

Capacity Building Workshop Report

Cyber Security Capacity Building Workshop for MSMEs in India May 22, 2025 | Coochbehar, West Bengal

On May 22, 2025, CUTS International, in collaboration with District Industries Centre, Coochbehar organised a cybersecurity workshop in Santiniketan to build awareness among MSMEs. The initiative, backed by The Asia Foundation and Google.org under the APAC Cybersecurity Fund, focused on equipping small businesses with the knowledge and tools required to strengthen their digital security and resilience.

The workshop attracted the participation of 61 entrepreneurs and workers from across Coochbehar district, representing a diverse range of sectors, including garments, food processing, handicrafts, tailoring, jewellery, stationery, and more.



The session commenced with a welcome address by Sumanta Biswas, Assistant Director, CUTS International, who greeted the distinguished guests and participants. Introductory remarks followed this from Shri Arvind Kumar Meena, IAS, District Magistrate and Collector, Cooch Behar, Government of West Bengal, Shri Duteeman Bhattacharya, IPS, Superintendent of Police, Cooch Behar, Government of West Bengal, JB. Khursid Alam, General Manager, District Industrial Centre, Cooch Behar, Government of West Bengal.

The workshop drew a total of 61 participants, the majority of whom (40) were from MSMEs, while the rest represented NGOs, business associations, and other related organisations. Demographic insights revealed that most attendees were between 35 and 42 years of age and had at least a primary education. The discussions highlighted a widespread gap in awareness of cybersecurity risks, although nine participants shared that they had personally faced cyberattacks in the past.

The workshop aimed to build awareness among MSME owners, employees, and business partners about a wide range of cybersecurity risks, from well-known threats to often neglected vulnerabilities. Using interactive sessions, participants were introduced to essential cybersecurity practices such as creating strong passwords, maintaining regular data backups, updating software, and managing digital assets responsibly. To keep the sessions engaging and ensure learning retention, each module concluded with a quiz, allowing participants to test their understanding in a fun and competitive way. Winners were recognised with prizes, which added enthusiasm and

motivation, while the overall approach fostered both practical learning and active involvement in adopting better cybersecurity measures.

Feedback collected from participants showed that 34 attendees found the workshop highly relevant, praising both the quality of the sessions and the practical insights offered through case studies. Additionally, 7 participants described their overall experience as positive and expressed interest in joining similar cybersecurity workshops in the future.

One of the participants in the Cooch Behar workshop shared an incident of a cyber-attack on their small trading business. They received an email that looked genuine, appearing to come from a trusted supplier. The email carried the supplier's logo, formatting, and even mentioned pending invoices. Believing it to be authentic, the participant opened the attached file. The file was actually malware disguised as an invoice. Soon after, the computer system slowed down drastically. Important business files suddenly became inaccessible. A pop-up appeared demanding cryptocurrency payment. It was a ransomware attack that locked their data. Daily operations came to a standstill. Sensitive client information was also at risk. A local IT professional was contacted for help. Some files were recovered, but many were lost forever. The experience caused both financial and emotional stress. Through the workshop, the participant wanted to learn prevention techniques and raise awareness among peers.

Workshop Glimpses of the training sessions and Group Photos





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