

Bringing Digital Access Closer to All



Gulshan Bind inside his workspace preparing to meet his customers

It's another busy day at Gulshan Kumar Bind's information kiosk at Lacchapati village. At 10 AM on a Thursday morning, there is already a queue of 7-8 people across age groups wanting to avail of various services provided in his shop. He provides over 250 services such as online Govt. registrations, printing, scanning, Xerox, booking tickets, retail, and enterprise set-up services.

The 25-year-old youth, who graduated with B.Com. realised that people in his village did not have much access to the right information and for every digital-based service, the community members had to travel to Mirzapur city. Already thinking of setting up a business at a young age from his college days, he decided to open a Common Service Centre in his village in 2016 to help locals avail digital services near their homes itself.

Gulshan on boarded the Work4Progress after he got to know about the program through his peers, and attended a capacity-building session. With his eagerness to learn more about entrepreneurship, he gradually learned the importance of enterprise development and agreed to pilot an information kiosk. Through his services, he has been able to cater to the needs of the rural population who do not have access to the digital platform or underprivileged sections of the community. Currently, people from over 20 km come to visit his store each day as people have become aware of the quality service he provides for all. And there are 5 full-time workers who help run the store.

One-by-one as the customers leave, more drop in at the store. Helping an elderly woman down an auto, and getting her seated at a chair, he turns to us and says, *"It is for them, our parents, elders, brothers and sisters, that I believe we should work hard. It does not matter if it's a job or a business. If we are able to provide service for the people. We are doing सेवा to all."*

More youth are opting to stay back in their native villages after COVID-19, there is demand for local jobs, and Gulshan is trying to make it possible for a few to serve the people locally. He even has two members of his team go to the homes of dependent family members who find it difficult to come to his store.

Moving forward, he intends to employ someone who can provide information to customers looking for financial support and enterprise set-up opportunities. Many people are asking for enterprise support services, which he feels that currently not able to cater to well due to time constraints with all his customers. He wishes to provide services to the people to ease the way of life in rural areas too.