Statement of Purpose – Harish Kumar | inSIG Fellowship 2025

As an Internet Governance professional with over a decade at the National Informatics Centre (NIC), Government of India, I have been at the intersection of public technology, policy, and people. My journey began with a deep curiosity about how digital systems can strengthen democratic service delivery — and it has since evolved into a committed mission to build inclusive, transparent, and secure digital infrastructures that serve citizens equitably.

My experience spans the end-to-end execution of state and central e-Governance initiatives, where I led the development of ICT systems that enabled data-driven governance, grievance redressal, and policy alignment. Notably, I led the implementation of the District Grievance Management System, which received national accolades for its citizen-centric model. My work has consistently focused on enhancing access to technology in underserved regions and creating open, accountable digital ecosystems.

Beyond implementation, I've actively contributed to global Internet Governance conversations. I've presented my research at the UN's ICEGOV conference, served on its Program Committee, and spoken at the United Nations' International Conference on e-Governance. These forums have deepened my appreciation for the multistakeholder model, and how diverse voices — from civil society to government to the private sector — must co-create the Internet's future.

The inSIG Fellowship represents a timely opportunity for me to formalize and deepen my understanding of Internet Governance frameworks, especially in areas of data protection, cybersecurity policy, and equitable access. I am particularly drawn to the multistakeholder approach that inSIG champions, and I hope to use this learning to bridge technical implementation with public policy outcomes — ensuring that governance systems remain both secure and rights-respecting.

As someone who has already mentored colleagues and junior officers in implementing public systems, I see this fellowship not just as a learning platform for myself, but as a multiplier for my ecosystem. I intend to share the insights gained through capacity-building workshops within government networks and contribute actively to community dialogues, including through platforms like the Internet Society and ICEGOV.

With a demonstrated commitment to digital inclusion, a track record of leadership in public infrastructure, and ongoing engagement in global governance forums, I believe I am well-positioned to both contribute to and benefit from the inSIG Fellowship. I am excited to join a cohort of changemakers working to ensure that the Internet remains an open, secure, and inclusive space for all.