

KEY INITIATIVES IN 2024



Conceptualised by Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) in partnership with the Government of Telangana's Emerging Technologies Wing, the Just AI Awards: Ethical AI-solutions for Social Good is an annual initiative recognizing AI best practices in India that focus on addressing social and digital inequalities, strengthening crisis response, and promoting democratic and feminist internet principles at the grassroots level.

The Digital Citizen Summit 2024, organized by DEF in collaboration with the Government of Telangana and the Centre for Development Policy and Practice, focused on "Algorithms, AI, and Accountability." The summit addressed key questions on citizen participation in AI accountability, accountability for AI biases, the role of regulatory bodies in AI governance, and how AI and algorithms may contribute to the exclusion of communities and citizens.

DEF participated in the Responsible AI Impact Fellowship (RAIL) program, organized by Digital Futures Lab. Through the fellowship, DEF is working on integrating AI into its Chatbot, SkillBot and the Information and Management Solution App, MeraApp. The fellowship, a 4-month learning experience, offered an opportunity to collaboratively build knowledge for critically engaging with and developing AI tools for social impact.



GOING FORWARD



ENHANCED FUNCTIONAL AND CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH AI



BRIDGING THE INTELLIGENCE DIVIDE BY INTEGRATING HUMAN AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE.



IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF IDENTIFYING ALGORITHMIC BIASES AND IMPACT OF AI ON COMMUNITIES



DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCLUSIVE AI TOOL FOR BETTER SERVICES AT THE COMMUNICATION INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTERS (CIRCS)



STRONGER COMMUNITY-DRIVEN ADVOCACY FOR AI ACCOUNTABILITY



TRAINED SOOCHNAPRENEURS TO PROMOTE THE SAFER USE OF AI AND DATA PROTECTION RIGHTS AMONG COMMUNITIES



COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH INITIATIVES AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS WITH DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS



JUST AI Data & ALGORITHMS FOR COMMUNITIES



ABOUT

Since 2019, Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) has been exploring the social, political, economic, and cultural impacts of AI through workshops, reports, and edited volumes, particularly after the Central Government's National AI Strategy (#AIforAll), which aims to advance AI in sectors like health, agriculture, education, and infrastructure. DEF recognizes that ICT advancements affect not only white-collar workers but also rural and underserved communities, who are often overlooked in development policies. The Just AI - Data and Algorithms for Communities initiative at DEF focuses on building connections between social justice and technology, with an emphasis on the growing impact of data on communities. The initiative adopts the AI for Social Good approach and aims to explore research gaps regarding the social impact of AI in rural and peri-urban India, examine AI's effect on marginalized communities in finance, education, and services, and enhance youth understanding of AI's uses and limitations. It also seeks to establish a policy dialogue on AI accountability, develop a multi-stakeholder approach to tackle exclusion, bias, and opacity in AI, and mentor AI solutions for social good while strengthening grassroots startups. Additionally, DEF strives to empower SochnaPreneurs, communities and the community-driven innovations ecosystem with the knowledge of AI, algorithmic systems, and data protection, while developing a citizen-centric digital design and model for a meaningful AI adoption in India.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 TO EXPLORE THE EXISTING RESEARCH GAPS REGARDING THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS, WITH AN APPROACH TO AI FOR SOCIAL GOOD, IN THE RURAL AND PERI-URBAN REGIONS OF INDIA.
- 2 TO CRITICALLY EXAMINE THE DAILY PRESENCE OF AI IN THE FINANCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND SERVICE SECTORS AND ITS IMPACT ON DIVERSE MARGINALISED AND UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.
- 3 TO STRENGTHEN THE ABILITY OF YOUTH TO COMPREHEND THE USES AND LIMITATIONS OF AI, WHILE INCULCATING A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO BUILDING KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS.
- 4 TO ESTABLISH A POLICY DIALOGUE ON AI ACCOUNTABILITY INFORMED BY EMPIRICAL STUDIES FROM THE GRASSROOTS AS WELL AS SECONDARY RESEARCH.
- 5 TO DEVELOP A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER, MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO ADDRESS THE EXCLUSION, BIAS, AND LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN AI.
- 6 TO MENTOR AND ACCELERATE AI SOLUTIONS FOR SOCIAL GOOD, WHILE SCALING AND STRENGTHENING THE GRASSROOTS AND COMMUNITY-DRIVEN STARTUP ECOSYSTEM.
- 7 TO STRENGTHEN SOOCHNAPRENEURS' ABILITY TO COMPREHEND THE IMPACT OF AI, ALGORITHMIC SYSTEMS, DATA PROTECTION RIGHTS, AND MORE.
- 8 TO DEVELOP A CITIZEN-CENTRIC DIGITAL DESIGN AND MODEL FOR AI ADOPTION ROOTED IN THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF DATA AND ALGORITHMS.

RESEARCH, TRAINING, AND ADVOCACY

This initiative at DEF will focus on research, training, and the development of toolkits, modules, policy papers, and advocacy reports aimed at promoting AI accountability and data justice.

RESEARCH



TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING



AI TOOLS DEVELOPMENT

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS



POLICY BRIEFS AND POLICY REVIEWS