

OSAMA MANZAR

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Founder-Director

Digital Empowerment Foundation

[Empowering People @ The Edge of Information]

Osama Manzar is a global leader on the mission of eradicating information poverty from India and the global south using digital tools through Digital Empowerment Foundation, an organisation he co-founded in 2002.

With over 25 years of experience, Osama has worked in the areas of journalism, new media, software enterprise before he established DEF to digitally empower the masses (so far 20 million directly) with a footprint of 1000 locations and 9000+ digital foot soldiers across 130 districts in 24 States.

A British Chevening Scholar and an International Visitors Leadership Program Fellow of the US State Department, Osama is a social entrepreneur, author, columnist, impact speaker, angel investor, storyteller, mentor, and sits on several government and policy committees in India and on international organisations working in the areas of Internet, access, digital inclusion and Misinformation.

Osama Manzar was instrumental in making National Digital Literacy Mission for DEF and its co-creators which later got adopted by Indian government. He also was a part of the team that developed India's one of the biggest scheme called Common Service Centers. Recently, in 2020 government of India declared PM-WANI to decentralise and democratise last mile wifi based on DEF' Wireless for Community program conceived by Osama. He also contributed in designing video call based mentorship program for tribal girls in remote areas called GOAL which got adopted by Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

He has co-authored more than six books, including *Internet Economy of India* and *Netchakra: 15 Years of Internet in India*. His latest book as a co-editor is *COVID-19 - The New Normal: How to Survive a New World Order*. Osama has instituted 10 awards for recognising digital innovations for development in South Asia.

He is a Member of Advisory Board at Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI); Member of Media & Information Literacy Experts Network (MILEN) and Member of the Board/Advisory at various organisations such as: Association of Progressive Communication (APC); Global Network Initiative (GNI); World Summit Award (WSA); Ibtada; Society for Labour & Development (SLD); Down To Earth; Missing; Swaraj University, Proto Village and Protsahan Sanstha.

Osama Manzar has travelled to more than 10,000 villages across India and 50 countries and specialises in advising digital models for underserved communities. He writes regular columns in various publications including Mint.

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