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SCHOOL OF LAW
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INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL AND TECHNICAL SCIENCES
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Education Research and Development Association (ERDA)

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A TWO DAY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INNOVATIONS AND CHALLENGES IN LAW, MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Editors

**Prof. Dr. Asha Sundaram | Dr. S. Thangamayan
Dr. Aswathy Prakash G | Prof. Dr. Reshma Soman N**

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AI TECHNOLOGY AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Dr. Intezar Mahdi

*Principal, University Polytechnic, Integral University, Lucknow, India
intezarmahdi2002@gmail.com*

Nazish Siddiqui

*Lecturer & Head, Department of CSE
University Polytechnic, Integral University, Lucknow, India
nazishcs016@gmail.com*

Abstract

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to reshape industries and societies worldwide, it simultaneously raises pressing ethical concerns that demand critical examination. This paper investigates key ethical dilemmas emerging from the deployment of AI technologies, drawing on recent research, global reports, and real-world case studies. It begins by framing the foundational principles of AI ethics, then explores concerns around privacy erosion and mass surveillance enabled by AI systems. The study examines the societal risks posed by deepfakes, digital manipulation, and the spread of misinformation, alongside unresolved challenges in intellectual property rights in the context of AI-generated content. The implications of AI for employment—particularly job displacement and algorithmic hiring practices—are analyzed through the lens of fairness and accountability. Environmental sustainability is also considered, with data highlighting the substantial resource and energy demands of AI infrastructure. Further, the paper addresses how reliance on AI may suppress creative human thinking and how machine learning models can perpetuate and amplify existing social biases. The analysis underscores the urgent need for globally coherent regulatory frameworks and ethical guidelines to ensure that AI development aligns with human values, equity, and ecological responsibility. This work contributes to the growing discourse on responsible AI by offering interdisciplinary insights and policy-oriented recommendations for more ethical and sustainable AI integration.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, AI, Ethics, Ethical Dilemmas, Privacy.

I. Introduction

What are AI Ethics?

These are a set of implications and responsibilities to regard human values and align with basic rights while developing and deploying AI systems. From these ethics stems accountability, transparency, and ensuring a positive impact on humanity and ecology[12]. There are no globally recognised principles or laws to regulate and enforce AI ethics. This ranges from non-discrimination and bias mitigation to explainability and accountability, simultaneously guaranteeing user security, consent, and environmental impact, thereby reducing ecological footprint. In the digital era, personal data has become a prized commodity—collected, stored, analyzed, and sold with unprecedented scale and sophistication. At the heart of the data revolution lies Artificial Intelligence (AI), a technology capable of deriving complex patterns and predictions from vast oceans of information, and no wonder that it is hungry for more data, ethically or unethically. India, with its over 800 million internet users and high smartphone penetration, is fertile ground for this digital deception—especially when content is shared across WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, often without verification.

Examples of AI Ethics in Practice

- Bias in Hiring Algorithms – Ensuring Fairness
- Facial Recognition in Public Surveillance – Protecting Privacy
- AI in Lending Decisions – Ensuring Explainability
- Autonomous Vehicles – Assigning Responsibility
- Predictive Policing – Ensuring Transparency and Fairness
- Generative AI in Creative Industries – Defining Authorship and Ownership
- AI in Healthcare – Maintaining Human Oversight [12]

Who Shoulders the Responsibility?

But as AI grows more powerful, so too does its appetite for data—and its potential to infringe on individual privacy, promote surveillance, and challenge the very foundations of data ethics. In the name of progress, are we surrendering our rights to anonymity, consent, and control? Is there a way out? The answer to these questions lies in this research paper only. Who are to be held accountable in the first place, and how –

1. Policymakers

Governments can create and implement policies and regulations that govern the use of AI. The governments must come up with laws like the European Union and, as India did by bringing about Data Protection Laws [15], though they do not ensure a blanket protection, but would curb it to some extent. In the Indian context, Certain ancillary laws that impact data protection based on their jurisdiction and subject matter include:

- The Information Rules, 2013.
- The Directions imposed by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In).
- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- The Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020.

2. Regulatory Agencies and International Organizations

Agencies like the European Commission or the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) can develop guidelines and enforce AI ethics in their industries. Whereas in the Indian context, the relevant government departments are being supervised by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), which looks into the enforcement of data protection. However, the DPDP Act envisages the setting up of a Data Protection Board of India (DPBI) to regulate the regime of digital personal data protection in the country. Organizations must also comply with data protection requirements set by sector-specific regulators like RBI, TRAI, and IRDAI. Entities like the United Nations (UN) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) can develop international standards for AI. Great point — mentioning the relevant agencies, authorities, or organizations responsible for regulating or overseeing these ethical issues adds weight and context.

Ethical AI in Practice: Real-World Examples and agencies responsible -

- Fairness in AI-Powered Hiring – Regulated by EEOC
- Privacy in Facial Recognition – Governed by Local Laws and FTC Oversight

- Transparency in AI Lending Decisions – Supervised by CFPB
- Accountability in Autonomous Vehicles – Under the Jurisdiction of NHTSA
- Ethical Predictive Policing – Scrutinized by DOJ and Civil Liberties Groups
- Ownership in AI-Generated Content – A Concern for USPTO and Copyright Office
- Human Oversight in AI Healthcare – Regulated by FDA and Medical Boards
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- UN Privacy Policy Group (UN PPG) [15]
- Privacy International [14]
- IAPP (International Association of Privacy Professionals)

3. Us

We are too quick to say “I agree” and compromise all our data and privacy.

II. Ethical Dilemmas

Privacy, Surveillance & Data Ethics

Users often share sensitive information unknowingly, and platforms like Meta may expose such data to human reviewers. Surveillance tools combined with AI, like facial recognition, escalate concerns over misuse and civil rights. Across the globe, AI-driven surveillance systems have gradually become the norm. Governments have deployed facial recognition software in public spaces; private companies monitor user behavior for profit [14].

How does it work?

- Lack of Informed Consent: Many platforms use vague or misleading privacy policies, undermining users’ ability to make informed decisions.
- Dark Patterns: Design tactics are used to manipulate users into sharing more than they intend—by making it harder to opt out or easier to "agree all."
- Surveillance Capitalism: Tech giants have built billion-dollar empires on user data, turning human behavior into profit with little accountability, and their hunger for data is ever-increasing.

Deepfakes, Misinformation & Digital Manipulation

In an age where digital media dominates our lives, distinguishing between truth and fabrication has become increasingly difficult. With the rise of deepfake technology [7], misinformation, and digital manipulation, i.e process of altering digital content—such as images, videos, audio, or text—using software or technology to change, distort, or fabricate reality. Though it can be used for both benign purposes (like photo editing or artistic enhancement) and malicious purposes (like spreading misinformation or creating fake content). India faces a growing crisis that threatens public trust, democratic integrity, and national security. Manipulated images, videos, or audio clips—especially when designed to evoke strong emotions—can quickly go viral on social media platforms, misleading large numbers of people before the content is debunked. This kind of misinformation often targets individuals or groups, causing severe damage to personal and professional reputations. For instance, a deepfake video falsely showing someone making offensive remarks can lead to

public outrage, job loss, or even legal trouble, despite being entirely fabricated. In India, manipulated content has also been a catalyst for violence and unrest— there have been multiple cases where morphed videos or fake news spread through WhatsApp have incited communal riots or mob lynchings [17].

Perhaps most concerning is the impact on democracy itself. During elections, digitally manipulated political content can be strategically deployed to sway public opinion, discredit opponents, or influence voting behavior. When citizens are unable to distinguish between real and fake content, the very foundations of informed decision-making and democratic participation begin to erode. Clone voices and images to impersonate people with alarming accuracy [7]. AI-generated media (deepfakes) blur truth and can manipulate public perception. Used for political deception, fraud, and social destabilization (Wikipedia). Major AI generative tools include chatbots such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, Claude, Grok, and DeepSeek. There are text-to-image models such as Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, DALL-E and Veo, and Sora for text to video [11].

There are several reasons behind it:

- End-to-end encryption on various social platforms
- Limited fact-checking capacity in regional languages
- Lack of a robust legal framework specifically addressing deepfakes.
- Massive user base
- Linguistic diversity
- Low digital literacy

Intellectual Property & Creative Ownership Issues?

Perhaps the most pressing ethical challenge lies in how AI systems are trained. Most generative AI models are trained on vast datasets scraped from the internet—often including copyrighted images, writings, music, and other content. Creators frequently discover that their work has been used to train AI systems without their permission, credit, or compensation. This practice, while legally ambiguous in many countries, clearly violates ethical standards around consent and respect for intellectual labor. Artists, writers, and musicians have begun taking legal action, arguing that this constitutes a form of digital appropriation. This has led to a growing number of lawsuits and legal complaints:

Kelly McKernan [5], a watercolour and acrylic illustrator from Tennessee, reports that she "felt sick" when she got to know that her artwork had been used to train AI. She said, "Suddenly, all of these paintings that I had a personal relationship, and journeyed with had a new meaning; it changed my relationship with those artworks". "I felt violated. If someone can type my name [into an AI tool] to make a book cover and not hire me, that affects my career and so many other people" Ms Toorenent says: "Firstly, I would never put my work into it. But if artists do want to, it should be opt in. If I'm the owner, I should decide what happens to my art." [5]

III. Societal Impact

AI and Job Displacement

Artificial Intelligence is expected to significantly impact the job market, with many professions at risk—especially mid-level, white-collar jobs like telemarketing and some teaching roles. Estimates from Goldman Sachs suggest that around 300 million jobs globally may be affected, while McKinsey predicts that 400–800 million jobs could be displaced [9], requiring up to 375 million people to change careers. A report by OpenAI and the University of Pennsylvania adds that 80% of U.S. workers may see at least 10% of their tasks influenced by AI [8], with nearly 1 in 5 seeing over 50% of their tasks impacted. This shift is likely to hit middle- and lower-class workers the hardest, potentially widening income and wealth inequality. Unlike past automation, which mainly affected factory jobs, AI is expected to disrupt higher-paying, white-collar roles more. However, history shows that automation-driven job losses are often balanced by the creation of new roles. Technological advancements typically lead to new occupations, increased productivity, and long-term economic growth. While the exact timing is uncertain, a productivity boom could follow widespread AI adoption.

For people like McGill, it's that human touch that is missing that makes all the difference. “I think there are certain auditory or visual cues that you get when you're talking to a real person that are just hard to communicate strictly with a computer,” she says. “And I just did not want to do it.”[16]

Economic Inequality and Workforce Instability Due to the Use of AI:

The increasing integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into global industries is significantly reshaping the labor market, sparking both opportunities and serious socio-economic challenges. AI and automation technologies are rapidly taking over routine and repetitive tasks—such as those in manufacturing, logistics, retail, and even some clerical roles—which traditionally employed a large segment of the population. As a result, workers in these sectors face growing job insecurity and unemployment risks unless they can transition into new roles that often require digital skills and technical expertise. This shift contributes to growing economic inequality, as individuals with advanced education and tech-savvy skillsets command significantly higher wages, while others are left behind with stagnant incomes or no stable employment at all.

Furthermore, the rise of AI has contributed to wage polarization, where the benefits of technology are concentrated in the hands of a few—typically high-income earners and large tech firms—while the broader workforce experiences limited gains [12, 13]. This divide is further widened by geographic disparities: urban centers and technologically advanced regions attract investment and AI-related jobs, whereas rural and underdeveloped areas struggle to keep pace. On a global scale, wealthier nations with access to advanced AI infrastructure and talent are poised to benefit disproportionately, exacerbating the inequality between developed and developing countries [18].

In addition to economic inequality, workforce instability is becoming a defining feature of the AI-driven economy. Traditional long-term employment is increasingly being replaced by flexible, often precarious, gig and freelance work. While such arrangements may offer flexibility, they often lack job security, benefits, and career advancement opportunities.

To address these challenges, there is an urgent need for robust policy interventions. Governments and institutions must invest in education and lifelong learning initiatives to equip workers with future-ready skills. Reskilling and upskilling programs should be accessible, affordable, and aligned with market demands. Without strategic action, the continued rise of AI risks deepening existing economic divides and destabilizing the workforce across societies [12, 13].

Environmental Sustainability

AI has an environmental problem. Here's what the world can do about that.[19]

Artificial Intelligence, particularly large-scale models, presents significant environmental challenges due to its high energy consumption, substantial carbon emissions [3], water usage, and resource-intensive hardware manufacturing [4]. These impacts span across the entire AI lifecycle—from model training and deployment to infrastructure maintenance and component disposal. The report from UNEP, titled "Navigating New Horizons- A Global Foresight Report on Planetary Health and Human Well-being," highlighted a powerful and growing concern about the environmental impact of AI, especially as it scales through massive data centre infrastructures.

If unaddressed, the environmental footprint of AI could rival or surpass many traditional industries. The big challenge is balancing AI's benefits with its growing ecological costs. Shifting to renewable energy in data centres. Improving hardware recycling and lifecycle management. Investing in more energy-efficient AI models and algorithms. Requiring transparency and regulation around resource use and emissions.

Overdependence on AI Can Erode Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Humanism

The widespread displacement of jobs due to AI-driven automation carries the potential to trigger profound social unrest and instability. The erosion of employment opportunities not only threatens financial security but also undermines social cohesion, potentially giving rise to frustration, protest, and disillusionment among affected populations.

Beyond the economic implications, the loss of work carries a deeper psychological toll. For many individuals, employment is more than just a means of livelihood—it serves as a core component of identity, self-worth, and purpose.

A recent study undertaken by the researchers at MIT's Media Lab [1, 2] divided 54 subjects, 18 to 39-year-olds, into three groups, and made them write several SAT essays with the help of OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's search engine, and nothing else. Researchers simultaneously used an EEG to record the groups' brain activity across 32 regions, and to their surprise, of the three groups, ChatGPT users had the lowest brain engagement and "consistently underperformed at neural, linguistic, and behavioral levels." Over the period of several months, AI users became lethargic, often resorting to copy-and-paste by the end of the study. The main author of the research paper, Nataliya Kosmyna, felt the need to bring the findings into the public domain to raise concerns that, as society increasingly relies upon AI for immediate results, it might adversely affect brain development in the long run.[6]

IV. Conclusion

As the boundaries of what AI can achieve continue to expand, the imperative remains to shape its trajectory in a manner that aligns with core human values and planetary well-being. This provokes a fundamental question for the global community: how can we ensure that the future of AI is guided not solely by capability, but by a rigorous and collective commitment to ethical responsibility?

The rise of Artificial Intelligence marks a defining moment in technological advancement, offering immense potential to drive progress across sectors. However, as this paper has shown, the ethical implications of AI are far-reaching and deeply intertwined with issues of privacy, misinformation, intellectual property, environmental sustainability, and social justice.

Addressing these challenges demands not only technological innovation but also a multidisciplinary commitment to ethical foresight, inclusive policy-making, and accountability frameworks that prioritize human dignity, equity, and sustainability. As AI continues to evolve, so too must our systems for governing its impact—ensuring it serves as a tool for empowerment rather than exploitation.

Ultimately, the question we must ask is not just what AI can do, but what it should do. In a world increasingly shaped by intelligent systems, how can we ensure that the future of AI is not only advanced but also just, responsible, and ethically sound?

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