

## Stories of Resilience Stories of Hope



### BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: EMPOWERING WOMEN

Dipali Halder is a forty-one-year-old woman who lives in Anandapur a low-income area in southern Kolkata. Dipali says “I had a phone but I did not know any of its functions and was not confident to use it. Even to save a phone number I used to take my son’s help. Whenever I asked him to teach me, he used to say this was not your cup of tea. He said I would never be able to learn it.” “During Covid time, I was able to buy things online, pay electricity bills, etc. and now I use Google Maps to go to new places. Many of my friends bought smartphones recently and I love to help them to use their phones. I feel empowered.”

Champa Mandal, a young mother from Choubaga, another low-income neighbourhood says “I never went to school but I know the basics of reading and writing in Bengali. I took my daughter’s help every time I had to call someone on phone. In fact, I was scared to use the phone. After receiving the phone and training from Parichiti, I have gained the confidence in myself to use it to ease my life. I use the phone to do different things like checking my bank account, using WhatsApp, changing my profile picture, sending photos, video calls, and group calls with my family and friends. I have learnt that life is so easy if you have a phone and you know how to use it. You feel safe and connected with your family and friends.”

Dipali Halder and Champa Mandal were among the 129 women from twenty low-income areas in Kolkata who were part of a digital technology training conducted by Parichiti, CHSJ Kolkata unit in collaboration with Point of View. These women are now teaching their friends and neighbours how to use smartphones.

