

WiMAX: the Next Revolution

Telecommunications in India is moving to Next Generation Networks that would provide affordable broadband connections with several features. Wi-Max, would be an integral part of this transformation that would provide high bandwidth within long ranges from hot spots to cover the entire country by 2010.

The Government of India is in favour of promoting manufacturing of WiMAX equipment. This is to reduce the cost of deployment also, said Shri. R. N. Padukone Senior Deputy Director General, Telecommunications Engineering Center, Department of Telecommunications, Government of India while speaking at WiMAX Forum India Summit. He further added that the equipment devices for use of Wi-Max need also to be very cost effective soon.

Telecommunications services in India are moving to the new generation networks, which is expected to provide affordable broadband connections with lots of features. WiMAX too, is expected to be an integral part of this transformation that would provide high bandwidth within long ranges from hot spots to serve the entire country by 2010. However, it was felt during the WiMAX summit that for widespread use of WiMAX in India, the licensing regime needed some changes.

'There is no doubt that WiMAX is the way forward, in case India needs to reach out to all of its population within the stipulated time frame, it needs to act now,' said Dr. Mo Shakouri, VP & Chair Marketing Working Group, WiMAX Forum. According to Dr. Shakouri the way Internet was converging into communications and also making radical shift in socio-economic relations, the deployment of WiMAX would make a huge impact on the Indian economy. Already there are over 400 operators globally for WiMAX technology.

In his keynote address, Mr. Jagbir Singh, Group CTO, Bharti Airtel said, ' for WiMAX to have a successful deployment in India, one of the most important factors will be the low-cost of deployment.' In his key note address, he dwelt on business models that would help achieve this aim. 'The Indian opportunity is much bigger than the China,' added Mr Singh. Mr. Singh's point was further enhanced by A. Sethuraman, CMO, Alcatel-Lucent, who during his address elaborated upon the projects which were offering solutions for the deployment of Wi-Max in the country. He lauded the Government's move to establish over one lakh community service centres that would be the right approach for spreading broadband to rural areas. Wi-Max would strengthen this programme to bring low cost broadband to rural areas.

According to Prateek Pashine, VP - Marketing & Technology Group (Broadband & Retail Business) VSNL, currently spectrum was one of the most crucial issues. 'Spectrum for WiMAX is not yet available for commercial applications,' said Mr. Pashine. 'The opportunity for broadband exists and wireless broadband would be very predominant for India. He pleaded for an end to the current debate over spectrum and instead pointed towards a situation wherein more spectrum is made available for broadband services throughout the country.

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