



Research Unit
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Rural Youth Lead India's Digital Transformation

(Ministry of Communications)

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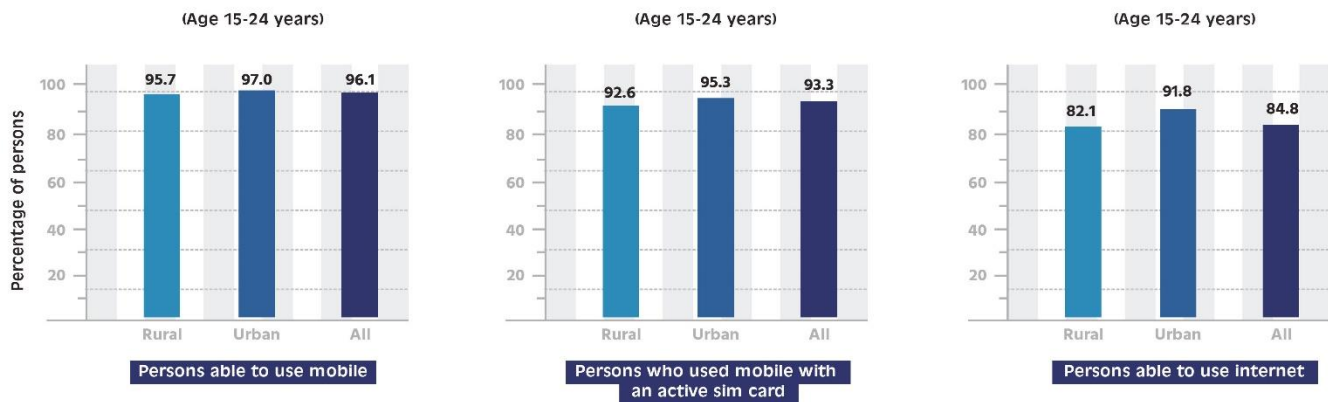
Introduction

"Desh ka Yuva" are the torchbearers of India's future, driving forward the aspirations of Amrit Kaal with their energy and innovation. As the country undergoes a digital transformation, this expansion is not just about boosting efficiency in various fields; it's also about creating a world where technology empowers people to improve their lives. The rise of digitalization has unlocked new possibilities, enabling millions to seize opportunities that were once out of reach. The Comprehensive Annual Modular Survey (July 2022 – June 2023) captures this shift, revealing how rural youth, in particular, are embracing technology, integrating digital tools into everyday life, and bridging the gap across sectors.



Mobile Usage in Rural India

Rural India is undergoing a remarkable transformation as more young people embrace technology and connect to the digital world. The adoption of mobile technology is on the rise, with a growing number of rural youths integrating digital tools into their daily lives. In rural areas, 95.7% of persons aged 15-24 years can use mobile phones, with the figure being 97% in urban areas. 99.5% of population is covered by 4G in rural areas. Whereas in Urban area 99.8% of population has a 4G connection. In rural area, among those aged 15-24 years, 82.1% can now access the internet, showcasing a shift towards a more connected generation. Although urban areas still lead with

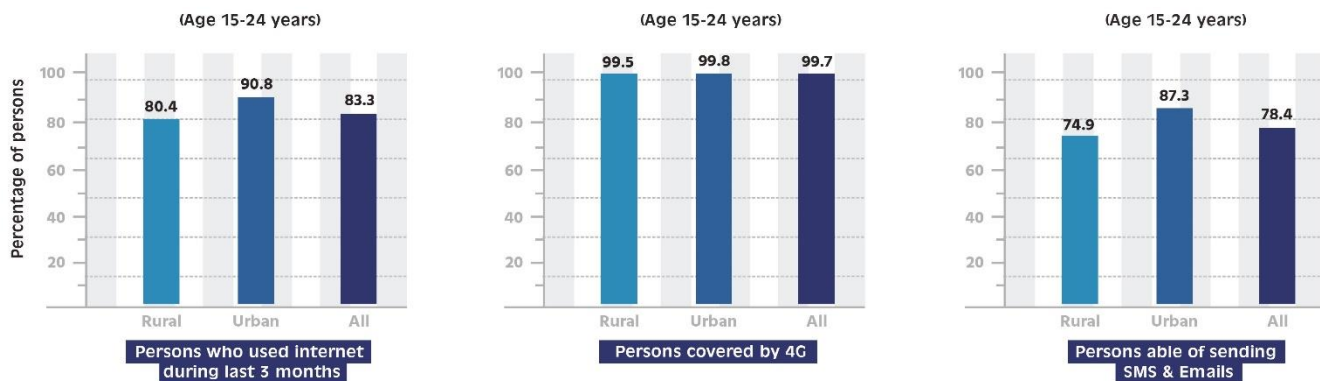


Source: Comprehensive Annual Modular Survey, 2022-23

91.8% internet accessibility for this age group, the gap is steadily narrowing. The Comprehensive Annual Modular Survey reveals that 80.4% of rural youth in the 15-24 age range used the internet in the three months leading up to the survey, the highest percentage recorded in rural India. In contrast, the 15-29 age group in urban areas reported a slightly higher usage at 91.0%, reflecting how digital adoption is gaining ground across both rural and urban settings. This growing trend highlights the rapid technological shift taking place in the heart of rural India, signaling a new era of digital inclusion and empowerment.

Purpose of Using Technology

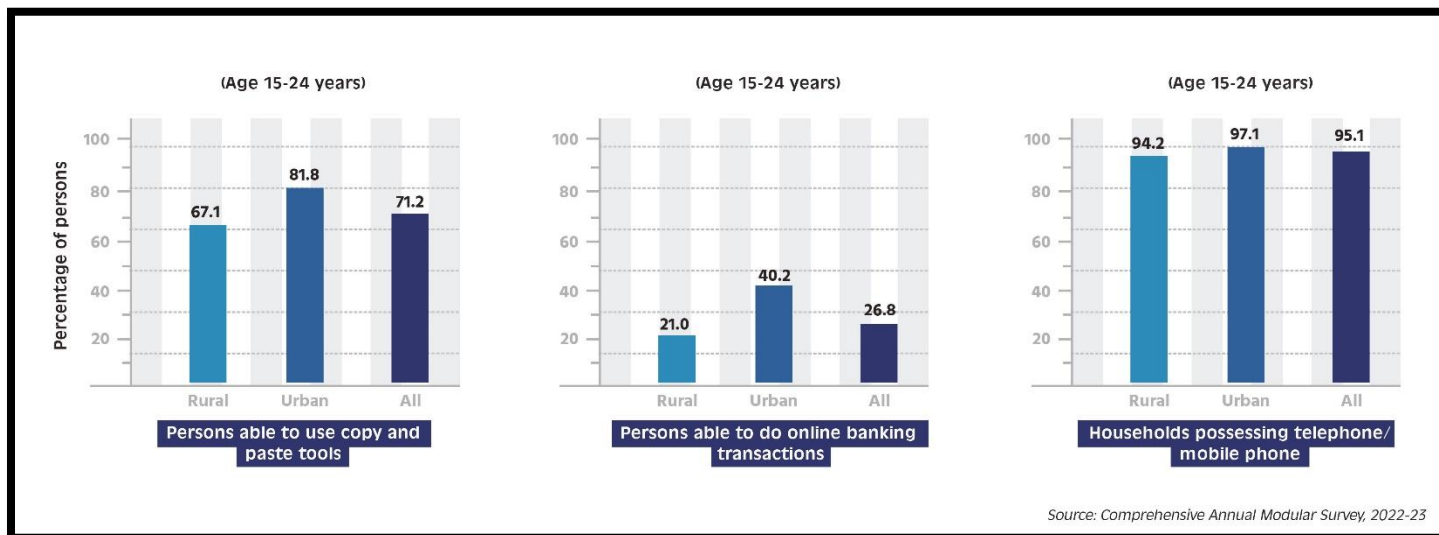
The digital journey of rural India is steadily advancing, with young people gradually mastering various technological skills. While not all can fully utilize digital tools, many are finding their way



Source: Comprehensive Annual Modular Survey, 2022-23

in this evolving landscape. Among the 15-24 age group, 74.9% can now send basic messages, a key step towards embracing digital communication.

As digital competence grows, rural youth are tackling more complex tasks like copying, pasting, and moving data—67.1% of the 15-24 age group and 65.6% of the 15-29 age group can perform these operations. The use of the internet for information searches is also on the rise, with 60.4% of those aged 15-24 and 59.3% of the 15-29 age group actively searching online.



Some areas, however, like sending emails, remain challenging. Only 43.6% of rural youth aged 15-24 can send emails, while the number is similar at 43.4% for the 15-29 age group. Online banking presents another hurdle, with 31% of 15-24-year-olds and 33.3% of 15-29-year-olds able to conduct transactions.

Though gaps remain, the gradual adoption of digital skills among rural youth signals progress towards a more connected and empowered rural India, where technology increasingly opens doors to opportunity and growth.

Government Initiatives for Universal Connectivity and Digital India

The government has launched several initiatives to promote digitalization, significantly transforming India's connectivity landscape. Under Digital India Initiative, various technology-led startups and innovation schemes like Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs (TIDE 2.0), Gen-Next Support for Innovative Startups (GENESIS), domain specific Centres of

Excellence (CoEs) and Next Generation Incubation Scheme (NGIS) have been undertaken. Also, BharatNet Project, which connects rural areas with Optical Fibre Cable, and USOF (Universal Service Obligation Fund) schemes that bring 4G services to remote villages have been implemented to expand broadband access. The India BPO Promotion Scheme (IBPS) and North East BPO Promotion Scheme (NEBPS) encourage IT/ITeS growth in underserved regions, creating employment opportunities. PM-WANI initiative is also in place to provide public Wi-Fi hotspots across the country. These initiatives collectively bridge the digital divide and propel India's digital transformation.

Metric	March 2014	March 2024	% increase
Broadband Definition	>= 512 Kbps	>= 2 Mbps	300%
India's Ranking in Avg Internet Download Speed	130	16	Improved by 114 ranks
Average Download Speed	4.18 Mbps	105.85 Mbps	2432.29%
Internet Subscribers (in mn)	251.59	954.40	279.34
Total Subscribers (in mn)	933	1199.28	28.54
Urban Tele-density	145.78%	133.72%	-8.27
Rural Tele-density	43.96%	59.19%	34.64%
Overall Tele-density	75.23%	85.69%	13.90%
Average Data Cost/GB	₹268.97	₹9.18	-96.58%
Average Data Consumption	0.26 GB	20.27 GB	7696%

Conclusion

Rural digital expansion in India is enabling young people to adopt technology, bringing significant changes to everyday life and narrowing the gap between urban and rural areas. With the availability of affordable high-speed internet and various government initiatives, rural youth are becoming more capable of using digital tools for communication, education, and financial activities. This shift represents a growing recognition of technology's role in promoting development and opportunities. As digital literacy and infrastructure continue to advance, rural youth are set to contribute meaningfully to a more connected and inclusive future for the country.

References

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