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As an eighth-grader, Sibanjan Das repaired a computer in the electrical department in Baripada, Odisha, and was given Rs 50 in appreciation. "I remember going there in my school uniform. But once I was home, my father rode me back on his scooter and told me to return the money. I got a good scolding for accepting it in the first place," laughs Sibanjan. Sibanjan got glued to computers from class 4, when the subject was introduced in school. Next year, his doctor-father enrolled him at a computer institute in town, where his classmates were mostly graduates. Sibanjan had joined for a brief course in programming language C, but continued to show up at the institute long after the module was over, pocketing nuggets of information from wherever he could. "There, I also found additional reading material and my passion for computers only grew," says Sibanjan, who is manager, data science at ServiceNow India.

Later, he'd go around town helping anyone facing glitches with their system. Sibanjan, a BTech in computer science & engineering, says he got an early edge in his career as he completed the OCA (Oracle Certified Associate) certification in his college years itself. "In my first job at Zensar Technologies, because I was an OCA, I was directly sent to work with the Oracle ERP department after the initial training," says Sibanjan, who later did Master's in IT, with a major in business analytics, from Singapore Management University. Currently, Sibanjan leads a team of highly skilled data scientists and machine learning data engineers at ServiceNow, the American software company that develops a cloud computing platform to help companies manage digital workflows. "The team crunches data every day to either garner insights to make work better for people, or to create ML models that support our business growth," says Sibanjan, adding: "Even a small analysis project, where the result is helpful to our customers, is a proud moment." He previously worked with IBM Singapore and NCS Singapore. At 33, Sibanjan has to his credit two books on machine learning and data science, which are part of libraries at IIM Bangalore, Deakin University, Bennett University, and Royal Holloway, University of London, among others. Sibanjan says technology books usually have a short shelf life, but he is glad to see the ones he has authored in demand even after several years. He mentors students and young professionals and believes if he can share his knowledge, it will only help someone else build on his experience.