

## **President of India Smt. Pratibha Patil announces ‘Sanchar Shakti’, a revolutionary program to enhance livelihood opportunities for women**

As a part of the launch of DoT-USOF's initiative 'Sanchar Shakti', a pilot project scheme for enablement of ICT Related Livelihood Skills for Women's Self Help Groups, Indepay launched 'Rural Public Service Terminals (RPST)', a revolutionary program to empower rural women.

The service was highlighted by Smt. Pratibha Patil, Hon. President of India at an event organised at Vigyan Bhawan on 7 March 2011. The RPST program will not only help in empowerment of rural women but will also enable them to earn significant revenues from offering banking, financial and non-financial services.

Indepay's infrastructure acts as a human ATM for offering financial transactions on behalf of banks. This extended rural branch is operated by SHG members working as identified Business Correspondents (BC) of partner Banks offering banking, government disbursements and content retailing services. As per RBI guidelines, Indepay's infrastructure provides for a single transaction point offering multiple services allowing for a self-sustainable model for rural banking and financial inclusion.

Speaking on the occasion, Hon President said that “real development cannot take root if it bypasses women, who represent the very pivot around which social change takes shape. We need approaches that are not only comprehensive, but forward looking, so that challenges of an evolving society can be met.” She further urged women to “use science and technology, innovations and inventions, mobiles and the internet for improving their lives.”

Hon'ble Minister of Communications & IT and Human Resource Development Sh Kapil Sibal during his speech said “When a woman is empowered and provided the tools of development, the benefits go much beyond her as an individual. Scheme has the criticality of grass-root mechanisms in form of Self Help Groups and it gives the power of information and communications technology to make Self Help Groups of women entrepreneurs, more efficient and economically viable.”

He added that “This project is ‘inclusive’ in its nature as the participants include, Self Help Groups, mobile service providers, handset and modem manufacturers, mobile Value Added Service providers, NABARD, Ministry of Rural Development and Non Government Organizations. The scheme would utilise core competencies of the partners in a collaborative fashion.” Elaborating on the anticipated goals and roadmap for the program he added that “I feel that the clusters of women Self Help Groups participating in Sanchar Shakti program would transform into hub of women-related entrepreneurial activities and for diffusion of ICT in rural areas. And soon this programme would extend to other self help groups that are not covered in the initial stages. “

Sh Sachin Pilot, Hon'ble Minister of State (C&IT) said that “The scheme also aims at enhancing the earning capacity of rural women through provision of ICT related

livelihood skills and opportunities within their own village and with the help of SHGs and NGOs with whom they are familiar. Economic independence is the most important and effective tool which aids women's empowerment and this scheme is an excellent step in that direction.”

### **Indepay Networks Private Limited**

Indepay Networks is a third party payment processor and enabler of Rural Banking, Micro Credit and various Non-Financial Services that touch the common man in their daily lives and makes their lives change for the better.

Indepay operates a nationwide financial payment and transaction processing business that includes comprehensive point-of-sale services, card issuance and master merchant acquiring services for debit/prepaid/credit cards, rural banking, government disbursements, electronic distribution of content, money transfer and utility bill payment services.

Indepay enables infrastructure for banks to offer rural banking and access at village level on a sustainable model. Indepay infrastructure is placed at rural and retail outlets and allows the retail of content services, Public Call Office (PCO) services, card payments, distribution of financial services, remittances and basic/rural banking services across the counter