



DiSTO

From digital skills
to tangible outcomes

DIGITAL

INCLUSION &

EMPOWERMENT

IN INDIA

Symposium

24th & 25th July 2023



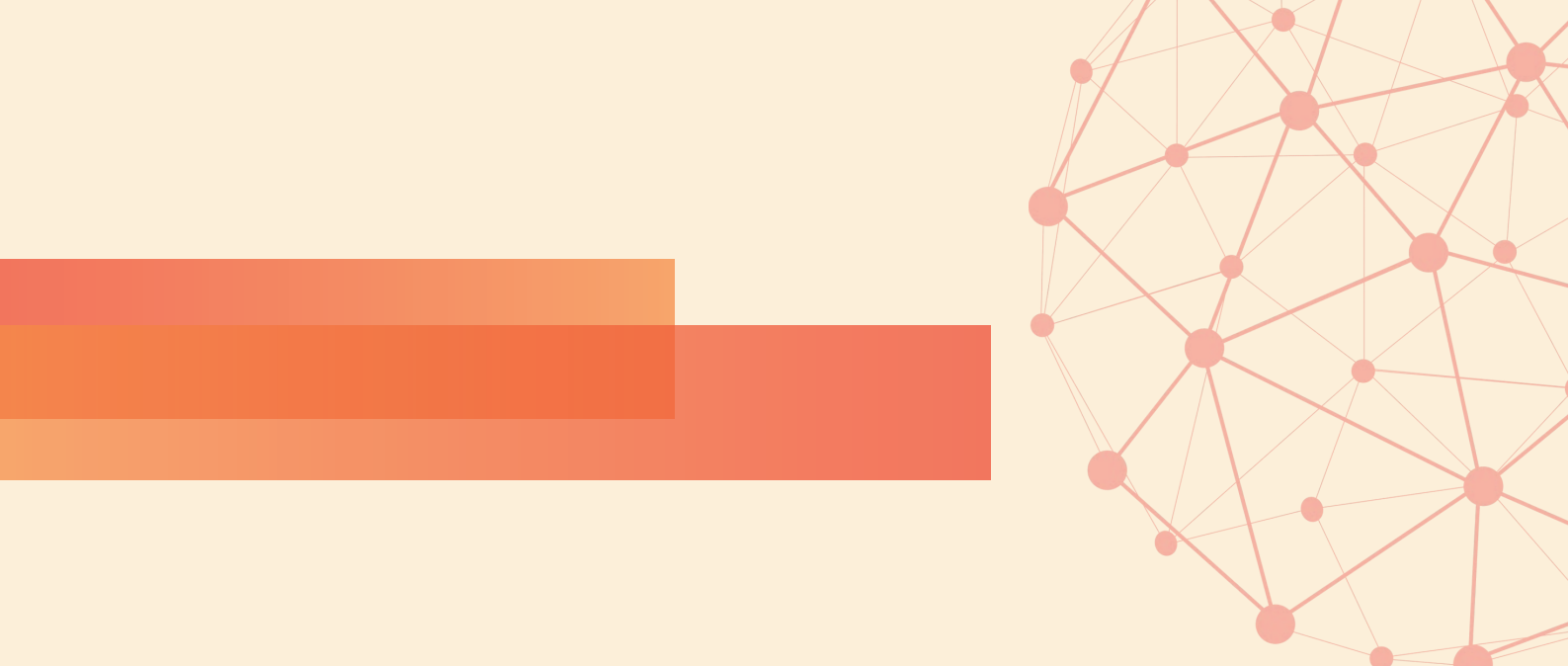
POLICY &
DEVELOPMENT
ADVISORY
GROUP

Facilitating people-centric public policy

LSE

THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

CONTENTS

- 
- 01** About DiSTO India
 - 03** About Dr Ellen Helsper
 - 04** Introducing PDAG
 - 05** Introducing IGNOU
 - 06** Introducing the India Team
 - 07** About the Symposium
 - 08** Themes of the Symposium
 - 14** Agenda
 - 16** Day 1: Panelists and Moderators
 - 22** Day 2: Panelists and Moderators

SITES OF THE DiSTO PROJECT

The DiSTO (From Digital Skills to Tangible Outcomes) initiative, hosted by the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), has successfully undertaken the project in eight countries.



Brazil

Chile

Uruguay

Spain

Netherlands

United Kingdom

United States of America

Kuwait

ABOUT DiSTO INDIA

Policy and Development Advisory Group (PDAG) is organising a symposium as part of the India chapter of **DiSTO (From Digital Skills to Tangible Outcomes)**, in collaboration with the **London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)**.

The DiSTO project organised by LSE develops and improves measures and models of people's digital skills, digital engagement, and outcomes of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) use—mapping these onto social inequalities. The two-day event will include multiple panel discussions on relevant themes and would involve participation from academicians, practitioners and policymakers.

ABOUT DiSTO INDIA



The Ministry of Education has stressed that the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020, inter alia, emphasises digital literacy, coding, and computational thinking in its suggested curricula. Keeping in view the availability of digital infrastructure, the government issued the Pragyata Guidelines on Digital Education in July 2020.



As per the **UN's e-participation index (2022)**, a composite measure of three important dimensions of e-government, namely provision of online services, telecommunication connectivity and human capacity, India ranks 61 out of 193 nations.



Based on **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data**, only 4.4 percent of rural households own computers, out of which only 14 percent have a computer with an internet connection.



Digital inequalities between urban and rural areas represent a significant challenge in India. Rural areas lack basic digital infrastructure and have limited access to internet services, which hinders the growth of digital literacy and engagement with digital technologies.

INTRODUCING

Dr Ellen Helsper is Professor of Digital Inequalities in the Department of Media and Communications at LSE, where she also serves as Programme Director for the MSc Media and Communications (Research). Her current research interests include the links between social and digital inequalities; mediated interpersonal communication; participatory immersive digital spaces (VR, ER); and quantitative and qualitative methodological developments in media and communications research.

Other studies she has been involved in include the impact of marketing through social media, online games and mobile applications on children's behaviour; the World Internet Project, Wisekids Wales; Youth at risks and ICTs; Social Impacts of ICT; Net Addiction; Me, My Spouse and the Internet; and Online Gambling.



Dr Ellen Helsper

Professor of Digital Inequalities, Department of Media and Communications, LSE

The three main research projects she is involved in are the From Digital Skills to Tangible Outcomes; the Global Kids Online and the Connected Cities and Inclusive Growth projects.



Facilitating people-centric public policy

ABOUT PDAG

Established in 2018, **Policy & Development Advisory Group (PDAG)** is a social enterprise working at the intersection of public policy and research advisory, and strategic communications. With the vision of a 'data-driven, people-centric public policy framework', PDAG has engaged in multiple at-scale partnerships with policymakers, multilateral institutions, impact investors and researchers, across its key practice areas of - Digital Cultures, Labour, Migration & Future of Work, Climate Action & Resilience, Sports for Social Impact, Governance and Political Economy, with gender being a cross-cutting theme. We strongly believe in the value of collaboration and therefore have established a global network of academic and non-academic partners across these practice areas.

PDAG has a young and dynamic team with members hailing from reputed global and national institutions and organisations. Together they bring onboard functional experience in strategic engagements and partnerships with policymakers, media and other impact-focused stakeholders with strong cross-sectoral expertise in conducting large-scale primary and secondary research and evidence generation using robust research methodologies, and a vibrant and creative strategic communications expertise.



The Indira Gandhi National Open University was established in 1985 by an act of parliament with the threefold objectives of encouraging distance education in the national educational pattern, accelerating and disseminating knowledge through a variety of means, including the use of communication technology, and providing opportunities for higher education to a significant portion of the population. The mandate of the University is to provide access, equity, affordability, quality and inclusive education.

Since its establishment, the University, by expanding equal access to high-quality education through Open and Distance Learning (ODL), has made a substantial contribution to the nation's higher education system. With an enrollment of 4,528 students, the University launched its academic activity in 1987 by providing two Diploma programmes, Management and Distance Education. IGNOU now offers 306 academic programmes and has seen a constant rise in enrolment. As a result of the university's dedication to achieving the aforementioned goals, it has established itself in the areas of teaching, research, training, and extension operations.

IGNOU has consistently upheld the nation's aspirations by offering education to the socially and economically disadvantaged, fulfilling its mission to "Reach the Unreached."

ABOUT IGNOU

INDIA RESEARCH TEAM



PROF. K S ARUL SELVAN

Professor and Director at the School of Journalism and New Media Studies (SOJNMS), IGNOU, New Delhi.

Prof. KS Arul Selvan is the coordinator of Masters programmes at SOJNMS, IGNOU. He coordinates three SWAYAM (E-learning portal of Ministry of Education, Govt of India) based MOOC courses: Media and Information Literacy for Teachers, Media, Information and Empowerment and Digital Media. Prof. Selvan also serves as an editor for the research journal "IGNOU Journal of Media and Empowerment".



MR ARINDAM BANERJEE

Co-Founder and Partner, Policy and Development Advisory Group (PDAG)

A UK Government Chevening Scholar, Arindam is the Co-founder and Partner at PDAG, a social enterprise working across public policy advisory and research and strategic communications. Arindam has nearly 13 years of experience working across some of India's most complex, underserved, and underdeveloped regions, closely with senior policymakers, researchers and civil society organisations. At PDAG, he currently oversees strategic partnerships with state governments, academic institutes and multilateral institutions.



MR KUNAL SINGH

Lead - Research & Research Operations, Policy and Development Advisory Group (PDAG)

With nearly ten years of expertise in social research, Kunal currently serves as the Lead - Research and Research Operations at PDAG. In this role, he is responsible for leading and coordinating research activities, as well as managing the overall research operations of the organisation.



MR SOURAV ADHIKARI

Consultant & Data Solutions Lead at Policy & Development Advisory Group (PDAG)

Sourav Adhikari is a data science engineer with five years of experience in the public policy research and social impact space. Currently, he leads the Data Solutions vertical at PDAG. His interests include geospatial analysis, systems design, and visualisation for knowledge communication.

ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

The 2-day symposium will feature a series of engaging panel discussions around the theme of digital inclusion and empowerment. The panel would be graced by a diverse range of participants, including esteemed academicians, seasoned practitioners and influential policymakers.

Their collective insights will help unpack the nuances around the prevailing digital divide and deliberate upon pathways to ensure digital inclusion and empowering the marginalised communities.

The symposium's first day will delve into crucial topics surrounding labour markets, digital literacy and skills, and impact of digital on everyday lives. This day will primarily cater to academicians, providing them with a platform to share their research findings from various disciplines within this field.

On the second day, our focus will shift toward critical themes such as digital infrastructure, financial inclusion, and inclusion strategies for marginalised communities. Day 2 will see participation from policymakers and practitioners, representatives from CSOs as well as industry stakeholders. Together, we will examine significant initiatives, share best practices, and address the barriers to success that exist within the Indian context.

Throughout the event, an overarching theme will be gender-based inequalities, drawing inspiration from SDG 5: Gender Equality.



Theme 1: Digital Inclusion, Socio-Economic Inequalities, and Labour Markets

In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, the world has witnessed a remarkable transformation in the way we work and connect. Yet, behind the glimmering façade of technological advancement lies a stark reality – the Digital Divide. This panel, will discuss and do a deep dive into the impact of digital exclusion on socio-economic inequalities and labour markets, with a special focus on its implications for marginalised communities as well for the female labour force.

This exploration aims to deliberate upon the lives of those individuals whose access to digital resources remains limited, hindering their ability to participate fully in the modern workforce. As we navigate through the intricate web of challenges they face, from restricted educational opportunities to limited access to job markets, we confront the pressing need to address the disparities that threaten to widen the gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged.

Drawing inspiration from Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 8 and 10, our quest is to unveil actionable strategies that can bridge this divide and usher in an era of inclusive digital access and opportunities. By tapping into the transformative potential of technology, we seek to understand how communities could digitally empower themselves towards a more equitable and inclusive society



THEMES OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Theme 2: Digital Literacy and Skills Facilitating Learning and Government Services

In the digital age, access to digital literacy and skills is instrumental in empowering marginalised communities and facilitating their engagement with education and government services. This theme explores the transformative role of digital competencies in breaking barriers to educational materials, enabling lifelong learning, and promoting efficient access to government services for underprivileged populations. Through an evaluation of digital education and training programs, the theme aims to gauge their effectiveness in enhancing digital inclusion. By linking SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), this exploration underscores the significance of digital literacy in fostering equitable access to education and empowering individuals to participate actively in civic life and access tech enabled government welfare services for just and inclusive social outcomes.

Theme 3: Impact of the Digital on Everyday Lives

In an increasingly interconnected world, the pervasive presence of digital technologies raises important questions about their impact on health and overall wellbeing. This theme will explore strategies to promote positive online experiences, digital resilience, and health support, especially in the post COVID-19 pandemic era of online work and education, affecting learning and mental health, especially for girls and women. By shedding light on the potential risks and benefits of technology, the exploration aims to foster a deeper understanding of the complexities involved and to address the unique challenges faced by vulnerable populations.

Beyond understanding the impact, this theme focuses on the formulation of proactive strategies to promote positive online experiences and digital resilience. By exploring the ways in which digital platforms can be leveraged to enhance mental health support, researchers and policymakers can work towards building a safer and more inclusive digital space. By aligning with SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, this exploration seeks to contribute to the broader global effort in prioritising mental health and creating a digital landscape that nurtures the overall wellbeing of individuals and communities alike.

Theme 1: Digital Infrastructure Development and Security

This panel will delve into the necessity of expanding digital infrastructure, especially broadband connectivity, in underserved regions. By discussing effective strategies, policies, and practices, the panel aims to ideate on solutions to ensure equitable access to digital resources and opportunities. As the world progresses towards achieving SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), this theme seeks to address the challenges faced in establishing robust digital networks and technology ecosystems in underserved regions. By examining the role of digital infrastructure in fostering economic growth, innovation, and social development, this discussion will contribute to shaping inclusive policies and initiatives that empower marginalised communities and create a foundation for a more sustainable and interconnected future.

The panel places significant emphasis on tackling the digital gender divide and by exploring gender-inclusive approaches to digital infrastructure development and promoting digital literacy among women and girls. The theme aligns with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and seeks to unlock the full potential of women across the globe. Simultaneously, the discussion addresses the paramount issues of cybersecurity and data protection in the digital era, which are essential for establishing trust and promoting digital engagement. By contributing to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), this panel aims to create a secure digital environment that fosters trust, collaboration, and collective progress, safeguarding individuals and societies from the vulnerabilities posed by the rapid advancement of technology.

Theme 2: Digital Financial Inclusion and Innovation

The panel aims to explore policies and initiatives to promote digital financial inclusion and innovation while addressing financial access and entrepreneurship disparities. It directly contributes to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by investigating how digital financial inclusion can create economic opportunities and empower individuals globally. Linked to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), the panel will focus on leveraging digital innovations to revolutionise financial services and bridge gaps in financial inclusion.

Additionally, the theme aligns with SDG 1 (No Poverty) by identifying ways to extend financial services to underserved populations, enabling economic empowerment and reducing poverty. By addressing inequalities in financial access and opportunities, the exploration contributes to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), fostering a more inclusive and equitable global economy. Through a comprehensive examination of digital financial inclusion and innovation, this theme aims to catalyse positive change and create a more financially inclusive world.

Theme 3: Digital Inclusion Strategies for Marginalised Communities

This theme delves into innovative approaches and policies designed to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to digital technologies and digital literacy programs for marginalised communities. By exploring the challenges faced by these underserved groups and identifying effective solutions, the panel would delve upon the need for creating a more inclusive digital landscape that leaves no one behind. With a strong alignment to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), the theme focuses on empowering marginalised populations with digital skills and resources, aiming to foster greater social and economic equity.

Furthermore, the discussion will incorporate SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) by investigating how innovative technologies and infrastructural developments can be leveraged to promote digital inclusion for marginalised communities. The theme will also attempt to unpack how India's huge labour force, especially migrant workers, Building and Other Construction Workers (BoCW), gig platform workers and home care workers can reap the true benefits of digital inclusion for better economic and social welfare outcomes. Additionally, this theme directly supports SDG 1 (No Poverty) by exploring ways to harness the power of digital inclusion to uplift vulnerable groups, offering pathways to economic empowerment and socio-economic growth. Overall, this theme strives to uncover impactful strategies that foster digital inclusion and promote a more equitable and interconnected global society.

AGENDA

DAY 1

9:30 AM	Welcome & Registration
10:00 AM - 10:15 AM	Introduction & setting the context
10:15 AM - 10:45 AM	Keynote Address
10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	Tea/ Coffee Break
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	Panel 1: Digital Inclusion and Labour Markets
12:30 PM - 12:45 PM	Q & A Session
12:45 PM - 1:30 PM	Lunch
1:30 PM - 2:45 PM	Panel 2: Digital Literacy and Skills Facilitating Learning and Government Services
2:45 PM - 3:00 PM	Q & A Session
3:00 PM - 3:15 PM	Tea/ Coffee Break
3:15 PM - 4.30 PM	Panel 3: Impact of the Digital on Everyday Lives
4:30 PM - 4:45 PM	Q & A Session
4:45 PM - 5:00 PM	Vote of Thanks

AGENDA

DAY 2

9:30 AM	Welcome & Registration
10:00 AM - 10:15 AM	Summary of Day 1 & Introduction to Day 2
10:15 AM - 10:45 AM	Keynote Address
10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	Tea/Coffee Break
11:00 AM - 12:15 PM	Panel 1: Digital Infrastructure Development and Security
12:15 PM - 12:30 PM	Q & A Session
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	Lunch
1:30 PM - 2:45 PM	Panel 2: Digital Financial Inclusion and Innovation
2:45 PM - 3:00 PM	Q & A Session
3:00 PM - 3:15 PM	Tea/ Coffee Break
3:15 PM - 4.30 PM	Panel 3: Digital Inclusion Strategies for Marginalised Communities
4:30 PM - 4:45 PM	Q & A Session
4:45 PM - 5:00 PM	Vote of Thanks



DAY 1



Dr Kanika Mahajan

Associate Professor of Economics, Ashoka University

Kanika Mahajan is an Associate Professor of Economics at Ashoka University, Sonapat. Her primary research interests include gender, labour and other distributional consequences of economic growth. As part of her current research, she is working on issues around the stagnation of women's employment in India - exploring both supply and demand side linkages using data from digital platforms as well as secondary household and firm data. Her other ongoing research examines the growth and resilience of firms in India and its implications for labour, capital, and trade.



Dr Shishir Kumar Jha

Professor, Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies, IIT Bombay

Dr Jha has completed over 20 years of teaching and enjoys being at IIT Bombay surrounded by one of the greenest campuses in India. He is interested in new alternatives to business and organisation that make 'value' creation more transparent, participatory and accountable. Presently, he is interested in examining the Digital Economy in terms of Digital Infrastructure, Digital Platforms, and forms of Digital Accreditation. His specialties lie in Digital and Information Economy, International Political Economy.



Dr Sona Mitra

Principal Economist, IWWAGE

Sona Mitra heads the research at the initiative for what works to advance gender equality. The initiative is hosted by IFMR-LEAD and located in the Krea University ecosystem. The work at IWWAGE aims to empower and improve women and girls' livelihood opportunities. Sona has been working on women's development for close to two decades. Her research is focussed on understanding the changes in women's labour under contemporary economic systems and examining economic policies using a feminist lens.



Mr Vibodh Parthasarathi

Associate Professor, Centre for Culture Media & Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia

Mr Parthasarathi maintains a multidisciplinary interest in media policy, digital transitions, & policy literacy. Associate Professor at Jamia Millia Islamia. he has been a visiting scholar at the University of Queensland, KU Leuven, University of Helsinki, and IIT Bombay. He has been at the forefront of media policy research in India and a winner of numerous grants including the Ford Foundation, Canada's IDRC, SSRC, and University Grants Commission.



Ms Akshi Chawla

Editor, Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), Ashoka University

Akshi Chawla is a writer, editor and researcher and her work focuses on tracking women's representation and participation in public life, focusing on workforce, politics & leadership roles. At CEDA, she leads the production of data-driven research analyses investigating India's progress on key socio-economic indicators. She also runs #WomenLead, a publication tracking noteworthy updates about women in politics from around the world, in an independent capacity.



Dr Bidisha Banerji

Associate Professor & Dy. Director, Amity Institute of Public Policy, Amity University

Dr Bidisha Banerji is an educator, researcher, and people manager. She has a wide range of experience in governance, sustainable development, and social responsibility issues in developing markets, migration, and academia. She is Associate Professor and Deputy Director at Amity Institute of Public Policy, Amity University, Noida. She is the editor of two books- Universities as Living Labs of Sustainability (2022) and Reimagining Sustainable Futures: The SDG Framework (2019).



Dr Mansi Kedia

Senior Fellow, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations

Dr Kedia's areas of research include telecommunication and digital policy, trade and industrial policy. Her ongoing research includes issues related to the governance of the Internet, competition, emerging tech and the future of work in India. She was a member of the Task Force rewriting the Direct Tax Code for India (2017) and a Mid-Career Fellow of the Internet Society (2022). She is currently a Co-Chair of the T20 Task Force on Our Common Digital Future: Affordable, Accessible and Inclusive Digital Public Infrastructure.



Dr P. Vigneswara Ilavarasan

Professor, Department of Management Studies, IIT Delhi

P. Vigneswara Ilavarasan is Abdulaziz Alsagar Chair Professor at the Dept. of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. He researches and teaches about the interaction of ICTs, society and business. He is a recipient of the Outstanding Young Faculty Fellowship Award at IIT Delhi and the Prof M.N. Srinivas Memorial Prize of the Indian Sociological Society. He is also a Senior Research Fellow at LIRNEasia, a leading regional ICT policy and regulation think tank. He is currently a Section Editor of Society and Politics, Heliyon (Elsevier & Cell Press).



Ms Sharon Buteau

Executive Director, LEAD at Krea University

Sharon Buteau combines the expansive experience of over 18 years in research and international development, with over 7 years in the field of digital financial services and financial inclusion. Sharon is passionate about finding effective solutions to promote enterprise growth and development and realise the untapped potential of micro and small businesses. At LEAD, Sharon focuses on bringing the right combination of talent, expertise and stakeholders together to ensure that investments and efforts are perfectly aligned with the desired goals.



Dr KS Arul Selvan

Professor and Director, School of Journalism and New Media Studies (SOJNMS), IGNOU

With 18 years of media education experience, Dr Selvan is coordinating master's degree programmes at SOJNMS. Additionally, he coordinates three SWAYAM-based MOOC courses: Media and Information Literacy for Teachers, Media, Information and Empowerment and Digital Media. He is serving as an editor for the research journal "IGNOU Journal of Media and Empowerment. Prior to that, he was associated with the South Asian Online Journalism programme of the BBC World Service Trust as a trainer, mentor and project coordinator.



Dr Damanjit Sandhu

Professor, Department of Psychology, Punjabi University, Patiala

Dr. Damanjit Sandhu is a Professor of Psychology at Punjabi University Patiala, India. Her area interests include Child and Adolescent Development, Mental Health, and Cyber Psychology. She is widely published including co-editing a book published by Cambridge University Press. She has previously been the principal investigator of the Indian-European Research Networking Programme and is currently heading a special research group "Australia-India Well-being Studies" at Flinders University Adelaide.



Dr Gauri Chakraborty

Professor, Times School of Media & Chairperson, Women Development Cell, Bennett University

Dr Gauri D Chakraborty has been a media educator for the last 18 years including spearheading a media department and a university community radio station. She has been a resource person for UGC refresher programs on gender and a member of IAMCR and IAWRT. Her doctoral research explores the representation of the emancipated 'other half' in the cinema of the city in Bollywood post-globalisation. Her research interests are gender studies, archiving, film studies and curatorial practices for film festivals.

SPEAKERS



Dr Rachna Sharma

Associate Professor, Digital Media, Indian Institute Of Mass Communication

Dr Rachna Sharma is Associate Professor, Digital Media, the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi. Currently, she is on a scholarship of the Summer 2023 SUSI on Journalism, Technology and Democracy at Arizona State University, USA. She had been an Assistant Professor in the Department of Journalism, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi University before her current academic assignment. She has taught at Kalindi College (University of Delhi) and Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies (affiliated to GGSIPU) previously.



Dr Tarushikha Sarvesh

Assistant Professor of Sociology, Advanced Centre for Women's Studies, Aligarh Muslim University

Dr Sarvesh is an Assistant Professor and researcher of Sociology and Gender Studies at the Advanced Centre for Women's Studies, Aligarh Muslim University. She is a member of the Development Studies Association and has published in various national and international research Journals like Social Change; Journal of International Women's Studies, Bridgewater State University Publication; Politics, Groups and Identities, and more. She also does translation work for PARI, a digital archiving platform.



Dr Ellen Helsper

Professor of Digital Inequalities, Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Dr Ellen Helsper is a professor at LSE, where she also serves as Programme Director for the MSc Media and Communications (Research). Ellen holds positions as a Visiting Scholar at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, the Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile, and the Centro Regional de Estudos para o Desenvolvimento da Sociedade da Informação Latino America (Cetic.br). She has held similar positions at Microsoft research in Boston, NYU Steinhardt's Department of Media, Culture and Communications, the University of Twente and the University of Oxford.



DAY 2



Mr Apar Gupta

Founder Director, Internet Freedom Foundation

Apar Gupta is a trained lawyer specialising in the intersection of technology and democratic rights in India. He has trained in law firms, appeared in historic constitutional cases, ran large online campaigns, instructed courses, drafted legislative proposals and authored academic articles. As Founder Director of Internet Freedom Foundation, he has been able to create meaningful social impact and bring several innovations to the non-profit sector in domains such as strategic litigation, civic literacy, transparency disclosures and retail-based fundraising.



Ms Meghna Bal

Head of Research & Fellow, Esya Centre

Meghna is a Fellow and Head of Research at the Esya Centre, a New Delhi-based think tank focussing on research at the intersection of technology and policy. She is a lawyer by training with deep experience in media and emerging technology. At Esya, she has led research on a host of different verticals such as internet governance, Web3, and competition regulation in digital markets. She also led research on a market study for the Competition Commission of India, which was shortlisted for a Concurrence Antitrust Writing Award in 2023.



Capt. Puneet Balasubramanian

Director, Ministry of Defence, Government of India

Captain Puneet is a seasoned Naval Officer by profession. With a specialisation in Communication & Electronic Warfare, Puneet has successfully accomplished several Operational, Staff and Training assignments in the Indian Navy. He has the distinction of commanding three frontline warships, including CGS Guardian of the National Coast Guard, Mauritius. He is a keen student and practitioner of Public Policy is particularly interested in the intersection of Strategy and Policy. He regularly writes on issues of Public Policy, Strategy and on Defence matters.



Mr Vineet Kumar

Founder & Global President, CyberPeace Foundation

In a career span of 20+ years, Vineet Kumar has founded NGO/NPOs, set up state government IT infrastructure & network, headed the Jharkhand State Government agency on Cyber Defence, led various initiatives for the welfare, trained senior officials on cybercrime, security & investigations, taught at prestigious schools/universities, conducted speaker engagements globally at seminars/conferences/forums. He is a social entrepreneur dedicated to reducing cyber crime, working for Cyber Peace and the prevention of Cyber Weapons. He founded NAG (National Anti-Hacking Group) & Cyber Peace Foundation as part of the social mission.



Ms Gayathri Shanmugam

Chief Programme Officer, Haqdarshak

Gayathri Shanmugam is the Chief Program Officer at Haqdarshak and oversees all elements of the design and delivery of programs. She has 20 years of experience across large corporates, and MNCs including six years of running her own enterprise. At Haqdarshak, Shanmugam leads quality control audits via M&E and is driving the training and development vertical. The organisation ensures citizens at the last mile get access to government and private welfare schemes and services.



Mr Rohit Kumar

Founding Partner, The Quantum Hub and co-founder, Young Leaders for Active Citizenship

Rohit co-founded The Quantum Hub (TQH) in 2017 and its sister concern Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC) in 2016 to strengthen the governance ecosystem in India through public policy research, advocacy and citizen engagement. Rohit's work in policy cuts across sectors, including regulation of new business models, emerging issues in tech policy, digital public infrastructure and payments. An alumnus of Harvard Kennedy School of Government and IIT Bombay, he previously served as the Head of Policy and Research at the office of Mr. Baijayant 'Jay' Panda, Member of Parliament (MP) in Lok Sabha.



Mr Swapnil Agarwal

Co-founder/CEO, Dhvani Rural Information Systems Pvt. Ltd.

Swapnil Agarwal is an experienced technology specialist with a demonstrated history of working with organisations in the social sector. He is skilled in Business Planning, Market Research, Process mapping, Technology consulting and Public Speaking. Also, he holds a strong information technology professional with a PGDRM focused in Rural Management from the Institute of Rural Management Anand.



Mr Arjun Venkataraman

Program Officer, Digital, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, India

Arjun Venkataraman is a Program Officer, Digital, at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation where he focuses on digital programs in the areas of gender equality, livelihoods, agriculture, and financial services for the poor. Arjun holds a bachelor's in computer science and a master's in business law from the National Law School of India University. Prior to BMGF, Arjun spent a decade working with communities in remote and rural regions in India to enable local technology adoption and ownership through The Mojoblab Foundation and in this context, was elected to the Ashoka fellowship in 2014.

SPEAKERS



Dr Akashi Kaul

Assistant Vice President, Sambodhi Research & Communications Pvt. Ltd.

Akashi is a methodologist specializing in mixed methods research and evaluation methodologies. Her research interests include issues of inequity based on access, race, gender, caste and class, participatory methods and issues of voice and agency. As the Assistant Vice President - Research at Sambodhi, Akashi plays a key role in setting the overall direction of high-impact interventions and building strategic partnerships with key stakeholders.



Mr Liby Johnson

Executive Director, Gram Vikas

Mr Liby Johnson is a Social Development Management specialist with 25 years of experience with grassroots and policy-level work in areas of livelihoods, disaster management and organisational development. He was instrumental in setting up a national-level resource organisation, that helps adapt experiences and lessons from Kerala to other States under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission. He has worked on ground in Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha with rural communities on securing better livelihoods, coping with natural disasters, and more, and in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, helping build back livelihoods and shelters affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.



Dr Sakshi Khurana

Senior Specialist (Skill Development, Labour and Employment), NITI Aayog

Dr Sakshi Khurana has been engaged in research and policy-related work as a Senior Specialist at the Skill Development, Labour & Employment Vertical at NITI Aayog which is the policy think tank of the Government of India. She has served at NITI Aayog since 2016. She was at the Centre for Gender and Labour, V.V. Giri National Labour Institute from 2014-16 and has also been a doctoral fellow at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University. Her current work is focused on understanding youth employment trends, the future of work, challenges and social protection in the gig and platform economy and strengthening the care economy.

READ MORE AT:



<https://www.disto.pdag.in/>



<https://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/research/research-projects/disto>



<https://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/research/research-projects/disto/disto-india>

CONTACT US



PDAG Consulting LLP,
E-934, 2nd Floor, CR Park,
New Delhi -110019



connect@pdag.in



+91 9434449964