



IT Students Below the Poverty Line Get Help in Rajasthan, India

Government sponsorship is encouraging young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to get employable skills.

Paybacks for Job Skills



"Computer education was a luxury I could not afford. I found a decent job with the help of this course, and I encourage my friends and other students to enroll in this program."

Buddhi Prakash Tomar
IT assistant, Airtel

Rakesh Kumar's parents never expected their disabled eldest son to get a job in IT. With an annual income of less than US\$500, their family was considered below the poverty line (BPL), meaning the prospects for any child, let alone one with mobility problems, would be severely limited.

Thanks to a collaboration between the Cisco Networking Academy® program and the government of Rajasthan, Kumar has become the main breadwinner in his family, with an income of \$52 a month.

The BPL funding scheme started in 2008 after government officials and Networking Academy representatives signed two memoranda of understanding. The resulting program offers refunded tuition costs for BPL students who successfully complete the Cisco® IT Essentials course. These funds are allocated to approximately 90 students each year.

The fact that students initially pay the tuition fees, and that this payment is not reimbursed until they have completed their studies, serves as an incentive to attend and finish their courses.

Localized Learning

This program has allowed more than 150 people from disadvantaged backgrounds to complete the IT Essentials course at the Centre for Electronic Governance (CEG), a regional academy in Rajasthan's capital, Jaipur. The 90-day, 70-hour Networking Academy curriculum is mandatory for all 400 or so CEG students and since 2008, students have been able to complete the course in Hindi.

Earning the Networking Academy course completion certificates has helped a number of poor but gifted students find relatively well-paying jobs, including Buddhi Prakash Tomar, who now earns about \$50 a month at Airtel, \$10 more than his father ever made. As for Kumar, his dedication has inspired the India and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Networking Academy team to donate 70 percent of the course fees he needs to complete all four courses of the Cisco CCNA® Exploration curriculum.

Future Plans

As a result of this program's success at CEG, it has been adopted by another Rajasthan public education center, Engineering College Bikaner, where 30 BPL students are studying the Networking Academy curriculum. And Lokesh Mehra, regional manager for corporate responsibility in Cisco South Asia, hopes it will be introduced into Rajasthan's other state-run engineering colleges. "They should all be offering BPL," he says.

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco Networking Academy, please visit www.cisco.com/go/netacad.

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