

I Thought My Job Was To Report On Tech In India. Instead, I've Watched Democracy Decline. | BuzzFeed News

By Pranav Dixit

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I was in a cavernous college auditorium on the frigid winter afternoon in New Delhi in 2015 when Sundar Pichai, the CEO of Google, was selling the promise of India, his home country and the company's largest market, to 2,000 high school and college students.

"Part of the reason we're all very interested in India is that it's an amazingly young country," he said. "It's a vast country, and in so many ways, we do think the trends of the future will come from places like that."

Over the next few years, American tech companies hungry for growth set their sights on India, where hundreds of millions of people were coming online for the first time thanks to cheap Android phones and crashing data prices. Venture capital coursed through Bangalore's clogged streets. Millions of Indians were suddenly booking their first Uber rides, receiving their first Amazon packages, watching their first Netflix shows, and having their first WhatsApp chats, some of it powered by the free Wi-Fi that Google was blanketing the country's railway stations with. A great churning was upon us.

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