Digital literacy

Why in news?

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- The recent massive ransomware (Wannacry) attack has hit lakhs of computers worldwide last week.
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- India was one of the worst-affected countries, with nearly 10% of impacted computers located within our borders.
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What is the issue?

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- In the aftermath, digital security companies have gone into advocating better cyber security measures.
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- Most cybersecurity experts admitted that having firewalls, security protocols, **better antivirus and anti-malware programmes is of no use** when its user is digitally illiterate or least security-conscious user.
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- Thus **user behaviour is the vital point** in cyber security related issues, which in India is completely lacking despite its giant strides in digital access.
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What is the problem of digital illiteracy in India?

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- A third of all mobile phone users in India used (or owned) a Smartphone in 2016.
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- According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), nearly 35% of the population has access to the Internet, making us one of the world’s

largest digital populations.
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- According to a Deloitte-Assocham study, ‘Digital India – unlocking the trillion dollar opportunity’, **India has one of the world’s largest populations of digital illiterates.**
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- Only 10% of the population is digitally literate, having the skills needed to take advantage of digital access.
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- To tackle this government recently launched **National Digital Literacy Mission,** tasked with making six crore households digitally literate in three years.
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What is the difference between digital literacy and digital skill?

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- In laymen sense, digital skills would include showing students how to download images from the Internet and insert them into PowerPoint slides or web pages.
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- In contrast, Digital literacy would focus on helping students choose appropriate images, recognise copyright licensing, and cite or get permissions, in addition to reminding students to use alternative text for images to support those with visual disabilities.
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- A digitally-skilled person will be able to create an email account, open it and even reply to mails.
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- A digitally-literate individual, on the other hand, would probably realise that the advantages and disadvantages involved in opening spam mails.
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- Digital skill is thus necessary but not the end in itself.
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- But **what India need is a nation of digital literates,** people who will be able to not only access the Internet but use it in a discerning manner.
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- Thus India needs to create aware and empowered digital citizens, which needs to be incorporated from the grass root level (primary school level).
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- It has to be as fundamental as the three ‘R’s of basic schooling — **reading, writing and arithmetic.**

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- State level governments along with Bharat Net programme which drags optic fibre to every gram panchayats in the country have the understood the power of the digitally empowered citizens.
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Source: The Hindu

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