THE ACHILLES HEEL OF
MOBILE-FIRST NATION

As a large and fast-growing mobile economy India ranks #1 on the target list of fraudsters. It is also the second-largest victim of mobile ad frauds globally

MONEY LOST
22.6% of global mobile media spend was wasted in 2019 due to mobile ad fraud

PLATFORMS AT RISK
Android apps have a fraud rate of 30%, 2.5 times higher than 12% rate of iOS

SIZE MATTERS
20% of large apps have 30% fraud, compared to 13% among medium-sized apps

25 YEARS
[INTERNET IN INDIA]

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REBOOTING
INDIAN ECONOMY

India needs to frame policies that safeguard the unfettered yet secured growth of the internet, the backbone for all the new technologies

The internet is 25 years old today. Its advent coincided with the 1991 reorientation of the Indian economy towards a more capitalistic free-market model. With the two events running parallel, there is sufficient empirical evidence to correlate rebooting of the Indian economy with the steady increase in internet usage and the attendant economic benefits.

The internet-connected and continues to connect people and businesses, foster innovation, and unleash entrepreneurship spirit. At no time its economic upside has been more apparent than the COVID-19 crisis, which in one swoop also reinforced another stark reality: the internet may be an engine of economic growth, but the access to the engine is still controlled by the traditional power structures of our society.

While access to the internet may have created a new generation of haves and have-nots, challenges are also being posed from within by the very stakeholders who benefit from it the most – internet service providers that threaten net neutrality, governments that are keen to

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conduct surveillance programmes, and individuals who endanger the security of internet users.

The widening footprints of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation solutions are the future drivers of the internet-led business, but they bring with it concomitant challenges at a social level.

Citizen empowerment and socio-economic growth

While Twitter and Facebook will vouch for the power of the internet to give a voice that can empower the individuals, the benefits of internet usage are slowly percolating to various social areas like education, health care, and rural development. The internet's contribution to citizens has been its ability to bridge poor physical and institutional infrastructure, especially in the access to government-driven public utilities.

Leveraging the internet, the government has powered the Digital India initiatives. It has provided financial inclusion for all citizens through the Jandhan-Aadhaar-Mobile initiative, reduced leakages in benefits through the Direct Benefit Transfer scheme and enabled safe and instantaneous financial transactions through the Unified Payments Interface.

For many organizations, their Digital Transformation journey has just begun. New technologies in the areas of AI, big data, internet-of-things (IoT) combined with 5G mobile technology have the potential to transform every sector that touches a citizen's life. The economic effects that these technologies would bring include job creation, primarily driven by e-commerce; the Gig economy currently generates more than 50% employment.

The job market will also be impacted by new services and industries on the back of applying new technologies to disrupt the old way of doing business (mobile app revenue ~$200 million in 2019), business innovation leveraging the power of technologies in driving efficiency across the business (IoT sensors and AI powering pro-ductivity enhancements) and smart workforce aided by automation and AI technologies like chatbots that provide customer service support.

Managing the automation disruption

Automation is key to a successful implementation of Digital Transformation at the organization level. By automating manual, effort-intensive, repetitive and standardized tasks, organizations are delivering world-class customer service, breaking down internal organization silos, improving security and compliance, becoming more agile while continuing to drive down costs. AI and other new technologies will lead to deeper, faster, broader, and yet more disruptive automation.

While automation is expected to boost economic growth, create new high-skilled jobs, and improve living standards, it may also present serious challenges for workers and communities. This will include existing job displacements, disruptions to local economies, changing skill requirements, and rising inequality if the fundamental issue of access is not addressed at the earliest.

Businesses would need to invest in education, training, and enhanced social safety net, along with a social contract for workers that provide workplace benefits and protections. At the same time, individuals in the workplace will need to get used to engaging with 'bots' as a part of their everyday activities and develop new skills that will be the demand for the new automation age.

But for all of this to come together, the government needs to frame policies that safeguard the unfettered yet secured growth of the internet – as it continues to be the backbone of all new technologies.. ☘

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