Will high speed internet help boost the popularity of online gaming in India

Online gaming is on the rise in India, with 45.4% of the respondents to a 2016 survey conducted by Cint saying that they had participated in online or virtual gaming. Free games such as Counter Strike: Global Offensive and League of Legends are growing in popularity, but there is a long way to go before India catches up with other markets in online gaming.

One inhibitor is cost, with games such as World of Warcraft and Overwatch requiring gamers to pay a few thousand rupees either in upfront or monthly subscription costs.

However one of the primary factors that determines how good an online game is, lies completely out of the control of the game developer. It is the strength of the average internet connection. Whether in cyber cafes where a lot of gaming takes place, or over the home broadband, a poor quality connection leads to scenes like the one below, which lead to complaints and much disgust in online gamer forums:

*A tense moment during World of Warcraft when I aimed at the enemy, fired... and the game froze! By the time my screen came back to life, I had been killed twice: once when I was about to take the shot, and once more, when I came back to life. I complained to the cyber café owner and asked for my money back.*

Gamers around the world understand that they need to play games that are commensurate with their internet connection. A puzzle or strategy game can make do with a dial-up connection. On the other hand today’s immensely popular fast-paced multiplayer games such as Call of Duty or Fallout require very fast connections.

The most important internet variable for online gaming is the ping rate (also referred to as latency), which is the time it takes for information to be sent from the player’s computer to the game servers and back again. The lower the number, the better. In fact some games shut out players whose networks are too slow to support an effective gaming experience.

The recent launch of extremely low latency internet connectivity meant for automated algorithmic trading could also prove a godsend to the online and massively multiplayer online gaming industry in India. With minimum delay in transmission from the game servers to the computer whether in the café or home, players would have a smooth and positive gameplay experience, something that gaming companies have been striving to deliver for a long time.