

Capacity Building Workshop Report

Cyber Security Capacity Building Workshop for MSMEs in India May 25, 2025, Siliguri, West Bengal

CUTS International organised a dedicated cybersecurity workshop for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Siliguri on May 25, 2025. The workshop was part of a broader initiative supported by The Asia Foundation and Google.org through the APAC Cybersecurity Fund. Its objective was to strengthen the digital resilience of MSMEs by enhancing their capacity to identify potential risks, prevent cyber threats, and respond effectively to incidents. Through interactive sessions and knowledge-sharing, the programme aimed to build greater awareness and encourage the adoption of secure digital practices across the sector.

The workshop was attended by 135 participants, comprising entrepreneurs and workers from across Siliguri district. Representation came from a diverse set of sectors, including garments, food processing, dairy, stationery, and goat rearing, reflecting the varied economic activities of the region.



Shri Sumanta Biswas, Assistant Director, CUTS International, began the session by welcoming the distinguished guest and participants. Brief remarks followed this: Shri Goutam Deb, Mayor, Siliguri Municipality Corporation, Shri Ranjan Sarkar, Deputy Mayor, Siliguri Municipality Corporation, Shri Dulal Dutta, Mayor, Parisad, Siliguri Municipality Corporation and Smt. Pinki Sarkar, Councillor, Siliguli Municipality Corporation.

The cybersecurity workshop brought together participants exclusively from the MSME sector. A majority of attendees were between 35 and 42 years of age and held at least a primary qualification and a few with secondary qualifications. The discussions revealed a significant gap in cybersecurity awareness, although three participants shared that they had previously encountered cyberattacks. Nevertheless, the workshop evoked strong interest, with most participants expressing a clear willingness to implement cybersecurity practices within their

organisations.

The workshop was designed to strengthen cybersecurity awareness among MSME owners, employees, and business partners by addressing a wide range of digital threats, ranging from well-known risks to often-overlooked vulnerabilities. The sessions were interactive and focused on imparting practical knowledge of fundamental cybersecurity practices, such as the use of strong passwords, regular data backups, timely software updates, and effective management of digital assets. To reinforce learning and maintain engagement, each session concluded with a quiz, wherein participants actively responded to questions based on the topics covered. Prizes were awarded for correct answers, adding an element of motivation. This approach created an energetic and hands-on learning environment, encouraging real-world application of the cybersecurity measures discussed.

Analysis of participants' feedback after the workshop illustrated that 85 of them rated the workshop as highly relevant and expressed strong appreciation for the quality of the content and the practical value of the case studies presented. 10 participants termed their experience as positive and indicated interest in attending future cybersecurity workshops.

A dairy cooperative owner shared his experience of being targeted by a ransomware attack. One morning, he found that all files on his office computer—including financial records, customer details, and invoices- had been locked, with a message demanding payment in cryptocurrency to regain access. Unable to access critical data, his daily operations came to a standstill, creating panic among his staff and disrupting supply schedules. Though he did not pay the ransom, he had to spend both time and money restoring his systems with the help of local technicians. The incident highlighted how even small enterprises are not immune to sophisticated cyber threats and how a lack of data backup can magnify the damage. Through the workshop, he understood the importance of maintaining regular backups, updating antivirus protections, and being cautious while opening suspicious email attachments or links.

Workshop Glimpses of the training sessions and Group Photo



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