

NSO, India and IIMA Join hands to Strengthen Data-Driven Policy and Innovation

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The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA), organized a workshop on "Emerging Trends in Public Data and Technology for Research and Policy" at the IIM Ahmedabad campus. This initiative aligns with MoSPI's ongoing efforts to enhance the national data ecosystem and advance evidence-based policymaking.

The event brought together distinguished speakers, including Dr. Saurabh Garg, Secretary, MoSPI & Head NSO; Prof. Bharat Bhaskar, Director, IIMA; Sh. P.R. Meshram, Director General, MoSPI; senior officials from the Ministry; faculty members; students; and representatives from premier academic and research institutions. The discussions revolved around leveraging public data, emerging technologies, and academic collaborations to address policy challenges.

Prof. Bharat Bhaskar, Director of IIMA, highlighted the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in policy formulation. However, he also cautioned against inherent biases that may arise from historical data patterns. "While AI can significantly enhance decision-making, it is essential to establish safeguards to ensure fairness and accuracy. Collaboration should be focused on maximizing benefits for public good," he stated.

Dr. Saurabh Garg, Secretary, MoSPI, provided an overview of the Ministry's functions, including its various surveys and macroeconomic indicators. "The vast volume of administrative data in India presents a unique opportunity to integrate it with alternate datasets to meet the increasing expectations of data users. As the custodian of decades-old datasets, MoSPI must rejuvenate legacy data using emerging technologies to make it AI ready. Institutions like IIMA can play a pivotal role in this endeavor," he remarked.

A major milestone of the workshop was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between MoSPI and IIMA. This partnership will serve as a framework for collaborative efforts in data innovation, ensuring that academic research contributes effectively to policy development. As a precursor to the workshop, a focused session with IIMA faculty was conducted in the forenoon. The session explored avenues for leveraging the expertise of both institutions to enhance data-driven policy support. The discussions underscored the importance of an institutional framework for sustained collaboration between NSO India and IIMA and creation of Human capital to take these initiatives forward.

The workshop reaffirmed the crucial role of integrating public data with cutting-edge technology to drive evidence-based policymaking. By engaging with academic institutions, MoSPI seeks to harness research-driven insights and technological advancements to strengthen India's statistical ecosystem. This collaboration marks a significant step toward building a robust, data-driven policy environment, reinforcing MoSPI's commitment to innovation, excellence, and inclusivity in the national statistical system.



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