

## **The Global Nexus: Education and Media in the Context of Global Market Research and Their Impact on Indian Economy**

Vinit Ketan, Indu Tyagi Ketan & Shubhra Ketan

### **Abstract**

The global economic landscape for 2026 is characterized by heightened volatility, with global growth projected to decelerate to 2.5% – 2.6% as regional conflicts and energy market disruptions trigger severe economic pressures. Within this challenging macroeconomic environment, rapid technological integration is profoundly transforming the global market research, education, and media sectors. India, as a swiftly digitizing developing economy, stands at a critical juncture where these global shifts present immense opportunities for economic growth and digital inclusion, alongside complex challenges related to equitable infrastructure development and information integrity.

This report highlights that while digital advancements in education (such as EdTech and online learning) and in media (including digital advertising dominance, the gig economy, and e-commerce) offer clear pathways to human capital development and economic prosperity in India, persistent structural issues threaten to undermine these gains. These bottlenecks include a pervasive rural-urban digital divide, outdated curricula, widespread teacher shortages, human capital flight (brain drain), and a severe, ongoing misinformation crisis. Strategic policy interventions, robust public-private partnerships, and a concerted focus on foundational digital literacy are imperative. India's ability to leverage its demographic dividend and sustain its impressive growth trajectory will largely depend on its capacity to implement comprehensive educational reforms, foster responsible digital media ecosystems, and effectively bridge the digital literacy gap.

**Keywords:** Global Market Research, Education, Media, India's Economy

### **Introduction**

The world economy is navigating a period of considerable volatility and uncertainty. Macroeconomic forecasts from the United Nations and UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) point to a global growth deceleration of 2.5% to 2.6% in 2026, driven by higher energy prices, shipping transport disruptions, financial market volatility, and escalating geopolitical friction in West Asia. This slowdown is further exacerbated by historically high economic policy uncertainty and a severe deceleration in merchandise trade dynamism, with global goods trade growth expected to drop sharply to between 1.5% and 2.5% in 2026. This confluence of adverse factors creates a challenging environment for developing nations, many of which are already grappling with heavy debt burdens and tightening domestic growth.

In this volatile global context, market research serves as a critical strategic tool for navigating corporate complexities and identifying market gaps. The global market research industry has

expanded into a massive sector, reaching \$150 billion in annual expenditure, fuelled by a structural transition toward AI-powered intelligence and mobile-first data collection.

Simultaneously, education and media play fundamental roles in the development trajectory of any nation, particularly in developing economies. Education is universally recognized as a crucial driver of long-term economic growth, innovation, and social cohesion. For individuals, it directly promotes employment, earnings, health, and poverty reduction. Media, especially digital media, has a transformative impact on real-time news reporting, information dissemination, and cultural exchange. It also generates significant economic opportunities through the rapid expansion of localized e-commerce and the gig economy.

This report aims to analyze the current status and future trajectories of these global sectors, emphasizing how global market research trends influence them. It will then delve into their specific impact on India's economy, identifying key challenges and opportunities for sustainable development within a developing nation context.

## Objectives

This report aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyze the current status and future trajectories of the global education and media sectors.
- To emphasize how global market research trends influence the education and media sectors.
- To delve into the specific impact of education and media on India's economy under the current 2026 macroeconomic climate.
- To identify key challenges and opportunities for sustainable development in India within the context of global education and media trends.
- To propose strategic policy interventions, robust public-private partnerships, and a concerted focus on digital literacy to leverage India's demographic dividend and sustain economic growth.

## Research Method

This paper is based on a comprehensive review of existing literature, including academic papers, reports from international organizations (e.g., IMF, UNCTAD, United Nations, World Bank, OECD), industry reports (e.g., Kantar, FICCI-EY, Deloitte, Alchemic), and articles from reputable news and analysis platforms. The research method involves:

- **Data Collection:** Gathering relevant data and insights from a variety of published sources on global economic trends, market research, education systems, media landscapes, and their specific manifestations and impacts in India.
- **Thematic Analysis:** Identifying key themes, challenges, opportunities, and interconnections within and between the global market research, education, and media sectors.
- **Contextualization:** Placing India's experiences within the broader global context, examining how global trends influence its domestic development.
- **Impact Assessment:** Analyzing the socio-economic impact of digital transformations in education and media on India, with a particular focus on economic growth, human capital development, and social inclusion.

- **Problem Identification:** Highlighting critical issues such as the digital divide, misinformation, and skill mismatches that pose challenges to India's sustainable development.
- **Policy Formulation:** Developing evidence-based recommendations for policy interventions, public-private partnerships, and strategic initiatives to address identified challenges and leverage opportunities for India's progress.

The analysis relies heavily on statistics and projections from cited sources to provide a quantitative and qualitative understanding of the current state and future outlook of the discussed sectors.

## **Global Market Research Trends and Technological Integration**

The market research industry is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by technological advancements that enhance its agility, efficiency, and strategic value in a complex global economy.

### **Overview of Industry Size and Growth**

The global market research industry reached a historic milestone, generating \$150 billion in expenditure. A significant portion of this growth stems from online and mobile quantitative research services, which account for a dominant share of worldwide revenues. The research software sector, a key enabler of this growth, has expanded rapidly, demonstrating an annual growth rate of 12.4%.

### **Impact of Technology**

Technology has revolutionized market research, fundamentally altering how data is collected, analyzed, and applied. This evolution has led to increased agility, allowing researchers to rapidly test, measure, and adjust projects in real-time. This adaptability also translates into greater efficiency and streamlined operational costs compared to traditional research methodologies.

The rise of "Do-It-Yourself" (DIY) market research platforms is democratizing access to consumer insights. These self-serve solutions enable faster and more cost-effective consumer feedback, allowing brands to validate ideas, optimize packaging, and refine product concepts with remarkable speed and accuracy. Historically, comprehensive market research was a costly and time-intensive endeavour, primarily accessible to large corporations in developed markets. The current landscape, driven by DIY platforms and AI tools, suggests that smaller businesses and startups, including those in developing economies like India, can now potentially access and leverage advanced market intelligence. This newfound accessibility helps level the global playing field, allowing emerging market enterprises to better understand local consumer behaviours, leading to greater market inclusivity and tailored service development globally.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a game-changer in market research, empowering brands to analyze vast datasets, predict trends, and generate insights with unprecedented speed and accuracy. Innovations like generative AI for research automation, AI assistant plug-ins, and automated ad-testing solutions have become standard. Furthermore, roughly 69% of market researchers are incorporating synthetic data into their efforts, indicating a growing reliance on advanced algorithmic data techniques.

**Ethical Governance Note:** While AI offers unprecedented speed and helps match advertisers with global audiences, its reliance on data and algorithms introduces severe considerations related to data privacy, algorithmic biases, and echo chambers. If AI systems used in market research are trained on biased or incomplete data, they could inadvertently misinterpret consumer preferences or perpetuate existing societal biases. This could lead to ineffective or ethically problematic marketing strategies, especially in diverse cultural contexts like India, highlighting a critical need for ethical AI development and continuous data validation.

Beyond data analysis, technology facilitates the creation of simulated digital environments to test product placements and packaging, significantly reducing the cost and complexity of physical testing. Consumer neuroscience, particularly facial coding technology, is increasingly applied to understand consumers' emotional responses, overcoming the implicit biases often found in self-reported measures.

## **The Evolving Global and Indian Education Landscape**

Education systems worldwide are undergoing significant transformation, shaped by a confluence of social, technological, economic, environmental, and political forces, including mounting geopolitical tensions and escalating ecological crises.

### **Major Global Trends Shaping Education**

Key pedagogical and technological trends include:

- **AI Literacy:** Understanding and effectively interacting with AI tools for teaching and learning workflows.
- **Personalized Learning:** Leveraging adaptive software, AI-driven platforms, and data analytics to tailor education to individual student needs.
- **Remote and Hybrid Learning:** Broad adoption of flexible learning models that offer geographic accessibility.
- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):** Increased emphasis on supporting student well-being and mental health, fostering skills like self-awareness and responsible decision-making.

The sector faces the ongoing challenge of anticipating future skill needs and diversifying educational pathways to meet the rising demand for high-skilled workers, necessitating a combination of specific technical skills with broader metacognitive competencies to ensure continuous lifelong learning.

### **The Global Learning Crisis and World Bank's Strategic Approach**

A severe global learning crisis persists, with over 250 million children currently out of school. Alarming, seven in ten children in low- and middle-income countries cannot read or understand a simple paragraph by the age of 10. The World Bank's strategy focuses on helping youth acquire advanced cognitive, socioemotional, technical, and digital skills necessary for success in today's world. Their approach is built upon five interrelated pillars: prepared and motivated learners, skilled teachers, relevant learning resources (including education technology), safe and inclusive schools, and well-managed education systems with adequate financing. Despite the critical need, domestic financing for education in low- and lower-middle-income countries has not kept pace, remaining severely constrained.

## Challenges in India's Education System

India's education system faces multifaceted challenges that impede its full potential:

- **Curriculum Relevance:** Outdated curricula in many Indian institutions heavily emphasize theoretical knowledge rather than practical, industry-relevant skills such as coding, AI, and financial literacy, leaving students inadequately prepared for modern job markets.
- **Infrastructure and Resources:** Many schools, particularly in rural areas, suffer from poor infrastructure, lacking basic amenities like functional classrooms, sanitation, libraries, and digital resources.
- **Teacher Quality and Shortage:** There is a notable lack of well-trained teachers and prevalent outdated teaching methods. Approximately 35% of rural schools operate with only one teacher, significantly reducing teaching effectiveness.
- **Educational Inequality and the Digital Divide:** A stark digital divide exists, with only 24% of rural households having internet access compared to 66% in urban areas, heavily limiting access to vital educational resources.
- **Inadequate Government Funding:** Spending on education in India has historically averaged about 3.82% of GDP, falling significantly below the 6% benchmark recommended by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- **Human Capital Flight (Brain Drain):** India experiences a persistent "brain drain," with highly educated professionals migrating abroad for better wages and research opportunities, causing an estimated annual economic loss of \$160 billion. Approximately 85% of Indian students pursuing higher education abroad do not return. However, an emerging trend shows that 15% to 25% of emigrants eventually return after gaining global experience, introducing advanced methodologies that benefit domestic industries—presenting a strategic "brain gain" opportunity if properly incentivized.

## Opportunities and Reforms in Indian Education

Despite these challenges, India's education system is poised for significant transformation through various opportunities and ongoing reforms:

- **Technological Advancements and Online Education:** Online education platforms are democratizing learning, reducing costs, and providing crucial flexibility. However, digital learning cannot fully reach the most underserved populations without first addressing fundamental issues of connectivity and digital literacy in rural zones.
- **Government Initiatives (Digital India & NEP 2020):** Initiatives include *e-education*, *PM e Vidya*, *DIKSHA*, and *Swayam*. The *Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)* aims to make 60 million rural households digitally literate. The *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020* introduces a new **5+3+3+4 curricular structure**, aiming to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 50% by 2035.
- **Skill Development Programs:** Frameworks like *Project AMBER* (a collaboration between the World Bank and the NSDC) have successfully trained thousands of youth, while the *India Skills Accelerator* (launched in partnership with the World Economic Forum) aims to close critical skill gaps in AI, cybersecurity, and cloud computing.

**Table 1: Key Challenges and Opportunities in India's Education System**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Opportunities / Reforms</b>
<b>Curriculum &amp; Relevance</b>	Outdated, theory-based, lacks practical skills for modern job markets.	Regular syllabus updates; incorporating coding, AI, financial literacy; emphasis on practical internships and project-based assessments.
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Resources</b>	Poor infrastructure, lack of basic amenities (classrooms, sanitation, digital tools), leading to school closures.	Government and private investment in facilities; deploying digital learning tools; merging under-enrolled rural institutions.
<b>Teacher Quality &amp; Shortage</b>	Lack of well-trained teachers, outdated methods, overcrowded classrooms; 35% of schools have only one teacher.	Mandatory comprehensive teacher training (modern pedagogy, digital tools); better salaries and incentives to attract and retain educators.
<b>Inequality &amp; Access</b>	Barriers for marginalized students; regional languages sidelined; only 24% rural internet access.	Scholarships, mid-day meals, transport assistance; multilingual education; online platforms reducing costs to reach remote areas.
<b>Dropout Rates &amp; Affordability</b>	High dropout rates due to financial constraints and family responsibilities; rising costs of private education.	Financial aid, flexible schooling, vocational training; regulating private school fees; expanding affordable government schools.
<b>Funding &amp; Investment</b>	Insufficient government funding (approx. 3.82% of GDP, below the 6% NEP target).	Increasing education budget, transparent fund allocation; Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and CSR initiatives.
<b>Human Capital Flight</b>	Brain drain of skilled professionals; \$160B annual loss; 85% of students abroad don't return.	Improving local research facilities, competitive salaries; actively encouraging the return of skilled diaspora to tap into "brain gain".
<b>Policy &amp; Vision</b>	Need for revamping to meet current needs, promote creativity, and critical thinking.	National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: Holistic, multidisciplinary system; new 5+3+3+4 structure; focus on experiential learning.
<b>Skill Development</b>	Skill gaps threaten progress; need for strict alignment with global market dynamics.	Project AMBER and India Skills Accelerator bridging skills-to-jobs gap; focused training on AI, cybersecurity, and cloud computing.

### **The Dynamic Global and Indian Media Landscape**

The global media landscape is undergoing a profound digital transformation, characterized by the ascendance of social platforms and evolving consumption patterns.

## **Digital Transformation in Global Media**

Social video platforms have emerged as hyper-scale and hyper-capitalized competitors to traditional studios, algorithmically optimized for engagement and drawing over half of global advertising spending. Younger generations (Gen Z and millennials) increasingly prefer watching short-form videos on social media over traditional streaming services. Pay TV subscriptions continue to decline primarily due to cost, with many opting for more affordable, ad-supported streaming tiers. Content globalization is accelerating rapidly, driven by platforms that utilize advanced ad tech and AI to match advertisers with global audiences, while generative AI for dubbing and translation allows content to easily cross traditional language barriers.

## **Impact of Social Media on Information Dissemination**

Social media has fundamentally transformed news reporting, enabling real-time news dissemination and empowering citizen journalists to capture events as they unfold. This rapid information flow ensures unprecedented immediacy in informing the public, but significantly increases the risk of spreading misinformation, false reports, and misleading content, posing severe challenges for verification and accuracy.

## **Growth and Digital Dominance in India's M&E Sector**

India represents one of the most dynamic media environments globally. Driven by rapid smartphone penetration and affordable data plans, India's internet environment has expanded to 806 million online individuals, representing a robust year-on-year growth rate of 6.5%, significantly higher than the global average.

According to the latest FICCI-EY Media and Entertainment Industry Report, India's M&E sector grew 9% year-on-year to reach INR 2.78 trillion. Crucially, digital media has emerged as the single largest segment within the Indian M&E sector, officially crossing the historic INR 1 trillion mark for the first time. Within this segment:

- Digital advertising recorded a 26% increase to INR 947 billion, accounting for nearly two-thirds of total advertising revenues, driven heavily by short video, social media, and e-commerce formats.
- Overall advertising grew by 13.5%, outpacing India's nominal GDP per-capita growth and contributing 0.41% to India's GDP.
- Live events witnessed an explosive 44% growth, supported by ticketed concerts, large public events, and religious gatherings.
- Linear Television is transitioning from a regulated utility into a lifestyle-integrated ecosystem that complements digital growth, reinforcing the integrated nature of screen consumption.

The broader Indian M&E sector is projected to continue its expansion, growing at a strong CAGR to reach INR 3.3 trillion by 2028.

**Table 2: Indian Media & Entertainment Sector Revenue Breakdown**

Segment	Current Revenue / Status (FICCI-EY Report Framework)	Key Trends & Notes
<b>Total M&amp;E Sector</b>	<b>INR 2.78 trillion</b>	Grew 9% year-on-year; driven primarily by digital media, advertising, and live experiences; projected to reach INR 3.3 trillion by 2028.
<b>Digital Media</b>	<b>Crossed INR 1 trillion</b>	Overtook TV to emerge as the single largest segment of the entire M&E industry for the first time.
<b>Digital Advertising</b>	<b>INR 947 billion</b>	Grew 26%; accounts for nearly two-thirds of total advertising revenues, driven by performance, short video, and e-commerce ads.
<b>Live Events</b>	Grew 44%	Massive post-pandemic rebound driven by high-margin ticketed concerts, public festivals, and large gatherings.
<b>Television</b>	Ecosystem transition	Linear TV is adapting to complement digital growth rather than directly competing with it, shaping an integrated screen ecosystem.
<b>Advertising Overall</b>	Grew 13.5%	Contributes 0.41% to India's total GDP, outpacing nominal GDP per-capita growth.

## **Economic Opportunities and Challenges in Indian Digital Media**

### **Economic Inclusion, E-Commerce, and the Gig Economy**

Digital media's influence extends deeply into India's economy, creating substantial opportunities while presenting severe structural risks. The digital gig economy in India is experiencing remarkable growth, projected to contribute 1.25% to India's GDP and hit \$455 billion, creating millions of flexible income opportunities in sectors like EdTech, healthcare, and gaming.

Furthermore, India has established itself as the world's third-largest retail market, with its e-retail market surging in Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) and boasting an online shopper base exceeding 270 million, with expansion spreading rapidly into Tier-3 cities and smaller towns. Social media and localized digital influencers play a critical role in accelerating this "trend-first commerce".

Digital platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp also facilitate extensive intercultural communication, democratizing content creation and actively aiding the

preservation and promotion of India's cultural heritage through digital archives and virtual museums.

### The Misinformation Crisis and Digital Literacy

However, the dual nature of this digital expansion introduces critical vulnerabilities. The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report identifies India as a leading country worldwide in misinformation and disinformation prevalence. This severe vulnerability stems directly from rapid digital growth outpacing fundamental digital literacy, as only 38% of Indian internet users can confidently identify fake news.

Misinformation spreads rapidly on platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube, leading to real-world consequences such as communal tensions, physical violence, and public health threats. Economically, unverified fake news has the capacity to cause immediate panic in financial markets and inflict severe reputational damage on local businesses. This reveals a critical tension: the very digital infrastructure driving economic opportunity harbors inherent vulnerabilities that can destabilize economic confidence if information integrity is left unmanaged.

**Table 3: Internet and Social Media Profile in India**

Metric	Current Data Profile	Strategic Implications
<b>Total Internet Users</b>	<b>806 million</b> (approx. 55.3% of total population)	Establishes a massive digital consumer footprint, offering immense scaling capacity for digital commerce.
<b>Year-on-Year Growth</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	India's adoption rate outpaces the global average, demonstrating rapid, continuous digital expansion.
<b>Mobile Internet Usage</b>	Avg. 3 hours 57 minutes daily on smartphones	A mobile-first framework is non-negotiable for digital services, public sector tools, and commercial ad spend.
<b>Most Popular Platforms</b>	WhatsApp (80.8%), Telegram (58.1%), YouTube, Instagram	These platforms act as the primary channels for commerce, news, information exchange, and cultural narratives.
<b>Digital Literacy Gap</b>	<b>Only 38%</b> of users can confidently spot fake news	Creates an acute, high-risk vulnerability to financial market panics and organized disinformation campaigns.
<b>Digital Divide</b>	<b>24% rural vs. 66% urban</b> household internet access	Poses a structural barrier that risks exacerbating inequality if connectivity infrastructure is not equitably deployed.

### Interplay and Economic Impact on India

The education and media sectors in India are not isolated entities but are deeply interconnected, forming a powerful socio-economic feedback loop. Educational development and digital literacy directly impact the capacity of citizens to participate in and benefit from the digital media-driven economy. Without foundational digital skills, high-growth opportunities in e-commerce and the gig economy remain entirely inaccessible to a large segment of the population. Conversely, digital media platforms serve as the primary infrastructure for

delivering low-cost educational content and vocational training to remote villages, bypassing traditional institutional teacher shortages.

### **Macroeconomic Reality (2026 Context)**

In the current 2026 macroeconomic landscape, the United Nations has forecast India's GDP growth at 6.4%, solidifying its position as one of the world's fastest-growing major economies despite severe global shocks, escalating crude oil prices, and constrained international trade conditions. Financial technology innovations, particularly the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), have revolutionized transactions and advanced deep financial inclusion, enabling rural sectors to participate in the formal digital economy.

However, India's ability to successfully capitalize on its vast working-age demographic dividend remains entirely dependent on resolving the digital divide and the skill mismatches identified by market research. Because only 24% of rural households possess internet access, a substantial portion of India's human capital potential risks being underutilized. If left unaddressed, the digital revolution will exacerbate socio-economic inequalities, creating a bifurcated workforce where only the digitally enabled urban elite can thrive. Furthermore, because digital growth is outperforming digital literacy, investing in community-wide media literacy programs transcends purely educational goals; it has become a critical national security and economic imperative to safeguard democratic stability and protect market confidence from the disruptive power of disinformation.

### **Recommendations for Sustainable Development**

To navigate global market volatilities and harness the transformative potential of education and media for sustainable development in India, a multi-pronged approach is essential.

#### **Policy Recommendations for Enhancing Quality and Access in Education**

- **Increase Public Investment Legally:** Urgently raise government expenditure on education to at least 6% of GDP, as recommended by NEP 2020. This funding must be allocated transparently to prioritize rural school infrastructure, basic sanitation amenities, and digital learning centers in underserved regions.
- **Curriculum Modernization:** Accelerate the practical integration of AI literacy, coding, and financial literacy from early educational tiers, shifting focus heavily from theoretical memorization toward experiential, project-based assessments.
- **Teacher Development and Retention:** Mandate continuous, comprehensive teacher training frameworks focused on modern digital tools and socio-emotional learning, while introducing competitive salaries and performance incentives to attract educators to rural single-teacher schools.
- **Bridge the Digital Divide:** Intensify the rollout of the *BharatNet* initiative to guarantee high-speed broadband across all rural districts, while providing subsidized digital devices to low-income demographics to ensure equitable online learning access.
- **Mitigate Brain Drain via “Brain Gain”:** Upgrade local laboratory and research facilities, offer competitive local corporate compensation, and actively formulate repatriation pipelines for the skilled Indian diaspora to transfer global expertise back into domestic tech sectors.

### **Strategies for Fostering Responsible and Economically Beneficial Media Growth**

- **Launch Mass Digital and Media Literacy Programs:** Establish widespread, culturally tailored literacy programs across schools and community centers to train citizens to critically evaluate online content, spot algorithmic bias, and identify deepfakes.
- **Enhance Platform Accountability:** Implement legal frameworks requiring social media platforms to deploy advanced AI content screening, enforce stricter self-regulatory tracking, and collaborate directly with certified fact-checking registries without stifling legitimate journalistic expression.
- **Support Ethical Journalism and Local Content:** Fund independent, ethical journalism networks to counter media fragmentation, while encouraging hyper-localized content creation that celebrates India's linguistic diversity, using digital spaces for cultural preservation.

### Measures for Economic Inclusion and Skill Development

- **Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Foster structured collaborations between state ministries, technology corporations, and NGOs to pool capital and operational expertise for educational tools and skilling accelerators.
- **Targeted Digital Skilling:** Align public skilling programs (such as *Project AMBER* and the *India Skills Accelerator*) directly with high-growth digital sectors, including cloud computing, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence, ensuring equitable access pathways for women and rural populations.
- **Formalize Gig Worker Safety Nets:** Enact comprehensive regulatory legal frameworks addressing fair compensation, job security, and social welfare benefits for the rapidly expanding digital gig workforce to ensure equitable economic development.

### Conclusion

In the context of a volatile global economy and a rapidly shifting macro-environment, education and media are not merely isolated corporate sectors but are the absolute foundational pillars for India's future socio-economic development. They are heavily instrumental in building resilient human capital, fostering industrial innovation, and driving domestic growth.

The structural transformation observed in 2025–2026—where digital media officially crossed the historic INR 1 trillion threshold in India—demonstrates the unparalleled power of digital platforms to democratize access to learning, expand formal economic participation via e-commerce, and accelerate flexible gig employment.

However, these monumental developmental gains remain highly vulnerable to a stark rural-urban digital divide and an acute, pervasive misinformation crisis. India's long-term economic trajectory and its capacity to fully harvest its demographic dividend hinge directly on sustained, legally protected investments in inclusive education, alongside the responsible, digitally literate development of its media landscape. By proactively executing targeted policy updates, India can solidify its global position as an inclusive knowledge superpower.

### References

Alchemic. (2026, January 19). *67 Market Research statistics that will shape your strategy in 2026*. Alchemic Insights Blog. <https://thealchemic.com/blog/market-research-statistics/>

Bain & Company. (2024). *How India shops online 2025*. <https://www.bain.com/insights/how-india-shops-online-2025/>

Black Swan Business Solutions. (2024). *Globalization and market research: Adapting strategies for international markets*. <https://blackswanbss.com/globalization-and-market-research-adapting-strategies-for-international-markets/>

CESS Education. (2024). *The impact of education expenditure on economic growth in India*. <https://cessedu.org/blog/impact-education-expenditure-economic-growth-india>

CRY America. (2025, March 12). *NGOs driving access to quality education for children in rural India*. <https://www.cryamerica.org/blogs/how-ngos-are-driving-access-to-quality-education-for-children-in-rural-india/>

Deloitte. (2025, March 25). *2025 Digital media trends: Social platforms are becoming a dominant force in media and entertainment*. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/technology/digital-media-trends-consumption-habits-survey/2025.html>

Economic Times. (2024, December 02). *India's gig economy set to hit \$455 billion this year: Report*. Retail Economic Times. <https://retail.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/indias-gig-economy-set-to-hit-455-billion-this-year-report/115882310>

Ekya Schools. (2025, January 16). *Challenges and opportunities in India's education system*. <https://ekyaschools.com/blog/challenges-and-opportunities-in-indias-education-system/>

Eurasia Review. (2025, May 28). *India at the epicenter of the global misinformation crisis: OpEd*. <https://www.eurasiareview.com/06042025-india-at-the-epicenter-of-the-global-misinformation-crisis-oped/>

EY & FICCI. (2026, March 24). *Stories, scale and impact: Unlocking India's media and entertainment economy*. EY India. [https://www.ey.com/en\\_in/newsroom/2026/03/india-s-media-and-entertainment-sector-grew-9-percent-to-inr-2-point-78-trillion-in-2025-driven-by-digital-and-live-experiences-ficci-ey-report](https://www.ey.com/en_in/newsroom/2026/03/india-s-media-and-entertainment-sector-grew-9-percent-to-inr-2-point-78-trillion-in-2025-driven-by-digital-and-live-experiences-ficci-ey-report)

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI). (2026, March 24). *India's M&E sector likely to grow to INR 3.3 trillion by 2028*. Press Release. <https://www.ficci.in/sector/media-entertainment/home>

IDinsight. (2023). *Mapping the digital gig economy and workforce development in India*. IDinsight Reports.

International Monetary Fund. (2026, April 14). *World economic outlook, April 2026: Global economy in the shadow of war*. IMF Publications. <https://www.imf.org/en/publications/weo/issues/2026/04/14/world-economic-outlook-april-2026>

Invest4Edu. (2025). *Evaluating quality and structural modernizations in developing academic landscapes*. Invest4Edu Industry Insights.

- Kadence. (2024). *Agility and automated testing protocols in modern consumer insights*. Kadence International Papers.
- Kantar. (2025). *The global insights and research software sector report 2025*. Kantar Marketplace Intelligence.
- Kearney. (2024). *The evolution of flexible income models in emerging tech sectors*. Kearney Strategy Reports.
- Knowledge Resonance. (2025). *Cultural hybridity versus assimilation in hyper-connected digital media ecosystems*. *Journal of Knowledge Resonance*, 14(2), 45-59.
- Kumar, A., & Gangwar, S. (2024). *Intercultural communication and localized content delivery inside the Indian sub-continent*. *Media Studies Review*.
- Kurmi, R. (2024). *Quantifying the financial and human capital effects of brain drain and reverse migration in South Asia*. *South Asian Economic Review*.
- LSU Online. (2024). *Pedagogical frameworks for artificial intelligence literacy and personalized learning tools*. Louisiana State University.
- Meltwater. (2025). *Digital 2025: India report on internet and social media usage*. Meltwater Data Insights.
- Ministry of Education. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. Government of India.
- Mollick, A. (2024). *Digital cultural hybridization and preservation initiatives via social streaming networks*. *Cultural Heritage Studies*.
- Moody's Ratings. (2026, May 12). *Moody's slashes 2026 India growth forecast to 6%*. *The Economic Times*. <https://m.economictimes.com/news/economy/indicators/moodys-slashes-2026-india-growth-forecast-to-6/articleshow/131030898.cms>
- Multipost Digital. (2024). *The velocity of information: Citizen journalism and the risks of unchecked digital dissemination*. *Media Tech Journal*.
- Next IAS. (2025). *Combating digital disinformation ecosystems: Policy frameworks for Indian public interest*. Next IAS Research.
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2025). *Education at a glance 2025: Fostering learner resilience amid systemic global crises*. OECD Publishing.
- Oyighan, P. (2023). *Real-time news and global information exchange networks*. *Digital Communications Review*.
- The Business Research Company. (2026, January). *Market research services market size & forecast to 2030*. Research and Markets Report ID: 5939744. <https://www.researchandmarkets.com/report/market-research-service>

The Diplomat. (2025, February 15). *The political polarization of media and information integrity in South Asia*. <https://thediplomat.com>. United Nations Trade and Development

### **About the Authors**

Vinit Ketan is CEO of Wantstats Research and Media Pvt. Ltd. Pune

Indu Tyagi Ketan is COO of Wantstats Research and Media Pvt. Ltd. Pune

Shubhra Ketan is Partner Relations Head of Wnatstats Research and Media Pvt. Ltd. Pune