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'Train schoolgirls to help more women take up data science'

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BENGALURU: "For more girls to take up data science as a career, we need more data science champions and role models," said Vasanthi Srinivasan, a professor of organisational behaviour at Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, while delivering the keynote address at the Women in Data Science conference hosted by IIMB on Saturday.

"In order to catch youngsters early on, data hackathons must be held in schools and special segregated training should be conducted exclusively for girl students," said Srinivasan at the event.

Other speakers pointed out that there is an acute shortage of radiologists in proportion to the number of patients in India and across the world and that AI and deep learning can help bridge this gap.

Dr Sunita Maheshwari, paediatric cardiologist at Tele-radiology Solutions said, "In India, there is only one radiologist per one lakh population. Using deep learning, we can auto-detect a lesion, pull up related clinical history and compare it with previous scans and prepare a templated report. Though there are algorithms for diagnosis and detection of diseases such as fractures, stroke, pulmonary embolism, tuberculosis and cancer, with most algorithms not being 100% accurate, there is a lot of confusion among the medical fraternity."

Vidhya Chandrasekharan, engineering manager at Pay Pal, pointed out there is a deep-rooted gender and racial bias even in AI-driven algorithms developed today.

"A big player in e-commerce reportedly brought down its internal AI recruitment tool due to gender bias. The gender-

insensitive tool penalised women candidates as the data was trained from a workforce consisting majorly of male employees. Low grades were given to resumes with words like 'women' and having a break in one's career would be considered a factor for low scoring — this impacted women candidates the most," she explained.