

*Report*

## Equinox 2025 : The 5th Annual International Conference

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*Received:* 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2025; *Published:* 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2025

### **Vantage: Journal of Thematic Analysis**

A Peer Reviewed Multidisciplinary Publication of Centre for Research, Maitreyi College, University of Delhi. Volume 6, Issue 2, October 2025. <https://vantagejournal.com> , ISSN(E): 2582-7391

### **How to cite:**

Nikita Audichya. (2025). Equinox 2025 : The 5th Annual International Conference. *Vantage: Journal of Thematic Analysis*, 6(2), 116-117. <https://doi.org/10.52253/vjta.2025.v06i02.116>

The Centre for Research (CFR), Maitreyi College, University of Delhi, organized the Fifth Annual International Conference EQUINOX 2025 from September 9 to 11, 2025. The international conference was organized under the guidance of Prof. Haritma Chopra, Principal, Maitreyi College. The conference convenors were Prof. Brototi Roy, Prof. Meena Yadav and Dr. Gopi Devdutt Tripathy. Conducted in a hybrid format and streamed live on YouTube, the conference witnessed participation across India and abroad, with scholars deliberating on the theme "Minds and Machines: Interdisciplinary Reflections on Science, Society, and Ethics."

The inaugural session commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp accompanied by the Kulgeet of the University of Delhi and Maitreyi College. The Vice Principal, Prof. Jyoti Singh, extended a warm welcome to the attendees and highlighted how EQUINOX is a platform for global academic exchange. Professor P. B. Sharma, Vice Chancellor of Amity University, Gurgaon, and the founding Vice Chancellor of the Delhi Technological University, was the Chief Guest. In his address, he emphasized striving for a dialogic relationship between minds and machines while exercising caution against blind submission to technology. Professor Jagreet Kaur, Chairperson, Governing Body, Maitreyi College, reflected on the new ethical dimensions in a world driven by AI. The inaugural session concluded with the release of the Book of Abstracts.

Day One featured three offline sessions. Every session was broadcast on YouTube Live to reach a wider audience. Technical Session I included Dr. Sachin Sharma (Assistant Professor, Cluster Innovation Centre, University of Delhi) and Prof. Prabhat Ranjan (Chairman, Research, Innovation, and International Relations, Dr. D. Y. Patil Pratishthan, Kolhapur) as invited speakers. They discussed the importance of integrating human creativity with technological innovation for sustainable development. Technical Session II featured poster presentations by undergraduate students on the primary theme of the conference, followed by an interactive session with the judges and the faculty. Technical Session III, organized by the The Department of Sociology was chaired by Dr. Anjali Bhatia. It featured discussions by Prof. Rukmini Bhaya Nair (IIT Delhi) on AI Cognizance, Dr. Saumya Malviya (IIT Mandi) on Mind, Mathematics, and Machines, and Prof. Reema Bhatia (Miranda House, University of Delhi) on Reclaiming the Web: Feminist Praxis in Virtual Spaces. The ensuing interaction with students and faculty set a reflective tone for the subsequent days of the conference.

Day Two had technical sessions held in a hybrid mode. It commenced with Technical Session IV, which involved insights shared by distinguished speakers. Professor Savyasaachi (retired, Jamia Millia Islamia) and Professor Amman Madan (Azim Premji University, Bhopal). Dr. Rashi Bhargava (North Eastern Hill University, Shillong) was the

session chair. The speakers engaged in an intellectually stimulating discussion on the “deforestation of the mind” and the moral transformations in education with the development of AI.

Technical Session V saw oral presentations from students and faculty across India. It was chaired by Dr. Samrita Sinha (Sophia College and Vivekananda College, Kolkata) and Dr. Gita Pandey (Ambedkar University, Delhi). Participants presented papers on a plethora of topics, such as “Transcending Consciousness: Transitional Bodies and Virtual Spaces,” “Existentialism and Alienation,” and “Allusion of Dystopian Tech Cultures,” to name a few, and received constructive feedback from faculty and peers.

Technical Session VI was chaired by Professor Bal Ram Singh, President of the Institute of Advanced Sciences, Dartmouth, Massachusetts. This session had three distinguished international speakers: Mr. Rajiv Malhotra, founder of the Infinity Foundation in Princeton, USA; Professor Narayanan Menon Komerath from Georgia, USA; and Professor Subhash Kak from Oklahoma State University, USA. Their presentations covered a wide range of topics, from the future of democracies to AI and consciousness. They explored the transformative potential of AI in governance and society and the accompanying ethical considerations.

Technical Session VII was chaired by Dr. Jyotsna Talreja Wassan from the Department of Computer Science, Maitreyi College. The session included a presentation by Dr. Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Glasgow Caledonian University, UK, on “Adversarial Machine Learning: Navigating Trust, Security, and Ethics in the Age of AI,” and a talk by Mr. Ayush Chopra from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, on AI Ethics and Education. Both speakers underscored the critical interdependence between technological innovation and moral responsibility.

Day Three witnessed sessions in person, which were also broadcast through YouTube Live. Technical Session VIII featured Dr. Sumbul Farah (Assistant Professor of Sociology at Jamia Millia Islamia), who spoke on “Faithful Senses / Faithless Machines: Religion and the Limits of Technology,” and Prof. Shashi Tiwari (Recipient of the President of India’s Certificate of Honour, President of WAVES India, and former faculty member of Maitreyi College), who delivered a lecture on “Human Mind, Machines, and Consciousness: Vedic Reflections on Spiritual and Social Ethics.” Their respective talks brought philosophical and spiritual depth to the conference, stressing that AI must remain rooted in human values and cultural ethics.

The Valedictory Session marked a memorable conclusion to EQUINOX 2025. After the lighting of the lamp and felicitation of the chief guest, Prof. Pawan K. Dhar (Executive Director, CVJ Centre for Synthetic Biology and Biomanufacturing) delivered the keynote address on “*Teaching Human Values to Machines.*” He warned against the rise of “digital zombies” through excessive automation and advocated value-driven AI that is assistive rather than substitutive. The session concluded with a feedback segment, prize distribution for poster and oral presentations, and a vote of thanks by Prof. Meena Yadav.

Over the three days, the international conference witnessed seventy-three oral and poster presentations alongside eight technical sessions and sixteen invited talks. With discussions on AI and digital inclusivity, Equinox 2025 witnessed meaningful deliberations on the intersection of science and social ethics. Through a hybrid format and YouTube Live, the conference showcased its theme of “minds and machines” in action. It reinforced the dedication of Maitreyi College to build an inclusive and interdisciplinary research environment where technology serves humanity.