

## interview

**DINESH KUMAR TYAGI,**

CEO, Common Service Centres (CSC) special purpose vehicle

# 'To digitally connect and improve rural India, CSC is the best option'

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**NEW DELHI:** The government wants rural India to be digitally connected, financially included and gainfully skilled. Common service centres (CSC), which provide such last-mile services, play a key role in these missions, says Dinesh Kumar Tyagi, chief executive officer of the CSC special purpose vehicle. Excerpts from the interview:

### What is the CSC's role?

The CSC special purpose vehicle (CSC SPV) was established to support the ecosystem required to improve financial inclusion, digital literacy and skill upgradation through the common service centre scheme. We are not legally mandated to monitor it, so we only help Central-, state-, and district-level agencies in coordinating with village-level entrepreneurs (VLEs) who are the backbone of these schemes.

### How do you aid such agencies?

VLEs offer services ranging from government-to-consumer (G2C) — Aadhaar, bill payments and passport applications, etc. — and business-to-consumer (B2C) — banking and ticketing services, recharges and online courses, etc. We negotiate with these agencies so that VLEs can get better commissions for offering these services. For example, if a service is offered for ₹10,000, we will negotiate with the company to provide it for ₹9,000 through our CSCs.

### Who can become a VLE?

Anyone. You only have to apply on our website detailing the services you want



to offer: The only condition is that the applicant must be a local resident of the village. As of now, there are 1,60,000 CSCs across India. Since the risks of setting up a service centre, such as capital and labour costs, are borne by the VLE, generally there are only genuine applications. VLEs primarily earn through commissions from providing services. For example, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) provides ₹40 to generate one Aadhaar number. Of this the VLE keeps ₹35 and CSC SPV ₹5.

### Is it a feasible business?

The idea is to help create private enterprises, which the government and corporates can use to deliver services. Since there is no restriction on the type of service a VLE can provide, the feasibility depends on her/his entrepreneurship skills. There is a VLE each in Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Agartala with an annual turnover of ₹1 crore, ₹75 lakh and ₹50 lakh respectively.

### What are your future plans?

As part of the CSC 2.0 mission, we want to have a VLE in each of the 2,50,000 panchayats. We are also working on Bharat Net, a scheme that seeks to connect these panchayats through broadband. At present, 11 villages have been connected as a part of our pilot project.