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Google AI helping India boost maternal health

Researchers from Google Research and IIT Madras have designed an AI technology that could provide an indication of women who are at risk of dropping out from the health information programme

The technology has helped non-profit organisation ARMMAN to personalise interventions and retain women in the health programmes, improving maternal health outcomes.

Test results demonstrated that use of AI technology was able to bring down the risk of drop-offs by up to 32 per cent for women at high risk of dropping out, Google has announced.

ARMMAN runs mMitra, a free mobile voice call service that sends timely and targeted preventive care information to expectant and new mothers.

“Adherence to such public health programs is a big challenge but timely intervention to retain people is beneficial to improve maternal health outcomes,” Google said.

The team is currently working towards scaling this to more than 300,000 women in mMitra.

“We are excited to continue to support ARMMAN as the project team increases the reach of this technology to over one million mothers and children in 2021,” the tech giant said in a statement on Saturday.

To support ARMMAN’s growing efforts, Google.org has committed another $530,000 to scale the use of AI for social good to reach underserved women and children.

Google AI is helping Indian nonprofits and universities solve big challenges in the field of public health, conservation, agriculture and education.

The company announced Google Research India, an AI Lab in Bengaluru, in 2019.

In 2020, Google announced AI for Social Good would support six projects from NGOs and academic collaborations to utilise the application of AI to assist underserved communities that have not traditionally benefited from the prowess of AI.

With technical and scientific contributions from Google Research and Singapore Management University, Wildlife Conservation Trust designed AI models that help predict human-wildlife conflict in Bramhapuri forest division in Tadoba, Maharashtra.

These novel AI techniques provide over 80 per cent accuracy in predicting human-wildlife conflict in the Bramhapuri forest division in the test results.

This work is currently being field-tested in Chandrapur district, Madhya Pradesh, to ensure safe deployment, Google said.

In yet another example of AI, Google said that creation tools in low-resource languages suffer from very low accuracy, adding barriers to content creation.

The team at AI4Bharat and IIT Madras, with support from Google, has developed state-of-the-art Natural Language Understanding tools to develop open-language models for two low-resource languages (Konkani, Maithal), making story-reading easier for more than 70,000 children.