

Digital India: A programme for digitally empowered society and economy

Sixty years ago, South Korea decided to change itself in what is now known as 'The Miracle on the Han River'. The transformational change that South Korea underwent over the years has been only possible because generations after generation adopted technology and invested in innovations across all sectors ranging from agriculture to health infrastructure.

And so despite a hostile neighbour in North Korea and finding itself as a battleground of world politics, technology driven growth pitted this picturesque nation on leadership podiums across the world.

In India, Prime Minister's vision of a Digital India is destined for almost the same path to success. But there is only so much a leader, a government and the political establishment can contribute to a nation's growth. While these are potential facilitators, the call for the change has to come from the society within!

Here in the land of Holy Ganges, a digitally empowered society which thrives on the gambut of information and knowledge based economy is still in it's early days. Currently, only 300 million of India's 1.25 billion people are connected to the net, around a half of them through mobile phones. Rural penetration and usage is pretty low as well.

Sooner than later all these will translate into opportunities for large corporations and a growing number of young entrepreneurs as the digital revolution will be led by innovations and development of a variety of applications.

However the very spirit of a digitally self reliant India has already been at the heart of Anudip Foundation's activities from day one. A birds eye view at our journey so far and you will find that majority of Anudip beneficiaries, youth and women, are from high-need, marginalized communities; they may be religious minorities, tribals, political refugees, people with disabilities or victims of trafficking.

Taking them all through a process of continuous in-depth professional development Anudip has been successfully creating aspirational livelihoods through digital inclusion in economy for over a decade now.

"Since childhood, i grew up seeing lack of access to education and less empowerment of women in our community", says an emotional Simi Khan after getting shortlisted for iMerit once she succesfully pursued IMPACT, a feature course offered by our organisation.

But Anudip is hardly about honing skills, be it with regard to on demand digital technologies or workplace etiquettes. It is much more than that. " My training centre was a few kilometres from my house and entering the centre made me feel like a different world. It was first of its kind in our locality", adds Simi while recounting her initial days at Anudip, the hardships she faced and the transition one small training centre brought in her village in Metiaburz, a still to be developed locality in West Bengal.

Just like Simi, thousands have now benefited from our varied range of courses all of which are offered at very nominal costs while the quality of education has never been compromised.

CODE, another featured course which certifies one in office automation and digital education has been one of the chartbusters when it comes to helping the students who were never short of dreams and motivation but always deprived of financial aid.

" I was born in a family of four in Jagannathpur village of Odisha. My father is a farmer by profession earning six thousand rupees monthly, which barely covers the basic needs of my family", says a teary eyed Prasad Pradhan while going down the memory lanes of the days when hardships would leave him with no option but to give up on his dreams.

All courses at Anudip are blended with interactive e-learning modules, something which our Prime Minister wants to be a new norm in India. These comprehensive digitally enhanced courses have not only put thousands of deprived youths like Simi and Pradhan on the path of self reliance but together with Anudip these alumni of ours are now also expanding the digital footprint of India, which in itself is a success story in making!

Saheli Das from Birbhum has been one of the thousands who benefitted from Anudips flagship program SAVE aimed at providing the specially abled students with a platform to help them realize two things: One that inability is just a state of mind and second, that nothing can come between you and your dreams if the fire inside is still burning!

"Due to neuro muscular disorder since childhood my nerves and muscles on the left side are affected. Still i was determined that my disability can never come in between my aspirations", says Saheli who is now happily located in Kolkata busy overcoming her challenges after cracking interview at Anudips placement cell for Om Innovations.

"My family and friends at Birbhum feel proud of me", signs off Saheli.

If there is one resemblance between the Digital India story and the success story of Anudip it can be summed up in one line - "Providing everyone the wings of wisdom to fly high"!

Thanks.

Keep watching this space for more stories !