

Building India's EdTech and AI Roadmap for Equitable Learning for Every Child

- Central Square Foundation (CSF) hosted the EdTech and AI Convening - *Education Dialogues*, a satellite event of the India AI Impact Summit, convening senior government leaders, philanthropies, global and Indian EdTech innovators, and education experts to reimagine how technology and AI can support learning at scale.
- The second edition of the Bharat Survey for EdTech (BaSE) launched - a unique, large-scale national survey by Central Square Foundation that offers insights across 10 States on access to, use of technology for teaching & learning among parents, teachers & children, and AI awareness among 12,500 underserved communities and households.
- Leaders underscored that evidence-backed innovation, strong system design, and cross-sector collaboration are critical to delivering measurable learning gains at scale.

New Delhi, 19 February: Central Square Foundation (CSF) hosted the EdTech and AI Convening - *Education Dialogues*, a satellite event of the India AI Impact Summit, convening senior government leaders, philanthropies, global and Indian EdTech innovators, and education experts to reimagine how technology and AI can support learning at scale.

Delivering the keynote address, Chief Guest Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Education Minister, Government of India, spoke about the pathway towards achieving a Viksit Bharat by 2047 - where technology and AI become integral to ensuring quality education for all, empowering teachers, and preparing young people for the future of work.

Speaking at the launch of the Bharat Survey for EdTech 2025 Report, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan said, *"Under the leadership of PM Modi, Digital India has truly come alive as a powerful means of empowerment. Rapid adoption of technology is part of India's DNA. Our commitment is clear — technology must connect to every aspect of life and be integrated into everyday living so that it delivers ease, opportunity, employment, and empowerment."*

If you look at the BaSE (Bharat Survey for EdTech) report launched today by Central Square Foundation, you will see how deeply digital access has expanded across India — smartphones have proliferated, internet access has grown significantly, and AI preparedness is steadily rising. The foundation of this transformation is education. When technology is anchored in education, it becomes far more than an infrastructure upgrade — it becomes a powerful equaliser because it enables broad participation and makes education more democratic. I can say with confidence that we are moving in the right direction, building pathways for the next generation of India — and for the world."

The event was also graced by Shri Sanjay Kumar (IAS), Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India, who highlighted the transformative impact of NIPUN Bharat in classrooms nationwide — from more confident readers to stronger number sense. He called for a bold integration of technology across every layer of the mission to ensure these gains are not only sustained, but accelerated. *He said, "The launch of the Bharat Survey for EdTech (BaSE) 2025 is an important development for strengthening evidence-based policymaking in school education. A comprehensive, pan-India understanding of how EdTech is accessed, adopted, and used — particularly across underserved geographies — will enable us to better align policy, programme design, and implementation frameworks with ground realities. The insights from this report will help identify adoption gaps, infrastructure constraints, and capacity needs at the last mile. This, in turn, will support more targeted interventions, improved resource allocation, and stronger monitoring mechanisms to ensure technology investments translate into measurable learning outcomes at scale."*

In his address, Ashish Dhawan, Founder-Chairperson, Central Square Foundation said, “We are at a rare inflexion point where India’s strong digital foundations, growing evidence on what works, and the rapid rise of AI can together reimagine how we support every child’s learning — but only if innovation remains intentional, pedagogically grounded, and relentlessly equity-first.”

Shaveta Sharma-Kukreja, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Central Square Foundation, while delivering the welcome address said, “Over the past decade, technology has steadily reshaped how our children learn, how teachers are trained and teach, and how systems think about scale. And today, with the rapid emergence of Artificial Intelligence, we find ourselves at a critical point — one that calls for both optimism and responsibility. The launch of the Bharat Survey for EdTech 2025 gives us key ground-level insights into how low-income households, students and teachers are actually accessing and using these technologies. We hope to see these help inform governments, innovators, civil society and philanthropies to ensure they truly serve every learner.”

A Global Moment for AI in Education

The Convening opened with reflections on the global moment for AI in education, as AI rapidly enters classrooms worldwide — unlocking new possibilities to personalise learning, empower teachers, and strengthen education systems. Benjamin Piper, Director, Global Education at the Gates Foundation underscored that realising this promise will require rigorous evidence, a strong equity lens, and context-sensitive implementation to ensure AI meaningfully benefits all learners, particularly those in low-resource settings.

The Convening also showcased a range of pioneering innovations, from India and globally, in AI-led EdTech, illustrating how technology is being creatively leveraged to enhance teaching and learning across diverse contexts.

Building the Evidence Base for AI in Education

As AI tools proliferate in education, global and national leaders alike called for rigorous data and research to guide their effective use.

Reinforcing this emphasis on data, Shri Amitabh Kant, former CEO, NITI Aayog, former G20 Sherpa (India), launched the 2nd edition of the Bharat Survey for EdTech (BaSE), a unique large-scale national survey by Central Square Foundation that provides insights on access to and use of technology for teaching and learning among parents, children and teachers from low-income backgrounds in India. Conducted across 10 states, the survey reached 12,500 households and 2,500 teachers from government and affordable private schools, exploring the foundational themes of access to, use of technology for teaching & learning among parents, teachers & children. The additional theme for BaSE 2025 was on AI awareness and use for teaching and learning. The findings signal that Bharat is increasingly going digital with 90% of households owning at least one smartphone and 63% of children already using technology for learning.

Scaling what works

Nobel Laureate Prof. Michael Kremer, & Director, Development Innovation Lab at the University of Chicago, emphasised that *AI’s potential to improve learning outcomes must rest on clear, measurable evidence of efficacy* - ensuring that innovation aligns with what truly drives impact in the classroom.

The discussions also highlighted what it takes to move from promising pilots to impact at scale, underscoring the importance of clear evidence on learning gains, enabling policy and infrastructure,

and strong partnerships to ensure that effective approaches reach millions of children, not just a few projects.

Building Foundations for Responsible AI

Leaders from government, policy, and the innovation ecosystem discussed how India is building the architecture for the responsible and equitable deployment of AI in education.

The session outlined India's vision to democratise AI through education-first digital public infrastructure, with the India AI Impact Summit advancing this agenda through the IndiaAI Mission's investments in compute capacity, safe language models, and high-quality datasets. Bodhan AI, Centre of Excellence in AI for Education was highlighted as a key vehicle to translate this infrastructure into system-ready solutions and build capacity for responsible, scalable adoption across public education systems.

Flowing from this vision, the convening spotlighted **AI Samarth**—launched by Central Square Foundation with support from Google.org in 2024 — as India's first structured, contextualised initiative to build AI literacy at scale among students, teachers, and parents from underserved communities—while Maggie Johnson, Global Head of Google.org, emphasised the importance of strengthening infrastructure and building institutional capacity to ensure communities across the Global South can meaningfully participate in and benefit from the AI transformation.

*While giving the Plenary Address, **Amitabh Kant, former CEO, Niti Aayog and Former G20 Sherpa (India)** said, "This session is meaningful and of critical importance for both Global South and India. The BaSE 2025 report shows that access is no longer the primary bottleneck. The pressing question is whether increased access to devices is actually translating into improved learning. If India aspires to become a Viksit Bharat by 2047, that ambition cannot be realised without improvement in learning outcomes."*

*While speaking at a Fireside chat on '**Building Blocks for Responsible AI**', **Prof. B. Ravindran**, Board Member, Bodhan AI, Centre of Excellence in AI for Education, IIT Madras, said, "It is important to know what the state of the system is and what the ground reality is. So we can understand a lot about what the ground reality is from these kinds of surveys and then go and solve for what AI needs to do."*

*Speaking at a Fireside chat on Building AI Literacy for the Global South, **Maggie Johnson, Global Head, Google.org**, talked about the importance of including the community. "It is important to build with the community, design with the community and design for scale. Taking time to be in the community and understanding what it takes to use that technology and build that solution for them. These are some design principles that we have to assume in the Global South that devices will be outdated so anything that you build needs to be at scale also. You want to think about 'Scaling' early on in the process."*

Notes to the Editor:

About Central Square Foundation

Founded in 2012, Central Square Foundation (CSF) is a non-profit committed to improving learning outcomes for school-going children across 14 Indian states through system-led reform. We work in

close partnership with 11 state governments to design and deliver statewide missions on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), while strengthening Early Childhood Education.

CSF also focuses on building a vibrant EdTech and AI ecosystem to enable equitable, high-quality learning at scale. Our work extends to strengthening school governance across government and affordable private schools, and supporting High Potential Students (HPS) from underserved communities to become future innovators, researchers, and leaders. More on <https://www.centalsquarefoundation.org>