

## Digital Delhi Conclave 2025 Concludes with Engaging Discussions on Digital Public Infrastructure and Sustainability

New Delhi, [25 February, 2025] – The **Digital Delhi Conclave 2025 (DDC '25)**, hosted by **IIIT-Delhi**, brought together leading experts, policymakers, academicians, and students for a thought-provoking dialogue on **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure**, with a special focus on **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**.

The conclave began by highlighting its role in bridging technology with **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Over the past five years, **DDC** has established itself as a platform for discussions on how IT can drive sustainability. This year's theme, **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**, focused on the vital role that private entities play in delivering public functions within the DPI ecosystem. Welcoming the attendees, **Prof. Ranjan Bose (Director, IIIT-Delhi)** shared key insights on the transformative impact of DPI on daily life, from **digital payments for street vendors to seamless travel experiences through Digi Yatra**. He emphasized the need for **cross-sector collaboration** to bridge socio-economic disparities while addressing critical concerns such as **privacy and inclusivity**.

One of the most anticipated discussions at DDC '25 was the panel on “**Privacy – A Public Concern?**”, moderated by **Naresh Aditya Madhav (Data Protection Officer, Concentrix Corp.)**. The session explored India's evolving data protection landscape and the complexities surrounding digital privacy. **Prof. Sambuddho (IIIT-Delhi)** provided an insightful analysis of the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act**, highlighting the vulnerabilities associated with Aadhaar and the widespread disregard for privacy in India, where it is often seen as a “quasi-blasphemous” concept. **Smriti Parsheera (Lawyer & Digital Policy Researcher)** reinforced these concerns, drawing attention to the commodification of health data and the potential risks associated with schemes like **Ayushman Bharat**. **Dr. Deepak Prince (IIIT-Delhi)** framed privacy as a **moral issue**, emphasizing that ensuring privacy requires a two-pronged approach: **transparency and protection**. The panel engaged in a compelling discussion on how India can navigate the fine balance between privacy rights and the economic and political pressures shaping digital governance.

Another engaging session focused on **the public aspect of DPI and its implications for the future**. Moderated by **Dr. Manohar Kumar (IIIT-Delhi)**, the discussion challenged traditional definitions of “public” within DPI. **Ms. Kriti Mittal (Associate Director, Strategy & Policy, eGovernments Foundation)** highlighted the pathways to unlocking the full potential of DPI for societal benefit, urging stakeholders to rethink the way digital infrastructure serves the public. **Prof. Balaji Parthasarathy (IIIT Bangalore)** posed a critical question: “**DPI for whom?**”, arguing that DPI is not just about efficiency and service delivery but about ensuring that the benefits reach the right people. **Prof. Shishir K Jha (IIT Bombay)** stressed the importance of treating **data as a public good**, advocating for DPI frameworks that empower policymakers with data-driven decision-making capabilities. The discussion delved into the nuances of accessibility, equity, and governance in the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

The importance of inclusivity in DPI was further explored in a dedicated **workshop on gender-responsive digital infrastructure**, led by **Sharon Buteau (Executive Director, LEAD, Krea University)**. She introduced the concept of “**gender intentionality**”, arguing that being gender-neutral is not enough and that digital frameworks must actively incorporate gender considerations. Sharon presented a striking statistic—**while 350 million people use UPI, only 30% are women**—highlighting the **gender gap in digital adoption**. She outlined six key areas that need attention to build a **Gender-Responsive DPI: Affordability, Accessibility, Digital Literacy, Relevance, Safety & Security, and Social Norms**. The workshop provided valuable insights into how digital services can be designed to cater to the diverse needs of all users, especially marginalized communities.

The day concluded with a **fireside chat on GST digitization**, featuring **Mr. M. V. Vasudevan (Retd. IRS)** in conversation with **Dr. Anuj Grover (IIIT-Delhi)**. Mr. Vasudevan shared his firsthand experience of **digitizing GST**, emphasizing the importance of defining **clear business specifications** at the outset of any large-scale digital project. He discussed the complexities of managing **redundancies and workflows**, noting that a well-assembled team is essential for ensuring smooth project execution. He also touched upon key considerations such as **data security, recovery mechanisms, and user experience**, illustrating how robust digital infrastructure can lead to seamless governance. His insights offered a valuable perspective on the challenges and opportunities of large-scale digital transformation in India.

As **Digital Delhi Conclave 2025** came to a close, it engaged participants with thought-provoking discussions and valuable insights on the evolving role of **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** in shaping a more inclusive, sustainable, and efficient digital future. The event successfully brought together **academicians, policymakers, industry leaders, and students**, fostering meaningful exchanges on **privacy, governance, gender inclusivity, and public interest in digital systems**. With each edition, **DDC continues to be a pivotal platform for dialogue and innovation**, driving forward the conversation on how technology can serve the greater good. As we look ahead, the discussions from this year will undoubtedly contribute to shaping policies and strategies that ensure DPI remains a powerful tool for social and economic progress.