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The Quiet Crisis of Adolescent Mental Health in India

Context

- The deaths of three adolescent girls in Ghaziabad reveal a deeper structural problem rather than an isolated tragedy.
- India is confronting a growing crisis in **child mental health** and **adolescent wellbeing**, shaped by early psychological vulnerability, social stigma, academic pressure, and an increasingly unregulated **digital environment**.
- This convergence has created a public health emergency insufficiently addressed by families, schools, healthcare systems, and policy frameworks.

Early Vulnerability and Misunderstanding of Childhood Mental Health

- Mental illness is often perceived as an adult issue, yet emotional and behavioural disorders appear in early childhood, sometimes as early as four or five years.
- Anxiety, depression, and **behavioural disorders** emerge during critical developmental stages.

- **Early trauma**, neglect, and **chronic stress** interfere with emotional and cognitive growth, often resurfacing with greater intensity during **adolescence**.
- Childhood experiences accumulate rather than disappear. When early distress remains unrecognised, it later manifests in more severe psychological difficulties.
- Disorders have also become more complex. Increasingly, children experience **comorbidity: ADHD** accompanied by anxiety, depression linked with compulsive **screen use**, and learning disorders associated with emotional distress.
- Early warning signs, withdrawal, impulsivity, or sudden behavioural change, are frequently dismissed as misbehaviour, allowing long-term emotional harm to develop.

The Structural Gap: Data, Resources, and Access to Care

- Survey data suggests that 7–10% of Indian adolescents have diagnosable mental health conditions, while 5–7% of school-aged children show symptoms of ADHD.
- Yet institutional capacity remains inadequate. India has fewer than 10,000 psychiatrists for over 1.4 billion people, and only a small proportion specialise in child psychiatry.
- The shortage of **clinical psychologists**, child specialists, and psychiatric social workers forces families to navigate fragmented care systems alone.
- This imbalance between demand and infrastructure leads to delayed diagnosis, untreated distress, and crisis-driven intervention.
- The issue therefore represents a wider **public health** failure rather than merely a clinical challenge.

The Digital Environment as an Intensifying Factor

- The expansion of smartphones and affordable internet access has transformed childhood.
- Hundreds of millions of children now interact daily with connected devices, a trend accelerated during the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- Education, communication, and entertainment occur on the same screen, blurring behavioural boundaries.
- Excessive exposure does not directly cause neurodevelopmental disorders, but it intensifies vulnerabilities.
- Internet addiction, marked by sleep disruption, irritability, and social withdrawal, has become common.
- Prolonged screen exposure weakens **attention**, emotional regulation, and sleep patterns while displacing essential **human interaction** during periods of **neuroplasticity**.
- Reduced real-world engagement undermines emotional development and delays recognition of underlying problems.

Families, Schools, and Social Institutions

- Families function as the first protective layer. **Trauma-informed parenting**, attentive listening, and early help-seeking significantly improve outcomes.
- Parent and peer **support groups** reduce isolation and encourage resilience.
- Schools, however, remain a major weakness. Educational systems prioritise **academic performance**, examinations, and rankings over emotional wellbeing.
- Without **emotional regulation** and stress management, academic achievement becomes fragile.

- Teachers often lack training to identify warning signs, and healthcare consultations focus mainly on physical growth rather than psychological health.

Policy and Social Response

- Recent policy discussions acknowledge rising youth mental health concerns, and some regions are considering limits on adolescent **social media**
- Effective action requires prevention, education, and support rather than punishment.
- Key measures include **school-based screening**, teacher training, stronger referral networks, community counselling, and expansion of **tele-mental health**
- Clear digital-use guidelines and accessible care for low-income families are essential. Cultural barriers remain significant; fear of labelling discourages families from seeking help.
- Normalising conversations about mental wellbeing is therefore a national priority.

Reframing Childhood: A Cultural Argument

- Modern childhood has become intensely competitive. Success is increasingly measured by grades rather than wellbeing.
- Healthy development requires resilience, emotional security, and social connection alongside achievement.
- Neglecting psychological health produces long-term social and economic consequences, including reduced productivity and strained relationships.

Conclusion

- The Ghaziabad incident underscores **interconnected causes**: early vulnerability, institutional neglect, inadequate resources, digital overexposure, and social pressure.
- Families, schools, healthcare providers, and policymakers share responsibility. Early detection, supportive parenting, school reform, **responsible technology use**, and stigma reduction are essential.
- **Protecting childhood wellbeing** is not peripheral; it is **central to national development** and long-term societal stability.

The Quiet Crisis of Adolescent Mental Health in India FAQs

Q1. Why is child and adolescent mental health considered a growing crisis in India?

Ans. Child and adolescent mental health is a growing crisis in India due to rising cases of anxiety, depression, ADHD, and limited access to trained mental health professionals.

Q2. How does early trauma affect children's psychological development?

Ans. Early trauma disrupts emotional and cognitive development, often leading to more severe mental health challenges during adolescence.

Q3. In what way does excessive screen use impact children?

Ans. Excessive screen use can worsen existing vulnerabilities by affecting sleep, attention, emotional regulation, and reducing meaningful human interaction.

Q4. Why are schools considered a weak link in addressing mental health?

Ans. Schools are considered a weak link because they prioritize academic performance over emotional wellbeing and often lack structured mental health support.

Q5. What measures can help prevent mental health crises among young people?

Ans. Early screening, trauma-informed parenting, teacher training, community support systems, and responsible digital regulation can help prevent mental health crises.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

India's Energy Shift Through the Green Ammonia Route

Context

- At India Energy Week (IEW) 2026, investment opportunities worth nearly \$500 billion were announced in the energy sector, reflecting a transition from energy security to **energy independence**.
- The long-term success of this shift depends on affordable clean fuels, particularly **green hydrogen** and its derivative **green ammonia**.
- Owing to its practicality and scalability, green ammonia is emerging as a central component of India's clean-energy pathway and a potential influence on global energy markets.

Understanding Green Ammonia

- **What is Green Ammonia?**

- Green ammonia is produced by combining nitrogen with hydrogen generated using renewable electricity.
- Unlike grey ammonia, which depends on fossil fuels, it is largely carbon-free and aligns with decarbonisation goals.

- **Why It Matters and Its Application**

- Hydrogen faces challenges of storage and transport. Green ammonia resolves these constraints because it can be liquefied, stored, and shipped using existing infrastructure.
- It therefore acts as a practical carrier of hydrogen energy. Green ammonia has multiple uses:
 - Fertiliser production
 - **Marine fuel** for shipping
 - Power generation
 - Industrial processes
- Its versatility enables large-scale adoption of clean fuel systems.

Creating a Market: The Role of Procurement Mechanisms

- Energy transitions require functioning markets. Governments have introduced aggregated procurement systems to guarantee demand and reduce investor uncertainty.
- Major initiatives include the European Union's H2Global programme, South Korea's Clean Hydrogen Portfolio Standard, and India's **SIGHT (Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition) programme** under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.
- These mechanisms encourage private participation by ensuring predictable demand and revenue streams.

India's Green Ammonia Auction Model

• The SECI Tender

- The Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) issued a tender in 2024 to procure 724,000 tonnes of green ammonia annually for 13 fertiliser plants.
- Successful bidders received 10-year offtake agreements and initial production subsidies, creating strong investment certainty.

• Participation and Outcomes

- Fifteen companies participated and seven secured thirteen contracts, including a large allocation of 370,000 tonnes annually to a single bidder.
- Revisions to the tender addressed risk allocation, payment security, and pricing clarity, producing a balanced framework acceptable to both producers and buyers.

Economic Viability and Price Competitiveness

• Price Discovery

- Prices ranged from ₹49.75–₹64.74 per kg (about \$572–\$744 per tonne). Conventional grey ammonia costs roughly \$515 per tonne.
- The gap narrowed significantly due to subsidies and long-term contracts, improving commercial feasibility.

• Global Significance

- Auction prices were about 40–50% lower than some international benchmarks, establishing strong price competitiveness and demonstrating the economic practicality of clean fuels.

Logistics, Infrastructure, and Strategic Benefits

• Delivery and Transportation

- Pre-identified delivery points were located near coastal fertiliser plants, enabling efficient shipping logistics and reduced transport costs.

- **Economic and Strategic Impact**

- The contracted supply could replace nearly **30% of imports**, lowering exposure to gas price volatility, currency fluctuations, and geopolitical risks.
- In regions with higher production costs, green ammonia becomes particularly attractive for scaling.

India's Global Leadership Potential

- India combines low renewable costs, a large domestic fertiliser market, effective contract design, and targeted incentives.
- Many countries seeking clean fuels for industry, power generation, and transport may rely on imports, positioning India as a major exporter and potential architect of a new clean-fuel trade network.

Challenges and Policy Requirements

- **Responsibilities of Developers**

- Project developers must ensure technical due diligence, integrate hybrid renewable systems with storage, and maintain transparent monitoring for long-term reliability.

- **Responsibilities of Policymakers**

- Authorities need stable regulatory frameworks, reliable grid access, clear energy banking rules, strengthened safety standards, and internationally aligned certification systems.

- **Financial Support**

- Expansion requires blended finance, extended contracts, and risk-mitigation instruments to improve project bankability and attract private capital.

Conclusion

- India's green ammonia initiative demonstrates that **environmental sustainability and economic growth** can progress together.
- By combining incentives, assured demand, and infrastructure planning, clean fuels are approaching commercial viability.
- **Continued regulatory stability and financial support** can help achieve energy independence while fostering a global clean-fuel market, positioning India as a significant leader in the twenty-first-century energy economy.

India's Energy Shift Through the Green Ammonia Route FAQs

Q1. What policy shift is India making in its energy sector?

Ans. India is moving from energy security toward energy independence based on clean and domestic energy

sources.

Q2. Why is green ammonia important in the clean-energy transition?

Ans. Green ammonia is important because it allows hydrogen energy to be stored, transported, and used more easily across industries.

Q3. What role did the SECI tender play in the market?

Ans. The SECI tender created investment certainty by offering long-term offtake agreements and assured demand for producers.

Q4. How has price competitiveness improved for green ammonia?

Ans. Subsidies and long-term contracts have narrowed the cost gap between green ammonia and conventional grey ammonia.

Q5. What could be India's global impact in the future energy market?

Ans. India could become a major exporter and leader in shaping the international clean-fuel trade system.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

India AI Impact Summit 2026 - Building a Sovereign and Inclusive AI Ecosystem

Context:

- India hosted the India AI Impact Summit 2026, the **first** global AI summit organised by a **Global South** country, signalling India's ambition to shape the future of Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance, infrastructure, and innovation.
- The summit brought together over 20 heads of state, 60 ministers, and over 500 AI leaders from over 100 countries, marking a major multilateral moment for AI policy.

Civilisational Inspiration:

- Drawing inspiration from India's civilisational traditions of structured knowledge — from **Panini's** grammar to **Nalanda's** institutional scholarship — the summit emphasised the importance of structured, inclusive and sovereign AI systems.
- India presented an **alternative vision** to the technology-dominated models of advanced economies.

India's Vision for AI Governance:

- **The MANAV framework:** The Indian Prime Minister outlined the MANAV vision as a guiding framework for AI governance –
 - M – Moral and Ethical System
 - A – Accountable Governance
 - N – National Sovereignty

- A – Accessible and Inclusive
- V – Valid and Legitimate
- **Key principles of the vision:** Ethical guardrails for responsible AI development, data sovereignty to prevent data exploitation, inclusive access ensuring benefits reach all citizens, democratic oversight, etc.
- The approach emphasises “AI with human control”, combining innovation with regulatory oversight.

Delhi Declaration – Global South AI Blueprint:

- The summit adopted the Delhi Declaration, considered the first major AI governance framework emerging from the Global South.
- **Key features:**
 - **Development-oriented AI governance:** Focus on development priorities rather than purely commercial interests. Flexible techno-legal regulatory approach. Avoidance of rigid compliance regimes.
 - **Three-pillar framework:**
 - **People** – Inclusive AI access
 - **Planet** – Sustainable technology use
 - **Progress** – Economic growth and innovation
 - **Global initiatives proposed:**
 - **Population-scale AI solutions:** BharatGen supporting 22 Indian languages.
 - **Global compute bank:** Modelled on subsidised GPU access in India (~₹65/hour).
 - **Data sovereignty:** Preventing AI extractivism (use of developing-country data to train proprietary models).

India’s Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) as Foundation:

- India’s AI strategy builds on its successful DPI ecosystem.
- **Key achievements:**
 - UPI processed 228 billion transactions in 2025 (~\$3.4 trillion).
 - **JAM** Trinity enabled welfare savings of ₹3.48 lakh crore since 2015.
 - Integrated architecture: Digital identity, payments, welfare delivery.
- This infrastructure provides a base for population-scale AI deployment.

AI Infrastructure Expansion:

- **Existing gap:** Though India generates around 20% of global data, it hosts only about 3% of global data centre capacity. Bridging this gap is central to India’s AI strategy.
- **Major investment announcements:**
 - **Global technology companies:**
 - **Microsoft:** \$50 billion Global South plan (including \$17.5 billion for India).
 - **Google:** \$15 billion America-India Connect initiative.
 - **Amazon Web Services:** \$8.3 billion investment in Maharashtra.
 - **Indian industry:**

- **Adani Group:** \$100 billion renewable-powered AI data centres by 2035.
- **Yotta Data Services:** Over \$2 billion AI computing hub using advanced chips.
- **L&T-Nvidia partnership:** For gigawatt-scale AI factory.
- **National AI infrastructure:** The IndiaAI Mission's national compute cluster has crossed 38,000 GPUs and is scaling to 58,000, available to startups at roughly one-third of global cost.
- **Investment target:** \$200 billion AI infrastructure investment in next two years.

Policy Support and Budgetary Measures:

- The Union Budget 2026–27 supports AI growth through key measures like –
 - Tax holiday until 2047 for foreign companies using Indian data centres.
 - \$1.1 billion VC fund for AI and advanced manufacturing startups.
- **National Critical Mineral Mission:** Secures the lithium, cobalt, and rare earths that AI and semiconductor manufacturing depend on.

Democratisation of AI:

- India emphasised AI for social transformation, not only industrial competitiveness.
- **Human capital initiatives:**
 - 5 lakh students pledged responsible AI innovation.
 - 30 Data and AI Labs operational in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities (Target: 570 AI labs nationwide).
- **Public AI infrastructure:** AIKosh platform offers over 7,500 datasets and 273 models as shared public infrastructure.
- **Education expansion:** IITs increased from 16 in 2014 to 23 today.

Sovereign AI Capability:

- India is transitioning from an AI consumer to an **AI producer**.
- **New sovereign AI models:** Sarvam AI LLM, BharatGen Param2.
- India is now among countries building indigenous Large Language Models (LLMs).

Strategic Partnerships and Global Role:

- **Co-building capacity:** India is shifting from technology licensing to technology co-development.
- **Key partnerships:**
 - **Tata-OpenAI:** Beginning with 100 MW of AI-ready data centre capacity under the Stargate initiative and scaling to one gigawatt, signals that Indian industry is moving to the supply side of global intelligence.
 - **Pax Silica Declaration:** Places India in the US-led coalition, securing supply chains for AI, semiconductors, and critical minerals.
 - **India-US AI Opportunity Partnership:** Commits both nations to pro-innovation approaches on critical technologies.
 - **India-France Year of Innovation 2026:** Organised around joint skilling and measurable outcomes.

Key Challenges and Way Forward:

- **Infrastructure deficit:** Limited data centre capacity relative to data generation.
 - Expand DPI **0** – AI integrated with DPI platforms.
- **Technological dependence:** Reliance on foreign chips and advanced AI hardware.
 - Strengthen sovereign AI ecosystem – Indigenous chips and models, domestic cloud infrastructure.
- **Skill gaps:** Shortage of AI researchers and advanced engineers.
 - Human capital development – AI education and research funding, skilling programmes in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.
- **Regulatory complexity:** Balancing innovation and ethical safeguards.
 - Ethical and democratic governance – Transparent AI regulation, algorithmic accountability.
- **Data governance issues:** Implementing data sovereignty without restricting innovation.
 - Global South leadership – Build coalitions for equitable AI governance, promote development-oriented AI models.

Conclusion:

- The India AI Impact Summit 2026 marks a turning point in the global AI landscape, positioning India as a **norm-setter** rather than a rule-taker.
- By combining data sovereignty, DPI, sovereign AI models, and global partnerships, India is attempting to build a structured and inclusive AI ecosystem.
- If executed effectively, this approach could allow India not only to benefit from the AI revolution but also to shape a more equitable global technological order.

India AI Impact Summit 2026 FAQs

Q1. How India AI Impact Summit 2026 reflects India's ambition to shape global AI governance?

Ans. It positioned India as a norm-setter through the Delhi Declaration, MANAV framework.

Q2. What is the role of DPI in strengthening India's Artificial Intelligence ecosystem?

Ans. India's DPI such as UPI and JAM Trinity provides population-scale digital data and delivery platforms.

Q3. What is meant by "AI extractivism" and how India seeks to address it?

Ans. It refers to the use of developing countries' data to train foreign AI models, which India counters through sovereign AI models.

Q4. What is the significance of sovereign AI infrastructure?

Ans. Domestic data centres, compute clusters and indigenous LLMs reduces technological dependence and strengthens strategic autonomy.

Q5. What are the challenges India faces in becoming a global AI hub?

Ans. Limited data centre capacity, dependence on foreign chips, skill shortages, and high energy requirements for AI infrastructure.

Source: IE

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/daily-editorial-analysis-24-february-2026/>

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