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Putting Humans before Technology
～Rethinking Autonomy & Role of Bridging in India～

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Abstract of the Mini-innovation Workshop

I participated in the Mini-Innovation workshop held for the official side event of the AI Impact Summit in India on 18th February 2026[1]. This summit, hosted by the Indian government, aimed to connect the impact of AI to the benefits for all humanity, inclusive development, and environmental protection. Representatives of national governments, international organizations, and AI tech companies gathered, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Emmanuel Macron, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres. From Japan, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi sent a video message. I could feel the strong national commitment to the event not only from the participants but also from the numerous signboards for the AI summit placed every few dozen meters along the streets and at bus stops across New Delhi.

The Mini-innovation workshop, where I participated, was held as one of the student community projects implemented in cooperation among the three GPAI Expert Support Centers: NICT (Japan), CEIMIA (France), and Inria (Canada). In the project, students share case studies and challenges related to AI from a youth perspective. In the event, one of the main objectives was to support the launch of a student community in India, co-hosting the event with CEMCA, an Indian educational organization.

On 18th February, 60 students from 7 countries gathered at the venue and held an active discussion throughout the day. In the first half of the event, I presented research from Japan and took part in the panel discussion to all participants. In the second half, as the main part of the workshop, we discussed in small groups, where students were allocated in advance based on our interests. Being assigned to Group 1 with the theme of "AI and Education," I did a workshop-style discussion with around 10 Indian students and 4 facilitators, both from India and Japan.

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[1] The details of the activities can also be read in these two reports: "Report on Participation in the India AI Impact Summit" and "Results of the Mini-Innovation Workshop with Student Participation from 7 Countries."

Photo 1: Group presentations after the workshop

Passion to develop localized & customized AI for educational use

The point where I was most overwhelmed in the discussion was that the Indian students had a strong passion for transforming AI systems used in education. In my group, we first identified problems with AI use in education, including a lack of AI literacy and limited adaptability to AI among students and teachers, as discussed in Japan.

On the other hand, two problems were emphasized in the Indian context, distinct from those in Japan. The first point was the absence of localized AI adapted to their own languages and cultures. The Indian students in my group argued that they tend to use generative AI in English when studying and researching, which led them to identify the lack of AI systems for their own languages as a common issue. I suppose this relates to the variety of cultural backgrounds in India. During lunchtime, I talked with three Indian students from the same state, who told me that even within the same state, they spoke different languages in their respective regions. Despite the diversity, they regarded it as a problem that they could not make the best use of AI, which was mainly trained on English data, and were concerned that, indirectly, AI would further reinforce the exclusive use of English.

The other point was the absence of an AI system specifically and sufficiently customized for educational use. In particular, Indian students sought to adapt systems that currently undermine students' critical thinking for educational use, which students with an IT background strongly argue, but they widely agreed on, regardless of their majors. Moreover, beyond the AI customized for educational use, they aimed to develop a national foundation model for generative AI that could support systems such as ChatGPT in the future. Apart from feasibility, this passion and pride in their national technology gave me a sense of their potential to develop national AI.

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Their focus on the AI system itself gave me a new perspective that "humans should not be passive toward technology too much," which also relates to my research activities. Now, I am developing materials to teach AI literacy to high school students, in which I take an approach to encourage students to think about how to use AI and reach consensus when problems arise. However, I realized that this approach in the materials unintentionally instills a passive attitude toward technology in students by accepting it as it is. In India, I learned that an essential literacy for students living in the AI era is the ability to think critically about AI itself: how it should be designed based on an understanding of how it works and the issues it raises, and how it could be improved by backcasting from the kind of society we want to achieve—even if students do not yet have the skills or authority to change AI systems themselves.

Common problems raised in both Japan and India
〜Who can take the role of bridging different perspectives?〜

On the other hand, one thing that I noticed was the same as Japan throughout the summit was a tendency to keep discussing without the process of merging opinions among those with different perspectives. For example, in the group discussion of the mini-innovation workshop, those majoring in education tend to argue for a solution focused on schools and adaptability, while those with an IT background mainly propose solutions that directly change AI systems. Having a wide range of opinions is a value; we faced the challenge of finding common ground and bringing the discussion to a conclusion. Therefore, in the end, I interrupted the continuous stream of opinions, took on the role of merging them, and wrapped up the policy suggestion and presentation (See Figure 1). Concisely, the core of the policy suggestion was creating a field to discuss and combine three types of actors' perspectives and insights. We suggested that national providers should establish educational AI systems with consideration of local context, and the government should develop AI use guidelines and the curriculum to teach AI literacy based on the integration of diverse perspectives.
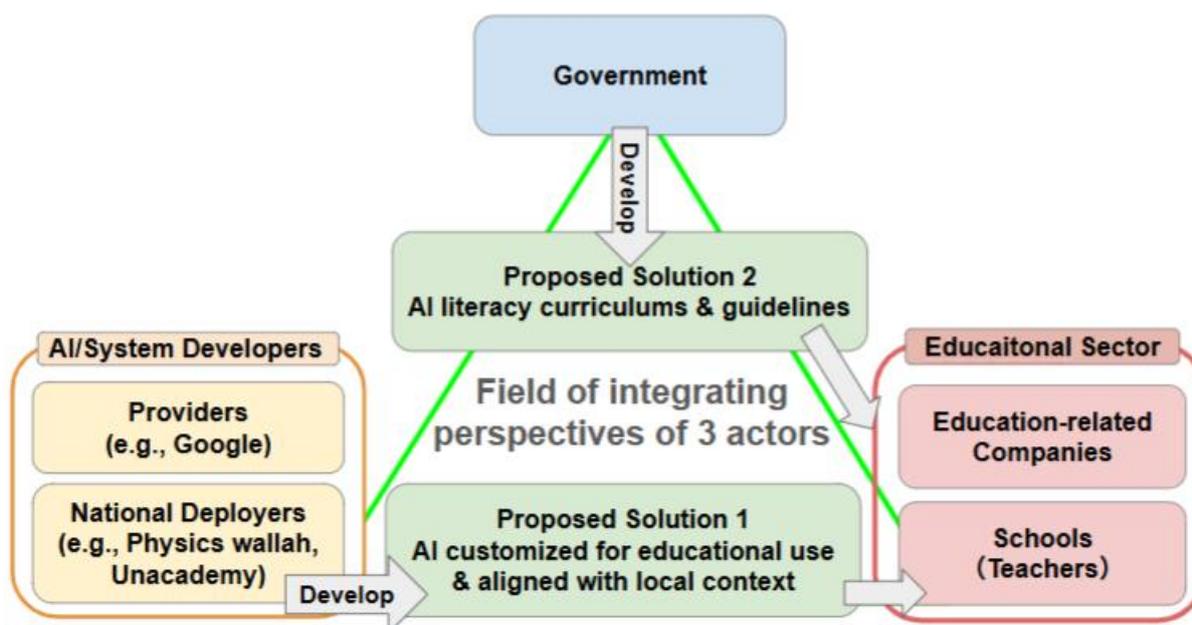

Figure 1: Structure of policy proposals based on the integration of perspectives from three actors

A conflict of opinions and difficulties in reaching a conclusion, stemming from different perspectives, were also evident in the panel discussion by the experts. At the side-event of the AI summit, "Asia AI Diplomacy - Governing AI in a Fragmented World," Mr. Azizjon Azimi, a speaker from Tajikistan, urged sufficient autonomy to use and develop AI inside his country, raising the EU Act as an example, in which I saw the frustration of developing nations being subject to regulations unilaterally imposed by developed countries. In addition, Prof. Stuart Russell argued that the AI risk and uncertainty are controllable, based on the history of electricity and nuclear power plants, which have been regulated. Although I found his argument interesting, I could not agree with his analogy, as I was living in Ibaraki Prefecture, which borders Fukushima to the south, at the time of the nuclear accident. As perceptions of nuclear risk vary depending on whether they face large earthquake and tsunami risks, AI risk recognition and AI regulations also vary with technological capabilities, political power, and the presence of AI providers in their countries.

I witnessed the dichotomies: AI developers and users, developed and developing countries, and countries that are leading AI regulations and those that are not. Observing the gap between them and the people trying to convey their perspectives to those on the other side, and participating in the discussion myself, were invaluable experiences. I think the meaning of the workshop event for students in this international field is to cultivate human resources who can bridge this gap. The important thing here is discussing in person to reach a consensus by understanding our different positions toward AI, depending on our majors, nationalities, and status. I believe that continuing these activities by future generations will become the driving force, helping us move forward toward realizing an ideal society by merging our opinions with a human-centered attitude when facing new technologies.