



Building Temples of Knowledge



Shaping the future

Village Knowledge Center Program

గ్రామ విజ్ఞాన కేంద్రం



Bridging the Rural Digital Divide

Village Knowledge Center Program

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Rural Education and Development (READ) Project

“Computer education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and lays a foundation for sustained economic growth”

Computer Training & Skill Development Initiative

As on 31.03.2023, PARD INDIA have successfully provided **31,605 e-hours** of free Computer & Internet training to **527** children (V-kids) and youth since we commence our Village knowledge Center (VKC) Program in August 2012.

1. Introduction

Poor children are using computers to enhance their IT knowledge in their schools. Poor farmers use mobile phones to get online information about agricultural market prices. Rural women's groups are using the Internet to exchange information on how to farm organically. These are just a few good examples of how access to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) can improve rural lives in developing countries.

But the opportunities offered by Information and Communication Technologies - telephone, smartphone, radio, video, computer, laptop, internet, etc. are unevenly distributed. Barely 6% of the world's population is linked to the Internet, and many people have never made a telephone call.

Information is a power. However, there is a growing disparity between those with access to information and those without access. The latter are the majority, and most live in rural areas of developing countries. If used effectively, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) can reduce poverty by improving poor people's access to education, health, government, and financial services.

Recognizing the advantages of ICT, PARD INDIA has been promoting the importance of Computer education among rural children (V-kids) and the communities through our unique initiative of the “Village Knowledge Center Program” launched on 26th August 2012.

2. About “Village Knowledge Center Program (VKCP)”

PARD INDIA recognizes the importance of computer-aided learning to children (V-kids) who are often denied equal opportunities in our society. For children, the computer is a fascinating machine. They are taught English, Science, Mathematics, etc., online using e-learning channels that will

bring them closer to the quality of education at par with urban kids. Dropout rate and absenteeism could be reduced to a great extent through computer education.

To bring digital impact in rural areas, PARD INDIA has launched a unique pilot social digital project named “Village Knowledge Center Program” in Yernagudem Village, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, on 26th August 2012, under the gracious sponsorship of **Mr. Bethala Veera Swami**, the founder of PARD INDIA.



Since 2012, we have been providing free computer & internet training and education without any interruption to children (V-kids), students, youth, working professionals, etc., in and around villages, creating Digital Rural India.

3. Main objectives of “Village Knowledge Center Program”

- ✓ Bridging the “**Digital Gap**” in rural areas.
- ✓ Promising “**Internet=Right**” for equal opportunities to rural children.
- ✓ Free “**Computer & Internet**” training & skill development for children, students & youth.
- ✓ Career Guidance & Personality Development Counseling
- ✓ Promoting e-learning abilities, especially English, on-the-job accountancy, etc.
- ✓ CV/Bio-data writing and online job search facilitating online employment opportunities.
- ✓ Promote Educational, Health & Social Awareness Programs using multimedia.
- ✓ Gather support for helpless people by connecting with the world platform.
- ✓ Generating internal revenue for meeting operational expenses from our IT services
- ✓ Meeting internal communication and database requirements of PARD INDIA.



4. Learning Modules at “Village Knowledge Center”

PARD INDIA provides training to children (V-kids), youth, working professionals, and communities during the winter and summer breaks, covering the following modules:

- Module 1: Basics of Computer and its Operation
- Module 2: MS Office (Word / Excel / PowerPoint)
- Module 3: Internet / E-mail / Outlook Express / Social Media
- Module 4: Personality & Career Development Program
- Module 5: CV / Bio-data writing skills & online Job search
- Module 6: e-learning - English / Accountancy / Academic Subjects, etc.
- Module 7: Adobe Photoshop / Coral Draw Graphic Software
- Module 8: Health, Safety & Environment (HSE) Programs



5. Impact of “Village Knowledge Center Program”

Our program has been designed so that students from the various villages take the maximum advantage of exclusive summer classes in May and June every year from the modules we offer training free of cost. The following data reflects a summary of the impact made so far through our VKC Program:

Impact of VKC Program (Status as of 31 st March 2023)					
Years in Series	VKC Program	Actual Hours of IT Training (e-hours)	Total Number of Students Underwent Training	Influenced Communities	Presence in Villages
1st	2012-13	5,450	90	40	8
2nd	2013-14	1,877	31	40	8
3rd	2014-15	3,461	63	40	8
4th	2015-16	2,233	37	40	8
5th	2016-17	5,956	75	40	8
6th	2017-18	5,956	52	40	8
7th	2018-19	2,218	42	40	8
8th	2019-20	3,496	114	40	8
9th	2020-21	Nil (due to COVID-19)	0	0	0
10 th	2021-22	Nil (due to COVID-19)	0	0	0
11 th	2022-23	958	23	10	2
12 th	2023-24				
TOTAL		31,605	527	40	8



6. PARD INDIA – Minimizing “Digital Divide in Rural India”

A “Digital Divide” or “Digital Gap” is an economic and social inequality about access to, use of, or impact of Information and Communication Technologies. A digital divide exists between rich and poor, corporate and government schools, students in villages and cities, etc.

According to NSSO survey findings released on 30th June 2015, nearly 6% of rural and 29% of urban households possessed a computer. Among persons aged 14-29, nearly **18%** in rural areas and **49%** in urban areas could operate a computer in India.

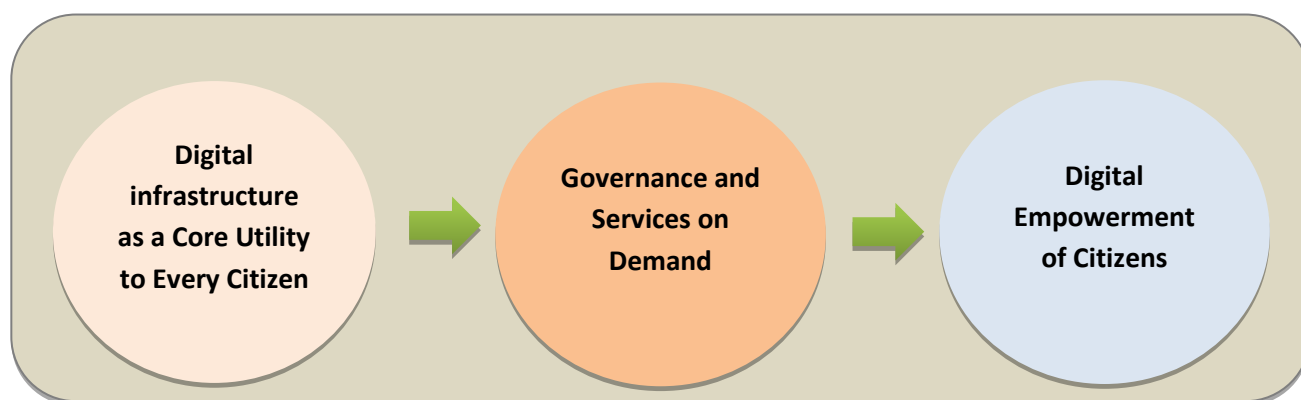
We have a rural digital divide, and bridging the gap is not just about technology and providing more computers and mobile phones. It is a matter of making the information more accessible, and this requires political will, education, training, and funds to create the necessary IT infrastructure in rural areas.

PARD INDIA has been raising the voices of children (V-kids) from marginalized communities in rural areas for free access to basic computer education in schools and at home to minimize the disparity in their upbringing as compared to urban children.

7. VKCP – A path-breaking step towards Digital India

The journey of e-governance initiatives in India took a broader dimension in the mid-90s, emphasizing citizen-centric services. To transform the entire ecosystem of public services using information technology, the Government of India launched the “Digital India Program” on 1st July 2015 to ensure that Government services are made available to citizens electronically by improving online infrastructure and increasing Internet connectivity.

The vision of the Digital India program is to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. The program is centered on three key areas:



PARD INDIA has been working at grassroots connecting villages for digital empowerment. Our VKC Program, which commenced on 26th August 2012, is a step ahead of the “Digital India Program” launched by the Indian Government on 1st July 2015.

8. Education takes off in Rural India helped by Computers – PARD INDIA calls for partnering opportunities.

Computer-assisted education is helping to draw village children back into school. Their wish to attend school increases with the word computer. Computer education builds the required confidence and narrows the gap between urban and rural education.

Like midday meals, computers are also helping to draw more children to schools. Children find computers very novel and exciting. It is found that the attendance rate at schools that offer computer-aided learning programs has gone up considerably.

To bridge the rural digital divide, PARD INDIA seeks to partner with corporates with CSR, likeminded social organizations, and institutions for creating basic infrastructure with digital classrooms in primary and high schools in villages, creating an everlasting impact on disadvantaged children to draw them back to the school and to control the potential school drop-outs.



9. References

Click the following Facebook links for details of VKC programs organized by PARD INDIA:

- [First VKCP launched on 26th August 2012](#)
- [e-learning program during Summer 2013](#)
- [e-learning program during Summer 2014](#)
- [e-learning program during Summer 2015](#)
- [e-learning program during Summer 2016](#)
- [e-learning program during Summer 2017](#)
- [e-learning program during Summer 2018](#)
- [e-learning program during Summer 2019](#)