

Digital Inclusion for all

Internet has brought a paradigm shift in everyday life of citizens, helped transform the social structures of the societies across the world. Internet Governance should be able to ensure that all people benefit from Digital Information, products and services equally and equitably. Digital Technologies through Internet, mobile phones, various other tools and devices that collect, store and analyse the information digitally. Internet has become the lifeline as it has proliferated the day-to-day activities such as digital payments, education, connecting to our family and friends. Governments use Internet to ensure e-delivery of its services, use for banking systems, healthcare – telehealth systems etc.

While there is Internet accessible to many, a lot many have access barriers to internet in terms of lack of good quality internet, high speed bandwidth, right instrument or devices to access, infrastructure, digital literacy. Globally over a billion people have been brought online, however, still half of the world's population does not use internet. Digital divide exists in varied forms for lesser connected societies and communities. Rural and Urban Digital divide exists in terms of exposure to the right opportunities for work, studies etc. Divide in terms of accessibility and digital literacy between the young and the old, women and men. Divide in terms of creating content that is accessible by everyone including the differently abled. To further this, Covid 19 has added to the existing digital divide related to age, gender, disability, geography, and socioeconomic state.

The children and young people from the poorest households, rural and lower income states are falling even further behind their peers in terms of digital inclusion and are left with fewer opportunities to catch up, facing disproportionate exposure to poverty and unemployment.

We required efficient and affordable ICT infrastructure and services, supported by a robust policy and regulatory environment, enable businesses, governments, and all stakeholders to participate in the digital economy, helping societies and communities boost their overall economic well-being and competitiveness.

Communities should focus on developing job ready digital skills, include the youth as active partners in digital change for the society, involve all to discuss how Internet can be made safe and trustworthy. Encourage young girls to participate in the growing opportunities in the field of Information and Communication Technologies.