



*Saral Services*

**Training of Rural Youth in Information Technology (TRYIT)**

Digital divide is one of the many divides, separating rural and urban India deeply. The divide that is deterring transparency, good governance and socio-economic empowerment of rural areas, could be bridged with use of IT. Government of India has initiated a step by developing IT Action Plan but it has been ineffective due to lack of trained manpower to operate services.

Availability of IT human resource within rural community which could have enabled various IT initiatives unfortunately did not happen for supply deficit of IT trained persons. Contrastingly, high rate of unemployment among rural youths could have been utilised toward this as providing employment in their own milieu has distinct advantages of preservation of social capital of a community. In the backdrop of various disparities, Saral Services, an NGO with the mission of leveraging the power of information & communication technology (ICT) has launched TRYIT.

TRYIT, a residential training program, aims to make youths employable by giving them the required exposure to ICT and basic management of specific applications useful to organizations and institutions working and located in rural areas. The attempt is to match deployment with catchment and to ensure that the requirement of ICT technical personnel is met with from within the rural community. As TRYIT has passed the pilot stage successfully, we have witnessed potential of rural poor youth, who are in no way less capable than their urban counterparts. This creates another non-farm livelihood option for rural community and also partly stems the flow of money and manpower from rural to urban areas.

TRYIT training modules, Computer Literacy, Package deployment, Troubleshooting, Soft Skills, Fitness programme, Spiritual camps, Field Visits and Training are not only technically comprehensive but also socio-culturally transformative. Our teaching methodology emphasizes learning by doing and theory is used only as a backup to practical training. Trainees build knowledge and skill base by working on projects as well as hone their communication skills by giving Power Point presentations and participating in class room discussions.

Financially, TRYIT has sustained itself with the fees paid by the trainees from Vidya loan mobilized from BASIX, an NBFC and free service provided by volunteers. In future, we plan to make TRYIT fully self sustaining with a model combining the fees from the trainees with earning from any employers who want training for their workforce and funding agencies that support market linked employment. We plan to design and tailor courses according to market demand.

TRYIT is a unique approach with 60 successful examples in terms of rural youth trained and placed, poised to go beyond boundaries. TRYIT has immense possibilities as different avenues are opening up to offer millions of jobs at CSC, Federations, SHGs, Gram Panchayats, Rural BPOs, NRHM, Schools, Retail Outlets, etc.

TRYIT approaches iDiya programme with a view to grow from pilot stage to socio-entrepreneurial venture addressing the twin issues of enhancing employability and generating employment, especially in the rural context. Through this platform, we hope to build networks that will guide our future growth by giving us the required business inputs and linkages for scaling with self sustainability.