GENOA WEEK 2026 · THE COST OF KNOWLEDGE

The Cost of (New) Knowledge

Women who teach machines to speak, and the price they pay

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AVANI · 31 · BANGALORE

“I can make my own education purposeful — also, but not only, for duḍḍu.”

MSc in Bioscience. Married at 24, two children by 27. Now annotates science data in Kannada, Hindi and English.

duḍḍu — everyday Kannada for cash, close to *duḍi*, to toil: hard-earned money.

Who pays for new knowledge?

We count compute, energy and data. We rarely count the people who turn text into meaning.

Who trains the machines

Label

Is this a name, a place, a date, a law?

Judge

Is this answer correct? Is this joke offensive?

Translate

Does this sound natural in Kannada, Tamil, Hindi?

Hired for what they already know: a degree, a mother tongue, other languages, a cultural ear.

ZOYA · MUMBAI · MASTER'S IN LAW

"It feels unfair that they benefited from our work and then removed us without any payment."

2 days
of work as an LLM evaluator

No criteria
an unexplained "quality threshold"

No pay
the promised stipend never came

Three threads

1

The dream

An “AI career” as a symbolic wage that makes low, unstable pay bearable.

2

The home

Work that fits care duties and respectability — and turns the home into a factory floor.

3

The extraction

Language, taste and judgement bought by the task, then stripped of authorship.

Open Science, seen from the other side

C	**Collective benefit**	Do they share in what their work builds?
A	**Authority to control**	Any say over how their judgements are used?
R	**Responsibility**	Who answers for their conditions along the chain?
E	**Ethics**	What justifies erasing their authorship?

CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance (Carroll et al. 2020), extended here by analogy

FOR THE DEBATE

Who should count as an author of AI?

Carroll et al. 2020, *Data Science Journal* · Casilli 2025, *Waiting for Robots* · Couldry & Mejias 2019, *The Costs of Connection* · Gajjala 2019, *Digital Diasporas* · Gray & Suri 2019, *Ghost Work* · Irani 2015, *South Atlantic Quarterly* · Miceli & Posada 2022, *PACM HCI* · Wang, Prabhat & Sambasivan 2022, *CHI '22*

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