

PREVENTING FINANCIAL FRAUD: A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

In an era where digital transactions dominate the economy, financial fraud has emerged as a pressing concern for individuals, businesses, and governments alike. From phishing scams and credit card fraud to sophisticated cyber-heists targeting banks, the threat is growing not only in frequency but also in complexity. With increasing dependence on online banking, e-wallets, and digital payment platforms, the onus to protect financial systems has never been greater. Preventing financial fraud is no longer just the responsibility of financial institutions; it requires collective vigilance by individuals, regulators, and technology providers.

Financial fraud impacts more than just money-it erodes trust. Victims often face severe monetary losses, prolonged legal battles, and emotional stress. For businesses, fraud can lead to reputational damage, customer attrition, and regulatory penalties. On a macroeconomic level, widespread financial fraud undermines investor confidence and can destabilize financial markets. In India, where digital payments are expanding rapidly under initiatives like UPI and Bharat QR, the stakes are especially high. Protecting the integrity of these systems is essential to sustaining economic growth and encouraging financial inclusion.

Technology, while a key enabler of financial growth, is also a double-edged sword. Cybercriminals continually devise new ways to exploit vulnerabilities in digital platforms. Artificial intelligence and machine learning have made it easier for banks to detect anomalies and prevent suspicious transactions, but these tools are only as effective as the awareness and cooperation of users. Individuals must remain alert to potential scams, use secure passwords, avoid sharing OTPs, and verify the authenticity of financial communications. Similarly, businesses must implement robust cybersecurity frameworks and continuously update their fraud detection systems.

Regulatory oversight is equally crucial. Financial authorities, such as the Reserve Bank of India, Securities and Exchange Board of India, and consumer protection agencies, play a pivotal role in formulating guidelines, monitoring compliance, and penalizing malpractices. However, prevention goes beyond technology and regulation-it requires a mindset of vigilance. Consumers must treat their financial information as highly confidential, while institutions should foster a culture of transparency and proactive monitoring. Public-private partnerships, along with citizen participation, can create early warning systems to detect and mitigate fraud before significant losses occur.

AI for All-Building an Inclusive Future for Women, Youth and the Workforce

KAVITA BHATIA



As India gears up to host the India-AI Impact Summit 2026, the most impactful stories are not about algorithms or automation, but about inclusion. The true promise of AI lies in amplifying human potential, especially among women, informal workers, and the youth who have long remained at the periphery of the formal economy. Guided by the vision of "Making AI in India and Making AI Work for India," the Cabinet approved the IndiaAI Mission in March 2024. Under the leadership of Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Hon'ble Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, the IndiaAI Mission team began work on strategically designing and implementing key initiatives such as IndiaAI Compute Capacity, the IndiaAI Innovation Centre (IAIC), the IndiaAI Datasets Platform, the IndiaAI Application Development Initiative, IndiaAIFutureSkills, IndiaAI Startup Financing, and Safe & Trusted AI.

The Mission's focus on inclusive growth is strongly reflected in the IndiaAI Innovation Centre, which is developing multilingual Large Language Models and domain-specific foundational models tailored to India's diverse socio-economic contexts. These models, trained using the national GPU grid, are being designed to serve women entrepreneurs, farmers, gig workers, and small retailers through vernacular AI assistants, micro-advisory tools, and sector-specific knowledge engines.

While much of the global dialogue around AI has focused on productivity gains and competitiveness, in India, its most powerful impact may be its ability to democratize access to work, to learning, to safety, and to opportunity. This vision of AI as a tool for

inclusion will be at the heart of the India-AI Impact Summit 2026, to be held in February. Bringing together policymakers, innovators and industry leaders, we aim to chart a discourse around how AI can be harnessed for People, Progress, and the Planet.

In India's expanding gig and platform economy, women are increasingly shaping a new digital workforce, one empowered by AI. Whether it is women entrepreneurs leveraging AI-driven marketplaces, or women drivers and delivery partners navigating safely through AI-powered safety systems, the technology is quietly reshaping agency and opportunity. Take, for instance, beauty and wellness platforms that use AI-based matching algorithms to pair customers with service professionals based on proximity, skill, and past performance. A majority of these professionals are women who now enjoy flexible hours, predictable income, and enhanced safety through AI-enabled verification and tracking. Similarly, ride-hailing platforms have integrated intelligent safety systems from real-time location sharing to voice-activated emergency features allowing women drivers to work with greater confidence and independence. While these systems existed before, AI has increased safety, reliability and efficiency of these platforms.

In rural and semi-urban India, AI-enabled financial tools are promoting digital inclusion. Vernacular AI assistants and voice-based digital payment systems are helping women overcome literacy and language barriers, enabling them to manage finances independently and securely.

For India's youth, AI is not merely a tool; it is an entry point into a new economy. Across states, government and private sector collaborations are building a pipeline of AI-skilled talent, from basic digital literacy to advanced machine learning. The Government of India has recently launched the YUVA AI for All National AI Literacy Campaign under the

IndiaAI Mission. Anchored on National Youth Day, the initiative aims to create foundational AI awareness among lakhs of students and young learners through a short, self-paced "AI 101" course. By leveraging existing school, higher education, and digital learning ecosystems, YUVA AI for All seeks to democratise access to AI knowledge, positioning AI literacy as a core life skill rather than a specialised privilege, and ensuring that India's youth across regions, languages, and socio-economic backgrounds are prepared to participate meaningfully in the AI-driven economy.

AI's role in inclusion extends beyond employment into public welfare. Startups like MyGate and SafeHouse Tech use AI-driven analytics to strengthen safety for women in residential and workplace settings. AI-powered grievance redressal systems are being integrated into government helplines such as 112 India, enabling quicker response times and data-driven deployment of emergency services.

In the agriculture sector, AI tools such as Kisan AI use machine learning models to predict pest infestations and weather-related risks, empowering women farmers to make informed, resilient decisions. Similarly, fintech innovators like Indifi and Kinara Capital are leveraging AI-driven credit scoring to extend credit to women-led enterprises that have historically lacked access to formal financial systems. This vision is also reflected in NITI Aayog's report, AI for Inclusive Societal Development. The report shows how AI can empower India's 490 million informal workers by expanding access to healthcare, education, skilling, and financial inclusion. It highlights how AI-driven tools can boost productivity and resilience for millions who form the backbone of India's economy.

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into economic and social systems, ensuring its ethical and inclusive use has become a national

priority. Anchored in the principle of "AI for All," India's approach focuses on fairness, transparency, and accountability to ensure that technology amplifies opportunity rather than inequality. By embedding AI into everyday platforms from payments and logistics to education and public services India is building an inclusive digital ecosystem that empowers people at every level. India has also implemented the Digital ShramSetu, a national mission dedicated to integrating cutting-edge technologies into India's informal economy. The implementation model is built on four pillars: identifying key needs by sector or persona, empowering state governments for execution, creating an enabling regulatory environment, and forming partnerships to drive down costs and ensure broad access. It will bring together government, businesses, and NGOs, all operating under a rigorous system for measuring impact. This model of accessibility and equity offers a compelling blueprint for the Global South on how AI can enable large-scale social and economic transformation.

If the first wave of India's digital revolution, led by Digital India and UPI, connected citizens, the next must ensure that AI connects them to opportunity. That means designing systems that are multilingual, gender-sensitive, and accessible, where the rural woman entrepreneur, the data labeler from Nagaland, and the young coder from Bhopal all have a stake in India's AI future.

The power of AI in India will not be measured by the sophistication of its algorithms, but by its capacity to level the playing field. Women, youth, and informal workers are not passive beneficiaries, they are becoming the architects of a more equitable AI economy. As the world looks toward India at the India-AI Impact Summit 2026, it will see a nation proving that inclusion is not a byproduct of technology; it is its greatest innovation.

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PM Surya Ghar Yojana: Where rooftops turn into powerhouses for the households

The implementation of the Prime Minister's flagship PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (PMS-GMBY) has gained remarkable traction in Jammu & Kashmir, positioning the Union Territory at the forefront of India's household-level renewable energy revolution.

Designed to provide free electricity up to 300 units per month through grid-connected rooftop solar systems, the scheme is rapidly transforming energy consumption patterns while strengthening energy self-reliance and sustainability across urban and rural households.

Backed by strong administrative oversight and a robust digital delivery framework, the scheme is being rolled out in a structured, transparent, and time-bound manner, reflecting the UT Administration's commitment to clean energy adoption and consumer-centric governance.

Impressive On-Ground Progress

As of 31 December 2025, the scheme has recorded robust physical and financial progress. A total of 17,998 rooftop solar systems have been installed across Jammu & Kashmir,

with 16,284 systems already commissioned and feeding clean power into the grid.

The financial impact is equally significant. Subsidies have been disbursed to 14,889 beneficiaries by the Central Government and 2,234 beneficiaries by the UT Government, with cumulative releases amounting to ₹129.57 crore from the Centre and ₹2.99 crore from the UT, underscoring the scale and seriousness of implementation.

Consumer-Friendly Subsidy Structure

The subsidy architecture under PM Surya Ghar has been designed to deliver maximum financial relief to households across different system capacities. For a 1 kW rooftop solar system, against an average project cost of ₹55,000, consumers receive ₹33,000 as MNRE subsidy and ₹3,000 as UT subsidy, bringing the total subsidy to ₹36,000.

Similarly, 2 kW systems receive a total subsidy of ₹72,000, while 3 kW systems attract a combined subsidy of ₹94,800, substantially reducing upfront costs. This carefully calibrated

subsidy framework has made rooftop solar installations financially viable and attractive, particularly for middle-income and lower-income households, accelerating adoption across the UT.

Digital Outreach and Vibrant Vendor Ecosystem

The scheme's fully digital execution model has ensured transparency, speed, and ease of access for consumers. The national portal has received 86,905 consumer applications, reflecting strong public enthusiasm and awareness.

To support this surge in demand, a robust vendor ecosystem has been developed, with 1,403 vendors registered across the UT. Vendor-consumer agreements have been signed in 11,779 cases, while access to affordable finance has been facilitated through institutional mechanisms.

Availability of Attractive Finance for RTS installation

A total of 26,225 loan applications have been submitted, of which 16,186 loans have already been disbursed at a special interest rate of around 7% per annum, covering up to 95% of the

project cost. This financial support has ensured that even households with limited upfront resources can participate in the solar transition. Additionally, 2,285 sites have already received material delivery, reflecting steady on-ground progress.

Strong Institutional Framework and Policy Support

The scheme's implementation is being closely monitored at the highest administrative level, with the Chief Secretary personally overseeing progress and coordination. Both power distribution utilities-Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDCL) and Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL)-have been designated as State Implementing Agencies, ensuring seamless execution across all districts. In a significant policy intervention aimed at enhancing affordability, the UT Government opted to supplement the Central Financial Assistance (CFA) provided by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) with an additional UT subsidy. This decision led to the sanction of ₹53.53 crore from the UT

Budget for supporting 85,000 residential beneficiaries over a three-year period from 2024-25 to 2026-27, reinforcing the Administration's pro-people approach.

Awareness, Capacity Building and Technical Preparedness

Recognising that awareness and technical competence are key to sustained success, the UT Administration has undertaken extensive outreach and capacity-building initiatives. Over 37.90 lakh bulk SMS messages have been disseminated to inform consumers, complemented by 923 IEC campaigns conducted across districts.

On the technical front, 138 structured training programmes have been organised, with 2,600 engineers trained to ensure quality installations, grid safety, and long-term system reliability.

Responsive Grievance Redressal

A strong and responsive grievance redressal mechanism has been institutionalised to maintain consumer confidence. Out of 1,157 grievances received from consumers and vendors, 1,154 have already been resolved, reflecting the Administration's

emphasis on accountability and service delivery.

Driving Sustainable Development and Energy Security

The PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana is fast emerging as a transformational initiative in Jammu & Kashmir. Beyond substantially reducing electricity bills-even making them zero for many households-the scheme is strengthening grid resilience through decentralized generation and reducing dependence on conventional power sources.

With strong policy backing, substantial financial support, and enthusiastic public participation, Jammu & Kashmir is steadily advancing towards its renewable energy targets while contributing meaningfully to India's national climate and energy security goals.

The J&K Administration remains firmly committed to scaling up rooftop solar adoption and ensuring that the benefits of this landmark initiative reach every eligible household within the stipulated timeline, ushering in a cleaner, greener, and more self-reliant energy future for the Union Territory.

Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026: Evolved as Nationwide Jan Andolan

ER. PRABHAT KISHORE

Pariksha Pe Charcha is an interactive initiative of the Prime Minister that provides a vibrant platform for students, teachers, and parents to engage on examinations, stress management, and related aspects of life, with the aim of transforming examination-related stress into a celebration of learning. It is organized annually to provide a platform for discussions on examinations, preparation strategies, and related issues.

The event is conducted ahead of the board and competitive examinations season and aims to address the concerns raised by students and other stakeholders. It opens space for honest talk on 3 Ps- Preparation, Pressure and Purpose.

Pariksha Pe Charcha has evolved as a global event, which is evident from the fact that PPC 8.0 saw participation from students in over 245 countries, teachers from 159 countries, and parents from 149 countries. For PPC 9.0, 41756407 students, 2477885 teachers and 612716 parents of Bharatvarsha have registered themselves, while 69874 students from 2450th countries, 54448 teachers from 171 countries and 2135 parents from 170countries has registered themselves to be part of the event.

The event has expanded steadily from around 22,000 in PPC 1.0 in 2018 to 3,56,68,817 registrations in PPC 8.0 in 2025. PPC 8.0 edition in 2025 was recognized by Guinness World Records for recording 3,56,68,817 registrations. PPC9.0 edition in 2026 has surpassed last year's Record with 4,49,24,465 online participant registrations.

Out of total 614851 parent registrations, 98553 parents are of class-6 children, 87731 of class-7 children, 93714 of class-8 children, 100940 of class-9 children, 97711 of class-10 children, 66530 of class-11 and 69672 parents are of class-12 children. 64.33% of parents are male while only 35.59



% of parents are female.

Out of total 2483333 teachers registration, 201261 teachers are from 18-25 age group, 616991 from 25-35 age group, 806605 from 35-45 age group, 627302 from 45-55 age group and 229124 are from 55-65 age group. 48.21% of teachers are male while 51.79 % of teachers are female.

Out of total 41826281 student registrations, 18.83% students have self-registration, while 81.17% students have registered themselves through teachers. 48.81% of the children are boys while 51.16% are girls. The higher representation of female students as well as female teachers reflects women

empowerment in a changing Bharat.

Age-wise participation of children is as follows:- Below 12 years-5980242, between 12 to 14 years-12240569, between 14 to 16 years-12933133, between 16 to 18 years-8647327, between 18 to 20 years-1756772 and above 20 years -268237 students. Class-wise child registration is as - 6thclass - 6063993, 7th class - 6241224, 8thclass- 6428028, 9thclass- 7281112, 10thclass- 6745084, 11thclass- 4604336, and 12thclass- 4462503.

Uttar Pradesh stood first in overall registration as well as student registration, while Bihar stood second in overall registration

and first in teacher registration. Chhattisgarh stood first in parent registration.

As part of the annual run-up to Pariksha Pe Charcha, a series of student-centric engagements are organized for students in schools from 12th January (Swami Vivekanand Jayanti celebrated as the National Youth Day) to 23rd January, 2026 (Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Jayanti celebrated as the Parakram Day), such as Swadeshi Sanjlap Daud-Students Run/Walk for Self-Reliance, Vande Mataram- Manta of Freedom, Indigenous Games Sessions, Meme Creation, Nukkad Natak on Exam and Life Skills,

Short Videos & Student Testimonials, Student Anchor- Student Guest interactive Sessions, Yoga-cum Meditation Sessions, Poetry and Songs by Students, Poster Making Activities, Quiz on Operation Sindoor, etc.

Altogether 36 Students have been selected, one each from every State/UTs, to interact with Prime Minister. The selected students are :- (1) Andman & Nicobar- Nesity Philip, (2) Andhra Pradesh- Shaik Jameer Basha, (3) Arunachal Pradesh- Tenzin Choiky, (4) Assam- Mridulay Barman, (5) Bihar- Mohit Kumar, (6) Chandigarh- Ananya, (7) Chhattisgarh- Shrishti Sahu, (8) Dadar & Nagar Haveli-Isha Shailesh Patel, (9) Delhi-Mansi, (10) Goa-Shrijit Gadgil, (11) Gujarat-Sanvi Acharya, (12) Haryana-Kavyansh Chauhan, (13) Himachal Pradesh-Anushka, (14) Jammu & Kashmir- Chahhat, (15) Jharkhand- Susar Hembram, (16) Karnataka- Panagbhushana, (17) Kerala-Sreehari V, (18) Laddakh- Padma Chosdon, (19) Lakshdweep-Nusla Ameer, (20) Madhya Pradesh- Ayyush Tiwari, (21) Maharashtra- Pranav Bhosale, (22) Manipur- Cdt. Memota Keisham, (23) Meghalaya- Andy Rodrick Lyngdoh, (24) Mizoram- Lalthmuanpuii Pachuau, (25) Nagaland- Pinotoli Kappo, (26) Odisha- Vrinda Ram Panda, (27) Puducherry- Keerthana, (28) Punjab- Ekam Kaur, (29) Rajasthan- Bhoomika Sharma, (30) Sikkim- Shreya Pradhan, (31) Tamilnadu- Nikhil R Nair, (32) Telangana- Sabavath Venkatesh, (33) Tripura- Mughda Saha, (34) Uttar Pradesh- Vaibhav Prajapati, (35) Uttarakhand- Rohan Rana, and (36) West Bengal- Arpita Mahato.

The "Pariksha Pe Charcha" event has evolved into a nationwide Jan Andolan, encouraging students and youth to approach examinations with confidence and positivity and to celebrate the exam season as an Utsav.

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