24th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Written statement by Indian Institute of Public Administration

Agenda item 6: Role of Governments in ensuring transparency and accountability of artificial intelligence systems in public administration

Governance and Accountability in AI: The Role of Governments in Ensuring Transparency in AI-Driven Public Administration

New Delhi –India

Section A: EASTERN THOUGHT & WESTERN THOUGHT : Blending the Two

Let us begin by reflecting on the profound wisdom of both Eastern and Western thought, as it provides a robust foundation for our exploration of AI in governance. Western Thought has always been driven by reason, logic, and individualism. In this ideology, progress is often measured through cause and effect, and thus through the relationship between cost and profit. This approach has sometimes led to a capitalistic society, focused on maximizing profit at the expense of nature and human resources. The West tends to focus on "more for less," often emphasizing overharvesting technologies and resources to generate profit for a few, resulting in the concentration of capital. In contrast, Eastern Thought teaches us that if we can imagine something, we can create it. It values deep contemplation and holistic understanding, where the cosmos and self are interconnected. The East emphasizes unity, balance, and fostering value without depleting resources. It embodies the idea of "more for less for more," focusing on the well-being of all, rather than just a select few.

Section B : COMBINING THE TWO THOUGHTS TO CREATE A BLENDED F/w FOR AI

Despite these differences, both philosophies share a common goal: the pursuit of sustainable development. The way forward, therefore, lies in blending these two streams:

- The Imagination of the East with the Reason of the West.
- The Unity of Existence with the Progress of All.

In the realm of AI for Public Service Delivery, we have a unique opportunity to combine these perspectives. AI can democratize information, create transparency, and empower citizens. It enables us to ensure that technological advancements serve humanity, not just individual gain. After all, in the words of Indra K. Nooyi, the Indian-American businesswoman who is currently the Chairman and CEO of PepsiCo, "*the blind pursuit of profit at the cost of communities' well-being is untenable*." By embracing the East's vision of inclusivity and the West's drive for progress, we can shape AI into not just a tool for profit but a force for the collective good.

Section C: AI in GOVERNANCE of INDIA
(to be our कवच (shield), our विद्यावान (source of wisdom), our महावीर (augmented power), and our संकटमोचन (savior)

Today, I would like to share how India has leveraged the power of AI in governance, utilizing a robust blended framework for navigating the new post-COVID-19, VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) world, ensuring that the benefits of this technology reach millions, while promoting transparency, efficiency, and equity. Despite having a lower nominal GDP of US$ 3.75 trillion compared to the US, which is the global leader with US$ 30.34 trillion, India has rapidly positioned itself as a global leader in AI governance, with a focus on inclusive development and the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

India's AI revolution represents a paradigm shift from a traditional, institution-heavy governance model to a "Bricks to Clicks" digital-first, AI-powered service delivery model. AI is indeed serving as our कवच (shield), our विद्यावान (source of wisdom), our महावीर (augmented intelligence for leadership power), and our संकटमोचन (savior), helping us not only survive but thrive.

1. **कवच AI: The Shield of Knowledge:**

   AI has acted as a shield of knowledge, enabling the government to save time, reduce inefficiencies, and focus on delivering value to the people. Some of the following cited AI-driven applications in governance vouch for this:

   - For decades, India's welfare schemes were plagued by fraud, ghost beneficiaries, and inefficiencies. Rural families waited endlessly for subsidies that never arrived. However, with **AI-driven Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT),** powered by the JAM Trinity (Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile), billions of rupees have been saved. By March 2023, AI had eliminated millions of fake beneficiaries, plugged leaks, and saved ₹3.48 lakh crore[1]. Payments that once took weeks now reach farmers and workers in a matter of hours. Today, over 900 million citizens receive welfare directly, eliminating the need for intermediaries, making India’s DBT the world's most extensive AI-driven welfare system. This use of AI has ensured transparency, removed corruption, and streamlined the distribution of welfare to the most vulnerable. India’s AI-driven governance has not only saved but has also ensured equitable distribution of resources, empowering citizens through the JAM Trinity and other AI-powered tools.
   - AI-driven Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), such as Unified Payments Interface- **UPI**, provides equitable access to resources and empowers millions of citizens.
   - AI’s ability to automate and streamline routine tasks, such as grievance redressal of the citizens through the Government of India’s AI-based Grievance Redressal Platform- ‘Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System’- **CPGRAMs,** also enables public servants to focus on more impactful work to resolve concerns of the citizenry.

2. **विद्यावान AI: Turning Knowledge into Wisdom**

[1] 41,760 million USD.

AI's strength lies in its ability to transform vast amounts of data into valuable insights and actionable knowledge.

- In agriculture, for instance, AI platforms like ***Kisan[2] AI*** are revolutionizing how small farmers make decisions. AI-powered systems provide real-time crop forecasting, soil health analysis, and early warning systems, promoting climate-resilient agriculture. The **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bhima Yojna[3]** uses AI-driven satellite data to optimize crop insurance, helping farmers mitigate risks from climate change.
- Similarly, in healthcare, AI platforms like ***Poshan[4]* Tracker** provide real-time maternal and child health tracking. By analyzing data, AI identifies stunting, underweight, and other nutritional issues, which enables proactive intervention. As of September 2023, *Poshan* Tracker gave us the exact data that 39% of children aged 0-6 experienced stunting and 18% were underweight, highlighting the critical role AI plays in shaping public health interventions.
- Through AI AI-driven **MyGov platform**, we are not just automating services; we are enabling citizens

While AI's ability to personalize experiences is invaluable, we must remain cautious of its risks, particularly the potential for AI to create echo chambers and reinforce existing biases. Leaders must ensure AI is used responsibly, challenging existing paradigms while fostering inclusivity and equity.

3. **महावीर** – Augmented Intelligence for Leadership Power

AI is transforming leadership, not by replacing human intelligence but by augmenting it. In times of crisis, AI enables governments to act more quickly and with greater precision. For example,

- **CoWIN, the platform that managed India's COVID-19 vaccination drive,** leveraged AI for real-time registration, logistics, and analytics. By March 2023, India had administered over 2.2 billion doses, with 75% of adults fully vaccinated by early 2022. Rural outreach reached 64% of the population, and 97.35% of surveyed users expressed satisfaction. What once seemed impossible—vaccinating over a billion people—was made possible with AI.

- **AIRAWAT, India's AI supercomputer** developed by C-DAC, is ranked among the top 100 globally and is empowering over 17,500 individuals through the National Supercomputing Mission.

- Similarly, **PARAM *Shavak*[5], India's first indigenous 'High-Performance Computing as a Desktop',** integrates AI, quantum computing, and home-grown, energy-efficient

[2] Kisan is a Hindi word that means 'farmer' in English
[3] Translates to 'Prime Minister Crop Insurance Scheme' in English
[4] Poshan is a Hindi word that means ' nourishment' in English
[5] Shavak is a Hindi word that means a 'cub' in English

liquid cooling systems. It facilitates AI-driven weather forecasting and soil analysis for precision agriculture, disaster prediction for better climate resilience, accelerated medical research and pandemic response, HPC-*Shiksha* training programs to bridge the digital divide, urban modeling for smart city planning, and renewable energy grid optimization. Additionally, PARAM *Shavak* strengthens cybersecurity and data sovereignty by reducing reliance on foreign AI solutions.

AI skills empower leaders to make more informed decisions across various sectors, including healthcare, agriculture, and governance. It enables them to combine Mind and Machine, Context and Content, and Perception and Perspective, allowing for faster and more accurate decision-making. As AI continues to evolve, it will become an essential tool for leaders to navigate a rapidly changing world, helping them remain agile and forward-thinking.

4. **संकटमोचन – Curing Without Causing Pain** (unlike Chemo that treats Cancer)

- In cities like **Bhopal, AI-driven waste management systems** have increased efficiency by 30% by integrating GPS tracking and sensors into waste collection trucks. These systems have reduced fuel consumption and optimized resource utilization. Similarly, in the **judiciary, AI applications** aid in categorizing cases, tracking pendency, and predicting delays;
- The **Unified Lending Interface (ULI)** of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), attempts to streamline the loan application process by integrating various data sources, including *Aadhaar* e-KYC, land records, and PAN validation, into a single platform. This system reduces the time and complexity involved in loan approvals, particularly benefiting small borrowers in rural areas.

Section D: Digital India Attempts to Resolve the AI Iceberg with an Inclusive Approach

While AI can analyze vast amounts of data, it only reveals the tip of the iceberg. The deeper aspects—human intuition, creativity, and compassion—lie beyond its reach. For instance, in AI-driven judicial systems, we still require human oversight and compassion to ensure the welfare of all citizens. Therefore, it is the compassionate leadership within the legal system that provides fair outcomes for all. Similarly, AI-driven climate models are helping governments assess risks and design resilience strategies; however, it is human leadership that will ultimately drive meaningful change on a global scale.

Recognising and appreciating these concerns, through the nation's prestigious 'Digital India' program – we are patiently and deliberately investing in the fundamentals – enabling the entire population digitally (broadening the base of digitally competent individuals); making smart use of global open-source collaboration (for affordable tools, relevant content); and actively fostering inclusion (increasing device accessibility; making it hyper-locally relevant. India is also enhancing the usability of open data by investing in data cleaning, structuring, and creating user-friendly APIs for key public datasets; developing guided applications that utilize these datasets to address local problems. Furthermore, India is already focusing on women-led start-ups and rural entrepreneurship to build socially responsive technology models. India's AI governance model is also a global exemplar of ethical AI, featuring a regulatory framework that strikes a balance between technological innovation and accountability.

Policies such as the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (NSAI) and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023) ensure data privacy and security while promoting the adoption of AI for inclusive growth. Therefore, on all fronts, India is consciously removing systemic exclusion to maximise competitiveness.

Section F: Conclusive Remarks

As we embark on this journey, let us be guided by both the reason of the West and the vision of the East to build a future where AI leads not only to progress, but to a more equitable and sustainable world for all. We must also go beyond simply emulating the tech-driven models of Silicon Valley. To truly harness AI for social impact, we must mobilize technology rooted in culture and the grassroots realities of all. This means focusing on micro-capital and micro-incubators for localized innovation, rather than chasing flashy trends like unicorns. We must prioritize public institutions as catalysts of innovation, rather than overemphasizing corporate research. In conclusion, AI in governance is not just about technology—it's about harnessing it to empower citizens, enhance efficiency, and drive sustainable growth. India's AI-driven initiatives show the power of blending technology with human leadership to address complex challenges and deliver impactful, equitable solutions. As we move forward, we must continue to ensure that AI serves the collective good, creating a future where technology uplifts humanity, rather than dividing it.

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