrounding

menstruation. Through her work, she not only inspires women to prioritize hygiene during pandemics but also actively dispels myths related to menstruation.

Naurin's commitment to women's empowerment extends to economic avenues as well. She provides handicraft training, offering women in her community opportunities for economic independence. Naurin's efforts go beyond digital platforms; she personally visits homes, ensuring that women are educated about menstrual hygiene and various initiatives available through the Chatbot.

Covering an area of about 5 kilometers, Naurin's impact eases the lives of people in the surrounding community. In addition to dispelling rumors and misinformation related to menstruation, she contributes significantly to the financial well-being of her family. Naurin Banu is not just a digital didi; she is a catalyst for positive change, breaking barriers and empowering women in Barmer, Rajasthan.

Nirmala Devi
Ranchi, Jharkhand

In the quaint village of Hesatu in Ranchi, Jharkhand, **Nirmala Devi** emerges as a beacon of change, spearheading digital and community services that extend up to 5 kilometers around her center. Her primary mission involves raising awareness about government schemes and digital services, particularly among impoverished and remote rural communities.

Nirmala's journey wasn't without its challenges. Initially grappling with financial constraints and limited support, she remained undeterred. Recognizing the transformative potential of her mission, Nirmala sought financial assistance, and with DEF's support, she acquired essential equipment like printers and tablets, significantly enhancing the efficiency of her operations. At the core of Nirmala's efforts is the empowerment of marginalized children and women through digital literacy. Despite facing skepticism from some quarters, she persistently advocates for the importance of digital knowledge in everyday tasks, inspiring women in the village to embrace this transformation.

For Nirmala, consistency is paramount. She understands that building trust within the community requires unwavering dedication. Her commitment to positive change is reflected in every initiative she undertakes, and she firmly believes that this dedication is the key to earning the confidence of the people she serves. Nirmala Devi continues to strive for lasting impact and transformation in the lives of the individuals and families in Hesatu.

Nisha Kumari
Barlong, Jharkhand

In the heart of Barlong, Jharkhand, **Nisha Kumari** stands as a dedicated SoochnaPreneur, actively bridging the digital divide and providing essential services to her community. At her center, individuals can seamlessly navigate applications for government schemes, conduct basic digital transactions, and access services like banking, pension facilitation, printouts, and photocopying. Nisha's commitment extends beyond the confines of her center as she endeavors to promote digital literacy. She employs various platforms, including WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, YouTube, Google, and Twitter, to educate and empower communities with the knowledge needed to navigate the digital landscape.

One shining example of Nisha's impactful work is the story of Sarita Devi. Through Nisha's guidance, Sarita Devi successfully enrolled in two cow-related schemes under the Mukhyamantri Pasudhan Yojana. Currently, Sarita Devi generates a daily income from these initiatives. Additionally, leveraging the MGNREGA scheme, she received support to establish a cow shed, significantly enhancing her livelihood opportunities. Lalita Devi is another beneficiary of Nisha's tireless efforts. Lalita Devi availed the benefits of the MGNREGA scheme's Didi Badi Yojana, enabling her to cultivate vegetables in her field and earn an income of ₹12,000 from her agricultural activities.

Through her unwavering dedication, Nisha Kumari continues to create positive transformations in the lives of individuals like Sarita Devi and Lalita Devi, empowering them with knowledge, resources, and opportunities for a better and more sustainable future.

Pinki Ahirwar
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Pinki Ahirwar, a dedicated SoochnaPreneur, operates her center in the heart of Guna, Madhya Pradesh, extending her digital services to areas within a radius of 10 to 15 kilometers. Pinki's commitment revolves around providing accurate information, raising awareness about various government schemes, and offering guidance on operating digital devices effectively.

Her mission goes beyond the immediate vicinity, as Pinki aspires to broaden the spectrum of her services to meet the evolving needs of the community. Through her efforts, Pinki aims to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that individuals in the region are not only well-informed about government initiatives but also equipped with the necessary skills to navigate the digital landscape.

Pinki Ahirwar's dedication to digital enlightenment serves as a catalyst for positive change in Guna and its surrounding areas. Her vision extends beyond the present, as she actively seeks ways to enhance and expand her services, empowering the community with the tools and knowledge needed for a digitally inclusive future.

Pooja Yadav
Sagar, Madhya Pradesh

Pooja Yadav, a dedicated social worker and current Master of Social Work (MSW) student in Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, has been actively engaged in community service with a focus on extending the benefits of government schemes to the residents of laboratory villages. With a robust background spanning over six years, Pooja has assumed various roles aimed at creating a positive societal impact.

During her tenure as a field coordinator for two years in the WORLD VISION INDIA program facilitated by the SEID NGO in Khurai Block, Pooja played a pivotal role in driving community development initiatives. Her commitment to the betterment of society became evident through her impactful contributions to the UNICEF DEF PROJECT. Here, Pooja conducted awareness programs on child missing, volunteered during the COVID-19 pandemic, and raised awareness about AI-related programs, reaching more than 500 individuals.

As Pooja continues her academic journey in the MSW course, her unwavering dedication to community service remains a beacon of inspiration. To ensure the success of her initiatives, she follows a structured implementation plan, involving baseline surveys, public meetings, and committee formations. Pooja's emphasis on training committees and raising awareness reflects her commitment to empowering communities and fostering sustainable development in Sagar and beyond.

Poonam
Alwar, Rajasthan

Poonam, a dynamic individual hailing from Khelda, Rajasthan, has emerged as a community leader, extending her center's outreach up to 15 kilometers, attracting residents from surrounding villages seeking assistance. Specializing in doorstep services, Poonam provides crucial online banking services and digital assistance, ensuring the accessibility of essential services to the community.

Initially confined to household chores and farming, Poonam's life underwent a transformative change when she connected with the DEF organization. Gaining comprehensive knowledge about various government schemes, she overcame inhibitions and emerged as a confident advocate for her community. Poonam actively engages with the community through phone calls, awareness programs organized at her center, and interactions with officials, including the Collector and Sarpanch.

Poonam's influence extends beyond her household, ensuring that her family members receive their entitled benefits and rights. Supported by her entire family, she has become a recognizable figure in five neighboring villages, actively participating in DEF projects that not only enhance her income but also contribute to her family's financial well-being. Poonam's entrepreneurial spirit is evident as she has established her own center for e-Mitra services, providing additional sources of income. From previously being unemployed, Poonam has now secured a steady income, enabling her to provide quality education to her children and support her family members effectively.

Poonam
Alwar, Rajasthan

Poonam, a resident of Batesara, Rajasthan, has been actively contributing to her community since 2017, with a focus on financial and digital literacy, and assisting individuals in availing government scheme benefits. Her mission is centered around empowering those who face challenges venturing outside the village due to limited means.

Poonam diligently keeps her center updated, ensuring accessibility to vital services through C.S.C and eMitra ID registrations. Her services cater to diverse demographics, including women, the elderly, children, and youth, all of whom benefit from her expertise. In cases where direct facilitation is not feasible, Poonam collaborates with block and District offices to ensure that the community's needs are effectively addressed.

Active engagement is a hallmark of Poonam's approach. She attends Panchayat meetings, disseminating information about various schemes and educating the community through organization-led projects. Maintaining regular contact with the people, Poonam utilizes WhatsApp groups to stay connected and informed.

Proficient in using digital devices, Poonam not only contributes to her community's welfare but also earns a monthly income, a source of great satisfaction for her. Committed to caring for her family, Poonam has successfully worked on nearly 12 projects, expressing gratitude and pride for being a driving force behind positive change in Batesara, Rajasthan.

Poonam Bai
Alwar, Rajasthan

WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

Poonam Bai, a dedicated Asha Worker from Untawal, Alwar District, Rajasthan has been an integral part of the organization since 2017. Driven by a strong passion for community service, Poonam has not only excelled in her role but has also expanded her capabilities by acquiring e-Mitra ID, BC, and CSC ID to better facilitate the community. Engaging in meaningful conversations, Poonam stays connected with the people, providing valuable information based on their eligibility criteria. Her role extends beyond mere information dissemination; she actively assists

individuals in filling out forms, charging according to the specified rate list. Poonam collaborates with entire families, ensuring comprehensive support.

The flexibility of service hours at her center reflects Poonam's commitment to accessibility, working whenever people seek assistance. The impact of her services resonates up to 10 kilometers away, attracting individuals from surrounding villages. Her center caters to the diverse needs of women, the elderly, children, the disabled, youth, and others. Poonam's success story is one of resilience and perseverance. Initially met with skepticism and reluctance, she faced challenges in garnering support and participation. Undeterred, Poonam gradually won people over through consistent efforts and support, making her journey more manageable.

A notable achievement for Poonam is the positive shift in attitudes toward digital literacy. Initially, no girls from her village pursued computer education. However, Poonam's efforts sparked interest, gradually encouraging girls to explore the realm of digital learning—an immensely satisfying outcome for her. Poonam Bai's unwavering dedication and transformative efforts continue to make a significant impact, empowering Untawal, Rajasthan, and inspiring positive change within the community.

Poonam Yadav
Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh

Poonam Yadav, a passionate individual hailing from Sirauli Gaushpur, Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh, has emerged as a beacon of empowerment in her community. Despite starting with limited knowledge and lacking a phone, her journey with the organization has been transformative, equipping her with valuable skills and insights. As a trusted figure in her village, she plays a pivotal role in disseminating accurate information about various government schemes. Her work primarily revolves around assisting individuals who face challenges in accessing facilities, focusing on the welfare of women, the elderly, and children. Poonam has facilitated a seamless process for elderly individuals to withdraw their pensions, conducting annual verifications at their doorsteps, eliminating the need for travel.

Recognizing the transportation challenges faced by women, Poonam's center has become a reliable hub for assistance. Her commitment extends beyond the center's confines, as she arranges for services to be provided at the homes of those unable to visit. With a vision of empowering marginalized groups within a 5-kilometer radius, Poonam strives to bridge the gap for women, children, the elderly, and the disabled engaged in household and farming chores.

Poonam's dedication extends to digital literacy, as she imparts essential skills to women, teaching them to use phones and perform tasks using Google. This proactive approach contributes to raising awareness and bridging the digital divide among women in the community. Establishing a foundation of trust, Poonam maintains open lines of communication with villagers, ensuring timely and relevant information about schemes reaches them. When necessary, she organizes camps to address specific needs, further reinforcing her commitment to community welfare. Poonam Yadav's relentless efforts continue to empower and uplift Sirauli Gaushpur, making a lasting impact on the lives of those she serves.

Preeti Chauhan
Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh

GIRL ICON

Preeti Chauhan, a dedicated individual from Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, actively engages in transformative projects aimed at uplifting her community. Her collaborative efforts with the Smartpur Center in Jalalabad have left a lasting impact on various initiatives, showcasing her commitment to social welfare. As a master trainer for the RCCE-2 project, Preeti played a crucial role in educating households about COVID-19 and its precautions. Her efforts were met with gratitude from community members, highlighting the significance of her contributions during challenging times.

Through her involvement in the Digital Didi project, Preeti addressed crucial issues related to women's health. She provided essential information to women and girls on menstrual hygiene, cleanliness, and dispelled myths surrounding menstruation. This initiative reflects her dedication to empowering women with knowledge for better health practices.

In her engagement with DEF, Preeti took on the role of sensitizing women entrepreneurs to cybercrime through the Digital Financial Inclusion (DFI) project. Additionally, she actively raised awareness about online safety and security measures, contributing to the digital empowerment of women in her community.

The positive responses garnered by these projects within the community serve as a testament to Preeti's impactful work. Motivated by these outcomes, she remains committed to making a difference in the social landscape. Preeti firmly believes in the transformative power of small initiatives in social work, especially in addressing prevalent issues in rural areas. Her advocacy for community engagement and social contribution underscores the potential for positive change that can be achieved through collective efforts. Preeti encourages everyone to embrace social work, emphasizing its potential to bring about significant transformations in society.

Priyanshi Varma
Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh

Priyanshi Varma, a dedicated professional at the Smartpur Center in Jalalabad, Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh has been instrumental in driving impactful projects within her community. Her diverse involvement in initiatives such as RCCE, Digital DiDi, and others underscores her commitment to fostering positive change. Operating from her center, Priyanshi has played a pivotal role in facilitating applications for various government schemes, including PM Kisan, Widow Pension, Disability Pension, and the Housing Scheme. Her efforts go beyond mere facilitation as she actively engages in surveys and awareness campaigns to disseminate crucial information about these schemes. Notably, she has extended her support to communities that face financial constraints, ensuring their enrollment in these initiatives.

In a community where resistance initially hindered the participation of women and girls, Priyanshi's dedication and engagement have successfully overcome these barriers. Through discussions and community outreach, she has convinced the community to embrace the opportunities provided by the center. This inclusivity is reflected in her efforts

to connect women, girls, and elderly individuals to essential services, breaking down initial barriers.

Priyanshi's commitment extends to assisting elderly individuals over the age of 60 in accessing old-age pensions. She has also contributed to enhancing the mobility of differently-abled individuals by distributing tricycles, making a tangible impact on their lives. Working in rural areas brings its own set of challenges, including issues related to documentation for scheme applications. Despite these hurdles, Priyanshi's proactive approach ensures effective problem-solving. She strives to address challenges such as the absence of necessary documents like Aadhar cards, showcasing her determination to provide solutions and make a meaningful impact.

Through her multifaceted initiatives, Priyanshi Varma stands as a catalyst for positive change in Jalalabad, Ghazipur, contributing to the holistic development of her community. Her unwavering dedication and ability to overcome challenges make her a valuable asset in driving transformative initiatives at the grassroots level.

Pooja Pandey
Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh

Pooja Pandey, a dedicated professional stationed at the Smartpur Centre in Kaithwalia, Ghazipur district, Uttar Pradesh, is at the forefront of community transformation. Her comprehensive projects span various crucial areas, ensuring that her services cater to every segment of the community. In the domain of health, Pooja has organized health camps, health awareness sessions, and provided digital support to address the well-being of the community. Her educational initiatives involve imparting digital literacy and career counseling, contributing to the educational upliftment of the residents. Additionally, Pooja actively engages in governance-related projects, disseminating information about government schemes and conducting awareness camps to empower the community.

Pooja's involvement in the Digi Poshan project exemplifies her commitment to addressing critical health issues. Focusing on raising awareness about malnutrition among pregnant women, young girls,

and children, she played a pivotal role in creating a positive impact. Her efforts extended beyond awareness as she facilitated contact with Asha workers to ensure hospital deliveries, marking a significant shift in community attitudes. The increased number of hospital deliveries stands as a testament to the success of her initiatives, with villagers expressing gratitude to DEF & Smartpur, Digi Poshan, for this positive change.

Pooja Pandey's holistic approach and dedicated involvement in a spectrum of projects demonstrate her commitment to the overall well-being and development of the community in Kaithwaliya. Her transformative initiatives reflect her belief in creating a positive and lasting impact on the lives of those she serves.

Radhika
Haridwar, Uttarakhand

Hailing from Bhagwanpur in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, **Radhika** is the driving force behind the Soochnapreneur Samudayik Soochna Sansadhan Kendra. Her center serves as a hub for digital literacy and facilitates access to various government schemes, addressing the critical needs of the community.

Radhika's journey began with a realization of the overwhelming requests for essential documents like caste certificates, domicile certificates, and income certificates from the local villagers. Understanding the necessity to broaden her services, she took proactive steps to sustain and enhance her center's offerings. To meet the growing demand, she obtained a CSC ID, enabling her to provide crucial government services efficiently. Recognizing the need for color printing services, Radhika invested in a color printer to meet the diverse requirements of the community. To streamline PAN card services, she acquired an NSDL Pan Retailer Id, ensuring swift and accessible solutions for the villagers.

The establishment of Radhika's center has brought joy to the villagers and surrounding communities. The convenience of accessing services locally has especially benefited women, eliminating the need for them to venture outside. Radhika finds immense

satisfaction in contributing to the well-being of her community.

In addition to her digital services, Radhika is actively involved in extending digital literacy to underprivileged girls and women at affordable rates. Her aim is to empower them with education and knowledge of their rights. Moreover, she is committed to reaching out to less educated individuals in her village, ensuring they too can benefit from the available services. These experiences serve as a constant source of inspiration, driving Radhika's unwavering dedication to social work and community development.

Rakhi Biswas
Nadia, West Bengal

Rakhi Biswas, a dynamic Soochnapreneur based in Nadia, West Bengal, has been instrumental in creating positive change by running a center that offers a spectrum of services. Her primary focus is on providing digital services, fostering digital literacy, and facilitating access to various government schemes.

Rakhi's dedication to empowering women is evident in her targeted efforts to make digital resources and services more accessible to them. Her center becomes a hub for women seeking to enhance their digital skills, bridging the gender gap in technology usage. Moreover, Rakhi extends her services to students, ensuring they have the necessary digital tools for educational purposes.

Recognizing the importance of catering to diverse age groups, Rakhi actively engages with senior citizens. Through personalized assistance, she ensures that the elderly members of the community can navigate digital platforms and avail themselves of relevant services effortlessly. Her center becomes a community hub where people find valuable support, information, and assistance in navigating the digital landscape.

By combining her commitment to digital literacy with a focus on government schemes, Rakhi Biswas is fostering an environment where individuals from all walks of life can harness the benefits of technology and government initiatives. Through her unwavering

efforts, Rakhi is not just running a center – she is a catalyst for empowerment and positive transformation in Nadia, West Bengal.

Ranu Begum
Murshidabad, West Bengal

Ranu Begum, a dedicated Soochnapreneur based in Nagar Village, Kirtipur Panchayat, Murshidabad District, West Bengal, has been a catalyst for positive change in her community by focusing on digital literacy, livelihood opportunities, and facilitating access to government schemes through her center. The primary community served by Ranu's center is the minority community, and she has played a pivotal role in addressing their unique needs and challenges. To enhance the sustainability of her efforts, Ranu obtained authorization for student services through a computer center, acquiring crucial IDs such as Digital India Portal ID for PAN Card services and an e-District Portal ID.

Ranu's commitment extends to raising awareness among women in her community, empowering them with information on various issues. Her center serves as a platform for local students to learn essential computer skills and spoken English, providing them with valuable tools for personal and professional growth. Recognizing the lack of awareness about health among local women, Ranu takes on the role of a Digital Didi, educating them on health-related matters. Her multifaceted approach aims not only to impart digital literacy but also to empower women and youth, encouraging them to progress and move forward in their lives.

Through Ranu Begum's unwavering dedication, her center has become a beacon of empowerment, providing valuable services, information, and skills to the minority community in West Bengal. Her vision goes beyond just digital literacy – it is about fostering holistic growth and empowerment in the lives of those she serves.

Rasmita Parida
Cuttack, Odisha

Rasmita Parida, a dedicated volunteer from Cuttack, Odisha, has been actively working towards promoting digital literacy in her community. Her altruistic efforts have a widespread impact, benefiting individuals across various communities, including OBC, SC, ST, and General categories.

Currently serving as a volunteer, Rasmita envisions establishing a dedicated center to further amplify the reach and impact of her services. Her commitment to the community is evident through her continuous efforts to enhance digital literacy and bridge the technological gap in the region.

Rasmita's initiatives are not limited to a specific community but are designed to be inclusive and accessible to everyone. Her focus on OBC, SC, ST, and General categories ensures that the benefits of digital literacy are extended to all sections of society. In her pursuit of community welfare, Rasmita aspires to set up a center that will serve as a hub for various digital services. This center aims to provide a comprehensive range of offerings, catering to the diverse needs of the community members.

As Rasmita Parida continues to dedicate her time and skills for the betterment of her community, her vision of establishing a center reflects her long-term commitment to community empowerment. Through digital literacy initiatives, she is not only imparting essential skills but also contributing to the overall development and progress of individuals in Cuttack, Odisha.

Renu Nagar
Baran, Rajasthan

Renu Nagar, a dynamic SoochnaPreneur hailing from Baran, Rajasthan, is on a mission to empower women across various villages within a remarkable radius of 30 km from her location. Through her dedicated efforts, Renu conducts awareness meetings and offers a spectrum of services, with a primary focus on digital literacy, livelihood opportunities, and government schemes. Renu's journey is not just about providing services; it's a testament to her own financial independence, supporting not only herself but also her family through her impactful work. She

recognizes the transformative power of education and actively contributes to the educational upliftment of women in the region. By facilitating education up to the 10th and 12th grades through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), Renu is instrumental in enhancing the educational status of women in her community.

Motivating women to venture into small businesses, Renu is committed to improving their economic conditions. Beyond economic empowerment, she addresses gender discrimination through informative training sessions, enabling women to understand their rights and advocating for improvements in their societal status. Digital literacy is a cornerstone of Renu's initiatives. She provides extensive training to women, empowering them to navigate the complexities of the modern world with confidence. Armed with a smartphone, tablet, and other digital devices, Renu has successfully trained over 700 women, ensuring they feel competent in operating digital tools.

Renu's journey wasn't without challenges. Initially facing negative comments and a slow start, she persevered, and today, she proudly leads a group of 700 to 800 women. Her resilience and dedication have not only secured her a fulfilling job but have also uplifted her community, creating a positive impact that transcends individual achievements.

Reenu Dhakad
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Residing in Raypur Kalan in Guna, Madhya Pradesh, **Reenu Dhakad** is a dedicated SoochnaPreneur committed to providing essential services and fostering financial inclusion in her community. Her center offers a diverse range of services, including photocopying, printing, financial transactions, and invaluable assistance with livelihood schemes. Reenu's impact extends to the Livelihood Mission, where she has been instrumental in facilitating the opening of accounts, providing loans for sewing machines and brick kilns, and guiding individuals through the complexities of availing home loans and Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana benefits. Her primary

focus is on empowering women from low-income and middle-income families, enlightening them about various job opportunities and the availability of low-interest loans from banks.

One notable success story from Reenu's center is that of Kritika Dhakad, a 4-year-old beneficiary. Under Reenu's guidance, Kritika was enrolled in the Ladki Lakshmi Yojana, opening doors to a promising future. Additionally, Reenu played a pivotal role in providing information about the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, facilitating the seamless completion of the application process, and overseeing the opening of a recurring deposit account for Kritika. Reenu's dedication goes beyond mere assistance; she serves as a reliable resource for Kritika's parents whenever they encounter challenges. Her commitment to the community, particularly in empowering women and ensuring financial inclusivity, establishes Reenu Dhakad as a beacon of positive change in Raipur Kalam, Madhya Pradesh.

Roshani Dewangan
Raipur, Chhattisgarh

Hailing from Raipur, Chhattisgarh, **Roshani Dewangan** stands as a dedicated SoochnaPreneur operating within the CSC framework, offering a diverse array of essential services to her community. Roshani's commitment extends across various domains, including the provision of PAN cards, E-Shram cards, driving licenses, Ayushman cards, user IDs, photocopying, printing, digital literacy initiatives, and facilitating RSCIT 3-month courses.

Her mission is rooted in assisting vulnerable individuals such as the disabled, elderly, widowed women, helpless children, and orphans. Additionally, Roshani lends a helping hand to women and united brothers within her community. Aiming to empower school-going children, she ensures the dissemination of accurate information and actively engages in the creation of essential documents like forms, PAN cards, and Aadhar cards. Handling banking transactions and promoting digital literacy are also integral components of her multifaceted responsibilities.

In a village where transportation is limited, and the nearest bank and main road are 10 kilometers away, Roshani goes door to door to ensure that every individual is informed about their entitlements and the potential benefits of government schemes. Her outreach efforts particularly focus on ensuring that children, elderly individuals, and disabled women receive accurate information, assistance with forms, and can avail themselves of the benefits offered by various government schemes.

A testament to Roshani's impactful work is the success story of Bharati Verma from her village. Through Roshani's assistance, Bharati obtained her labor card, commonly known as a labor card. Subsequently, under the Noni Scheme facilitated by the state government through the labor card, Bharati's daughter received Rs. 18,000 upon turning 18 years old. This achievement has not only brought joy to Bharati Verma but has also paved the way for her daughter's enrollment in college. Roshani Dewangan's unwavering dedication exemplifies her role as a catalyst for positive change in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

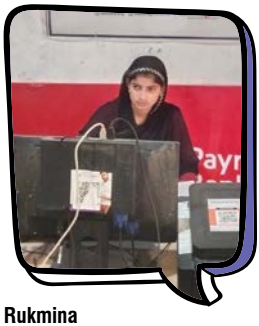
Ruksana Siyol
Barmer, Rajasthan

Ruksana Siyol, based in Barmer, Rajasthan, is actively involved in the Information Entrepreneurship Program, a dynamic initiative designed to cater to the informational needs of the local community. Specializing in fieldwork, Ruksana conducts a range of activities, including monitoring blood pressure and blood sugar levels. Her mission extends beyond health awareness, encompassing the education of individuals about various government schemes and digital literacy.

In her multifaceted role, Ruksana empowers people by enhancing their understanding of rights and equipping them with the knowledge to address issues such as fraud or misinformation. Through her outreach efforts, she has positively influenced various communities, effectively bridging the information gap prevalent in society. Despite the absence of a dedicated center, Ruksana actively engages in fieldwork to identify and disseminate

crucial information to the local population. She utilizes digital devices provided by DEF to assist individuals, employing tools like BP machines, sugar machines, and smart pads during her field visits. The tangible impact of her work brings her a profound sense of fulfillment.

Ruksana's educational initiatives extend to enlightening the community on the functioning of e-Mitra in hospitals, potential challenges, and strategies to address issues or scams. Her dedication and services have significantly eased the lives of individuals in Barmer, Rajasthan, making her a valuable asset in the community's pursuit of information and empowerment.



Rukmina
Alwar, Rajasthan

Rukmina, a dedicated resident of Bidarka village in Alwar, Rajasthan, has played a pivotal role in transforming her community through the establishment of an e-Mitra center. At the heart of her mission is the empowerment of villagers by providing crucial information about various government schemes and assisting them in availing associated benefits. The e-Mitra center, spearheaded by Rukmina, operates as a hub for essential services, offering its assistance at nominal charges. From facilitating pension registrations for widows to checking exam results for children and enrolling individuals in diverse schemes, the center has become a cornerstone for the community's access to vital resources. Financial transactions are seamlessly conducted at the center, contributing to the overall convenience of the villagers.

Rukmina's commitment extends beyond the conventional scope, with the center also serving as an educational hub. Basic computer education is provided to children, broadening their horizons, and online English speaking classes are conducted to enhance their learning opportunities. This multifaceted approach reflects Rukmina's dedication to holistic community development. To ensure the stability and efficiency of her center, Rukmina has strategically obtained a CSC ID for authentication and a Spice Money ID for seamless financial

transactions. These measures not only contribute to the sustainability of her initiatives but also enhance the accessibility of services for the villagers.

A compelling illustration of Rukmina's impact unfolds in the story of Hussain, a 45-year-old with a family of eight members. When faced with a sudden and severe illness, financial constraints prevented Hussain from affording proper treatment. Rukmina, acting as a guiding force, informed him about the Chief Minister's Chiranjeevi Yojana and facilitated his registration. As a result, Hussain successfully availed the benefits of the scheme, receiving free and timely medical treatment, showcasing the tangible impact of Rukmina's efforts in transforming lives within her community.

Runa Naik
Cuttack, Odisha

Runa Naik, a dedicated individual hailing from Cuttack, Odisha, has emerged as a beacon of change through her voluntary efforts to promote digital literacy in her community. Engaging in diverse projects such as UNICEF, Digital Sarthak, Digital Didi, Chatbot, AI, DFI, Safety & Security, Runa has left a lasting impact on the lives of people in her vicinity. Focusing primarily on women, especially those from SC and ST communities, Runa extends her services to various other demographics within her community. Her commitment to inclusivity is evident in her active engagement with diverse communities, ensuring that the benefits of digital literacy are accessible to all.

Collaborating with the Digital Empowerment Foundation on multiple projects, Runa addresses the unique needs of her village through strategic implementations. In the initial stages, there may have been skepticism regarding her capabilities among the women in her village. However, through persistent dedication and unwavering efforts, Runa has earned their trust, becoming a reliable source of assistance for them.

A significant achievement in Runa's journey is her successful instruction of numerous women in her village on how to use mobile phones. Overcoming initial hesitations, these women have now become

proficient in operating mobile devices, a testament to Runa's effective and empowering approach to digital education. Runa Naik stands as an inspiring figure, bringing about positive change in her community by bridging the digital divide and empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills essential for the modern world.

Saharina
Murshidabad, West Bengal

Saharina, the driving force behind an online center in Dewansarai village in Murshidabad, West Bengal, has become a catalyst for positive change by offering a range of essential services. Her center has become a hub for PAN Card, Aadhaar Correction, Scholarship Form Fillup, Trade License New & Renewal, and Udham Registration services. While her primary focus is on women, she extends support to students, youth, and senior citizens, with a particular emphasis on serving the SC community.

Saharina's mission revolves around providing digital and document services to women in her village, alleviating the burden of travel to the city for such essential tasks. Despite encountering challenges in navigating complex processes like passport and trade license applications, Saharina showcased remarkable resilience. Leveraging online resources, such as YouTube tutorials, she empowered herself with the knowledge and skills needed to independently handle these tasks.

Recognizing the importance of staying up-to-date, Saharina has consistently invested her own funds in upgrading her center. Equipping it with essentials like a fingerprint device and a broadband internet connection, she ensures her center remains well-prepared to meet the evolving needs of her community.

In her pursuit of comprehensive community service, Saharina has acquired various credentials and services to cater to diverse needs. These include a Banking CSP for providing banking services, a UTI PSA Pan Services ID to facilitate PAN Card applications, Udyam Registration to support entrepreneurship, a CSC ID for accessing online

services, and an e-District Portal ID for facilitating Government-to-Citizen (G2C) services. Through this strategic approach, Saharina aims not only to address immediate needs but also to promote sustainability and overall community development.

Samima Khatun
Murshidabad, West Bengal

Samima Khatun, hailing from Murshidabad, West Bengal, stands at the forefront of community empowerment through her multifaceted center. Offering a spectrum of services, including Digital Services, Computer training for rural children, and assistance with Government Schemes, Samima has become a beacon of positive change in her community. To broaden the scope of her services, Samima strategically acquired several service portal IDs, including CSC ID, Pan Application ID, Bank BC, and e-District Portal ID. These credentials enable her to provide a diverse range of services, catering to the specific needs of the community.

Samima identified a critical need for digital literacy in her community, particularly among economically disadvantaged villagers. Taking proactive steps, she undertook the responsibility of educating them. Today, her center has become a hub for local students seeking to enhance their computer skills and spoken English, a testament to Samima's dedication to education. Beyond digital literacy, Samima recognized a gap in health awareness among local women. Assuming the role of a Digital Didi for health, she actively imparts knowledge about various health issues and conducts awareness campaigns through her center.

Samima's overarching goals include empowering women in her community and inspiring the youth to reach greater heights. Her tireless efforts aim to create a positive and lasting impact by bridging the digital divide and promoting the overall well-being of the people she serves in Murshidabad, West Bengal.

Sangeeta
Alwar, Rajasthan

Sangeeta, a resident of Alwar, Rajasthan, has transformed her life and community through her dedicated center, offering invaluable services to beneficiaries. Her journey began in 2016 when she joined the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF), marking a turning point that filled her with joy and hope for a brighter future. Initially unengaged in any work, Sangeeta's activities were limited to her home and fields. The introduction of DEF into her life brought about a significant change. DEF equipped her with essential tools, providing a printer for photocopying and a tablet with the Mera App, aimed at increasing her income. Monthly training sessions on tablet operation and reporting procedures further enhanced her skills.

As Sangeeta diligently worked, her efforts bore fruit, and she eventually became a Fino Bank BC. This role allowed her to facilitate money withdrawals for villagers in her area, expanding her income streams. In 2019, DEF provided her with an eMitra ID, a pivotal development that not only boosted her income but also brought unprecedented convenience to the villagers.

With the eMitra ID, villagers no longer had to travel long distances for various scheme forms or other services. Sangeeta's center became a 24/7 accessible hub for the community. Importantly, her center became a safe space for women and girls who felt more comfortable openly communicating with her compared to male eMitra operators. Sangeeta's journey exemplifies the transformative power of digital empowerment, turning her center into a catalyst for positive change in Alwar, Rajasthan.

Sanjana Gupta
Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh

Sanjana Gupta, a dedicated individual from Dullahpur in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh has been a driving force behind several impactful digital initiatives, including Digital Didi Phase I & II, RCCE, Edge Group, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Safety & Security, and Digital Financial Inclusion. Despite not having a dedicated digital center, Sanjana's commitment extends to neighboring villages like Deva and Dullahapur, where she not only raises awareness but also motivates

individuals from diverse backgrounds, with a special focus on empowering women.

Armed with digital tools such as a tablet, a mobile phone, and a blood pressure & sugar testing machine, Sanjana has made a substantial impact, reaching approximately 8000 individuals. Her outreach encompasses youth, the elderly, students, backward communities, girls/women, and handicapped individuals. Sanjana's efforts revolve around inspiring women and girls, ensuring the project's accessibility to all villagers, and promoting awareness about digital literacy, particularly among females. Her meticulous implementation plan involves stages like initiation, planning, execution, monitoring and control, and closing and closure. The emphasis remains on supporting disadvantaged children and educating women about the myriad opportunities in the digital realm.

With a vision to transform the mindset of every villager, Sanjana strives to empower women by fostering digital knowledge, literacy, and services. The Smartpur computer center, under her guidance, has evolved into a hub where everyone gathers, earning a reputation as an awareness center among the locals. Sanjana Gupta stands as a beacon of digital empowerment, making a lasting impact in Dullahapur and beyond.

Santosh Sharma
Alwar, Rajasthan

Santosh Sharma, a dedicated resident of Bahali village in the Gram Panchayat Firozpur, Rajasthan serves as an ASHA worker with a profound commitment to her community's well-being. Renowned for her unwavering dedication, Santosh is a trusted figure in the village, known for providing accurate and valuable information.

Actively participating in various programs conducted by the organization, Santosh plays a crucial role in promoting government schemes among the villagers. Her focus lies on marginalized groups, including women, the elderly, and children, ensuring they benefit from the array of schemes available. Through the

organization's projects, Santosh actively contributes to the digital literacy of women in the community.

Residents from villages within a 10-kilometer radius frequently seek Santosh's services at her center. Her overarching goal is to empower women, children, and the elderly with digital services, fostering knowledge and awareness. Santosh is on a mission to bridge the digital literacy gap among women, recognizing the transformative impact such skills can have on their lives.

Beyond information dissemination, Santosh actively engages with individuals, providing support and even accompanying them to block or District offices when needed. Her efforts extend to raising awareness about the perils of fake news and rumors, ensuring the community remains well-informed.

One notable incident exemplifying Santosh's impact involved Payal Valmiki, a girl from Bahali village facing health challenges. Santosh's timely intervention led to Payal receiving a diagnosis of TB at a government hospital. Santosh facilitated her treatment and helped her family obtain a health card, earning gratitude from the villagers for ensuring that government schemes reach those in need. Santosh Sharma, alongside the DEF organization, stands as a beacon of compassionate service and community outreach.

Sarita Naik
Cuttack, Odisha

Sarita Naik, a digital literacy enthusiast hailing from Cuttack, Odisha, has been making significant strides in her community under various projects, including UNICEF, Digital Didi, Chatbot, AI, DFI, and Online Safety and Security. Currently, her center's outreach extends up to 7 kilometers, benefiting predominantly women, youth, and communities such as SC and ST. Notably, she is also actively engaging with other communities like OBC and General, ensuring inclusivity in her digital empowerment initiatives.

Although currently dependent on the DEF project, Sarita aspires to establish a dedicated center, amplifying her impact and providing essential

digital services to a broader audience. Despite initial skepticism from her fellow villagers, Sarita has successfully dispelled doubts by educating them about her organization and the manifold aspects of digital literacy.

Sarita's journey involves actively participating in projects aimed at promoting digital literacy, online safety, and security. Her focus on reaching marginalized communities reflects a commitment to bridging the digital divide. As she aims to establish her own center, Sarita's dedication to empowering her community through digital education stands as a beacon of progress in Cuttack, Odisha.

Shakuntala Devi
Ranchi, Jharkhand

Shakuntala Devi, a dedicated community leader from Hesadih in Ranchi, Jharkhand, has been actively engaged in providing essential services related to various government schemes. Her center, which serves as a hub for MNREGA, Prime Minister Housing Scheme, Pension Scheme, Banking transactions, Scholarship Scheme, Prime Minister Honor Fund Scheme, E-Shram Card, Labor Card, and more, plays a pivotal role in disseminating critical information to the local community.

Currently, Shakuntala Devi's center caters to a community consisting of 50 women and 500 children, drawing customers from a radius of 8 kilometers. Equipped with essential tools such as a color printer, printer machine, and a tablet, the center serves as a focal point for banking and digital-related information for both children and women.

Shakuntala Devi's focus extends beyond just providing services; she actively educates women from impoverished and middle-class families about various employment opportunities. This includes imparting knowledge about low-interest rate loans from banks, empowering women to meet the needs of their families effectively.

In her four years of service, Shakuntala Devi has successfully implemented distinct programs tailored for the specific needs of children and women.

The center has become a vital resource for the community, with individuals traveling from distances of 2 to 5 kilometers to benefit from its offerings. As she continues her efforts, Shakuntala Devi is committed to expanding her outreach, establishing connections with more women and children, and enhancing the center's resources to ensure sustained impact and community development.

Shivani Lodha
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

Shivani Lodha, a dedicated changemaker from Puraposar in Guna, Madhya Pradesh, is actively involved in multifaceted initiatives spanning education, healthcare, agriculture, and government-backed Panchayati Raj schemes. Her commitment to community welfare is reflected in her engagement with various sectors that contribute to the holistic development of the locality.

To enhance her capacity to serve the community effectively, Shivani has acquired essential credentials such as CSC and bank IDs. These digital tools not only enable her to access a range of digital services but also provide stability to her activities, ensuring seamless implementation of initiatives. Shivani's impact extends beyond individual efforts, as she has cultivated strong relationships with key stakeholders at the Panchayat level. This collaborative approach has facilitated a supportive environment for digital initiatives, paving the way for more comprehensive and impactful community development projects.

By strategically aligning herself with government schemes like MGNREGA and actively participating in digital services, Shivani Lodha stands as a beacon of progress in Puraposar. Her multifaceted approach and strategic collaborations underscore her dedication to creating positive change across various facets of community life.

Soni Hemlata
Nuh, Haryana

Soni Hemlata, a dedicated resident of Salamba village in Nuh tehsil, Haryana, has been a pivotal force in community development for nearly four years. Her digital center, strategically located in the heart of her village, extends its services across a radius of 2 to 3 kilometers, impacting the lives of approximately 1000 to 1500 individuals.

Specializing in governance-related services, Soni provides essential documentation support, including Aadhar cards, PAN cards, voter IDs, ration cards, passports, family identity certificates, Ayushman cards, and various certificates related to residence, caste, and pensions. Her expertise also encompasses financial services such as account management, deposits, withdrawals, mobile banking, and loan processing.

Armed with a smartphone, a printer, and a morpho device, Soni is dedicated to serving both men and women, tailoring her assistance to meet their specific needs. Beyond her digital center operations, she actively engages in projects that contribute to digital empowerment, resulting in a gradual increase in her income. Collaborating with HSRLM (Haryana State Rural Livelihoods Mission) in self-help groups exemplifies Soni's commitment to holistic community development.

During the challenging period of COVID-19, Soni emerged as a beacon of awareness, actively disseminating information and aiding the community in curbing the spread of the virus. Her commendable efforts have earned her widespread appreciation and trust within the society she serves, solidifying her position as a catalyst for positive change in Nuh, Haryana.

Subhadra Patra
Cuttack, Odisha

At the age of 23, **Subhadra Patra** has emerged as a dynamic force in the realm of digital literacy. Although she doesn't operate a dedicated center, she passionately volunteers with the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) at Cuttack, Odisha, expanding her services within an impressive 8-kilometer radius armed with just a smartphone. Under the umbrella of a UNICEF project, Subhadra's impact has reached approximately 10,000 individuals. While her primary focus is on empowering women, she also dedicates her efforts to working closely with senior citizens, particularly from the General, OBC, SC, and ST communities.

Subhadra's strategic implementation plan revolves around providing crucial financial literacy assistance, particularly during the challenging times brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Leveraging DEF's support, she generously volunteers her time to assist her village members, embodying a commitment to community welfare.

Her ongoing goals encompass a dedication to vulnerable children, a mission to raise digital awareness among women, a vision to transform village mindsets towards empowering women in digital pursuits, and a commitment to promoting digital literacy within the handicapped community. Notably, Subhadra found profound fulfillment during the COVID-19 pandemic when she actively assisted two pregnant women in distress. Her efforts ensured their understanding of medical protocols and facilitated safe deliveries, underscoring her unwavering commitment to community service and empowerment.

Sudipta Gautam
Panna, Madhya Pradesh

In the heart of Gunaur Tehsil's Pipariya village in Madhya Pradesh's Panna District, **Sudipta Gautam** takes charge of the Som Store Pipariya center, a beacon of convenience for local beneficiaries. Operating within her own community, Sudipta's center focuses on serving the elderly, rural banking transactions, and assisting with Gram Panchayat tasks, with a notable emphasis on the tribal community, particularly women.

Sudipta's center, equipped with two computers, a laptop, a printer, and essential agricultural materials, has become a pivotal resource for individuals within a 15-kilometer radius. The center's impact extends to over 2,000 individuals, prominently featuring senior citizens and youth. Her strategic approach involves targeting tribal women, raising awareness, understanding community needs, and efficiently handling Gram Panchayat tasks, especially related to pension disbursement for elderly women. The center's role goes beyond transactional services, contributing to the overall well-being and self-confidence of the community.

To ensure sustainability, Sudipta has made consistent efforts, including the provision of necessary amenities and obtaining a CSC center's kiosk banking ID. The success of the center is evident in the transformed lives of villagers who were once excluded from government schemes. Sudipta's dedication has fostered a spirit of self-reliance among women, empowering them to meet their needs independently. The positive response from villagers echoes their satisfaction and gratitude, marking the Som Store Pipariya center as a trusted and valuable asset for the community.

Swapnarani Rout
Cuttack, Odisha

At the age of 22, **Swapnarani Rout** is making significant strides in digital literacy and services in a rural setting of Kasikiari Village, Cuttack District, Odisha, operating a center that caters to the needs of villagers within a 5-kilometer radius. Equipped with essential tools such as a desktop, printers, a biometric device, tablets, a BP machine, and a sugar machine, Swapnarani's center serves as a hub for digital and financial empowerment.

Her impact is evident in reaching approximately 3000 individuals through diverse programs, including digital literacy initiatives, Digital Sarthak, Digital Didi, AI, DFI, Accenture track, and safety and security campaigns. Swapnarani's target groups span the entire community, with a special focus on special students and women. While her center predominantly serves the SC community, it also extends its services

to ST, OBC, and general communities, addressing their unique needs in digital literacy, government schemes, and financial education.

Swapnarani's vision is to alleviate the inconvenience of villagers traveling 7 kilometers for digital services. To realize this goal, she plans to establish a dedicated digital service center in her village. With the support of the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF), Swapnarani has successfully implemented her plan, acquiring a Mitra Sewa ID for banking services and obtaining a printer and biometric device for her center.

Despite facing initial challenges and criticism, Swapnarani discovered solace and support upon joining DEF, gaining access to advanced technology and valuable resources. Her unwavering efforts have earned her respect in her village, where people now turn to her for assistance in banking and digital education matters. With DEF's assistance, Swapnarani has transformed her center into a flourishing hub, providing quality services and fostering digital empowerment in her community.

Swati Tiwari
Kapashera, New Delhi

GIRL ICON

At the age of 23, **Swati Tiwari** is a dedicated force in supporting the migrant community in Kapashera, New Delhi, South West Delhi, focusing on digital awareness, education, campaigns, and life skills methodologies for youth and adolescents. Her center, situated in Kapashera, serves as a hub for these activities, engaging approximately 90 individuals daily. The facility is equipped with essential digital tools, including 7 monitors, 7 CPUs, 11 tables, 22 chairs, and 3 fans.

Swati's primary target demographic includes migrant and marginalized youth and adolescents. Her efforts center around providing digital education and raising awareness about government schemes. Operating from a single center, Swati and her team implement sustainable initiatives through avenues such as paid classes, crowdfunding, donations, free life skill classes, and events.

An exemplary impact of Swati's work is evident in Anjali, an 18-year-old from Mainpuri residing in Kapashera. Since joining the digital center's program in 2019, Anjali has acquired computer skills and internet usage knowledge. Anjali's determination and active engagement in her community make her a role model. Swati's empowerment of young leaders like Anjali goes beyond skill development, encouraging them to advocate for positive change and uplift their communities, particularly on issues like Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). Swati's leadership serves as a beacon of enthusiasm and dedication, inspiring daily commitments to the cause and nurturing individuals like Anjali into resilient youth leaders.

Swati's dedication and passion set a remarkable example for young girls, motivating them to lead the social and digital upliftment of society.

Tarana Najmi
Ranchi, Jharkhand

WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

Tarana Najmi, a resident of Rani Khanga village, Thana, Itki block, Ranchi District, Jharkhand, embarked on her journey in July 2017 armed with a tablet and printer. Initially, her efforts involved conducting door-to-door surveys to enlighten people about various government schemes. While she commenced her work within her village, her impact extends across the entire panchayat, with people traveling up to 15 km to access her services at the center. Equipped with one computer, one color printer, one black and white printer, and one tablet (Morpho), Tarana focuses on serving adolescents, women, and the elderly. Her center aims to provide online government scheme services and banking-related assistance to community members, spanning SC, ST, OBC, and General categories.

The core objective of Tarana's center is to deliver accurate information about government schemes to rural residents and the elderly in her village and neighboring areas, ensuring they fully benefit from these initiatives. In the initial stages, Tarana faced challenges, including walking 5 km to collect block forms and financial constraints, prompting her to sell goats to enhance her center's equipment.

With support from DEF, Tarana received vital equipment such as printers, computers, and tablet support. Her participation in DEF projects generated income, enabling her to purchase a laminating machine, a Morpho device, and a CSC ID BC point. Over time, her center has become a hub for children and women from nearby villages, with ongoing efforts to expand its reach and upgrade equipment through bank loans.

A testament to Tarana's impact is Afsana Parwen, currently learning computer skills at the center. Prior to this, Afsana had no knowledge of the internet. Tarana's dedication and work are not only commendable but also inspiring, bringing positive change to the community.

Usha
Alwar, Rajasthan

Usha, stationed at the Information Service Center in Irinia village, in Alwar, Rajasthan plays a crucial role in disseminating accurate information to the villagers. Her operational radius spans Irinia, Nangli, and Iteda Dharra, covering approximately 8 kilometers. The center, equipped with printers, mobiles, tablets, and seating furniture, primarily benefits women, the elderly, and youth who face challenges accessing services outside the village.

Usha focuses on diverse target groups, including women, the elderly, girls, and youth, ensuring they maximize the benefits of government schemes. She actively collaborates with villagers, coordinating with block or District offices when necessary to address their specific needs. Regular updates, meetings, phone calls, and WhatsApp groups help Usha maintain a robust connection with the community, and she actively participates in Panchayat meetings.

Expressing her joy in being associated with DEF, Usha highlights her transformative journey from solely managing household duties to establishing herself as an e-Mitra center entrepreneur. DEF provided her with a printer and a tablet, empowering her to extend her services. Usha shares a success story involving Chawand Pari, whom she registered on DEF's app, enabling access to various schemes. Additionally,

Usha actively engages in income-enhancing projects such as the TikTok project facilitated by DEF. Her dedication and success stories underscore the positive impact she has made in bridging information gaps and uplifting the community in Irinia village.

Vidhya Yadav
Alwar, Rajasthan

Vidhya Yadav, residing in Morod Kalan village, Gram Panchayat Chhilodi, Alwar, Rajasthan, is a dedicated Asha worker committed to community welfare. Her reputation for providing accurate information about various programs has earned trust and recognition among the villagers. Working extensively with the organization, Vidhya focuses on promoting and disseminating information about government schemes, ensuring marginalized groups such as women, the elderly, children, and persons with disabilities benefit from these initiatives. Her commitment extends to providing doorstep services, including facilitating pension disbursements for the elderly.

Digital literacy is a key aspect of Vidhya's initiatives, empowering women in her community through various projects. The strategic location of her center attracts people from surrounding villages, reflecting the positive impact of her services. Vidhya's work goes beyond the center as she visits homes, especially those of the elderly and disabled, to ensure they receive the benefits of government schemes. The provision of digital tools such as desktops, laminating machines, printers, and tablets further enhances the quality of services provided.

In addition to economic support for herself, Vidhya takes pride in the transformation she witnesses in people's lives. Her commitment to serving the community is evident in the personalized approach she adopts, adjusting center timings based on people's convenience and providing assistance at their doorstep if needed. Vidhya's spirit, ambition, and dedication stand as an inspiring example of community welfare through effective grassroots engagement.

INNOVATIVE DIGITAL SOLUTIONS:

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN THE 'PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWD)' CATEGORY

Niranjan Nayak
Cuttack, Odisha

Niranjan Nayak, a resident of Cuttack, Odisha, operates as a beacon of information and digital development in his village. Within the vibrant cultural background of Cuttack, Odisha, a backdrop of tradition and heritage is juxtaposed with marginalization, especially in terms of limited internet access. To tackle these challenges, Niranjan stands as a catalyst for change, bridging the information gap and ensuring that the digital divide does not impede the progress of his village. Serving as the driving force behind a SoochnaPreneur center, his days are devoted to helping the community by enabling them with government schemes and fostering financial literacy.

In addition to knowledge dissemination, Niranjan provides vital digital services, such as printing, photocopying, and assistance with application forms. His inclusive approach transcends caste barriers, with beneficiaries from the general, SC, ST, and OBC communities. Eager to broaden his impact, he secured a CSC ID, propelling him to expand the scope of his invaluable work and empower more lives.

Amarjeet Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Amarjeet Kumar, residing in the West Champaran District of Bihar, defies societal expectations and stereotypes as a disabled individual facing mobility challenges. Despite encountering initial discrimination when establishing his SoochnaPreneur center, where some doubted his capabilities, Amarjeet persevered and triumphed over these obstacles. His resilience and determination became evident as he overcame stereotypical perceptions, refusing to let others' skepticism hinder his resolve.

In breaking through physical barriers, Amarjeet went above and beyond by conducting door-to-door campaigns and awareness drives, ensuring that people were informed about government schemes and benefits available to them. Undeterred by doubt and negativity, he demonstrated remarkable resilience and steadfast commitment to his mission. Amarjeet's inclusive approach extends to all members of society, regardless of age, gender, status, or caste, with a significant customer base from the SC community.

Amarjeet's dedication to serving the community is not only commendable but also inspirational, standing as a testament to his unwavering commitment to undiscriminating service for the collective good of society.

Amresh Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Amresh Kumar, a 28-year-old resident of Semari Dumari village in West Champaran, Bihar, has been at the forefront of digital empowerment since establishing his SoochnaPreneur center in 2020. Over the course of three years, Amresh has actively championed digital literacy initiatives, particularly focusing on students within his village. His impact resonates beyond the immediate community, drawing individuals from neighboring areas to benefit from the digital services and online application assistance he provides at his center.

Recognizing the socio-economic context of his community, Amresh has maintained minimal charges for his services, aiming to eliminate barriers and ensure that people feel comfortable seeking assistance. His commitment to promoting digital literacy has transcended societal divisions and prejudices, making significant strides in overcoming these challenges. Amresh's center has successfully brought essential services within easy reach, eliminating the need for individuals to travel extensively. He views this endeavor as his personal contribution to serving and uplifting society.

Ashok Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Ashok Kumar, a resident of Gaunaha Block in West Champaran, Bihar, derives immense satisfaction from his involvement in work that has significantly streamlined the lives of local residents. Situated 30 km away from the city, his village has grappled with challenges related to accessing basic services, including photocopying, cash withdrawal, obtaining caste certificates, residential proofs, income certificates, card printing, and rail ticket bookings.

Recognizing the prevalent difficulties faced by the community, Ashok Kumar proactively expanded the range of services offered at his center. This involved acquiring additional tools, thereby enhancing the center's capacity to cater to the diverse needs of the people in his village. Eager to make a meaningful impact, Ashok learned to provide digital services and obtained a CSC ID to effectively facilitate government-related services and schemes.

Through his continuous efforts, Ashok has introduced a level of proficiency and significantly narrowed the digital gap in his otherwise secluded village. His commitment to bridging these technological divides underscores his dedication to improving the quality of life for the residents he serves.

Aslam Ansari
West Champaran, Bihar

Aslam Ansari, a resident of Bangaha village in West Champaran, Bihar, operates the A-Z Computer Center within the same community. Through his center, Aslam is dedicated to assisting individuals with various capacities and capabilities, tirelessly working to help them access the benefits offered by active government schemes. His commitment extends to serving people without any discrimination based on religion, caste, or category.

Initially apprehensive about venturing into digital literacy due to prevailing prejudices and low literacy rates in the area, Aslam faced skepticism from the community. However, through consistent efforts, regular visits, and adeptly resolving complex issues related to digital services, he successfully overcame the initial preconceptions. This transformative experience helped build trust among the people,

inspiring Aslam to expand the capabilities of his center by adding more tools and equipment.

Enthralled by the positive changes in behavior and perception within the community, Aslam seized the opportunity to enhance his center's offerings, ensuring that people could easily access the services they came for. His laudable intentions and proactive efforts have brought about positive changes, making a meaningful impact on the community he serves.

Bandana Kumari
West Champaran, Bihar

2nd PRIZE WINNER

Bandana Kumari, a resident of Dhamaura Village in West Champaran, Bihar, has been operating a Digital Services center since 2020. Despite facing physical limitations, Bandana has shown exceptional determination to improve her own life and contribute to the betterment of her community. Her resilience and goodwill towards her work have earned her the titles of "Digital Beti" and "Digital Bahu," symbolizing the impactful role she plays in the lives of the people around her.

Bandana encountered various challenges, including knowledge deficiency, cultural drawbacks, and physical limitations, in her journey as a SoochnaPreneur. However, her current success stands as a testament to her inspirational journey. As a woman, Bandana has garnered magnetic support from students and women in her community, establishing herself as a reliable source of information.

To maximize her reach and create awareness about government entitlements, Bandana organizes campaigns in her village. Her goal is to educate people on available benefits and assist them in applying for these schemes. Bandana has taken it upon herself to enhance her knowledge of digital services and has equipped her center with additional tools, further empowering her to serve the community effectively. Her dedication and continuous efforts highlight her commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of those she serves.

Brij Bhushan Prasad
West Champaran, Bihar

Brij Bhushan Prasad, based in West Champaran, Bihar, operates a center that serves as a comprehensive resource for students, providing both stationery and Digital Services under one roof at affordable rates compared to the market. Recognizing the economic challenges faced by the local residents, Brij Bhushan has strategically kept the prices of his services minimal, contributing to the success of his shop. Having a deep understanding of the hardships people endure and their financial constraints, he has implemented a pricing strategy that not only attracts customers but also builds trust in the community. This approach, coupled with his proactive outreach efforts, has played a pivotal role in establishing credibility for his services.

Brij Bhushan takes immense pride in his journey, having transitioned from a phase of unemployment and contemplation about his future. His shift from being unemployed to self-employed has significantly boosted his self-esteem and allowed him to contribute meaningfully to the community. Recognizing the challenges people face in traveling for bank-related transactions, he goes the extra mile by assisting them with these tasks. The diverse range of essential services offered in his shop reflects a keen understanding of the village's needs, contributing to the evident success of his center.

Brijesh Kaji
West Champaran, Bihar

BEST SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Brijesh Kaji, a resident of Champapur in West Champaran, Bihar, embarked on a transformative journey focused on changing perceptions and cultivating a positive image within his village. This shift in perspective began with an internal transformation, where he consciously altered his speech, tone, and behavior towards others. Brijesh realized that true inclusion involves embracing others, a realization that prompted him to address his own shortcomings and connect with the issues faced by the people in his community.

Taking a proactive approach, Brijesh started offering services at minimal rates, making digital services accessible to his fellow villagers. Notably, he transcended caste barriers, demonstrating

an inclusive mindset by serving people from all backgrounds without hesitation. His customer base predominantly comprises individuals from the ST community, reflecting his commitment to breaking down societal prejudices and setting an example for others.

While digital services may not have been a natural part of his initial skill set, Brijesh worked diligently to acquire the necessary knowledge, making himself a valuable resource for the community. His journey is a testament to personal growth, community service, and the positive impact that one individual's dedication can have on fostering inclusivity and understanding.

Chandan Singh Banjara
Guna, Madhya Pradesh

Chandan Singh Banjara, a 36-year-old resident of Chakdevpur in Guna District, Madhya Pradesh, operates a pivotal digital center that stands as the sole provider of digital services in the area, situated 17 km away from Guna city. Chandan, like many first-time innovators, channels his efforts towards the betterment of society, making his center an indispensable asset for the local community.

Covering a cluster of 12 villages, Chandan's center offers a diverse range of services, including printing, photocopying, awareness campaigns, application assistance for government schemes, E-KYC, monetary transactions, residential certificates, and caste certificates. Despite facing numerous challenges, both personal and social, in his journey as a SoochnaPreneur, Chandan has shown resilience and determination.

One significant hurdle was the issue of poor electricity, which initially hampered the operation of his center. Moreover, Chandan faces mobility challenges as he cannot walk. However, the transformative aspect of his journey emerged when he became a SoochnaPreneur and accessed tricycles through a government scheme, enabling him to overcome the barrier of limited mobility and extend his reach for community outreach. The response from the community, appreciative of Chandan's efforts

in addressing their needs, has motivated him to contemplate expanding his center further. His goal is to work tirelessly for the community, bridging the information gap prevalent in the region.

Dalima Kumari
West Champaran, Bihar

Dalima Kumari, a resident of West Champaran District in Bihar, has defied societal norms and stereotypes by establishing and successfully running her Digital Services center for the past three years. Hailing from a region where the acceptance of working women is still evolving, Dalima faced additional challenges, especially in the realm of Digital Services, where tools and technology are often considered domains dominated by men.

Undeterred by these obstacles, Dalima embarked on a journey to change perceptions and carve out a space for herself in the community. Despite initial uncertainties about how people would react to a woman in this role, she tirelessly worked to showcase her capabilities. Dalima took proactive measures, visiting every door in the village to promote her center and create awareness about the services it offers.

Her perseverance has borne fruit, and Dalima is now reaping the rewards of her efforts. People of all ages, genders, and castes now visit her center to address their diverse needs. Through her dedication and resilience, Dalima has not only established a successful Digital Services center but has also become a trailblazer, challenging traditional gender norms and inspiring others in her community.

Deepak Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Deepak Kumar, a resident of West Champaran in Bihar, stands out as a dedicated individual committed to providing valuable assistance to those in need. Recognizing that certain individuals may face challenges in visiting his center for services, Deepak takes the extra step of initiating home visits, ensuring that essential services are accessible to everyone in the community.

Deepak's involvement in numerous projects reflects his proactive approach and his desire to collaborate with and support people in various capacities.

Engaging in these projects not only allows him to contribute to the community's well-being but also showcases his potential and value as a service provider.

One of Deepak's notable attributes is his inclusive approach. His services are not limited to a specific demographic; instead, he ensures that they are accessible to all members of the community. However, he places a particular emphasis on assisting individuals from the SC, ST, and OBC backgrounds, aiming to address the needs of marginalized communities and promote equitable access to essential services. Through his actions, Deepak Kumar exemplifies a commitment to community welfare and inclusivity.

Gokul Saikh
Murshidabad, West Bengal

Gokul Saikh, a 35-year-old individual with a leg disability, has been running his Digital Services center for the past two years. Located in the remote village of Basudevpur in Murshidabad, West Bengal, Gokul's center plays a vital role in providing digital and financial services to the local community.

Gokul's center serves as a hub for various digital services, attracting a diverse demographic including students, women, and young individuals from the surrounding area. He identified a significant need within his community, where local businesses had to travel to the city for essential services. Recognizing the potential to save time and inconvenience for his fellow community members, Gokul embarked on the initiative to open his center.

To enhance the scope of his work, Gokul invested in additional tools for his center, such as a color printer, lamination machine, and an Any Desk ID for facilitating bank transactions. This strategic decision not only expanded the range of services offered but also contributed to the overall improvement of his center's capabilities. Gokul's commitment to addressing the needs of his community through digital empowerment reflects his dedication to making essential services accessible locally.

Iqbal Khan
Alwar, Rajasthan

Iqbal Khan, a resident of Mithiyawas village in Alwar, Rajasthan, operates a SoochnaPreneur center and holds an e-mitra ID for his dedicated work. His center provides a comprehensive range of digital services, with a particular focus on finance and governance domains. In a location where few actively cater to the needs of the community, Iqbal stands out as a committed individual striving to assist people in accessing the benefits of government schemes.

One of the notable challenges Iqbal faces is when elderly individuals and widows visit his center for pension schemes, but their fingerprints cannot be imprinted on the device. Recognizing the importance of overcoming this obstacle to ensure the rights of these individuals, Iqbal took the initiative to purchase an iris device, utilizing eyes for identification purposes. This innovative solution demonstrates his commitment to inclusivity and ensuring that no one is deprived of their entitled benefits. Iqbal actively communicates information about new government schemes, creating awareness among the people in his community.Through his constant efforts and commitment to self-capacitation, Iqbal has transformed his center into a one-stop destination for all, catering to the diverse needs of the community.

Jahid Hasan
Murshidabad, West Bengal

BEST SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Jahid Hasan, hailing from Joypur village in Murshidabad District of West Bengal, is a problem-solver with unwavering determination. His journey began when he faced challenges in self-scheduling on the E-Paddy website, prompting him to delve into manuals, watch YouTube videos, and consult various sources to overcome the hurdle. Recognizing that others might face similar difficulties, Jahid decided to establish his center, offering assistance with complex online processes and paperwork to make life easier for the community.

To ensure seamless service delivery, Jahid acquired multiple IDs and a robust broadband connection. His commitment to helping people is evident in his proactive methods of promotion and awareness campaigns. From loudspeaker announcements to wall painting and banner printing, Jahid employs

diverse strategies to spread the word about the services he provides and the entitlements people can access through his center. Despite facing personal challenges, Jahid remains undeterred, prioritizing the well-being of those who entrust him with their needs.

Jakir Hussain
Alwar, Rajasthan

BEST PRESENTATION

Jakir Hussain, a resident of Alwar, Rajasthan, exemplifies determination and resilience in his role as a SoochnaPreneur. Recognizing the reciprocal nature of helping oneself and others, Jakir has overcome challenges with a unique approach. Despite having a locomotor disability, he obtained a divyang-scooty to facilitate his mobility within the community and subsequently helped others in acquiring similar assistance.

To enhance his operational skills, Jakir pursued a PGDCA course certification. Despite his physical limitations, he goes the extra mile by visiting the homes of the elderly to provide digital services, especially for pension-related matters. Jakir has made significant contributions to the washerman community by assisting them in obtaining essential documents like residential certificates.

His remarkable contribution extends to the empowerment of economically weaker families through the formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Jakir not only identifies those in need but also encourages them to embark on the path of savings and investments. In an effort to expand his impact, Jakir has established another center and tirelessly works to procure the necessary equipment. His community-oriented approach includes organizing awareness camps for elderly individuals whose fingerprints may not register, ensuring they do not face disruptions in receiving their pensions. Through these seemingly small steps, Jakir believes he has made a positive and lasting impact on the lives of the people he serves.

Jayananda Behera
Cuttack, Odisha

Jayananda Behera, based in Cuttack, Odisha, serves as a SoochnaPreneur, operating a vital digital resource center in his remote village. Despite facing mobility challenges that limit his ability to move easily, Jayananda has become an indispensable figure in his community, surrounded by dense forests. His primary engagement involves collaborating with the forest departments, managing and digitizing their documentation.

In this remote setting, Jayananda's SoochnaPreneur Center stands as the sole facility, providing essential digital services to the local population. The majority of his community comprises the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population, and they form a significant portion of his customer base. Before the establishment of his center, villagers had to travel a considerable distance of 9 km to access any digital services. Jayananda's intervention has not only bridged this gap but has also become a lifeline for the people in the area.

Understanding the need for financial services, Jayananda is actively working to acquire a banking ID, aiming to expand the scope of services offered. His consistent efforts and dedication have significantly eased the daily lives of the villagers, making him a respected and valuable asset to the community.

Kanta
Alwar, Rajasthan

BEST SPORTS ENTREPRENEUR

Kanta, a resident of Alwar, Rajasthan, has been serving her community with distinction through her SoochnaPreneur center for over three years. With a focus on providing essential digital services, Kanta plays a crucial role in assisting individuals with a range of tasks, including applying for new pensions, facilitating electricity bill payments, accessing the Palanhar Yojana, and handling water bill payments.

One of Kanta's significant contributions lies in her efforts to create awareness about various government schemes. By educating the community on the available entitlements, she ensures that people are well-informed and can take advantage of the benefits offered by these programs. Kanta's dedication and competence in these areas have made her a valuable asset to the community, fostering positive change and empowering individuals through digital services.

Khushi Ram
Alwar, Rajasthan

Khushi Ram, residing in the small village of Kaririya in Alwar District, Rajasthan, faced the challenge of low literacy rates and lack of knowledge among the local population when he established his SoochnaPreneur center. Being differently-abled, he overcame these obstacles to become the sole provider of E-Mitra services in his village. Recognizing the need for financial services, Khushi Ram obtained a Bank BC ID, further expanding the range of offerings at his center.

Despite facing financial constraints, Khushi Ram's center has become a beacon of support for the community. Gratitude from village-dwellers reflects the positive impact of his initiatives, as people appreciate the convenience of accessing essential services without having to travel 6 km for basic requirements like photocopying.

Khushi Ram sees his center not only as a means of earning a livelihood but also as a purposeful endeavor that addresses the needs of his community. While financial constraints initially slowed down the process of upgrading his center with new equipment, his commitment to providing valuable services has remained unwavering.

Masuma Khatun
Malda, West Bengal

Masuma Khatun, a resilient and ambitious 27-year-old woman from Malda, West Bengal, has emerged as a beacon of empowerment in her community. Through her SoochnaPreneur center, Masuma provides crucial digital services and non-governmental assistance to the village residents. Her dedication and approach play a pivotal role in the significant benefits derived by the people she serves. Masuma's outreach spans diverse groups, including women, self-help groups, ASHA workers, school students, youth, and senior citizens. Her services primarily address the crucial areas of digital literacy, financial literacy, and access to government schemes. The impact of her work extends to boosting local businesses through the provision of essential digital and document-related services.

Masuma's journey is a testament to her resilience

and determination. She undertook self-directed learning to enhance her skills, leveraging available devices and watching tutorials to expand her scope of work. Recognizing the importance of a reliable internet connection, she invested in upgrading her center with a broadband connection, overcoming challenges associated with internet access. Her transformation into an independent and empowered individual serves as an inspiration for many in her community, showcasing the potential for positive change through dedication and continuous learning.

Mayadhar Chand
Cuttack, Odisha

Mayadhar Chand, a 39-year-old resident of Cuttack, Odisha, is the proud owner of a SoochnaPreneur Center. His journey is a testament to his longstanding dream of having his own venture, and today, he finds joy and fulfillment in the reality of his center, which is making a positive impact on the lives of those around him.

Despite facing challenges related to his disability, Mayadhar is dedicated to simplifying the lives of others. Recognizing the significance of his work, he aspires to enhance the capabilities of his center to ensure that every service-seeker leaves satisfied. Mayadhar's commitment to minimizing the efforts of people, coupled with his desire to make his center even more impactful, reflects his dedication to serving the community and making a meaningful difference in their lives.

Md Mabud Ali
Malda, West Bengal

Md Mabud Ali, a post-graduate residing in Malda, West Bengal, embodies resilience and determination in the face of challenges. Despite having a disability in his legs that confines his ability to walk, Mabud approaches life with great enthusiasm. In addition to being a SoochnaPreneur to support his family, Mabud has dedicated himself to making a positive impact on the community.

Living in a poverty-stricken region with limited educational resources, Mabud recognized the lack of guidance for students. Driven by a passion to contribute, he decided to share his knowledge with the younger generation. Mabud actively provides

tuition and computer classes to students and children in his community, aiming to empower them with education.

His SoochnaPreneur center not only serves as a hub for community members, eliminating the need for extensive travel, but also operates with a spirit of inclusivity. Mabud extends his assistance to everyone who seeks services without discrimination based on caste or faith. Through his activities, Mabud serves as a source of motivation, demonstrating that personal challenges should never hinder one's ability to engage in meaningful and impactful actions.

Rawfur Samim
Malda, West Bengal

Rawfur Samim, a resident of Malda, West Bengal, is a dynamic individual who doesn't let personal challenges hinder his pursuits. Despite facing a disability, he is actively involved in various roles, from pursuing LLB to running a SoochnaPreneur center that serves the needs of his community.

At his SoochnaPreneur center, Rawfur provides crucial services, including digital literacy, assistance with legal matters such as land registry, and various other government-related services. His comprehensive offerings make him a go-to person for community members seeking legal guidance and digital services.

Rawfur has closely aligned his services with the needs of the OBC population in his area, understanding and addressing their specific concerns. His center has become a valuable resource for the women in his village, alleviating the need for them to travel to cities for essential services.

By strategically upgrading his center with IDs from Yes Bank CSP, Digital India Portal, and e-District Portal, Rawfur has not only increased his income but also streamlined the process for community members. His holistic approach to service delivery reflects his commitment to making a positive impact in the lives of those he serves.

Md. Sahimuddin Momin
Malda, West Bengal

Md. Sahimuddin Momin, hailing from Malda in West Bengal, has carved a niche for himself as a dedicated SoochnaPreneur with a multifaceted approach to community service. His diverse range of services encompasses digital literacy, government schemes, panchayat-level initiatives, and efforts towards enhancing livelihoods. Recognizing the lack of access to computers among students in his village, he has undertaken the responsibility of bridging this information gap through his SoochnaPreneur center. He actively imparts digital and financial literacy to school students, empowering them with essential skills for the digital age. His commitment to education extends beyond the classroom, making a significant impact on the overall development of the community.

Sahimuddin's center serves as a crucial information hub for the local residents, simplifying processes and providing support to Asha and Aanganwadi workers. By operating multiple IDs, he maximizes the scope of his center's services, ensuring optimal assistance to the community. The sustainability of Sahimuddin's center is a testament to his unwavering efforts and dedication. His consistent contributions serve as an inspiration to many, reflecting the positive change that can be brought about through grassroots initiatives.

Mithilesh Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Mithilesh Kumar, a prominent figure in West Champaran, Bihar, stands as an invaluable resource for his village, catering to a wide spectrum of needs with his dedicated SoochnaPreneur center. His profound understanding of the community's requirements, coupled with years of relentless service, has positioned him as an indispensable figure in the lives of the villagers. His center has become a go-to destination for everyone in the village seeking assistance in digital literacy, various services, financial transactions, government entitlements, and bank-related matters. His comprehensive approach to addressing diverse needs has earned him widespread recognition and trust within the community.

A driving force in his village, Mithilesh has played a pivotal role in educating over 500 students

in basic digital literacy through his center. This educational initiative has positioned him as a pioneer, empowering the younger generation with essential skills for the modern world. Building strong relationships, he has cultivated positive connections even with government employees. This network proves beneficial in delivering enhanced services to the community, reflecting his commitment to providing the best possible assistance. Mithilesh's center offers a range of critical services, including applications for Awas Yojana, income certificates, Pan Cards, E-Shram Cards, Ayushman Cards, Kisan Cards, and more. To facilitate these services effectively, he has acquired essential IDs such as CSC, CSP, and APES, demonstrating his proactive approach to staying well-equipped and continually serving the needs of his community.

Md. Wazid Ali
Nuh, Haryana

BEST SPORTS ENTREPRENEUR

Md. Wazid Ali, a remarkable individual from Jaisinghpur village in Nuh District, Haryana, operates a SoochnaPreneur Center that stands as a beacon of resilience and service in his community. His journey is not just one of overcoming personal challenges but also a testament to his unwavering commitment to improving the lives of others. In 2012, Wazid Ali faced a life-altering accident that left him in a wheelchair with a spinal injury. Instead of succumbing to the physical challenges, he made a conscious decision to rise above them. Through determination and hard work, he not only adapted to his new reality but also trained to compete in the Para National Championship in 2018. His participation in multiple editions of the championship culminated in a commendable 3rd place in the Discus Throw event in 2023.

Wazid's resilience extends beyond the sports arena; it is ingrained in his personality and work for the community. His SoochnaPreneur Center serves as a hub for digital and financial literacy, government entitlements, and various other digital services. He exhibits a compassionate focus on the needs of the elderly, widows, and disabled individuals in his village. While empowering his community with essential services, Wazid Ali is also actively engaged

in the fight against poverty. He collaborates with people to connect them with government schemes and livelihood provisions. Simultaneously, he strives to make his family life more manageable and contribute to running the household effectively. Wazid Ali's story is not just about personal triumph but about channeling that triumph into service for others, making a positive impact on the lives of those around him.

Nani Gopal Biswas
Murshidabad, West Bengal

BEST SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Nani Gopal Biswas, a resident of Murshidabad in West Bengal, operates a dynamic SoochnaPreneur center that serves as a comprehensive solution hub in his village. Recognizing the diverse needs of the community, his center caters to a wide range of services, including digital, financial, health, insurance, government schemes, and agriculture. The people visiting the center are diverse, encompassing farmers, daily-wage laborers, micro-enterprises, students, youth, and senior citizens. Nani Gopal has strategically acquired multiple IDs, such as HDFC Bank CSP, Rail IRCTC, Digitalseva portal, and CSC, to maximize the array of services he can offer to the community. Understanding the gaps in health services, Nani Gopal goes beyond conventional offerings by providing assistance through Tele-law and Tele-medicine, ensuring that the community has access to essential healthcare support.

In the initial stages, resource constraints, such as having only one computer, limited the scope of services he could provide. Despite facing challenges like transaction delays and payment failures, Nani Gopal persevered. Over time, he successfully built a rapport within the community, alleviating concerns and fostering trust. People now have confidence in the reliability of the services, and Nani Gopal no longer encounters the previous challenges of managing their frustrations. His constant presence and commitment have transformed his SoochnaPreneur center into an indispensable resource for the village, addressing a myriad of needs and contributing to the overall well-being of the community.

Nargesh Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Nargesh Kumar, a resident of West Champaran, Bihar, embarked on a transformative journey in 2020 when he collaborated with an organization and conducted a comprehensive survey of his village. The survey served as a revelation, shedding light on the prevailing lack of awareness among the local population regarding government schemes designed for their benefit.

Motivated by the urgent need to address this information gap and empower his community, Nargesh took the initiative to establish a Digital Services Center. In the initial stages, he actively promoted his center by organizing awareness camps, where he disseminated information about existing government schemes and the array of services available at his center. These efforts aimed to bridge the awareness gap and bring essential digital services within the reach of the local residents.

As Nargesh's commitment to community service deepened, he further equipped his center with additional tools and technology, ensuring that it could offer a comprehensive suite of digital services. This transformation allowed him to simplify the lives of his fellow villagers by providing easy access to a wide range of services. He takes immense pride and satisfaction in the positive impact he has made on the lives of his people. Through his Digital Services Center, he has become a catalyst for change, bringing digital empowerment and essential services to his community and contributing to their overall well-being.

Pappu Kanwar
Barmer, Rajasthan

BEST COMMUNITY LEADER

Pappu Kanwar, a distinguished resident of Danji ki Hodi village in Barmer, Rajasthan, holds a postgraduate degree along with a B.ED qualification. Despite facing the challenge of mobility due to a physical disability, Pappu has emerged as a beacon of empowerment in her community. Pappu operates a SoochnaPreneur center, leveraging her acquired CSC ID to extend a range of digital services and government entitlements to the local residents. Recognizing the significance of digital literacy, she has taken a special interest in working closely with

women in her village. Pappu conducts sessions to teach them essential digital skills, including the use of smartphones and online platforms for e-business.

One of Pappu's notable initiatives involves empowering women to promote their products through popular online channels like WhatsApp and Facebook. By imparting these skills, she has enabled local women to participate in online markets, expanding their reach and economic opportunities. In addition to her SoochnaPreneur center, Pappu manages a Sakhi Seva Kendra, where she dedicates herself to the upliftment of women in her community. Her strategic decision to locate the center in the heart of the village ensures accessibility for all, particularly considering her mobility challenges.

Despite her disability, Pappu Kanwar goes above and beyond, making home visits to assist the elderly with pension withdrawals. Her commitment to providing hassle-free services has earned her respect and admiration within the community. Pappu's story is one of resilience, empowerment, and community impact, showcasing the transformative potential of digital literacy and inclusive service delivery.

Parmeshwarnath
West Champaran, Bihar

Parmeshwarnath, the proprietor of Parmeshwarnath Digital Center and Kirana Shop in Village Harkatwa, West Champaran, Bihar, has become a beacon of support and empowerment for the local residents. His establishment serves as a vital resource, offering a range of digital services, government scheme awareness, and application assistance, addressing the pressing needs of the community.

In this quaint village, Parmeshwarnath's digital center plays a crucial role in bridging the information gap and facilitating access to essential services. His commitment to serving the people is reflected in the diverse services provided, encompassing digital literacy, awareness campaigns, and practical assistance with government schemes. The impact of his work is particularly pronounced among the SC and ST groups, who form a significant portion of his clientele.

Initially harboring doubts about his persuasive abilities, Parmeshwarnath has overcome these uncertainties through two years of dedicated service. Today, he confidently communicates with the villagers, establishing trust and rapport with the community. Parmeshwarnath's Digital Center and Kirana Shop stand as a testament to the transformative power of community-centric services, bringing much-needed support and awareness to the residents of Village Harkatwa.

Prashant Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Prashant Kumar, who runs a SoochnaPreneur center in West Champaran, Bihar, has emerged as a trusted source of digital assistance and financial services for his village community. Reflecting on the initial challenges, Prashant recalls the skepticism people harbored regarding digital mediums and his services. However, through persistent efforts, including regular community meetings and outreach programs, he successfully built trust among the villagers.

Over the course of two years, Prashant's dedicated service has transformed the perception of his center in the eyes of the community. People now actively seek assistance from his center, showcasing a newfound confidence and trust in the services provided. Initially focusing on digital services and literacy, Prashant keenly observed the evolving needs of the community. Recognizing the demand for additional services, especially in the financial domain, he took proactive measures to upgrade his center.

Prashant's commitment to addressing the changing needs of his community led to the acquisition of more tools and devices, expanding the scope of services offered. Today, his center stands as a testament to the positive impact that dedicated SoochnaPreneurs can have on the lives of rural residents, fostering trust, awareness, and accessibility in the digital realm.

Pratap Singh
Alwar, Rajasthan

1st PRIZE WINNER

Pratap Singh, a resilient resident of Alwar, Rajasthan, has defied physical limitations to become a beacon of support for his community through his SoochnaPreneur center, established in 2019. Despite being 81% disabled in his legs and unable to walk, Pratap's unwavering dedication and trustworthiness have earned him a special place in the hearts of the people he serves. A graduate with a commitment to service, Pratap's center attracts customers from various demographics, including students, elderly individuals, women, youth, and working professionals. Despite the presence of alternative options, people patiently await the opening of his center, a testament to the reliability and impact he has on their lives.

Pratap's services go beyond the confines of his center, as he takes the extra step of visiting the homes of women, elderly, and disabled individuals. This personalized approach reflects his genuine concern for the well-being of his community. Offering a range of services, including digital literacy, financial literacy, bank-related assistance, and guidance on government entitlements, Pratap ensures his center remains a hub of essential support.

During the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pratap engaged in extensive fieldwork, influencing and assisting people in getting vaccinated. Recognizing the prevalence of fake news and misinformation, he took on the additional responsibility of fighting against misinformation, raising awareness about the importance of accurate information. Pratap's impactful work extends to collaborating intimately with the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) group in his District. His efforts have not gone unnoticed, as he has been awarded the title of 'Star' for his remarkable initiative. With a group consisting of nearly 250 individuals from the PwD community, Pratap continues to be a source of inspiration and positivity, demonstrating the transformative power of dedicated individuals in shaping society for the better.

Radhika Kumari
West Champaran, Bihar

Radhika Kumari, a determined resident of West Champaran, Bihar, has been actively operating a center providing digital services in her village for the past two years. Despite facing initial resistance due to societal biases against working women, Radhika has persevered, gradually breaking down barriers and making significant strides in challenging gender stereotypes. The patriarchal norms entrenched in her community initially led to skepticism and a lack of interest in the services Radhika offered simply because of her gender. However, undeterred by these challenges, she embarked on a journey of consistent efforts, utilizing various strategies such as community meetings, door-to-door visits, and participation in multiple programs aimed at bridging the gender gap.

The societal resistance to accepting working women as the norm still persists in Radhika's community. Nevertheless, her unwavering commitment to her work and breaking down stereotypes has begun to yield positive results. With each small step, Radhika is dismantling misconceptions and showcasing the valuable contributions that women can make in the professional sphere. As she continues her journey, Radhika serves as an inspiring example for other women in her community, challenging traditional beliefs and contributing to the gradual shift towards a more inclusive and accepting society. Her story is a testament to the transformative power of persistence and dedication in the face of societal norms.

Rupali Konwar
Kamrup Metropolitan, Assam

BEST SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL CHANGEMAKER

Rupali Konwar, a resident of Kamrup Metropolitan District in Assam, has achieved remarkable success in her initial years as a SoochnaPreneur, overcoming significant challenges in her quest to empower her community. The region she serves is characterized by a predominant lack of literacy and digital knowledge among its residents. Educating them about the use of mobile phones and digital tools, as well as explaining government initiatives for their benefit, posed a substantial challenge. Adding to the complexity of her role, a significant portion of the population in her village is engaged in various day-to-day livelihood activities such as farming, wage

labor, and household work. Rupali, who walks with crutches, faces the additional strain of visiting homes, often in the early morning or late at night. Despite these challenges, Rupali remains resolute in her commitment to helping everyone in her community.

Rupali's SoochnaPreneur center caters to a diverse audience, including students, housewives, farmers, job seekers, entrepreneurs, Self-Help Group (SHG) members, and Van Dhan Vikash Kendra (VDVK) participants. Through her persistent efforts, Rupali has raised awareness among the villagers about the various benefits they can access through informed decision-making. Her center provides a wide range of services, including assistance in applying for Udhyam Registration, Food Licensing (FSSAI), government schemes, and school/college admissions. Rupali also aids in the application and correction of ID cards and documents, bill payments, and other digital services. To enhance her impact, Rupali has upgraded her center and acquired additional tools, with plans to expand further and maximize the potential of her work. Her dedication serves as an inspiration, transforming her community by bridging the information gap and empowering individuals through digital literacy and essential services.

Sadekul Alam
Murshidabad, West Bengal

Sadekul Alam, hailing from Murshidabad, West Bengal, operates a SoochnaPreneur center situated in the rural area of Basudevpur, far from the city. Despite facing physical challenges, Sadekul is dedicated to his work, standing for the entire day in his center due to a disability that restricts him from sitting. Running the center brings Sadekul a sense of happiness as it provides him with an opportunity to earn a livelihood. His earnings not only support him but also help in sustaining his dependent niece. Specializing in digital services and disseminating information about government entitlements, Sadekul has become an essential resource for his community.

Recalling a time when he faced challenges providing Pan Card-related services in his center, Sadekul sought assistance and successfully acquired an

AEPS ID. This step significantly expanded the scope of services he could offer. Proud of the impactful work he does, Sadekul has taken steps to enhance his center by acquiring additional tools such as a lamination machine and color printer. His commitment to improving and upgrading his center reflects his dedication to serving the community and making a positive impact on their lives.

Sandeep Kumar
Sant Kabir Nagar,
Uttar Pradesh

BEST SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL CHANGEMAKER

Sandeep Kumar, a resident of Sant Kabir Nagar in Uttar Pradesh, is a beacon of change within his community. Overcoming the challenges of battling cancer, he transformed his personal journey into a mission to assist those in need. Sandeep established an organization called DigiSwasthya to address the gaps in healthcare services that often left people in his community suffering due to the lack of proper medical facilities.

Through DigiSwasthya, Sandeep's center provides a range of crucial healthcare services, including teleconsultations, specialized teleconsultations, cancer care consultations, referrals for tertiary care, and the generation of electronic medical records (EMRs). Drawing from his own experiences of facing accessibility issues during treatment, Sandeep is wholeheartedly committed to revolutionizing the primary healthcare system and making healthcare services accessible and affordable for marginalized communities.

Informed by a deep understanding of the deficiencies in rural healthcare, Sandeep combines technology with his mission to improve healthcare accessibility. Witnessing the conditions of rural hospitals and recognizing the scarcity of skilled medical professionals in these areas, he felt compelled to find a solution. DigiSwasthya stands as a testament to this need-assessment, providing vital services to the community. The organization has achieved significant milestones, conducting over 4,200 teleconsultations, 1,800 specialized teleconsultations, 300 cancer care consultations, and generating 45,000 EMRs to date. Sandeep's unwavering dedication showcases his commitment to bringing positive change to healthcare accessibility and affordability in his community.

Simanta Mondal
Murshidabad, West Bengal

Simanta Mondal, a 35-year-old resident of Khargram Block in Murshidabad, West Bengal, operates a SoochnaPreneur center in his village. Through his center, Simanta is dedicated to providing digital services and raising awareness about various government initiatives. He actively assists people in applying for these schemes, with a particular focus on serving students in his community. To augment his income, Simanta also offers tuition to students in his center.

The motivation behind establishing his center stemmed from observing fellow villagers traveling long distances for essential services, particularly small business owners facing unnecessary hassles. Simanta envisioned a place where these challenges could be alleviated, allowing people more time to focus on their work.

A self-driven learner, Simanta takes the initiative to educate himself through online platforms like YouTube whenever he encounters challenges in his work or faces a lack of information. His SoochnaPreneur center serves as a valuable resource for the community, bridging the gap in access to digital services and government initiatives while contributing to the educational needs of local students.

Sk. Karim
Malda, West Bengal

Sk. Karim, hailing from a modest background and residing with his mother in a small village in the Malda District of West Bengal, operates a SoochnaPreneur center. Through his center, Karim is committed to assisting his village while providing a livelihood for his family. He offers a range of services, including digital literacy, financial literacy, and information about government schemes.

Karim's center attracts individuals from diverse communities, including OBC, ST, and SC, with a particular focus on serving students, women, and senior citizens. To enhance the scope of his services, Karim has obtained various IDs, such as India Post Payment Bank CSP ID, Digital India Portal ID, and e-District Portal ID.

In his pursuit of providing uninterrupted services,

Karim has invested in a broadband connection to ensure that every customer's needs are addressed efficiently. His dedication to running the center to the best of his ability reflects his commitment to uplifting the community and making essential services more accessible.

Sushma Kumari
Ramgarh, Jharkhand

3rd PRIZE WINNER

Sushma Kumari, a 23-year-old post-graduate, operates the 'Oracle Center,' a SoochnaPreneur center in the Byang village of Ramgarh District in Jharkhand. Despite facing visual disability, Sushma is determined to serve her community, focusing on individuals with disabilities and the elderly. Her center, equipped with BC Sakhi and CSC ID, provides a wide range of services, including assistance in applying for Pan Card, E-Shram Card, Ayushman Card, and various financial and digital services.

Sushma's dedication extends beyond her own village, reaching neighboring villages that lack proper travel provisions. The Oracle Center serves as a vital resource for communities, especially considering the village's location 8 km away from the main road. Recognizing the financial constraints of her community, Sushma offers services at lower costs, attracting a growing number of people. To further empower her center, she invested in additional devices, ensuring that anyone seeking her services does not leave empty-handed. Her journey towards earning the trust of her community was not immediate; she began with self-capacitation, obtaining DCS certification, and undergoing a course to operate as a BC Sakhi from the Bank. Her commitment to continuous learning and expanding her knowledge has made her capable of meeting the diverse needs of the people she serves.

Upendra Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

Upendra Kumar, a resident of West Champaran in Bihar, has successfully operated a SoochnaPreneur center for the past two years. In the initial phase, he faced uncertainty regarding whether people would trust him with their work and seek services from his center. To overcome this challenge, Upendra immersed himself in the community, residing among the people to better understand their needs and requirements.

Over the course of two years, Upendra's diligent efforts and commitment have borne fruit. People are now more open and willing to utilize the services offered at his center. Upendra's center provides a range of services, including digital literacy, digital services, financial services, and assistance with government schemes. To facilitate these services, Upendra holds CSP ID and PNB Bank ID, utilizing them for various transactions and initiatives. The positive change in people's perceptions is evident, as those who initially doubted his capabilities now shower Upendra with praises. His journey reflects the transformative impact that dedicated and community-focused SoochnaPreneurs can have on the lives of the people they serve.

Virendra Kumar
West Champaran, Bihar

BEST SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Virendra Kumar, a resident of West Champaran in Bihar, plays a pivotal role in uplifting his community through his multifaceted initiatives. Operating both a hostel and a SoochnaPreneur center, Virendra has become a crucial figure in providing educational and digital services to the people in his village.

His hostel serves as a learning hub, particularly for students, offering computer literacy programs that are otherwise scarce in the community. Virendra's commitment to education extends beyond the hostel, as he also runs a SoochnaPreneur center. Through this center, he delivers essential services such as digital literacy, financial services, and assistance with government schemes.

Virendra acts as a bridge between the digital world and the community, addressing the information gap prevalent in his region. Despite the presence of mobile networks, many residents lacked the knowledge and awareness of their usage. Recognizing this need, Virendra actively works to empower his community by providing valuable resources and services. His holistic approach reflects a commitment to education, digital empowerment, and community development.

DIGITAL INNOVATIONS AND INCLUSION: ENVISIONING THE PATH FORWARD

The SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 stands as a commendable initiative, acknowledging and celebrating digital innovators who are actively contributing to the betterment of their communities. These individuals, driving the digital revolution in villages and communities, serve as catalysts for social change and development. Operating as CSCs, CIRCs, PDOs, SoochnaPreneurs, or VLEs, they play crucial roles in creating awareness about people's rights and governmental provisions. These dedicated innovators extend their efforts beyond mere information dissemination, providing valuable services like government entitlements, digital services, financial literacy, and computer education.

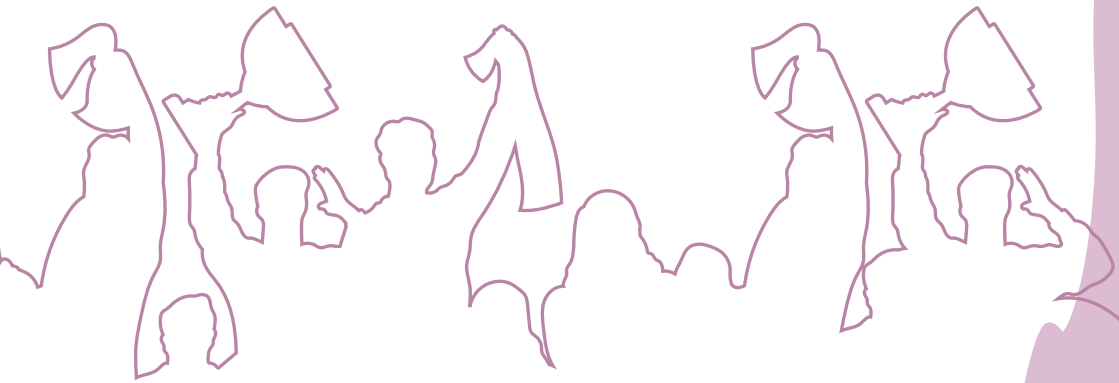
Many awardees serve as essential sources of digital literacy in their regions, imparting computer knowledge to students and children. Their endeavors have facilitated the availability of banking services in villages, thanks to the Bank IDs they have acquired. These community-centric centers act as networking hotspots, addressing the specific needs and health conditions of residents. Remarkably, some applicants have received District-level commendations, with one even being honored by the Honorable Prime Minister.

The inclusivity of the SoochnaPreneur Award 2023 is evident, as it provides a platform for individuals

irrespective of caste, class, religion, gender, or physical abilities to showcase their interventions. Women, in particular, have played a pivotal role in the initiative, breaking free from societal constraints and embracing self-dependence through digitalization. Their stories symbolize transformation and empowerment, emphasizing that change is achievable for those willing to embrace it.

This inclusivity extends to other application categories, including men and people with disabilities. The courage exhibited by these individuals in overcoming personal limitations to work for the betterment of society is commendable. The initiative challenges societal perceptions and prejudices, fostering a more inclusive and transformative environment.

Looking ahead, the SoochnaPreneur Awards envision a continued focus on recognizing and celebrating digital champions. The future trajectory aims to integrate technological advancements with a strong emphasis on inclusiveness, ensuring that the benefits of digital innovations reach diverse individuals and communities across India. The overarching goal is to create a pathway that not only embraces digital innovation but also addresses the imperative of inclusivity in India's evolving digital landscape.



Embark on an inspiring realm of grassroots transformation and digital innovation through the SoochnaPreneur Award 2023, an initiative by the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF). Within the pages of this book unfold compelling narratives that bring forth the extraordinary stories of individuals who have emerged as catalysts for positive change and digital empowerment in the grassroots.

Designed to honour exemplary efforts, the awards cast a spotlight on those who have tirelessly dedicated themselves to uplifting rural communities through digital interventions. From community mobilization, women's empowerment, skill enhancement, and information dissemination, the SoochnaPreneur Awards celebrate outstanding achievements that harness the potential of ICT tools for an equal digital future for all.

Taking the readers through the extraordinary journeys of SoochnaPreneurs who not only have bridged the digital divide over years, but have also emerged as beacons of change, this book delves into the core objectives of the awards - recognizing excellence, providing a platform for initiatives promoting digital empowerment, and inspiring the replication of best practices among underserved populations.

This book is a testament to their transformative journey and steadfast commitment, celebrating the SoochnaPreneurs and showcasing their substantial contributions to the digital empowerment and upliftment of marginalized sections of society, community by community.

DEF
DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT *foundation*

Soochnapreneur
Award 2023
Information, Entitlements & Empowerment