



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## *City boy floats the idea of rural m-powerment*

B K Mishra | TNN

**E**ven as the rural India is yet to reap the benefits of e-governance, a Patna boy has come up with an innovative idea of m-powerment with a view to serving the three basic needs — education, healthcare and rights — of the rural masses.

The boy, Vishrut Shukla, who is presently studying computer engineering at BITS, Pilani, along with his two other batchmates, Ankit Govil and Abhay Murarka, has provided a software solution which attempts to blend modern mobile technology with interactive media and provide the rural people good affordable education, proper health care services and sufficient knowledge of their rights. All that is required is a mobile phone and the Indian villages can easily march on the road to development. Swashikar, as the prototype application for implementing this initiative is named, comprises three separate modules, namely Swasthya (healthcare), Shiksha (literacy) and Adhikar (rights) which combine to provide the application its unique name.

### GLITTER OF HOPE

The Swasthya module, serving as a demonstration of m-health care of the future, aims to support the functioning of rural health services in India. The application, which supports individual users as well as dispensaries and local health centres at villages, lets the user select from a range of services like blood donation, facility request from bigger hospital or health centre, daily updates of medicines, emergency service request, etc and supply required information which is delivered to a pre-set cell number via SMS.

For example, the facility can be used by a local village dispensary to send daily updates of medicine stocks to a central health centre through the cheapest medium available.

The Shiksha module addresses one of the biggest needs of rural India and has a potential of serving as a vehicle for mass literacy at villages for people of all ages. The application, through its small video and voice-based lessons on topics ranging from mathematics to English, builds an easy-to-scale, quick and efficient methodology for spreading basic education among rural masses.