Editorial

I still remember the unique satisfaction of a problem finally yielding after hours spent with nothing but a textbook, a sharp pencil, and pages of painstaking calculations. The intellectual routine was the crucible of our training teaching us discipline, principles, and providing a deep-rooted confidence that we could build an answer from the ground up. For many of us, this rigor and hard work was the very definition of what it meant to become an engineer.

However, today the students entering our classrooms are different. They are sitting on a heap of information and assisted by the generative artificial intelligence and other large language models which can help them with their course learnings, practicals, projects and much more. The question which arises is "As educators should be restrict them using AI or equip them to take AI as a facilitator?"

To answer we must understand the following-

The focus must shift from the "what" and "how" of a solution to the "why." An engineer's value will no longer lie in the ability to recall a formula or execute a standard calculation, but in the capacity for critical thinking, systems-level integration, ethical judgment, and creative problem-framing.

This calls for a curricular evolution. We must actively teach our students to become expert users and critical evaluators of AI tools. This means designing assignments where students are not just permitted, but required, to use AI as a "co-pilot." The assessment then shifts to their ability to frame the right questions, validate the output, and integrate and innovate. Formulating a precise, well-constrained prompt for an AI requires a deep understanding of the underlying engineering principles. Because AI can "hallucinate" or produce plausible-sounding but incorrect results, the future engineer must possess the fundamental knowledge to verify, test, and debug AI-generated solutions. Hands-on lab work and physical prototyping become more critical than ever to ground simulated results in reality. Ultimately, the true power of AI will be unlocked not by accepting its first answer, but by using it as a brainstorming partner to explore a wider design space, and then applying human ingenuity and ethical considerations to select and refine the optimal path forward.

Our responsibility as engineering educators is not to shield students from this technological revolution, but to prepare them to lead it. We must redesign our courses and assessments to cultivate the uniquely human skills that AI augments rather than replaces. The engineer of the future will not be one who simply knows the answers, but one who knows what questions to ask, how to critically engage with an AI collaborator, and how to apply timeless engineering ethics to this powerful new frontier.

Dr. (Mrs.) Sushma S. Kulkarni
Editor-JEE