

February-November, 2019

# Digital Literacy

## MP Phase-3

Digital Empowerment Foundation



Internet Saathi is an initiative to introduce women to digital tools, content, information and opportunities Internet holds. Under this project, women volunteers (Internet Saathis) have been trained and equipped with ICT tools and knowledge to connect remote communities to the mainstream world, thus bringing them out of information darkness. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have accelerated economic growth and propelled a wave of engagements that have touched human lives; changing the way communities interact, increasing opportunities for livelihood and crossing the barriers of inequitable growth. ICTs have taken up such pre-eminence in our everyday lives, that we now have access to a bank of knowledge & services at our fingertips. As a result, people in tune with ICTs are no longer isolated and are a part of fast-changing global platform. However, there are still millions who are yet to gain access to ICT platforms to access knowledge and opportunities, especially women.

Google and Tata Trust's joint initiative "Internet Saathi" has empowered thousands of rural women across the country to access digital tools and connect with the online world. As part of this initiative, Google and Tata Trust teamed up and Digital Empowerment Foundation contributes as an implementation partner to reach out to women living in rural parts of MP.

This is an effort to train them on digital literacy and further digitally empower more than 8 lakhs women and girls.

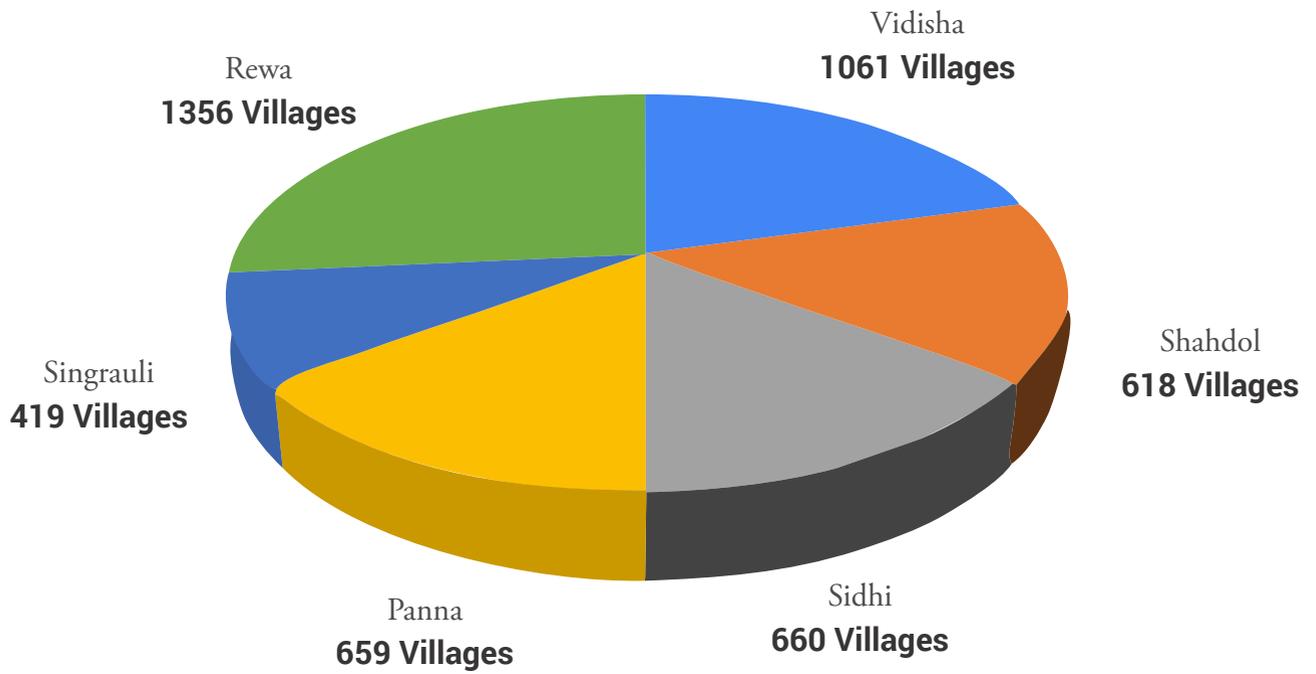
The project was implemented in six districts of MP, training a total of 1200 women leaders to spearhead the digital revolution with a cascading effect in rural India. This report outlines the outcome and challenges of the project, and highlights the success stories of the Internet Saathis, their experiences and learning from the project.

Out Reach: In this Phase we covered 4773 villages in 34 blocks from 6 district of MP. Detailed chart for the same is given below.

**Out Reach: In this Phase we covered 4773 villages in 34 blocks from 6 district of MP. Detailed chart for the same is given below.**

S.N.	State	Districts	Blocks	Villages	Total Saathis
1	MP	Vidisha	7	1061	266
2		Shahdol	5	618	156
3		Sidhi	5	660	165
4		Panna	5	659	165
5		Singrauli	3	419	105
6		Rewa	9	1356	343
<b>Total</b>			<b>34</b>	<b>4773</b>	<b>1200</b>

# DISTRICT WISE VILLAGE COVERAGE



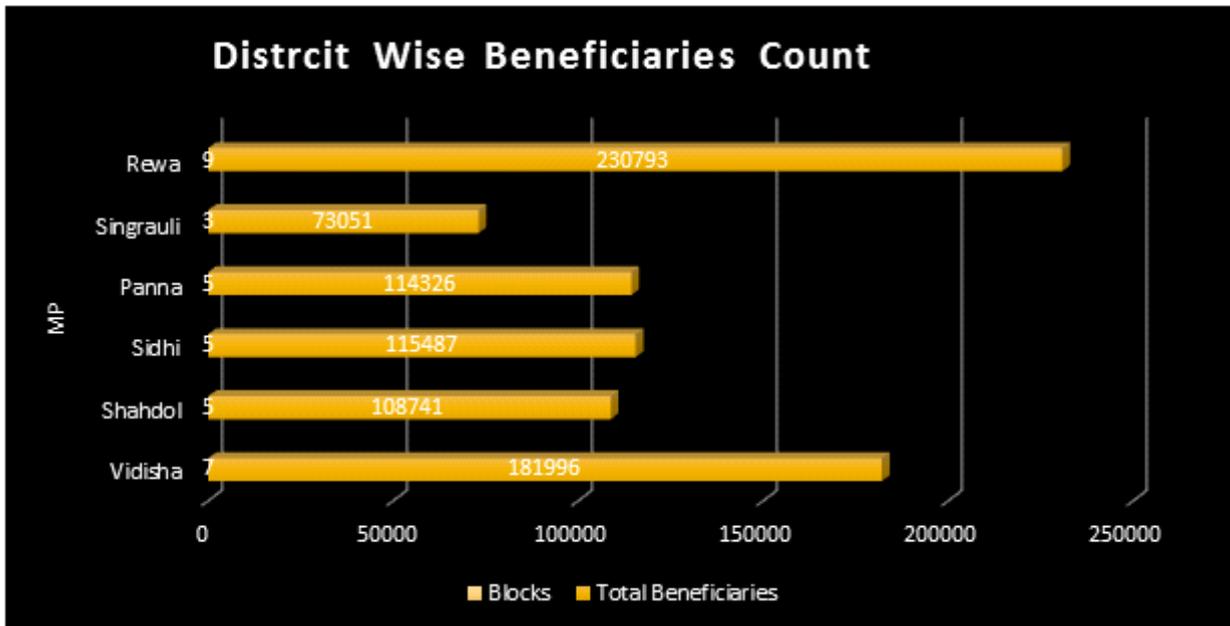
# Project Overview:

The mission of Internet Saathi was to train rural women (Internet Saathis) to provide digital and Internet literacy to lakhs of rural women. These trained Internet Saathis were enabled to train women in functional mobile usage and spread awareness about digital and financial literacy to enhance their ICT skills and expose others like them to digital tools and the Internet. The training modules included basic operating functions of mobile phone/tablet, digital literacy, and digital financial literacy. The project was rolled out in MP State to cover 08 lakh rural women and girls between February to November in 2019. A cadre of 1200 Internet Saathis trained a cumulative of 824394 beneficiaries under this project. The beneficiaries ranged from varying backgrounds of caste, economic status, educational qualifications and occupations but most of them were first-time digital users. Every Internet Saathi equipped with a 2 Smart phones and targeted minimum three and maximum four villages, and travelled for six months from house-to house to train and impart digital literacy. The project successfully completed its target and established a strong foundation of women leaders driven to change and contribute to the society.



# Outcomes:

The larger aim of the project was to create a large-scale impact in the area of women empowerment through access and awareness of digital tools and connectivity among the female population in the targeted areas. The outcome, both quantitative and qualitative, could be witnessed among various stakeholders of the project. The project achieved a target of training 824394 beneficiaries of the backward communities of rural areas.



Activities & Implementation process: The following are the activities and process had been done during the implementation of the project;

- District and Village mapping
- Village network identification
- Identification and selection of District and Block Coordinator
- Organized one day orientation session for Implementation Team (State, District and Block Coordinator)
- Selection of interested and potential internet Saathi (Female) as per village mapping
- Conducted two days training/workshop for selected Internet Saathi's
- Launch of digital literacy program/ activity in the village by trained Internet Saathis.
- Bi-Monthly Meeting conducted with Internet Saathi's by District and Block Coordinator at block level.
- In last Review meeting conducted with Implementation Team

# Key Highlights of the Programme:

- Though the primary focus of the project was to impart digital literacy to women and girls (above the 14 years age) of the backward communities of rural areas.
- One of the key achievements of the project has been the extensive outreach across the villages to mobilize women and young girls to participate in the rural digital revolution. The project has succeeded in empowering women from marginalized, low-economic and social backgrounds in areas with low access of digital tools and its awareness.
- Education was not a barrier for this project, and benefitted more persons who were illiterates than those who had a little or higher education levels. The Internet Saathi project was based on hands-on training in which reading ability was minimized to operating a device. To use the Internet, voice commands were prioritized for search over a phone or a tablet. However, illiterate beneficiaries took more time to learn to operate a mobile phone/tablet as compared to literate beneficiaries yet their operational performances were at par, according to Internet Saathis/trainers.
- Basic mobile literacy, was the first step of digital Education. It included the use of offline applications and maneuvering through the basic function of smart phone.
- Internet literacy was one of the key focus areas of the trainings, given its key value in accessing and sharing information. It is also one of the media to access various citizen-centric government applications that provide easy access to government schemes and entitlements to citizens. Since most of the beneficiaries belonged to poor rural areas with limited connectivity, a high number of project beneficiaries were first-time Internet users. Starting this training from the scratch, beneficiaries were first trained to switch on and switch off mobile data in a phone.
- In today's time, digital literacy is incomplete without digital financial literacy. Therefore, keeping up with times and needs, trainings of beneficiaries focused on providing awareness about digital financial tools and accessing banking services through a mobile device. The Saathis were made to watch a video film on, online banking and financial literacy for this purpose, besides they were included in discussions about the same. The video covered topics like USSD, UPI, mobile wallets and debit/credit cards, among others.



# Challenges

The Internet Saathi project was a great opportunity for Digital Empowerment Foundation to interact with thousands of women and introduce them to technology in the road towards its mission of providing digital access, connectivity and digital literacy to the marginalized sections of the society. This project also gave the organization a platform to experiment with new ideas and tackle several challenges that came our way. The challenges were diverse and ranged from technical issues, social issues, cultural issues and geographical barriers. Some of the key challenges from the project were:

- Frequent technical defects in the devices provided to the Saathis, especially low battery backup of smartphones
- Tedious procedures and lengthy delays in the servicing of the devices
- Poor network connectivity in certain tribal belts
- Frequent technical glitches affected the monitoring mechanism
- Long distances between villages, with poor road transportation and connectivity, led to delays in on-field problem resolution.
- Illiteracy and lack of awareness among the communities created suspicion about the intention of the Internet Saathis and this program.
- Caste politics often led to demotivation and jealousy among local women and the Internet Saathis
- Saathi Honorarium were very less because of travelling around villages and target was high.
- Model Code of conduct (2019 Lok Sabha Election) has also affected the program at local and district level administration.
- 



# Impact Story



## Krishna Verma- “GIVING NEW HOPE”

Krishna Verma is one of the most energetic, excited and enterprising woman among the Internet Saathi of Panna district, Madhya Pradesh. In just six months she had completed internet literacy trainings of more than 600 women and girls across four villages. She has also completed her high school education.

Due to poor financial condition of the house, her parents got her married soon. The only educated one at her in-law's place, Krishna thought that she should do something for the family.

In her village, She joined Self-Help Group as a member.

Meanwhile, she also got to know about the Internet Saathi program through a peer in her village and took all the necessary information regarding the program such as training, working of Saathis' area and salary.

She was very curious to join the training program and after a two-day training she learnt how to use the smart phone. Post training, she began training the women and girls (from 14 to 60 years) in 4 villages that were allocated to her. During the training she realised that the women in the Self –help group she was working, should do something that serves as a source of income which may help build their own identities.

Through the “Internet” Krishna learned how to make soap, from where to get the raw materials and know its costing. She shared the idea with the group and they were happy to work with her. Initially, they faced many difficulties but gradually started making 300 to 400 soaps a day with different fragrances like Chandan, Aelovera and Rose. They then sold them to nearby shops and now earn between Rs. 100- 150 per day.

This motivated the women in the group to further learn and use their skills to earn a living. Many of them are now making papad (papadon), wax candles, incense sticks from the internet to increase their daily income.

*Krishna wants to spread this to other villages as well and encourage more trainees to take up 'Home Enterprise.' She feels that this will help them women take up more entrepreneurial roles.*



## Shivkumari Kushwaha - “Hard work is to KEY of successes”

Prior to being an Internet Saathi, Shivkumari was working with the Ajeevika mission program and joined the group. She has done multiple jobs to fulfill her family needs. With her dedication of work and enthusiasm she got the position of President of that center.

Despite her husband's presence , she has been a backbone to her family.

She earns Rs.3000 a month which unfortunately caters to only the basic necessities. She aims for a better life for her daughter .

She took up a new job of supervising at her workplace and earned 2000 Rs. /Month.

She was very much willing to work with the community and then later she got to know about the Internet Saathi Program. With this program she got an opportunity to meet different people in around four villages.

Going to the village and teaching the women is the task of the program and she faces difficulties while traveling.

Neha,a friend of her helps her in reaching the village in turn helping her with peer- teaching in each of the allocated villages.

Later due to transportation issues, she decided to buy a scooter but it wasn't possible due to weak finances.

Her Internet Saathis' helped her buy a scooter.

“Now a days, I drive to go to village and teach women of community the usage of Internet.

I'm very happy and my husband too.

Now, I am selling my product (Incense sticks) online through internet Saathis.”

*Shivkumari feels that the internet Saathi program is a great medium through which she can continue to earn a livelihood.*





# Community Mobilisations and Star Saathi



Star Saathi is an initiative to build up the inner confidence in Star Saathi as well as the perspective of community people towards the Star Saathis and their work. This program introduces women to digital tools and the content, information and opportunities Internet holds. Under this project, women volunteers (Star Saathis) have been trained and equipped with ICT tools and knowledge to connect remote communities to the mainstream world, thus bringing them out of information darkness. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have accelerated economic growth and propelled a wave of engagements that have touched human lives; changing the way communities interact, increasing opportunities for livelihood and crossing the barriers of inequitable growth. ICTs have taken up such pre-eminence in our everyday lives, that we now have access to a bank of knowledge & services at our fingertips.

The pilot project was implemented in Rewa district of MP, training a total of 4 women Star leaders to spearhead the digital revolution with a cascading effect in Rural/Urban belt of Rewa.

# Challenges:

·Security concern of the family member.

·Star saathis are not able to share their feeling with the community people.

Translator identification for Star Saathi is difficult to manage on ground.



# Star Saathi-Activity on ground





*Figure -Review Meeting with Implementation team @ MP*

Conclusion: The Internet Saathi project was a major success in terms of its scale and innovation in design. The project successfully achieved a target of over 8 lakh beneficiaries to include men, women and girls to become digitally enabled, Basic Mobile literate and financially aware. The community trainings of 8 lakh people in MP states through digitally empowered rural women was one of the greatest achievements of the project as its exposed information-dark communities to the power of technology and the Internet. At the same time, qualitatively, the project has created self-confidence and an entrepreneurial attitude among the Internet Saathis to use technology as a means to enhance their livelihood opportunities while serving the needs of their community members. The project, thus, achieved scale by reaching out to communities of more than 4753 villages by creating women digital leaders to drive and lead the rural digital revolution.