



India in Focus

By Rahul Nehra, Honorary National Secretary, SCTE India

Technological advancement and transition across all platforms in 2021.



Rahul Nehra
Honorary National
Secretary, SCTE India

Rahul Nehra is the Founder/MD of Jadooz Media Solutions. He founded and successfully exited Moving Talkies.

In his financial career, he has taken various leadership roles in blue chip companies in India such as Irdeto, Latens, Intelsat and Exset.

He is also a director of Celebridge and the co-chair of TIE Global: Media and Entertainment SG.

The stage is set. This year the world will go into digital and infrastructure overdrive. This year we will see a surge in infrastructure driving digital services, applications driving education, entertainment, governance and health across the globe. This year we may also see a limited 5G roll out, the design of a new breed of satellites and broadband internet supplying unconnected regions across India for the first time.

The Indian satellite industry will see a slew of launches with Brazil's Amazonia, three Indian satellites and the PSLV-C51 all happening in the first quarter of 2021. The PSLV-C 51 is particularly special to us as it is powered by an Indian start-up called Pixxel. We will also see some old satellites being replaced and new gigabit satellites being launched.

The Indian mobile market is expected to grow at a rate of 12-15% and see ownership of more than 170 million handsets in the year 2021. We will also see the introduction of the 5G compatible handsets for the first time. The telecoms sector, under pressure from liquidity, rationalisation, AGR and spectrum may see some relief over the course of the year.

Broadband penetration today is expected to reach in excess of 2 million households with an average of 200GB of data being consumed on a per household basis in India. Mobile data penetration is expected to grow at about seven percent, with more than 75% of the bandwidth being consumed by video. Rural broadband penetration continues to lag behind the national

average, but we should see this gap being reduced further in 2021. This will be primarily on account of the BBNL village level expansion and also the user demand growth for applications and video in the heartland.

The India cable industry slowly but surely is expected to enter into the TriplePlay space with more and more Android STB (Hybrid and IPTV) being seeded. It will be clear by the end of Q-1 what these numbers may eventually look like, given the challenges that the current networks pose to IPTV delivery. There will be two key players defining this transition: Jio and Next Digital in India. Citicable is also expected to see

this transition starting Q-1 this year. The Cable ARPU may experience further decline but should be compensated by revenue coming from broadband delivery.

In a nutshell, 2021 will be a time of transition; the advent of 5G, gigabit satellites, TriplePlay and a large and growing universe of data and video applications for the consumers. Considering the impact that COVID-19 is having on the region and our daily lives, this is a source of great pride for us at SCTE India and we are proud of the hard work and dedication our team have shown during these challenging times.

Editor's Note

SCTE India (based in New Delhi), with its own dedicated committee, focuses on the requirements of SCTE's members in India. The group has been granted registration as a non-profit organisation and is run by an Indian Executive. It regularly organises networking meetings and roadshows (sometimes hosted by local cable operators and manufacturers) as well as training activities in India. It also holds the SCTE India awards (for individual achievement and technology innovation).

SCTE India regularly disseminates news that is relevant to all SCTE India members and widely promotes further SCTE activities such as training and standards news. For further details, see www.scteindia.org



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