

## New Media Empowering Indian Youth



*L-R: Sudhir Nair, Vice President - G2, South Asia; Govind Ethiraj, Editor-in-Chief, UTVi!; Jehangir Pocha, Editor, Businessworld; Abhishek Singhvi, Member of Parliament Lok Sabha (Indian National Congress) Moderator: Kishan Rana, Professor Emeritus, Indian Foreign Service Institute/Former Ambassador of India to Germany*

New media has opened up huge possibilities for the Indian youth but a large part of the potential remains untapped due to various constraints inherent in the Indian reality. This was the consensus at a panel discussion on 'New Media and Technology: Empowering the Indian Youth,' organized by Aspen Institute India as part of its Ideas India 2008.

Kicking off the discussion, **Govind Ethiraj, Editor-in-Chief, UTVi!**, said more and more youth are spending time online. Though the overall Internet penetration has reached only five per cent, it is up to 80 per cent in the metropolises. He said that beginning with e-mail in the 90s, the use of Internet has spread to chat, transactions and teaching. We still have to clear obstacles in the way of full use of the Internet, one of which is lack of bandwidth, he noted.

Calling it the media of freedom, **Mr Jehangir Pocha, Editor, Businessworld**, said the first freedom the new media affords is economic by has adding technology to the four traditional means of production – land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship. He felt that India has lagged behind in making full use of the possibilities. "Surfing the Net is no use of technology. It is commerce," he said.

**Mr Sudhir Nair, Vice President – G2, South Asia**, said that the numbers using the online media are growing. But we are talking of empowering urban

youth only. In fact, youth are empowering themselves, he said. He suggested that online space can be used to generate more ideas.

**Mr Abhishek Singhvi, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha (Indian National Congress)**, said that the biggest single change that happened in the past two decades is media – new or traditional. It has brought in transparency. We are today a more transparent nation even before the Right to Information Act because of the power of the media, he noted. On the issue of ethics, he said that when you live in a borderless world, it will itself develop a common ethics because of the public pressure.

Moderating the discussion, **Mr Kishan Rana, Professor Emeritus, Indian Foreign Service Institute/ Former Ambassador of India to Germany**, hoped that things will change for the better in the coming years when 3-G spectrum and real broadband becomes available.

**New Delhi  
December 19, 2008**