BACKGROUNDERS
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Transforming Rural India

AI IN INDIA
FROM VISION TO IMPACT

February 23, 2026

Key Takeaways

- AI is emerging as a foundational driver of inclusive rural development in India.
- **India's AI governance frameworks** prioritize fairness, accountability, transparency, and context-specific risk mitigation to prevent exclusion and administrative harm.
- **AI integration within Panchayati Raj Institutions, Digital Public Infrastructure**, and **welfare systems enhances** transparency, efficiency, planning, and grassroots participation.
- Multilingual and voice-enabled platforms such as **BHASHINI**, **BharatGen**, and **Adi Vaani** reduce linguistic and literacy barriers, expanding access to services and governance.
- **National missions, sectoral initiatives, state-led innovations**, and the **India–AI Impact Summit 2026** reflect a coordinated shift toward scalable, people-centric AI-aligned with inclusive growth and the vision of **Viksit Bharat@2047**.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the ability of **machines** to perform **cognitive tasks** such as learning, reasoning, and decision-making. In recent years, AI has rapidly moved from **experimental use** to **large-scale deployment,** driven by advances in data, computing power, and connectivity. In India, AI is being developed within a **social-purpose framework** aligned with the vision of **inclusive welfare**, positioning it as a public good aimed at equity and broad-based access rather than exclusivity. By strengthening service delivery, supporting data-driven governance, and integrating marginalised communities into formal systems, AI is particularly relevant to **rural development** across **agriculture, healthcare, skilling, employment,** and **local governance**. The people-centric

AI IMPACT SUMMIT
भारत 2026 INDIA

orientation of this approach is reflected in the **India–AI Impact Summit 2026**, which emphasises **rural livelihoods, social inclusion,** and **service delivery** across sectors such as **agriculture, healthcare, education,** and **governance.** By fostering institutional coordination and scaling proven use cases under the **IndiaAI Mission** and **Digital India**, the Summit signals a transition from pilot initiatives to system-wide implementation for **equitable** and **sustainable rural development.**

National AI Policy and Governance Framework for Inclusive Development

India's approach to AI is anchored in a dual framework that combines a forward-looking national strategy for inclusive growth with a robust governance architecture to ensure **responsible, transparent,** and **equitable** deployment across sectors, particularly in rural and socially sensitive contexts.

National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence: AI for All

The **National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence**, launched by **NITI Aayog** in **June 2018**, identifies AI as a transformative tool to address India's development challenges by improving **access, affordability, and quality of essential services**. It prioritises inclusive and socially oriented growth, particularly in underserved sectors and regions, with rural India recognised as a key focus area due to persistent service and infrastructure gaps. In sectors such as **agriculture, healthcare,** and **education**, AI-enabled decision-support systems and data-driven platforms are envisaged to strengthen **frontline workers** and **local institutions**, extending services to remote populations without extensive physical infrastructure expansion.

The strategy emphasises augmentation rather than displacement of human labour, positioning AI as a support system for **farmers, health workers, teachers,** and **administrators.** It also highlights AI's role in promoting **inclusive economic participation** through **decentralised skilling, digital work opportunities**, and **technology-aligned training**. Under the **#AIforAll framework**, AI is framed as a catalyst for inclusive rural growth, strengthened governance, and enhanced human capacity.

India AI Governance Guidelines: Deploying AI Responsibly in Rural India

The **India AI Governance Guidelines**, launched by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** (MeitY) in **November 2025**, reorient AI policy from a focus on applications to **governance frameworks, safeguards,** and **institutional preparedness**-an approach particularly significant for rural India. The guidelines establish people-centric principles, such as **fairness, accountability,** and **transparency**, to mitigate the risks of bias, exclusion, and opaque decision-making. Recognising that global risk models may not fully capture India's socio-economic context, the framework advocates **India-specific risk assessment and protections**, especially in welfare delivery systems where automated tools influence targeting and service provision.
The framework comprises four key components:

- **Seven guiding principles (Sutras)** for ethical and responsible AI.
- **Key recommendations** across six pillars of AI governance.
- An **action plan** mapped to short, medium, and long-term timelines.
- **Practical guidelines** for industry, developers, and regulators to ensure transparent and accountable AI deployment.

It further promotes **system-level governance** through **Digital Public Infrastructure**, embedding privacy, interoperability, and accountability by design. A **whole-of-government approach** enhances coordination across ministries and states, **strengthening transparency, grievance redressal,** and **institutional capacity** to ensure inclusive and trust-based AI-enabled governance.

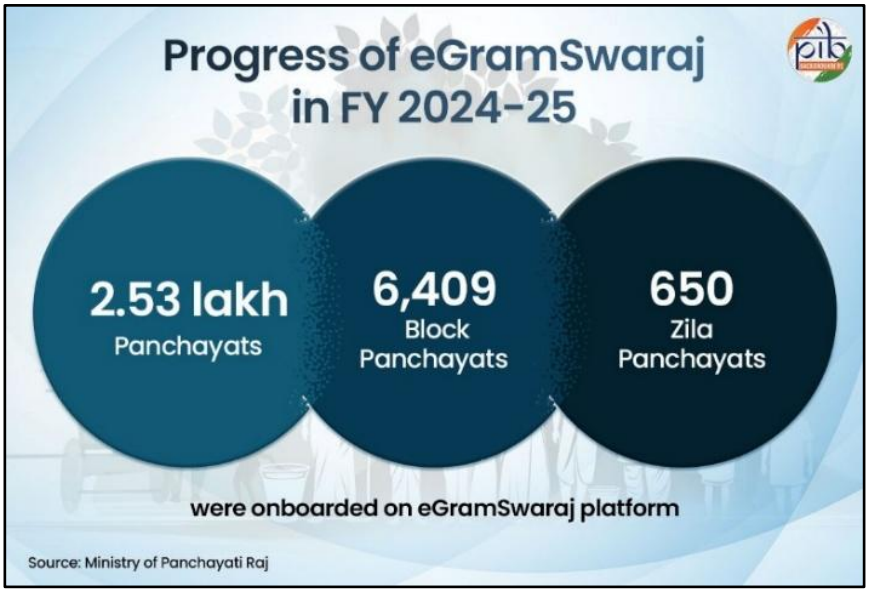
AI in Rural e-Governance and Decentralized Administration

Artificial Intelligence is increasingly being used to strengthen rural governance by improving transparency, efficiency, and citizen access to public services.

AI Tools for Gram Panchayat and Local Governance

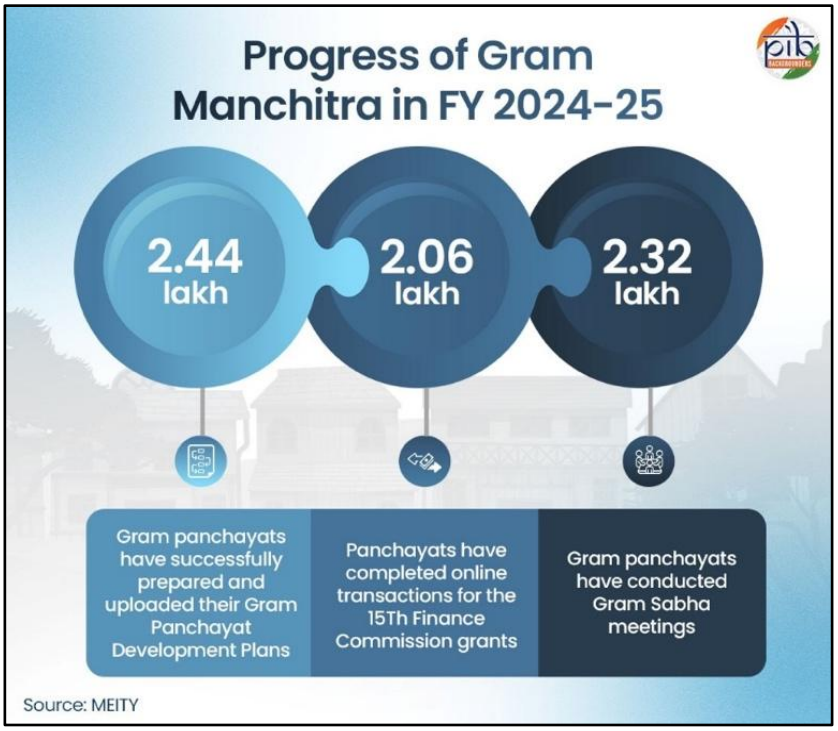
AI is being directly integrated into **Panchayati Raj Institutions** to **strengthen decentralised governance**. One such tool is ***SabhaSaar,*** an **AI-enabled tool that generates structured minutes of Gram Sabha and Panchayat meetings** from audio or video inputs. By automating documentation, SabhaSaar reduces manual effort, improves consistency, and ensures timely and unbiased records. Integrated with BHASHINI, it supports functionality in 14 Indian languages, enabling multilingual accessibility across rural communities. By streamlining administrative processes, *SabhaSaar* allows local officials to focus more effectively on governance outcomes and service delivery.

AI-enabled governance is further strengthened through digital platforms such as ***eGramSwaraj*** and ***Gram Manchitra***. Developed under the **e-Panchayat Mission** Mode Project and launched in April 2020, eGramSwaraj consolidates key Panchayat functions- including **planning, budgeting, accounting, monitoring, asset management,** and **payments**- into a unified digital system. In **FY 2024-25,** the platform onboarded over **2.53 lakh gram panchayats,** along with **6,409 block panchayats** and **650 Zila panchayats**, reflecting its extensive adoption in decentralised governance.



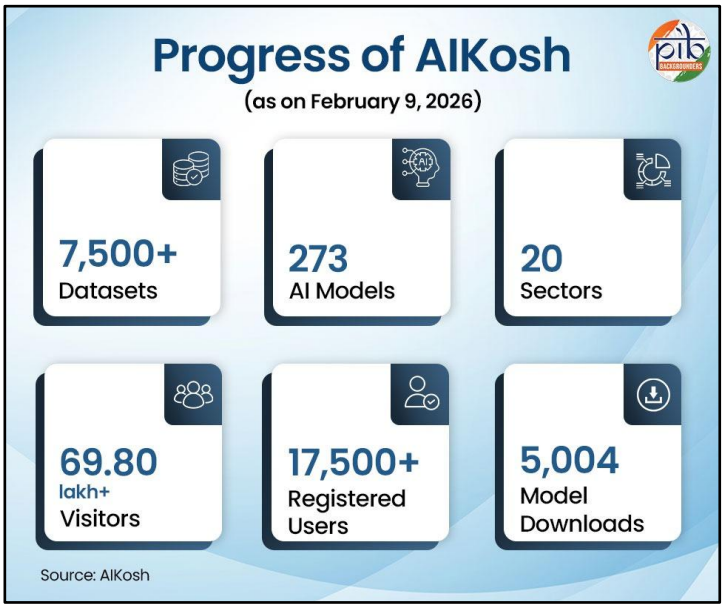
Gram Manchitra complements administrative systems by offering **GIS-based visualisation and planning tools** to support rural development. It enables Panchayats to **map assets, monitor**

projects, and **integrate spatial data** into Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs). By linking geotagged infrastructure with demographic and environmental data, the platform enables **evidence-based decision-making** across infrastructure planning, natural resource management, and disaster response, thereby strengthening alignment between planning and implementation. As of FY 2024–25, **2.44 lakh gram panchayats** have prepared and uploaded GPDPs, **2.06 lakh** have completed online transactions under the 15th Finance Commission grants, and **2.32 lakh** have conducted Gram Sabha meetings.



AIKosh: Use-Cases for Rural e-Governance

AIKosh serves as a national **repository of AI datasets** and models to advance **public-sector innovation**. It consolidates data from **governmental** and **non-governmental sources** and offers ready-to-deploy AI models across diverse sectors. With more than **7,500 datasets** and **273 AI models** spanning 20 industries, the platform lowers entry barriers for developers designing governance and service delivery applications. By enabling the reuse of foundational AI components, AIKosh accelerates the development of solutions for **rural e-governance** and **public administration**. As of 9 February 2026, the platform has recorded over **69.80 lakh visits, 17,500 registered users,** and **5,004 model downloads**, underscoring the expanding role of shared data infrastructure in scaling AI for public good.



AI Infrastructure and Sectoral Integration in Rural India

The effective use of Artificial Intelligence in rural development extends beyond application design to the establishment of robust digital and institutional infrastructure. In India, AI infrastructure is being advanced through collaborative efforts involving government agencies, academic institutions, and national platforms. These initiatives integrate data resources, computational capacity, and domain expertise to enhance planning, monitoring, and service delivery in rural contexts. Collectively, they form the foundational ecosystem needed to scale AI solutions and align them with grassroots development priorities.

BhuPRAHARI: AI and Geospatial Infrastructure for Rural Asset Management

BhuPRAHARI, launched in **May 2025** by the **Ministry of Rural Development** in collaboration with **IIT Delhi**, integrates AI and geospatial technologies to monitor assets created under MGNREGA. Initially, the platform was utilised as a **water observatory** for monitoring ***Amrit Sarovars***, enabling scientific assessment of water availability, and storage status through satellite- and ground-based data. The platform will now be utilised for monitoring assets created under the **Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin)** (VB-G RAM G). By leveraging ground- and satellite-based data with AI-driven analytics, the platform enables **real-time asset tracking, enhancing transparency, accountability,** and **resource optimisation**. This convergence of AI and geospatial infrastructure strengthens the planning and implementation of large-scale rural development programmes.

Digital ShramSetu Mission and AI for Informal Workers

The ***Digital ShramSetu Mission*** is a coordinated initiative to deploy AI and other frontier technologies within the **informal sector.** By aligning technological deployment with regulatory frameworks and impact assessment, the mission enhances service delivery and livelihood support for informal and rural workers, thereby promoting **inclusive** and **sustainable rural development**.

AI Infrastructure in Agriculture

In agriculture, AI operates as a **decision-support system** at the farm level, enabling data-driven management practices. Applications include **weather forecasting, pest detection, and optimization of sowing** and **irrigation schedules.** The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has deployed AI through initiatives such as ***Kisan e-Mitra***, a virtual assistant providing information on government schemes, including income support programmes. Additionally, platforms such as the **National Pest Surveillance System and Crop Health Monitoring integrate satellite imagery, meteorological data,** and **soil information** to generate real-time advisories. These interventions **reduce production risks, enhance productivity,** and **strengthen farmers' income security**, particularly in vulnerable regions.

AI Infrastructure for Education and Skilling

At the national level, NCERT's ***DIKSHA*** platform incorporates AI-enabled features such as keyword-based video search and read-aloud tools to enhance accessibility and promote **inclusive learning**, particularly for **students with visual impairments** and **diverse educational needs**. Complementing this, the **National e-Governance Division** under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has introduced **Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI (*YUVAI*)**-to equip students from **Classes VIII to XII** with foundational AI and socio-technical skills through experiential learning. By enabling AI across sectors, including agriculture, health, and rural development, the programme fosters **real-world problem-solving** and **future-ready competencies across diverse contexts.**

A State-Led Initiative to Promote AI in Rural Development

The **Suman Sakhi WhatsApp Chatbot** illustrates state-level adoption of AI to strengthen rural healthcare delivery. Launched under the **National Health Mission** in Madhya Pradesh, it employs **AI-enabled conversational tools** to provide women and families with **accessible maternal** and **newborn health information**. The platform offers details on delivery services, nearby health facilities, and support from frontline workers such as **ASHAs and ANMs**. Leveraging WhatsApp enhances **last-mile outreach**, particularly in rural and high-risk areas. Planned features, including **multilingual access, grievance redressal,** and **real-time updates**, demonstrate the potential of locally contextualised AI solutions to advance inclusive and responsive rural healthcare systems.

AI for Language Inclusion and Multilingual Governance

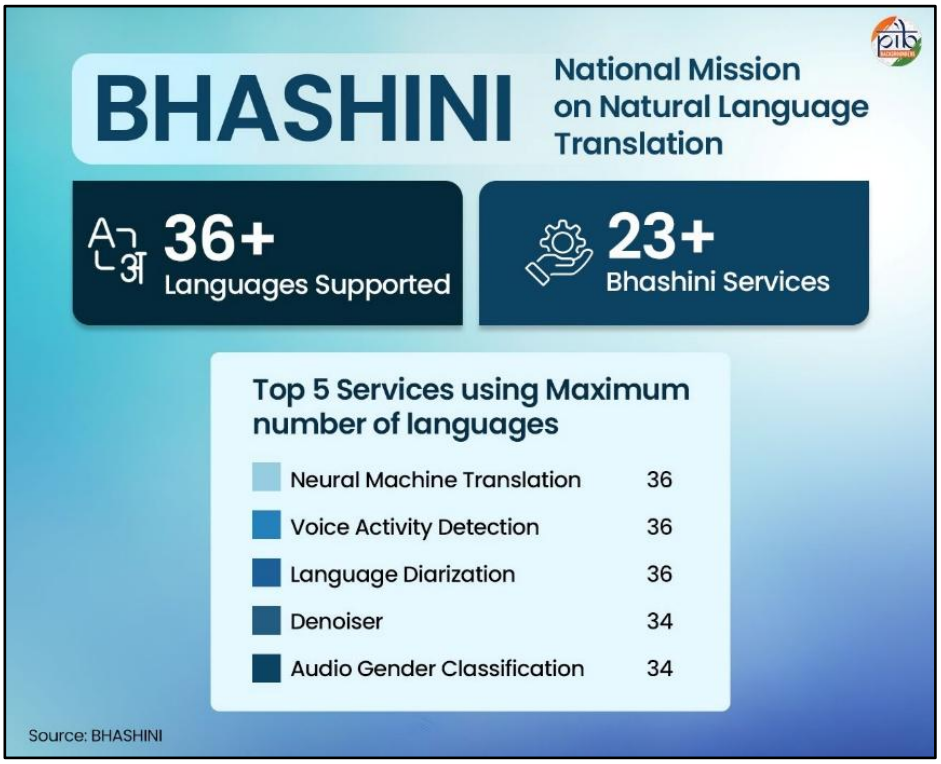
Artificial Intelligence is playing a central role in expanding language access and inclusion in India by enabling citizens, especially in rural, remote, and tribal areas, to interact with digital services in their own languages, thereby strengthening last-mile service delivery and participatory governance.

BHASHINI – National Mission on Natural Language Translation

BHASHINI is an AI-enabled language platform designed to reduce linguistic barriers to accessing digital services and is currently integrated with **over 23 government services**. Launched in July 2022, it offers **translation, speech-to-text,** and **voice-based interfaces** across more than **36 Indian languages**, promoting inclusion for users with limited literacy or digital proficiency, particularly in rural areas. Through integration with public digital infrastructure and cross-sector partnerships, the platform has scaled significantly. As of October 2025, BHASHINI supports over **350 AI language models** and has surpassed **one million downloads**.

BHASHINI operates as a collaborative ecosystem fostering **co-creation** and **innovation,** partnering with over **50 ministries, startups,** and **private entities** to develop multilingual solutions across **agriculture, governance, education,** and **public administration**. By integrating **voice-first** and **language-inclusive design** into digital platforms, it enhances last-mile

connectivity and promotes **equitable participation** in the **digital economy**. In rural development contexts, BHASHINI ensures that **linguistic diversity** does not impede access to welfare schemes, information, or public services.



BHASHINI Sanchalan is a collaborative initiative of central ministries and the Digital India BHASHINI Division that strengthens multilingual governance through AI-enabled language technologies. Implemented under the broader BHASHINI programme, it integrates **voice-first interfaces** and **translation capabilities** into public digital systems to enhance governance processes and service delivery. The initiative supports the development of **domain-specific language models**, enhances translation accuracy, and standardises terminology through collaborative model training. The initiative promotes linguistic inclusion and citizen participation, particularly in rural and underserved regions.

BharatGen AI: India's Multilingual AI Model

BharatGen, launched in June 2025, is **India's first government-funded, sovereign, multilingual, and multimodal Large Language Model**. Developed under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems and advanced through the IndiaAI Mission, it supports **22 Indian languages** and integrates text, speech, and document-vision capabilities. Built on **India-centric datasets** and led by a consortium of academic institutions, BharatGen establishes a domestically developed **AI stack for public** and **developmental applications**.

In the context of rural development, BharatGen enables inclusive, language-accessible AI solutions that **reduce literacy and digital barriers**. Its voice-enabled and multilingual capabilities support applications in **agriculture, governance,** and **citizen services**, **strengthening last-mile delivery** and **rural participation** in the digital economy.

Adi Vaani: Enabling Inclusive Rural and Tribal Development

Adi Vaani is an **AI-enabled language platform** designed to address communication barriers faced by tribal communities in remote and underserved regions. Under the **Adi Karmayogi framework**, it facilitates access to **governance, education,** and **healthcare services** in native tribal languages. Developed using authentic linguistic data from State Tribal Research Institutes, the platform integrates technological innovation with community knowledge. It incorporates feedback mechanisms to ensure **linguistic accuracy, cultural relevance,** and **continuous improvement.**

Beyond translation, Adi Vaani supports **language preservation, cultural documentation,** and **digital learning** by digitising endangered languages and oral traditions. By enhancing linguistic inclusion in public services and supporting community empowerment, the platform exemplifies the **responsible use of AI** to advance **inclusive rural** and **tribal development** aligned with national priorities.

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence is **steadily evolving into a foundational pillar of rural transformation in India**, not merely as a technological intervention but as an integrated public infrastructure aligned with inclusive development goals. Through a combination of **strategic vision, governance safeguards, digital public infrastructure, multilingual platforms,** and **sectoral integration** across agriculture, healthcare, education, skilling, and local governance, AI is being institutionalised to augment human capacity rather than replace it. When embedded within principles of fairness, transparency, and linguistic inclusion, AI strengthens **last-mile service delivery**, enhances participatory governance, and reduces structural inequalities. As India advances toward **Viksit Bharat@2047**, the **responsible** and **people-centric deployment of AI in rural ecosystems** will remain central to building resilient, equitable, and future-ready development systems.

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