Looking into the future: is Digital India the next big thing?

Introduction

Digital India has significantly contributed to India's goal of becoming a trillion-dollar economy in the next decade. **Driven by the rising availability of smartphones, high-speed connectivity, and Government policies,** India is already home to one of the world's largest and fastest-growing bases of digital consumers.

The future of Digital India

1. Digitalisation in rural India
2. The gaming industry
3. 5G and transformational technology

1. **Digitalisation in rural India**

- **BharatNet, is an initiative by the Government to empower village councils, also known as Gram Panchayats with internet connectivity by using optical fibre cables**. It will also deliver e-services such as e-health, education, and e-commerce.

- Regulatory bodies introduced 'Zero-balance Jan Dhan' savings bank accounts — a digital payment infrastructure in rural India, **which led to an increase in the number of bank accounts in the country from 53% in 2014 to 80% in 2018.**

- **MUDRA (Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency) is a scheme that caters to providing rural businesses credit at low rates**, in turn, acting as a catalyst for the digital transformation of medium, small, and micro-enterprises.

2. The gaming industry

- Investments from big players such as Youzu, Alibaba, Nazara, and Tencent have led to **an increase in the number of new job opportunities in the industry**. It is anticipated to grow to over 40,000 employees by the year 2022.

- Today, casual gamers and hardcore gamers in India opt to **use mobile phones instead of traditional bulky desktops.** The primary contributing factor — development and affordability of smartphones.

3. 5G and transformational technology

- The BharatNet project aims to **connect 250,000 village councils (known in India as Gram Panchayats) to 5G** in the next few years.

- One of the digital goals for the Government of India is to **provide broadband to the entire nation** and create over four million additional jobs in the digital communications sector by 2022.

- A multi-disciplinary forum has been constituted, with the DoT (Department of Telecommunication) at its head, to **fund research of 5G networks** in collaboration with the IITs (Indian Institute of Technology).

Has Covid reset India's digital future?

- Since the lockdown in March, **India has distributed around $5 billion in cash** benefits to its citizens entirely through payments made via digital platforms.

- With the unique digitally authenticated Aadhar identification number, the Jan Dhan bank accounts, and the millions of smartphones in the country, India is in the wake of the JAM revolution.

- Also, to effectively monitor the spread of the coronavirus, India's National Informatics Centre created the Aarogya Setu app, which has since been downloaded more than 127 million times.

- With other allied initiatives like the National e-Health Authority, the Government is steadily working towards a National Health Stack, completed by 2022.

- **Indian states are also using this opportunity to facilitate the use of digital technology further –** whether it's Jharkhand's use of Collaborative Robots (Co-Bot) or Bangalore's use of drones to spray disinfectants and monitor containment zones.

- The reality is apparent — **Digital India is here to stay.**

Thank you

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