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Digital classrooms: Transforming education for marginalised communities



KORVIRAKSHAND

In an increasingly interconnected world, education remains the most powerful tool to break the cycle of poverty and inequality. However, for marginalised communities, access to quality education

often remains a distant dream. The advent of digital classrooms is rapidly altering this landscape, bridging the gap between privilege and disadvantage. At the Jaago Foundation, we have witnessed firsthand how technology can transform lives, offering opportunities to those who might

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otherwise be left behind.

Since its inception in 2007, Jaago Foundation has been committed to providing quality education to underprivileged children in Bangladesh. Recognising the limitations posed by geography, socio-economic barriers, and a shortage of qualified teachers in remote areas, we launched our Digital School Program in 2011. This initiative was born out of necessity, driven by the belief that every child, regardless of their background, deserves access to quality education. Our digital classrooms connect trained educators from urban centres with students in remote, underserved communities using video conferencing technology and interactive digital tools. This approach not only addresses the scarcity of qualified teachers in rural areas but also ensures that students receive a consistent, high-quality education aligned with national standards.

The impact of digital classrooms on marginalised communities is profound. In regions where traditional schools are few and far between, digital platforms eliminate the barriers of distance and infrastructure. Students who once walked miles to attend makeshift classrooms now access lessons from the safety and comfort of local learning centres equipped with basic digital infrastructure. The flexibility offered by digital education also allows for personalised learning, enabling students to progress at their own pace—a critical factor for those who may need to balance education with work or family responsibilities.

Beyond accessibility, digital classrooms foster inclusivity. For children with disabilities, traditional classrooms often lack the resources and infrastructure needed to support their learning effectively. Digital education, however,

offers adaptable tools and technologies—such as screen readers, captioning, and customised learning software—that cater to diverse needs, making education truly inclusive. Moreover, digital classrooms can help break down gender barriers in education. In conservative communities where girls face cultural restrictions on attending school, online learning offers a discreet, flexible alternative, empowering them to pursue their education without compromising cultural norms.

Globally, several initiatives mirror the successes and challenges we've encountered. In India, the government's "Diksha" platform provides e-learning content tailored to different state curricula, supporting millions of students and teachers. The platform includes interactive lessons, assessments, and resources accessible even on low-bandwidth networks, making it particularly effective in rural areas. In Kenya, the 'BRCK' initiative has introduced rugged, solar-powered tablets in rural schools, ensuring that children in off-grid areas remain connected to the wider world of knowledge. Similarly, in Australia, community-wide Wi-Fi projects in remote Aboriginal communities have transformed not just education but also healthcare and economic opportunities, showcasing the ripple effect of digital connectivity.

However, the success of digital classrooms hinges on more than just technology. Effective teacher training is paramount. At Jaago, we invest heavily in equipping our educators with the skills needed to navigate digital platforms and create engaging, interactive lessons. Teachers are trained not only in the technical aspects of e-learning but also in new pedagogical approaches that foster

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