

# Openness, Access to Knowledge, Intellectual Property Rights

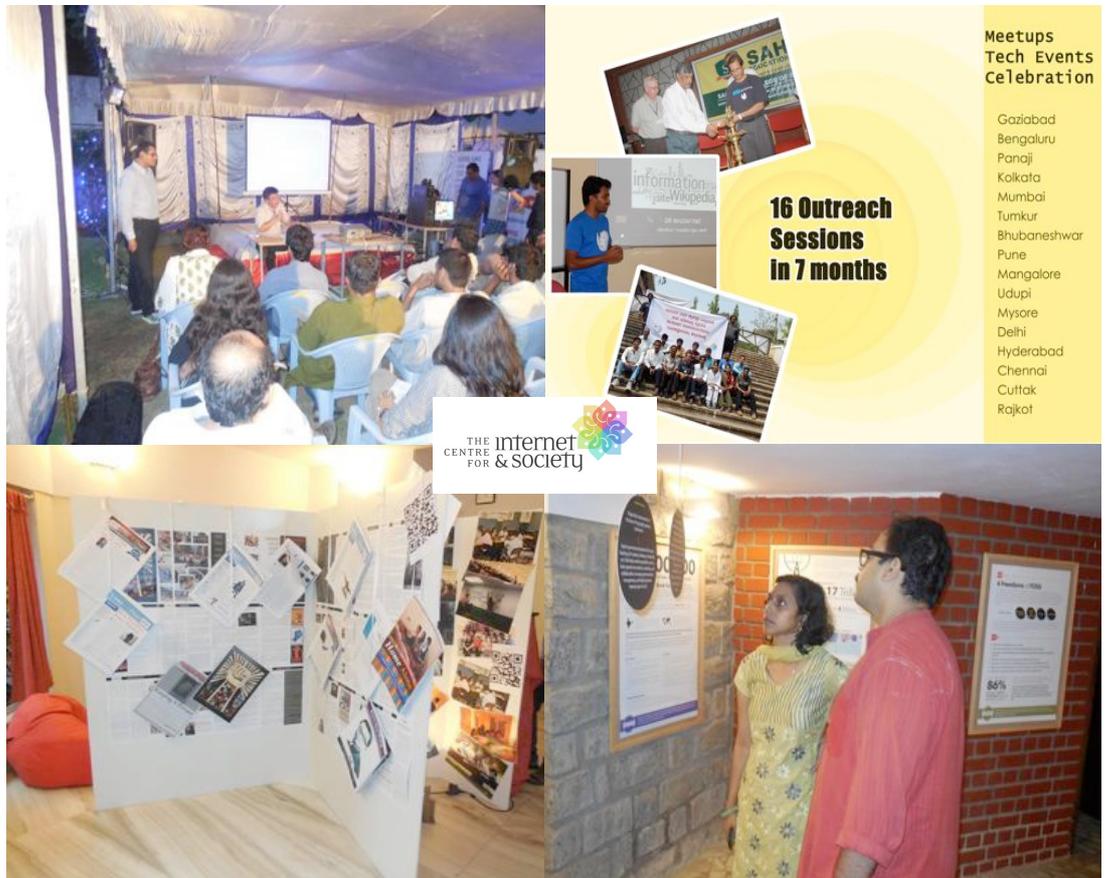
## CIS celebrates 5 years of achievements

In May, The Centre for Internet and Society (CIS) celebrated its five-year anniversary with a donor roundtable meeting, exhibition and a series of talks, film screenings and cultural events that showcased its major activities and accomplishments. Dr Balwant Singh, Chief Executive of the Kusuma Trust (The Trust), attended the donor roundtable meeting with other major donors including the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation and Open Society Foundations. The roundtable discussion focused on plans, activities and achievements of CIS including internet governance, collaboration between researchers and internet accessibility and openness. Key achievements of CIS include exposing the blocking of websites through media coverage, a national resource kit of policies and programmes for people with disabilities and an audit report on the accessibility of 7800 Government of India websites which is now being used by State departments to revise website guidelines.

The exhibition to celebrate the work of CIS was held at its offices in Bangalore and Delhi. To promote transparency, CIS invited the general public to be auditors for the day by opening its account books and contracts to show how their funding has been spent. The exhibition featured talks, workshops and films on cyber-security, privacy and surveillance, language and access to IT.

Sunil Abraham, Executive Director of CIS said *“we are deeply indebted to Kusuma Trust for helping CIS protect public interest within information society policy and research. CIS has been quoted 681 times in the media to date and we hope that in the next 5 years with support from The Trust, CIS will become the ‘go-to organisation’ for the global south when it comes to internet policy research”*.

The Centre for Internet and Society is a not for profit research organisation that works on policy issues relating to freedom of expression, privacy, accessibility for persons with disabilities, access to knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights reform, and openness.



Exhibitions and events at CIS's five-year anniversary celebrations. Photos: CIS

## Research Fellowships Launched

### International Institute for Population Sciences

In partnership with the Kusuma Foundation and the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) in Mumbai, The Trust has launched the Kusuma Research Fellowship programme for postgraduate students. The programme will fund five fellows a year and will run for three years. The programme will strengthen research capacity in the education sector and train young professional researchers who do not have the financial means to conduct research of national importance. Following the training, research fellows will carry out field research. Fellows will receive support from IIPS mentors who will advise the fellows on research design and methodology, writing research reports and disseminating and publishing their findings at national and international forums.

As part of their research, fellows will identify an area of study relevant to secondary and higher education and employment in India and carry out the research over the course of the year. The research will focus on educational issues that particularly affect The Trust's focus districts of Sambalpur in Odisha and Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh.

Potential research subjects that the fellows may choose include a study on improving the rates of attendance in schools, an attitudinal study on parental expectations of schooling and ways to integrate technology in classrooms. At the end of each year, all five fellows will have received training on quantitative and qualitative research tools, study design, data analysis and will have disseminated their research in peer reviewed journals.

Dr Balwant Singh, Chief Executive of The Trust, said *"I am delighted the Kusuma Fellowships are underway in partnership with the Kusuma Foundation and IIPS. These fellowships are designed to strengthen research capacity in India and contribute to generating evidence to inform policy and practice in education"*.

---

## State of the Nation Update

### Centre for Social Justice

The Trust is funding the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) to undertake research to review the causes of educational failure in the UK as part of CSJ's Breakthrough Britain II initiative, which will provide recommendations for policy and practical reforms to break the cycle of social inequality.

On 29 May, The Trust attended a reception hosted by the chairman of CSJ, Mark Florman, who gave an update on the findings from the interim report entitled 'State of the Nation'. The report argues that educational failure is not only a consequence of poverty – but also one of its key drivers. The report goes on to highlight key issues such as qualifications and levels of attainment, standards in literacy and numeracy and the national picture compared with local areas of acute disadvantage. Causes of educational failure have already been identified and include income poverty, parental education, family breakdown and domestic violence. The report also identifies factors that can prevent educational failure such as the quality of teaching, good school governance and strong leadership. The educational failure volume of the State of the Nation report will be published fully in the autumn of this year.

---

## Higher results for Kusuma Schools

Class XII students from 25 Kusuma supported schools in Sambalpur, Odisha, have achieved higher results in their Board Class XII examinations in 2012-13 compared with the results from 2011-2012. Schools in the Dhankauda, Maneswar and Naktideul blocks of Sambalpur achieved an average pass percentage of 70% in the examinations compared with an average of 63% the year before. The increase of 7% in performance across all schools provides promising evidence of the potential impact of Kusuma funded projects in the district. Interventions such as the Kusuma Ratna Fellowship Programme, the provision of science equipment and training for secondary schools and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)<sup>1</sup> project to roll-out quality secondary education are being implemented in the schools that achieved higher than average results.



Students from the Kusuma Ratna Fellowship Programme. Photo: Sam Strickland

<sup>1</sup> Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is India's national scheme for improving the quality of secondary education