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Digital Governance and Urban Security in India: A Case Study of the Delhi NCR Region

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ABSTRACT

Digital governance—the use of technology to enhance public services and local management—has become central to India's urban transformation. This paper examines how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping urban security through *MyGate*, a widely used digital gatekeeping application in the Delhi-NCR region. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork across three socioeconomically distinct neighborhoods—Gurgaon, Dwarka, and Janakpuri—the study analyses interviews with residents, security staff, and Resident Welfare Association (RWA) members. The findings reveal that while *MyGate* offers efficiency and convenience, it primarily digitises existing human-centred security systems rather than transforming them. The platform's design reproduces a micro-surveillance state at the residential level: movements of residents of gated communities are logged, biometric data are stored, and behavioural information is monetised through commercial models. Residents' responses vary by class, age, and digital literacy—ranging from Gurgaon's younger professionals who embrace convenience to Dwarka's middle-class residents who demand legal safeguards, to Janakpuri's older citizens who view facial recognition as an infringement on dignity and privacy. The study argues that these trends reflect a broader process of privatised decentralisation, where digital platforms assume governance functions without public accountability. It calls for a specialised AI-governance framework that extends beyond the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, incorporating *privacy-by-design* principles and oversight mechanisms such as an AI Ethics Committee. Only through such measures can technology strengthen citizenship and trust, rather than normalising surveillance in the name of convenience.

Keywords: Digital governance, local management, behavioural information, DPDP

1. INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a rapid phenomenon in India (World Bank, 2024). It requires the comprehensive development of physical, institutional, social, and profitable structures. All are important in perfecting the quality of life and attracting people and investment, thereby setting in motion a righteous cycle of growth and development. Traditional systems of governance in Indian cities often struggle with inefficiencies and limitations. We face recurring challenges in urban planning. The enforcement of the

74th Amendment Act has only been partial, limiting the full empowerment of urban local bodies (ULBs) such as municipal corporations, municipalities, and Nagar panchayats, which are supported by state governments for civic management. ULBs require clear functions, financial grants, and greater autonomy (India.gov.in, 2025). Urban governance needs improvements in technology, management, and capacity to foster urban development. Although planning is centralised, state planning boards have not crafted specific strategies; instead, they depend on planning authorities. This is changing following the abolition of the Planning Commission, with an emphasis on empowering states and reinforcing federalism. Current large metropolitan plans are outdated and fail to address residents' concerns, highlighting the need for intervention by the Urban Planning Commission under the 74th Amendment. Planning should be decentralised and participatory to serve residents' needs better, but there is a significant shortage of skilled personnel in state planning departments and related institutions. This makes it increasingly necessary to adopt new technological solutions.

Digital governance, which refers to the use of technology to improve the delivery of public services and city management, has emerged as a powerful tool to address these challenges. Among the technologies transforming urban governance, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and AI-driven platforms have a significant role in streamlining operations and enabling data-driven decision-making processes. India's digital governance is transforming how the government and citizens communicate.

2. BACKDROP OF EXPANSION

Initiatives such as Digital India, Aadhaar, BharatNet, UMANG, DigiLocker, and the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) are striving to make public services more transparent, efficient, and user-centred through ICT. By 2023, according to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology [MeitY], 2023), over 4,700 services from both central and state governments will be integrated into digital platforms. The aim is to cut bureaucratic delays, eliminate intermediaries, reach remote areas, and promote more inclusive governance (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2024). In these numerous digital interactions, governance is becoming increasingly reliant on algorithmic protocols to make decisions automatically, encourage collaboration, and foster trust (Hanisch et al. 2023). Platforms like Digi Locker, the Unified Payment Interface (UPI), which handles transactions worth over ₹10 lakh crore annually, and UMANG, which consolidates various government services into a single mobile app, demonstrate the widespread adoption of digital technology (Press Information Bureau, 2025a, 2025b) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2024). It is against this backdrop that the AI-led infrastructure of urban governance is expanding, offering both vast potential for efficiency and pressing concerns about who is being left behind in this drive. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a crucial component of India's urban digital transformation. It promises greater efficiency, predictive insights, and safer cities. AI can help governments manage waste, improve administration, enhance security surveillance, provide citizen services, plan land use, handle disasters, and manage parking systems, ultimately boosting urban life and the quality of life (Jain & Singh, 2022; Mishra & Chakraborty, 2020; Voda & Radu, 2018; Jindal & Devadas, 2023). For instance, Bengaluru's Adaptive Traffic Control System (ATCS) utilises sensors and AI algorithms to adjust traffic signals based on real-time traffic flow, which has significantly reduced wait times at 165 intersections. Pune's Intelligent Traffic Management System and Chandigarh's AI-enabled CCTV networks further illustrate how automation can improve mobility and enforcement. These efforts align with global standards, such as the OECD AI Principles, which emphasise safe and human rights-focused AI (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2024). Over the last decade, India's urban governance landscape has undergone significant digital transformation thanks to initiatives like the Smart Cities Mission, the National Urban Digital Mission (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs [MoHUA], 2021; MoHUA n.d.), and early e-governance programs, all of which aim to digitize service delivery, data management, and civic engagement (Jha & Rao, 2017). These national missions reflect the state's aspiration to create data-driven, responsive, and participatory urban systems.

The rapid growth of AI-driven infrastructure in urban governance is not just a technological advance but also the result of combined policy, market, and behavioural changes. Initiatives like Digital India and the Smart Cities Mission have made sensors, data dashboards, and predictive analytics standard features of "good governance." Meanwhile, private developers and resident associations increasingly view AI as a neutral tool for boosting efficiency, security, and transparency—values that align with middle-class desires for orderly city living. The pandemic accelerated these developments, making

contactless verification and algorithmic monitoring part of daily life. As a result, AI serves both as a governance tool and a governance idea—a symbol of local empowerment that, paradoxically, reinforces control through digital infrastructure. While the 74th Constitutional Amendment envisioned participatory decentralisation through empowered local bodies, the current wave of digitisation represents a different trajectory—one shaped by public–private partnerships, corporate platforms, and data-driven management systems. This creates a form of privatised decentralisation, where governance functions and data management shift downward to residential associations or citizen groups, but not necessarily outward toward democratic accountability. Efficiency and convenience replace collective deliberation as the key markers of participation. Residents' enthusiasm for seamless, app-based management thus acts as a social catalyst legitimising these private forms of micro-governance. The result is a landscape where corporate infrastructure and algorithmic control mediate what was once envisioned as participatory local self-government. The focus of this paper is *MyGate*, one of the most widely used digital gatekeeping applications in urban India.

Digital Governance

A notable example of the digital urban landscape in Delhi-NCR is MyGate, a privately developed, AI-powered app that enhances everyday neighbourhood security. Unlike government platforms, MyGate digitises entry and exit logs, enables remote approvals, and even offers employer-employee surveillance features. It is changing how the concepts of security and efficiency are understood in residential communities. MyGate highlights how AI protocols are expanding beyond government programs into smaller governance spaces such as RWAs, households, and private security blurring the lines between public governance and private control. MyGate, established in 2016 by Vijay Arisetty, Abhishek Kumar, Shreyans Daga, and Vivaik Bhardwaj, is a leading Indian company specialising in community management technology. It enhances security and convenience by offering digital visitor tracking, automated approvals, emergency alerts, and app-based management for deliveries, bills, and notices. To support financial efficiency and better communication, it provides a local service directory, property search tools, and an online marketplace. MyGate represents digital governance at the community level, leveraging AI to enhance security features such as facial recognition and automation (MyGate, n.d.). Examining MyGate offers insight into the real-world application of AI and the challenges of integrating technology into daily life.

The MyGate platform, as a model of community-level governance, presents a unique set of ethical and policy implications that mirror the challenges faced at a national level. The collection of data, primarily through features like Smart Eye Attendance, can be activated on any guard device. It requires the guard to take a picture of staff as they enter and exit the community. The technology compares each picture with the original profile picture of the staff member and flags it if any discrepancy is found. This raises significant concerns regarding data privacy (MyGate, 2024a; MyGate 2024b). The system collects and stores facial biometric data of staff members, as well as the personal details of visitors, including their names and contact information. The continuous collection and processing of sensitive personal data by a private company raises questions about consent, data minimisation, and the potential for a data breach. A critical consequence of this model is the creation of a "micro-surveillance state" at the residential society level (Shrestha, 2025).

Every time someone passes through the gate, whether residents, domestic workers, service providers, or delivery personnel, the movement is automatically logged, time-stamped, and stored in a database. This data can be accessed, cross-checked, or exported at any moment. Such infrastructure turns the gate into a data point where identity, mobility, and trust are constantly validated. As a result, entry and exit become acts of registration, generating a traceable digital record similar to bureaucratic processes like identification, verification, and documentation. However, unlike traditional government functions, this system lacks public transparency and procedural accountability.

Within this environment, RWAs and residents assume an administrative role, with the power to approve or deny access, flag individuals, and produce reports on movement patterns. Their authority is exercised through a somewhat unclear interface that extends surveillance capabilities to private entities while providing limited oversight or consent options for those being watched. For domestic workers and delivery personnel, the facial-recognition checks and automated alerts turn personal presence into biometric data, transforming everyday labor into data points. This creates a widespread yet persistent system of observation which is similar to state powers but privately owned and driven by commercial interests, where security and convenience become normalised through constant visibility and the subtle loss of privacy.

The absence of a clear legal framework makes accountability ambiguous, raising questions about who would be liable in the event of an algorithmic error or a data breach: the platform itself, the residential welfare association, or the individual user. As these digital governance initiatives take hold, scholars point out their overlap with urban security, highlighting issues of surveillance, privacy, and information integrity, as well as ongoing risks such as data breaches, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and inadequate tax regulatory safeguards (Raut & Singh, 2024; Bedewy, 2024; Aksietha, 2024).

Today's digital transformation is driven by partnerships between the public and private sectors, corporate platforms, and systems that efficiently manage data. Further, there is a lack of policy briefs and studies focused on interdisciplinary integration, with few combining the technical, policy, administrative, and socio-political aspects of digital governance in Indian cities. Urban security is typically seen as a subset of larger smart city or e-governance projects, resulting in insufficient in-depth analysis of challenges such as surveillance overreach or AI-enabled policing (Ramanathan, 2021). Other weaknesses include the lack of a comprehensive data protection framework, the underuse of regional and local variations beyond metropolitan contexts, and the scarcity of thorough impact evaluations or longitudinal studies assessing the effects of digital initiatives on security and well-being. The existing scholarship fails to address intra-city digital divides among marginalised groups, the emergence of algorithmic bias and ethical concerns in AI-driven governance, and the lack of international comparative research to aid benchmarking and knowledge transfer (United Nations Human Settlements Programme [UN-Habitat], 2021). Through work on Mygate, one of the most widely used digital gatekeeping applications, the aim is to expand the reach of existing scholarship on digital urban governance in India.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Our paper employs a qualitative method to provide an in-depth understanding of the benefits and impacts of the MyGate application. It adopts a qualitative approach to examine how app-based security platforms influence everyday governance in gated communities. The focus is on MyGate, one of the most widely used digital gatekeeping applications in urban India. The study covers three distinct areas of Delhi—Gurgaon (Parsavnath Villa, Sector 48 and Orchid Petal Complex), Janakpuri (Block C), and Dwarka (Rama Apartments, Sector 12)—to capture diverse urban living experiences. Residential complexes that actively use MyGate were chosen for the fieldwork. The study was conducted across these localities to explore a diverse range of urban living experiences and governance models.

While Delhi reflects a state-led approach to urban management, Gurgaon demonstrates the influence of private developer governance, offering a comparative view of how digital platforms mediate different political economies. Fieldwork focused on gated societies, utilising the MyGate application, which enabled examination of their operation across contrasting urban contexts. Since Gurgaon features high-rise private complexes, Dwarka has well-established middle-class neighbourhoods and early adoption of citizen-led governance tools, and Janakpuri contains older residential areas with evolving Resident Welfare Association (RWA) structures, these localities were chosen for the fieldwork.

3.1 Respondent Profile and Methodology Details

A total of twenty-five semi-structured interviews were conducted with three stakeholder groups: RWA members, residents, and security guards. It included 12 residents (7 men, five women), 7 RWA office-bearers, and six security personnel. Open-ended discussions encouraged participants to reflect on both the benefits and concerns related to its adoption. All interviews were audio-recorded (with consent), transcribed, and analysed thematically. Before each session, participants were informed about the research's purpose and assured that their involvement was voluntary. Established ethical guidelines including informed consent and anonymisation of the participants were strictly adhered to in the course of the fieldwork.

Most residents were middle- to upper-middle-class salaried professionals in their thirties and forties working in sectors such as education, IT, and finance. Janakpuri respondents were a smaller group of mostly retired government employees aged 60-65; Dwarka participants represented established middle-class families with prior civic engagement; and Gurgaon respondents lived in recently developed high-rise condominiums of dual-income households. This variation allowed the study to observe how class position, digital literacy, and neighbourhood form shape perceptions of security and convenience.

Each interview lasted thirty to forty-five minutes and addressed the four primary concerns that were part of the fieldwork: (1) everyday interaction with MyGate; (2) perceptions of safety and trust before and after

adoption; (3) concerns regarding privacy, consent, and algorithmic control; and (4) expectations about state regulation and accountability. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically using inductive coding.

Following this methodology, the data achieved was used to research and address four key questions: how digital governance is transforming urban governance in India, how citizens perceive its risks, and what policy and ethical issues arise from AI-integrated platforms.

4. DISCUSSION

Gurgaon

The responses from residents in Gurgaon—primarily younger, dual-income professionals living in high-rise private condominiums—consistently highlighted how platforms like MyGate offer convenience and a sense of security. For these residents, the app is a tool that "has streamlined several aspects of their residential experience," with specific praise for its late-night delivery notifications and its ability to provide "prior notifications about who is coming and when," which they see as adding predictability and control. The visitor management feature was frequently cited as the most used, showing that many value the platform's ability to simplify routine tasks. A key fieldwork insight, shared by a resident of Parsavnath Green Ville in Sector 48, sheds light on the role of the Resident Welfare Association (RWA). MyGate's main purpose is to digitise what was once entirely manual, such as maintaining paper visitor logs, posting physical notices, and managing maintenance bills. This digitisation also covers complex systems, such as electricity billing, in societies supplied by a single connection from a utility such as Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (DHBVN). The fieldwork reveals an interesting contradiction: while some residents see the app's facial recognition as "foolproof security" against fake records and verifying staff, others quickly call it an "invasion of privacy" that could become "dehumanising for the staff." Additionally, the fieldwork uncovers a persistent challenge—there is a significant lack of integration between these apps and municipal bodies like the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG). For example, there's no unified system linking residents' phone numbers to their property tax dues or electricity consumption, highlighting a fragmented digital landscape where "vertical problems"—domain-specific issues like plumbing or electrical—still outweigh what digital tools can handle, which only address about 30–40% of the challenges.

Dwarka

The perspectives of **middle-class Dwarka residents** — predominantly salaried professionals and long-term homeowners in planned DDA housing societies such as Rama Apartments (Sector 11) — reveal a generally positive yet conditional endorsement of the *MyGate* app. One resident praised the app for its "enhanced security and convenience," noting that it has "simplified his life," especially when managing deliveries and visitors. However, a key difference from residents' responses in Dwarka has been their observation that, while the app has increased a sense of "comfort," it has not fundamentally altered the general sense of security they felt with the previous manual guard system. This offers a valuable insight: that digital solutions may be seen as improving a particular kind of user experience rather than fundamentally changing safety. This distinction is important for subsequent scholarly research. Residents who frequently use the app believe that while such systems are "necessary for safety and law enforcement," their large-scale adoption must be accompanied by "a solid law in place to protect the data" from private companies. This perspective directly supports the paper's thesis about the imbalance between innovation and regulation. Another resident, who primarily uses the app for announcements, expressed complete opposition to the facial recognition feature, citing a lack of transparency and fearing that data could fall into the "wrong hands".

Janakpuri

The fieldwork from C-2 Janakpuri, an older residential neighbourhood in West Delhi with mostly retired or soon-to-retire government employees, reveals a lack of trust in AI-driven governance platforms. For these residents, the app's convenience is often overshadowed by serious ethical concerns. The most notable response came from a senior citizen who expressed 'shock' upon learning about the facial recognition feature, describing it as a 'lack of privacy and dignity for the workers.' This perspective frames the issue not just as a technical security measure but as a fundamental human rights concern, showing that the ethical implications of AI are directly experienced on the ground. These residents were also the most vocal about the risks linked to data collection. One respondent, who uses the app daily for convenience, was worried about a potential 'data breach' and the vulnerability of personal information, echoing a key finding from an industry-wide study on the rising costs of data breaches in India (Cisco, 2024; LexLocum, 2024).

These variations across localities reflect how **class position, housing typology, and digital literacy** shape the adoption and perception of *MyGate*. Residents in newly built private complexes emphasise efficiency and convenience, whereas older neighbourhoods perceive the same technology through the lens of ethics and dignity.

The analysis of the fieldwork yields three primary observations: (1) **The convenience paradox**: The immediate benefits, such as pre-approving guests, getting instant delivery notifications, and avoiding last-minute issues make daily routines easier. One resident described this as creating a "seamless and pleasant check-in experience". Nonetheless, this focus on convenience often downplays residents' perceptions of the app's security improvements. A resident from Dwarka mentioned that, although the app was a "great initiative," they felt just as secure with the previous manual guard system, implying that the app's main benefit is improving user experience rather than fundamentally changing security. The analysis of RWAs' functioning suggests that these digital tools may not significantly alter the security model of urban governance as much as mainstream discourse implies. Instead, they have digitised an existing, human-centred structure. Our field visits confirmed that security guards continue to serve as the primary point of contact and now use digital devices instead of paper registers. The RWA member from Dwarka noted that many RWA teams remain sceptical about the app's data security and continue to maintain a "dual system of documentation" with both manual and digital records. (2) **The ethical dilemma: Privacy, dignity, and consent**: The core ethical concern is the use of facial recognition for domestic staff and delivery personnel. The technology is designed to flag discrepancies by comparing real-time images with an original profile picture. This system is perceived by some as an invasion of privacy and a violation of dignity. The RWA in Janakpuri, in particular, was vocal about this being a human rights issue, arguing that the convenience of one group should not come at the cost of the dignity of a more vulnerable group. This highlights the uneven distribution of convenience and surveillance risks within the community.

Furthermore, the continuous collection and processing of sensitive biometric data by a private entity raises serious questions about informed consent and data minimisation, which are not adequately covered by the existing legal framework to guarantee data protection. RWA members provided critical insights into the monetisation models of these platforms. The RWA president from C-2 Block of Janakpuri explained that MyGate's business model is not based on charging the RWA but on collecting valuable data on residents' behavioural patterns, such as vehicle movements, visitor logs, and consumption habits. This data can be used to infer financial capabilities and income levels, for instance, by analysing rental amounts to create targeted profiles for "third-party advertisement and marketing". This demonstrates that the convenience offered by the app comes with a direct cost to residents' privacy, as their personal information is being monetised without their full and informed consent. (3) **Fragmentation and missed opportunities**: The fieldwork revealed that while these apps provide a digital convenience-backed solution at a micro-level, they also contribute to a digital landscape that does not contribute to larger urban development reforms. An RWA member in Gurgaon noted the significant lack of integration between these third-party platforms and municipal bodies, such as the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG), the Gurgaon Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA), or the state-level power utility. This fragmentation means that data on security, traffic, or consumption remains locked in private silos, preventing the aggregation needed for comprehensive city-level planning. The digital urban landscape, therefore, is not an integrated smart city but a collection of smart fragments that ultimately falls short of the goal of unified, large-scale public-sector reform (MoHUA, 2021; MeitY, 2023). The digital divide is a significant concern. Although the applications promote ease of use, they often require a certain level of digital literacy, a smartphone, and internet access, which can exclude marginalised groups such as the elderly, those with low incomes, or those with less technical proficiency. Furthermore, the lack of transparency in how the AI algorithms manage and analyse data means that the decisions made by the app are often opaque to the end-users. This lack of explainability, coupled with the potential for algorithmic bias, undermines the principle of transparent and accountable governance (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2024).

The comparison between Gurgaon, Dwarka, and Janakpuri also shows how different ideas of governance, efficiency, and security might exist within a city, revealing aspects of the socio-economic landscape. The findings, drawn from three socially distinct neighbourhoods, underline that **digital governance is not experienced uniformly**; it interacts deeply with residents' class position, age, and the institutional maturity of local RWAs.

Ultimately, these platforms fail to connect with city-level authorities, resulting in a focus on daily convenience rather than genuine urban reform. Overall, the results show that while digital tools can simplify small tasks, they also bring hidden costs related to surveillance, data collection, and missed opportunities for integrated governance.

As urban governance authorities increasingly adopt a digital governance approach to enhance urban planning, a dedicated, decentralised framework for AI governance is essential to safeguard data privacy, extending beyond the current purview of laws such as the DPDP Act. The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023 (Lawrbit, n.d.) is a comprehensive data privacy law passed in India to ensure accountability and prevent the misuse of personal information. However, the law still allows for certain exemptions that private and public actors could misuse. For AI-driven services that rely on real-time data and biometrics, a supplementary and specialised framework is required. This framework should include the formation of an **AI Ethics Committee (AIEC)**, a multi-stakeholder body comprising legal experts, ethicists, civil society representatives, and technical specialists. The AIEC's mandate would be to provide independent oversight of AI system deployments, assess the potential for bias and harm, and issue guidelines on the ethical use of facial recognition and data processing in urban security contexts (MoHUA, 2021). This is supported by the public consultation on AI governance in India (Storyboard18, 2025). This will ensure that new platforms are scrutinised for social and ethical implications, not just technical functionality.

Furthermore, the government must enforce **data minimisation** principles, which require that only data strictly necessary for a specified purpose be collected and retained. This practice reduces the risk profile of data collection by private entities and ensures that data is not repurposed for advertising or other commercial ends without explicit, informed consent (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2024). This is particularly relevant for applications like MyGate, where biometric data is collected for security purposes but is stored by a private entity with a commercial business model. The government is also working to establish an AI Mission with a significant budget to support these regulatory and ethical goals (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, 2023). A comprehensive approach to data governance and protection will help prevent the misuse of personal information. Lastly, the concept of **'privacy by design'** emphasises proactive, user-centric safeguards that embed privacy into system architecture from the outset (Cavoukian, 2011). must be an integral part of all new digital initiatives. This implies that data protection and privacy are not secondary, but are incorporated into the design and architecture from the outset of any system, ensuring that data collection and processing are designed with user privacy at the centre. This aspect is crucial in preventing data breaches and abuse, rather than merely responding to them. This method not only bolsters citizen faith but also enhances the State's institutional capability to govern data in a fast-paced, digitalising urban environment.

5. CONCLUSION

Integrating digital governance and Artificial Intelligence (AI) into India's urban management brings both exciting possibilities and complex challenges. This study, which examined the MyGate app across three socially distinct neighbourhoods of Delhi NCR—Gurgaon, Dwarka, and Janakpuri—shows that residents' experiences with AI-mediated governance are profoundly shaped by class position, generational outlook, and local institutional cultures.

In Gurgaon, younger dual-income professionals living in privately developed condominiums associate MyGate with efficiency, order, and lifestyle management, often prioritising convenience over privacy concerns. In Dwarka, the civic-minded middle-class residents of planned DDA societies acknowledge the app's utility but call for stronger legal safeguards and transparency in data handling. In Janakpuri, older residents, many of them retired government employees, view facial recognition and monitoring practices as ethically troubling and dehumanizing for domestic workers. These contrasts underline that digital governance is not experienced uniformly—it intersects with social hierarchy, digital literacy, and neighborhood form.

While platforms like MyGate simplify daily management and promote efficiency, they also entrench new forms of data dependency and surveillance. The findings reveal that the pursuit of convenience often overshadows structural concerns about consent, dignity, and accountability. When personal and behavioural data are monetised privately without explicit legal protections, it produces what may be termed a micro-surveillance state—state-like in its reach, private in its ownership, and commercial in its logic.

For digital governance to become genuinely effective and equitable, regulation must keep pace with innovation. Legal frameworks must account for the differentiated social realities of urban India, embedding "privacy by design," algorithmic

accountability, and class-sensitive safeguards into digital infrastructure. Onlys by integrating these principles can technology strengthen citizenship and participation, rather than merely extending surveillance in new forms.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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