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CONNECTING INDIA WITH INTELLIGENCE: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE VISION OF EK BHARAT SHRESTHA BHARAT

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Abstract
This paper examines the synergistic potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in realizing the "Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat" (EBSB) vision, which aims to foster national unity and celebrate India's rich cultural diversity. It argues that AI is not merely a technological tool but a transformative force capable of bridging socio-economic, linguistic, and regional divides. Through an analysis of current initiatives, policy frameworks, and case studies, the paper explores how AI-driven solutions in governance, education, healthcare, agriculture, and cultural preservation can promote inclusive development and administrative integration. The study identifies key challenges, including digital infrastructure gaps, algorithmic bias, and skill disparities, and concludes with a multi-stakeholder framework for deploying AI as a catalyst for building a more connected, equitable, and knowledge-based nation.

Key Words: Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Use of AI, Digital transformation.

1. Introduction

1.1 Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat (EBSB): Vision and National Integration: India's unity is rooted in its extraordinary diversity of languages, cultures, traditions, and socio-economic realities. Recognizing the need to strengthen emotional and cultural bonds among its people, the Government of India launched the Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat (EBSB) initiative in 2015. The primary objective of EBSB is to promote national integration by fostering mutual understanding and cooperation among different States and Union Territories. The initiative emphasizes cultural exchange, people-to-people contact, and the sharing of best practices across regions to reinforce the idea of unity in diversity. The core pillars of the EBSB framework include cultural exchange and appreciation, institutional and linguistic understanding, and mutual economic and social development. Through structured state pairings, educational exchanges, tourism promotion, and collaborative governance practices, EBSB seeks to build a shared national consciousness while respecting regional identities. However, the scale and complexity of India's diversity demand innovative mechanisms that go beyond traditional approaches to integration.

1.2 Digital India: The Foundational Infrastructure for National Connectivity: The realization of EBSB is closely linked to India's rapid digital transformation under the Digital India mission. Launched to create a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy, Digital India has laid the foundational infrastructure required for large-scale integration. Key initiatives such as Aadhaar for digital identity, Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for financial inclusion, and widespread internet and mobile connectivity have significantly reduced barriers to access and participation. These digital platforms have enhanced transparency, improved service delivery, and enabled real-time interaction between citizens and the state. By connecting remote and marginalized populations to governance systems, Digital India has

created a unified digital backbone that supports social inclusion and economic participation. Nevertheless, while digital connectivity enables access, it does not automatically ensure meaningful engagement, personalization, or equitable outcomes across India's diverse population.

1.3 Artificial Intelligence as the Intelligent Layer for EBSB: As India advances from digital enablement to digital intelligence, Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerges as the next transformative layer built upon existing digital infrastructure. AI possesses the capability to analyze vast datasets, learn from patterns, and deliver context-aware, personalized, and scalable solutions. In the context of EBSB, AI can function as an "intelligent integrator", enabling deeper socio-cultural, linguistic, and administrative cohesion.

AI-driven applications such as multilingual language translation, predictive governance, personalized education platforms, smart healthcare diagnostics, precision agriculture, and digital cultural preservation can significantly reduce regional and social disparities. By adapting solutions to local needs while maintaining national coherence, AI can enhance inclusivity and efficiency in public service delivery. Thus, AI is not merely a technological advancement but a strategic enabler for achieving the broader objectives of unity, equity, and shared growth envisioned under EBSB.

2. Literature Review

Much of the AI literature concentrates on economic outcomes—such as productivity gains, employment effects, and financial inclusion—without adequately connecting these to broader goals of administrative convergence or national unity. For instance, studies examine AI's impact on India's economy through productivity and automation effects (Panigrahi et al., 2024) but do not link these analyses to state-to-state administrative coordination or integrative governance strategies.

Despite policy interest in digital governance, there is a paucity of research exploring how AI might support administrative convergence or cooperative governance frameworks across regions. Current research tends to address algorithmic fairness and bias within Indian contexts (Sambasivan et al., 2021) but does not explicitly examine the potential for AI systems to reduce bureaucratic silos or align multi-state public service delivery.

Existing literature predominantly examines Artificial Intelligence from an economic and productivity-oriented perspective, emphasizing its role in economic growth, efficiency, and innovation. Studies by NITI Aayog (2018) and Bughin et al. (2018) highlight AI's potential to enhance GDP growth, improve service delivery, and increase competitiveness. However, these studies largely overlook AI's role in fostering national integration, administrative convergence, or inter-state cooperation. The social and cultural dimensions of AI adoption—particularly in a diverse country like India—remain underexplored.

Scholars and international organizations recognize AI's potential in language preservation, cultural heritage digitization, and creative industries. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that AI can support cultural diversity and multilingualism if deployed responsibly. However, most studies remain conceptual or policy-oriented, with minimal empirical evidence on AI-powered cultural exchange platforms or their long-term impact on reducing regional and cultural divides. Research linking AI, regional languages, and inclusive cultural participation in India is particularly scarce.

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3. Research Methodology

3.1 Problem Statements: While digital connectivity is growing, intelligent *integration* and personalized access remain challenges. This paper posits that ethically deployed, inclusive AI can address these gaps, acting as the key enabler for transforming "Digital India" into a cognitively connected "Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat."

3.2 Research Objectives

- To analyze the alignment between India's National AI Strategy (NITI Aayog, 2018) and the objectives of the Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat mission.
- To identify and evaluate existing AI initiatives that implicitly or explicitly promote inter-state connectivity and inclusive development.
- To assess the major challenges (infrastructural, linguistic, ethical, skill-based) in deploying AI for national integration.
- To propose a strategic framework for prioritizing AI applications that directly contribute to the EBSB vision

3.3 Research Gap: Few empirical or theoretical studies investigate how AI can harmonize administrative processes across states or enhance governance interoperability. Lack of studies assessing AI tools for interoperable governance, shared administrative platforms, or collaborative public policy across state boundaries. AI is extensively studied as an economic enabler, but its potential contribution to Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat–type integration goals is insufficiently addressed.

3.4 Methodology

- Type: Descriptive and analytical research based on secondary data.
- Data Sources:
    - Policy Documents: NITI Aayog's AI Strategy, MeitY's reports, EBSB action plans.
    - Government Data: AI use cases on the National AI Portal (indiaai.gov.in), ASER reports on education, NFHS data on health disparities.
    - Academic & Think-Tank Publications: Papers from IDFC Institute, Carnegie India, ORF.
    - Credible News & Case Studies: Documented AI projects in states (e.g., Cropin's AI solutions, Microsoft's Project VeLLM for local languages).
- Analysis Method: Thematic analysis to identify convergence points between AI potential and EBSB goals. Comparative analysis of state-level digital and AI readiness.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 AI for Bridging the Linguistic Divide (Promoting “Understanding”)

According to industry and policy reports by IAMAI and Google–KPMG, Indian language internet users significantly outnumber English-language users, accounting for nearly two-thirds of India’s total internet population. Despite this linguistic diversity, the availability and maturity of AI-based language tools remain uneven across languages. High-resource languages such as Hindi, English, Tamil, and Telugu receive disproportionate attention, while tribal and low-resource languages such as Santali, Manipuri, Bodo, and Khasi remain underrepresented in AI datasets.

Government-supported initiatives such as Project Vaani (AI4Bharat) and Bhashini (National Language Translation Mission) aim to address this imbalance by creating open, annotated

datasets and developing speech-to-text, text-to-text, and text-to-speech AI models for Indian languages.

Findings and Analysis

The analysis reveals a clear digital linguistic asymmetry. While AI tools for Hindi and English are relatively mature and widely deployed across governance, education, and commerce, many regional and indigenous languages lack robust AI support. This imbalance risks reinforcing linguistic marginalization rather than reducing it.

However, initiatives like Project Vaani have made significant progress by collecting large-scale speech datasets across Indian languages, including dialectal variations. Bhashini, by integrating multiple AI language models into a single national platform, enables multilingual communication across public digital services. These efforts demonstrate how AI can simultaneously preserve linguistic diversity while enabling cross-linguistic communication.

4.2 AI for Administrative Integration and Cooperative Federalism ("Connecting")

Data and Examples

India's move toward integrated digital governance is reflected in platforms such as Bhavishya, which enables seamless pension processing and transfer across states, and the One Nation, One Ration Card (ONORC) system, which allows beneficiaries to access food security benefits nationwide. These systems increasingly rely on AI-driven data validation, fraud detection, and predictive analytics.

AI applications are also being explored in disaster management, public health surveillance, and law enforcement, where real-time data sharing across states is critical.

Findings and Analysis

The findings indicate that AI-enabled platforms significantly reduce administrative fragmentation by enabling interoperable databases and predictive decision-making. For example, AI-based flood prediction models use meteorological and geospatial data shared across states to provide early warnings. Similarly, AI-driven disease surveillance systems can track outbreaks across state boundaries, enabling coordinated responses.

Such platforms reduce duplication, improve efficiency, and strengthen cooperative federalism by aligning state-level actions with national priorities while respecting local contexts.

4.3 AI for Equitable Development and Access ("Shrestha Bharat")

4.3.1 Education

Data and Analysis: Platforms such as DIKSHA integrate AI-based analytics to assess learner progress, recommend content, and support Personalized Adaptive Learning (PAL). AI enables content customization based on language, learning pace, and regional curriculum differences.

Findings: AI reduces disparities in educational quality by delivering standardized yet personalized learning experiences across states, particularly benefiting students in rural and underserved regions.

4.3.2 Healthcare

Data and Analysis: AI-driven diagnostic tools such as NIRMAN for tuberculosis detection and Swasth AI for clinical decision support, combined with telemedicine platforms, extend expert healthcare access to remote regions.

Findings: AI bridges geographical and infrastructural gaps by enabling early diagnosis, reducing referral delays, and supporting frontline health workers irrespective of state boundaries

4.3.3 Agriculture

Data and Analysis: AI-based solutions for crop health monitoring, yield prediction, and personalized advisories—such as IBM's Watson Decision Platform for Agriculture—use satellite imagery and weather data to guide farmers.

Findings: These systems enhance productivity and resilience across diverse agro-climatic zones, ensuring that farmers benefit from national-level intelligence while receiving localized recommendations.

4.4 AI for Cultural Preservation and Exchange ("Celebrating Diversity")

Data and Example

Initiatives such as the National Digital Library of India, AI-assisted manuscript restoration projects, and digitization of folk art, music, and literature demonstrate AI's role in cultural preservation. Emerging applications include AI-curated virtual heritage tours and recommendation systems for regional cultural content.

Findings and Analysis

AI enables large-scale cataloging, translation, and contextualization of cultural assets, making them accessible across linguistic and regional boundaries. Recommendation algorithms can expose users in one state to cultural expressions from another, fostering curiosity and appreciation rather than cultural isolation.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The research reveals that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a very resourceful and powerful tool in the areas of connectivity, personalization, and efficient governance which are the main aims of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat (EBSB). AI-powered language technologies, integrated governance platforms, and sectoral applications such as education, healthcare, agriculture, and culture together not only promote national unity but also acknowledge diversity among regions. AI, when backed up by inclusive and ethical policy frameworks, acts as a cognitive infrastructure that unites people. It does so by incorporating understanding through language, integration of. the administration being a part of it, and financing quality provision through equal service delivery while opening up regional diversity as a cultural merit to be celebrated. In other terms, AI has the power to change the scenario of digital connectivity from being a mere channel to that of a meaningful and sustainable national integration and in so doing, it will be a great facilitator in prompting the holistic vision of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat.

5.2 Key Recommendations

- AI for EBSB Task Force: Establish a joint task force under MeitY and the Ministry of Culture to coordinate AI initiatives supporting EBSB.
- Linguistic AI Priority: Invest in AI datasets and models for all 22 Scheduled Languages to ensure inclusive participation.
- AI Integration Index: Develop an index to assess and incentivize states' use of AI for cooperative governance.
- Federated Learning Frameworks: Enable inter-state AI collaboration while protecting data privacy.
- National AI Literacy Mission: Promote public awareness, trust, and ethical AI usage.

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