

## **Elements of Best Practices in 10 years: Digital Agenda for South Asia**

Why Manthan Award platform has been such a success over the years and is seen by the industry as a benchmark of absolute quality pick up of the best ICT4D practices and for long,

The last ten years of Manthan Award has not only been successful in establishing itself as unique platform, but has been uncompromised for its belief and practice to identify such innovations and projects who are genuinely working in making impact on society and communities who are otherwise ignored, left out or excluded. We are also proud that we have been able to make success out of Manthan Award without having it ever compromised, yet financially sustainable through the support of the government, private sector, and other stakeholders.

As we are celebrating 10th year, it is important to relate ourselves as to why we were formed and whether we have been on the course on the vision of the Manthan Award. The Manthan Award was formed as regional initiative of the World Summit Award, which itself was institutionalized in 2003 under the framework of United Nation's World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), with vision to work towards making the world an inclusive society by using ICT tools and digital media and make sure that we end up creating Information Society.

Since India is one of the most populated countries in the world, we also have the highest number of people suffering from information poverty and information asymmetry. Manthan Award has been making sure to identify those people and organisations who are making efforts to make information society a reality. Although Manthan Award was initiated as an India specific award, it soon expanded its reach to all the countries of South Asia, and this year it has leapfrogged to Asia Pacific also.

The Manthan Awards, a first of its kind initiative in India to recognize the best practices in e-Content and Creativity, is a great forum to recognize and bring together all the success stories from across the region. By recognizing ICT innovations, Manthan is trying to foster a spirit of inclusion across the region and build a sense of community through the forum.

Inequalities in terms of costs persist while Internet and PCs have become pervasive for people around the globe. With six billion mobile connections worldwide, the mobile revolution has taken place. Its centres are not New York or Paris but Mumbai and Manila.

The Manthan Award has a lighthouse function in this environment. South East Asian content developers turn available technical devices into powerful knowledge tools for the masses: They create content that has a direct impact on the daily lives of millions of people. And a most

positive one: e-content and net platforms support citizens in harvesting crops, transferring money, managing learning processes or starting up their businesses.