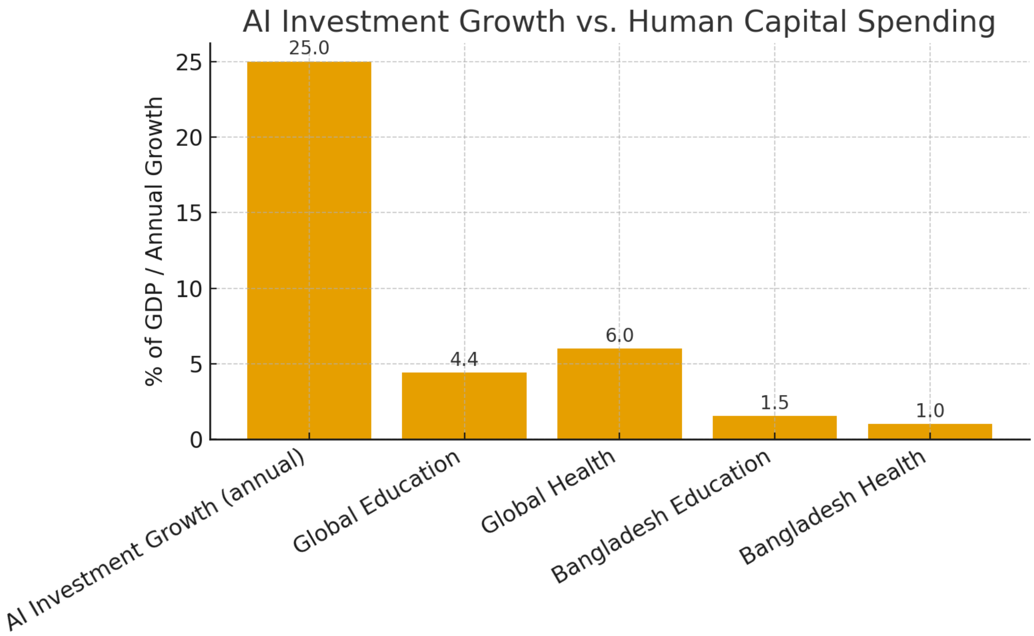
Humanity at a Crossroads: Why We Must Invest in Human Intelligence in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Executive Summary

Global AI investment is accelerating at breakneck speed—reaching US $252 billion in 2024, up 45% from 2023. Private investment in the U.S. alone stood at US $109 billion, compared to China's US $9.3 billion. Meanwhile, public spending on human capital remains stagnant: education averages 4.4% of GDP globally, health 6%, with far lower shares in developing countries. Bangladesh spends just 1.5% of GDP on education and about 1% on health. This imbalance between AI and human investment poses risks for economic resilience, equity, and ethical governance.

Figure 1: AI Investment Growth vs. Human Capital Spending



Key Challenges for Bangladesh

• Education spending has stagnated at ~1.5% of GDP—well below UNESCO's 4–6% benchmark. • Health spending is about 1% of GDP, one of the lowest in South Asia, leaving gaps in preventive care and mental health. • Outcomes: 28% of under-five children remain stunted, while skills shortages persist among youth. At the same time, Bangladesh is accelerating digital and AI initiatives, risking imbalance between technology and people.

Policy Priorities

Priority Area	Action
Scale Up Investment	Raise education to ≥6% and health to ≥5% of GDP; focus on quality outcomes
Reform Education	Introduce AI literacy, ethics, and problem-solving in schools
Lifelong Learning	National reskilling programs with industry partnerships
Inclusive Skills	Target women, youth, rural workers with AI-relevant skills
Ethical AI Governance	National Commission on AI; data protection & transparency laws
AI for Human Development	Apply AI to telemedicine, personalized learning, and agriculture

Bangladesh's Future: Success or Failure

If Bangladesh balances AI with human investment, it can build a resilient, competitive workforce and leapfrog into a digitally inclusive economy. If it fails, it risks widening inequality, jobless growth, and dependence on foreign AI systems.

Conclusion

The numbers are clear: AI investment is rising 25% annually, while Bangladesh spends under 3% of GDP combined on health and education. The future will belong to countries that integrate AI with strong human capital systems. For Bangladesh, the message is urgent—invest in people now, or risk irrelevance in a machine-led world.