



A ONE DAY CONFERENCE

# AI AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR VIKSIT BHARAT

*Preparing for the Next Wave*

**REPORT**

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Aryabhata College, University of Delhi

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For India, integrating AI into education is central to the vision of Viksit Bharat. A future-ready education system must go beyond adopting AI tools to actively build human capabilities such as analytical thinking, creativity and ethical judgment. Equally important is ensuring inclusive access so that the benefits of AI do not remain concentrated in a few institutions or regions. By aligning technological adoption with institutional readiness, responsible governance and skill development, AI-enabled education can play a critical role in building a skilled, innovative and resilient workforce for India's long-term growth.

The conference titled 'AI and the Education System for Viksit Bharat: Preparing for the Next Wave' was conceived as a step in this direction. It was convened by the Institute for Governance, Policies and Politics (IGPP) in collaboration with Aryabhata College, University of Delhi. The conference was held on the 21 April 2026 and brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including academicians, policymakers, industry practitioners, technologists and students, to engage in a multi-dimensional dialogue on the transformative impact of AI across learning ecosystems, institutional frameworks and labour markets in India. The deliberations unfolded across four key thematic areas with discussions ranging from the cognitive impact of AI on student learning and critical thinking, to questions of institutional readiness and governance for AI-enabled education systems, the evolving relationship between AI, skills and the future of work and finally, the nuanced voices of students on artificial intelligence and education in the context of a Viksit Bharat.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

**1. Institutional Readiness for structured AI integration-** AI adoption cannot remain ad hoc. Institutions must develop clear strategies, infrastructure and governance mechanisms to integrate AI effectively and responsibly.

**1.1 Need for clear and uniform AI guidelines in Higher education institutions-** There is an urgent need for standardized guidelines to regulate AI usage in teaching, learning and assessment methods across HEIs.

**1.2 Process-Based Evaluation in the Age of AI-** Institutions must adopt evaluation frameworks that capture the full learning process, focusing on how students think, iterate and engage with AI, rather than relying solely on polished outputs.

**1.3 Gap between student adoption and faculty preparedness-** Students are rapidly adopting AI tools, while faculty readiness remains uneven. This creates a critical imbalance that requires continuous professional development and pedagogical reform.

**2. AI literacy must go beyond technical skill-** AI literacy is a foundational pillar of AI-enabled education for Viksit Bharat. Existing AI literacy frameworks remain largely confined to technical skills and operational understanding, while overlooking broader human and societal dimensions and as a mode of thinking that includes awareness of its limitations, biases and ethical implications. AI literacy must evolve beyond simply teaching individuals how to use technology to an environment that enables people to meaningfully adapt, critically engage and flourish in a world increasingly shaped by AI.

**2.1 Overreliance on AI risks weakening core learning abilities-** Uncritical dependence on AI may reduce critical thinking, problem-solving and independent reasoning, undermining foundational learning outcomes. Ability to critically interpret AI-generated outputs is one of the essential competencies in an AI era.

**2.2 Need to integrate digital well-being and mental health-** AI is influencing not only learning but also behavioural well-being. Educational systems must address digital well-being and psychological impacts.

**3. Human oversight must remain central to AI use-** A 'human-in-the-loop' approach is essential to ensure accountability, ethical use and meaningful engagement with AI systems. Educators and institutions must retain oversight in how AI is adopted, ensuring that accountability rests with human judgment and ethical reasoning.

**4. Future workforce will require hybrid competencies-** Analytical thinking, communication, adaptability and the ability to translate information into meaningful insights will be foundation skills.

**5. Students are active stakeholders in the AI transition-** Students are not passive users of AI; they are critically aware of its risks, including the erosion of deep thinking, conceptual clarity and well-being. At the same time, they recognize the necessity of using AI to remain efficient and competitive, leading to a clear demand for responsible and guided integration that enhances learning without compromising intellectual depth.

**6. Moving away from 'future-proof' career to 'future-responsive' career approach-** Success will depend on learning agility, continuous reskilling, emotional steadiness and the ability to navigate uncertainty, rather than fixed career pathways.

# CONTEXT

Artificial Intelligence has moved from a futuristic concept to an everyday reality in higher education. Students today routinely use AI chatbots for quick explanations, adaptive learning platforms that tailor content to their pace and style, generative tools to brainstorm ideas or draft assignments and interactive discussion boards that spark collaboration. According to the 'Future-Ready Campuses: Unlocking the Power of AI in Higher Education' (2025) report by EY-Parthenon and FICCI, a majority of higher education institutions (HEIs) have begun to allow or encourage the use of AI tools, while a significant proportion of students report using them regularly (2). This widespread uptake underscores how quickly AI has moved from the margins to the mainstream within academic environments. In India, these global shifts intersect with a rapidly evolving but uneven landscape of digital adoption. Despite this widespread adoption, findings from the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI's AI Index Report 2026 indicate that AI tools are now deeply embedded in academic workflows, with students in the US increasingly relying on them for research, writing and problem-solving (1). However, only half of middle and high schools currently have AI policies in place, and merely 6% of teachers report that these policies are clearly defined.

This transformation reflects a shift from traditional, linear models of learning toward more dynamic and technology-driven educational environments, for which the education system appears largely unprepared. At the same time, it raises foundational questions about the nature of cognition, the role of human effort in learning and the adequacy of existing pedagogical and assessment frameworks in an AI-enabled ecosystem. Beyond the classroom, AI is also transforming the broader knowledge economy by altering skill requirements, work structures and pathways to employment. This transition requires not only curricular reform but also a rethinking of institutional roles, governance models and the relationship between education and the labour market. However, this expansion is marked by deep structural asymmetries. While well-resourced urban institutions are experimenting with advanced AI-enabled learning models, many state-funded and rural colleges continue to grapple with inadequate infrastructure, limited connectivity and insufficient faculty training. These disparities risk entrenching a new form of inequality: an 'AI divide.' Without targeted interventions, such gaps could undermine the inclusive potential of AI in education.

At the policy level, frameworks such as the National Education Policy 2020 signal a strong commitment to leverage technologies to enhance access, quality and equity. Yet, the pace of technological change has outstripped the development of clear institutional guidelines and regulatory mechanisms. Questions around data privacy, algorithmic bias, accountability and ethical use remain insufficiently addressed, even as students and educators engage more deeply with AI systems. This creates a complex governance challenge, where innovation must be balanced with safeguards that protect both learners and the integrity of educational processes.

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[1] The 2026 AI Index Report (Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI, 2026)

[2] Future-Ready Campuses: Unlocking the Power of AI in Higher Education (EY-Parthenon & FICCI, 2025)

At its core, the story of AI in education is one of delicate balance. On one side lies the immense promise of democratizing quality education, boosting creativity through smart personalization and preparing graduates for an AI-driven economy. On the other side lurks the risk of creating new dependencies, widening existing divides and weakening the very cognitive and ethical foundations that HEIs seek to build. Against this backdrop, the need for a structured, multi-stakeholder dialogue becomes evident. The rapid and uneven integration of AI, coupled with its far-reaching implications for cognition, equity and institutional design, necessitates a deeper examination of how education systems can adapt responsibly. This conference emerges from that need, providing a platform to critically engage with the opportunities and risks of AI in education, while situating these discussions within India's broader developmental trajectory.



# SESSIONS

## INAUGURAL SESSION



**Dr. Amar Patnaik,**  
Former MP, Rajya Sabha



**Prof. Sanjeev Singh,**  
Director, DUCC



**Prof. Manoj Sinha,**  
Principal,  
Aryabhata College, DU



**Dr. Manish Tiwari,**  
Director, IGPP

The session framed the transformation of education in the age of AI through an economic lens, as a recalibration of ‘demand and supply’. Students represent a rapidly growing demand for AI literacy, while teachers constitute the supply responsible for delivering it. However, this supply has evolved more slowly, creating a gap between student readiness and educator preparedness. This imbalance highlights the need for continuous professional development and pedagogical recalibration to ensure effective AI integration.

This gap also raises concerns around equity, particularly the risk of a widening digital divide. While national initiatives are building foundational infrastructure, their impact depends on last-mile delivery, especially in underserved regions. Without targeted capacity-building for educators, disparities between urban and non-urban systems may deepen. Data governance further emerged as a key concern, with emphasis on student privacy and ethical AI adoption.

The discussion clarified that AI should augment, not replace, education. While it may disrupt rote learning, it cannot substitute human capacities such as critical thinking, empathy, and ethical judgment. AI is thus positioned as a tool within a human-led system. Overall, the conversation emphasized that AI integration is unavoidable, but its outcome depends on how it is shaped and governed. Institutional responses remain emergent, with early efforts toward frameworks and best practices. This underscores the need for adaptive governance, ongoing dialogue, and continuous learning to navigate AI integration effectively.

## SESSION 1

### COGNITIVE IMPACT OF AI ON STUDENT LEARNING AND CRITICAL THINKING



**Mr. Rakesh Maheshwari,**  
Former Sr. Director & Grp Coordinator, Cyber Laws, Cyber Security and Data Governance, MeitY



**Prof. Charu Malhotra,**  
Professor (E-governance & ICT), IIPA



**Dr. Ankit Rajpal,**  
Associate Professor, Cluster Innovation Centre, DU



**Dr Varsha Singh,**  
Assistant Professor, Aryabhata College, University of Delhi (Moderator)

The opening session, *'Cognitive Impact of AI on Student Learning and Critical Thinking,'* examined AI's transformative role in reshaping educational processes for both students *and* teachers. It foregrounded a central tension: whether AI enhances cognitive engagement or encourages passive learning. The discussion emphasized that while AI is altering how knowledge is accessed and processed, its impact depends on how it is integrated into learning environments.

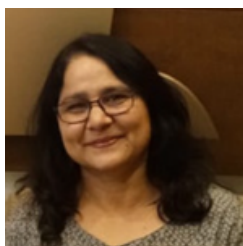
Overreliance on AI, even for routine tasks, risks weakening foundational cognitive habits such as critical inquiry, problem-solving and independent thinking. When students offload tasks to AI, engagement can become more superficial, limiting deeper understanding and the ability to process information meaningfully. This is further complicated by the fact that AI systems reflect biases in their training data, which students may accept uncritically. Together, these trends raise concerns about whether AI is supporting thinking or gradually displacing it. At the same time, the session acknowledged AI's potential to enable more advanced forms of learning, condensing repeated positive framings. By automating repetitive, lower-order tasks, AI can allow students to focus on higher-order processes such as analysis, evaluation and creativity. However, this shift depends on active engagement. AI must be used in ways that encourage questioning, reflection and intellectual exploration, rather than as a shortcut to ready-made answers. When used thoughtfully, AI can also support more personalized, accessible and multilingual learning. These shifts point to the need for curriculum and pedagogical reform. As AI handles information generation, education must move away from rote-based models toward application-oriented learning focused on inquiry, discussion and problem-solving. This also requires a redefining faculty role, from information providers to facilitators who guide students in critically engaging with AI outputs.

At an institutional level, embedding AI literacy within core curricula is essential to ensure students understand both capabilities and limitations. While policy frameworks indicate movement in this direction, institutional responses remain at an early stage. This highlights the need for continued capacity-building and alignment with ethical considerations.

Ultimately, the session positioned AI not as a replacement for human cognition, but as a tool whose value depends on its use, removing repeated formulations of the same idea. Uncritical reliance risks diminishing intellectual depth, while deliberate engagement can strengthen it. The focus, therefore, must be on cultivating learners who engage with AI critically and consciously.

## SESSION 2

### INSTITUTIONAL READINESS AND GOVERNANCE FOR AI-ENABLED EDUCATION SYSTEMS



**Ms. Seema Kumar,**  
Program Director,  
Smile Foundation



**Dr. Priti Jagwani,**  
Associate Professor,  
Aryabhata College,  
DU



**Ms. Chaitali Moitra,**  
Senior Director South  
Asia, Turnitin



**Mr. Vishal Naidu,**  
Senior Program  
Officer, Education  
Team, Wadhvani AI



**Dr. Kartikeya Kohli,**  
Associate Professor,  
Aryabhata College, DU  
(Moderator)

This session, *'Institutional Readiness and Governance for AI-Enabled Education System,'* examined how higher education institutions can prepare for AI integration while ensuring deployment remains responsible, ethical and human-centred. The discussion focused on the institutional, pedagogical and governance shifts required to integrate AI in education without compromising core educational values, consolidating the original framing. At its core was a central question: how can institutions harness AI's potential while preserving human agency and intellectual integrity?

AI offers expanded access to knowledge, hyper-personalized learning, improved administrative efficiency and broader educational reach. However, institutions must overcome several structural and capacity-related challenges to realize this potential. A key concern was the emergence of an 'AI divide,' defined not just by access but by differences in digital literacy, institutional support and the ability to use AI meaningfully. Access alone does not guarantee equitable outcomes; gaps in infrastructure, user understanding and support systems risk reinforcing existing inequalities. Addressing this requires investment in skills, support structures and inclusive frameworks, alongside stronger collaboration between academia and industry.

The session also emphasized that AI adoption must be balanced and sustainable, with students learning to use AI critically rather than becoming dependent on it. Unchecked reliance can weaken critical evaluation and deep engagement with knowledge. Institutions must integrate AI while preserving the 'human touch,' with educators playing a central role as facilitators of judgment, mentorship and intellectual engagement.

Academic integrity emerged as another key issue and the lack of clarity around ethical AI use has led to concerns such as plagiarism and misuse. This necessitates structured guidance on responsible AI use and a shift in assessment models, from evaluating final outputs to examining the learning process, including how students engage with AI tools. At a broader level, AI integration must be anchored in a holistic institutional framework spanning infrastructure, people, policy and pedagogy. Ethical concerns, including bias, cultural representation and environmental impact, must be addressed alongside ensuring human oversight and accountability. The discussion also highlighted the changing demands of the future workforce, where adaptability, continuous learning and AI literacy are essential. The ability to critically interpret AI-generated outputs was identified as a core competency in an evolving job market.

In the context of India's Viksit Bharat development trajectory, institutional readiness and ethical AI adoption were identified as critical to ensuring equitable and effective integration across diverse regions and socio-economic groups. This requires robust capacity-building through policy, skilled faculty, adaptive governance and inclusive infrastructure. Equally important is anchoring AI adoption in strong ethical foundations. Ensuring transparency, accountability, fairness and cultural sensitivity, while safeguarding student data and maintaining human oversight. Whether AI becomes a force for inclusive growth or deepens existing inequalities depends on how these systems are designed and governed. The session concluded that AI adoption in education is not merely a technological shift, but a question of governance, responsibility and intent. The challenge lies in building systems where AI enhances innovation while preserving human judgment, critical thinking and ethical integrity.



## SESSION 3

### FUTURE CAREERS, SKILLS AND POLICY PATHWAYS IN THE AI ERA



**Mr. Nitin Saluja,**  
Author, *The Policy Self*



**Ms. Chitra Iyer,**  
Co-founder, Space2Grow



**Ms. Karuna Nain,**  
Founder, [StopNCII.org](http://StopNCII.org)



**Mr. Deepak Pathak,** Lead  
Data Scientist, IDFC



**Dr. Tusharika Deka,**  
Lecturer, Benjamin Franklin  
Cummings Institute of Technology



**Dr. Manish Tiwari,**  
Director, IGPP  
(Moderator)

The third session extended the discussion beyond the classroom to examine AI's impact across education, work and public policy. It positioned AI as a structural force reshaping labour markets, skill requirements, and governance frameworks within the broader vision of Viksit Bharat.

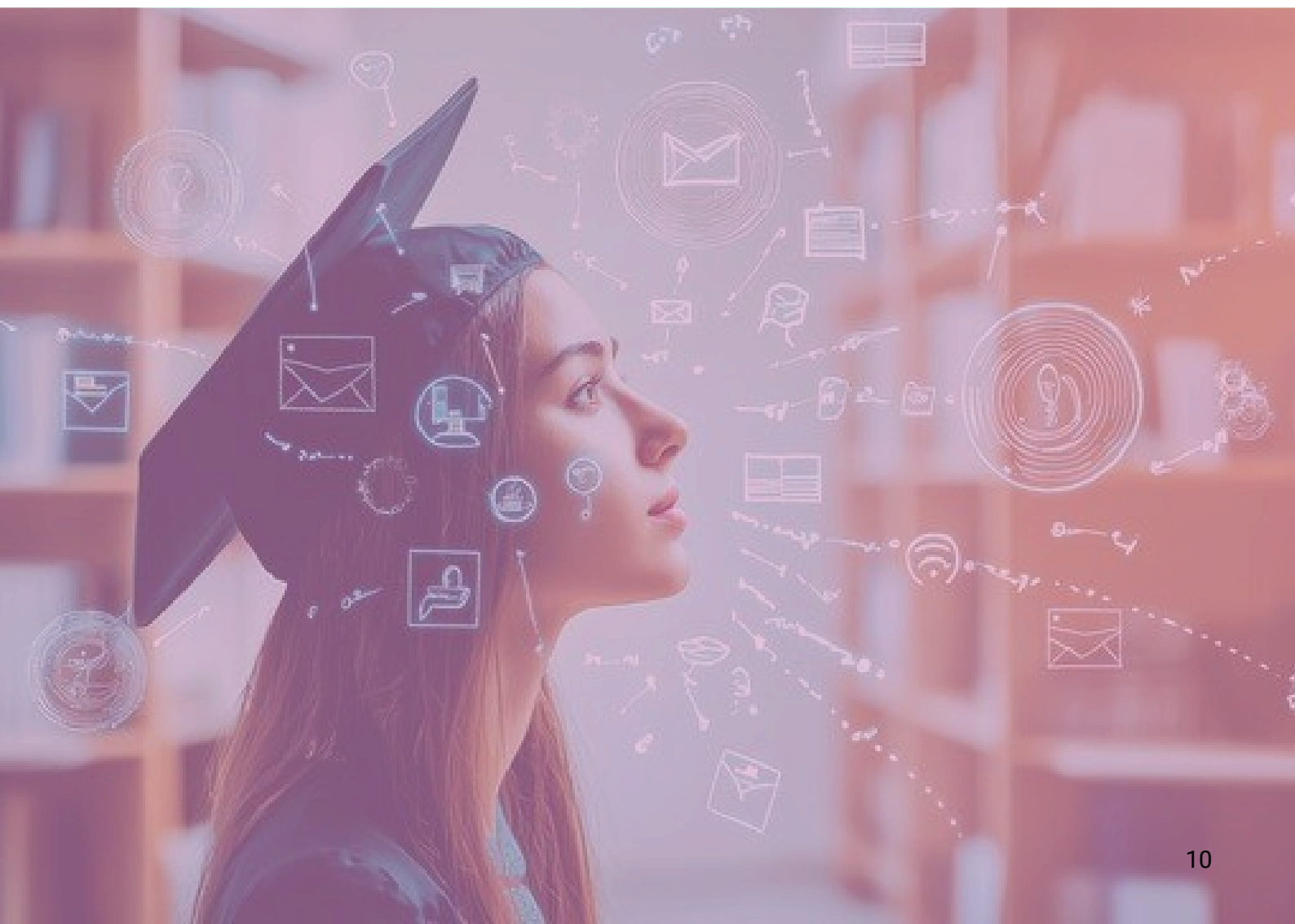
A key theme was the decline of traditional, linear career pathways due to AI-driven automation of routine tasks. Rather than reducing opportunities, this shift is redefining human work toward higher-order capabilities such as critical judgment, problem framing, empathy and contextual decision-making. The 'human-in-the-loop' model captured this transition, where AI enhances efficiency, but human input remains essential for interpretation and ethical reasoning. This transformation has significant implications for how skills are conceptualized within education systems. Technical familiarity with AI alone is insufficient. The future workforce will require a blend of cognitive, social and emotional competencies. Analytical thinking, communication, adaptability and the ability to translate information into insight were identified as core skills. The idea of a 'future-proof career' was replaced with 'future-responsive' pathways defined by continuous learning, reskilling and adaptability.

The session emphasized that if work is shifting from execution to interpretation, curricula must move beyond content delivery toward inquiry, reasoning and application-based learning. This includes embedding interdisciplinary thinking, problem-solving and early AI literacy that incorporates its limitations, biases and ethical implications. For Viksit Bharat, this signals a shift from expansion-focused education to quality-driven transformation aligned with future needs. The discussion also highlighted gaps in institutional readiness, with disparities between AI-enabled institutions and those constrained by limited infrastructure and outdated pedagogy. Addressing this requires investment in both technology and faculty capacity-building. Educators must transition from content transmitters to facilitators who guide critical engagement with AI.

From a policy perspective, AI is enhancing efficiency in research, data processing and policy design, but introduces risks such as overreliance and the marginalization of lived experience. Since AI systems reflect biases in their training data, unchecked use may reproduce systemic inequalities. This underscores the need for human oversight, ethical frameworks and inclusive design in policymaking. While AI may displace certain roles, it is also creating new domains at the intersection of technology and governance. In a diverse context like India, human capabilities such as cultural understanding and contextual judgment remain indispensable.

The session also pointed to structural challenges in building an AI-ready workforce, including unequal digital access, limited early exposure and disparities across regions. Concerns about declining critical thinking due to overdependence on AI further highlight the need for curriculum reform, infrastructure investment and experiential learning models.

Finally, the session positioned AI as a structural force simultaneously reshaping education, employment and governance. For the Viksit Bharat vision, its integration must remain human-centric, prioritizing inclusivity, ethics and long-term capability-building. Success will depend on aligning technological progress with critical thinking, adaptability and social responsibility. The closing insight emphasized that the challenge is not predicting future jobs, but preparing individuals and systems to continuously evolve. Readiness, therefore, lies in cultivating the ability to think, adapt and act responsibly in an AI-driven world.



## SESSION 4

### FUTURE CAREERS, SKILLS AND POLICY PATHWAYS IN THE AI ERA



**Prof. Rajendra Dayal,**  
Associate Professor,  
Aryabhata College, DU  
(Moderator)



**Mr. Sachin Chauhan,**  
Assistant Professor,  
Aryabhata College, DU  
(Moderator)



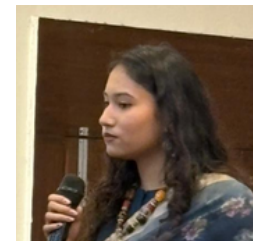
**Mr. Ashish Sharma,**  
Student,  
Aryabhata College, DU



**Mr. Swayam Ranjan,**  
Student, Aryabhata  
College, DU



**Mr. Raghav Dogra,**  
Student, Aryabhata  
College, DU



**Ms. Paridhi Chauhan,**  
Student, Aryabhata  
College, DU

The fourth and concluding session shifted from expert-driven discourse to a student-centered reflection, positioning learners as active interpreters of AI's impact on their academic and social lives. It examined whether institutional narratives around AI align with students' lived realities. By foregrounding student experiences, the session highlighted the everyday negotiations and adaptations that shape AI use in higher education.

A central theme was the tension between efficiency and intellectual depth. Students noted that while AI enhances productivity and streamlines academic tasks, it can displace inquiry, reflection and critical engagement. This distinction between efficiency and deep thinking raises concerns about whether education is prioritizing outputs over cognition. As a result, assessment frameworks must shift toward process-oriented learning, emphasizing reasoning, originality, and critical engagement rather than polished outputs. Closely linked was the risk of declining critical thinking due to reliance on AI-generated responses. Students expressed concern that dependence on AI may weaken their ability to analyze, question and synthesize information independently. The discussion also extended to psychological and social dimensions, including the growing use of AI for emotional support. While AI offers accessibility, it lacks empathy and contextual understanding, raising concerns about its impact on social learning and emotional development. This points to the need for integrating digital well-being and mental health awareness into education.

Ethical and privacy concerns emerged as another key theme. While students are aware that AI use involves sharing personal data, this awareness is not always matched by informed behavior. The absence of clear institutional guidelines increases vulnerability. This underscores the need to embed ethical AI literacy within curricula, including data privacy, bias and responsible use.

At a structural level, the session highlighted uneven AI integration across institutions and disciplines. Students identified a disconnect between policy ambitions and classroom realities, particularly in non-technical fields. This gap risks reinforcing existing inequalities and calls for curriculum redesign, interdisciplinary integration, investment in institutional capacity and faculty training.

Importantly, the session also recognized AI's transformative potential when used responsibly. AI can expand access, enable personalized learning and support creativity, but productivity gains should not be mistaken for genuine learning. Sustained engagement, reflection and effort remain central to intellectual growth, requiring institutions to design systems where AI enhances rather than replaces rigor.

Taken together, the session underscored the need to balance technological integration with human development. The effectiveness of AI in education will depend not just on its adoption, but on how thoughtfully it is governed, integrated and individually adopted. The success of AI will be measured by its ability to strengthen, rather than diminish, human capacities such as curiosity, critical thinking, empathy and ethical judgment. These capacities remain central to building an inclusive and resilient knowledge society in the journey toward Viksit Bharat.



# CONCLUSION

The conference on '*AI and the Education System for Viksit Bharat: Preparing for the Next Wave*' brought together perspectives from academia, policy, industry and students to examine AI as a transformative force reshaping how knowledge is created, delivered and applied. Across sessions, a central tension emerged between efficiency and intellectual depth. While AI enhances access, productivity and personalization, it also risks weakening critical thinking and cognitive engagement if used uncritically. The key challenge, therefore, lies in ensuring that AI augments rather than replaces human thought.

At the institutional level, readiness for AI integration remains uneven. Despite policy momentum through National Education Policy 2020 and National Curriculum Framework 2023, gaps persist in infrastructure, faculty training, governance and equitable access. At the same time, shifts in the labour market demand adaptability, continuous learning and interdisciplinary skills, reinforcing the need for education systems to evolve in step with technological change.

Student perspectives highlighted a critical disconnect between policy and practice. While AI is widely used for efficiency and accessibility, concerns around overdependence, declining critical engagement and ethical ambiguity remain significant. This underscores the importance of grounding AI integration in lived realities and incorporating student voices into institutional decision-making.

Taken together, the conference points to three core imperatives:

- 1. reimagining education toward inquiry-driven and application-based learning;**
- 2. strengthening human capacities such as critical thinking, creativity and ethical reasoning;**
- 3. and building responsible AI ecosystems through robust governance, equitable access and context-sensitive innovation.**

Moving forward, institutions must transition into adaptive learning ecosystems, faculty must be supported to redesign pedagogy and students must engage with AI consciously without surrendering intellectual agency. Policymakers, in turn, must focus on implementation through investments in infrastructure, training, and ethical frameworks. Ultimately, the vision of Viksit Bharat in an AI-driven era depends not on technological adoption alone, but on aligning innovation with human judgment, equity, and responsibility. AI is not an end in itself, but a powerful enabler whose impact will be determined by how thoughtfully it is integrated into education and society.

