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India has higher use of e-commerce platforms than its neighbors: AfterAccess surveys.

Recently concluded nationally representative AfterAccess surveys show that 65% of Indians between the ages of 15 and 65 do not know what the Internet is, and that 81% claim not to use it. The study also revealed that rural dwellers are 22-percent less likely to own a mobile phone than urban. This gap is larger than in Bangladesh and Pakistan, as found by the same study.

LIRNEasia, an ICT (information and communication technology) policy and regulation think tank working in the Asia-Pacific launched a report on “AfterAccess: ICT access and use in India and the Global South”. The AfterAccess research currently consists of data from 38,005 households and individuals in 18 countries, engaged through 90-minute interviews. The surveys cover a wide range of topics related to mobile, Internet, social media and other platform use, and will soon include four additional countries.

“The objective of this concerted data collection effort is to offer much greater insight to the barriers to digital inequality in the Global South,” said **Helani Galpaya, Chief Executive Officer of LIRNEasia**. “We are now able to provide a far more comprehensive evidence base to inform policy and regulation in the areas of mobile, Internet, social media and online or mobile platform use.”

The report focused on findings from India, and the launch was held in collaboration with the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).

“The survey offers perspective on mobile penetration and use across developing economies,” commented **Rajan S. Mathews, Director General, COAI**. “With mobile being an integral part of society all over the world, the data collected on the levels and types of use can prove to be a guiding tool for developing right marketing strategies and policies. While the study highlights the challenges, it also provides the right path ahead for introducing changes”.

Present as speakers at the launch event were leading government, industry and civil society representatives including **Shri. Rajeev Chandrasekhar**, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha; **Shri. Baijayant Jay Panda**, Former Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha; **Shri. Amitabh Kant**, CEO, NITI Aayog; **Smt. Aruna Sundararajan**, Secretary, DoT, Ministry of Communications and Chairperson, Telecom Commission; **Shri. N. Sivasailam**, Special Secretary (T), DoT, Ministry of Communications; **Mr. Rajat Kathuria**, Director & Chief Executive, ICRIER; **Mr. Ravi Gandhi**, Chief Regulatory Officer, Bharti Airtel Limited; **Mr. Sanjay Kaul**, Managing Director, CISCO; **Ms. Amba Kak**, Public Policy Advisor, Mozilla Corp (India)

Quote from **Smt. Aruna Sundararajan**.

Household and individual surveys were conducted by the research team in 5,000 households across India. The sampling methodology has been designed to ensure representation of the target group (population aged 15-65) at a national level with a confidence level of 95-percent and a +/-3.5% margin of error. The data allows for disaggregation of data by urban/rural, gender and socio-economic classification at the national level.

The key findings from the report:

- 61% of Indians aged 15-65 are mobile phone owners
- There is a 22% gap between urban and rural populations in mobile ownership, the largest gap among the Asian countries studied
- Just 28% of these phones are smartphones, 16% feature phones, and the majority (55%) are basic phones, therefore have no internet capability
- 65% still don't know what the Internet is; 81% claim not to use it
- Just 15% use social media
- 9% of Indian social media users report being bullied online; 7% report being faced with inappropriate or offensive material
- India performs best among Asian countries on platform use; mostly e-commerce, transport and ticket/appointment platforms are being used.

LIRNEasia is a pro-poor, pro-market think tank. The organization conducts in-depth, policy-relevant research on infrastructure industries including ICT sectors. Their work extends to other sectors such as agriculture which can benefit the poorest citizens of the Asia Pacific.

For more information on LIRNEasia visit lirneasia.net

For more information on the AfterAccess surveys visit afteraccess.net



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