

## MARK ZUCKERBERG IN INDIA

10<sup>th</sup> October, 2014, would've been just another day for unassuming people in non-descript Chandauli village, situated in Alwar district, Rajasthan, India, had it not been for a certain Mark Zuckerberg, who brought the world's attention to its doorstep, when he came knocking during his short two day visit to India for the first time.

Chairman and CEO of Facebook, could not have found a better destination to flag his ambitious initiative Internet.org, in which he pledges to commit his vast resources to provide affordable access of broadband internet to the people of third world countries, who have little or no hope of ever going online.

India has the second largest population in the world, but only 30% of Indians, mostly residing in cities and towns, have access to broadband internet. And the rest, 70% who live in rural India, suffer apathy.

However, Mark chose to honour Chandauli with his presence for a reason.

Earlier this year, Chandauli, situated around 100 miles from the capital of India, Delhi, became the site for first Minority Cyber Village under Minority Cyber Gram Yojna, an innovative pilot project initiated by Ministry of Minority Affairs and Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF). Minority Cyber Village brought IT foot-prints to the sizable Meo Muslim population in Chandauli. And as the year 2014 approaches its end, 90% of the goal has already been achieved.

Mark realizes that existing efforts of digital empowerment in Chandauli, combined with his futuristic vision, has the potential of setting off Internet.org well on its way.

World media frenzy notwithstanding, Mark instantly found affinity with a 13 years old local boy, Vishal Kumar.

Vishal began his quest for digital literacy at the very spot just a few months back. And, much to Mark's delight, today Vishal uses Facebook extensively to connect with his friends and make new ones. Not only that, he uses video calls facility on Facebook for virtually communicating with his teachers.

Then Yusuf Khan, noted Bhopang player regaled and rejoiced his famous guest with one of the most inspired performance. He himself has benefited beyond measure by Minority Cyber Village. Broadband internet is enabling him for the first time to promote his music globally.

Just when Mark was wrapping up his one hour stay at Chandauli's Minority Cyber Village, an incident took him by surprise; power failure.

Poor villagers in countries like India live without much more than just broadband internet.

Hopefully, Mark went away enriched from this trip.