

## AI learning in village schools

Youcode is taking coding and robotics to children in Tamil Nadu to bridge the divide between urban and rural learning



■ Government school students attending a YouCode workshop.

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**A**rtificial Intelligence (AI) is touted to be the future and is already disrupting the current system of education and employment. To match pace with this development, the CBSE recently announced the introduction of AI as an elective subject for students in classes VIII, IX and X from the upcoming session to prepare the students to be future-ready.

There has also been a surge in certification courses undertaken by working professionals and college students on various e-learning platforms to upskill themselves in emerging technologies such as AI, ML, Blockchain, IoT, etc. All this will make the urban youth ready for industry 4.0, but those living in the interiors will continue to be underskilled largely because of lack of infrastructure, resources and unskilled teachers.

To bridge the divide between urban and rural learning, K Suriya Prabha, Chennai-based founder of Youcode, has taken

upon herself to take these technologies to students in the villages of Tamil Nadu. A graduate in Microbiology, Prabha quit her job as a visualiser in an ad agency, to undertake these initiatives. While the world was getting automated, the educational growth was missing in the villages. "The idea is to make students and their parents aware of these new-age technologies and eventually get them interested in knowing more about the subject. The rural belts have a huge talent pool but they do not have access to such resources," says Prabha while talking to *Education Times*.

the villages and reached around 6000 students.

These workshops have been received well and we have given several coding lessons to students from class VI onwards, she adds.

YouCode has created some Unique Interactive Demonstration using Google and Amazon AI kits to make the seemingly tough subject approachable to young children.

"We teach coding to kids in a fun and interactive way using smart Robots like Mekamon, Cozmo, LittleBits, Sphero, Nintendo Labo Kit, etc. We also use programs like the Block programme to really break the



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Presently, she is working in Ramanathapuram and Virudhanagar that have been identified as the most backward districts in Tamil Nadu. Since March 2018, she has conducted coding and robotics workshops in around 15 schools in

process of coding," says Prabha, who has bootstrapped her startup with the help of family and friends and is exploring options to apply for government loans to increase the reach of her ideas to other regions.