

One Day Consultation

# DIGITAL STREET

Digital Technologies for Street Vendors

Challenges & Opportunities



Jointly hosted by



**Venue:**

**Opulent Hotel by Ferns & Petals, New Delhi.**



**May 19, 2022**

**9.30 am onwards**

Curated by



(ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education)



**AACSB  
ACCREDITED**

## ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (IFHE)

The ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education is a deemed-to-be-University established under section 3 of UGC Act, 1956. IFHE's comprehensive student-centric learning approach provides relevant knowledge, imparts practical skills and inculcates a positive attitude among the students.

Today, IFHE is one of the largest multidisciplinary universities in the country. The Faculty of Management, Faculty of Science and Technology and Faculty of Law are the three main building blocks of the university. The University is a member of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU).

### ICFAI Business School (IBS), Hyderabad

ICFAI Business School (IBS-Hyderabad) is a constituent of the ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (IFHE). Established in 1995, IBS-Hyderabad has been consistently ranked among the top business schools in India. It is one of the few business schools in India to have AACSB accreditation for undergraduate and doctoral programs also along with its flagship MBA program. The school has been re-accredited by South Asian Quality Standards (SAQS), and has the following ratings: A\*\* by CRISIL, EB2 IN by ICRA and Excellent Business School by Eduniversal.

The programs offered at IBS, Hyderabad include Ph.D., MBA and BBA. The MBA program of the school is one of the largest programs in Asia with a student intake of around 1,200 per annum. In addition, its BBA program has an annual intake of around 1000 students, and over 60 scholars are pursuing Ph.D. Program. Faculty members of IBS-Hyderabad have published around 500 research papers in reputed National and International journals. The school has two dedicated research and content research centers, IBS Center for Management Research (ICMR) & Case Research Center (CRC), managed by a team of intellectuals from the academic and corporate worlds. The cases developed by these Centers are used by elite B-Schools and premier consulting firms around the world.

### Centre of Excellence for Digital Transformation (CeDT)

The Centre of Excellence for Digital Transformation (CeDT) at the IFHE has been established with an agenda of leveraging the information and communication technologies for the benefit of the underserved.

We, at CeDT, believe that constructive interactions between actors in an ecosystem shapes various aspects of business and social practices and technology. Thus, continuous engagement with key human and non-human stakeholders across industry, academia and society to advance our agenda, is the guiding principle of the centre.

The activities through which we plan to engage with key stakeholders include research, consultancy, training/teaching and outreach. The tools that we plan to use for the aforementioned activities include experiments (both field and laboratory), surveys, digital gap analysis, content creation and curriculum design.

### About Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) India

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is a non-profit German foundation committed to the values of social democracy and social justice. Widely acknowledged by the German and Indian governments for being an important actor in the promotion of dialogue (people-to-people contacts), FES established its India country office in 1983 in New Delhi.

### About Future of Work

India is in the midst of a transformation. Spurred on by the economic liberalisation in the 1990s, the country has gradually moved ahead on a path of industrial and technological modernisation and a further integration into the global markets. Presently, the core question is: how can India's economic development be charted in a way that it becomes a socially-balanced, sustainable and resilient economy. Digitalisation assumes particular importance in this regard, especially in overcoming economic, ecological and social conflicts. The FES aims to engage diverse stakeholders in developing transformative concepts on the future of work, by identifying elements for socially and ecologically sustainable, gender-equitable value chain and consequently formulating policy recommendations on inclusive digital transformation.

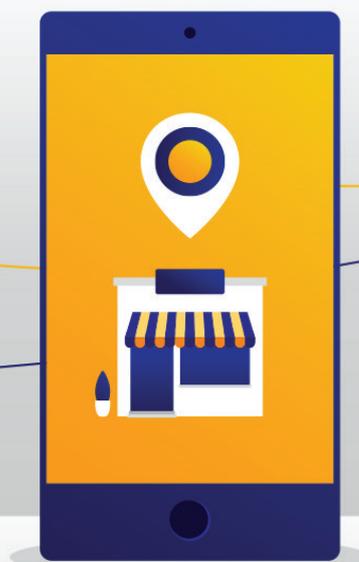


## Introduction

India is witnessing an interesting phenomenon- growing informalisation of work and simultaneous increase in digitisation of informal work. Rise of gig economy has led to millions of informal workers having their work determined by an algorithm and advent of cheap internet enabled smartphones has pulled many of the younger informal worker into an increasingly digital world.

## Digital Technologies

The advent of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) has impacted the world around us in a big way. As a result, digital transformation is an integral part of the discourse around transforming the lives of masses. Digital Transformation “encompasses the profound changes taking place in society and industries through the use of digital technologies” (Vial, G., 2021). These changes are especially needed across sectors that serve/employ the marginalised. Retail is such a key sector that can be benefited by digital transformation to uplift the underserved and lead to a country’s overall growth. This is particularly relevant in the context of a developing country like India. Around 42.6 % of the total people employed were in agriculture<sup>2</sup>.



## Informal/ Unorganised Retail Sector

This sector is one of the largest employers in India. The retail sector contributes 10% to the Indian GDP and generates 8% of employment<sup>3</sup>. Globally, the retail sector is dominated by informal/ unorganised businesses. In India, around 90% of all retail businesses belong to the informal category<sup>4</sup>. In the financial year 2020, the retail and allied sector has been found to be the second highest employment generator after agriculture in India<sup>5</sup>. Informal retail can be further divided into two categories: those who operate from fixed shops (e.g. kirana shops) and the others who don’t (e.g. hawkers). Generally, it is the latter category of street vendors/sellers that is closer to the bottom of the pyramid for want of resources. This study on digital transformation focuses on such underserved contributors to the Indian economy who can benefit from this effort.

According to the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) “A street vendor is broadly defined as a person who offers goods for sale to the public at large without having a permanent built up structure from which to sell. Street vendors may be stationary in the sense that they occupy space on the pavements or other public/private spaces or, they may be mobile in the sense that they move from place to place by carrying their wares on push carts or in baskets on their heads<sup>6</sup>.”

## Digital Technologies and Street Vendors

Emergence of digital technologies has created new business models and innovations that can be used by both informal and formal sector enterprises. Almost all digital innovations are sector agnostic. They can have more inclusive impacts thus benefiting people who may have been excluded from the formal sector in unprecedented way. We anticipate that the convergence of emerging/existing digital technologies and informal sector solutions can create effective hybrid innovations thus enabling informal entrepreneurs including street vendors to optimise their business practices.

## Digital Street Project

In this context, we aim to develop a framework for facilitating digital transformation of street vendors which is based on social dimensions of development and modernisation. We are also aware that there are myriad issues that compound the problem at hand. Therefore, we want to progress systematically step-by-step. In absence of any published review in Indian context, our understanding of these issues largely remains intuitive, anecdotal and presumptuous based on our informal interactions with the people in the sector and our insights emanating from our study of extant literature published in the West.

That is why, as a first step we propose to organise a consultation with sector experts to know about the existing digital technologies known to/experienced by the experienced practitioners/researchers working in this area. We also want to gain insights into the likely challenges in adoption of digital technologies by street vendor and other stakeholders. We would like the thought leaders and practitioners to reflect on the following questions.

1. Vial, G. (2021). *Understanding digital transformation: A review and a research agenda*. *Managing Digital Transformation*, 13-66.

2. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/271320/distribution-of-the-workforce-across-economic-sectors-in-india/>

3. <https://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/25-million-new-jobs-in-indian-retail-sector-by-2030-study/article34020291.ece>

4. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/sme-sector/indian-unorganised-retail-key-to-worlds-third-largest-consumer-market/articleshow/86222834.cms?from=mdr>

5. <https://www.financialexpress.com/jobs/on-the-job-retail-hires-on-the-rise/2091283/>

6. <https://nasvinet.org/overview-of-street-vendors-a-little-history/>

## General: Setting the context

1. Understanding the Informal sector: What is “informal”?
2. Could digital technologies work differently for informal sector?
3. How are street vendors different from other informal businesses?
4. Who are the key stakeholders (individuals/institutions) in this sector apart from the central actor (the street vendor)?  
e.g., the government/regulator, the law-enforcement (which, depending on the context shares a love-hate relationship), the supply chain actors like the supplier and the customer(s), the informal infrastructure actors like the local business/non-business associations who have real/notional power (on multiple issues like real estate occupancy, quality etc.), the real/notional competition both in the informal sector (e.g., fixed shops) and the formal sector (e.g., supermarkets), the technology providers (both state and non-state), technologies like that of financial transaction, identity, location, communication etc.

## Challenges:

5. What are the key challenges for the central actor, the street vendor?
6. What are the key challenges (with regards to the issues related to the central actor, the street vendor) for each of above identified stakeholders?
7. Would digital technologies bring location independent enterprises or intermediaries thus reducing opportunities for local street vendors?
8. Would there be differential access and thus benefits of digital technologies within the street vendors thus exacerbating existing inequities?

## Opportunities:

9. Given the understanding of the context and the ecosystem, what are the key opportunities for the central actor, the street vendor?
10. Given the understanding of the context and the ecosystem, what are the key opportunities (with regards to the issues related to the central actor, the street vendor) for each of above identified stakeholders?
11. Is it possible that digital technology adoption improves productivity and the working conditions of the street vendors thus impacting overall quality of life?
12. Would adoption of digital technologies accelerate street vendors' transition to digital economy?

## Tentative Agenda for 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2022

0930-1000 hrs	<b>Registration</b>
	<b>Welcome and Introduction</b> A short introduction to FES and its Future of Work project by <b>Mandvi Kulshreshtha</b> , FES India Office
1000-1030 hrs	<b>What is CeDT?</b> A short introduction for the audience by <b>Sanjay Fuloria</b> , ICFAI Business School (IBS) Hyderabad
	<b>Why Digital Street?</b> by <b>Shailendra Singh Bisht</b> , ICFAI Business School (IBS), Hyderabad
	<b>Introduction of the Participants</b>
1030-1200 hrs	<b>Digital Technologies for Street Vendors - Challenges</b> <b>Lead Speaker:</b> <b>Arbind Singh</b> , National Coordinator, National Association of Street Vendors India (NASVI) <b>Moderator:</b> <b>Mandvi Kulshreshtha</b> , FES India Office <b>Discussants</b> 1. <b>Mayank Mishra</b> , National Mission Manager, National Urban Livelihoods Mission, Govt. of India 2. <b>Kazim Rizvi</b> , Founder, The Dialogue 3. <b>Jasminder Singh Gulati</b> , Founder, Digital Desh <b>Q &amp; A and comments from the audience</b>
1200-1230 hrs	<b>Tea Break</b>
1230-1400 hrs	<b>Digital Technologies for Street Vendors - Opportunities</b> <b>Lead Speaker:</b> <b>Dharmendra Kumar</b> , National Resource Person, Street Food, FSSAI, Govt. of India <b>Moderator:</b> <b>A V Vedpuriswar</b> , Senior Advisor, ICFAI Group <b>Discussants</b> 1. <b>Neehar Ranjan</b> , CEO at Econurture Consulting and Co-Founder, Travelexic LLP 2. <b>Sudhakar Rao</b> , Director, Branding, ICFAI Group 3. <b>Wajiha Aziz</b> , Program Manager, NASVI <b>Q &amp; A and comments from the audience</b>
1400-1430 hrs	<b>Concluding Session</b> <b>SpaceTech for Informal Economy</b> by <b>Lt Gen AK Bhatt</b> (Retd), PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, Director General, Indian Space Association (ISpA) <b>Next Steps</b> by <b>Shailendra Singh Bisht</b> , ICFAI Business School (IBS), Hyderabad <b>Concluding Remarks</b> by <b>Ulrich Storck</b> , Country Director, FES India <b>Vote of Thanks</b> by <b>Anurag Shanker</b> , FES India
1430 hrs onwards	<b>Lunch and Departure of outstation guests</b>

RSVP

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