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New World Tech Order and India's Role

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Why in News?

- At the IIT 2020 Global Summit, the Prime Minister said that the post-Covid world will be about **re-learning**, **re-thinking** and **re-inventing**.
The government is fully committed to its principle of **reforming**, **performing** and **transforming** India in the field of technology.
- In 2022, India will mark 75 years since Independence and urged the Pan IIT movement to set an even higher benchmark for "giving back to India".

The Technology Scenario

- With the increasing role of **Artificial Intelligence**, the world is looking forward to **grobotisation** = global + robotisation.
However, an issue associated with the same is of employment, if the increased dependence on machines is going to take up the employment or not.
- The private sector is not at all human-centric, it is completely based on making profit.
- Maximum contribution in the field of technology is made by only the U.S. and China.

India's Scenario

- **Advancing in technology:** The mindset about Indian products and technology being inferior is changing rapidly within the country.
- **Dependent for assistance:** India may have developed a lot in technology than earlier but is still dependent on other countries for various technical assistance.
 - India has approximately 1.5 billion mobile connections, but still does not have the complete knowledge of making a mobile phone in its full capacity.
 - The medical expertise of India are well known yet all the medical equipment is imported in India.
- **Lack of resources:** India still lacks the ecosystem where a young talent coming up with an innovative idea can always get a mentor, or encouragement or can be provided seed money.
- **India and R&D:** India spends less than 1% on the Research and Development sector and that is also mostly by the government, which is considerably less as compared to other countries like South Korea where 3.4% of GDP of the country is spent in the R&D sector and 70% of it is by the private sector.

Role of the Indian Diaspora

- When the IT revolution of India took place in the 90s, the Indian diaspora who had studied in IITs mostly settled in Silicon Valley.
They have played a very significant role by acting as the bridge between the Indian skills, human resources and the American technology requirements.
- Indian diaspora, IIT, BITS or NIT alumni in particular, can play a very crucial role in acting as a mentor to the young talents as they already have the experience and know what the advanced technologies and other developed countries want.

Technology and Education

- With the nationwide **lockdown**, the education system shifted from physical mode to virtual, online mode began.
 - About 60% of India's population cannot afford full-time higher education even if it is provided for free.
 - A number of students do not prefer to go for engineering mainly because they cannot afford attending higher-education on a full time basis.
 - Making learning available online for the students on a permanent basis can help them study from home.
- Moreover, in order to make India capable of competing globally in the technology field, the enrollment in quality technology should increase proportionately.

Way Forward

- **Human-centric approach:** All the new technologies should be human-centric, the interest of the individual should be protected. The upcoming technologies should be more employing-giving rather than taking away the employment.
- **Blending the education:** This is a high time India should talk about blended education; studying online along with interning.
 - Attending college physically only for a short period of time and focussing more on enhancing their skills and gaining experience beside theoretical learning.
- **No more over-reliance on the govt:** The private sector is not so keen about investing in the R&D sector.
 - Relying only on the government for all the technological development is not a right approach. The private sectors have to come forward and invest in the R&D and make it work for long-term while the government shall continue supporting providing infrastructure, healthcare etc.

Conclusion

- As far as technology is concerned, India is at a far better place now than it was a few years ago.
 - Bringing about a change in our mindsets about the Indian products and Indian technology is the need.
- What India needs to do to go forward is better training and also ensure that both the services side as well as the product side of things is covered and do a lot more R&D investment.
 - Besides, the private sector also needs to pull up its socks and try and complement what the government is doing.