

Challenges and opportunities in the digital world spelt out; need for partnerships to create a digitally empowered society

MUMBAI, 21 March, 2017: At the session on ‘**Connecting the Unconnected - Upgrading technology and infrastructure to the last mile**’ at **FICCI FRAMES 2017**, **Mr. J. S. Deepak, India’s Ambassador Designate to the WTO**, outlined the challenges and opportunities that the telecom sector and the digital world faces, especially in terms of data connectivity.

He said the pace of internet subscription in India is growing by leaps and bounds and there is a need to realise that that with every 10% increase in internet digital connectivity, the GDP grows by a full percentage point.

Mr. Deepak said that only 18% of the rural households in India are digitally literate and therefore there is need to leverage this, else the asymmetry of information would lead to a digital divide.

He said that at present the access to content is restricted to 300 million people as it is created in English. Content was not being available in local languages and the divide was magnified by lack of connectivity of local bodies.

The Digital India vision of the Government, he said, sought to create a digitally empowered society. The aim was to provide broadband connectivity in all the 2500 gram panchayats. Once accomplished, it would lead to increase in demand and step up the flow of investments.

He underlined the need for partnerships between industry and consumers, between industry and government and between telcos themselves to make the Digital India programme truly transformative.

Other experts who shared their perspectives on the topic were Mr. Himanshu Kapania, Managing Director, Idea Cellular Ltd., Mr. Anuj Gandhi, Group CEO, India Cast Media Distribution Pvt Ltd; Mr. Rajan S. Mathews, Director General, Cellular Operators Association of India and Ms. Ranjana Narwane, Industry Capacity Lead for communication Media & Technology, Accenture Technology. The session was moderated by Mr. Neeraj Roy, Managing Director & CEO, Hungama Digital Media Entertainment Pvt Ltd.

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