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Youth and Internet usage among rural youth in India

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Introduction

The integration of the internet into young people's daily life involves the convergence of various perspectives. Instead of focusing exclusively on cause-and-effect linkages, we should consider the reciprocal impacts at play. Adolescents use the internet to attain important developmental milestones such as creating their identities, engaging in social interactions, and promoting autonomy. Notably, the internet serves as a vehicle for carrying out these developmental responsibilities while also defining their culture, resulting in several features that differ from the preceding generation's experience.

Rotszein found in 2003 that college students have greater benefits when it comes to internet usage than school students. This is often because higher education institutions usually give students with email accounts, and college students frequently have strong computer and internet skills. However, these benefits might result in both positive and bad results. On the drawback, college students may develop online addiction and major health problems because of excessive internet use. In contrast, the positive component involves college students using these resources to share knowledge and acquire information.

The widespread usage of the Internet has had a huge impact on Indian youth. Young people in India increasingly utilize the Internet daily, which has had a major effect on many aspects of their lives, such as communication, entertainment, and social interactions. India's internet penetration has skyrocketed in recent years, thanks to affordable cell phones and data contracts. For Indian youngsters, the Internet has provided new educational opportunities. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), instructional websites, and online learning platforms now provide students across the country with high-quality educational resources. Additionally, it has enabled remote learning and online learning programs, providing students with access to a variety of instructional materials.

Internet and its implications for youth today

Social Media and Communication: Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter are widely used among Indian youth. These platforms have evolved into ways to express oneself, communicate, and maintain relationships with friends and peers. Furthermore, they have provided a platform for young people to express themselves and participate in social and political discussions. E-commerce and online buying have transformed the shopping habits of Indian youth. E-commerce websites such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra have grown in popularity due to their diverse product and service offerings. Young shoppers can now investigate multiple possibilities and make purchases from the comfort of their own homes, thanks to the convenience and accessibility of internet shopping.

The Internet has transformed the Indian entertainment and media consumption market. Streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ Hotstar have increased in popularity and now provide a wide range of films, television shows, and web series. The popularity of mobile games such as PUBG Mobile and Free Fire among young players has helped to drive the expansion of online gaming.

The Internet has made it simpler for young people in India to obtain information on a range of topics. They have access to a wide range of instructional resources, including online news. To avoid incorrect information and fake news, individuals must critically assess the information they encounter. The Internet has enabled young people in India to pursue entrepreneurship and employment opportunities. It has facilitated the growth of startups and digital enterprises, as well as the establishment and expansion of businesses by young entrepreneurs. Furthermore, remote work and freelancing have grown in popularity, offering more flexible job opportunities.

The role of internet and the youth

The youth of India have a crucial role in defining and utilizing the Internet. India has one of the world's greatest youth populations, and with the rising availability and affordability of cell phones and internet services, the Internet has become an essential part of their lives. Here are some crucial aspects about youth and the Internet in India:

1. India's internet penetration has expanded significantly, mostly due to mobile internet usage. According to current research, over 624 million individuals in India were active internet users in 2021, with a large proportion of them being young people.
2. Social Media Usage: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp are highly popular among Indian young. These platforms are used for a variety of objectives, including interacting with friends, sharing material, and staying informed about news and trends.
3. Online Education: The Internet has significantly improved education in India, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic. Many educational institutions and e-learning platforms have converted to online teaching methods, allowing students to access educational resources and learn remotely.
4. E-commerce and Digital Payments: Indian young are increasingly using online buying and digital payment options. E-commerce sites like as Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra have grown in popularity due to their diverse product offerings. Paytm, Google Pay, and PhonePe is have all seen notable acceptance.

5. Entertainment and Streaming: Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ Hotstar have been popular among Indian youngsters. These platforms offer a diverse selection of movies, television series, and original material, helping to drive the expansion of the digital entertainment business.
6. Content Creation: Indian young are actively developing content across several channels. Individuals may display their abilities, express their thoughts, and establish a following on sites such as YouTube, TikTok (now prohibited in India), and Instagram.
7. Online Activism: The Internet enables Indian young to express their thoughts, create awareness, and mobilize for social and political concerns. Social media campaigns, online petitions, and digital activism have become popular means for young Indians to express themselves and advocate for change.

However, it is important to note that, while the Internet has provided countless benefits, it also poses issues such as online privacy concerns, cyberbullying, and the spread of disinformation. Indian authorities have made attempts to restrict various areas of the internet, resulting in periodic conflicts about freedom of expression and Internet governance. As per the 2016 study conducted by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), internet usage among Indian youth is growing. It discussed how young Indians were embracing digital technology for education, communication, entertainment, and other uses.

India's Youth and the Internet: Mobile is the Future (2017) - Kantar IMRB and IAMAI performed a research on Indian teenagers' online behavior, focusing on mobile internet usage. According to the survey, young people are increasingly adopting smartphones to access the internet and participate in various online activities. According to Nielson, the book Indian Youth Internet Usage Patterns (2018) investigates Facebook and the online behaviors of Indian youths. It displayed information on their internet use for content consumption, communication, and social networking. Kantar Millward Brown and Google India researched Indian youth's digital behavior in the book Digital Consumers of Tomorrow (2019), focusing on their online preferences, content consumption, and smartphone usage habits.

The book Youth, Digital Transformation, and the Future of India (2020) investigates the impact of the internet on the goals, identities, and experiences of Indian youth through a collaborative study conducted by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS).

Research Methodology

In our study, we employed convenience sampling due to its non-probabilistic nature, which assumes an equitable distribution of characteristics within the population. Thus, the researcher assumes that any sample chosen would accurately mirror the population, resulting in precise outcomes. Therefore, our sample comprised 2000 college students enrolled in various government colleges in Tamilnadu and Puducherry, majoring in arts and science disciplines. Both male and female students were included, provided they possessed knowledge of computers and the internet. Among the 2000 students, there were 1000 males and 1000 females, evenly distributed across universities in Tamilnadu and Puducherry.

Findings of the study

PERIOD OF INTERNET USERS

The Periods of internet users indicates respondent digital understanding and the year of digital experience respondent have for potent of usage of advance technology and digital initiative of Government of India (GoI). For the purpose of study, period of Internet users has been categories in three different years viz., <1year, 1-3years, and >3years. The details are presented in following table.

TABLE NO. 4.9

Frequency of period of internet user

S. No.	Period of Internet User	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	< 1 year	348	17.4
2	1-3 years	893	44.6
3	>3 years	759	38.0
	Total	**2000**	**100.0**

The table 4.9 explains the age group of the respondents who took the survey on the digital India initiatives among the rural youth in government colleges in Tamilnadu and Pondicherry. From the table above, it is found that majority of the respondents who responded to the survey i.e.44.6% fall in the period of internet user of 1-3 years. It can be noted that 38.0% and 17.4% of the respondents fall under the category of >3 years and above <1 years respectively, thus making least period of internet user year. Hence, majority of the respondents fall under the age category of <1 years.

USAGE HOURS OF INTERNET PER DAY

Internet usage per day is important to understand the time period of internet browsing is useful for advance technology and digital initiative of Government of India (GoI). For the purpose of study, usage hour of internet per day has been divided in three interval viz., <1 hour, 1-3 hours, and >3hours. The details are presented in the following table.

TABLE NO. 4.10

Frequency of usage hours of internet per day

S. No.	Usage Hours / Day	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	< 1 hour	431	21.6
2	1-3 hours	765	38.2
3	>3 hours	804	40.2
	Total	**2000**	**100.0**

The table 4.10 explains the age group of the respondents who took the survey on the digital India initiatives among the rural youth in government colleges in Tamilnadu and Pondicherry. From the table above, it is found that 40.2% of respondent use internet >3 hours/ day. It can noted that 38.2% and 21.6% fall under category of 1-3 hours and <1 hour respectively, thus making least hour of usage hour of internet per day. Hence, major of respondents' usage hours of internet per day fall under category of >3 hours.

PLACE OF INTERNET USAGE

Palace of internet usage is the spots of comfort zone where users usually do browsing is useful of advance technology and digital initiative of Government of India (GoI). For the purpose of the study, place of internet usage is places has been classified into three categories viz., My Home, Friend's/ Relative's Home, My college, Common Service Center (or) e-Sevai Center, Private Browsing Centre, and Other (Specify). The details are presented in following table.

TABLE NO. 4.11

Frequency of place of internet usage

S. No.	Place of Internet Usage	Yes	No
1	My Home	1958 (97.9%)	42 (2.1%)
2	Friend's/ Relative's Home	1739 (87.0%)	261 (13.1%)
3	My College	1779 (89.0%)	221 (11.1%)
4	Common Service Centre (or) e-Sevai Centre	1509 (75.5%)	491 (24.6%)
5	Private Browsing Centre	1761 (88.1%)	239 (12.0%)
6	Other place (Specify)	1730 (86.5%)	270 (13.5%)

The table 4.11 explains the preferred place of internet of usage the respondents who took the survey on the digital India initiatives among the rural youth in government colleges in Tamilnadu and Pondicherry. From the table above, it is found that majority of the respondents who responded to the survey i.e. 97.9% choose My Home as the place of internet usage. It can be noted that 89.0% My College for internet usage, followed by 88.1%

selected Private Browsing Center place for internet usage. It can be noted that 86.5% and 75.5% fall under the category of Other place (Specify) and Common Service Center (or) e-Sevai Centre respectively, thus making less used places for internet usage. Hence most preferred place of internet usage is My Home.

TYPE OF INTERNET CONNECTION AT HOME

Type of internet connection play an important role in this digital era. Good speed of internet connection to communicate and accessing information. For the purpose of the study the type of internet connection has been classified into five categories viz., Mobile data (2G/3G/4G), SIM card Wi-Fi Device, SIM card USB Modem, BSNL Broadband Land line, and Private Broadband Landline. The details are furnished in the following table.

TABLE NO. 4.12

Frequency of type of internet connection at home

S. No.	Type of Internet Connection At Home	Yes	No
1	Mobile data (2G/3G/4G)	1830 (93.5%)	128 (6.5%)
2	SIM card Wi-Fi Device	1129 (57.7%)	829 (42.3%)
3	SIM card USB Modem	1063 (54.3%)	895 (45.7%)
4	BSNL Broadband Land line	1059 (54.1%)	899 (45.9%)
5	Private Broadband Landline	33 (1.7%)	1925 (98.3%)

The table 4.12 explains the preferred place of internet of usage the respondents who took the survey on the digital India initiatives among the rural youth in government colleges in Tamilnadu and Pondicherry. From the table above, it is found that majority of the respondents who responded to the survey i.e. 93.5% choose Mobile data (2G/3G/4G) for the internet connection at home. It can be noted that 57.7%, 54.3%, and 54.1% fall under the category of SIM card Wi-Fi Device, SIM card USB Modem, and BSNL Broadband Land line, meanwhile 1.7% of Private Broadband Landline making least percentage of the usage of interconnection at home. Hence, Mobile data (2G/3G/4G) preferred most as type of internet connection at home.

TYPE OF INTERNET CONNECTION USING AT FRIEND'S/RELATIVE'S HOME

Development in technical and increase speed of internet usage is type of internet connection is became important component is useful usage of advance technology and digital initiative of Government of India (GoI). For the purpose of type of internet connection using at friend's/ relative's home has been classified into four categories viz., Friend's Mobile Hotspot, Friend's Home Wi-Fi, Friend's Broadband Setup, Others (Specify). The details are furnished in the following table.

TABLE NO. 4.14

Frequency of type of internet connection using at friend's/relative's home

S. No.	Opinion	Yes	No
1	Friend's Mobile Hotspot	1485 (85.4%)	254 (14.6%)
2	Friend's Home Wi-Fi	1621 (93.2%)	118 (6.8%)
3	Friend's Broadband Setup	1466 (84.3%)	273 (15.7%)
4	Others (Specify)	1553 (89.3%)	186 (10.7%)

The table 4.14 explains the preferred place of internet of usage the respondents who took the survey on the digital India initiatives among the rural youth in government colleges in Tamilnadu and Pondicherry. From the table above, it is found that most of the respondents who responded to survey i.e. 93.2% selected Friend's Home Wi-Fi. It can be noted that only 89.3%, 85.4%, and 84.3% of the respondents selected Others (Specify), Friend's Mobile Hotspot, and Friend's Broadband Setup above respectively, thus making the less percentage compare to other types of internet connections using at friend's/relative's home. Hence most of respondent preferred Friend's Home Wi-Fi internet connection using at friend's/relative's home.

TYPE OF INTERNET CONNECTION USING AT COLLEGE

Type of internet connection most important at academic institute, it help access information easily like e-book, research studies, report, data etc. is useful usage of advance technology and digital initiative of Government of India (GoI). For the purpose of type of internet connection using at college has been classified into four categories viz., Campus Wi-Fi, Computer Lab LAN connection, E-Library LAN Connection, Others (Specify). The details are furnished in the following table.

TABLE NO. 4.15

Frequency of type of internet connection using at college

S. No.	Opinion	Yes	No
1	Campus Wi-Fi	1697 (95.4%)	82 (4.6%)
2	Computer Lab LAN connection	1610 (90.5%)	169 (9.5%)
3	E-Library LAN Connection	1589 (89.3%)	190 (10.7%)
4	Others (Specify)	1237 (69.5%)	542 (30.5%)

The table 4.15 explains the preferred place of internet of usage the respondents who took the survey on the digital India initiatives among the rural youth in government colleges in Tamilnadu and Pondicherry. From the table above, it is found that most of the respondents who responded to survey i.e. 95.4% selected Campus Wi-

Fi. It can be noted that 90.5%, 89.3%, and 69.5% of the respondents selected Computer Lab LAN connection, E-Library LAN Connection, and Others (Specify) above respectively, thus making the less percentage compare to other types of internet connections using at college. Hence most of respondent preferred Campus Wi-Fi connection using at college.

SOURCE OF DIGITAL DEVICES USE TO ACCESS INTERNET

The source of digital devices use to access internet plays an important role for using the technological advancement and the digital India initiatives of the Government of India (GoI). For the purpose of study, the source of digital devices use to access internet of the respondents has been given preferable choices into six categories viz., Keypad Phone, Smart Phone, Free Laptop, Bought Laptop, Desktop PC, and Tablet. The details are furnished in the following table.

TABLE NO. 4.19

Frequency source of digital devices use to access internet

S. No.	Source	Yes	No
1	Keypad Phone	1670 (83.5%)	330 (16.5%)
2	Smart Phone	1815 (90.8%)	185 (9.3%)
3	Free Laptop	1517 (75.9%)	483 (24.2%)
4	Bought Laptop	1503 (75.2%)	497 (24.9%)
5	Desktop PC	1389 (69.5%)	611 (30.6%)
6	Tablet	1440 (72.0%)	560 (28.0%)

The table 4.19 explains the source of digital devices use to access internet the respondents who took the survey on the digital India initiatives among the rural youth in government colleges in Tamilnadu and Pondicherry. From the table above, it is found that most of the respondents who responded to survey i.e. 90.8% selected smart phone as the source of digital devices use to access internet. It can be noted that 83.5%, 75.9%, 75.2%, 72.0%, and 69.5% respondent selected the source of digital devices use to access internet is keypad phone, free laptop, bought laptop, tablet, and desktop pc above respectively, thus making less percentage compare to others opinions. Hence, most selected source of digital devices use to access internet is smart phone.

Conclusion

In India, the interaction between young people and the internet is dynamic and fast changing. Due to the rising availability of smartphones and reasonably priced data plans, India's youth population has grown to become one of the biggest and most engaged internet users. Indian youth's lives have been profoundly impacted by the internet, which has shaped their prospects, goals, and habits. They have the ability to spur social change, economic expansion, and innovation in India's increasingly linked digital environment since they are digital natives. But it's

critical to solve the issues and guarantee that everyone in society has equitable access to the advantages of the internet.

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