

ONEOTT iNTERTAINMENT Limited (OIL), a Hinduja Group company, is focusing on building a scaleable and future-ready fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) network to offer always-on, high speed internet access to homes. Yugal Kishore Sharma, chief executive officer, OIL, talks about the company's focus areas and future plans...

### **How has been your journey so far in the Indian fixed broadband market? What are ONEOTT's key focus areas?**

Today, the usage of the internet has moved beyond browsing and social networking, and has expanded to areas of education, health, e-governance and agriculture. This is where the limitation of mobile internet arises and the journey for wired internet connections begins. The existing cable TV networks in the country have a vast untapped potential to leverage this opportunity.

The Hinduja Media Group laid the foundation of a robust cable network decades ago through scaleable partnerships with last-mile owners (LMOs) for primarily providing cable TV services. In 2016, OIL was created to address the growing appetite for data consumption.

OIL's current business interests include broadband services for homes and enterprises through direct and franchise models. We have substantial experience in providing high speed public Wi-Fi access. We are steadily progressing to roll out a smart devices ecosystem and solutions to power IPTV and over-the-top (OTT) services.

OIL's vision is to contribute towards digital inclusion in India by connecting homes online.

### **How is the entry of new players like Jio GigaFiber impacting the broadband space?**

Telcos are now gearing up to deliver always-on, high speed internet access to homes by building robust last-mile optical fiber cable (OFC) networks powered by GPON technology. Jio's entry into this market itself is a big indicator of the emerging opportunity. The internet economy is expected to reach over \$200 billion by 2020, accounting for almost 5 per cent of India's GDP.

OIL is well poised to benefit from the data revolution. With our existing partnership ecosystem with the LMOs, we will be leveraging their pan-Indian cable TV network infrastructure to bring entertainment powered by the internet, intertainment, to homes.

### **What are the various models that the industry is exploring on the content side?**

The world is fast moving towards a converged delivery of entertainment. Users' early engagement with internet-entertainment was via OTT. Having experienced the idea of any time, anywhere, any device access to their favourite content, users are now looking for a similar experience on Live TV too, especially with better proliferation of 4G services. All content companies (EROS, Balaji Telefilms), broadcasters (Star, SONY, Zee, TV18, etc.) and even global players (Amazon, Netflix, HULU, Google, etc.) are trying to leverage this opportunity.

Telcos like Jio are in the process of building a media and entertainment business by investing in exclusive content. Other telcos are joining hands with OTT content providers by offering free subscriptions and unlimited video streaming. MSOs have also felt the need to adapt to this change by aligning their overall business strategy to cover intertainment.

### **What is your outlook for fixed broadband services in the wake of surging demand for mobile broadband in India?**

Fixed broadband demand will grow across urban and rural pockets driven by the consumption of rich content in the 4K format and the changing consumer behaviour. Trends are visible wherein fixed and mobile broadband players are forming strategic alliances for offloading of data and voice to fixed broadband networks to enable last-mile Wi-Fi connectivity.

Going forward, telcos, MSOs and ISPs would have to collaborate and consolidate their businesses, as mere connectivity-led business models will not be sustainable, particularly with the advent of OTT. Focusing on the CDAC model (connectivity, devices, applications and content) will be important.

## **Do you have a policy or regulatory wish list?**

A friendly regulatory framework is a must for LMOs to upgrade their legacy networks for providing OFC-led FTTH connectivity to their existing customers. Our wish list is as follows:

- Ease in right-of-way permissions
- Exemption on paying 8 per cent revenue share on AGR by MSOs and ISPs on revenues earned from value-added services (other than internet revenue)
- Exemption/Reduction of duties for next-generation GPON equipment

## **What are your future plans?**

OIL wants to champion the wave of the on-demand economy. We plan to offer convergent solutions, such as internet access, and IPTV and voice through one wire. We will soon launch an IPTV service bundled with OTT as an entertainment solution for a smart home. Also, we have plans to launch smart security, smart lighting and IoT solutions for smart living.

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