Internet Roshni

Stories of Digital Empowerment of Tea Tribe & Adivasi Communities in West Bengal and Assam



What's in this book?

The Museum of Digital Society is the storytelling arm of the Digital Empowerment Foundation: a community-centred learning ecosystem that documents the journey of digital development in India, forming a living archive of real-world stories showing how digital tools can transform lives.

This book showcases innovative and people-driven prototypes for ensuring last mile Internet access. The museum as a repository links communities to each other, contributing to and drawing from the larger surrounding knowledge economy.

Thus, we seek to:

- **To document the digital journeys of marginalized communities, represent the voices of underserved communities and provide a platform for dialogue and collaboration**
- **To reflect on how digital technologies and communities of people shape each other.**
- **To foster empathy and understanding through storytelling and creative media.**

About the Program

Internet Roshni is an initiative of the Digital Empowerment Foundation and Internet Society Foundation. This program focuses on access and inclusion of the Tea Tribe and Adivasi Community in Assam and West Bengal. This community has one of the lowest socio-economic indicators.

The Covid-19 pandemic affected the community as the production and demand decreased so the wages became irregular. With no steady, sustainable, affordable access to the internet, digital resources, opportunities, and welfare announcements, the community is further excluded and now faces challenges for response, recovery, and resilience.

With the current focus on shifting all information, and services digitally and online, the community needs major access and digital inclusion support and mainstreaming.

Among the unconnected communities across the world and India, the communities who have been traditionally working in Tea Gardens, are mostly tribals of various origins, dialects and are remotely located, mostly unconnected from the power of information, knowledge and rights.

This project is an opportunity to finally get a chance to engineer a program that is designed to create a model to link the tea garden communities to the information world and knowledge economy.

The model is simple: identify a community leader, preferably a woman with entrepreneurial knack, train and capacitate her in all possible digital tools and linkages, give her connectivity to digital infrastructure, and means to empower at least 2,000 community members around her in one year.

We have started with 150 Internet Roshni Entrepreneurs at as many locations in Assam and West Bengal.

Impact at a Glance

2 States:

150 Tea Plantations

150 Wifi-Digital Centers

2500 youth engaged with access to information, opportunities in livehood, employment and entrepreneurship

150,000 people impacted.

Impact at a Glance

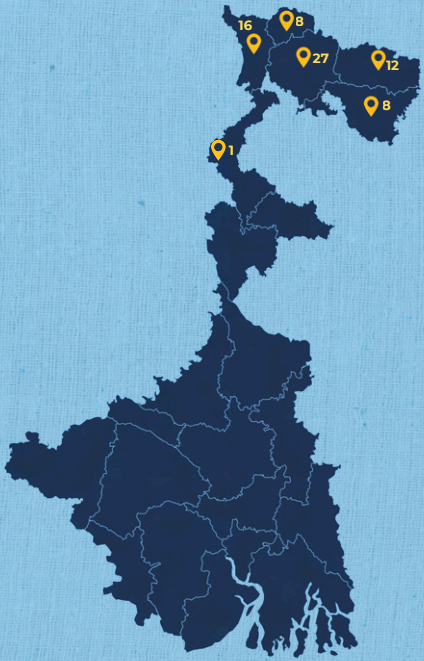
The population of Tea Tribe & Adivasi community is estimated to be around 7 million or nearly 20% of the total population in Assam, and around 5 million or 6% of the population of West Bengal (2011 Census).

The community, especially the younger generation, has been facing challenges in accessing better education, livelihood, skills and opportunities.

By providing access to technology, community internet centres are helping to bridge the digital divide and reduce disparities in access to information and resources. These centres are an essential resource for individuals and families who do not have access to the internet or other technology resources individually or at home.

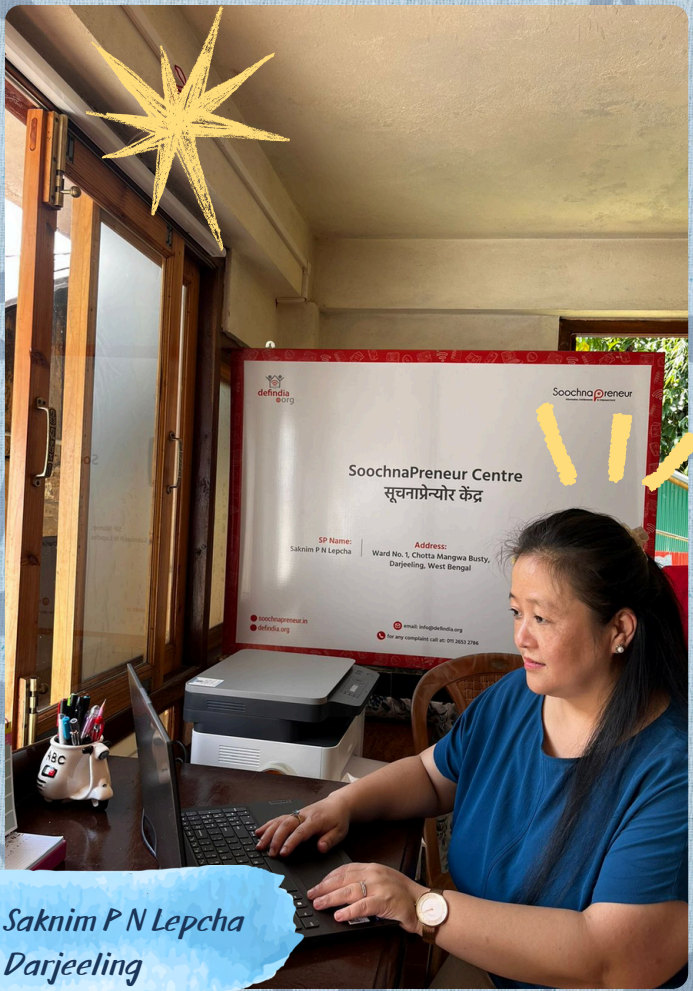
Females, and adolescents/ students are the most benefited group of this project. Given the remoteness of most of the tea estates, the CILs are becoming an essential resource for the communities to access critical information for survival.

West Bengal





Anisha Chhetri
Bong, Kalimpong



Saknim P N Lepcha
Darjeeling



Bunu Oraon
Karbala Tea Garden, Jalpaiguri



Dipika Deb Barman,
Vetaguri, Cooch Behar



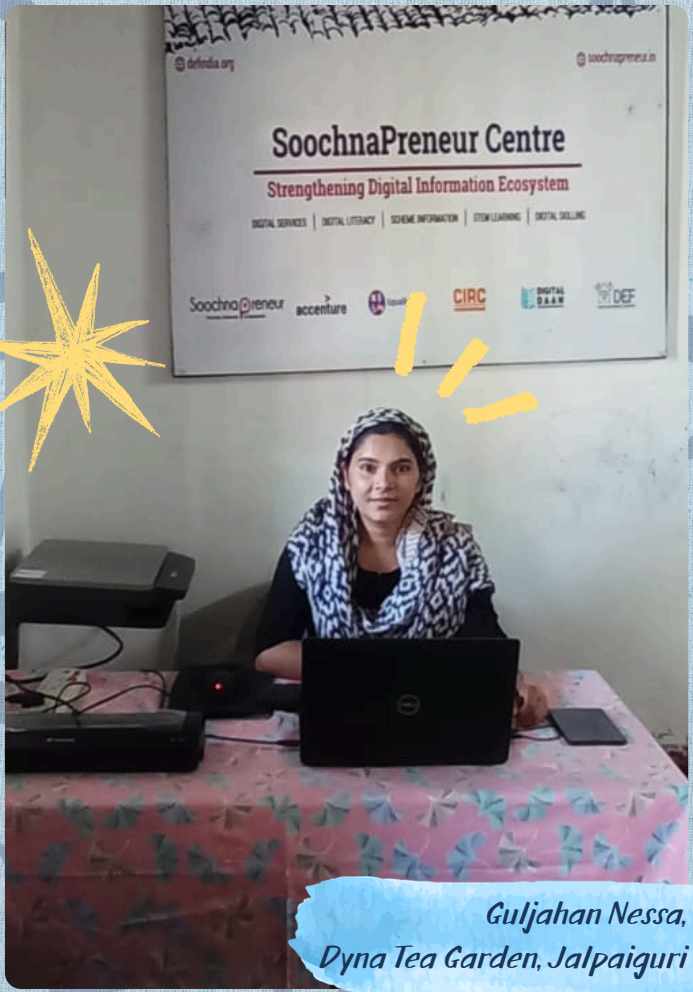
Binita Toppo
Gairkata Tea Garden, Jalpaiguri



Ditya Rai,
Singbuli Tea Garden,
Mirik Darjeeling



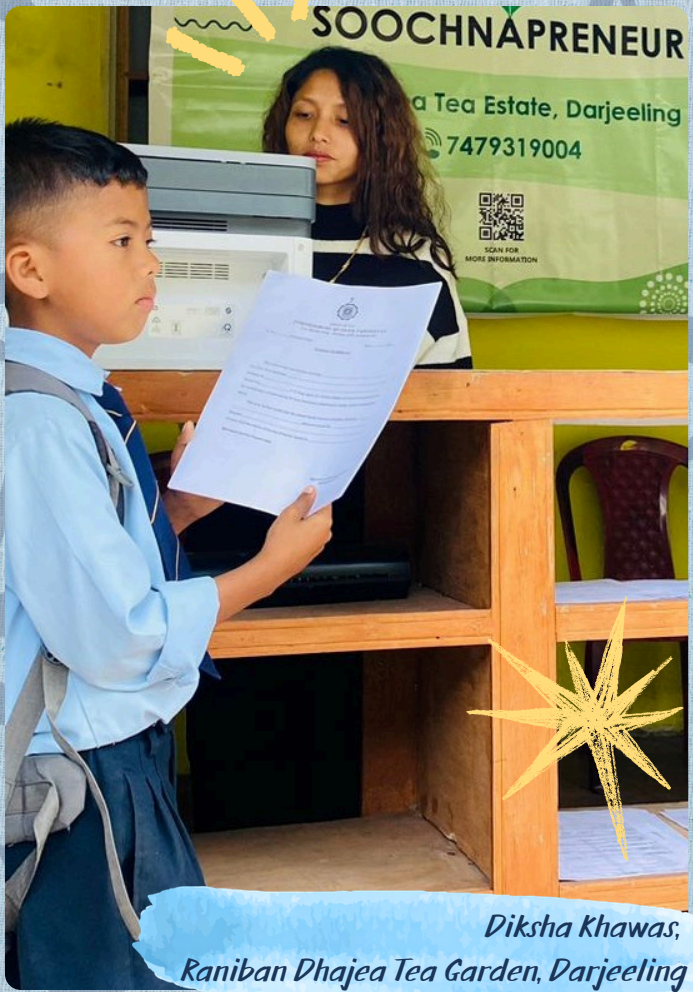
Aparna Oroan,
Coochbihar Tea Garden
Barro Shoulmari, Coochbehar



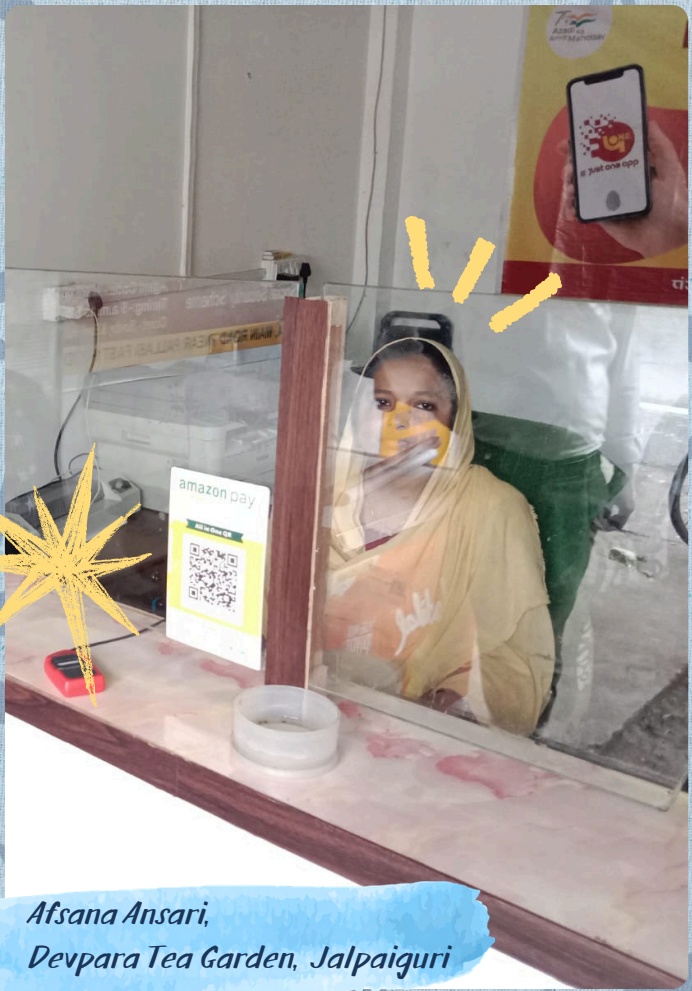
Guljahan Nessa,
Dyna Tea Garden, Jalpaiguri



Binita Tanti,
Lohagarh Tea Garden, Chenga
Panighata, Darjeeling



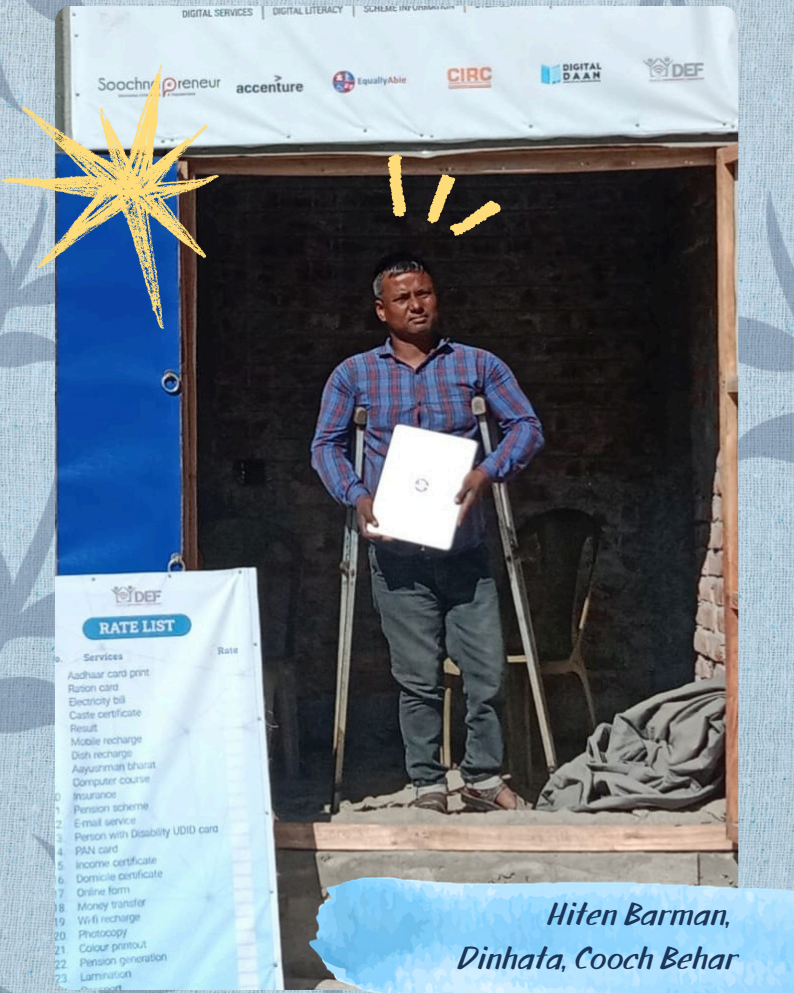
Diksha Khawas,
Raniban Dhajea Tea Garden, Darjeeling



Afsana Ansari,
Devpara Tea Garden, Jalpaiguri



Anisha Rai
Lower Salimbong, Kalimpong



Hiten Barman,
Dinhata, Cooch Behar



Dipali Baraik
Jabra Tea Garden
Naxalbari Darjeeling



Diya Paswan

Manbari Tea Garden, Jalpaiguri



Farida Parvin

Banarhat Tea Garden, Jalpaiguri



Manorajini Minj,
Kadambini Tea Garden, Alipurduar



Gomadevi Newar, Totopara,
Alipurduar, West Bengal



Kabita Oroan
Tasati Tea Estate
Alipurduar



Lila Paswan,
Karbala, Jalpaiguri



Lilima Toppo
Sayadabad Tea Garden



Maheshwari Chik Baraik,
Moraghat Tea Garden, Jalpaiguri



Sonam Tamang,
Purbong, Kalimpong



Mintu Bhadra,
Cooch Behar



Maya Kumari Jha
Chunabhati Tea Garden Jalpaiguri



Mehar Nazmi,
Lakhipara Tea Garden,
Jalpaiguri



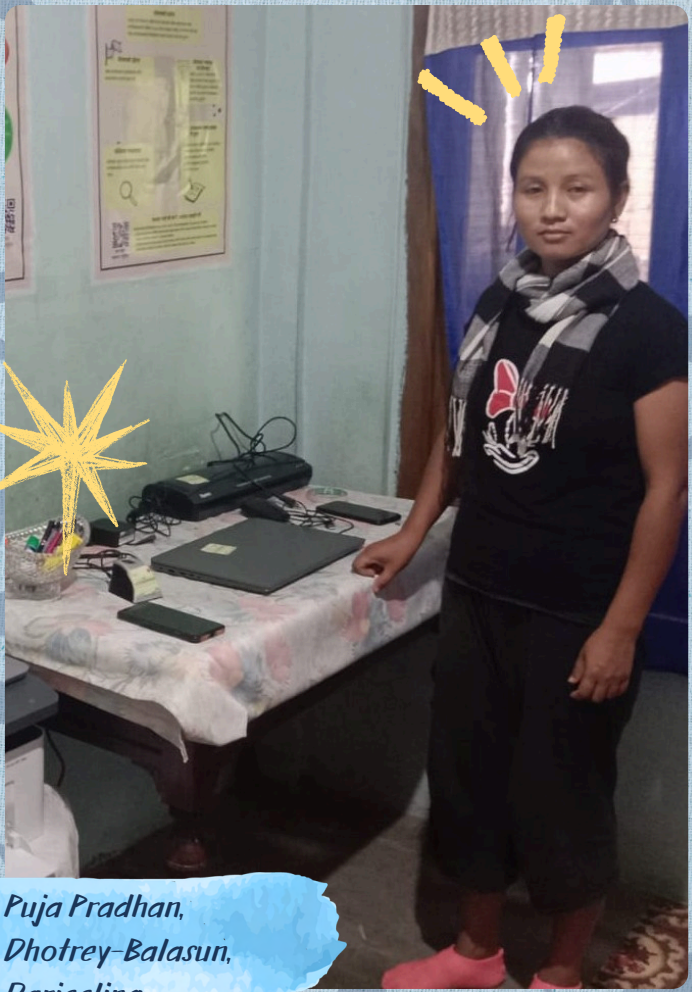
Namita Pradhan,
Relli Mission Tar
Kalimpong



Nilima Shaw,
Mujnai Tea Garden,
Alipurduar,



Neha Baraik Debijhora
Uttar Dinajpur



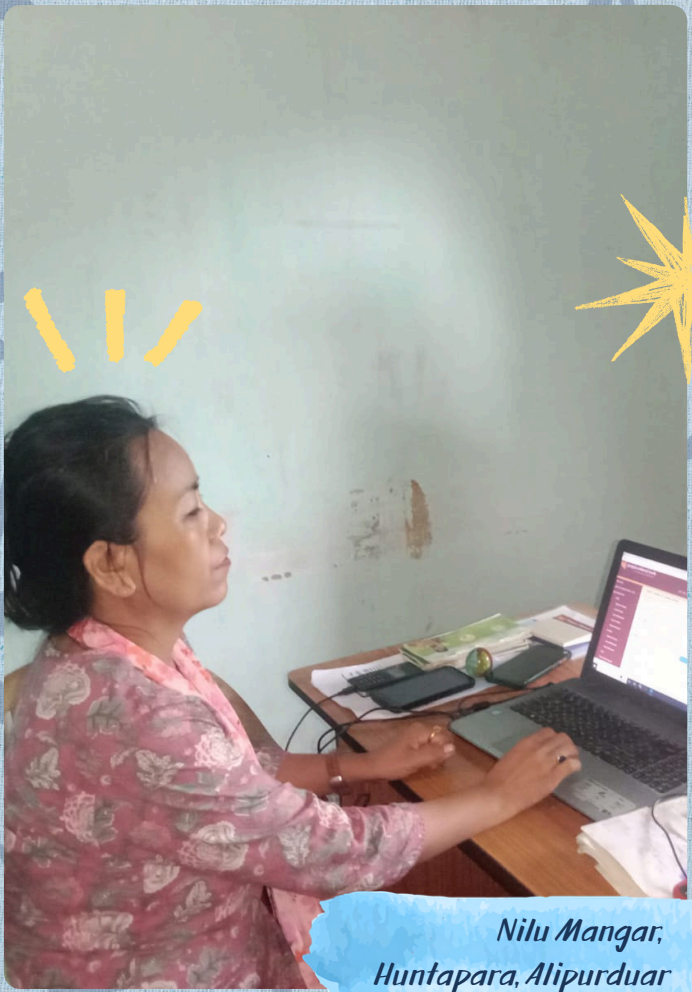
Puja Pradhan,
Dhotrey-Balasun,
Darjeeling



Neha Khond
Marionbarie Tea Estate
Karshiong Darjeeling



Nikhat Jabee Ansari
Binnaguri Tea Estate
Jalpaiguri



Nilu Mangar,
Huntapara, Alipurduar



Oliva Barla
Gopalpur Tea Garden, Alipurduar



Passang Lepcha,
Gitdabling, Khashmahal,
Kalimpong



Pooja Khawas,
Linge Tea Garden,, Darjeeling



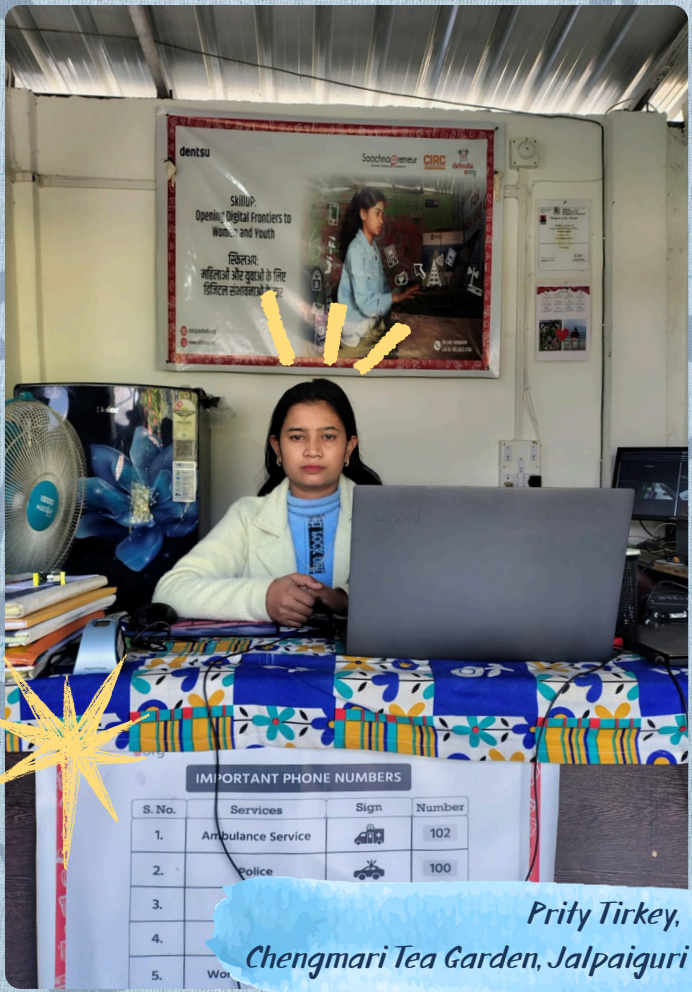
Rabbina Yasmin,
Jateswar, Alipurduar



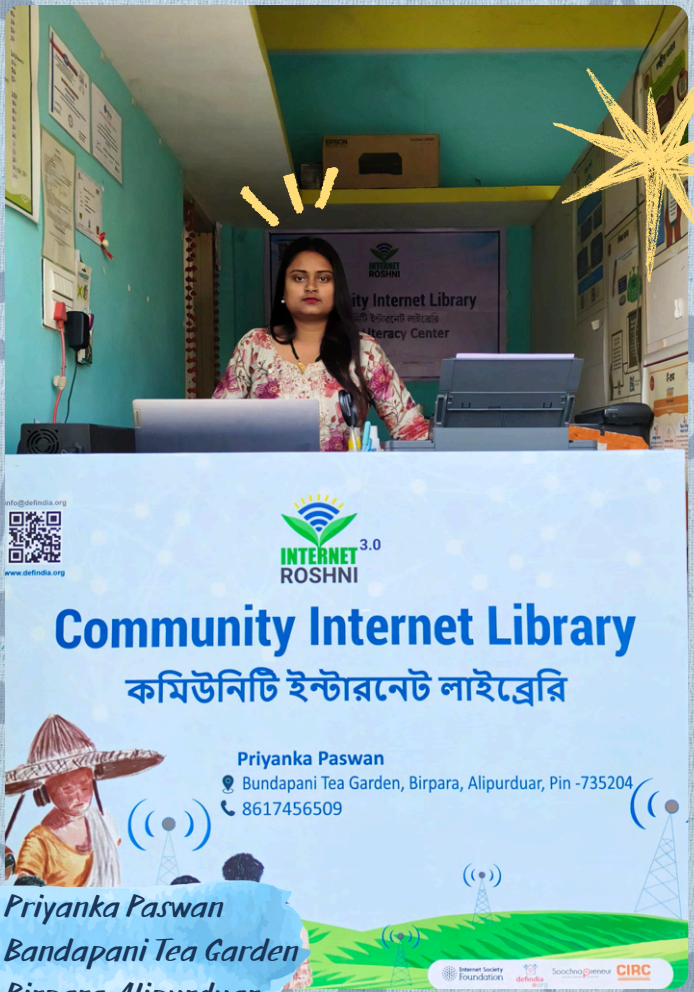
Poonam Tamang
Murmah Tea Garden
Mirik Darjeeling

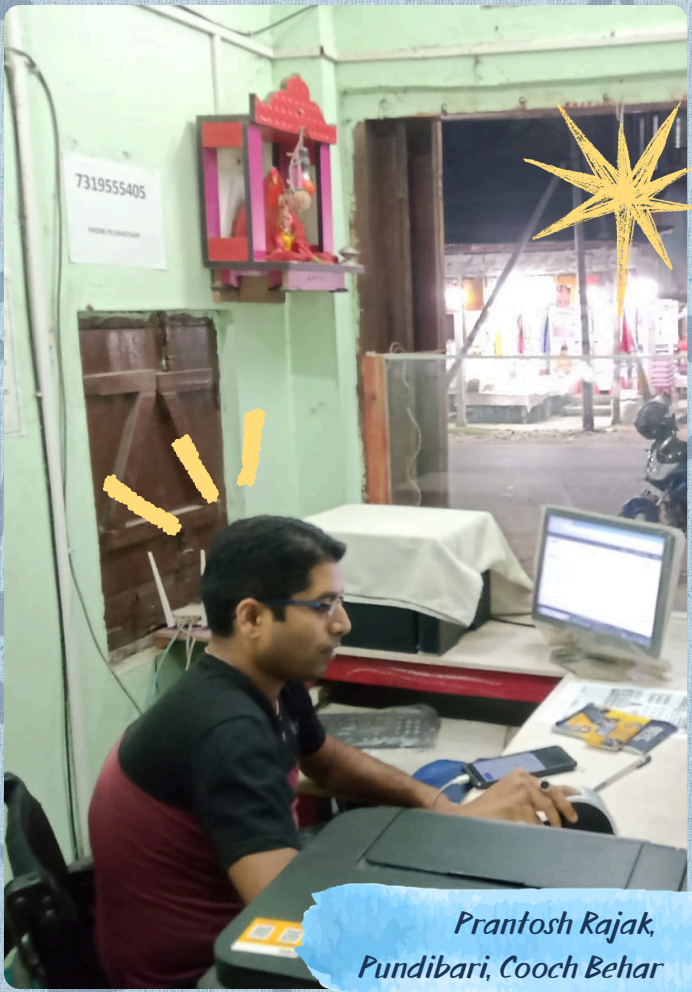


Prasanna Gurung
Lower Salimbong
Kalimpong



Prity Tirkey,
Chengmari Tea Garden, Jalpaiguri

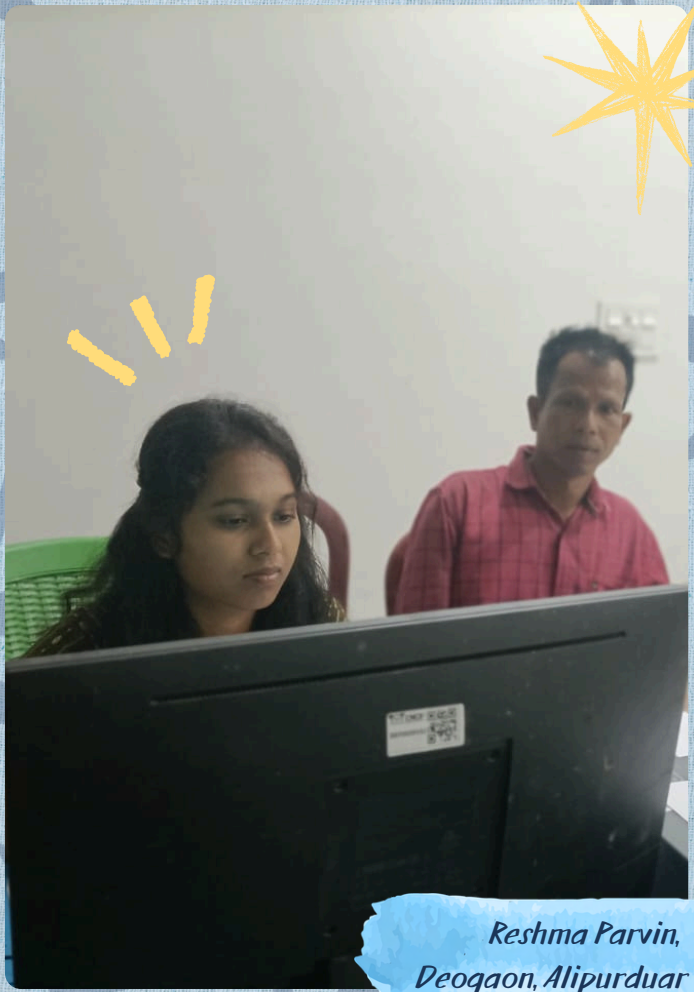

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Community Internet Library
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Priyanka Paswan
Bandapani Tea Garden
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Prantosh Rajak,
Pundibari, Cooch Behar



Rita Munda Oraon,
Mogolkata Tea Estate,
Jalpaiguri



Reshma Parvin,
Deogaon, Alipurduar



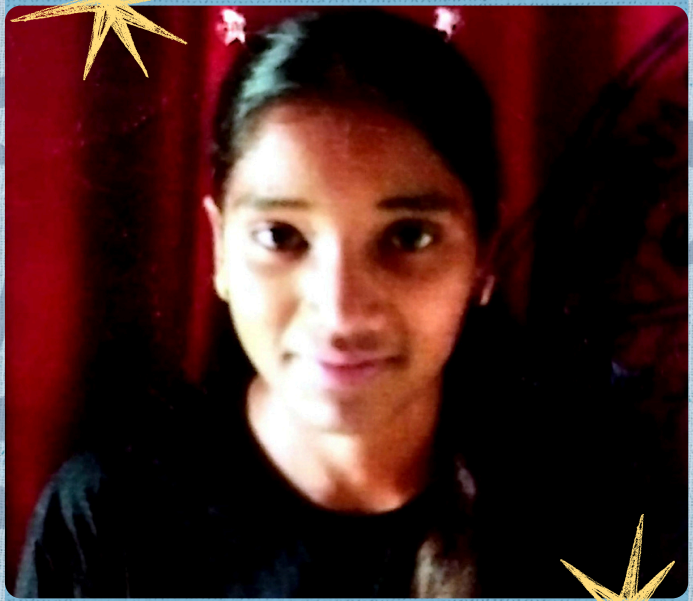
Puja Barwar,
Dalgaon Tea Garden,
Alipurduar



Rista Tamang
Tea Garden Birpara
Alipurduar



Rajkishori Tigga,
Chengmari Tea Garden,
Jalpaiguri



Anushka Mahali,
Huldibari Tea Garden,
Jalpaiguri



Ranjana Subba,
Kalimpong



Sukhajit Bhawal,
Cooch Behar



Rishita Chettri
Dhuseni Gaon,
Mirik, Darjeeling



Babita Kumari Giri
Telipara, Jalpaiguri,



Sati Kujur,
Binnaguri Tea Estate
Jalpaiguri



Saddam Hossain,
Cooch Behar



Sahnaj Nessa,
Sonakhuli, Jalpaiguri



Riya Oraon,
Redbank Tea Garden, Jalpaiguri



Roji Khatun,
Rheabari Tea Estate,
Jalpaiguri



Sabetan Begum
Palashbari Tea Garden
Jalpaiguri



Roma Routh,
New Doors Tea Garden,
Jalpaiguri



Tulsi Chala
Dalimkote Tea Garden
Malbazar Jalpaiguri



Swadikcha Rai

Sourenee Bazar, Mirik Darjeeling



Shushila Khora,
Gargenda Tea Estate,
Alipurduar



Shiuli Barman,
Cooch Behar



Sonika Chik Baraik
Hope Tea Garden
Nagrakata Jalpaiguri



Sudeshna Kujur,
Binnaguri, Jalpaiguri



Swayam Pradhan,
Mundakotie Tea Estate, Darjeeling



Swapna Tirkey,
Malbazar, Jalpaiguri



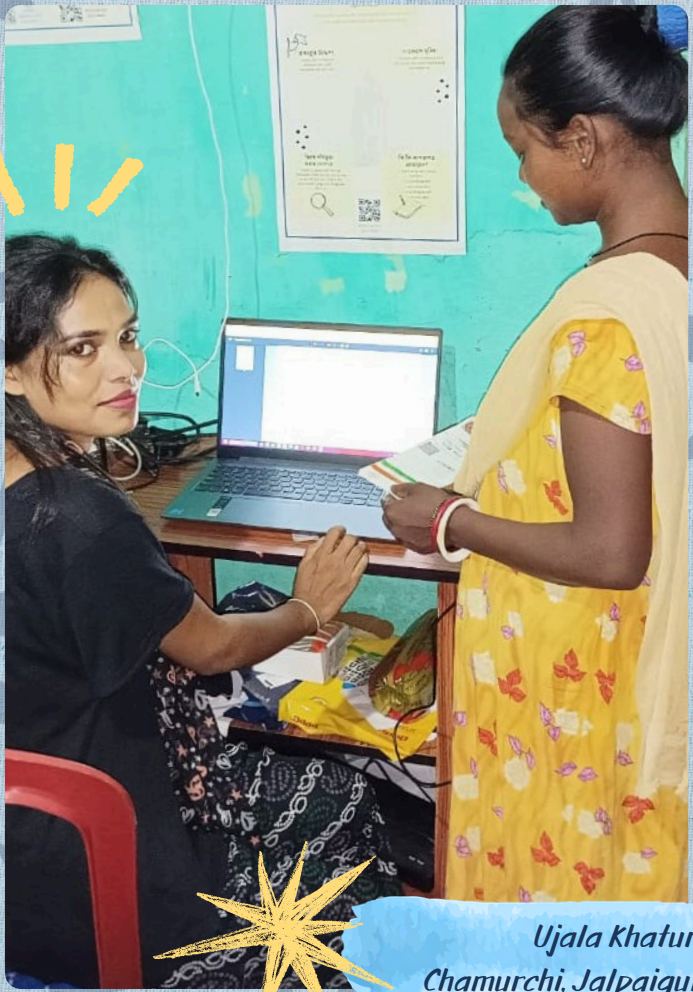
Tanuja Rai
Phulguri Tea Garden,
Mirik, Darjeeling



Sabita Joshi Dudhey
Karsiong Darjeeling

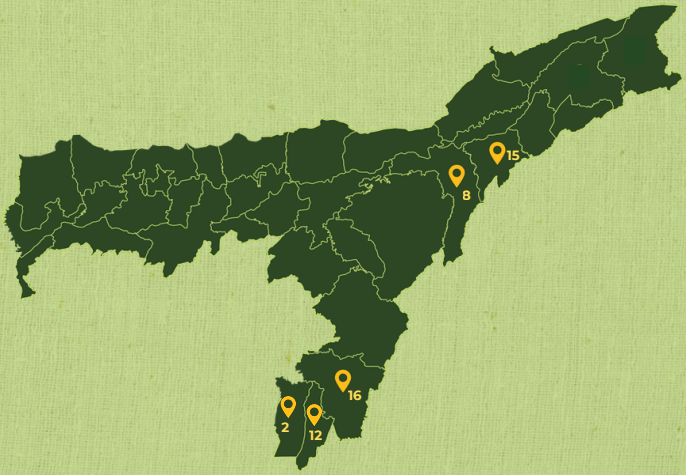


Yesmin Lepcha,
Todey-Tangta, Kalimpong



Ujala Khatun,
Chamurchi, Jalpaiguri

Assam

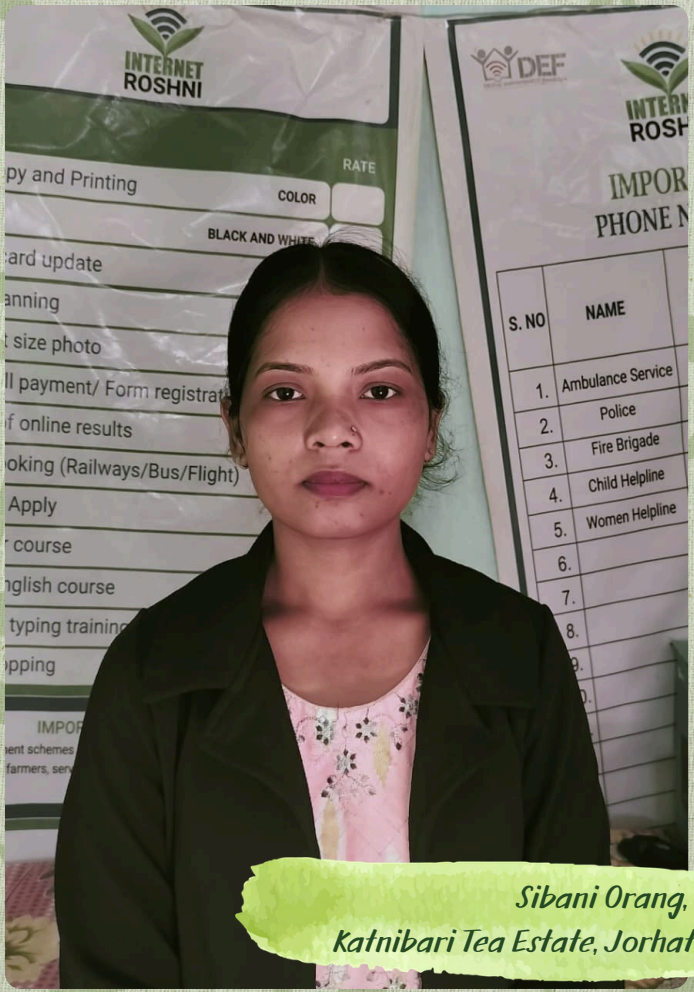




Rita Barhoi Murah,
Hendurting Tea Estate, Golaghat



Gitashree Saikia
Thurajan Tea Estate, Golaghat



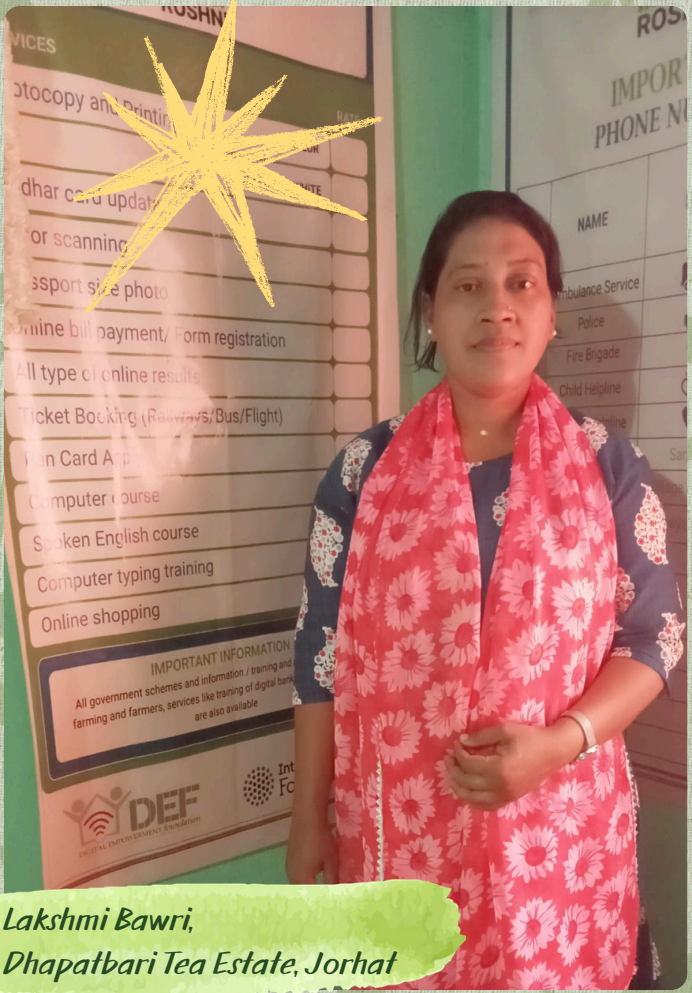
Sibani Orang,
Katnibari Tea Estate, Jorhat



Junali Patar,
Borfolong Tea Estate, Golaghat



Shua Begum Mazumder
Kanakpur, Cachar



Lakshmi Bawri,
Dhapatbari Tea Estate, Jorhat



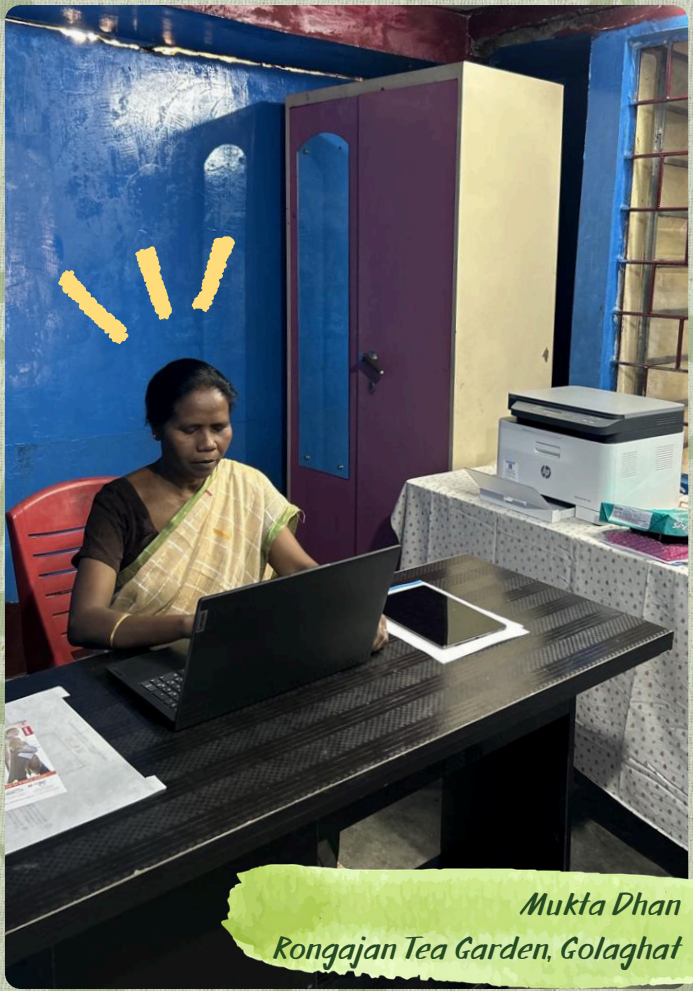
Anar Sing Gaour
Lowairpoa, Sribhumi



Abjal Hussain Barbhuiya,
Lala, Hailakandi



Dibakar Bhoumji
Elanpur Tea Estate, Cachar



Mukta Dhan

Rongajan Tea Garden, Golaghat

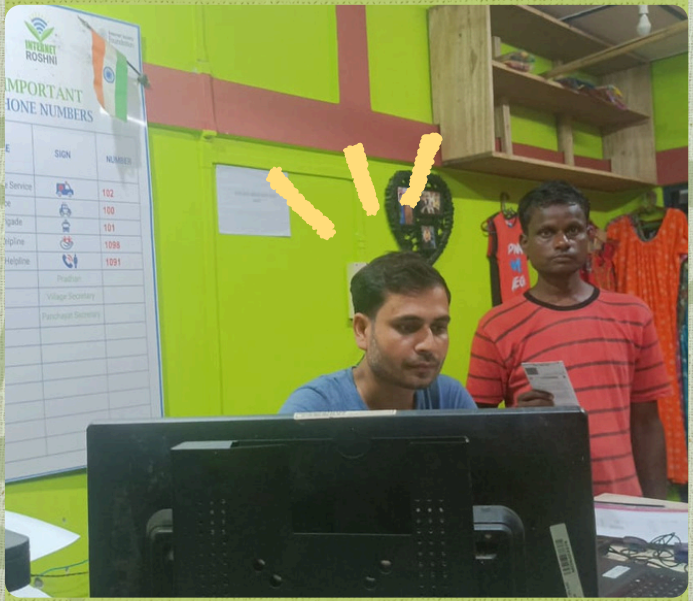


Bijoya Projapati
Behul, Hailakandi



Hardik Gour

Manipur Tea Estate, Hailakandi



Chabdra Shekar Dubey
Dikush Grant , Cachar



Rupali Keot,
Ghaladhary Tea Estate, Golaghat



Akash Patnayak,
Kothalgoorie Tea Estate, Jorhat



Anu Longa Lakra,
Dholaguri Tea Estate, Golaghat



Biliyom Tanti,
Hilikha Tea Estate , Jorhat

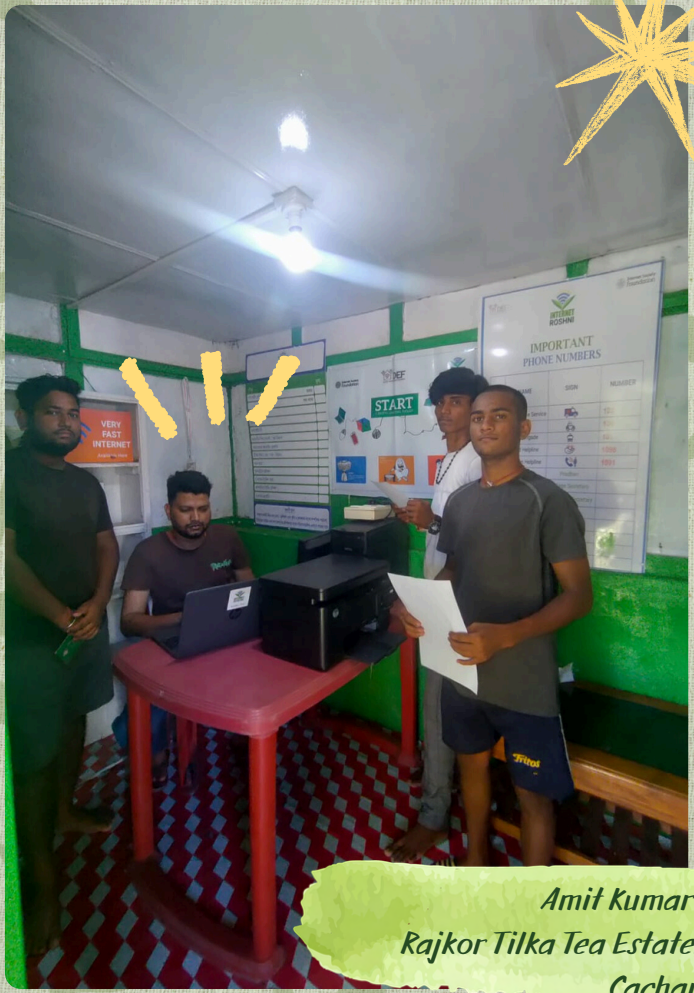


Anita Urang,
Abhayjan Tea Estate, Golaghat



Mohesh Mahili

Tyroon Tea Estate, Jorhat



Amit Kumar
Rajkor Tilka Tea Estate,
Cachar



Pankaj Dusad,
Rangajan Tea Estate, Jorhat



Gayatri Tanti,
Kasojan Tea Estate, Jorhat



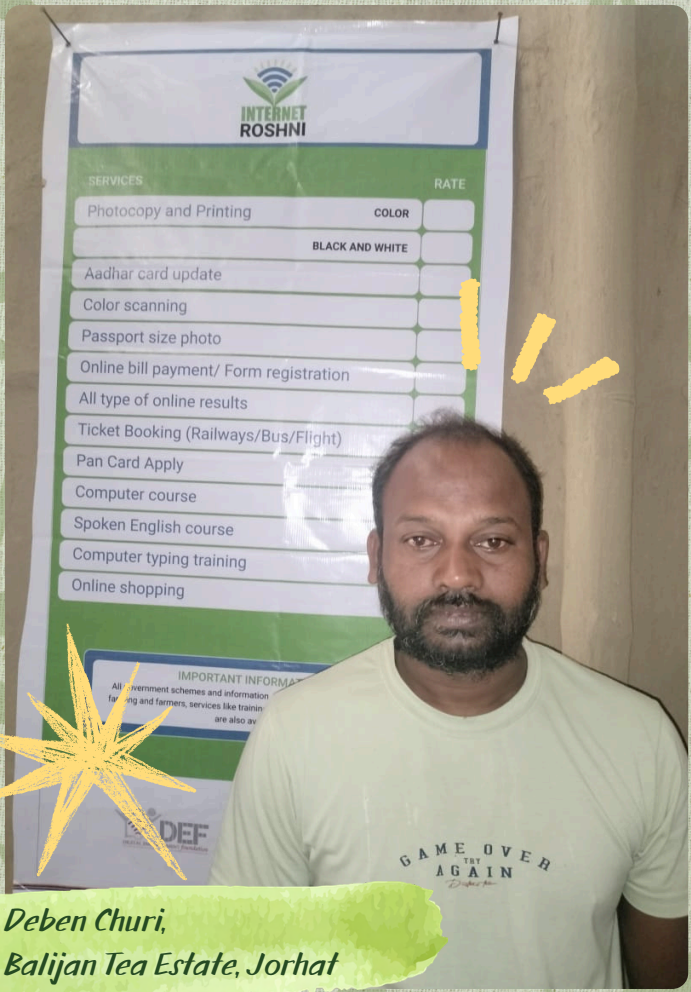
Robi Tanti,
Hatipara Tea Estate , Jorhat



Minoti Jatop,
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Priya Tanti,
Gohaijan Tea Estate, Jorhat



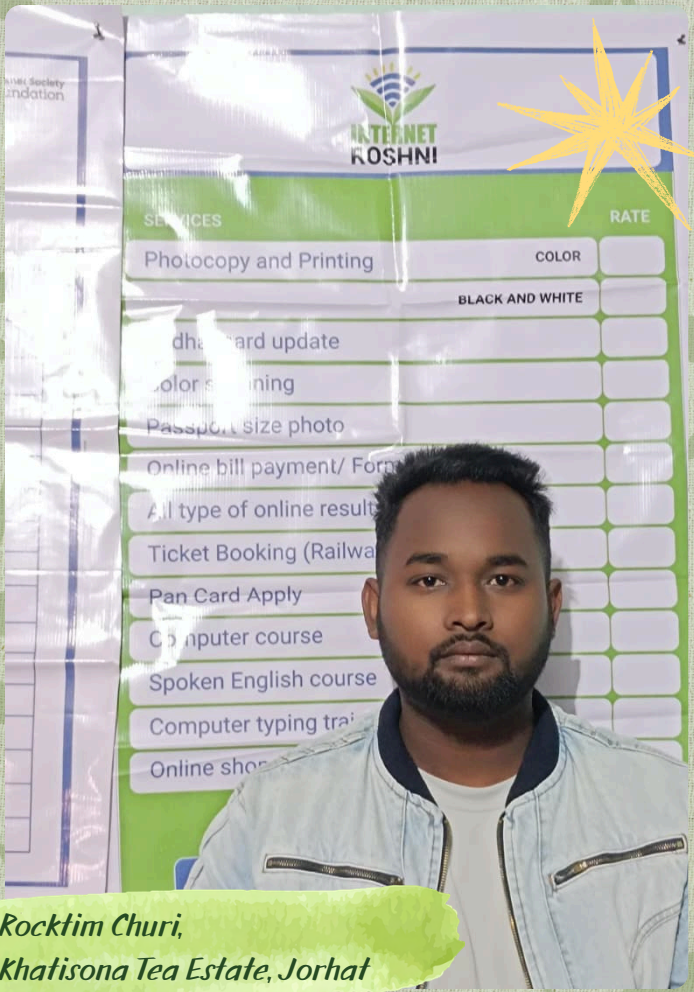
Deben Churi,
Balijan Tea Estate, Jorhat



Mishu Das

Uttarkrishnapur, Cachar

Rajib Panika,
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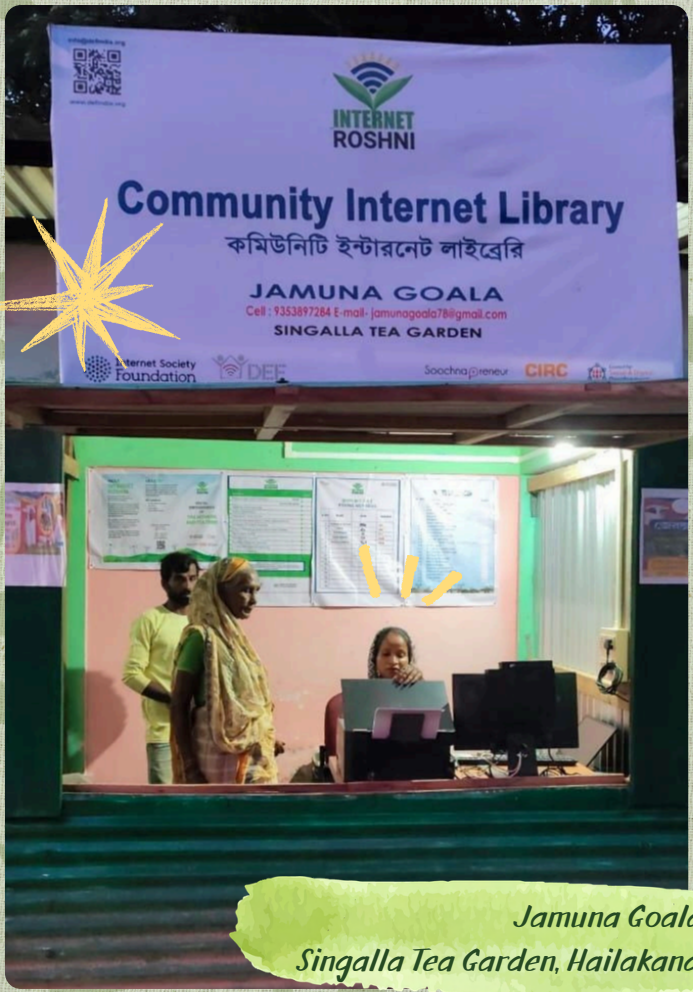
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Sonai , Cachar



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Sakila Begum Mazumdar,
Sonabarighat, Cachar



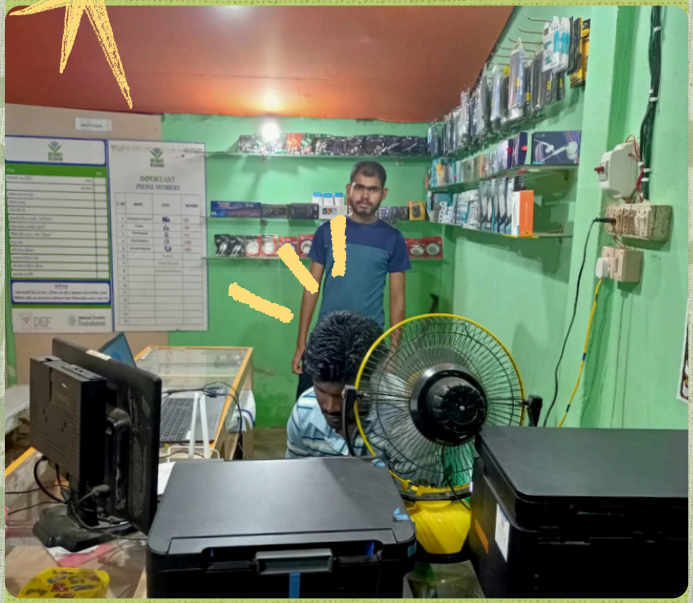
Jamuna Goala
Singalla Tea Garden, Hailakandi



Mustafa Khannam Laskar,
Bagpur, Cachar



Lobkishor Kairi
Cleaver House , Cachar



Nasir Hussain,
Silcoorie Tea Estate, Cachar



Chanda Kalowar Jaiswal,
Missamora Tea Estate, Golaghat



Niranjan Roy
Mohanpur Tea Estate,
Hailakandi



Ritumoni Guwala,
Moheema Tea Estate, Jorhat



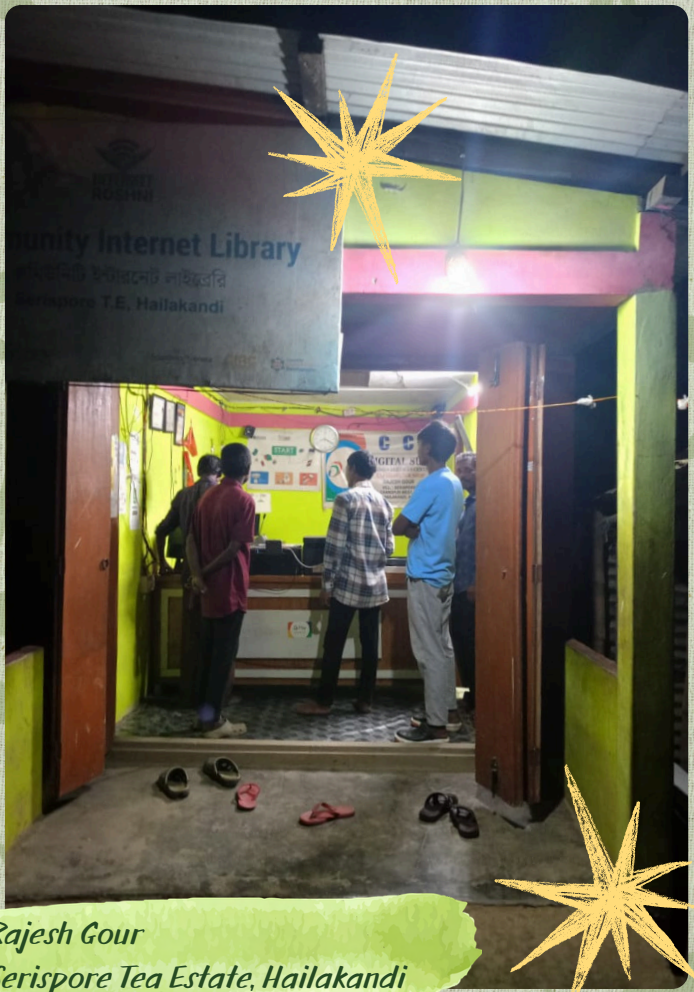
Nurul Haque
Sonabarighat, Cachar



Nirmal Pandey
Burnie Brease Tea Estate,
Hailakandi



Samar Kurmi
Sahapur Tea Garden, Cachar



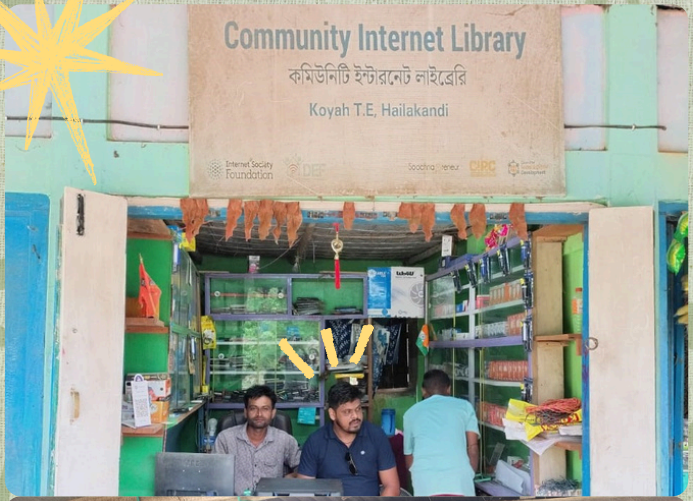
Rajesh Gour
Serispore Tea Estate, Hailakandi



Nizam Uddin
Rosekandy Tea Garden,
Cachar



Sanjay Gour
Chandipur Tea Estate,
Hailakandi





Satish Rudra Paul

Koyal Tea Estate Hailakandi



Somnath Tribedi Pecharghat
Hatikhira, Sribhumi



Sumit Kumar Kairi
Burnie Brease Tea Estate
Hailakandi



Sopon Kumar Rabidas
Binnakandi Tea Estate
Cachar



Suraj Kanu
Chincoorie Tea Estate, Cachar

Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Internet Society Foundation for their support of the Internet Roshni project, as well as the Digital Empowerment Foundation for their work in implementing the project's measures on the ground.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank all the SoochnaPreneurs for their tireless contributions to their communities, in improving access and bringing awareness to information dark areas. Special thanks are also extended to the state and district coordinators for their invaluable assistance and participation in data collection.

We would also like to thank the Museum of Digital Society team, for compiling this book- showcasing the people behind a project for last-mile access.

Through these undertakings, the Museum is documenting the journey of digital development in India, forming a living archive of real-world stories showing how digital tools can transform lives.



DEF's Publications

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Museum of Digital Society

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