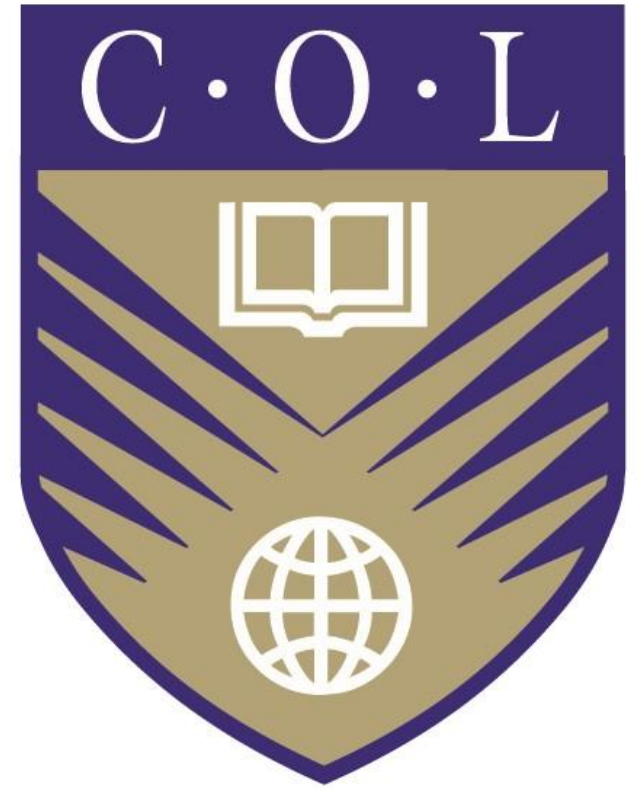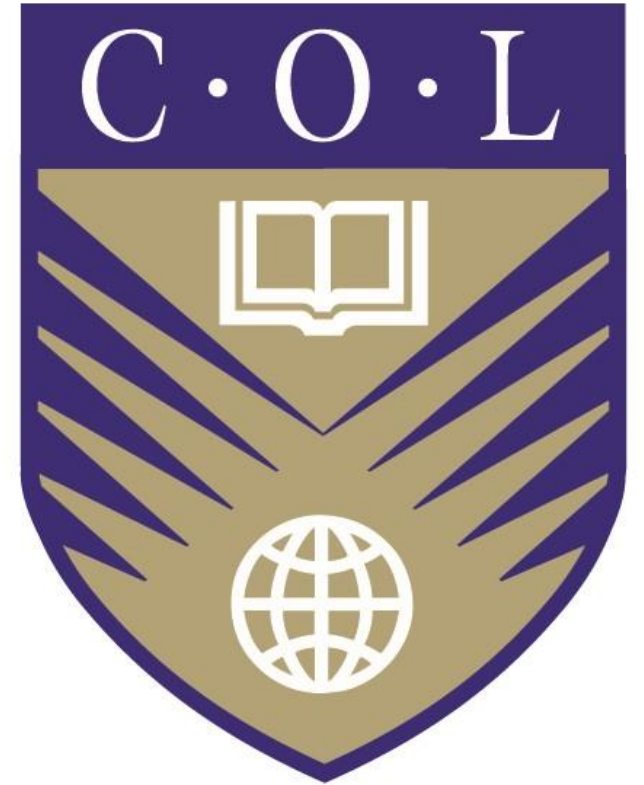# Panel Discussion on Empowering Youth with Disabilities: AI for Inclusive Education

Presentation by Dr B. Shadrach, Director, COL-CEMCA, at
Zero Project India Conference 2024
Date: September 19, 2024; 15:20 – 16:00
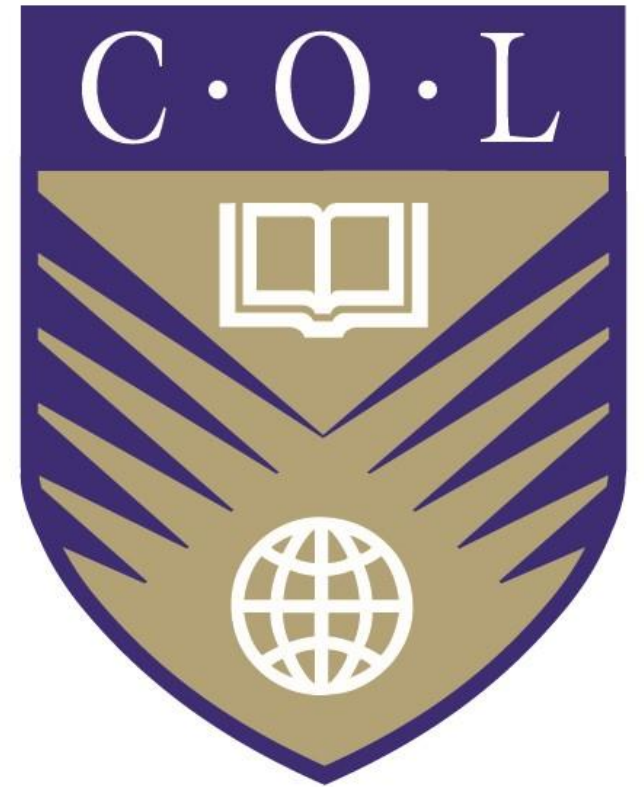Location: Gurugram, Haryana, India

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It is said that AI will take away many jobs. But each new development creates new opportunities too. **What new opportunities will come up for PwDs through AI?**
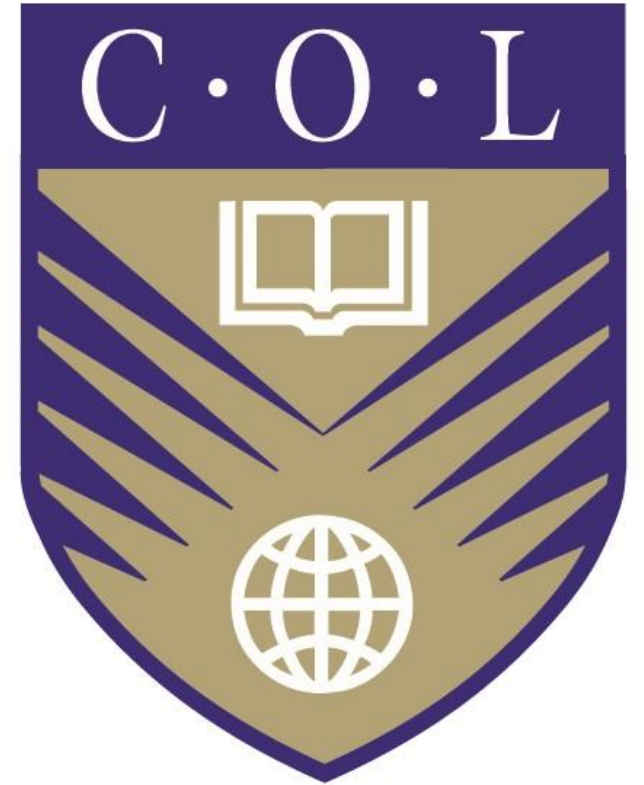
First, some data points

- ❖ PwDs, 15% of world population or 1B people, are the **world's largest minority**.
- ❖ Disabilities mean **multi-dimensional poverty**; earn less, less likely employed.
- ❖ Most vulnerable members of society within **rural-developing settings**.
- ❖ Although, by stat, it should be 200M, official stat suggests **21 million persons with disabilities in India**, 70% of them being unemployed or underemployed.
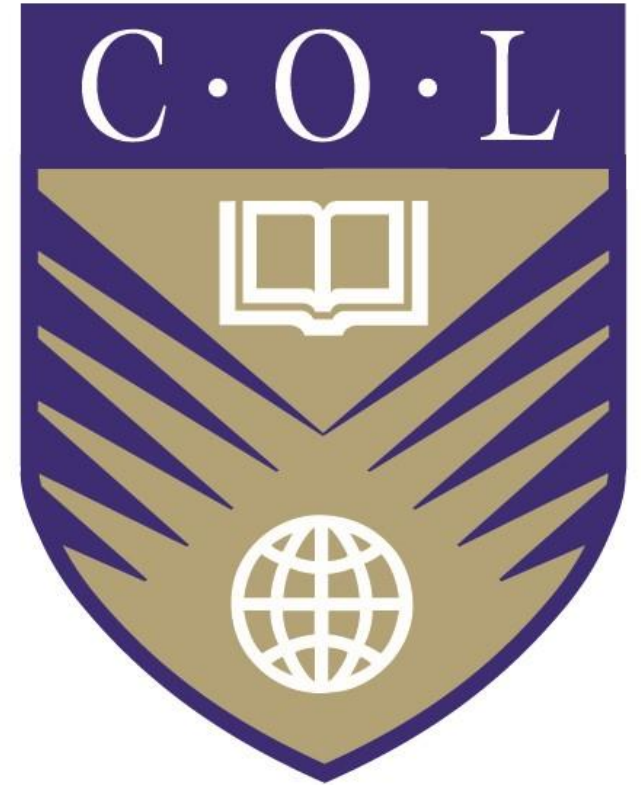
AI and PwDs

❖ **Make things accessible for PwDs:** What the PwDs could not access earlier, AI can make it possible today – speech to text, text to speech, image recognition, assistive robots, real time translation, transliteration, transcription, etc., Cognitive assistance, AI-powered prosthetics and many more.

❖ **Job creation and enhanced production:** flexible and remote work but also occupations that require high level of concentration, workplace access. AI tools can assist PwD to do their jobs more efficiently.

❖ **More than education, skills:** that can foster their participation. In AI/ML and Data Analytics, especially.

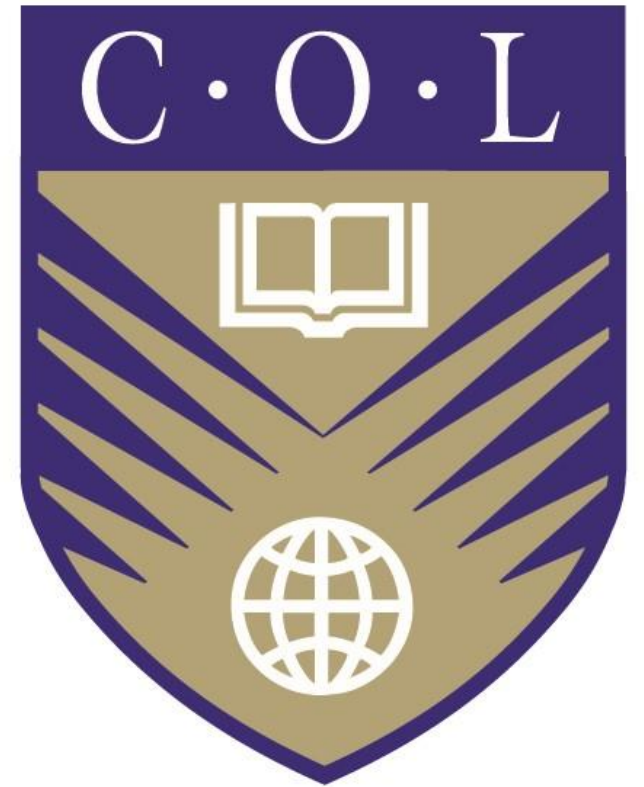❖ **Inclusive work environments:** Assistive technologies play a vital role in making work environments more inclusive

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AI and the job market

❖ A good indication that there is **increasing demand for AI exposure** in jobs advertised

❖ **Wage premium** for certain jobs – database designers, administrators, lawyers, sales personnel, financial analysts, accountants, etc.

❖ **4.8 times higher productivity** in AI-exposed sectors

❖ Lower job growth in AI-exposed occupations

❖ Fastest growing skill categories – Performing arts, sports, recreation, personal care and services, energy and utilities, environmental protection, waste management, etc. (relatively harder for AI to perform

❖ Slowest growing skill categories – IT, design, sales and analysis

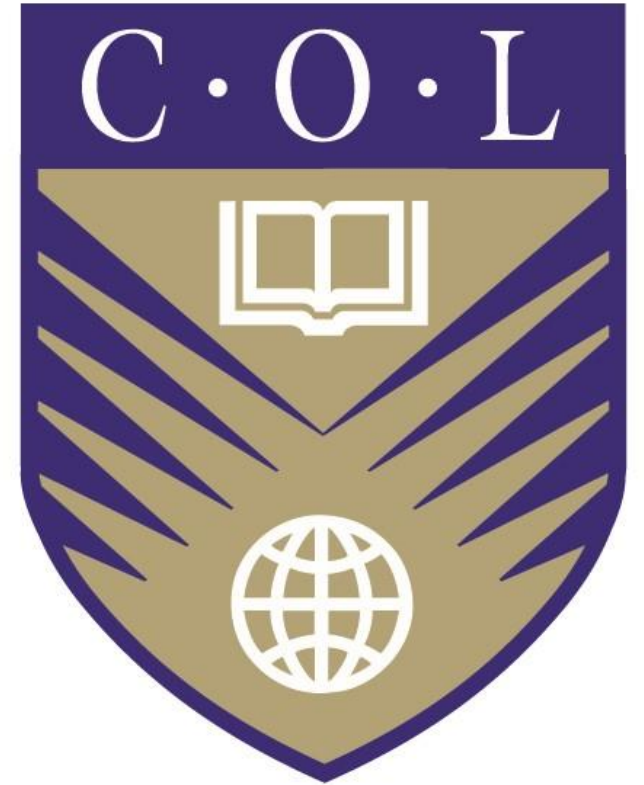❖ OECD countries are more prone to losing jobs to AI; hence, reskilling is key

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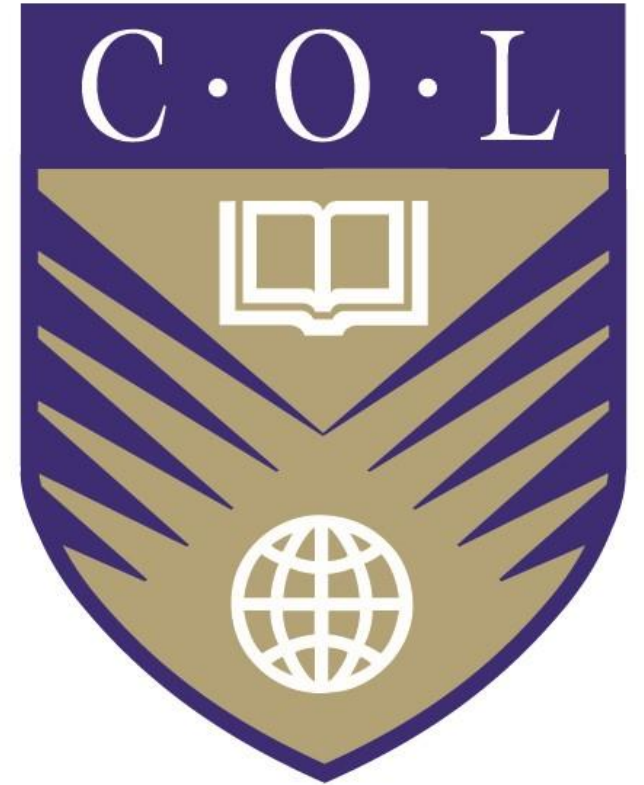What role can governments play in encouraging accessible AI?

HLAB-AI (Governing AI for Humanity highlights the following:

❖ Differential impact on children, PwDs, older persons and vulnerable groups
❖ Seven recommendations:
  ➢ An International Scientific Panel on AI
  ➢ Policy Dialogue on AI Governance
  ➢ AI Standards Exchange
  ➢ Capacity Development Network
  ➢ Global Fund for AI
  ➢ Global AI Data Framework
  ➢ AI Office within the Secretariat
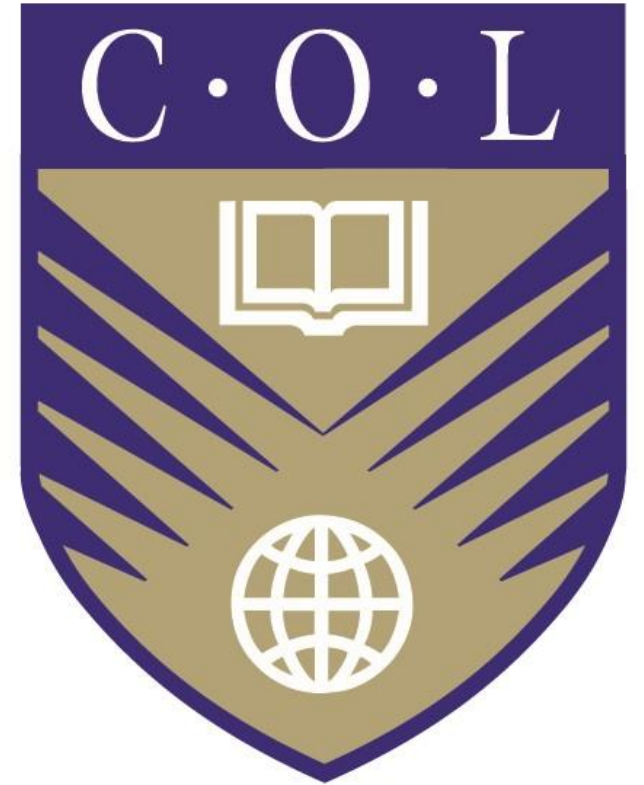❖ **Deep dives do not include PwDs**

What are the issues?

- ❖ Accessibility issues
- ❖ Discrimination and bias
- ❖ Lack of training and education opportunities
- ❖ Mobility
- ❖ Limited awareness
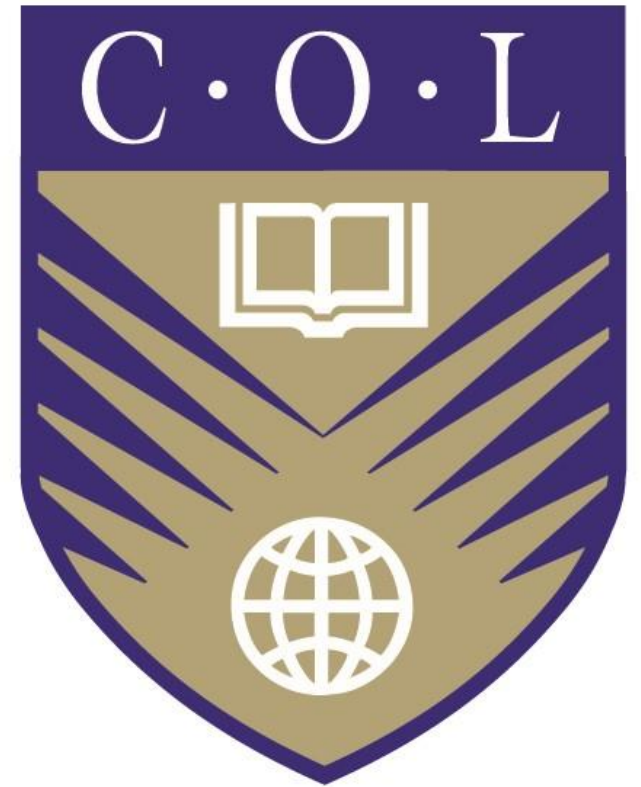- ❖ Inadequate support systems

What are the generic solutions?

❖ Accessible infra in every office, transaction and system, including flexible working culture and work environment
❖ Organise and provide access to assistive technologies
❖ Create inclusive policies, hiring practices, CPD, awareness and training in every function of government
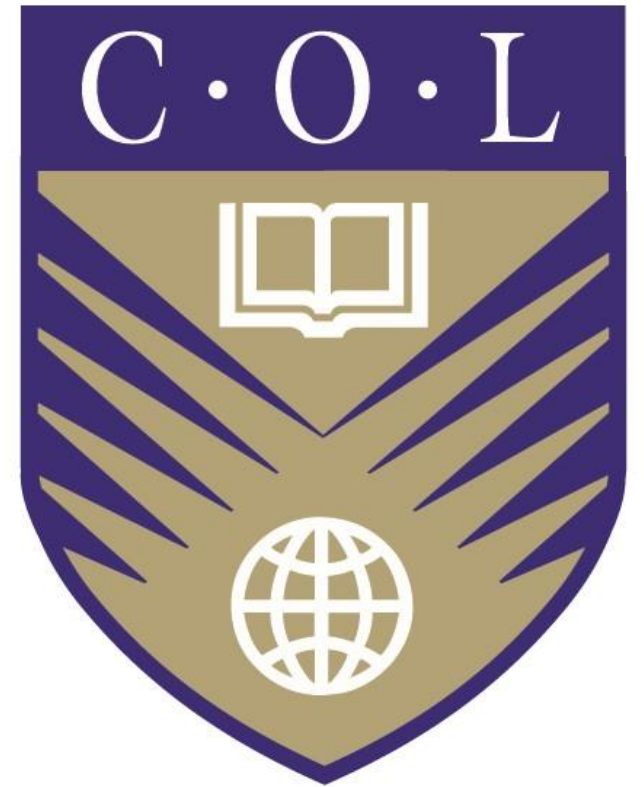
What are the specific AI-related solutions?

- ❖ Ensure the responsible use of AI
- ❖ Encourage the use of AI to grow productivity and prosperity but ensure that prosperity from AI adoption is widely shared
- ❖ Support the use of AI to augment rather than replace workers; therefore, support workers with training/retraining, worker protections, and safety nets
- ❖ Shape the education system to help prepare workers for an AI age, initiate special incentives for PwDs
- ❖ AI officers in every department and joint-up approach within the government to look at the impact of AI on PwDs

It is not a job of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment alone! But, of everyone
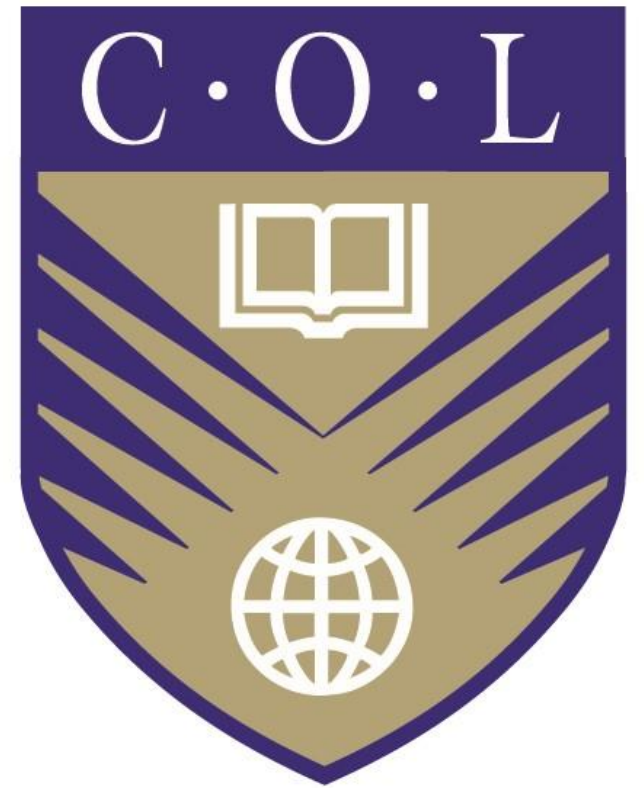We used to know about these e-envoys. Can we see AI-envoys in each Ministry now?
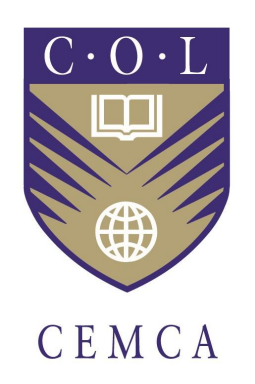
Thank You!

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About COL-CEMCA: Empowering Education in Asia

CEMCA is a leading organisation dedicated to enhancing educational access and quality across Asia. Through innovative multimedia resources and capacity building initiatives, CEMCA empowers educators and learners, driving sustainable development and educational equity.