From Booth to Bot: Indian General Elections of 2024 and Artificial Intelligence

Sandhanee Deka and Syed Insha[1]

ABSTRACT

The year 2024 marked a turning point in Indian democracy. The year did not just witness the general elections; Narendra Modi also marked history by leading as the Prime Minister for third consecutive time, being the second after Jawaharlal Nehru to do so, but more than that, the election results were celebrated all across the stratum, and technological tools became the handy guide for political communication and campaign by the majority of the political parties in the game. It depicts how India's democracy has not just evolved but matured. In 2021, Narendra Modi claimed India to be the 'Mother of Democracy,' tracing its ancient roots and glorious values, and 2024 elections revealed the modern characteristics of Indian democracy as the artificial intelligence became the renowned mode of political communication and campaign, making Indian democracy not just glorious but vibrant and competitive also. The article seeks to unravel the ways in which AI has been used in the general election of 2024, and presents a balanced perspective of positives and negatives of AI on Indian democracy. The article attempts to explore, first, how AI is revolutionising the electoral process by analysing the political campaigns, voter engagements, and government strategies of the 2024 general elections. Secondly, how AI offers both prospects and obstacles to India's democratic principles. Does it enhance transparency and combat misinformation? Or is it another tool that monotonises the interactive election process? The article follows a qualitative approach, relying on both primary as well as secondary data on AI and its integration into global electoral systems, particularly in India.

Keywords: *Election, artificial intelligence, democracy, campaign, communication, engagement, electoral process.*

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence implies developing computer systems to take decisions and perform the tasks by processing the data and acquired information.

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1. Sandhanee Deka is a Research Scholar in Department of Political Science, University of Delhi. Email: dekasan562@gmail.com; Syed Insha is a Research Scholar in Department of Political Science, University of Delhi. Email: inshariz2000@gmail.com.

Techniques of machine learning, natural language processing are used to inbuilt abilities like learning, reasoning, understanding, and problem solving in computer systems. According to UNESCO's World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) AI implies, "machines capable of imitating certain functionalities of human intelligence, including such features as perception, learning, reasoning, problem-solving, language interaction, and even producing creative work" (Xianhong, Neupane, Echaiz, Sibal & Revera Lam, 2019). Lately, Artificial intelligence (AI) has become an integrated part of our lives. From social media, virtual personal assistants like Siri, Amazon Alexa to autonomous vehicles, healthcare diagnosis and treatment, AI has replaced traditional mode and models to the revolutionizing ones. Liberal tradition has always been individual centric, regarding individual rational, decisive and bearer of natural rights which no artificial institutions of state or civil society can take away. The same liberal tradition evolved itself into a neo-liberal tradition recalling the limited intervention of state, leading the global yet interdependent world with its policies of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation. The question is, are we generating something that is better than us (human) in form of AI? Are we trying to make machines better than us in issues of decision making, absorbing and interpreting data. Or most importantly if not in emotional or sensitive terms than can AI replace human in cognitive terms? Machines have learned to think, behave and interact like humans. In this view, this article attempts to explore the interactive and behavioural aspects of AI whilst analysing its role and influence in general election of 2024 in India.

Post-1990s witnessed the increased internet dissemination and also transformation of citizens into consumer. Individuals are lately attracted by not just the policies of government but also the packages and services the government promises to give. Political parties utilise various techniques to attract the people and traditional ways of election campaigns are now replaced by AI and modern modes of political communication. AI uses psychographic and behavioural profiles of people to understand their mindset and patterns of voting. Deepfakes and automated social media bots, X (previously Twitter) and Instagram polls are testimonials of how these technologies are becoming an integrated part of influencing and attracting the voters as well as manipulating and altering their opinions. The article is divided into three parts. First, an attempt is made to comprehend AI's integration into global electoral system. Second, AI and its influence in Indian Lok Sabha election of 2024 and lastly, AI's future and its prospects for Indian democracy.

India, today is not merely the largest democracy but also its democratic values are ancient as well as glorious. The growing integration of AI in India's electoral system, particularly in 2024 Lok Sabha election outlines how democracy will sustain in India in times to come. It is not a hidden fact that most political parties leverage AI to analyse voter behaviour and their inclinations. Through localised messages, polls, deepfakes in diverse languages, AI tools address India's diverse linguistic and cultural spectrum, making it an effective tool for political parties to grow their base and roots in every corner of India. Chatbots and AI driven apps are deployed to interact with voters, share the party's future prospects and plans, manifestos and also addresses queries and issues of common people. The integration of AI in electoral strategy was undoubtably visible in Lok Sabha elections of 2024 but its landscape has evolved significantly, particularly with the initiative of Digital India. The 'Digital India' initiative was launched in 2015, aiming to transform India into a 'digitally empowered society' and growing but 'knowledgeable economy' (Achievements made under Digital India Programme, 2022). The medium was to integrate the technological tools, including AI, into governance and electoral process of country. Digitalisation of electoral process in India can be traced back to the adoption of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in the 1990s, replacing Voter Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs). This transition was the initial development for incorporating more sophisticated tools in electoral processes. Similarly, Election Commission of India (ECI) also digitalised voter databases to improve the accuracy and accessibility of data. The machine learning algorithms were used to regularly update voter rolls, identifying the eligible and duplicate entries. From AI and digital tools assisting ECI and other institutions in their function of managing India's diverse database to AI becoming a handy tool of political parties in analysing voter's sentiments through media platforms, news outlets and online polls. Technology had undoubtably become accessible. It was Digital India initiative of government that has set the stage for AI to digitalise election process in India. But Indian General Elections of 2024 depict, now AI is more about leveraging efficiency, inclusivity and on the other hand, a tool to manipulate people and mobilise their sentiments.

AI in recent Lok Sabha Elections was primarily used to inform citizens and ended up shaping or altering their respective opinions regarding the political dynamics of the country. The objective was to provide access to high-quality information and represent the goals and plans of different political parties. For instance, AI led Digital India Bhashini is a language translation platform launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2022. It seeks to 'enable easy

access to the internet and digital services in Indian languages, including voice-based access, and help creation of content in Indian languages' (Digital India BHASHINI - India's AI-led language translation platform, 2022). This Digital Initiative was aimed to digitally include the masses, strengthening the participatory democracy in India. Suno India, Bolo India, Dekho India and Likho India are constituents of Bhashini platform, aiming to disperse digital content in native languages. The same tool of Bhashini is used by Prime Minister to deliver speeches in multiple languages, so that his words can attract wider audience, depicting the new modes of political campaigning (Gupta & Mathews, 2024). Similarly, AI powered robo-calls are used to deliver personalised messages to voters across the country in their respective languages. AI driven voice assistants and chat boxes are aimed to generate an interactive relation between political parties and voters but these platforms and constant triggering in daily lives of people is also a matter of ethical and privacy concern. People across the country were bombarded by personal calls and WhatsApp messages by different representatives of different political parties using voice cloning and lip sync software to deliver the party messages (Christopher & Bansal, 2024). But how AI became an integral part of electoral process worldwide? Is it a new development or was always existing in some way or the other in electoral processes across the world, particularly in India?

AI'S INTEGRATION INTO GLOBAL ELECTORATE SYSTEM

Democracy is the most celebrated form of government in the world today and free and fair elections constitute the part and parcel of thriving democracy. 2024 has been the "super election year" with more than 70 countries went to polls as claimed by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme, 2024). AI and machine learning have undoubtably left their mark in this super election year. AI has already been influential in biotechnology, neurotechnology, robotics and lately in political domains too in forms of one of the modes of communication in electoral process. Political parties across the world are experimenting with the technologies and machine learning developments in their campaigns and voter outreach programmes. Technology has always been the integral part of electoral process since the advent of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation. Different modes like e-voting and online polls have always been used to campaign, interact and mobilise the voters. But the advent of novel technological development in forms of AI ChatGPT, Copilot, Deepfakes, Voice cloning software have the tendency to impact the electoral process both in positive and negative terms. AI generative tools however, sought to make the whole electoral process effective, efficient,

transparent and most profoundly interactive. But these tools are got into the hands of local leaders in a way that depicts nothing but unethical utilisation of AI. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in his address to Security Council asserted about the dual nature of AI. He argued, "The advent of generative AI could be a defining moment for disinformation and hate speech- undermining truth, facts, and safety adding a new dimension to the manipulation of human behaviour and contributing to polarisation and instability on a vast scale" (United Nations: Meeting Coverage and Press Releases, 2023).

AI is flexible in nature, available to public without any legal or economic measures. It eases the functions and work of people across the world, which made it also adaptable in nature. It does not just question technical, social or legal peculiarities but intents to integrate political actors and citizens and through its interactive models. Guterres urged the council to exercise AI whilst maintaining the transparency, efficiency, and accountability. However, does AI categorically bridges the economic and digital divide? AI as a technological development should not be just accurate but reliable also. If AI is to be used to bridge social, economic or digital divide, to cure diseases, for sustainable development measures, then how AI has been used in electoral process becomes significant constituent to comprehend as elections are the testing grounds of future promises and prospects.

Social media and AI have become significant actors in electoral process, widening the scope for citizens to not be just voters but 'responsible' voters and citizens. Digital era seeks to first provide election management bodies across the world the efficient mode to gather and manage the voter's data and monitor the polls easily. Secondly, the political parties and politicians have got a new and attractive tool in their hands to attract people as it is now easy to communicate with voters and disperse the parties plans for future. UNESCO 2019 report on Elections and media in digital times identified the threats the digital era posed in electoral process (Xianhong et al., 2019). First, the spread of misinformation and ill-speech. Second, increase in violence and terrorization against media actors. Third, coercion and manipulation in electoral campaigning and political communication. All these issues pose serious threats to right to speech and expression, freedom of press and right to associate and move. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.10 asserted the significance of 'ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms according to the national and international agreements.' In this view, it needs to be noted that AI is not just a common technological development but a tool possessing the capability of learning and developing itself. UNESCO's

report on Elections in Digital India marks that, "the mechanics behind AI are quite straightforward: search engines and recommendation platforms identify personalised suggestions for products and services based on personal preferences and meta-data that has been gathered from previous searches, purchases and mobility behaviour, as well as social interactions" (Xianhong et al., 2019). However, there is no ethical or democratic control over how algorithms predict people's preferences and behaviour. And the control over such algorithms makes any party an influential actor in elections as political leaders through deepfakes videos and automated robo-calls influence voters' preferences in elections when voters don't have any idea of how cloned and fake the calls and videos are. It leads to the social polarisation in society, wherein different groups are formed to support different political parties on the basis of any automated content which has full potential to be false (Helbing, Frey, Gigerenzer, Hafen, Hagner, Hofstetter, J. van den Hoven, Zicari and Zwitter, 2017). Different social media platforms engage the algorithms that seeks to provide controversial exchanges to generate likes and comments, ignoring the legitimacy of the content.

The information and debates in pre-election period influence the preferences and opinions of people. Disruptive practices through deep-fake videos or any other tool take away the people's opportunity to rationally make a judgement. It requires genuine public debates to nourish the minds of people through reliable data and information. All the actors in electoral landscape like voters, electoral bodies, candidates and political parties then must play an important role in having the access and dissemination of reliable information. Whatever happens in elections has the capability to influence negatively or positively every other issue of human and financial resources, its supply and allocation, security and efficiency and so forth. Social media and AI provide common platform to political candidates to reach and engage with voters through modern modes of campaigning and communication. Citizens in return also have the opportunity to easily obtain the information and data that further helps them to take respective voting decisions. Social media and AI tools are also used for voter mobilisation, spread of hate speech, cyberespionage, data hampering, trolling and spreading misinformation. Although elections in every country are often guided by rule of law principles but social media and AI are not rule bound. Their use is not predictable and often results in arbitrating political violence and diverging social units. Digital campaigning is a result of dispersed use of social media and AI in elections. It allows the political actors to use digital platforms to campaign by ensuing advertising services from Google, Twitter, Meta and so forth. It is a positive outcome for electoral

participation as it is a cheaper and accessible mode to engage and interact with political contestants. But again, data mining, fake profiles in the process of campaigning enhance the misuse of online advertising strategies.

AI's integration in global electoral systems allows first, political parties and candidates to utilise AI algorithms to gather data about voters' demographics, preferences, voting behaviour. Political parties accordingly plan their campaigning strategies and target their audience more effectively. In Brazil, AI based analytics were used to understand public opinion before the elections, giving political parties an opportunity to shape their policies and prioritize key issues (Santini, Salles & Tucci, 2021). Secondly, AI generated tools can also predict the electoral outcomes with the help of polling data and people's social media responses. Different political parties also use AI chat boxes and virtual assistant to engage with voters on different social media platforms. These tools provide information and plans of political parties to people, enhancing voter participation. Estonia has integrated AI in its *i*-voting system to ensure effective online voting (Mulholland, 2021). Third, AI can also analyse any discrepancy and anomalies in data. So, AI generated tools can be utilised to prevent any fraud in electoral process. In 2021, Bihar Election Commission in India worked in collaboration with AI Staqu to analyse CCTV footage from counting booths to enhance transparency in its Panchayat elections (Ahaskar, 2021). AI generated tools are also employed to tackle misinformation. AI systems were used before the 2019 European Parliamentary elections to identify and block misinformation campaigns on social media. In India also, AI was used by election monitoring organizations to debunk viral misinformation in 2019. However, there are concerns of manipulation of electoral behaviour through AI generated deep fake videos. In United States presidential elections of 2016, one of the political consulting firms Cambridge Analytica misused the Facebook data to create political advertisements to influence voting behaviour of targeted audience. Messaging and propaganda, spread of misinformation, ethical concerns and regulatory challenges are other issues needs to be unravelled before AI becomes a legitimate source of information in electoral process worldwide. Thus, AI's integration into global electoral system is a double-edged sword. It undoubtably offers efficiency and innovation in electoral process but also requires robust legal frameworks and ethical oversight to ensure that employment of AI upholds and not degrades democratic principles globally.

THEORETICAL ASPECTS ON DIGITAL POLITICS

The Politics encompass a wide range of phenomena and actions that are centred around people. This section will elaborate two logics on digital politics i.e., collective and connective action. Given the appropriate technological interaction, digital media networking plays a significant role in regulating socio-political issues. Digital media is a common tool used by individuals, civil society, organisations and many other actors to create networks for interactions and to communicate their views directly to the world. These two logics of collective and connective action depicts different dimensions of analysis. According to Bennett and Segerberg (2015), "the logic of collective action emphasizes the problems of getting individuals to contribute to the collective endeavour that typically involves seeking some sort of public good like democratic reforms that may better be attained through forging a common cause." The importance of collective action is noticeable while bridging of differences among the organizational coordination, individual's identity, resource allocation and so forth. Benett argues that, "connective action networks may differ in terms of stability, coherence and scale but they are organized by different principle. The Connective action networks are typically far more individualized and technologically organized sets of processes, that result in action without the requirement of collective identity framing or the levels of organisational resources required to respond" (Bennett et al., 2015). Whereas according to Benkler, "in digitally mediated social network, participation becomes self-motivating as personally expressive content is shared with, recognized by, others who in turn repeat these networked sharing activities" (Benkler, 2006). But all online communication does not work in the same way, for instance- the online newspapers, blogs, or political campaign sites make it clear that the logic of the organization centred brick-and-mortar world is often reproduced online, with little change in organizational logic beyond possible efficiency gains (Bimber & Davis, 2003; Foot & Schneider, 2006). In connective action, the starting point is self-motivated which is sharing of already internalized ideas, plans, images through networking sites like- Facebook, YouTube, X (previously Twitter) by commenting on the posts or re-tweets. Such networks are flexible, enabled coordinating adjustments and rapid action aimed at often shifting political targets, even cross-border boundaries in the process. As Diani argues, "networks are not just precursors or building blocks of collective action, they are in themselves organizational structures that can transcend the elemental units of organizations and individuals" (Bennett, Lang & Segerberg, 2014).

Democratic theorists have not focused much on the materiality of human affairs, whereas no entity matters in isolation instead attains meaning through numerous volatile relationships. Bruno Latour calls such multitudes of relations as action-networks and refers to the ways in which these various components of such a system affect each other as translations (Latour, 2005). Specialized AI has the ability to transform materiality of democracy by altering collective decision making and human participation, for instance- how people see themselves, what relationships they have, and what interactions their behaviour bring about, etc. The public-reason standpoint must acknowledge the point that, 'Technology is political,' especially in the sense that the material underpinnings of democracy matter for how the democratic ideals translates into practices and can survive (Risse, 2023). According to Risse, "technology explains how citizens get information that defines their participation, mainly restricted to voting and frees up time for social activities. AI improves procedural legitimacy through greater participation and increase the caliber of decision making as the voters are well informed" (Risse, 2023). From the internet's hardware to the organisations that manage domain names and the software that keeps the internet running smoothly, digital media have created an online communications infrastructure that powers our digital existence.

AI AND INDIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS 2024

With the use of AI, we are entering into a new era and will form the foundation in building our digital future. The Digital India flagship program was launched by Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi dated on 1st July, 2015 to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledgeable economy. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) of India envisions the AI program as umbrella endeavour leveraging transformative technologies to promote inclusivity, creativity and adoption for social impact. The four main pillars of "National Program on Artificial Intelligence" are as follows (National Program on Artificial Intelligence, n.d): National Centre on AI, Data Management Office, Skilling in AI, and Responsible AI. BJP has used AI for National Integration, for instance- launching of BHASHINI AAP by Honorable PM Shri Narendra Modi in July 2022, aiming to transcend language barriers, so that everyone can have the access of digital services in their respective languages. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at the inauguration of the Kashi-Tamil Sangam cultural festival on 17th December 2023 in Varanasi was translated into Tamil using the BHASHINI AI tool (National Language Translation Mission). This app aims to provide technology translation services in 22 scheduled Indian languages.

The 2024 general elections in India showed an extensive use of AI technologies in various dimensions of election such as, poll campaigning, voter registration, ballot processing, spreading propaganda and so forth. Keeping in consideration of India's vast diversity and demographic compositions, AI is used to navigate through complexities and offer a nuanced understanding of voter preferences and behaviours. On an average an Indian MP represents constituencies with the number of eligible voters ranging from 1.5-2.5 million, which poses a "challenge for the candidature of MP to reach out to the voters at this scale and also effect the candidate's winning probability and voter's ability to make informed decision" (Dhanuraj, Harilal & Solomon, 2024). However, with the advent of technology the very idea of traditional public meetings has undergone changes, no longer constrained by geographical limitations. AI has been used extensively in this way.

ELECTION CAMPAIGNING

It is argued that, "the prevalence of social media powered by sophisticated AI algorithms became indispensable in terms of understanding and mobilising the demographics in the Indian election" (Pang, Chen & Jin, 2019). Governments and political parties rely heavily on technologies to raise awareness, that includes, voter registration rolls, the location of polling stations, polling schedules and polling results. According to Rebelo, some trends of AI used in Indian General Elections 2024 are as follows, "AI was used by the political parties for content creation, replacing the human survey callers; the translation capabilities of Generative AI make it particularly useful for political strategists to craft the entire campaign in local Indian language; AI voice clones and Official parties' social media handles used AI content to openly parody their rivals" (Rebelo, 2024). Social media platforms wired with highly sophisticated AI algorithms offer remarkable opportunities to political parties to provide personalized messages to voters and ensure last-mile connectivity. During the election campaigning, BJP member, Shakti Singh Rathore approached to Divyendra Singh Jadoun, who operates an AI startup in Rajasthan, to create a replica of himself to tell as many as people about PM Modi's programs and policies. Accordingly, Shakti Singh was instructed to look into the camera and speak as if the person is sitting right in front of him (Raj, 2024). Through Generative AI tool Shakti Singh could reach to maximum number of beneficiaries in a short period of time. Political Parties used AI to transmit personalized messages by cloning the voices of local politicians and delivering them directly to voter's phones (Anandi, 2024). This information is designed to elicit strong emotions, frequently translated into regional

languages, and emphasizes on building personal connection with prominent leaders, especially deceased politicians. AI is the constitution of computational systems with agency power to accomplish a goal (Filgueiras, 2022).

During the 2024 general election, BJP used the Sangathan Reporting and Analysis report or Saral App, to increase public outreach. The primary objective of the app is to digitalize all data and improve contact with party karyakartas by diffusing policies, expansion activities and programs of the party. The Saral App with more than 2.9 million Google Play store downloads described as an "election-winning machine" by the party's head of information technology and social media division (Jaswal, 2024). To increase registration, grassroot karyakartas conducted door-to-door campaigns and held camps in the neighbourhood displaying posters carrying BJP's logo. In addition to voter registration, they also helped people sign up for the app and promoted government welfare schemes in it. For instance, by utilising the data collected through the Saral app alongside other data like previous election results, the BJP segregates respective booths in a constituency as "safe," "favourable," "battleground," or "difficult", and devise campaigning strategies to turn "favourable" to "safe" and "difficult" to "favourable" (Jaswal, 2024). Thus, it is imperative to specify the democratic goods that need to be fortified in elections and three beneficial uses of AI (Mckay, Tenove, Gupta, Ibanez, Mathews, Tworek, 2024) that are, informing citizens, supporting deliberations (e.g. by helping to moderate or facilitate conversations among citizens), and improving political representation by making it easier for candidates and elected officials to communicate with voters and understand their preferences.

Filgueiras has identified both positive and negative impacts of AI on the society, such as: AI has the potential to accelerate digital transformation in society and on the other side it further creates trust and legitimacy issues on applying AI in different aspects of life (Filgueiras, 2022). Deepfakes are created through intense machine learning technique which trains neural networks by using AI tools (Whittaker, Letheren & Mulcahy, 2021). This product of AI technology combines, replaces, or superimposes various type of contents to produce a form of synthetic media that mystifies the distinction of authenticity. Along with manipulating personalised data, an incipient problem is the possibilities presented by the text and image produced content which further can be used for disinformation operations, inauthentic behaviour campaigns, and propaganda material (Dad & Khan, 2023). According to the Threat Report,2021 coordinated inauthentic behaviour (CIB) campaigns in the past have relied on troll farms and 'bots,' consisting of both robot-generated and social media

accounts engaging in disruptive and disinformation operations in order to influence opinions, to attack opposition members, journalists and members of civil society, and to disrupt online discourse. Generative AI was used to spread disinformation during the election as seen in several instances, (Rebelo, 2024): the opposition party (Congress) had posted videos of Bollywood actors- Aamir Khan and Ranveer Singh with AI cloned voice tracks criticizing Modi overlaid on top of the authentic video footage; two manipulated videos- fake graphics and AI cloned voices of familiar Hindi news anchors were posted ahead of Delhi polls on General Elections 2024, delivering bogus reports that the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) west Delhi candidate was ahead in opinion polls; An AI voice cloning audio was leaked claiming to be a phone call between Swati Maliwal (MP of Rajya Sabha) and You Tuber Dhruv Rathee. However, experts were concerned that off-the-shelf AI editing tools are enable of creating 'cheapfakes' which are less convincing but easily accessible GenAI content that could flood the political zone (Rebelo, 2024).

ETHICS IN AI APPLICATION: PREVENT MISUSE

One of the most important contemporary challenges, is to place governance within AI applications. While preparing for an "extraordinary" election on 16th February 2024, 20 top tech companies of the world met at the Munich Security Conference and signed an accord to address the risks presented to democracy by AI-generated deceptive election content (Singh & Roy, 2024). The Munich Accord, however, submits social media platforms and tech companies to a self-regulatory framework where they submit to two commitments: minimising the monopolisation of power associated with insertion of AI in electoral/ political contest, and social resilience (Singh & Roy, 2024). The Munich Accord defines "Deceptive AI Election Content" as convincing AI-generated audio, video and images that deceptively fake or alter the appearance, voice, or actions of political candidates, election officials, and other key stakeholders in a democratic election, or that provide false information to voters about when, where and how they can lawfully vote (Munich Security Conference, 2024). In India, concerns have been raised about the impact of AI on voting integrity. This is due to the possibility of GenAI to deceive people with phony images, cloned voice calls which look real, and current authorised apps are not effective to distinguish between real and fake. On 3 March 2024, in the last formal meeting with his Council of Ministers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi alerted them to the dangers of deepfakes, asking them to be cautious as they approached elections to the Lok Sabha (Mishra, 2024). The Voluntary Code of Ethics (VCE) broadly covered five "responses" and "actions" that

the social media platforms agreed to take: voluntarily undertake information, education and communication campaigns to build awareness about electoral laws and other related instructions; create a high priority dedicated grievance redressal channel for expeditious action on cases reported by the ECI; develop a notification mechanism whereby the platforms could be notified by the ECI about potential violation of electoral laws; ensure "precertification" of all political advertisement from the Media Certification and Monitoring Committees; and facilitate transparency in paid political advertisements, including utilising their pre-existing labels/disclosure technology for such advertisements (PIB, 2019).

As included in UNESCO's report on Ethics in AI,some of the values and principles related to use of AI tools are as follows: respect, protection and promotion of human dignity and rights as established by international law, including international human rights law, is essential throughout the life cycle of AI systems (UNESCO, 2022). Any individual or a community should not be harmed or subordinated, physically, economically, socially, politically, culturally or mentally during any phase of implementing AI tools. Governments, private sector, civil society, international organizations, technical communities and academia must respect human rights instruments and frameworks in their interventions in the processes surrounding the life cycle of AI systems and unwanted harms (safety risks), as well as vulnerabilities to attack (security risks) should be avoided and should be addressed, prevented and eliminated throughout the AI systems to ensure human, environmental and ecosystem safety and security. The UNESCO report also emphasizes upon adequate data protection frameworks and governance mechanisms which could established a multi-stakeholder approach at the national or international level, and will be protected and ensured by judicial systems, etc (UNESCO, 2022).

Furthermore, the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill of 2022 explicitly addresses the safeguarding of personal data pertaining to natural persons, that may be collected online or offline and subsequently digitized and utilization of such data is limited solely to lawful and consensual usage, breaching would cause penalties (Vig, 2024). While India has some legislation in place to combat deepfake technology, more precise measures are needed to adequately address the distinctive hurdles presented by the use of AI tools.

CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence has become an integrated part of electoral process worldwide. India concluded its 18th Lok Sabha elections in 2024 and depicted

the dispersed use of social media and AI, transforming the traditional mode of political campaigning to digitalised one. AI was typically used in diverse political activities like campaigning, mudslinging and to connect and interact with voters. Deepfakes and automated calls were used to propagate the party messages to the voters. Deepfake popularly became the tool to bring dead politician into mobilisation activities, to influence and manipulate the voter's emotions. In one of the instances, the famous political party of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) authorised the deepfake video of former and late chief minister of Tamil Nadu, Muthuvel Karunanidhi, wherein he was seen interacting at DMK's youth wing conference. Similarly, voters were given calls from different representatives across the country to interact on local and concerning issues. Voters were not even aware that these automated calls and personalised videos were an AI impersonation.

The article has made an attempt to analyse dispersed use of AI in global electoral system, and how AI has been used by different political actors in 2024 general elections. AI powered tools like Bhashini and NaMo mobile app are the famous tools used by BJP since 2022. These tools helped political candidates to interact with citizens in their own languages. Similarly, short clips on social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and X (previously Twitter) also attracted people across the country. Indian National Congress's video of cloned voice of Narendra Modi, critiquing his ties with famous Indian businessmen gathered the attraction of people. Similarly, BJP also grafted its own video, presenting Narendra Modi campaigning in streets and interacting with people. Thus, it is apparent that India has successfully integrated AI tools in its electoral process but these tools have been both advantageous and disadvantageous in indefinite ways. AI has been helpful in enhancing the voter outreach as it helped political parties to design tailored campaign messages. It ensured the better engagement between political candidates and voters. AI has also been used by political parties to track public sentiments on local as well as trending issues. It allowed different political parties to adjust their respective strategies in real time. AI has also been beneficial in improving the electoral processes as AI powered facial recognition or biometric systems streamlined voter verification to reduce the fraudulent practices in elections. AI-driven systems are capable to detect flag misinformation on social media. It curbs the spread of fake news that often influences the voter behaviour. AI has its own disadvantages too. AI is a threat to privacy as collection of voter data raise the issues of misuse of sensitive information. Similarly, political parties often misuse AI for spreading propaganda through deepfake videos to further mislead or manipulate voters. The major concern is that over-reliance on AI

for campaign or electoral purposes will reduce human involvement, and might led to job or role displacement. Unequal access to AI technology also creates biasness as it tends to favour political parties that are tech-savvy. It potentially skews the fairness in electoral processes. AI has been a handy tool for political parties in India in electoral processes. It has undoubtably the capability to influence the voters, especially the youth but ethical use of AI is necessary for sustenance of electoral democracy worldwide. In this way, this article is an attempt to comprehend the prospects of AI in electoral process of India by analysing the Lok Sabha election of 2024.

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