

mBillionth Grand Jury 2013: Highlights

mBillionth Award South Asia Grand Jury was successfully held at Fort Unchagaon (Bulandshahar), Uttar Pradesh on 27th and 28th May 2013. mBillionth Award Grand Jury is one of the most crucial milestones in entire mBillionth Award Process, which is aimed to invite and identify the best mobile and telecom innovations across Asia.

The Jury

mBillionth South Asia Award Jury panel was mix of telecom experts, entrepreneurs, market experts, mentors, consultants, active journalists & writers on Telecom Developments from 8 South Asian countries and selected based on their overall insight on the subjects and domain. The jury was a mix of diversity, language, region, gender and sector.

The experts were: Osama Manzar, Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF); Laura Turkington, Country Head-India, Vodafone Foundation; Milind Pathak, Head Global Business, One97; Anuraj Gambhir, Strategic Advisor and Innovation Evangelist, Steadworks; Arjun Basu, Co-Founder and Director, Mydala; Mahesh Uppal, Director COM FIRST (INDIA) PRIVATE LIMITED; Indumini Kodikara, Project Manager, e-Society at Information & Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka; Sushil Raj Pandey, Knowledge Management and Communication Specialist, ICIMOD; Mohammad Chowdhury, Partner & Telecoms Industry Leader at Price waterhouse Coopers India; Pranshu Singhal, Head, Sustainability at Nokia India Private Limited; Binay Tiwari, Global Marketing Head. Vserv.mobi; Dr. Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net; Soumya Sarkar, National Editor, Mint; Professor Debabrata Goswami, Professor at IIT Kanpur and Academic Council & Advisory Council Member, Glocal University; Mahesh Venkateswaran, Principal – Innovation and Engagement at National Skill Development Corporation; N. Ramakrishnan, Director of Projects, Ideosync Media Combine; Amir Ullah Khan, President of Glocal University; Rajen Varada, Founder & Director, Technology For The People; Madan Mohan Rao, Research Project Director, Mobile Monday.

Why Unchagaon (Bulandshahar) for Grand Jury 2013

Fort Unchagaon (Garhmukteshwar, Uttar Pradesh) was selected for the mBillionth Grand Jury 2013. With more than 200 million people, Uttar Pradesh is India's most populous state, roughly equal in population to Brazil. The one third of the state's population lives below the poverty line and the state has the highest number of children who leave school to work. The maternal mortality rate here is one of the highest in India.

Building for the future requires us to think beyond programmatic lines. Our aim was to show the Juror's the current scenario of one of the backward states in India and find ways to keep them up with the mobile technology.

High Quality Nominations

This time the quality of nominations was very high. The Juror's had a very difficult time this year deciding mBillionth Winners.

The nominations were in mobile communications across south Asia spread across 12 core categories: m- Business & Commerce/Banking; m- Environment; m-Infrastructure; m-Culture & Heritage; m-Entertainment; m-News & Journalism; m-Governance; m-Health; m-Travel & Tourism; m-Education & Learning; m-Infrastructure and m-Woman& Children.

Out of 291 nominations, 63 best practices were chosen as finalists.

Nomination and Jury Process

mBillionth Award jury is a three tier process where the entries go through rigorous review and filtering, it then goes through parameter and secondary research based evaluation and then it finally goes through diverse qualitative and quantitative discussion and voting by about 20 jurors who spend about three days to select the winners across 12 categories.

mBillionth Award 2013 launched the online process of accepting the nomination entries from March 2013. Each entry went through a rigorous scrutiny and filtration process to make the database of entries meticulous and eligible. After the clearing of database the nominations were further checked for their quality, relevance and category belongingness. It then handed over to small group of jury team known as a virtual jury. The virtual jury team went through each and every nomination and filters the nominations further on the basis of quality.

Finally the formed Grand Jury members got-together in person in Unchagaon (Bulandshahar) for 2 days and collectively worked in a two round process to select the best 3 to 5 in each category.

Jurors' plenary

- The plenary was based on totally offline discussion, presentation, and consensus.
- Participated by every juror, in second plenary, the short listed nomination went through joint voting system by show of hands.
- Discussion and voting on the winner per category by the plenary.
- Outcome: A Winners List of best nominations per category and Identify Special Mentions

Juror's Evaluation Criteria

- **Content & Services:** Quantify the quality of content and services delivery, relevance of content and its utility value.
- **Impact & Sustainability:** The social impact & the commercial viability of the application/product/project.
- **Functionality/Navigation:** User friendliness & interactive nature of the application & its features.
- **Interface & Visual Design:** Number usability as well as the design of applications, user experience, aesthetic value, and multimedia values.
- **USP & Strategic Value:** Uniqueness of the idea & the easiness of Strategy replication.
- **Execution values & Implementation:** Value of smooth execution; implementation processes; socio economic impact of execution and implementation.
- **Accessibility:** How accessible is the system, technology, interface and is it inclusive to allow all kind of users to access.
- **Overall Experience:** The overall experience of the user about the project or service or content delivery.

The Entire Two Days' Experience

The Jurors argued for hours into the late night scoring the entries, sweating it out in the grand but dusty hall of a stout family fort built over a hundred years' ago, with an a/c which could never cool quickly enough to neutralise the heat from the sultry sunshine streaming in from outside.

In the village of Unchagaon, connectivity was a major issue. This time m-Health has the most number of nominations (20), obviously this was the most difficult category for the Jurors. Does it mean that m-Health is going to bring in the next wave of Indian Healthcare?

The jury had a lot of time for these entries, the ones that are using mobile to bind communities together and make our society stronger.

Challenges:

Despite sending so many nominations invited mailers, there was very little participation of small countries in mBillionth Award 2013. There was no participation from Bhutan, Maldives and Afganistan. This implies there isa big lethargy in these countries in mobile segment. And, there is no dearth of innovations in mobile technology in the small South Asian countries. There is need to build mobile communications policies for development and bridging the digital divide in these countries.