AI can transform trade by curbing fraud: DGFT

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Artificial intelligence (AI) can transform the way India does trade, by detecting fraud while ensuring genuine businesses are not harassed, Lav Agarwal, Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), said on Wednesday.

Beyond trade, AI should be used by the government to improve services and policies. The government should also explore if AI can be used in agriculture for soil analysis or something which directly affects the common man, he said.

"I think, from a government perspective, what is very important is that we have to look for AI as an inclusive tool... can AI be embedded into the software, which we use to provide permission to people... (can AI be used to) not create one tool, one pilot somewhere, but engage in digital public infrastructure through services provided to common man so that it is accessible to everyone," Agarwal asked at the AI Impact Summit.

"Can it help me in terms of understanding that if someone is trying to utilise or gain from the system and identify those people, those organisations? The genuine exporter or importer does not get harassed but the wrong set of people can be accounted for. So, that is what the AI can build in," he said, adding that from a government perspective, AI should be integrated into India's expanding digital public infrastructure.

Agarwal further said that India should start thinking in terms of building AI tools for itself. "We are a country of 1.4-plus billion people. We have to start thinking of LLMs (large language models) that are based on Indian data, and based on that we need to get it embedded into the software that the government is making for people at large," he said.

"So, it has to be primarily focused on the common man and rural area, rather than in terms of certain pilots. We need to come out of that pilot approach and actually understand that technology already exists. Information technology (IT) revolution is happening, and we cannot lose the opportunity," he added.