Event Report

Future of Fair Tech – Equity, Safety and Accountability in AI

India AI Impact Summit 2026

Organised by

Future Shift Labs

In collaboration with

WOMEN IN RESPONSIBLE AI

SESSION DETAILS

SESSION SPEAKERS

Vidhi Sharma
Niki Iliadis
Lipika Kapoor
Damar Juniarto
Pauline Charazac

VENUE

India AI Impact Summit 2026,
Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

THEME

Advancing Equitable, Safe, and Accountable AI Governance in Democratic Societies

MESSAGE FROM FOUNDERS

Mr. Nitin Narang

Founder, Future Shift Labs

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence has compelled governments, institutions, and societies to confront questions that extend far beyond technological capability. As AI systems become embedded in economic structures, media ecosystems, public service delivery, and democratic processes, the need for fairness, safety, and accountability becomes foundational rather than optional.

The session “Future of Fair Tech – Equity, Safety and Accountability in AI” reflects Future Shift Labs’ commitment to shaping governance frameworks that move beyond innovation narratives alone. Technological progress, while essential, must be accompanied by institutional maturity. Fairness in AI is not achieved solely through improved algorithms or larger datasets; it requires coherent regulatory architecture, measurable safeguards, and inclusive access across geographies and communities.

In emerging economies, these questions carry particular urgency. The Global South must not merely adapt to externally designed governance models but actively contribute to shaping standards that reflect its social realities, democratic aspirations, and developmental priorities. Equity in AI deployment requires ensuring that safety standards, oversight mechanisms, and accountability frameworks are both context-sensitive and globally interoperable.

At Future Shift Labs, we believe that innovation and regulation are not opposing forces. Durable technological progress depends upon public trust, institutional resilience, and transparent governance. The conversations captured in this report reaffirm that the defining challenge of the AI era is not capability, but trust in the systems and institutions guiding its deployment.

The path forward demands collaboration across governments, industry, civil society, and research institutions. Fair tech will not emerge automatically from market incentives; it must be consciously designed, measured, and sustained through responsible governance.

MESSAGE FROM FOUNDERS

Mr. Sagar Vishnoi

Director, Future Shift Labs

Artificial intelligence is increasingly shaping the architecture of democratic discourse, economic opportunity, and public decision-making. As AI systems influence information flows, labor markets, financial inclusion, and civic engagement, governance institutions must adapt to ensure that technological power is aligned with constitutional values and public interest.

The “Future of Fair Tech” session was convened to interrogate what fairness means in operational terms. Abstract commitments to ethics and safety are insufficient unless translated into enforceable standards, oversight mechanisms, and measurable accountability. Trust in AI systems is built not through declarations, but through institutional safeguards that are visible, credible, and responsive.

The discussion underscored several structural challenges: uneven access to AI capabilities across regions, the risk of information decay within media ecosystems, the dangers of hyper-personalization in political communication, and fragmentation in global governance approaches. These challenges are interconnected and require coordinated policy responses that balance national sovereignty with international cooperation.

India and other emerging economies occupy a critical position in shaping this trajectory. As AI adoption accelerates, the focus must shift from narratives of technological dominance toward practical applications that solve local problems, strengthen democratic resilience, and expand equitable access. Governance must differentiate between categories of risk, establish clear red lines, and invest in institutional capacity-building.

This report documents a dialogue that recognizes fairness not as an aspirational slogan, but as a measurable and enforceable objective. Building equitable and accountable AI systems will require sustained policy engagement, cross-border coordination, and an unwavering commitment to public trust.

ABOUT FUTURE SHIFT LABS

Future Shift Labs Future Shift Labs, established in 2024, is a think tank devoted towards a sustainable and equitable future, valuing openness, diversity, and innovation. Our core goal is to make India a global leader by offering research, strategic consulting, and training on AI's impact, while fostering collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and industry leaders for responsible AI development.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“In the pursuit of fair and responsible artificial intelligence, progress is measured not only by technological advancement, but by the equity, trust, and accountability embedded within our governance frameworks.”

Future Shift Labs expresses its sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of the session “Future of Fair Tech – Equity, Safety and Accountability in AI” at the India AI Impact Summit 2026.

We extend our appreciation to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) for hosting the India AI Impact Summit 2026 and for providing a national platform that enabled substantive dialogue on AI governance. The Summit’s guiding framework of the Three Sutras: People, Planet, and Progress, and the Seven Chakras of multilateral cooperation offered a principled foundation for discussions on equitable and accountable AI systems. This vision reinforced the importance of aligning innovation with institutional responsibility, democratic resilience, and inclusive growth.

We are deeply thankful to the distinguished speakers — Vidhi Sharma, Niki Iliadis, Lipika Kapoor, Damar Juniarto, and Pauline Charazac, for their rigorous and forward-looking insights. Their reflections on trust deficits, regulatory design, media sustainability, global coordination, and equitable access to AI enriched the Summit’s broader objectives, particularly those relating to Safe and Trusted AI, Democratizing AI Resources, and AI for Social Good.

We acknowledge the Women in Responsible AI convening for fostering a space that foregrounds equity, inclusion, and institutional accountability within emerging technology discourse.

Our sincere appreciation also goes to the moderators, researchers, program teams, and operational staff at Future Shift Labs whose dedication ensured the seamless execution of this dialogue. Finally, we thank the policymakers, scholars, practitioners, and participants whose engagement reflects a shared commitment: to ensure that artificial intelligence systems are not only powerful, but fair, safe, and accountable in their design and deployment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Future of Fair Tech – Equity, Safety and Accountability in AI, held at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 by Future Shift Labs, examined how AI governance must extend beyond innovation to address equity, safety, trust, and accountability. The session brought together policymakers and experts to assess the institutional responsibilities shaping AI deployment across democratic and economic systems.

Speakers emphasized that fairness in AI is fundamentally a governance challenge. Technical improvements alone are insufficient without measurable safety standards, transparent oversight, and coherent regulatory frameworks. A central theme was that the defining constraint of the AI era is not capability, but trust in the systems and institutions guiding its use.

The discussion highlighted unequal access to AI, risks to media ecosystems and democratic processes, and the need for balanced coordination at both national and international levels. The session concluded that sustainable innovation depends upon context-sensitive governance models that align technological progress with equity, accountability, and public trust.

Speakers highlighted six key themes:

- Fairness requires both shared values and infrastructure.
- Trust not capability is the defining challenge of the AI era.
- Regulation and innovation are complementary, not contradictory.
- AI is reshaping democratic systems and media ecosystems globally.
- Establish clear, enforceable red lines that define the boundaries of AI development.
- International coordination is necessary, but must avoid one-sided governance models.

The panel concluded that measurable safety standards, stronger oversight mechanisms, protection of media ecosystems, and locally grounded AI use cases are essential to building fair and sustainable AI systems.

BACKGROUND

The Women in Responsible AI convening served as a platform for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to engage in dialogue on ethics, governance, and institutional responsibility in AI.

The session, Future of Fair Tech, explored what equitable AI systems should look like in practice particularly in the context of the Global South and emerging economies. Discussions reflected ongoing global tensions around sovereignty, regulation, innovation, and democratic resilience in the AI era.

OBJECTIVES

The session aimed to:

- Examine what “fair tech” means beyond abstract principles.
- Identify governance gaps affecting AI safety and accessibility.
- Assess how AI is transforming democratic systems and media ecosystems.
- Explore whether fragmentation in AI governance is harmful or necessary.
- Propose actionable pathways for international and domestic coordination.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

From Principles to Practice: Shared Values and Infrastructure

Vidhi Sharma opened the session by arguing that conversations about AI often begin with “universal values” that are treated as abstract and uncontested. In reality, these values are complex and context-dependent.

She proposed that fairness in AI requires the intersection of:
- Shared principles and values, and
- Institutional and technical infrastructure.

However, current AI governance frameworks remain fragmented. Trust, she emphasized, is not abstract it must be operationalized through measurable safeguards.

Accessibility and Unequal Adoption

Referencing a recently launched AI safety report, Pauline Charazac highlighted global disparities in AI adoption. Accessibility to AI systems remains uneven, particularly across developing countries.

Fairness, therefore, must include:
- Accessibility across geographies
- Linguistic inclusion
- Safety guarantees
- Practical usability
- Governance, she argued, is not merely technical it is existential.

Data, Datasets, and the Limits of Technical Fixes

While improving datasets enhances inclusiveness, speakers agreed that better data alone cannot ensure fairness. Governance—rules agreed upon by governments, industry, and civil society is essential.

Pauline referenced India’s growing international role, noting the symbolic importance of cooperation agreements between India and the EU as indicators of emerging economies shaping AI governance conversations.

Regulation and Innovation: Two Sides of the Same Coin

A central theme was the rejection of the false dichotomy between innovation and regulation. Niki Iliadis and Vidhi Sharma emphasized that regulation strengthens systems rather than weakens them.

Examples discussed included:
Aviation sector: Highly regulated yet continuously innovating; public trust enables industry growth.
Banking sector: Post-financial crisis regulation improved resilience and long-term profitability.
The message was clear: governance frameworks allow systems to last longer and operate more sustainably.

Trust as the Core Challenge

Lipika Kapoor argued that today's AI landscape does not suffer from a capability deficit but a trust deficit.

Trust breaks at multiple levels:

- During system development
- In deployment and workforce integration
- At the citizen-user interface

She outlined features of AI user engagement:
- AI as advanced search
- AI as content generator

She also highlighted that what we observe now is an Identity shift among professionals which calls for the need for human judgment.

Crucially, she emphasized explainability in practical contexts—for example, if farmers are denied loans through AI systems, they must receive explanations in accessible language.

AI, Democracy, and Information Decay

Damar Juniarto explored how AI is reshaping democratic systems, particularly in the Global South.

Key observations included:

- AI has already transformed media ecosystems.
- In Indonesia, AI tools have been used in political consulting.
- Media organizations have reportedly lost significant traffic due to AI-generated summaries.
- Readers increasingly consume AI summaries instead of full journalism.

Damar warned of “information decay”, a scenario where AI-mediated summaries reduce nuance, context, and media viability. This erosion threatens the media’s role as the fourth pillar of democracy.

He emphasised the importance of safeguarding independent journalism and ensuring AI does not distort political communication.

Personalization and Democratic Risk

The discussion also touched on advanced AI systems capable of deep personalization. Hyper-personalised AI systems can shape what individuals read and how they interpret information.

If unchecked, such systems risk gradually influencing public understanding and weakening democratic deliberation.

Fragmentation vs. Coordination

Niki Iliadis framed fragmentation as a coordination challenge inherent in AI's transnational nature. National approaches alone are insufficient.

She identified two opportunities for international collaboration:
Red Lines: Clear global limits on unacceptable AI applications (e.g., manipulative systems harming children, malicious cyber operations).

Incident Prevention Coordination: Joint crisis response and oversight mechanisms.

She acknowledged that multilateralism is under strain but argued that this moment offers an opportunity to "turn the pendulum back" toward cooperative governance.
Importantly, speakers agreed there is no one-size-fits-all model. Governance must differentiate between types of risks and adapt to national contexts.

Rapid-Fire Reflections

1. Indicators that AI is becoming safer:
   - Niki Iliadis: The establishment of clear global red lines defining unacceptable AI applications.
   - Damar Juniarto: Reduced reliance on AI-generated summaries in political discourse and public decision-making.
   - Lipika Kapoor: Evidence of meaningful and responsible AI adoption in rural and underserved communities.
   - Pauline Charazac: Measurable improvements in equitable access and adoption rates across regions.
2. Most underestimated risks:
   - Damar Juniarto: Information decay resulting from overreliance on AI-mediated content and summaries.
   - Pauline Charazac: The strategic and defense-related risks associated with advanced AI systems.
3. Governance reform priorities:
   - Damar Juniarto: Establishing sandboxing mechanisms to regulate and monitor AI use in political campaigns.
   - Lipika Kapoor: Reframing AI policy discourse from narratives of technological dominance toward practical solutions addressing local, everyday challenges.

CONCLUSION

The session underscored that building equitable and accountable AI systems requires far more than technological advancement. Across the discussion, speakers emphasized that the central challenge of the AI era is not capability, but trust in institutions, in information, and in the systems increasingly shaping democratic and economic life. Fairness cannot be achieved through better datasets alone; it demands coherent governance frameworks, measurable safety standards, and meaningful coordination among governments, industry, and civil society. The panel also highlighted the urgent need to protect democratic institutions, particularly media ecosystems, from the risks of information decay and excessive personalization. Ultimately, the conversation reaffirmed that innovation and regulation are not opposing forces but mutually reinforcing pillars. The future of fair tech will depend on inclusive, context-sensitive governance models that prioritize equity, transparency, and accountability while enabling sustainable innovation.