

Insights on INSIGHT

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Insights on INSIGHT

Genesis

Consequent to the wide-ranging application of computer and information and communication technologies (ICT) in the various fields of life and industry, there emerged a thought among practitioners and experts of information technology (IT) that the benefits of this revolutionary development should reach to all segments of the population. Voices for equitable distribution of the benefits of IT grew louder with the increasing evidence of the phenomenon that has come to be called the 'digital divide'.

The IT Policy, 2007 of Government of Kerala advocates that ICT should reach to all sections of the society. This thinking was disseminated in the national level conference conducted by the Kerala State IT Mission (KSITM) in February 2007, which concluded that IT must be made available and accessible to all, including the differently abled¹. The policy backing together with the collective opinion that was formed in the Conference paved the way for the setting up of INSIGHT, an organisation that deploys ICT to enable the differently abled. Since its establishment in May 2007, this project of KSITM, functioning with the technical and managerial support for of the Society for Promotion of Alternative Computing and Employment (SPACE), has been striving to improve the quality of lives of people with the different abilities, beginning with the visually impaired.

The organisation with a thought provoking name has many firsts to its credit. This is the first-of-its-kind initiative in Kerala that uses IT for the benefit of the differently abled and the first Government initiative of this sort in the country. INSIGHT is also accredited with being the first of its kind venture in Kerala and perhaps in India that uses free software in training and capacity building of the differently abled.

Objectives

Even at the time of setting up, the founding patrons were very clear about what they sought to achieve from an initiative of this form, principally of enabling the differently abled through the deployment of free software. The major objectives behind the setting up of INSIGHT are:

- To use technology as an interface to increase the quality of life of the differently abled
- To make technology accessible and available for hassle-free use by the target group
- To enhance the employability of the differently abled

¹The term 'differently abled' or 'people with different abilities' has come to gained wide usage in recent literature to describe people whose physical/mental faculties are not at par with the normal population. The coinage of this term comes in recognition of the fact that these people are in fact endowed with the different abilities, which require nurturing and cannot hence be blindly categorised as disabled.

Organisational Details

As earlier mentioned, INSIGHT has been set up a project of the KSITM of the Government of Kerala, with the technical and managerial support of SPACE. INSIGHT, with its mission of enabling the differently abled through the use of technology, began its endeavour in this regard by starting efforts to improve the lives of the visually challenged.

The activities of INSIGHT, which works within close tandem with SPACE, is taken forward by a team, headed by the Coordinator. The Coordinator is in-charge of the overall functioning of the organisation and serves as the principal point of contact between the organisation and the KSITM. The Coordinator is supported by three staff members who are responsible for the content development activity at INSIGHT. Two trainers, including a visually challenged trainer, facilitate the various training activities at INSIGHT. INSIGHT also receives the support of Master Trainers who help to carry forward the training activities.

The office of INSIGHT at Vellayambalam also doubles up as the Resource Centre and conducts various training programmes. INSIGHT functions from a double-storeyed rented building, the ground floor of which is devoted to training and managerial activities. The first floor also houses the recording studio, where audio content production is facilitated.

INSIGHT is financially supported by the grant funds from KSITM.

Activities

The activities at INSIGHT are in line with the aforementioned objectives and can be broadly classified under the following heads:

1. Training and Capacity Building
2. Content Development and Dissemination
3. Knowledge Building and Advocacy
4. Research and Development

1. Training and Capacity Building

INSIGHT recognises that capacity building and capacity enhancement of the differently abled persons could be best achieved through training programmes. As such, the organisation devotes a great deal of time to training the visually challenged people.

The Resource Centre at Vellayambalam provides and anchors training programmes for persons with visual impairment or persons involved in the training of the visually challenged people.

- Training of Master Trainers

To give shape to this ambitious programme of training visually challenged people, SPACE and INSIGHT began by providing training to a select group of trainers who would then serve as Master Trainers (MTs). Identified from among visually challenged people, these MTs were to have previous experience in computers and with an aptitude for teaching.

Since the launch of the project in May 2007, four rounds of trainings have been held for MTs. Spanning over three days; the sessions have been handled by experts in the field of Web Accessibility² like Mr.Krishnakanth Mane and Ms Anusha Kadambala. A visually challenged person, Mr.Krishnakanth Mane is a Fellow with the Tata Institute of Fundamental Sciences, Mumbai while Ms Anusha Kadambala is an accessibility adviser based in Mumbai. Some of the sessions covered in the programme, include Introduction to Programming Concepts, Internet Browsing Tools like Firefox and Installation and Use of Assistive Technology.

The first training programme for 11 MTs coincided with the launch of the project and was held from 21st to 23rd May 2007. The second round of training for 12 MTs was from 11th to 14th August 2007 and the third round for 17 MTs was from 14th to 16th January 2008. The fourth and hitherto final one, comprising of 11 MTs, was organised from 4th to 6th September 2008. While in the initial training, applications were solicited from interested persons, trainees at the Resource Centre who displayed calibre and potential were also considered in subsequent trainings. So far, 17 MTs have been trained at the Resource Centre and over 70 MTs in Akshaya centres in Mallapuram, Kannur and Thrissur.

Wherever possible, INSIGHT has tried to avail the services of its MTs for the conduct of its various training programmes. They are generally engaged on a day-to-day basis and are paid a remuneration of Rs.250 per day.

- Training of Trainees

The Resource Centre also provides free training to persons with visual impairment. Any person with this affliction is free to walk in to avail the services of training here on all weekdays between 10 am and 5 pm. Since its inception, the Resource Centre, which is equipped with five computers that have assistive technology, has trained nearly 70 visually impaired persons between the ages of 13 and 55 and with varying educational backgrounds.

In keeping with INSIGHT's policy of using free software, the operating system employed is Ubuntu. Ubuntu is a GNU/Linux-based operating system that is available free of charge and without any licensing fee. The assistive technology used is called Orca, which is a free, open source, flexible, extensible and powerful technology ideal for persons with visual impairment. Orca facilitates comprehension of textual matter by converting text into voice. This conversion into voice format enables a visually impaired to effectively navigate the computer besides helping them compose messages. Thus, with a help of a speaker and a headphone, a visually challenged person can use the computer as effectively as a person with no physical challenges.

Training is provided by two full-time trainers, including a visually impaired person and they work to help the trainees acquire necessary skills that will make them adept at availing the conveniences afforded by the computer alongside helping them secure gainful employment. The training programme is structured on a framework that is spread over 140 hours and begins with keyboard familiarisation followed by familiarisation modules in operating system and in assistive technology. The other modules incorporated in the training programme are, using open office word processor and spreadsheet, Internet, using utilities like CD writing, playing music and messenger services besides installation of operating system and basic troubleshooting. Apart from these, the trainees get free CDs and Braille books on computers besides free access to high-speed Internet on all working days.

Training is provided in batches to ensure availability of one-to-one computers. The training structure notwithstanding, customisations are done to suit the pace of the individual learners. The programme adopts a flexible approach to duration to allow sufficient room for practice and task repetition. The

2 Web Accessibility is refers to the practice of making websites usable by people of all abilities and disabilities with semantically meaningful HTML and textual equivalents for images.

training environment can be termed sensitive to the needs of the target group on account of two factors, one, maintenance of a stress-free and friendly environment and two, the inclusion of a visually impaired trainer, which fosters a feeling of oneness and identification.

INSIGHT attracts students for this programme through word-of-mouth publicity.

- Training for Akshaya Master Trainers

As part of its efforts to enable greater number of differently abled persons across the State of Kerala, INSIGHT launched a programme of training Master Trainers in other districts of Kerala. The programme began with imparting training on the technology for the visually impaired to the trainers of Akshaya³ centres in the districts of Kannur, Malappuram and Thrissur.

Identification of MTs for this district level training programme was done through inviting applications from interested Akshaya entrepreneurs. Open to Akshaya trainers this free training programme covered topics like Installation of Ubuntu Operating System, Orca Screen Reader, Open Office and web surfing using Mozilla Firefox. The Master Trainers have also been given a CD containing the installation pack of Ubuntu, Orca along with a handout giving shortcut keys for Orca.

Training for MTs has been so far completed in the districts of Malappuram, Kannur and Thrissur. The training of MTs from Malappuram district was held on 9th and 10th August 2008, Kannur district was held on 16th and 17th August 2008 and Thrissur district was held on 18th and 19th September 2008 and 29th October 2008. In all, more than 70 Akshaya entrepreneurs have been trained to serve as MTs.

Under the present arrangement, the Akshaya entrepreneurs who have received the Master Trainer training are expected to devote one computer at their Centre for the use of visually impaired persons. Insight distributed PCs to the master trainers who underwent training at Insight. In all 15 PCs along with Ubuntu Operating System and Orca were distributed in May 2008. These PCs were donated by SBI and SBT.

- Employability Enhancement Training

Enhancing the employability of the differently abled is one of the objectives of INSIGHT. To increase the employability of the visually impaired youths in the IT and IT Enabled Sectors, INSIGHT has currently invited applications for a programme in Communication Skills to be started in March 2009.

The pilot programme is open to visually impaired people from all over Kerala and would be offered free of cost, including free boarding and lodging. Youths who have successfully completed their degree in any stream together with possessing basic knowledge in computers are eligible to participate in the programme. The two-month long course would cover English language communication and would incorporate group as well as computer based exercises. The programme, which would be held at the Resource Centre, can accommodate a maximum of 20 students.

Placement support to the successful candidates is another feature of this programme, which would be done with the help of Enable India, a Bangalore based NGO that is involved in providing training in employment based skills.

- Other Trainings

Other than the aforementioned trainings, INSIGHT has also conducted other training programmes, both at the Resource Centre and in outside venues.

3 Akshaya is a pioneering offering by Kerala that deploys ICT to empower communities by bridging the digital divide

- A day-long training programme for the 8th, 9th and 10th standard students of SMV School and Cotton Girls High School, both at Trivandrum was conducted on 17th September 2007 at Insight. 14 students participated in the training, which covered topics like Introduction to Ubuntu and Orca, File Management, OpenOffice etc.
- A Master Trainer training programme for 24 teachers attached with the IT@School⁴ was held from 18th to 20th February 2008 at the Resource Centre. The training was intended to help teachers of IT address the special needs of visually challenged students who enrolled in regular schools after Standard 8. As such, the programme concentrated on covering various aspects of Assistive Technology.
- 12 teachers of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDS) were given a day-long training in Assistive Technology at Insight on 26th& 27th February 2008. IEDS is a scheme that provides educational opportunities for disabled children in common schools to facilitate their integration in general schools. The Scheme is implemented through the Education Department as well as through NGOs.
- A one day training on Introduction to Ubuntu GNU/Linux Operating System and Orca for the students of Blind School, Vazhuthacaud was conducted at the Resource Centre on 15th November 2008. 24 visually impaired children, accompanied by a teacher were given hands-on training on using a computer with the help of Orca screen reader software. Accessing files and folders, creating new ones, listening to their favourite songs, creating documents with OOWriter and calculations using OO Calc were covered as part of the training.

Portal Development

As part of capacity building of the differently abled people, INSIGHT is putting together a web portal that will allow free profile registration of persons with all forms of disability. The portal would serve as a consolidated databank of persons afflicted with disabilities and would facilitate the drawing up of schemes/programmes that are aimed at their upliftment. The portal is also expected to be an authentic resource base for policy makers and researchers. The portal is being developed with the help of Accessibility, an organisation working for the employment of the disabled in New Delhi.

2. Content Development and Dissemination

Content development and dissemination is another core activity for INSIGHT. Development of content is specifically attuned to match the needs of the visually challenged persons. Two different forms of content are principally developed at INSIGHT, viz., training materials in Braille and audio content. Since materials in Braille can be made use of only by persons aware of this script, INSIGHT devotes greater attention and effort to producing audio based content.

Swaram

Audio content includes an audio book to support the training programme offered at INSIGHT as well as an audio magazine called 'Swaram'. Conceived and developed by SPACE, the purpose of this first-of-its kind magazine in India, is to keep the visually challenged persons abreast of the various developments happening in the world. A joint venture of Mediaact and Alakal, the community radio wing of SPACE, the first edition of 'Swaram' was launched in January 2008. Since then, four editions have been launched, all

⁴ IT@School aims at imparting computer education to the high school students for making qualitative improvements in the conventional learning systems besides equipping teachers to use computers as an educational tool.

made available free of cost in the website www.swaram.web4all.in as well as in compact discs (CDs). 50 copies of each magazine have been distributed free of cost to schools and other institutions for the visually challenged, and individuals across Kerala persons.

Made in Malayalam, the duration of each magazine is between 30 minutes to one hour. It is currently being extended to two hours. It includes a wide variety of infotainment programmes, aimed at informing as well entertaining the audiences. General interest articles, short plays, news analysis, poems, dramas, film and book reviews, are some of the programmes aired through 'Swaram'. It disseminates only reproducible content that do not have issues of copyright and which can be distributed further.

The content for 'Swaram' is sourced and put together by a Content Editor, solely engaged for this task. After selecting the required content, it is done recorded at the studio at INSIGHT. The adequately-appointed air-conditioned studio at INSIGHT consists of two computers, two mikes and a mixer which facilitates in-house recording, editing and mixing. Before the setting up of this studio, INSIGHT depended on SPACE for carrying out its recording activities. Dubbing and voice-over are mainly done by staff members of INSIGHT and SPACE, with support of external professionals, wherever needed. In the past, INSIGHT has engaged a visually challenged father and daughter to carry out the dubbing activities. External professionals are hired on a daily basis at a remuneration of Rs.300 per day. 'Swaram' also enjoysavails the creative inputs of students of journalism at the Press Club, Trivandrum.

The magazines that have been released so far have found very positive reception from the target group, who has been demanding increase in its frequency and duration. In response of the demand, INSIGHT plans to make it a monthly affair from February 2009. As regards increasing the duration, INSIGHT is exploring ways to overcome the problem of copyright and to source more reproducible content. INSIGHT also welcomes the interested public to contribute suitable material for airing through the audio magazine.

Audio TextBooks

In January 2009, INSIGHT has recently embarked on an activity of converting the text books of seventh standard of Kerala State Syllabus to audio format, starting with the Science text book. In the process of converting the Science text book, INSIGHT was faced with two challenges, inclusion of questions and answers and illustrations in the text book. Questions and answers are often of a specific nature, which presented a challenge in conversion. Illustrations, charts and tables also posed a problem. After consultation with experts in the field, INSIGHT decided to go ahead with the text book, keeping away illustrations and diagrams. The audio form of Science text book is complete and INSIGHT is to start work on Malayalam text book soon. The text books will be disseminated through CDs as well as through the web medium.

INSIGHT Website

To disseminate information about the various activities under by INSIGHT, it has launched a dedicated website, which is available at <http://insight.kerala.gov.in>. Launched in June 2008, it has the distinction of being the first accessible website under the Government of Kerala. As such, visually challenged persons can completely be benefited from this website. The website has dedicated links to highlight its various activities, associated events besides spelling out the benefits that can accrue to a visually challenged person as a result of the training programme at INSIGHT.

3. Knowledge Building and Advocacy

A pioneer of sorts in the field of training and capacity for the differently abled, INSIGHT, in a short span of time, has established itself as a creditable agency to build knowledge and advocate in this area. As

such, INSIGHT has been invited at various fora to share its thoughts and contribute to the knowledge building process. INSIGHT has also hosted events like conferences to deliberate on the topic, raise opinions and advocate measures.

- INSIGHT participated in a conference held by the GTech group in Technopark on the 7th of August 2008. Titled 'Diversity in Workforce: Employing the Differently Abled', the conference was inaugurated by Dr. Ajay Kumar IAS, Secretary, IT Department. Eminent personalities including Dr Usha Titus, Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Rakesh Kumar Gupta, COO, Allianz Cornhill India, Sebi Chacko, Vice President - HR, South Asia, Reuters and Rama Chari, Director, Diversity and Equal Opportunity spoke on "Business Case for Employing the Differently Abled" and "How to be a Differently Abled Friendly company." TK Velayudhan CEO, Wins Infotek, G Vijayaraghavan, Former CEO, Technopark, Arun Ramachandran Coordinator, Insight and Ashok Kumar, Leonard Cheshire Home, spoke on "Industry - NGO Partnership to Train Differently Abled".
- INSIGHT organised the National Conference on "Enabling the differently abled with the use of ICT, 2008" with the broad objective of exploring possibilities of ICT in improving the lives of the differently abled. The one-day conference, which was held at the Residency Towers on 3rd September 2008, sought to identify ways and means by which assistive solutions could be provided for the mentally & physically challenged and find ways to equip the differently abled in seeking employment in the ICT sector.

The Conference, which showcased the works of various organisations and individuals across India in the field of accessibility, had front-ranking personalities in the field participating in it. The speakers in the forenoon session included Arun Mehta, a Professor at JMIT, Radaur, Gaurav Takkar of Media Lab Asia, Swati Chakraborty of Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy (IICP) Kolkatta, K V Johny, C-DAC Trivandrum and Vijayachandran of Future India Foundation. The post lunch hours saw sessions by Sachin Verma of AccessAbility, New Delhi, Shanti Raghavan of Enable India, Bangalore, Krishna Kant Mane of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai and Binu Sankar of G-Tech, Technopark Trivandrum. Sundar.R, who faces visual challenges spoke about the skills required by a visually challenged to succeed in the IT enabled sector. He was placed in IBM Bangalore after undergoing four-month Linux training at SPACE. *The report of the Conference is attached as Annexure 1 at the end of this document.*

- INSIGHT supported Dr. Arun Mehta a Professor at JMIT, Radaur in conducting a one-day workshop on 'Software Development for Kids with Special Needs' at the Government Engineering College, Barton Hill on 4th September 2008. The workshop saw a demonstration of the Skid website, available at www.skid.org.in developed by him to benefit children with autism and cerebral palsy. The workshop was attended by students of various Engineering Colleges in Trivandrum.
- Insight was invited to give a presentation on the topic 'IT in Special Education' at the two-day National Seminar on 'Best Practices in IT-Enabled Teacher Education and Knowledge Management', held at the PWD guest house at Thycaud, Trivandrum. The two day event, held on the 17th and 18th of October 2008, was a sincere attempt to bring the best of IT enabled education from around the country under one roof. James P Mathew, Coordinator, INSIGHT made a presentation in which he highlighted the various activities of the organisation and described its future plans. P. Balaraman a visually challenged Master Trainer at Insight demonstrated how a visually challenged person could seamlessly use a computer as efficiently as others, much to the amazement of the participants. The two day conference was inaugurated by Dr. Ajay Kumar IAS, Secretary, IT Department, and Dr. Rethan U Kelkar, Director, Kerala State IT Mission, delivered the keynote address.

- INSIGHT participated in a meet named Poornamitham in Ernakulam held as part of a science exhibition organised by the Swadeshi Science Movement and Saksham. INSIGHT demonstrated the screen reader technology for the visually challenged students of blind schools in Ernakulam district. The exhibition was held on the 19th of October in Ernakulam. The exhibition also saw the demonstration of 'Audio Book Reader', an electronic device to read audio books, developed by Saksham.

In its knowledge building and advocacy roles, INSIGHT has closely interacted with organisations like Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, AccessAbility, New Delhi and Enable India, Bangalore.

4. Research and Development

Research and development is a relatively nascent area of work for INSIGHT. The main area of research has been to improve aspects of technology to benefit the visually challenged.

- INSIGHT presently uses the screen reader technology to convert text matter into voice. However this technology comes with a limitation, ie, it is compatible with only English language text. As such it is suitable to only those visually challenged persons who have knowledge of English. The screen reader cannot recognise vernacular languages like Malayalam. This poses a difficulty in the dissemination of Malayalam based content. To overcome this, INSIGHT, with the support of SPACE, is working to develop technology that can recognise Malayalam. It makes use of external experts like linguists to facilitate this research activity.
- Optical Character Recogniser (OCR) is a software that allows a person to scan a text from a physical document and convert into digital format. OCR is a boon for the visually disabled because it allows them to scan newspapers and reference books with the use of a computer and convert into a digital format which can be used by a screen reading software like the Orca to give an audio version of it. A Malayalam OCR in the FOSS format was not available. INSIGHT has put pains to develop a software that would allow users to convert printed documents in Malayalam to digital form.
- As a prelude to greater inclusiveness of technology to improve persons with different abilities, INSIGHT has put together a 'Preliminary Report on Technological Options for Various Disabilities excluding Visual Disability'. The Report identifies the various organisations that work for the differently abled and spells out their contributions in brief. It then talks about assistive technologies for persons with cerebral palsy, autism, mental retardation besides persons with locomotor disabilities. *For the entire report, please refer Annexure 2 of this document.*

Achievements

INSIGHT, which is a quarter away from its completing two years of successful operations, has list of noteworthy achievements to boast of. They include the following:

- The setting up of an INSIGHT as project by the Government of Kerala working to bridge the digital divide of the differently abled population is an achievement by itself. As mentioned in the introductory section of this document, INSIGHT is credited with being the first-of-its kind initiative in Kerala that uses IT for the differently abled. It is also the first organisation of its kind in Kerala and perhaps in India that uses free software in training and capacity building of the

differently abled.

- In the process of enabling the differently abled, INSIGHT, with the support of SPACE, has adhered to its philosophy of using free software. In this process, it has emerged as a noteworthy agency championing the promotion of free software through highlighting its benefits.
- INSIGHT has and is devising a variety of training programmes to enhance the capacities of the visually challenged persons. The incorporation of visually challenged qualified persons as training faculty speaks about the sensitivity with which INSIGHT approaches the training programmes for visually challenged.
- The training at INSIGHT is provided free of cost for the beneficiaries. Since inception in May 2007, INSIGHT has successfully trained nearly 70 visually impaired persons between the ages of 13 and 55 and with varying educational backgrounds.
- The training is designed to help the trainees acquire essential computer skills that will enable them make effective use of it besides equipping them for gainful employment.
- The training modules are flexible enough to match the pace of the learners. Great stress is laid on practice and task repetition. The training environment is itself kept friendly to promote greater learning.
- To provide the benefit of IT to visually challenged persons belonging to rural and remote regions of Kerala, INSIGHT launched a programme of providing training to Akshaya entrepreneurs in the districts of Malappuram, Kannur and Thrissur. Trained to serve as Master Trainers, training for nearly 70 Akshaya entrepreneurs has been completed so far.
- INSIGHT has tried to bring as many capable visually challenged persons under its fold by engaging them in tasks like training and support in content development.
- INSIGHT is involved in the production of content and training materials to suit the needs of the visually challenged persons. Production of Braille training materials, the first ever audio magazine of its kind in India called 'Swaram' and audio textbooks for school children are noteworthy endeavours. Four editions of 'Swaram' have been released so far and 50 copies of each in CDs have been distributed to visually challenged persons free of cost.
- The website of INSIGHT is the first-ever-accessible website under the Government of Kerala.
- INSIGHT engages in technology based research to improve existing technology to serve the visually challenged persons better.
- In a short span of functioning, INSIGHT has presented a viable model that deploys ICT for enabling the differently abled; a model that can be easily replicated by other states in the country and elsewhere.
- Cases of individual successes, like the case of Sundar.R, a visually challenged youth who was placed in IBM, Bangalore after undergoing training at INSIGHT/SPACE or the case of Vishnu who is now pursuing his MA Economics at the University College, Trivandrum, also find place in the overall achievement record of the organisation.
- INSIGHT mainly relies on word-of-mouth publicity to promote its activities and does not employ any other means of promotion. The fact that INSIGHT has found such acceptance among its targeted audience, going by the appreciable number of trainees, is an achievement by itself.

Challenges

Some of the challenges faced by INSIGHT are:

- In the last couple of months, INSIGHT has seen a perceptible drop in the number of trainees attending the training programme at the Resource Centre. Saturation in the level of word-of-mouth publicity can be seen as a factor. INSIGHT has to seriously look at other means to promote their activities so that greater numbers of visually challenged persons can be benefited.
- Even though INSIGHT has trained successful nearly 70 visually challenged persons at its Resource Centre and through Akshaya centres, it however had to face problems like inconsistent attendance of trainees, owing to a variety of reasons. The inconsistent pattern of attendance had led to unwarranted delays in training schedules, which impacting on the trainees' uptake.
- The availability of freely reproducible content sans copyright is a major challenge faced by INSIGHT, especially in the case of audio content production. In spite of an enthused following to 'Swaram', INSIGHT has been able to bring only four editions since January 2008, due to the challenges in sourcing reproducible content. The duration of each edition is restricted to a maximum of one hour owing to this reason.
- The technology based research of making the screen reader compatible with Malayalam language is presently carried out by a single member. The pace of this research activity can be enhanced by allocating more staff.
- As part of enhancing the employability of the visually challenged persons in the IT and ITES, INSIGHT is presently working to start a training programme in Communication Skills. After the completion of the training, INSIGHT hopes to place them in companies/firms that are engaged in IT and IT enabled services. In the wake of the current recessionary pressures that is affecting the IT and ITES, successfully placing the students is a challenge that INSIGHT will have to deal with.

Future Plans

The ambitious team behind INSIGHT envisages the following as part of their future:

- Employ alternative ways to promote activities of INSIGHT, primarily through radio
- Greater roll-out of the project to cover all districts of Kerala and to reach to maximum number of visually challenged persons
- Broaden the scope of support services offered by INSIGHT by devising programmes for persons with other disabilities
- Preparation of English to Malayalam and Malayalam to English talking dictionary
- Release of 'Swaram' audio magazine on a monthly basis
- Source more reproducible content by spreading the message among the public
- Preparation of audio text books covering all subjects for school students
- Position INSIGHT as an agency that can offer creditable inputs on enabling the differently abled through free software

Annexures

1. Report of the One Day National Conference – Enabling the Different Abled with the use of ICT
2. Preliminary Report on Technological Options for Various Disabilities excluding Visual Disability