



# India IGF (IIGF-2022) Workshop

## Part 1 - Lead Organizer

Salutation

Mr.

Contact Person

Mayank Manish

Organization / Affiliation (Please state "Individual" if appropriate)

ICRIER

Designation

Research Associate

Economy of Residence

India

Primary Stakeholder Group

Government

## Part 2 - Workshop

Primary Theme

Reaching the unreached

Session Title

Last-mile internet connectivity in India

Session Format

Panel Discussion

Description of Session Formats **Birds of a Feather (BoF)** – An informal discussion session designed to connect the participants of shared topic of interests without a pre-planned agenda. **Panel** - Presentation and/or sharing of viewpoints by speakers on a particular topic. The number of speakers on the panel shall not be more than 4 to allow sufficient time for interaction with the attendees. **Roundtable** - Interactive dialogue involving all participants with designated moderators and not more than 2 speakers.

### Specific Issues of Discussion

- 1) What are the key challenges in achieving universal digital connectivity in India?
- 2) How can infrastructure deployment be accelerated? What business models will work best to provide good quality and resilient connectivity in the last mile?
- 3) How can the government address the challenges associated with physical infrastructure in remote areas and develop innovative and cost-effective mechanisms to provide ubiquitous connectivity in such regions?
- 4) What are the major barriers in reducing cost of access for individuals? What mechanisms might

increase affordability, including devices that enable adoption for marginalised sections of the population in India?

### Describe the Relevance of Your Session to Theme

India has the second-largest number of internet users in the world currently. While digital technologies and services have the power to transform people’s lives, it needs connectivity to leverage such opportunities. Despite the large-scale progress in connecting large sections of population, the digital divide persists across age, spatiality, gender, literacy, and income levels. These gaps are most visible across marginalized and vulnerable groups in the country. Meaningful connectivity for everyone becomes imperative in such scenario. This objective needs to be supported through holistic policy frameworks and a multi-stakeholder (government, private sector, communities) approach towards providing last-mile connectivity to each individual. This must include but not be limited to affordable and user-friendly devices, low-cost services, ubiquitous and universal connectivity.

The rapid expansion of the digital economy is leading to rapid economic growth, expanding social mobility and opportunities, and enabling easy access to government information and services. Therefore, the objectives of ensuring no one is left behind in accessing these benefits by providing last-mile connectivity becomes of utmost importance.

### Methodology / Agenda

1. Opening Remarks by the Moderator (5 mins)
2. Introductory Remarks by each panellist (20 mins)
3. Moderated questions (20 mins)
4. Q&A (5 mins)

**Please provide 3 subject matter tags that best describe your session.** #Connectivity #Affordableaccess #digital

\*Please specify gender e.g. agender, cis woman, cis man, female, gender-fluid, gender-neutral, male, trans woman, trans man, etc.

### Moderators & Speakers Info (Please complete where possible)

	Moderator (Primary)	Moderator (Backup)	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3	Speaker 4
Name	Karishma Mehrotra		Sunil Kumar Singhal	Osama Manzar	Rekha Jain	TV Ramachandran
Email	karishma.mehrotra.7@gmail.com		ddgas-dot@nic.in	osamam@gmail.com	rekha@iima.ac.in	tvr@broadbandindiaforum.in
Organization			Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, Government of India	Digital Empowerment Foundation	IIM Ahmedabad	Broadband India Forum

	Moderator (Primary)	Moderator (Backup)	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3	Speaker 4
Designation			DDG (AS)	Founder-Director, Digital Empowerment Foundation	Retired Professor	President
Gender	Female		Male	Male	Female	Male
Economy of Residence / Country	India		India	India	India	India
Stakeholder Group	Press / Media		Government	Civil Society	Academia	Private Sector
Status of Confirmation	Confirmed		Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed

**Please explain the rationale for choosing each of the above contributors to the session.**

The session has been planned with a view to accommodate diverse stakeholders across the board.

Ms Karishma Mehrotra is a Fulbright research fellow. She has previously worked with the Indian Express, Radiolab, Wall Street Journal, CNN, the Boston Globe, and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Her words have also appeared in Bloomberg Businessweek and Quartz. She has held a range of beats, usually focused on forward-looking issues such as technology, urbanization, and climate.

Shri Sunil Kumar Singhal is the present DDG(AS) for Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, Government of India and is one of the leaders in the government’s efforts towards universal connectivity.

Mr. TV Ramachandran is currently the President of Broadband India Forum; Global Advisor, Future Tech Panel – IET (Institution of Engg. & Technology, London); and Founder & CEO of Advisory@TVR – a Consultancy in the ICT & TMT space.

Prof Rekha Jain is former Professor and Executive Chair, IIMA Idea Telecom Centre of Excellence at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and Senior Visiting Fellow, ICRIER.

Mr. Osama Manzar is Founder and Director of Digital Empowerment Foundation; Ashoka Senior Fellow; British Chevening Scholar and IVLP Fellow. Recently G20 has endorsed DEF’s work for Digital Infrastructure and Digital Transformation.

## IIGF 2022

### Session Title

Last-mile internet connectivity in India