

Uttarakhand Wireless Aid Community Network

Project Impact Report

Internet Society Foundation

defindia.org

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Executive Summary

The Uttarakhand Wireless Aid Community Network Project was implemented to address the persistent digital divide in remote, high-altitude regions of Uttarakhand, where geographic isolation, seasonal migration, and limited infrastructure have historically restricted access to essential digital services. Focused on underserved border communities, the project aimed to enable reliable connectivity, strengthen digital literacy, and create sustainable access points for government and financial services.

Operating in geographically challenging terrains marked by poor network coverage and limited mobility, the initiative adopted a hybrid approach combining wireless connectivity solutions with community-based digital enablement. Local entrepreneurs and community members were trained to operate digital service centers, ensuring last-mile delivery of services such as online documentation, financial transactions, teleconsultation, and access to government schemes.

A total of over 400 individuals were directly engaged through offline and online digital literacy programs, with special emphasis on youth, women, and elderly populations. The project successfully established functional digital access points in remote villages, reducing the need for long-distance travel to urban centers and improving access to critical services.

Beyond infrastructure, the initiative demonstrated measurable social impact by enhancing digital confidence among first-time users, enabling income-generating opportunities for local operators, and strengthening community resilience. Beneficiaries reported improved access to entitlements, reduced transaction costs, and greater inclusion in digital governance systems.

The project also navigated significant operational challenges, including harsh weather conditions, limited electricity, and difficult terrain. These were addressed through context-specific technological adaptations and strong community engagement, ensuring continuity and sustainability of services.

Overall, the Uttarakhand Wireless Aid Community Network Project illustrates a scalable and replicable model for bridging digital gaps in remote and border regions. By integrating connectivity with capacity-building and local ownership, the initiative contributes to inclusive digital transformation and supports long-term socio-economic development in vulnerable communities.

Dharchula on banks of Mahakali River, Uttarakhand

Context and Background

Dharchula block in Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand, represents a remote and ecologically fragile Himalayan region characterised by geographic isolation, limited infrastructure, and high disaster vulnerability. Frequent landslides, earthquakes, heavy rainfall, floods, and flash floods disrupt everyday life, while rugged terrain and recurring environmental damage leave road infrastructure in a persistently fragile state. These conditions not only increase the risk of accidents and blockades but also severely constrain mobility, access to services, and economic opportunities.

A critical challenge in this region is the lack of reliable communication infrastructure. Internet connectivity remains weak and inconsistent, with several high-altitude villages experiencing little to no network coverage. Electricity supply is equally unstable, with outages lasting several hours each day. In the absence of dependable digital systems, information flows rely heavily on informal, ad hoc channels,often transmitted through vehicle drivers or travellers on the road. During disasters, such systems become inefficient and chaotic, leading to misinformation, delayed responses, and an inability among residents, tourists, and development actors to accurately assess risk or coordinate relief efforts.

This communication gap has significant socio-economic implications. Young people are often compelled to relocate temporarily to the Dharchula block headquarters to access education and digital services, reinforcing patterns of seasonal migration. At the same time, local livelihoods are shaped by a combination of agriculture, transhumance practices, and tourism. While transit-based tourism, particularly linked to the Kailash Mansarovar and Chota Kailash routes, has created income opportunities in transport and related services, its growth remains constrained by poor road connectivity and infrastructural fragility. As a result, communities in higher-altitude villages continue to depend on limited and climate-sensitive agricultural livelihoods, making diversification into non-farm economic activities an urgent necessity rather than a choice.

The region also reflects a pronounced digital divide, where structural barriers such as geography, poor infrastructure, and socio-economic inequalities intersect. Limited connectivity restricts access to essential services including education, healthcare, welfare schemes, and emergency information, challenges that are further exacerbated during disasters. Although mobile phone ownership is widespread, unreliable network coverage and dependence on prepaid data plans hinder meaningful and consistent internet use. Access disparities are also shaped by social factors such as age, education, and community affiliations, while women and youth, in some cases, demonstrate relatively better engagement with digital tools due to targeted policy interventions.

DEF Team at disaster affected areas of Dharchula



Community members during the training program



In this context, the relationship between digital exclusion and vulnerability becomes particularly evident. Communication breakdowns during disasters amplify existing inequalities, leaving already marginalised communities further isolated from critical support systems. Recognising this, there is a pressing need for interventions that strengthen resilient, decentralised communication infrastructure tailored to the region's unique geographic and socio-cultural conditions.

This report situated itself within these challenges by examining the digital divide in rural Uttarakhand, with a specific focus on Dharchula block. It evaluates the impact of the Digital Empowerment Foundation's intervention under the Internet Society Foundation's "Wireless Aid Community Network Project," which aims to establish resilient and community-driven internet infrastructure. By exploring alternative technological solutions,such as mesh networks, satellite-based connectivity, and community radio, the initiative seeks to enable reliable information access without heavy dependence on conventional infrastructure.

> In remote Dharchula, landslides, weak connectivity, and fragile roads isolate communities, limiting access, disrupting lives, and shrinking local economic opportunities.

Project Initiative:

The project was designed to establish resilient and reliable internet infrastructure across ten villages in Uttarakhand, India, regions that are highly vulnerable to natural disasters such as floods and landslides. In such contexts, timely communication is critical for reducing risk, coordinating responses, and ensuring access to essential services.

To address these challenges, the initiative deployed advanced and decentralised connectivity solutions capable of functioning even during adverse conditions. Each village was connected through a mesh network, supported by strategically installed communication terminals positioned at elevated locations to minimise disruption during disasters. These systems were further reinforced with power backup mechanisms to ensure continuity during electricity outages.

> Mesh networks and solar-powered systems keep communities connected, empowering locals to manage infrastructure and stay informed.



A key component of the project was community participation. Local residents—particularly women and youth—were trained to operate, manage, and maintain the network infrastructure, fostering local ownership and long-term sustainability. In addition, village-level digital information centres were established to provide access to essential online services, improve information dissemination, and strengthen community preparedness and response during emergencies.

Objectives

- **Resilient Internet Infrastructure:**

  To deploy robust and disaster-resilient connectivity solutions, including satellite and mesh network technologies, ensuring uninterrupted communication in high-risk environments.

- **Capacity Building:**

  To train local community members, especially women and youth as "internet entrepreneurs" capable of maintaining and managing digital infrastructure.

- **Disaster Preparedness and Response:**

  To enable the rapid dissemination of critical, real-time information during natural disasters, improving coordination and reducing response time.

- **Community Empowerment:**

  To establish village-level digital information centres that provide access to essential services, thereby strengthening local agency and decision-making.

- **Digital Literacy:**

  To enhance the ability of residents to effectively use digital tools for accessing services, improving livelihoods, and building resilience against disaster-related disruptions.

> Empowering communities through resilient connectivity and training for disaster readiness and stronger livelihoods.

Overview of the Project Location

This project examines the socio-economic realities shaping rural life in the Dharchula block of Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand. Located along the Mahakali River, which forms a natural boundary between India and Nepal, many villages in this region are closely tied to cross-border interactions. A bridge connecting the two countries facilitates daily movement, enabling trade, commerce, and deep-rooted social relationships.

Dharchula, with a population of 58,413 (Census 2011) spread across 73 villages, serves as a key transit point for pilgrims traveling to Kailash Mansarovar and Chota Kailash. As a result, tourism has emerged as a primary source of livelihood, with many residents renting vehicles and providing related services. However, this economic dependence is increasingly vulnerable due to poor all-weather road connectivity, frequent natural disasters, and limited access to modern infrastructure and services.

The region is predominantly inhabited by the Rung community, historically engaged in transhumance and Trans-Himalayan trade. Their livelihood patterns are closely linked to seasonal migration: communities move collectively between lower altitudes during

> Cross-border ties, seasonal migration, and tourism shape livelihoods—yet fragile infrastructure and disasters threaten life here

winter (October–March) and higher elevations in summer (April–September). This cyclical movement represents a unique form of mobility, distinct from typical migration patterns in the plains.

Unlike individual or household migration, entire villages relocate seasonally, carrying with them their social structures, institutions, and governance systems. This way of life creates a fluid sense of space and belonging, requiring the maintenance of dual settlements, administrative arrangements, and service systems across locations.

Location/Village Panchayat	Population (In numbers)
Naya Basti/Dugtu Panchayat	136
Nigalpani /Dugtu Panchayat	234
Chhalmachilaso	387
Bajani Kalika/Dharchula Dehat	1500
Ghatibargh/ Dugtu Panchayat	343
Dar	560
Galati/Rupkhet	2236
Sirkha/Sosa Panchayat	552



Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

The implementation of the Uttarakhand Wireless Aid Community Network in the Dharchula block has delivered significant benefits in improving connectivity and access to digital services. However, the project has also encountered multiple challenges arising from the region's mountainous terrain, fragile infrastructure, and high exposure to natural disasters. The following section outlines the key challenges and corresponding mitigation strategies adopted to address them.

1. Connectivity Constraints in Remote Terrain

Challenge:

Remote and high-altitude villages in the Dharchula block experience weak, unreliable, or non-existent internet connectivity. Several locations fall outside mobile network coverage, while others suffer from low bandwidth and inconsistent speeds, limiting access to digital services and communication channels.

Mitigation Strategies:

- Deployment of V-SAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) systems in completely unconnected (internet-dark) zones to establish baseline connectivity.
- Installation of MikroTik SXT LTE devices in low-bandwidth areas to amplify 4G signals and improve internet speed and reliability.
- Establishment of Point-to-Point (P2P) wireless links in villages with fluctuating connectivity to create stable, high-speed local networks.
- Placement of all network equipment at elevated and secure locations, supported by solar-powered and battery backup systems, ensuring uninterrupted operation during power outages and adverse weather conditions.

> Weak connectivity is tackled through satellite links, signal boosters, and solar-powered networks in this challenging terrain



2. Communication and Digital Literacy Barriers

Challenge:

Limited digital literacy, language barriers, and low awareness of digital tools and government schemes initially hindered effective community engagement and information dissemination.

Mitigation Strategies:

- Delivery of comprehensive digital literacy training for local entrepreneurs, emphasising practical, hands-on learning in regional languages.
- Provision of continuous mentorship, refresher sessions, and technical support to build confidence and improve communication skills.
- Use of locally appropriate outreach methods, including pamphlets in regional languages, mobile-based communication, and door-to-door mobilisation to raise awareness and encourage digital adoption.

> Local-language training and outreach overcome digital barriers, enabling inclusive access to essential digital services



3. Weather-Related Disruptions and Disaster Risks

Challenge:

Extreme weather conditions, including heavy snowfall in winter and landslides or flash floods during the monsoon, frequently damage infrastructure, disrupt connectivity, and restrict physical access to villages.

Roads, brought to a standstill due to landslides.

Mitigation Strategies:

- Installation of network infrastructure and digital centres in geographically safer, elevated locations, minimising exposure to landslide- and flood-prone areas.
- Use of disaster-resilient equipment enclosures and solar-powered backup systems to maintain service continuity during disruptions.
- Introduction of offline service capabilities (such as form filling and document preparation), enabling work to continue during outages and be synchronised once connectivity is restored.

> Ensuring connectivity and access through solar-powered infrastructure and offline systems despite harsh conditions



Key Activities

Feasibility Study for Internet Infrastructure

A comprehensive wireless feasibility study was undertaken across the selected project locations to assess the viability of establishing a resilient and sustainable internet infrastructure in the region. Given the complex Himalayan terrain and high exposure to climatic variability, the study adopted a multi-dimensional approach to ensure that the network design would be both technically robust and contextually appropriate.

Key parameters assessed included the strength and range of connectivity across varied elevations, network performance indicators such as speed and latency, and the potential impact of climatic conditions, including rainfall, snowfall, and lightning, on infrastructure reliability. Particular attention was paid to ensuring continuity of services during adverse weather and disaster events.

> Studying terrain, climate, and signal performance to design resilient, context-appropriate internet infrastructure



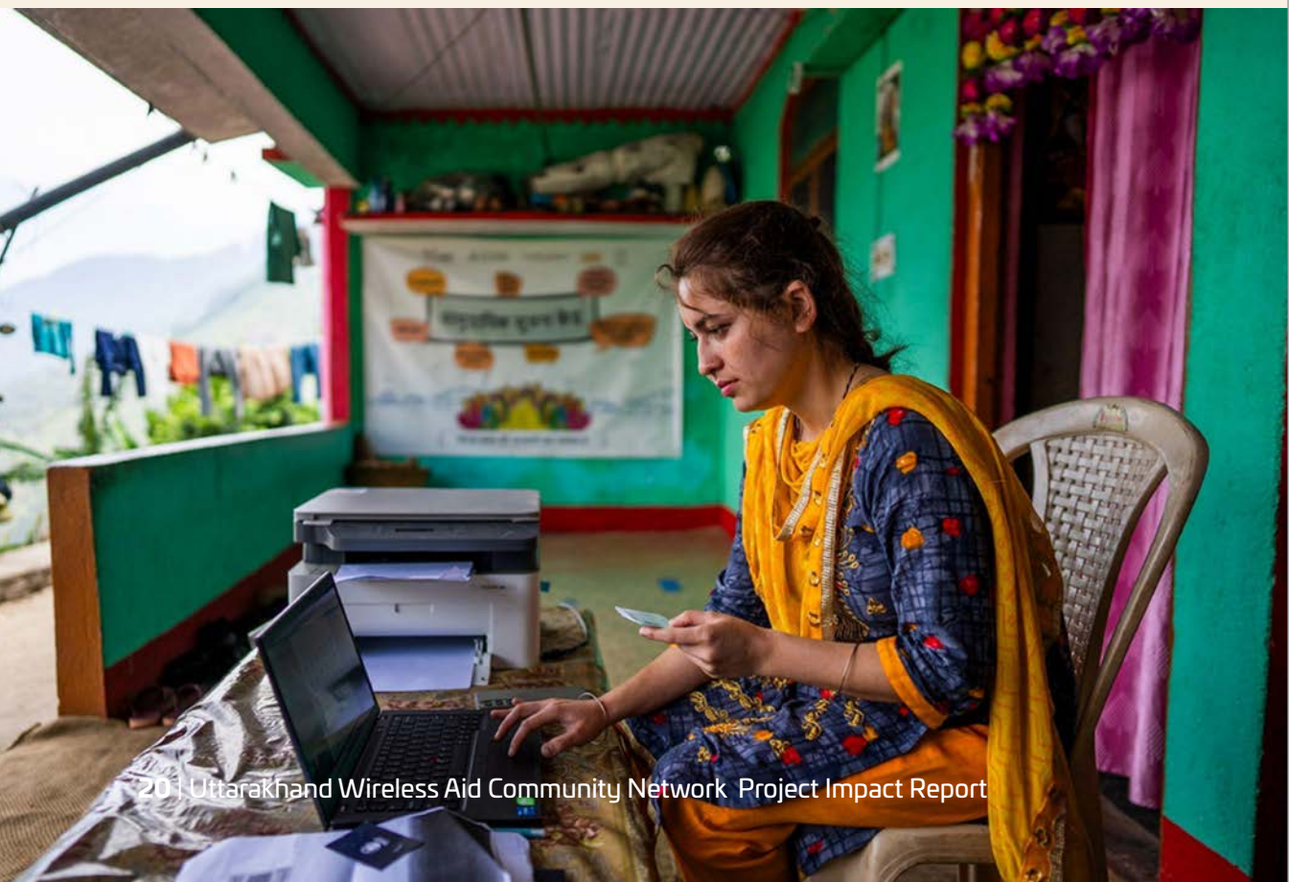
The study also evaluated the suitability of installation materials, including poles, mounting structures, and weatherproof enclosures, to withstand harsh environmental conditions. Strategic site selection was undertaken to identify optimal antenna locations with clear line-of-sight for uninterrupted signal transmission. In addition, terrain mapping and signal testing exercises were conducted to analyse signal propagation patterns and identify physical obstructions such as hills, dense vegetation, and built structures.

DEF Team conducting feasibility study

Selection of Location and Soochnapreneurs

The selection of locations for the centres was undertaken with careful consideration to align with the program's core objectives and maximise benefits for the local community. Each site was carefully evaluated based on several key factors, including geographic accessibility, disaster vulnerability, the lack of existing digital infrastructure, and the potential for community engagement and impact. The intent was to bridge the digital divide in underserved and remote areas where access to essential services, information, and communication channels is limited. Priority was given to regions where the centres could act as vital hubs for digital empowerment, financial inclusion, disaster preparedness, and access to government schemes. The accompanying table illustrates the rationale for selecting each location, reflecting a strategic approach that balances community needs, logistical feasibility, and programmatic impact.

> Strategic site selection and trained Soochnapreneurs to bridge digital gaps and creating local hubs for connectivity



A central pillar of the initiative was the identification, training, and capacity building of local "Soochnapreneurs" (information entrepreneurs), who play a critical role in sustaining last-mile connectivity and delivering digital services within their communities.

Name of Soochna-preneur	Gender	Location (Village)	Population	Reasons for Selection
Pooja Dhami	Female	Bajeti Kalika	450	The area lacks mobile network coverage; frequent landslides disrupt access; very limited transportation facilities, making it isolated during emergencies.
Juhi	Female	Chalma-chilaso	500	Located in a tourist area, but has no mobile network and is highly disaster-prone with recurring landslides and lightning, making information access critical.
Sangita Devi	Female	Dar	500	A tourist hotspot that suffers from no network availability and is prone to cloudbursting, landslides, and lightning, creating high vulnerability during disasters.
Mahima	Female	Nigalpani	500	Faces seasonal migration, which affects continuity of services; low network availability, flood-prone, and lies along a tourist route, needing better communication infrastructure.
Bhagirathi	Female	Rupkhet	1000	Completely lacks network access; regularly affected by landslides and has minimal transportation options, isolating the community in emergencies.

Name of Soochna-preneur	Gender	Location (Village)	Population	Reasons for Selection
Harak Bam	Male	Siniyakhola	600	Identified as a disaster-prone area with frequent landslides and lightning, and requires a communication and service hub for community resilience.
Mansi Sirkhal	Female	Bagicha	800	The area experiences seasonal migration, has poor network availability, and lies on a tourist pathway to the valley; a centre here helps with both communication and community engagement.
Kalsha	Male	Khumati	600	Disaster-prone area affected by cloudbursting, landslides, and lightning; highly vulnerable with limited connectivity and access to emergency services.
Trilok Singh	Male	Linuwa	600	Regularly hit by landslides and lightning; a critical area for intervention due to disaster risks and the need for timely communication and support.
Vikram Singh	Male	Jarajibli	700	Low network availability and seasonal landslides isolate the village; it lacks a digital literacy centre; residents must travel 8 km for basic needs, underscoring the urgency of access to local services.



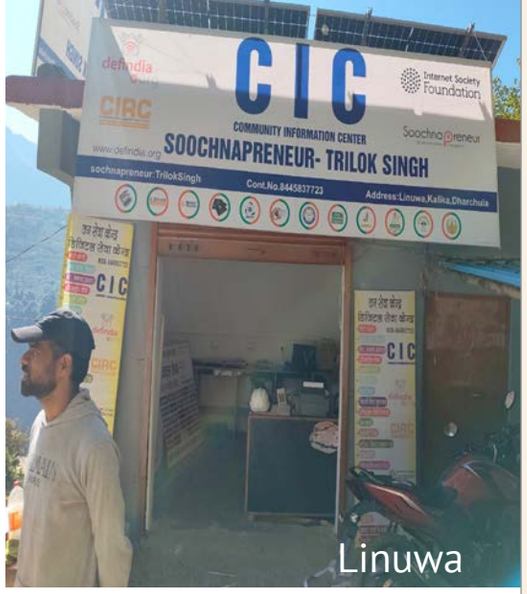








Jarajibli



Linuwa



Bagicha


Bajeti (Kalika)



Siniyakhola


Khumati

Initial Training

To build local capacity, the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) conducted a comprehensive six-day training programme in Dharchula in January 2025. The training brought together selected entrepreneurs from across the block, positioning them as key agents of digital transformation within their communities.

The programme focused on both technical and service delivery aspects, including:

- Setting up and managing internet connectivity across diverse geographical conditions
- Troubleshooting common network and hardware issues
- Use of emergency communication tools, including the Emergency Communication Vehicle
- Accessing and delivering digital governance services (e.g., PAN card, Aadhaar, voter ID)

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Emerging as local leaders driving access and digital transformation through hands-on training, in connectivity, troubleshooting, and digital services



- Utilisation of digital literacy tools such as the START kit and Media and Information Literacy (MIL) kit
- Provision of ancillary services such as printing (including PVC card printing) and digital record management
- Community mobilisation and outreach strategies to increase digital adoption

The training combined theoretical sessions with hands-on practice, live demonstrations, and interactive discussions, ensuring participants gained practical, field-ready skills.

Refresher Training and Strengthening Preparedness

Building on the initial training, a refresher programme was conducted in May 2025 to reinforce learning, address emerging challenges, and enhance the preparedness of Soochnapreneurs.

A key focus of this phase was disaster resilience, reflecting the region's vulnerability to floods, landslides, and extreme weather events. Participants were trained in:

- Using digital tools for early warning dissemination
- Coordinating information flows during emergencies
- Supporting community preparedness and response before, during, and after disasters

The training also served as a platform for peer learning, enabling participants to share experiences, discuss challenges, and collaboratively identify solutions. Interactive methods—including group discussions, simulations, and practical exercises—helped deepen understanding and build confidence.



> Participants learned digital warning tools, emergency coordination, and community preparedness through interactive, peer-driven training exercises

Internet Infrastructure Setup

Following the setup, essential digital assets were distributed to the selected Internet Entrepreneurs, along with hands-on training to ensure effective utilisation. Each centre was equipped with a comprehensive suite of digital tools, including black-and-white and colour printers, biometric machines, lamination machines, and laptops to support a wide range of digital services.

To ensure uninterrupted operations, especially in remote areas, each centre was also provided with a solar power backup system. Additionally, a projector was installed at every centre to facilitate digital literacy sessions and support community mobilisation activities. Internet connectivity solutions were tailored to the specific geographical challenges

> Essential digital tools, solar backup, and tailored connectivity enabled centres to deliver reliable services and strengthen community engagement

of each location, with options such as network boosters, V-SATs, and point-to-point links being deployed to ensure reliable access. The infrastructure setup was further supported by essential furniture, IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) materials for awareness and outreach, and centre branding to enhance visibility and community engagement. This holistic approach has created a functional and recognisable space that not only offers digital services but also fosters learning and empowerment within the community

Community Mobilisation and awareness

In the hilly regions, where access to information and services is often limited, community mobilisation and awareness play a crucial role. Internet Entrepreneurs are bridging the digital divide by empowering rural communities with essential digital skills and awareness. They not only teach people how to use digital tools but also guide them in accessing government schemes, financial services, and online

> Enabling trust, awareness, and participation, helping rural communities access digital tools, government services, and opportunities



resources in a simple and accessible way. By mobilising communities through door-to-door engagement, group sessions, and local outreach, they are building trust and digital confidence in remote areas. Their efforts are ensuring that even in the most underserved regions, people are informed, connected, and capable of improving their lives through digital empowerment.

Various governance camps were held in the region, depending on community needs. Before organising the government scheme camps, three entrepreneurs carried out awareness activities in their villages to inform people about the upcoming camps. They went door-to-door, spoke with villagers, and shared details about the date, time, and services available at the camp. These efforts helped ensure that more people could benefit from the services.

During the camps, several important services were provided, including PAN card creation and correction, Ayushman Bharat card registration, family register updates, issuance of permanent residence and caste certificates, e-Shram card registration, and employment registration.

Digital Literacy Session at CIRC

An impactful digital literacy session was successfully conducted by the Internet Entrepreneurs (IEs), reaching 138 participants through in-person training: 62 male and 76 female learners. In addition to on-the-ground engagement, an online session attracted 270 participants, reflecting growing interest and the need for digital skills within the community. The primary goal of these sessions was to equip participants with essential computer literacy and basic digital skills that are increasingly important in everyday life.

The training covered a range of foundational topics, including operating a computer, using the internet safely, accessing digital services, and handling basic online transactions. Special focus was given to using government service portals, digital communication tools, and understanding online safety and privacy. These skills are especially valuable in rural and remote areas where access to such knowledge is often limited.

Youth participation was particularly encouraging, as many young individuals see digital literacy as a gateway to new opportunities in education, employment, and entrepreneurship. By building confidence and competence in using digital, prepare for the demands of the modern workforce and become more active participants in the digital economy.

Overall, the sessions not only built digital awareness but also laid the foundation for long-term empowerment by enabling individuals—especially women and youth—to become digitally confident and self-reliant.

Impact and Success Case Stories

Gaur Singh, 85 years old, Kalika Linuwa, Dharchula

Gaur Singh is a 85 year old man residing in Kalika Linuwa Village in Dharchula. Due to age-old and mobility issues, he found it difficult to travel to bank for his day-to-day work. Through the Uttarakhand Wireless Aid Project, when the Community Information Centre was established by the Soochnapreneur, he was able to withdraw money from his bank account online without travelling to the bank. Gaur Singh was initially hesitant to withdraw money using his biometrics and the Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS), but later felt relieved to use it. He no longer needed to travel to the bank, and whenever he needed to withdraw money, he would go to the Centre Information Centre to withdraw cash, which he believes has brought him a lot of relief.

"I was hesitant about biometrics, but now easily withdraw money at my nearby centre, making life simpler and relieving"

- Gaur Singh





Jiven Singh Bisht, 40 years old, Dar, Dharchula

Jivesh Singh has been visiting the Community Information Centre in Village Dar, Dharchula, for essential government services. Recently, Mr Jiven Singh Bisht visited the center for the registration of his new e-Shram Card. Earlier, due to the absence of a digital service centre in the village, Mr. Bisht had to travel approximately 60 kilometres to Dharchula town to access such services. This not only required a full day's time but also involved significant travel expenses.

With the establishment of the center in the village, he was able to complete his e-Shram registration locally in a convenient and timely manner. The presence of the center has helped him save both time and money, while ensuring access to important social security benefits under the e-Shram scheme. This example highlights how the Community Information Center is reducing the digital and service access gap in remote hill regions and strengthening last-mile delivery of government schemes.

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Center has saved me time, money, and effort while ensuring I can access important benefits without leaving my village

Mahima Sonal, 25 years old, Nigalpani, Dharchula

Mahima Sonal, as a young women soochnapreneur, successfully organised at the Community Information Centre in Village Nigalpani, Dharchula, to provide essential digital and government-related services to the local community at their doorstep. During the camp, beneficiaries received support for Aadhaar address updates, new e-Shram card registrations, and assistance with UCC certificate-related services. Her active commitment was reflected in the participation of community members, especially women, who benefited from the availability of services within the village. Young women soochnapreneurs like Mahima play a crucial role in strengthening last-mile access to government schemes, minimizing travel burdens for villagers, and enhancing digital inclusion in remote areas of Dharchula.

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I feel proud supporting my community bringing essential services closer, helping women access opportunities, and making everyday life easier for everyone.





Ham Radio License Certification

In Dharchula block, SoochnaPreneurs are steadily building local communication capacity through HAM radio certification. So far, 7 individuals have obtained their licenses, while 4 are in the process. This progress highlights a growing pool of trained community members equipped to ensure reliable communication in remote, high-altitude areas where conventional networks are often unreliable. Such certification is especially valuable for local people, as it empowers them with critical skills for emergency response, improves disaster preparedness, and fosters self-reliance. By enabling communities to manage their own communication systems, it not only addresses immediate connectivity challenges but also strengthens long-term resilience and confidence.

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The certification, boosts emergency communication, disaster readiness, and resilient, self-reliant remote community networks

SoochnaPreneurs at 9th Community Network Exchange



Mansi, a SoochnaPreneur from Dharchula, joined the panel on Empowering Rural Changemakers: Lessons from SoochnaPreneurs, to share her powerful journey. Coming from a remote village, she spoke candidly about the harsh living conditions and daily challenges faced by her community. She highlighted how becoming a SoochnaPreneur has not only transformed her own life but also brought a sense of hope and possibility to those around her, even amidst the difficult realities of Dharchula.



Mahima, a SoochnaPreneur from Dharchula, participated in a panel on Building Equitable Community Networks: A Women-Led Approach, where she shared how digital access has transformed her life and the lives of other women, creating better livelihood opportunities and building confidence in using and managing digital tools.

Impact in Motion



The documentary captures the harsh ground realities in Dharchula, affected by disasters and gaps in connectivity and access. It also highlights how the DEF team conducted an elaborate feasibility study to identify these gaps and build resilient connectivity infrastructure, empowering communities through training, mobilization, and meaningful impact.



Community training and workshops formed a key component of the project, aimed at raising awareness and promoting safe digital practices. These sessions focused on cyber fraud prevention, basic digital literacy, and navigating information in the online world. Community members actively participated, asked questions, and engaged in media and information literacy activities, strengthening their understanding and confidence in using digital tools safely and responsibly.

Conclusion and Way Forward

The Uttarakhand Wireless Aid Project demonstrates that bridging the digital divide in remote and high-altitude regions is both achievable and impactful when connectivity solutions are combined with community engagement and local capacity-building. The initiative has not only enabled access to digital services but has also fostered confidence, reduced physical barriers to essential services, and created new opportunities for local participation in the digital ecosystem. By embedding services within communities, the project has laid a strong foundation for inclusive and decentralized digital access.

Sustainability of the established centres is intrinsically linked to their integration into the daily needs of the community. As these centres continue to function as access points for essential services—such as government schemes, financial transactions, and digital documentation—their relevance and usage are expected to remain consistent. The involvement of trained local operators further strengthens this sustainability, as it creates ownership, accountability, and a direct economic incentive to maintain and expand services.

The diversification of services offered through these centres will play a critical role in ensuring their long-term viability. As demand evolves, centres can continue to expand into areas such as teleconsultation, online education support, and assisted e-governance services, thereby increasing both utility and revenue potential. This adaptability ensures that the centres remain responsive to community needs rather than becoming static infrastructure.

> I feel proud supporting my community bringing essential services closer, helping women access opportunities, and making everyday life easier for everyone.

In parallel, sustained digital engagement within the community will reinforce continued usage. As more individuals become comfortable with digital platforms, the reliance on these centres is likely to deepen, particularly among populations that initially faced barriers to adoption. This gradual normalization of digital access is essential for maintaining the momentum generated by the project.

Technological resilience also underpins sustainability. The use of context-appropriate solutions that can operate in challenging terrain and low-resource settings ensures that services remain functional despite environmental and infrastructural constraints. Continued maintenance, local troubleshooting capacity, and simple, reliable systems will help minimize disruptions and support uninterrupted service delivery.

Overall, the project's long-term impact will be sustained through a combination of community ownership, service relevance, economic viability, and technological adaptability. Together, these factors position the centres not merely as project outputs, but as enduring community assets capable of supporting inclusive digital access and contributing to ongoing socio-economic development in remote regions.



SoochnaPreneur Centre, Dharchula



A fun informative session on online safety



Digital Literacy Sessions at Local School



Rural women learning basic of digital literacy via visual interatcion



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