

AI GOVERNANCE: ETHICS, DATA PROTECTION AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Conference Outcome Report



Chennai, Tamil Nadu
28th April 2026



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Please direct inquiries to:
Deccan Centre for International Relations
No 186, Parthasarathy Gardens, TTK Road,
Alwarpet, Chennai - 600018.

📞 +91 99940 10305

✉ deccancentre.communications@gmail.com

🌐 www.deccancentre.org

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AI-GEG	AI Governance and Economic Group
AIKosh	AIKosh Dataset Platform
API	Application Programming Interface
BNS	Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023
BVLOS	Beyond Visual Line of Sight
CeRAI	Centre for Responsible AI
CERT-In	Indian Computer Emergency Response Team
DARPA	Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency
DSAI	Department of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence
DPI	Digital Public Infrastructure
DPIIT	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
DPDP Act	Digital Personal Data Protection, Act, 2023
FREE-AI Framework	Framework for Responsible, Ethical and Explainable of AI
IIT Madras	Indian Institute of Technology Madras
IMPS	Immediate Payment Service
iTNT	Tamil Nadu Technology Hub
IT Act	Information Technology Act, 2000
IT Rules	Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021
JIXA	Japan Innovation Exchange and Collaboration Platform
MANAV	Moral, Accountable, National Sovereignty, Accessible, and Valid
MeitY	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
MoSPI	Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
NASSCOM	National Association of Software and Service Companies
RBI	Reserve Bank of India
R&D	Research and Development
SAHI	Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India
SLMs	Small Language Models
TEC	Technology and Policy Expert Group
UPI	Unified Payments Interface

PREFACE



Mr. S. KRISHNAN

Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India

I commend the Deccan Centre for International Relations, for partnering IIT Madras Pravartak and Dhirubhai Ambani University–School of Law, to organise the conference on “AI Governance: Ethics, Data Protection and Legal Framework” in Chennai on 28th April 2026. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, was happy to support the event.

The conference brought together a galaxy of policymakers, experts, industry representatives, researchers, legal practitioners, and institutional stakeholders to deliberate upon the emerging opportunities and challenges associated with artificial intelligence governance.

Artificial intelligence is increasingly shaping economies, governance systems, public services, and strategic affairs across the world. As AI technologies continue to evolve rapidly, there is a growing need for governance frameworks that are innovation-oriented,

inclusive, secure, and aligned with broader societal and developmental priorities. Constructive dialogue between government, academia, industry, and civil society will therefore remain essential in developing responsible and future-ready approaches towards AI governance.

I am pleased to note that the proceedings and key discussions emerging from the conference have been compiled in the form of this Outcome Report. I am confident that this report will serve as a valuable reference for policymakers, researchers, industry stakeholders, and institutions working in the field of AI governance and emerging technologies. The Outcome Report also promises to take forward the priorities and implementation pathways emerging from the successful India AI Impact Summit held in New Delhi between 16–20 February 2026.

FOREWORD BY ORGANISERS

-
- DECCAN CENTRE
FOR INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS (DCIR)
 - DHIRUBHAI AMBANI
UNIVERSITY SCHOOL
OF LAW
 - IIT MADRAS,
PRAVARTAK
-

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming governance systems, economies, public institutions, strategic affairs, and everyday life across the world. As AI technologies continue to evolve at an unprecedented pace, questions relating to ethics, accountability, data governance, security, inclusion, and institutional preparedness have assumed increasing importance for governments, industry, academia, and civil society alike.

Artificial Intelligence is also rapidly reshaping national security and defence by transforming ISR, decision-making, autonomous systems, cyber operations, electronic warfare, and Multi-Domain Operations. For India, this makes Sovereign AI a strategic necessity rather than a technological choice. Dependence on external AI models, data infrastructure, chips, networks, or software can create vulnerabilities during crises and conflict. Efforts being undertaken in this direction - needs primacy.

It is in this context that the conference on “AI Governance: Ethics, Data Protection and Legal Framework” was organised as a collaborative initiative bringing together policymakers, diplomats, technologists, legal experts, researchers, industry leaders, defence practitioners, and institutional stakeholders to deliberate upon the emerging opportunities and challenges associated with AI governance.

The conference aimed to strengthen South India’s voice in the national AI landscape, building on the momentum of the India AI Impact 2026 — especially

the MANAV Vision, the Three Sutras (People, Planet, Progress), and the Seven Chakras—by translating these frameworks into actionable regional roadmaps. Discussions critically examined key challenges in AI ethics, data protection, liability, bias, sovereign AI, and the development of an inclusive, human-centric Indian model of AI governance.

Conversations during the conference reflected the growing recognition that AI governance cannot be approached solely through narrow regulatory perspectives. Rather, meaningful governance frameworks must balance innovation with accountability, strategic autonomy with international cooperation, and technological advancement with broader societal and developmental priorities. The conference also highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary engagement and multi-stakeholder collaboration in shaping governance systems that remain operationally practical, inclusive, and responsive to rapidly evolving technological ecosystems.

This Outcome Report seeks to capture the key discussions, perspectives, recommendations, and strategic insights emerging from the conference proceedings. We hope the report contributes meaningfully to ongoing conversations surrounding responsible AI development, Digital Public Infrastructure, sovereign technological capacity, multilingual and inclusive AI ecosystems, and India's evolving role in global AI governance discussions.

We place on record our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, for its support towards this initiative. We also extend our gratitude to all speakers, participants, partner institutions, researchers, and stakeholders whose contributions enriched the deliberations and strengthened the quality of the discussions.

We hope that the insights emerging from this conference and the present report contribute towards the development of governance frameworks that remain ethical, inclusive, innovation-oriented, strategically sovereign, and aligned with the broader public interest.

AMBASSADOR T. S. TIRUMURTI

*Indian Foreign Service (Retd.)
Chair, Steering Committee, Deccan Centre
for International Relations (DCIR)*

Prof. (Dr.) AVINASH DADHICH

*Founding Director,
Dhirubhai Ambani University, School of Law*

**Lt. Gen. KARANBIR SINGH BRAR
PVSM, AVSM (RETD.)**

*Distinguished Strategic Advisor,
IIT Madras, Pravartak*

INTRODUCTION



Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force shaping contemporary economic systems, governance frameworks, national security consideration, and social structures across the world. The accelerated deployment of generative AI systems, large language models, automated decision-making tools, and data driven technologies has expanded the scope of AI applications across sectors including healthcare, finance, education, manufacturing, governance, and public administration. At the same time, these developments have intensified policy debates surrounding accountability, transparency, algorithmic bias, privacy, data protection, regulatory oversight, and the broader societal implications of AI-driven systems.

As governments and institutions increasingly recognise the strategic significance of AI, there is a growing emphasis on developing governance frameworks that balance innovation with safeguards rooted in constitutional values, democratic accountability, and human-centric development. Global conversations on AI governance have also shifted from purely technological considerations towards questions of institutional readiness, ethical deployment, regulatory harmonisation, and equitable access, particularly in the context of developing economies and the Global South.

In this context, the conference on “AI Governance: Ethics, Data Protection and Legal Framework and Legal Framework”, held on 28 April 2026 in Chennai, was convened as a platform to facilitate interdisciplinary engagement on emerging challenges and opportunities in AI governance. The conference sought to examine the evolving regulatory and policy landscape governing AI systems, while also addressing the practical challenges associated with implementation, institutional coordination, and sector-specific adaptation.

A key focus of the conference was the need to translate broad principles of responsible and inclusive AI governance into actionable policy approaches suited to India’s institutional, developmental, and technological context.

Particular attention was given to questions relating to sovereign AI capabilities, ethical and accountable AI development, data governance, legal and regulatory frameworks, institutional capacity-building, and the development of governance models responsive to India’s socio-economic realities.



A packed session at the AI Governance Conference

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

The conference was jointly organised by the Deccan Centre for International Relations, Dhirubhai Ambani University – School for Law, and Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) Pravartak, with support from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India.



Mr. T.S. Tirumurti in conversation with Ms. Vanitha Venugopal and Prof. (Dr.) Avinash Dadhich

Deccan Centre for International Relations

The Deccan Centre for International Relations (Deccan Centre) is an independent think tank and the ninth centre under the Institute for Financial Management and Research, uniquely dedicated to the study of international relations. Based in Chennai, it focuses on the global engagement of South India, covering Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and the Union Territories of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry. Its work spans key domains such as geopolitics, security, technology (including digital), trade, business, environment, maritime affairs, and diaspora, with the aim of identifying opportunities and strengthening international linkages aligned with India's foreign policy.

The Centre serves as a platform to amplify South India's voice in global discourse by fostering policy dialogue, research, and partnerships. It collaborates with institutions and stakeholders in India and abroad through joint projects, policy briefs, research publications, podcasts, and thought leadership initiatives. By enabling business and academic engagement, the Deccan Centre seeks to build meaningful cross-border partnerships and contribute to informed policymaking, positioning the region as a significant player in international affairs.



TEAM Deccan Centre for International Relations



Dhirubhai Ambani University - School of Law

True to the name of our founding father, Late Shri Dhirubhai Ambani, the School of Law aims to create and train a community of lawyers and non-lawyers guided by the ideals of industry-academia collaboration and entrepreneurial spirit in globalized Indian economy. We are specialized law school positioned as a hub for capacity building, training, research and technical assistance. We offer an interdisciplinary and industry oriented education through a wide array of courses, with insights and instruction provided by experts drawn from top international & domestic organizations, industry/multilateral & intergovernmental organizations and educational institutions.

Apart from the flagship verticals ESG, Carbon Markets & Sustainability; Construction & Arbitration Law; and AI, Data Privacy & Technology Law, we are striving to build expertise and offer programmes in emerging areas of law such as International Trade & Investment Law, IPR, Aviation Law, Tax Law, Capital Market & Securities Law and others regulatory enactments. Boasting tie-ups with key Indian and global organizations, we aim to develop capacity by providing high-quality, industry-focused executive development programmes in tax and regulatory areas to senior leadership team for better compliance and reporting to their stake holders.



IIT Madras Pravartak

IIT Madras Pravartak is a Section 8 not-for-profit company hosted by the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, is a Technology Innovation Hub focused on Cyber-Physical Systems, particularly in Sensors, Networking, Actuators, and Control Systems (SNACS). Supported by the Department of Science and Technology under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems, it aims to build a strong innovation ecosystem by bringing together academia, industry, startups, and government to drive advanced research and technology development in these domains.

The organisation works across the full innovation lifecycle-supporting research translation, product development, entrepreneurship, and workforce skilling. Through initiatives such as incubation support, industry collaborations, training programmes, and international partnerships, IIT Madras Pravartak enables the development of scalable, industry-relevant solutions it seeks to strengthen India's capabilities in next-generation technologies while fostering talent and contributing to a globally competitive innovation ecosystem.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The conference on “AI Governance: Ethics, Data Protection and Legal Framework” brought together policymakers, academics, industry representatives, legal experts, technologists, defence practitioners, and institutional stakeholders to examine the evolving contours of artificial intelligence governance in India. The discussions collectively explored the legal, ethical, institutional, strategic, and developmental implications of AI deployment, while also examining the opportunities and challenges associated with building governance frameworks suited to India’s socio-economic realities and long-term technological ambitions.

A central theme emerging across the conference was the recognition that AI must be understood not merely as a technological tool, but as a foundational governance infrastructure with implications across public administration, economic systems, national security, education, healthcare, finance, agriculture, and social organisation. Participants consistently emphasised that AI governance in the Indian context cannot be reduced solely to questions of regulation, but must instead encompass institutional preparedness, technological sovereignty, operational accountability, ethical safeguards, innovation ecosystems, and inclusive development.

The inaugural session highlighted India’s emerging approach towards adaptive and principle-based AI governance. Discussions emphasised the Government of India’s

preference for leveraging existing legal and regulatory frameworks while avoiding premature or excessively restrictive regulation that could constrain innovation. Particular attention was given to balancing innovation with safeguards relating to privacy, cybersecurity, accountability, misinformation, and public trust. The discussions also highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder governance frameworks, voluntary compliance mechanisms, lifecycle accountability, and sector-specific governance approaches capable of adapting to rapidly evolving technological ecosystems.



A major focus of the conference concerned the relationship between AI sovereignty, national security, institutional resilience, and strategic autonomy.

Participants repeatedly emphasised that meaningful AI governance ultimately depends upon domestic technological capacity across compute infrastructure, semiconductors, datasets, Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), foundational models, cybersecurity systems, and innovation ecosystems. Discussions further highlighted concerns relating to opaque automated decision-making systems, cognitive inequality, technological dependence on foreign-controlled systems, and the need for governance mechanisms incorporating transparency, explainability, accountability, and human oversight.

The conference also examined the evolving legal and regulatory architecture required for responsible AI governance in India. A broad consensus emerged that India should avoid directly replicating highly prescriptive regulatory structures developed in other jurisdictions and instead pursue a principles-based, sector-specific, and risk-calibrated governance framework aligned with India's developmental and institutional context. Particular emphasis was placed on explainability, auditability, transparency, documentation standards, human-in-the-loop safeguards, operational governance protocols, and lifecycle accountability mechanisms extending from data collection and model design to deployment, monitoring, and post-deployment oversight.

Another major theme concerned the development of an inclusive Indian model for global AI governance. Discussions focused on multilingual accessibility, participatory governance, Digital Public Infrastructure, developmental inclusion, and the need to ensure that AI systems remain accessible beyond elite and urban populations. The conference repeatedly highlighted concerns relating to bias propagation, unequal access to AI systems, exclusion of vulnerable communities, and the broader societal implications of increasingly automated decision-making systems. The MANAV framework emerged as an important reference point linking ethical governance, accountability, sovereignty, accessibility, inclusion, and operational legitimacy within India's evolving AI governance architecture.

A recurring insight across sessions was the need to move beyond abstract ethical principles towards operational governance systems embedded directly within technological infrastructures and deployment processes. Participants repeatedly underscored the importance

of strengthening institutional coordination, regulatory capacity, AI literacy, privacy literacy, and public awareness in order to address the widening gap between the pace of technological development and broader societal preparedness.

The conference also highlighted several South India-specific opportunities relevant to India's broader AI governance and innovation ecosystem. Discussions underscored the region's strengths in higher education, multilingual computing, semiconductor ecosystems, Digital Public Infrastructure, deep-tech innovation, startup ecosystems, and technology-enabled public service delivery. Particular attention was given to state-level innovation models, multilingual AI initiatives, and regionally contextualised deployment frameworks capable of supporting broader national and Global South applications.

Overall, the conference reflected a broad convergence around the need for India to develop an AI governance framework that remains adaptive, human-centric, development-oriented, and strategically sovereign while balancing innovation with accountability, transparency, inclusion, and public trust. The discussions collectively reinforced the view that India's long-term contribution to global AI governance may lie in its ability to develop interoperable and inclusive governance architectures rooted in democratic accountability, Digital Public Infrastructure, multilingual accessibility, participatory governance, and context-sensitive innovation ecosystems.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

- AI governance is not merely regulation. It is governance infrastructure.
- Innovation without accountability risks institutional distrust.
- AI sovereignty begins with domestic technological capacity.
- India's AI governance model must remain adaptive, not overregulated.
- Explainability and human oversight cannot remain optional safeguards.
- Ethical AI must also be operationally accountable AI.
- Multilingual accessibility is central to inclusive AI governance.
- Digital Public Infrastructure may become India's global governance contribution.
- AI governance cannot remain confined to elite and urban ecosystems.
- Technological dependence ultimately becomes strategic dependence.
- India's AI future depends as much on institutional preparedness as technological advancement.
- Governance frameworks must evolve as rapidly as the technologies they seek to regulate.

INAUGURAL SESSION



WELCOME ADDRESS BY

AMBASSADOR T. S. TIRUMURTI

Indian Foreign Service (Retd.),

Chair, Steering Committee, Deccan Centre for International Relations

In his welcome address, Mr. T. S. Tirumurti situated the conference within the broader strategic transformation of the contemporary global order, observing that technology has increasingly become central to geopolitics, economic competitiveness, and international governance. He emphasised that artificial intelligence can no longer be viewed solely as a technological or commercial issue, but must instead be approached as a matter of strategic statecraft, institutional preparedness, and international cooperation.

Mr. Tirumurti highlighted the growing interrelationship between geopolitics, geotechnology, and geoeconomics, noting that governance discussions surrounding AI have become immediate policy imperatives requiring coordinated engagement across governments, academia, industry, legal institutions, and civil society. In this context, he underscored the importance of moving from broad declarations towards “action-oriented” and interoperable governance frameworks capable of balancing innovation, accountability, and public trust.

The address further positioned the conference as part of India’s broader effort to contribute meaningfully to global AI governance discussions following the India AI Impact Summit held earlier in 2026. Mr. Tirumurti observed

that while earlier international conversations largely focused on AI’s transformative potential, the present moment requires greater attention towards governance, ethics, data protection, legal frameworks, and institutional coordination.

A major theme of the address concerned India’s evolving role within global AI governance ecosystems. Mr. Tirumurti emphasised that India is uniquely positioned to function as a bridge between innovation and equity, and between sovereignty and international cooperation, particularly in representing the developmental realities and governance priorities of the Global South. He cautioned against fragmented governance architectures that may disproportionately reflect the priorities of major technological powers while marginalising developing economies.

In particular, Mr. Tirumurti pointed out that, at a time, when geopolitics is determining geo-technology and geo-economics, the United States and China are setting their own standards and rules in emerging areas of technology, like AI, digital, data ownership, state control, etc. They have parallel visions of how the world should be shaped. Consequently, it is imperative that India needs to protect itself when rules are being re-written in technology governance.

The address also highlighted the importance of collaborative and multi-stakeholder governance frameworks involving government, academia, industry, and civil society. Referring to the establishment of the Inter-ministerial AI Governance and Economic Group, Mr. Tirumurti noted that the discussions emerging from the conference would contribute towards ongoing governmental deliberations concerning India's evolving AI governance framework.

Mr. Tirumurti also highlighted the role of the Deccan Centre for International Relations as a platform for fostering interdisciplinary and policy-oriented dialogue on emerging strategic and technological issues. He noted that institutions such as the Deccan Centre can play an important role in convening

stakeholders across government, academia, industry, and civil society in order to support informed and implementation-oriented policy discussions on AI governance and related emerging technologies.

Concluding his remarks, Mr. Tirumurti underscored the importance of moving from “dialogue to design” and from “principles to practice,” emphasising that the next phase of AI governance must focus on operational implementation, institutional coordination, and the development of interoperable and inclusive governance architectures capable of supporting both innovation and public interest objectives.



Mr. T.S. Tirumurti addressing the participants



INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY

Mr. S. KRISHNAN

*Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information
Technology (MeitY), Government of India*

In his inaugural address, Mr. S. Krishnan outlined the Government of India's evolving approach towards AI governance, emphasising the need to balance technological innovation with safeguards relating to privacy, cybersecurity, accountability, and ethical deployment. He characterised AI as a “horizontal technology” with implications cutting across sectors including finance, healthcare, public administration, critical infrastructure, and national security, and stressed that governance responses must therefore remain coordinated, adaptive, and cross-sectoral rather than confined to isolated regulatory silos.

Mr. Krishnan noted that the Government's present approach consciously avoids premature or excessively restrictive regulation that could constrain innovation during a formative stage of technological development. Referring to ongoing institutional and policy discussions, he observed that India currently favours a layered governance approach that utilises existing legal and regulatory mechanisms, including the Information Technology Act, 2000 (“IT Act”), the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (“BNS”), the Digital Personal Data Protection (“DPDP”) Act, 2023, and intermediary liability frameworks to address emerging harms associated with AI systems, including misinformation, fraud, digital impersonation, and deepfakes. He further indicated that the Government continues to assess whether additional AI-specific interventions may become necessary as technologies evolve in complexity and scale.

A significant focus of the address concerned the institutional architecture emerging around AI governance in India.

Mr. Krishnan referred to the establishment of the AI Governance and Economy Group (AI-GEG), constituted pursuant to recommendations made by a Committee chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser, as part of efforts to develop coordinated governance mechanisms spanning both economic and regulatory dimensions of AI deployment. He emphasised that AI governance cannot be treated solely as a technological or legal issue, but instead requires sustained coordination between multiple ministries, regulators, sectoral institutions, industry stakeholders, and research ecosystems.

On data governance and privacy protections, Mr. Krishnan discussed the DPDP Act and the accompanying DPDP Rules, 2025 as central pillars of India's emerging digital governance framework. Referring to the Supreme Court's recognition of privacy as a fundamental right, he stated that the framework seeks to balance innovation and economic utility with constitutional protections relating to informational privacy through a consent-based model recognising individuals as “data principals.” He described India's approach as an attempt to maintain a calibrated balance between highly restrictive and minimally regulated international approaches to data governance while preserving space for innovation and responsible data utilisation.

At the same time, Mr. Krishnan emphasised that responsible AI development requires broad access to high-quality datasets and domestic technological capacity. In this regard, he referred to ongoing initiatives under the India AI Mission, including AIKosh, which presently provides access to thousands

of datasets intended to support research, innovation, and sectoral AI applications. He also referred to efforts by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) to transition public datasets into machine-readable formats compatible with AI training and deployment systems. The address repeatedly underscored the strategic importance of building sovereign data ecosystems, domestic innovation capacity, and indigenous AI capabilities in order to ensure that India's technological trajectory is not shaped exclusively by external platforms and foreign-controlled infrastructures.

Mr. Krishnan further highlighted the importance of voluntary compliance frameworks and multi-stakeholder participation in AI governance. He observed that technology developers and model creators are often best positioned to understand the operational implications and downstream consequences of AI systems, making their participation essential to the formulation of practical and implementable governance standards. At the same time, he indicated that voluntary governance approaches must continue to operate within broader public-interest safeguards and institutional oversight mechanisms.

The address also highlighted several emerging legal, ethical, and cybersecurity concerns arising from AI deployment. On the issue of deepfakes and AI-enabled misinformation, Mr. Krishnan stated that while existing legal provisions already address several forms of digital misrepresentation, amendments to the IT Intermediary Guidelines have also been undertaken to strengthen platform accountability relating to synthetic and manipulated content. He further referred to ongoing parliamentary and policy discussions regarding the adequacy of existing safeguards and the potential need for additional regulatory responses. With respect to copyright and the creator economy, Mr. Krishnan highlighted ongoing policy deliberations concerning the relationship between AI systems and intellectual property protections, including discussions arising from a working paper issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal

Trade (DPIIT). He noted that emerging debates now extend beyond conventional copyright questions to issues relating to personality rights, data access, and the use of human likeness and creative outputs in generative AI systems, including matters currently under judicial consideration.

On cybersecurity, Mr. Krishnan cautioned that developments in advanced AI systems and autonomous agents are introducing new categories of cyber risk with potential implications for critical infrastructure and public systems. Referring to recent discussions surrounding AI-enabled cyber vulnerabilities and threat scenarios, including concerns highlighted internationally in relation to advanced generative AI systems such as Anthropic's Mythos, he noted that relevant government agencies, including CERT-In, have undertaken consultations and issued advisories directed at critical sectors such as finance, power, aviation, and telecommunications.

Concluding his address, Mr. Krishnan emphasised that India's AI governance trajectory must remain consultative, innovation-oriented, and responsive to technological change while ensuring that appropriate safeguards are developed to protect citizens, institutions, and national interests. He underscored the importance of strengthening domestic technological capacity, institutional preparedness, and sovereign AI ecosystems as part of India's broader developmental and digital transformation objectives, including the long-term vision of a technologically empowered and developed India by 2047.



Inaugural Address by Mr. S. Krishnan



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY

Prof. B. RAVINDRAN

Head, Department of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (DSAI) and Centre for Responsible AI (CeRAI), IIT Madras

In his keynote address, Prof. B. Ravindran examined the evolving contours of India's AI governance framework, emphasising the need for governance mechanisms that enable the adoption and diffusion of AI technologies while simultaneously addressing associated societal, institutional, and economic risks. Distinguishing between "AI governance" and "AI regulation," he observed that India's current approach consciously prioritises governance-oriented frameworks over rigid regulatory structures in order to avoid constraining innovation during a formative stage of technological development.

A central theme of the address concerned India's position within the global AI ecosystem as part of what Prof. Ravindran described as the "Global Majority", i.e., countries that do not presently control frontier AI models or foundational AI infrastructure. He observed that this creates significant "enforcement asymmetry" in AI governance, particularly where globally dominant AI companies operate beyond the effective jurisdictional reach of domestic regulators. In this context, he emphasised that India's governance strategy must account for practical limitations associated with directly regulating offshore frontier model developers and should therefore combine domestic governance mechanisms with voluntary commitments, international engagement, institutional coordination, and deployment-phase accountability frameworks.

Prof. Ravindran further noted that public discourse surrounding AI frequently overemphasises speculative harms while overlooking the broader developmental and social benefits enabled by the technology. In this regard, he cautioned against adopting excessively restrictive approaches based solely on worst-case scenarios or directly replicating governance models developed in other jurisdictions without adapting them to India-specific realities. He observed that India's governance priorities must remain responsive to domestic developmental concerns, including exclusion from essential services, unequal access to technological systems, and resource-constrained implementation environments.

A central focus of the address was the AI Governance Guidelines Framework and its emphasis on principle-based governance. Prof. Ravindran described trust as a "techno-social construct," emphasising that public confidence in AI systems depends not only on technical reliability but also on broader institutional and societal trust. He further observed that baseline public distrust towards AI currently appears lower in India than in several Western jurisdictions, creating a distinct policy environment for AI adoption and experimentation.

Prof. Ravindran structured his discussion around the "Seven Sutras" underpinning the proposed governance framework: trust as the foundation; people-first and human-centric AI; innovation over unnecessary restraints; fairness and

equity; accountability; understandability by design; and safety, resilience, and sustainability. He emphasised that these principles should guide both institutional governance mechanisms and sector-specific implementation strategies.

On the principle of accountability, Prof. Ravindran highlighted the need for nuanced allocation of responsibility across AI supply chains and deployment ecosystems. He observed that while India may have limited ability to directly regulate offshore frontier model developers, domestic governance mechanisms can impose accountability obligations upon regulated deploying entities such as banks, hospitals, financial institutions, and public agencies. In this regard, he emphasised that deployment-phase accountability, internal testing, red-teaming, and due diligence mechanisms would likely become increasingly important components of India's governance architecture.

The address also drew an important distinction between technical "explainability" and broader "understandability." Prof. Ravindran emphasised that AI systems must be understandable to ordinary users in forms that are meaningful and accessible within real-world operational contexts rather than relying solely upon technical disclosure mechanisms intelligible only to specialists. He argued that such user-centric understandability must be incorporated into AI systems from the design stage itself rather than being treated as a post-deployment compliance requirement.

The discussion further highlighted the importance of sector-specific governance approaches rather than a uniform regulatory model. Referring to frameworks including the RBI's FREE-AI Framework (2025) for finance, and the Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India (SAHI) Guidelines (2026) for healthcare, Prof. Ravindran explained that governance mechanisms

must remain calibrated to operational realities within individual sectors. He noted, for instance, that while high-volume financial systems may require graded human oversight mechanisms based on transaction risk, healthcare applications require mandatory human supervision due to their life-critical implications.

Prof. Ravindran also emphasised that India's long-term technological leadership would depend not merely upon policy articulation, but upon the development of deployable technological infrastructure and scalable institutional ecosystems.

Referring to the global adoption of India Stack as an example of population-scale digital infrastructure, he argued that India must similarly develop an operational "AI Stack" capable of supporting domestic innovation, sovereign technological capacity, and broader Global South cooperation. In this context, he highlighted the strategic importance of investments in compute infrastructure, datasets, indigenous models, skilling, and public digital infrastructure under the India AI Mission Framework (2024).

The address also highlighted the institutional architecture emerging around AI governance in India. Prof. Ravindran referred to bodies such as the AI Governance Executive Group (AI-GEG) and the Technology and Policy Expert Group (TEC) as mechanisms intended to support continuous policy evolution, sectoral coordination, and interdisciplinary governance. He further referred to the establishment of AI Safety Institutes and the importance of strengthening institutional capacity across regulators, judiciary, and public administration systems.

On accountability and risk mitigation, Prof. Ravindran emphasised the need for governance mechanisms capable of generating evidence-based understanding of AI-related harms and failures. In this regard, he advocated for the establishment of AI incident reporting systems, regulatory sandboxes, and technology-led compliance mechanisms capable of supporting continuous oversight and collaborative learning. He noted that such systems would require non-punitive reporting structures and institutional safeguards capable of encouraging disclosure and transparency rather than suppressing reporting through fear of liability.

The address also identified several emerging implementation challenges requiring further policy attention. Prof. Ravindran highlighted concerns relating to deepfakes, synthetic media, and disclosure standards, particularly in the context of audio-based AI systems where disclosure mechanisms may not always remain sufficiently visible or intelligible to users. He also referred to concerns relating to “vicarious consent” within digital ecosystems, including situations where personal data shared by third parties may subsequently become part of AI training and deployment systems without meaningful awareness or control by affected individuals.

Concluding his address, Prof. Ravindran emphasised that India’s AI governance trajectory must remain adaptive, principle-based, implementation-oriented, and responsive to domestic realities. He underscored the importance of strengthening sovereign technological capacity, institutional preparedness, sector-specific governance mechanisms, and interoperable public digital infrastructure in order to ensure that India’s AI ecosystem remains innovative, accountable, inclusive, and aligned with broader developmental and strategic objectives.





VOTE OF THANKS BY

Mr. C. BALASUBRAMANIAN

Senior Advisor, Deccan Centre for International Relations

Delivering the Vote of Thanks for the inaugural session, Mr. C. Balasubramanian underscored the urgency of developing responsible and future-oriented AI governance frameworks amid the rapid transformation of global economic, social, and geopolitical landscapes by artificial intelligence technologies. He highlighted that emerging systems such as generative AI, large language models, and autonomous technologies are increasingly influencing critical sectors including healthcare, finance, governance, and public services, while simultaneously raising complex concerns relating to accountability, bias, data sovereignty, privacy, liability, and sustainability.

Emphasising the need for human-centric and ethically grounded governance approaches, he noted that robust AI governance mechanisms are essential to ensuring that technological advancement remains inclusive, accountable, and aligned with broader societal values. He further observed that the conference

served as an important platform to operationalise and carry forward the outcomes of the India AI Impact Summit 2026, particularly the MANAV Vision, through practical and actionable governance roadmaps.

Mr. Balasubramanian concluded by stressing that as AI continues to reshape global power structures, labour markets, and public trust, sustained multi-stakeholder engagement and collaborative governance efforts will play a decisive role in determining whether technological development ultimately serves humanity while effectively managing emerging risks.

SPECIAL ADDRESS



Ms. VANITHA VENUGOPAL

*CEO, Tamil Nadu Technology Hub (iTNT),
Government of Tamil Nadu*

In her special address, Ms. Vanitha Venugopal outlined Tamil Nadu's strategic vision to position itself as a leading global innovation and deep technology hub through an integrated ecosystem focused on research, entrepreneurship, infrastructure, intellectual property creation, and technology commercialisation. She emphasised that the long-term objective of the state's innovation ecosystem is not merely to expand technology services, but to transition towards an innovation-driven and intellectual property-led economy capable of generating indigenous technologies, scalable deep-tech enterprises, and globally competitive products.

Ms. Vanitha highlighted the role of the Tamil Nadu Technology Hub (iTNT) as a state-supported innovation platform designed to strengthen collaboration between government, academia, startups, research institutions, industry, and investors through a public-private partnership model. Referring to iTNT's structure as a "Section 8 not-for-profit company", she explained that the model was intended to combine institutional flexibility with public-sector support in order to facilitate technology transfer, ecosystem coordination, innovation incubation, and industry collaboration at scale.

A central focus of the address was Tamil Nadu's Deep Tech Policy, released in January 2024 and described as India's first dedicated state-level deep technology policy. Ms. Vanitha noted that the policy seeks to strengthen linkages between research institutions, startups, industry, and markets through strategic pillars relating to research and development, infrastructure, funding ecosystems, skilling, market access, and policy enablement.

She emphasised that deep technology ecosystems require governance approaches distinct from conventional software and startup ecosystems due to their longer research and development cycles, higher capital intensity, infrastructure dependencies, and extended commercialisation timelines.

In this regard, the address repeatedly highlighted the importance of what Ms. Vanitha described as the "patience of capital" in supporting deep-tech ecosystems. She observed that frontier sectors such as semiconductors, quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, and space technologies often require sustained long-term investments and

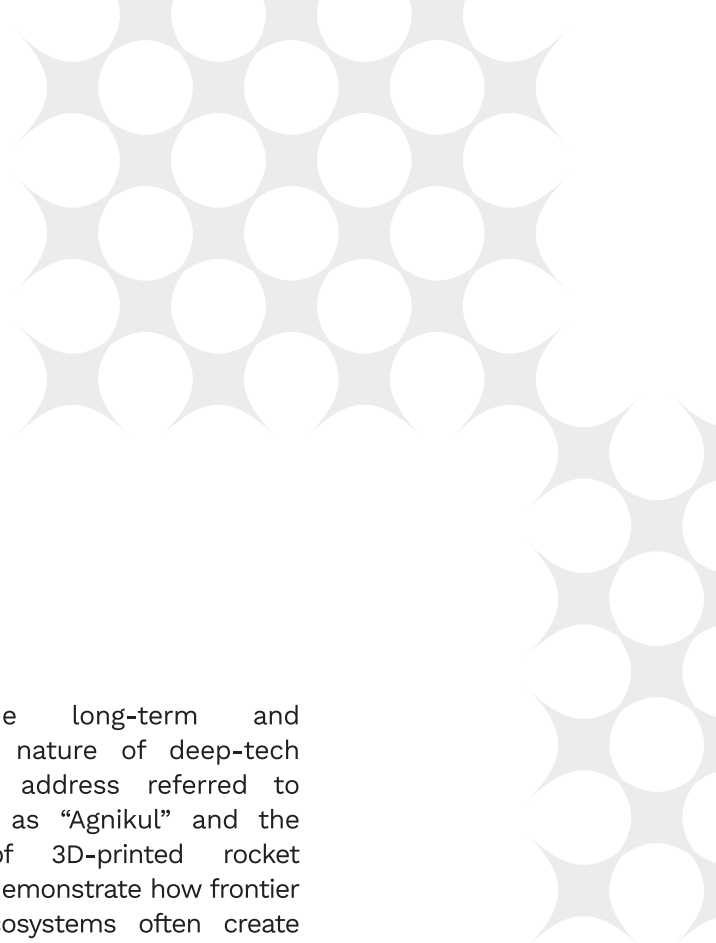
institutional support before achieving commercial scalability. The discussion therefore underscored the need for innovation financing ecosystems capable of supporting long-duration research, experimentation, and intellectual property creation rather than prioritising only short-term commercial returns.

The address also highlighted the “Network of Networks” principle as a foundational institutional strategy underpinning Tamil Nadu’s innovation ecosystem. Ms. Vanitha explained that the state’s approach seeks to avoid duplication of infrastructure and fragmented innovation silos by enabling shared access to laboratories, testbeds, research ecosystems, Centres of Excellence, and domain expertise across institutions and regions. In this context, she referred to collaborations involving academic institutions, research parks, incubators, industry stakeholders, and regional innovation ecosystems, including partnerships with IIT Madras Research Park, IIT Madras Pravartak, T-Hub, Kerala Startup Mission, and the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM).

Ms. Vanitha further emphasised the importance of geographically distributed innovation ecosystems extending beyond Chennai and other metropolitan centres. Referring to regional innovation hubs established across cities such as Coimbatore, Madurai, Salem, Tirunelveli,

and Hosur, she highlighted efforts to align regional innovation ecosystems with existing industrial and institutional strengths, including semiconductor ecosystems, manufacturing clusters, and emerging space technology infrastructure. The address underscored the importance of democratising access to deep-tech ecosystems and ensuring that students, innovators, startups, and researchers from Tier-2 and Tier-3 regions are able to participate meaningfully in advanced technology sectors.

A major theme of the discussion concerned the transition from research generation to technology commercialisation. Ms. Vanitha observed that one of the principal bottlenecks within India’s innovation ecosystem lies in the failure to convert research outputs and patents into deployable products and commercially viable enterprises. In this regard, she highlighted iTNT’s role in facilitating technology transfer, idea validation, and industry problem-solving through initiatives such as the Beacon programme and technology-transfer platforms. She also referred to the “JIXA” (Japan Innovation Exchange and Collaboration) platform, which maps researchers, patents, and innovation assets in order to strengthen commercialisation pathways and collaboration between academia and industry.



The address further emphasised the importance of strengthening horizontal AI and deep-tech skilling across the broader educational ecosystem. Ms. Vanitha highlighted the need to move beyond conventional engineering-focused training models and expand computational thinking, AI literacy, and domain-specific technology education across arts, science, mathematics, and commerce institutions. Referring to Tamil Nadu's extensive higher education ecosystem, she argued that the state's demographic and educational scale creates opportunities to develop a broad-based innovation workforce capable of supporting deep-tech adoption across sectors rather than limiting AI ecosystems to specialised engineering domains alone.

The discussion also highlighted the strategic importance of aligning state-level innovation ecosystems with broader national missions and developmental objectives, including the India AI Mission and emerging national deep-tech frameworks. Ms. Vanitha emphasised that state-level innovation ecosystems must function not in isolation, but as execution and implementation layers supporting broader national technological priorities relating to sovereign AI capacity, semiconductor ecosystems, quantum technologies, and advanced manufacturing.

Illustrating the long-term and market-creating nature of deep-tech innovation, the address referred to examples such as "Agnikul" and the development of 3D-printed rocket technologies to demonstrate how frontier technological ecosystems often create entirely new industrial and commercial categories rather than merely responding to existing market demand.

Concluding her address, Ms. Vanitha emphasised that India's long-term technological competitiveness will depend upon its ability to move from being primarily a supplier of skilled services and talent towards becoming an owner and producer of intellectual property, frontier technologies, and globally scalable innovation ecosystems. She underscored the importance of sustained institutional coordination, distributed innovation infrastructure, long-term financing ecosystems, and collaborative public-private-academic partnerships in achieving this transition.



*Honouring Prof. B. Ravindran
and Lt. Gen. Karanbir Singh Brar*



KEY DISCUSSIONS AND PANEL SUMMARIES

PANEL 1

Sovereign AI and Opportunities

SPEAKERS:

Lt. Gen. KARBANBIR SINGH BRAR PVSM, AVSM (RETD.)

Distinguished Strategic Advisor, IIT Madras, Pravartak

Dr. GAURAV RAINA

Professor of Electrical Engineering, IIT Madras



Speakers Lt. Gen. Karanbir Singh Brar and Dr. Gaurav Raina

MAIN THEMES DISCUSSED

The first panel discussion examined the relationship between artificial intelligence, technological sovereignty, institutional resilience, and national strategic capacity in the context of India's long-term developmental and security objectives. A recurring theme throughout the discussion was that AI must no longer be understood merely as an isolated technological tool or productivity enhancer, but rather as a foundational layer shaping governance systems, economic competitiveness, national security, institutional decision-making, and sovereign state capacity itself.

The discussion highlighted the growing transformation of AI from an assistive technology into an infrastructural and systemic layer influencing public administration, warfare, intelligence, economic systems, and social organisation. In this context, the panel repeatedly emphasised that contemporary geopolitical competition increasingly extends beyond conventional territorial conflict into continuous technological, informational, cyber, and cognitive domains. The discussion underscored that the “data layer”, comprising datasets, models, compute systems, surveillance infrastructure, real-time analytics, and information architectures is emerging as a critical determinant of strategic advantage and institutional resilience.

A central focus of the panel concerned the need for India to develop sovereign technological capacity across the full AI stack, including semiconductors, compute infrastructure, operating systems, databases, software ecosystems, foundational models, and digital public infrastructure. The panel highlighted the strategic risks associated with dependence on foreign-controlled technological systems and external AI infrastructures, particularly in contexts involving critical decision-making systems, cybersecurity, intelligence, and

strategic communications. The discussion repeatedly underscored that meaningful AI governance ultimately depends upon institutional and technological self-reliance, including the ability to govern systems, datasets, and infrastructures that remain domestically controlled and operationally auditable.

Prof. Gaurav Raina emphasised that AI should not be understood narrowly through the lens of standalone models or applications, but rather as an integrated “operating system” governing the efficiency, coordination, and responsiveness of downstream institutional and decision-making architectures.

He observed that the principal bottleneck in AI deployment is increasingly not the sophistication of models themselves, but the design, integration, orchestration, and governance of entire AI ecosystems. In this regard, the discussion highlighted the growing importance of system-level governance frameworks capable of integrating data systems, models, operational infrastructure, accountability mechanisms, and human oversight into coherent institutional architectures.

The panel also examined the implications of AI systems for governance and institutional design. A significant theme emerging from the discussion concerned the limitations of conventional hierarchical and bureaucratic organisational structures in adapting to rapidly evolving AI-enabled environments. The panel highlighted the concept of “native AI organisations” or “decision-native” institutional architectures characterised by flatter operational structures, reduced informational bottlenecks, faster decision-making systems, and greater integration between leadership, operational execution, and AI-enabled

analytical systems. The discussion suggested that AI systems are increasingly reshaping not only technological processes, but also the internal logic through which institutions coordinate information, make decisions, and execute policy.

A major focus of the discussion concerned the relationship between governance systems and probabilistic AI architectures. The panel observed that traditional governance and legal systems are often structured around deterministic assumptions, whereas AI systems inherently operate through probabilistic outputs, uncertainty, and dynamic adaptation. In this context, the discussion highlighted the limitations of relying solely on static and policy-driven regulatory approaches for governing rapidly evolving AI ecosystems. Instead, the panel repeatedly emphasised the need for “protocol-driven governance” frameworks in which trust, auditability, explainability, accountability, and human override mechanisms are embedded directly into technological infrastructure and system architecture.

Drawing parallels with India’s Digital Public Infrastructure frameworks such as UPI and IMPS, the discussion highlighted the importance of engineering trust directly into interoperable digital systems rather than relying exclusively upon external regulatory enforcement. The panel therefore underscored the need for governance architectures capable of ensuring “auditability by design” through embedded safeguards, interoperable standards, operational traceability, and continuous monitoring mechanisms.



“The bottleneck is not the model; it is the system.”

- Prof. Gaurav Raina

The panel also examined the broader societal implications of increasingly AI-mediated decision systems. Prof. Raina highlighted concerns relating to “cognitive inequality,” referring to the uneven distribution of access to advanced AI systems, high-quality datasets, compute capacity, and institutional decision-support systems. The discussion emphasised that AI governance must remain fundamentally human-centric and responsive to the needs of low-agency users, including students, patients, farmers, workers, and ordinary citizens who may lack meaningful mechanisms to question or challenge automated decisions. In this regard, the panel repeatedly highlighted the importance of ensuring transparency, explainability, recourse, and meaningful human oversight within AI-enabled systems.

The discussion further examined the growing significance of cognitive and informational dimensions of modern conflict.

Lt. Gen. Karanbir Singh Brar highlighted how control over data flows, information systems, satellite imagery, digital narratives, and real-time intelligence architectures increasingly shapes geopolitical influence and strategic outcomes.

The panel observed that modern conflict environments now involve continuous competition across cyber, informational, economic, and cognitive domains rather than remaining confined to episodic battlefield engagements. In this context, the discussion highlighted the strategic importance of sovereign data ecosystems, indigenous intelligence infrastructure, and domestic AI capabilities capable of reducing vulnerabilities arising from external technological dependence.

A further operational concern raised during the panel related to the economic sustainability of AI deployment at scale. The discussion highlighted the growing “intelligence cost” associated with advanced AI systems, including compute expenditure, infrastructure costs, and dependence on expensive frontier AI models and external Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). In this regard, the panel underscored the importance of developing indigenous optimisation frameworks, lightweight models, and domain-specific AI architectures capable of reducing long-term technological and fiscal dependence while supporting scalable deployment across public systems and strategic sectors.

The panel also highlighted the importance of strengthening India’s deep-tech and defence innovation ecosystems. In this context, the discussion examined proposals for dedicated strategic technology institutions and Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)-style innovation frameworks capable of supporting long-duration research and development in areas including defence technologies, semiconductors, AI infrastructure, advanced computing, and cybersecurity systems. The discussion further emphasised the importance of strengthening interdisciplinary technological capacity, particularly through greater integration of computational thinking, systems engineering, mathematics, and physics into India’s broader innovation ecosystem.

CONSENSUS POINTS

A strong consensus emerged that AI governance can no longer be treated solely as a question of regulating technological applications. Rather, the

panel broadly converged on the view that AI increasingly constitutes a foundational layer shaping state capacity, governance systems, economic resilience, strategic autonomy, and national security.

The speakers also broadly agreed on:

- The need for sovereign technological capacity across the full AI stack;
- The importance of reducing dependence on foreign-controlled technological infrastructure;
- The limitations of static and purely policy-driven governance frameworks;
- The importance of embedding trust, accountability, and auditability directly into digital systems;
- And the need for human-centric governance frameworks capable of preventing “cognitive inequality” and ensuring meaningful recourse for affected users.

The panel further converged on the importance of strengthening India’s deep-tech and defence innovation ecosystems through long-term investments in infrastructure, indigenous R&D, interdisciplinary technical capacity, and institutional innovation frameworks.



“Warfare is no longer episodic;
it is continuous.”

- Lt. Gen. Karanbir Singh Brar

DIVERGENT VIEWS

While the panel broadly converged on the need for sovereign and human-centric AI governance, differences emerged regarding the principal strategic orientation of India's AI ecosystem.

Lt. Gen. Brar approached AI governance primarily through the lens of national security, strategic autonomy, cognitive warfare, defence preparedness, and technological sovereignty. His interventions focused on the geopolitical consequences of technological dependence, the role of AI in modern warfare, and the need for sovereign control over strategic technological infrastructure.

Prof. Raina, while also emphasising sovereignty and institutional resilience, placed comparatively greater emphasis on governance architecture, institutional redesign, protocol-driven trust systems, accountability mechanisms, and the societal implications of AI-enabled decision systems. His interventions repeatedly focused on human-centric governance, probabilistic systems, explainability, recourse, and the risks associated with “cognitive inequality.”

The panel also reflected a broader tension between conventional deterministic governance frameworks and the probabilistic nature of AI systems. While the discussion broadly supported protocol-driven governance

architectures, it also highlighted the institutional and regulatory challenges associated with governing systems characterised by uncertainty, adaptation, and dynamic outputs.

Differences also emerged regarding the balance between individual rights-centric frameworks and developmental or socially leveraged data governance approaches. While the panel broadly supported public-interest and developmental deployment models, concerns were also raised regarding the challenge of ensuring meaningful social legitimacy, informed consent, and adequate safeguards within highly unequal digital ecosystems characterised by uneven literacy and technological awareness.

The panel further reflected tensions between rapid technological deployment and institutional preparedness. While participants broadly supported adaptive and flexible governance approaches, the discussion also highlighted concerns regarding implementation gaps, institutional coordination challenges, and the difficulty of maintaining effective oversight within rapidly evolving technological ecosystems.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUGGESTED

The panel generated several broad legal, institutional, and operational recommendations relating to responsible AI governance in India:

Strengthen sovereign technological capabilities across the full AI stack, including semiconductors, compute infrastructure, foundational models, operating systems, databases, and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

Develop protocol-driven governance architectures embedding auditability, explainability, traceability, accountability, and human override mechanisms directly into AI systems

Strengthen domestic optimisation frameworks, lightweight AI models, and domain-specific systems capable of reducing long-term dependence on expensive frontier AI infrastructures

Build “decision-native” and AI-enabled institutional architectures capable of supporting faster, interoperable, and data-driven governance systems

Expand investments in deep-tech innovation ecosystems and strategic R&D institutions, including long-duration research frameworks in AI, semiconductors, cybersecurity, and defence technologies

Strengthen interdisciplinary technological capacity through greater integration of computational thinking, systems engineering, mathematics, and physics into innovation ecosystems

Ensure that AI governance frameworks remain human-centric and responsive to vulnerable or low-agency populations through transparency, explainability, recourse, and meaningful human oversight mechanisms

And strengthen sovereign data ecosystems, intelligence infrastructures, and domestic AI capabilities in order to improve strategic resilience and reduce vulnerabilities arising from foreign technological dependence.

PANEL 2

Legal and Regulatory Frameworks for Responsible AI

MODERATOR:

Dr. VINI SINGH

*Associate Professor of Law, Vertical
Head- AI, Data Protection & Technology
Law, Dhirubhai Ambani University,
School of Law*

SPEAKERS:

Ms. SUDHA HOODA

Head of Legal, Compliance and Corporate Governance

Mr. ANIRUDH RASTOGI

Founder, Ikigai Law and Business Consulting

Ms. AKSHAYA SURESH

Partner, JSA Advocates & Solicitors

Mr. PARISHRUT JASSAL

Founder & CEO, Govern AI



Moderator Dr. Vini Singh and the panelists discussing frameworks for responsible AI

MAIN THEMES DISCUSSED

The second panel discussion examined the evolving legal and regulatory architecture required for responsible AI governance in India, with particular focus on balancing innovation, accountability, public trust, and institutional preparedness. A recurring theme throughout the discussion was that India's AI governance trajectory must remain responsive to the country's socio-economic realities, institutional capacities, and technology ecosystem rather than directly replicating governance models developed in other jurisdictions.

The panel broadly situated current global AI governance approaches within three broad models: the highly prescriptive and risk-based European Union framework, the comparatively fragmented and market-driven United States approach, and India's emerging "middle path" model characterised by principle-based and context-sensitive governance. The discussion repeatedly emphasised that India's present governance strategy consciously avoids excessively rigid ex ante regulatory frameworks that could impose disproportionate compliance burdens upon startups, technology services firms, and innovation ecosystems. Instead, the panel highlighted India's preference for leveraging existing legal and institutional mechanisms, including the BNS, Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules (IT Rules), and the DPDP Act to address specific harms such as deepfakes, synthetic media, digital impersonation, and privacy violations.

A major focus of the discussion concerned the transition from broad ethical principles towards operational governance mechanisms.

The panel repeatedly emphasised that concepts such as fairness, accountability, transparency, and safety remain insufficient unless translated into concrete institutional "protocols" governing AI development, deployment, oversight, and recourse.

In this context, the discussion highlighted the need for structured implementation frameworks incorporating documentation standards, auditability, human oversight, data provenance systems, deployment safeguards, and institutional accountability mechanisms.

The panel also examined accountability across the AI lifecycle. Participants highlighted that responsibility for AI harms cannot be concentrated solely upon model developers or end-users, but must instead be distributed across infrastructure providers, data curators, model developers, deployers, integrators, and institutional users. The discussion therefore emphasised the importance of "layered accountability" frameworks capable of tracing responsibility across procurement, training, deployment, and operational decision-making processes.

Another major theme concerned the relationship between explainability, human oversight, and legal recourse. The panel repeatedly highlighted the limitations of "black box" AI systems, particularly in contexts involving consequential decisions relating to healthcare, finance, welfare, and access to public services. In this regard, the discussion underscored the importance of ensuring meaningful explainability,

transparency, and “human-in-the-loop” safeguards within AI-enabled systems. The panel also examined the possibility of incorporating rights relating to explanation and human intervention into India’s evolving digital governance frameworks.

The discussion further examined significant institutional and implementation challenges associated with AI governance. A recurring concern related to what participants described as the “regulatory capacity gap,” referring to the mismatch between the speed of technological development and the slower pace of institutional adaptation within regulatory and bureaucratic systems. Participants highlighted concerns that conventional governance systems frequently lack the technical expertise, implementation guidance, and operational agility necessary to supervise rapidly evolving AI ecosystems effectively. In this context, examples from the drone sector’s Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) certification challenges were referenced to illustrate how insufficient technical guidance and delayed certification processes can stall innovation and create prolonged regulatory uncertainty.

The panel also addressed the broader societal implications of AI deployment within a context of uneven digital literacy and infrastructure access.



“It would be beneficial to India to have a risk-based regulatory framework.”; “Layered accountability has to be adopted.”

- Ms. Sudha Hooda

Participants repeatedly highlighted concerns that AI systems may deepen existing inequalities if governance frameworks fail to account for disparities in literacy, accessibility, and technological awareness.

‘The discussion therefore emphasised that responsible AI governance in India must remain fundamentally human-centric and responsive to vulnerable or low-agency populations who may lack the institutional or technical capacity to question automated decisions.

Several operational deployment risks associated with AI systems were also examined. The panel discussed challenges such as “pilot purge” failures, where systems perform effectively within controlled testing environments but fail during real-world deployment, as well as the limitations of superficial “wrapper” models dependent entirely upon external foundational AI systems without meaningful proprietary capability or resilience. The discussion further highlighted concerns relating to post-facto correction mechanisms in safety-critical domains, emphasising that reactive correction may remain insufficient in sectors where erroneous decisions can result in irreversible harm.

CONSENSUS POINTS

A broad consensus emerged that India should avoid directly replicating highly prescriptive and compliance-intensive AI regulatory models that may constrain innovation and disproportionately burden emerging technology ecosystems. Instead, the panel broadly converged on the need for a principle-based, sector-specific, and operationally flexible governance framework suited to India’s developmental realities and institutional capacities.

The speakers also broadly agreed on:

- The importance of translating broad ethical principles into concrete governance protocols;
- The need for layered accountability across the AI lifecycle;
- The importance of human oversight in high-impact and safety-critical systems;
- The need for explainability, transparency, auditability, and traceability within AI systems;
- And the importance of strengthening institutional and regulatory capacity in order to address rapidly evolving technological ecosystems.

The panel also broadly converged on the importance of developing governance architectures resembling India's Digital Public Infrastructure models, particularly systems where auditability, traceability, accountability, and user recourse are embedded directly into operational infrastructure.



“AI is here... it's just that it's not equally distributed.”

- Mr. Anirudh Rastogi

“[India is] still figuring out what this beast of an AI is. In India we have taken a reactive approach... one that is harms-based.”

- Ms. Akshaya Suresh

“Accessibility of AI tech across societal strata must be thought of when thinking about AI governance.”

- Mr. Parishrut Jassal

DIVERGENT VIEWS

While the panel broadly converged on the need for flexible and adaptive AI governance, differences emerged regarding the pace, form, and enforceability of regulatory intervention. One area of divergence concerned the question of regulatory timing and institutional responsiveness. Some participants viewed India's current “wait and watch” or harm-based governance posture as a deliberate and strategically intelligent approach that allows institutions to better understand evolving technologies before imposing rigid regulatory structures. Others cautioned that prolonged regulatory minimalism may create the risk of “regulatory overcorrection” following a major crisis, cyber incident, or large-scale AI-related harm.

Differences also emerged regarding the effectiveness of regulatory sandboxes and controlled testing environments. While some participants supported sandbox approaches as important mechanisms for experimentation and governance learning, others highlighted concerns that rapidly evolving markets may outpace sandbox timelines, creating “regulatory lag” in which technologies deployed at scale move faster than institutional oversight systems.

A further area of discussion concerned accountability mechanisms and institutional liability. While some participants emphasised contractual safeguards and distributed operational accountability, others advocated stronger fiduciary and professional responsibility frameworks, including proposals for “AI Fiduciary Boards” or governance structures assigning personal accountability obligations to certified AI officers analogous to professional regulatory systems governing medical or chartered accounting professions.

The panel also reflected broader tensions between innovation-oriented flexibility and safety-oriented regulation, particularly in balancing startup growth,

technological competitiveness, public trust, and citizen protections within rapidly evolving AI ecosystems.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUGGESTED

The panel generated several broad legal, institutional, and operational recommendations relating to responsible AI governance in India:

Continue pursuing a principle-based and sector-specific governance framework while avoiding excessively rigid and innovation-constraining regulatory models

Strengthen operational governance mechanisms capable of translating ethical principles into enforceable protocols and measurable standards

Incorporate stronger explainability and “right to explanation” safeguards within digital governance frameworks relating to automated decision-making systems

Mandate meaningful “human-in-the-loop” oversight mechanisms in safety-critical sectors including healthcare, finance, and public administration

Establish stronger documentation standards relating to data provenance, model development, deployment practices, validation systems, and audit trails

Develop layered accountability frameworks capable of distributing responsibility across the AI lifecycle, including infrastructure providers, developers, deployers, and institutional users

Strengthen regulatory and institutional capacity through technical skilling, specialised guidance frameworks, interdisciplinary expertise, and sector-specific implementation support

Encourage interoperable and “auditability-by-design” governance architectures modelled on trusted Digital Public Infrastructure systems

Explore the creation of structured professional accountability or fiduciary governance mechanisms for AI oversight and compliance

And strengthen AI literacy, digital literacy, and public awareness initiatives in order to reduce exclusion and ensure broader accessibility to AI-enabled systems and service



Participant engagement during the panel discussions

PANEL 3

Towards an Inclusive Indian Model for Global AI Governance

MODERATOR:

Ms. DEEPA KARTHYKEYAN

*Co-Founder & Partner, Athena
Infonomics*

SPEAKERS:

Ms. SHREEPPRIYA GOPALAKRISHNAN

*Deputy General Manager, Policy and Communications,
India AI, MeitY, Government of India*

Mr. JAGAN NATHAN VAMAN

*Technology Advisor & Board Member, TransAltus
Technologies Pvt. Ltd.*

Mr. VIBHAV MITTAL

Associate Partner, Anand & Anand, New Delhi



Moderator Ms. Deepa Karthykeyan with speakers Mr. Jagan, Ms. Shreeppriya, and Mr. Vibhav Mittal

MAIN THEMES DISCUSSED

The third panel discussion examined the contours of an inclusive Indian model for global AI governance, focusing on how India can develop governance frameworks that remain technologically robust, operationally viable, socially inclusive, and responsive to the country's developmental realities. A recurring theme throughout the discussion was that India's governance approach must move beyond binary debates between innovation and regulation and instead develop an ecosystem-oriented governance model rooted in accessibility, inclusion, institutional accountability, and developmental priorities.

The discussion repeatedly emphasised that AI should not become an exclusive technological resource concentrated within elite institutional or urban ecosystems, but rather function as a broadly accessible public infrastructure capable of serving diverse social and economic groups, including farmers, low-income populations, and linguistically diverse communities. In this regard, the panel highlighted the need to ensure that AI systems remain responsive to India's demographic complexity, multilingual environment, and uneven digital literacy landscape.

A major focus of the panel concerned the AI lifecycle, including data collection, design, training, evaluation, deployment, and monitoring, and the governance gaps emerging across different stages of AI development. Participants highlighted that while deployment and application layers receive increasing policy attention, the "training" phase remains comparatively under-governed despite its central role in shaping model behaviour, embedded biases, and downstream decision-making systems. The discussion repeatedly underscored that many foundational models are trained upon datasets disproportionately reflecting urban, English-speaking, or technologically privileged populations,

thereby creating risks of exclusion and representational imbalance for marginalised communities.

The panel also examined several structural tensions complicating AI governance in India and globally. These included:

- "Actor alignment" challenges arising from differing incentives between developers, deployers, regulators, and users;
- "Recursive complexity," referring to situations where AI systems increasingly become responsible for monitoring or evaluating other AI systems;
- "Interpretability gaps" involving limited visibility into model reasoning processes;
- And "pace asymmetry," referring to the widening gap between rapidly evolving technological systems and comparatively slower legal, regulatory, and institutional adaptation processes.

A significant theme emerging throughout the discussion concerned the distinction between "regulation" and broader "governance" ecosystems.

The panel repeatedly emphasised that AI governance cannot rely exclusively upon statutory regulation and instead requires what participants described as a "law plus" framework integrating legislation, technical standards, institutional oversight, voluntary commitments, social norms, audit mechanisms, and operational safeguards.

In this context, the MANAV framework, i.e., Moral, Accountable, National Sovereignty, Accessible, and Valid, was discussed as a broad governance architecture intended to integrate ethical principles, technological

sovereignty, accessibility, and institutional legitimacy into AI deployment ecosystems.

The discussion also explored India's evolving approach towards data governance and developmental deployment models. Participants highlighted that India's governance framework differs from both market-centric approaches and highly individualised rights-centric frameworks by increasingly treating data as a developmental and strategic resource capable of supporting inclusive public infrastructure and welfare systems when governed within appropriate safeguards. In this context, the panel repeatedly highlighted the role of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), multilingual AI systems, and interoperable governance architectures in enabling wider societal access to AI-enabled services.



“How [do we] make AI flow like a river rather than being bottled up for the elites?”

The panel further examined concerns relating to inclusion, representational fairness, and operational exclusion within AI systems. Several examples highlighted how AI systems trained upon incomplete or socially unrepresentative datasets may unintentionally marginalise vulnerable populations. The discussion particularly emphasised the importance of ensuring that AI governance frameworks remain responsive to local knowledge systems, cultural contexts, linguistic diversity, and communities lacking formal institutional identifiers or technological agency.

Another major theme concerned India's strategic position within global AI governance ecosystems. Participants repeatedly highlighted the limitations associated with directly regulating global

foundational AI model developers and instead emphasised the need for India to focus on application-layer governance, sovereign model development, multilingual systems, and operational deployment frameworks over which domestic institutions retain greater influence and accountability. The panel therefore underscored the importance of developing indigenous Small Language Models (SLMs), sovereign datasets, and locally contextualised governance architectures aligned with Indian and broader Global South realities.

CONSENSUS POINTS

A broad consensus emerged that India's AI governance framework must remain inclusive, development-oriented, multilingual, and context-sensitive rather than replicating governance models developed for significantly different socio-economic and institutional environments.

The speakers also broadly agreed on:

- The need to move beyond the binary framing of “innovation versus regulation”;
- The importance of integrating governance safeguards across the entire AI lifecycle;
- The strategic importance of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) as a governance backbone;
- The need for participatory and human-centric governance models;
- And the importance of sovereign and multilingual AI ecosystems capable of reflecting local realities, dialects, and developmental priorities.

The panel also broadly converged on the proposition that India's contribution to global AI governance may lie in developing governance architectures optimised for scale, inclusion, resource constraints, and societal diversity within Global South contexts.



“Data is not a forbidden fruit... [rather] the data dividend is a precious resource.”

“Who watches the watchmen? [The risk of] recursive complexity.”

“Consent as a concept often does not have social legitimacy in this framework.”

DIVERGENT VIEWS

While the panel broadly converged on the need for an inclusive and sovereignty-oriented governance framework, differences emerged regarding the principal focus and operational mechanics of governance systems.

One area of divergence concerned the relationship between foundational model governance and application-level governance. Some participants emphasised the practical limitations associated with regulating global foundational model developers and therefore advocated prioritising governance at the application and deployment layers where domestic

regulators possess greater institutional leverage. Others highlighted the long-term risks associated with dependence upon externally developed foundational systems and argued for stronger investments in sovereign model development and indigenous AI infrastructure.

Differences also emerged regarding the balance between individual rights-centric frameworks and developmental or socially leveraged data governance approaches. While the panel broadly supported public-interest and developmental deployment models, concerns were also raised regarding the challenge of ensuring meaningful social legitimacy, informed consent, and adequate safeguards within highly unequal digital ecosystems characterised by uneven literacy and technological awareness.

The panel further reflected tensions between rapid technological deployment and institutional preparedness. While participants broadly supported adaptive and flexible governance approaches, the discussion also highlighted concerns regarding implementation gaps, institutional coordination challenges, and the difficulty of maintaining effective oversight within rapidly evolving technological ecosystems.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUGGESTED

The panel generated several broad legal, institutional, and operational recommendations relating to responsible AI governance in India:

Continue pursuing a principle-based and sector-specific governance framework while avoiding excessively rigid and innovation-constraining regulatory models

Strengthen operational governance mechanisms capable of translating ethical principles into enforceable protocols and measurable standards

Incorporate stronger explainability and “right to explanation” safeguards within digital governance frameworks relating to automated decision-making systems

Mandate meaningful “human-in-the-loop” oversight mechanisms in safety-critical sectors including healthcare, finance, and public administration

Establish stronger documentation standards relating to data provenance, model development, deployment practices, validation systems, and audit trails

Develop layered accountability frameworks capable of distributing responsibility across the AI lifecycle, including infrastructure providers, developers, deployers, and institutional users

Strengthen regulatory and institutional capacity through technical skilling, specialised guidance frameworks, interdisciplinary expertise, and sector-specific implementation support

Encourage interoperable and “auditability-by-design” governance architectures modelled on trusted Digital Public Infrastructure systems

Explore the creation of structured professional accountability or fiduciary governance mechanisms for AI oversight and compliance

And strengthen AI literacy, digital literacy, and public awareness initiatives in order to reduce exclusion and ensure broader accessibility to AI-enabled systems and service

SPECIAL ADDRESS & CONCLUDING REMARKS



Prof. (Dr.) AVINASH DADHICH

Founding Director, Dhirubhai Ambani University – School of Law

In his concluding remarks and vote of thanks, Prof. Avinash Dadhich reflected on the conference as part of a broader and continuing effort to develop inclusive, multidisciplinary, and operationally grounded approaches towards AI governance. He highlighted the significance of the collaboration between the Deccan Centre for International Relations, IIT Madras Pravartak, academic institutions, industry stakeholders, and policy practitioners in creating sustained platforms for dialogue on emerging technological governance challenges.

Prof. Dadhich emphasised that AI governance cannot be approached through isolated institutional or

disciplinary perspectives alone. Drawing upon the analogy of the “blind men and the elephant,” he observed that fragmented understandings of AI among technologists, legal experts, bureaucrats, and security practitioners risk producing incomplete governance responses unless integrated within a broader and more holistic framework.

A major theme of the address concerned the importance of balancing technological adoption with public awareness, safety, and social preparedness. Referring to the experience of social media adoption and the growth of cyber-enabled fraud ecosystems, Prof. Dadhich cautioned against deploying transformative



Honouring Prof. (Dr.) Avinash Dadhich

technologies without simultaneously strengthening institutional safeguards, digital literacy, and public awareness frameworks. In this regard, he emphasised that AI governance must remain attentive not only to innovation and deployment, but also to societal vulnerabilities, misinformation risks, financial fraud, and the protection of vulnerable populations.

The address also highlighted the importance of regional language ecosystems and inclusive technological access. Referring to initiatives such as Bhashini, Prof. Dadhich underscored the potential of multilingual AI systems to reduce barriers arising from language and digital access, particularly for rural and non-English-speaking populations. He observed that AI governance frameworks must remain responsive to India's linguistic diversity and developmental realities in order to ensure broader societal participation in emerging digital ecosystems.

Prof. Dadhich further emphasised the importance of strengthening awareness and “safety literacy” relating to AI systems, particularly among students, elderly populations, and digitally vulnerable communities. He cautioned against excessive reliance on “frictionless” technological systems lacking sufficient human oversight, debate, or critical engagement, particularly within educational and social environments.

Concluding his remarks, Prof. Dadhich reiterated the importance of collaborative and multi-stakeholder approaches towards AI governance involving government, academia, research institutions, industry, and civil society. He emphasised that the conference should be viewed not as a standalone event, but as part of an ongoing process aimed at translating governance principles into practical and socially responsive implementation frameworks capable of supporting inclusive and responsible AI development in India.

OVERALL TAKEAWAYS FROM PANEL DISCUSSIONS

A central insight emerging across the conference was that AI governance can no longer be understood narrowly as a question of regulating technological applications. Rather, AI increasingly functions as a foundational layer shaping governance systems, institutional decision-making, economic competitiveness, strategic autonomy, public administration, and social organisation.

The discussions collectively reflected a shift from viewing AI governance as a purely legal or ethical exercise towards understanding it as a broader institutional, infrastructural, and strategic challenge. In this regard, participants repeatedly emphasised that governance frameworks must extend beyond abstract principles and become operationally embedded within technological systems, deployment architectures, institutional processes, and Digital Public Infrastructure.

A recurring theme across sessions was the importance of balancing innovation with safeguards. Participants broadly supported adaptive and principle-based governance approaches capable of enabling innovation while ensuring accountability, explainability, transparency, privacy protection, cybersecurity resilience, and meaningful human oversight. At the same time, the conference repeatedly highlighted the limitations of excessively rigid or prematurely prescriptive regulatory approaches, particularly in rapidly evolving technological ecosystems.

The conference also underscored the importance of sovereign technological capacity.

Multiple sessions highlighted that meaningful AI governance ultimately depends upon domestic control over critical technological infrastructure, including semiconductors, compute systems, datasets, foundational models, cloud ecosystems, and cybersecurity infrastructure.

Discussions repeatedly linked AI sovereignty with broader questions of strategic autonomy, institutional resilience, and national security.

Another major insight concerned the growing importance of “protocol-driven governance” and “auditability-by-design.” Participants observed that conventional governance systems built around static rules and deterministic assumptions may prove inadequate for governing probabilistic and adaptive AI systems. In this context, the conference emphasised the importance of embedding trust, accountability, traceability, and explainability directly into technological and institutional architectures.

The discussions further highlighted that India’s AI governance framework must remain responsive to domestic socio-economic realities, including uneven digital literacy, infrastructural

disparities, linguistic diversity, and varying levels of institutional capacity. Participants repeatedly emphasised that governance frameworks imported directly from other jurisdictions may not fully address the operational realities and developmental priorities of India and the broader Global South.

The conference also reflected strong concern regarding exclusion, cognitive inequality, and representational imbalance within AI systems. Participants highlighted the risks arising from AI ecosystems trained predominantly on urban, English-speaking, or technologically privileged datasets and repeatedly emphasised the need for representative data practices, multilingual systems, participatory governance models, and inclusive deployment architectures.

A final cross-cutting insight concerned the need for sustained multi-stakeholder collaboration involving government, academia, industry, research institutions, legal experts, and civil society. Participants broadly agreed that AI governance cannot be effectively managed through isolated institutional approaches and instead requires continuous coordination across technical, legal, economic, and societal domains.

The discussions across the conference strongly aligned with the broader principles reflected in the MANAV framework, i.e., Moral, Accountable, National Sovereignty, Accessible, and Valid, which emerged as a recurring conceptual anchor connecting ethical governance, operational accountability, technological sovereignty, inclusion, and institutional legitimacy.

THE “MORAL” DIMENSION

was reflected in repeated discussions concerning fairness, bias mitigation, ethical deployment, human-centric governance, and the broader societal consequences of AI-enabled decision systems. Participants repeatedly emphasised that governance frameworks must remain attentive to vulnerable populations, social inequalities, and the need for meaningful human oversight in high-impact domains.

THE “ACCOUNTABLE” PILLAR

was reflected in extensive discussions concerning explainability, traceability, layered accountability, auditability, deployment-phase responsibility, and lifecycle governance mechanisms extending from data collection and model training to deployment, monitoring, and post-deployment oversight.

THE “NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY” DIMENSION

emerged prominently across discussions relating to sovereign AI ecosystems, domestic technological capacity, semiconductors, Digital Public Infrastructure, indigenous foundational models, strategic autonomy, and the risks associated with dependence on foreign-controlled technological infrastructure.

THE “ACCESSIBLE” PILLAR

was reflected in discussions concerning multilingual AI systems, Digital Public Infrastructure, representative datasets, regional inclusion, participatory governance models, and the need to ensure that AI ecosystems remain accessible beyond urban and elite institutional environments.

Finally,

THE “VALID” DIMENSION

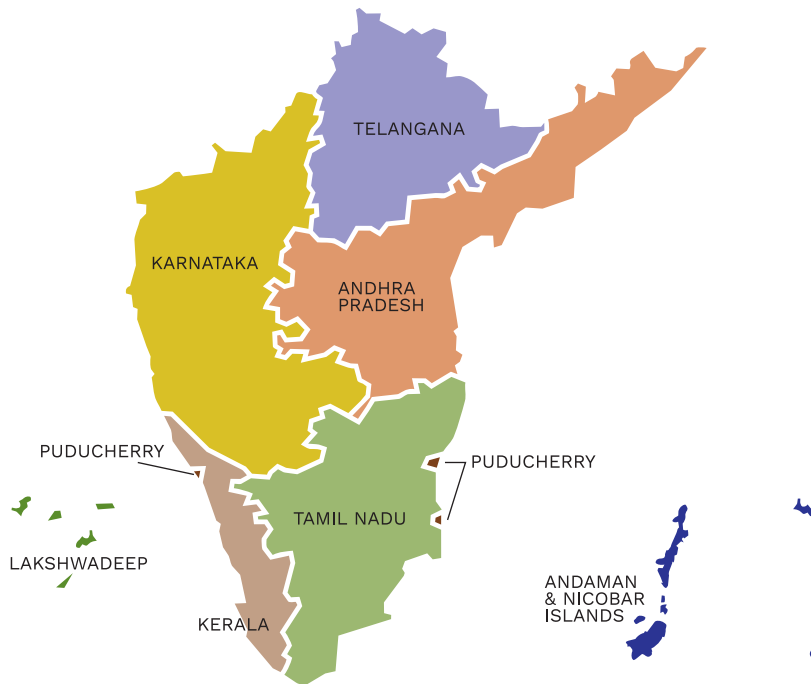
was reflected in repeated emphasis on operational governance, evidence-based oversight, trustworthy deployment architectures, institutional preparedness, interoperability, testing frameworks, AI incident reporting systems, and the need for technically robust and socially legitimate governance mechanisms.

Collectively, the conference reinforced the proposition that India’s evolving AI governance architecture must remain simultaneously ethical, operationally implementable, strategically sovereign, inclusive, and development-oriented.



Ms. Shreepriya Gopalakrishnan addressing the audience

SOUTH INDIA-SPECIFIC PERSPECTIVES & OPPORTUNITIES



The conference highlighted several South India-specific opportunities relevant to India's broader AI governance and innovation ecosystem. Discussions repeatedly emphasised the region's strengths in higher education, engineering talent, semiconductor ecosystems, Digital Public Infrastructure, multilingual computing, deep-tech innovation, startup ecosystems, and technology-enabled public service delivery.

Tamil Nadu's Deep Tech Policy and the ecosystem initiatives led through institutions such as iTNT were highlighted as examples of state-level innovation frameworks designed to support long-term deep-tech development, technology commercialisation, and collaborative ecosystem-building. In particular, the "network-of-networks" approach discussed during the conference demonstrated the

importance of shared infrastructure, institutional coordination, and distributed innovation ecosystems extending beyond major metropolitan centres.

Participants also highlighted the significance of South India's multilingual and culturally diverse environment for the development of inclusive AI systems, particularly in the context of regional language computing, voice-based interfaces, and AI accessibility for non-English-speaking populations. Initiatives such as Bhashini and regionally contextualised AI models were repeatedly referenced as important components of broader inclusion-oriented governance strategies.

* This illustration is for representational purposes only. Geographic boundaries, distances, positions, and maritime features are not intended for navigation, legal interpretations, or precise cartographic use. This map is not to scale.



Participant engagement during the panel discussion

The discussions further emphasised the role of the Deccan region as a potential “living laboratory” for operationalising AI governance frameworks capable of balancing innovation, inclusion, Digital Public Infrastructure, and public-interest deployment models. In this regard, the conference highlighted the region’s strong ecosystem of research institutions, public-private partnerships, startups, legal academia, and governance-focused think tanks.

Several sessions also highlighted the importance of extending AI innovation ecosystems beyond major urban centres into Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities through distributed innovation hubs, regional skilling ecosystems, and broader access to research infrastructure and incubation support.

Collectively, the discussions suggested that South India may play a significant role in shaping India’s broader AI governance architecture, particularly in areas relating to multilingual AI, Digital Public Infrastructure, deep-tech innovation, public-interest technology deployment, and Global South-oriented governance models.

RECOMMENDATIONS & WAY FORWARD

Based on the discussions across the conference, the following broad recommendations and strategic directions emerged:

DEVELOP ADAPTIVE AND PRINCIPLE-BASED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS

India's AI governance framework should continue to remain adaptive, principle-based, and sector-sensitive while avoiding excessively rigid or prematurely prescriptive regulatory structures that may constrain innovation or disproportionately burden emerging ecosystems.

STRENGTHEN OPERATIONAL AND PROTOCOL-DRIVEN GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS

Governance frameworks should increasingly focus on operational implementation by embedding explainability, traceability, accountability, auditability, and human oversight directly into AI deployment architectures, Digital Public Infrastructure, and institutional systems.

BUILD SOVEREIGN TECHNOLOGICAL CAPACITY ACROSS THE AI STACK

India should strengthen domestic capabilities across semiconductors, compute infrastructure, foundational models, datasets, cloud ecosystems, cybersecurity systems, and multilingual AI architectures in order to reduce strategic dependence on foreign-controlled technological infrastructure.

STRENGTHEN LIFECYCLE GOVERNANCE AND LAYERED ACCOUNTABILITY

AI governance mechanisms should extend across the entire AI lifecycle, including data collection, training, evaluation, deployment, monitoring, and post-deployment oversight. Governance frameworks should also distribute accountability appropriately across developers, deployers, infrastructure providers, institutional users, and public agencies.



(L): His Excellency Mr. Valerii Khodzhaev, Consul General of the Russian Federation in Chennai
 (R): Andrei M. Erokhin, Attache, Economic Affairs, Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Chennai

EXPAND DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND INCLUSIVE AI ECOSYSTEMS

India should continue leveraging Digital Public Infrastructure frameworks to support scalable, interoperable, and inclusive AI deployment while ensuring broad access across linguistic, regional, and socio-economic groups.

PROMOTE MULTILINGUAL AND REPRESENTATIVE AI SYSTEMS

Investments should be strengthened in multilingual AI systems, regional language computing, representative datasets, voice-based interfaces, and locally contextualised AI models capable of addressing exclusion and representational imbalance.

STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY CAPACITY

Governments, regulators, judiciary, and public institutions should strengthen technical capacity, interdisciplinary expertise, and implementation readiness in order to address rapidly evolving AI ecosystems effectively.

DEVELOP SECTOR-SPECIFIC GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS

Sector-specific governance mechanisms should be developed for high-impact domains such as healthcare, finance, agriculture, education, defence, welfare delivery, and public administration, recognising the differing operational risks and accountability requirements across sectors.

EXPAND AI LITERACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS INITIATIVES

National and state-level efforts should strengthen AI literacy, digital literacy, cybersecurity awareness, and “safety literacy,” particularly among vulnerable populations, students, elderly users, and digitally underserved communities.

ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATORY AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE

Governance frameworks should continue incorporating participation from academia, industry, research institutions, civil society, legal experts, domain specialists, and end-users in order to ensure that governance systems remain operationally informed, socially legitimate, and responsive to real-world deployment challenges.

SUPPORT LONG-TERM DEEP-TECH AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

India should strengthen long-duration research ecosystems, public-private partnerships, deep-tech financing models, and regional innovation hubs capable of supporting sustained development in AI, semiconductors, cybersecurity, quantum technologies, and advanced computing.

POSITION INDIA AS A GOVERNANCE PATHFINDER FOR THE GLOBAL SOUTH

India should continue contributing towards interoperable and inclusive global AI governance architectures capable of reflecting the developmental realities, resource constraints, and societal diversity of emerging economies and Global South countries.

STRENGTHEN AI INCIDENT REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT SYSTEMS

India should explore structured AI incident reporting systems, testing frameworks, and evidence-based oversight mechanisms capable of supporting continuous governance learning, institutional preparedness, and collaborative risk mitigation.

MOVE FROM PRINCIPLES TO IMPLEMENTATION

A recurring recommendation across sessions was the need to move from high-level declarations towards operational implementation, institutional coordination, and interoperable governance systems capable of translating governance principles into practical deployment frameworks.

Overall, the conference reinforced the importance of developing AI governance frameworks that remain technologically informed, strategically sovereign, operationally implementable, development-oriented, and responsive to India’s broader democratic, social, and economic priorities.

ANNEXURES

Speakers



Mr. S. Krishnan (IAS)
*Secretary, Ministry of
Electronics and
Information
Technology (MeitY),
Government of India*



Lt. Gen. Karanbir
Singh Brar PVSM,
AVSM (Retd.)
*Distinguished Strategic
Advisor IIT Madras
Pravartak*



Prof. B. Ravindran
*Head of Department of
Data Science and
Artificial Intelligence
(DSAI) & Centre for
Responsible AI (CeRAI),
IIT Madras*



Ms. Vanitha
Venugopal
*CEO, Tamil Nadu
Technology Hub
(ITNT), Government of
Tamil Nadu*



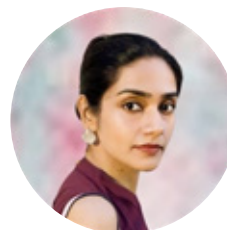
Ambassador T. S.
Tirumurti, IFS (Retd.)
*Chair, Steering
Committee, Deccan
Centre for International
Relations and Member,
Board of Governors,
Dhirubhai Ambani
University*



Prof. (Dr.) Avinash
Dadhich
*Founding Director,
Dhirubhai Ambani
University – School of
Law and Global
Advisory Board
Member for AMS
Ethical AI*



Dr. Gaurav Raina
*Professor of Electrical
Engineering, IIT
Madras*



Ms. Shreeppriya
Gopalakrishnan
*Deputy General
Manager, Policy and
Communications,
India AI, MeitY,
Government of India*



Ms. Akshaya Suresh
*Partner, JSA Advocates
& Solicitors*



Mr. Anirudh Rastogi
*Founder, Ikigai Law
and Business
Consulting*



Mr. Parishrut Jassal
*Founder & CEO,
Govern AI*



Ms. Sudha Hooda
*Head of Legal,
Compliance and
Corporate Governance
at NVIDIA (SE Asia,
India, Australia &
New Zealand)*



Mr. Vibhav Mittal
*Associate Partner,
Anand & Anand,
New Delhi*



Dr. Vini Singh
*Associate Professor of
Law, Vertical Head- AI,
Data Protection &
Technology Law,
Dhirubhai Ambani
University, School of
Law*



Mr. Jagan Nathan
Vaman
*Technology Advisor &
Board Member,
TransAltus
Technologies Pvt. Ltd.*



Ms. Deepa
Karthykeyan
*Co-Founder & Partner,
Athena Infonomics*

Prominent Participants & Categories

Diplomacy & Foreign Missions

- Consulate General of Malaysia (Trade Section)
- Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Chennai

Government & Public Sector

- IndiaAI, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India
- Guidance Tamil Nadu
- National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) Bangalore

Academia & Research Institutions

- IIT Madras
- Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru
- VIT University
- Symbiosis Law School, Pune
- Hidayatullah National Law University, Raipur
- Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), Chennai
- Saveetha School of Law, Chennai
- School of Excellence in Law, The Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, Chennai
- Government Law College, Trivandrum
- Christ University, Bangalore
- Sri Sairam Engineering College, Chennai
- SRM Valliammai Engineering College, Kanchipuram
- Loyola College, Chennai

Legal Profession & Policy

- KRIA Law
- Orbit Law Services
- Harii Law Chambers
- DigiIPLaw
- AADH Intellectual Property
- Corpvidhi
- Independent advocates, legal researchers, and IP specialists

Technology, AI & Industry

- IIT Madras Pravartak
- HCLTech
- LatentView Analytics
- Medtronic
- Reflex Industries
- BLOCK X Technologies
- Integra Software Services
- Supercore Private Limited
- Neurosynk Research Pvt Ltd
- Responsible AI and GenAI consultants/advisors
- AI policy analysts and emerging tech practitioners

Think Tanks, Strategic & Policy Institutions

- Chennai Centre for China Studies
- Centre for Responsible AI (CeRAI), IIT Madras

Media & Journalism

- Freelance journalists and independent media professionals

Civil Society, NGOs & Social Sector

- Aware India Trust
- Indian Geriatric Care Foundation
- Hope
- NexGen Athlete

Startups, Innovation & Entrepreneurship

- IIT Madras startup ecosystem participants
- Startup founders and AI entrepreneurs
- Emerging-tech legal and consulting firms

Students & Young Researchers

A substantial student and early-career research presence from:

- Law schools
- Engineering institutions
- AI and technology programs
- PhD scholars and research fellows

About Deccan Centre

STEERING COMMITTEE



Mr. T.S. Tirumurti
*Indian Foreign Service
(Retired)*



Mr. Kapil Viswanathan
*President, IFMR and
Member, Governing
Council, KREA University*



Professor Mukund
Padmanabhan
*Distinguished Professor
of Philosophy, KREA
University*



Mr. Vishwanathan Iyer
*IT Industry veteran and
Co-founder, The
NxtPractice Growth
Partners LLP*

NON-RESIDENT DISTINGUISHED FELLOW



Lt. Gen SL Narasimhan
PVSM, AVSM, VSM, Phd
(Retd.)*

TEAM DECCAN CENTRE



Mr. Balasubramanian
Chandrashekar
Senior Advisor



Ms. Mehak Gautam
Research Officer



Mr. Sairakshit
Raghupathy
Research Officer



Ms. Simhanjana
Gopikrishna Sumathi
Research Officer

We also extend our gratitude to our interns Ms. Joshna Shri KV, Ms. Divyalakshmi D, and Ms. Michelle Teresa Sebastian, who played an integral role in bringing this conference together.



*Mr. C. Balasubramanian
and Mr. T.S. Tirumurti of Deccan
Centre with Prof. B. Ravindran,
Commodore R. S. Vasan and
Ms. Deepa Karthykeyan*



*Ms. Mehak Gautam and
Mr. Sairakshit Raghupathy*



*Lt. Gen. A. Arun
PVSM, YSM, SM, VSM (Retd.)*



*A packed session at the
AI Governance Conference*



Deccan Centre for International Relations

The Deccan Centre for International Relations (Deccan Centre) is an independent think tank and the ninth centre under the Institute for Financial Management and Research, uniquely dedicated to the study of international relations. Based in Chennai, it focuses on the global engagement of South India, covering Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and the Union Territories of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry. Its work spans key domains such as geopolitics, security, technology (including digital), trade, business, environment, maritime affairs, and diaspora, with the aim of identifying opportunities and strengthening international linkages aligned with India's foreign policy.

The Centre serves as a platform to amplify South India's voice in global discourse by fostering policy dialogue, research, and partnerships. It collaborates with institutions and stakeholders in India and abroad through joint projects, policy briefs, research publications, podcasts, and thought leadership initiatives. By enabling business and academic engagement, the Deccan Centre seeks to build meaningful cross-border partnerships and contribute to informed policymaking, positioning the region as a significant player in international affairs.

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