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# Artificial Intelligence in Indian Politics: Challenges and Opportunities

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### Article Info

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**ABSTRACT**: Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in various sectors, including politics. In the context of Indian politics, AI holds significant potential to revolutionise election campaigns, governance, public policy-making and citizen engagement. AI has the potential to revolutionise electoral processes through predictive analytics, voter behaviour analysis, targeted communication strategies and social media management. It also promises to enhance governance by enabling data-driven decision-making and fostering greater transparency. However, the adoption of AI in Indian politics is apprehensive with significant challenges, including ethical concerns, data privacy issues and the risk of algorithmic bias. Furthermore, the digital divide and the lack of AI literacy among large segments of the population pose additional barriers to its widespread implementation. This paper examines these problems and proposes a roadmap for harnessing AI's potential in a way that aligns with democratic values and ensures equitable benefits for all citizens. This paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the responsible and inclusive use of AI in the political sphere in India. It aims to provide insights into the trajectory of AI in Indian politics, suggesting policy recommendations to harness its potential while justifying risks and highlights the need for a balanced approach that encourages innovation without compromising democratic values. With thoughtful management, AI has the potential to improve political processes rather than disrupt them. Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Indian Politics, Political Campaigns, Data

Privacy, Ethical Issues, Algorithmic Bias

Introduction: The year 2024 will shape the global future in unprecedented ways. On one hand, more than 64 major elections will take place worldwide, with billions of people participating. On the other hand, the rapid rise of artificial intelligence (AI) is set to significantly influence these electoral outcomes. India, the world's most populous country, stands at the forefront of this technological shift, where the integration of AI into its political landscape marks a turning point in democratic processes. Political parties are increasingly adopting AI to personalise, analyse and strategically target voters on a massive scale. The implications of this trend are

profound and it is essential to stay informed about these developments to fully grasp AI's influence on the electoral process. Recent insights, such as those from the Council of Foreign Relations, emphasize the growing urgency to address the potential dangers posed by AI in elections.<sup>ii</sup>

India, with its vast digital footprint, has become a central hub for AI-driven political campaigns. India had over 1.2 billion internet users across the country in 2023; political parties are leveraging advanced AI tools to reach voters through online platforms. AI can easily create and disseminate personalised content, including synthetic Media or deepfakes, poses significant challenges for the integrity of the electoral process. These AI-generated materials, capable of spreading misinformation rapidly, have seen exponential growth since the 2019 general elections, raising concerns about their impact on public opinion and societal harmony. AI's role in Indian elections is evident across various platforms, from social media campaigns to real-time language translation during political speeches. AI's potential to manipulate public perception through deepfakes and targeted propaganda is increasingly being realised by political parties, highlighting the need for responsible AI usage. As India is witnessing General elections, the ethical and transparent use of AI will be crucial in safeguarding democracy and ensuring that technological advancements benefit all segments of society.

AI's influence in Indian politics is not just a future concern; it is already a present reality. Political parties are utilizing AI tools to craft more engaging and impactful content, using platforms like Midjourney for image design and advanced video editing tools for creating persuasive messages. For instance, AI-driven real-time language translation, as seen with Prime Minister Modi's speeches, enables political messages to reach diverse linguistic audiences simultaneously. This capability could significantly alter the dynamics of electoral campaigns by bridging communication gaps across India's multilingual population. Moreover, AI technologies such as deepfake videos and AI-based dubbing are being exploited to sway public opinion. Examples from recent elections, where AI was used to manipulate video footage of political figures, demonstrate the risks of misinformation. Such incidents underscore the potential of AI to not only influence voter behavior but also to disrupt social harmony by spreading false narratives.

The use of AI extends to personalized voter engagement as well. Political parties have begun to employ AI for targeted outreach, using data-driven strategies to connect with voters on a personal level. This can be seen in the way AI is used to generate personalized messages or phone calls from political leaders, aiming to create a sense of direct communication between the voter and the leader. However, this also raises concerns about privacy and the ethical use of voter data, as seen in practices where apps are used to collect detailed voter information. The rapid adoption of AI in political campaigns also highlights the potential dangers of unregulated and irresponsible use. The spread of fake news, manipulation of public sentiment, and the deepening of societal divides are some of the negative trends that could emerge if AI is not used responsibly. To mitigate these risks, it is essential for all stakeholders—including political parties, AI developers, and regulators—to collaborate on establishing guidelines and regulations that ensure the ethical deployment of AI in politics.

India's active involvement in AI development, such as through its National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence launched in 2018, shows a commitment to harnessing AI's potential while addressing its risks.\* Prime Minister Modi have expressed concerns about deepfake technology and called for responsible AI use, emphasizing the need for a multifaceted approach to safeguard democracy.\* Looking ahead, the integration of AI into political processes holds promising possibilities, provided it is done with care and inclusivity. AI can be a powerful tool for overcoming challenges such as language barriers, thereby enhancing political participation and representation. As AI continues to evolve, its role in creating more informed, data-driven decision-making processes in elections could contribute to a more vibrant and inclusive democracy.

However, the key to realizing these benefits lies in ensuring that AI is used in a way that is transparent, ethical and beneficial to all. Proper regulations, coupled with widespread awareness about the responsible use of AI, will be crucial in dealing with the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. In this way, the integration of AI in elections can serve as a model for how technology and democracy can coexist and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Demystifying Artificial Intelligence in Politics: Politics is one of the most recent areas affected by AI. The incorporation of AI-generated content into campaigns could create challenges for candidates and voters in combating misinformation and disinformation. AI offers a chance to enhance the democratic process in our societies. For instance, it can help people understand politics better and participate more easily in debates. Politicians, in turn, can connect more closely with citizens and represent them more effectively. This closer alignment between citizens and politicians could transform electoral campaigns and make policymaking more accurate and efficient. While concerns about AI in politics have existed since the late 2010s, worries about its impact on democracies and elections have increased with recent advancements in AI.xii Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a field of capability of machines and software to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. This includes the ability to learn from experience, understanding and processing natural language and making decisions. AI systems are built using algorithms and vast amounts of data which enable them to recognize patterns and make predictions or decisions based on the information they process.xiii At its core, AI is designed to simulate human cognitive functions such as learning, reasoning and problem-solving.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly shaping politics around the world which comes with both opportunities and challenges in following manner:

- **Electoral Processes:** One of the most prominent applications of AI is in electoral processes, where AI algorithms analyse vast amounts of voter data to predict election outcomes and shape campaign strategies. Xiv For instance, AI helps political parties identify and target specific voter demographics with personalized messages that help in increasing the efficiency of their campaigns.
- Voter Behaviour Analysis: AI is also making its mark in voter behavior analysis. By examining data from social media, surveys and other sources, AI systems can estimate public opinion and understand

voter preferences.\*\* This information facilitates political campaigns to adjust their strategies in real time that contribute in focusing on the issues that matter most to voters and potentially persuading undecided voters.

- Political Campaigning: In the realm of political campaigning, AI-powered tools are used to create and
  manage digital ads, optimise campaign messaging, and engage with voters through chatbots and
  automated responses.xvi These tools can analyse engagement metrics to refine ad strategies and
  improve voter outreach.
- **Governance:** This is another area where AI is having a significant impact. Governments are leveraging AI to streamline public services, manage resources more effectively, and enhance decision-making processes. xvii For example, AI systems can analyze data to predict traffic patterns, optimize public transportation routes, and manage emergency responses.
- Policy Analysis and Development: AI also plays a significant role in policy analysis and development.
  Governments and organizations use AI to model the potential impacts of proposed policies, forecast economic outcomes, and simulate various scenarios. xviii This helps policymakers make informed decisions by providing data-driven insights and predicting the consequences of different policy choices.
- **Policy Analysis and Development**: Another important application of AI is in policy analysis and development. AI tools analyse social media trends, news articles, and other online content to presume public sentiment and identify emerging issues.xix This real-time feedback can help political leaders and organizations understand the public's concerns and address them more effectively.
- **Election integrity:** This is another critical area where AI is utilised. AI systems are used to detect and combat election fraud, such as identifying fake news and misinformation campaigns that could undermine democratic processes.<sup>xx</sup> These tools can also monitor and analyze voting patterns to ensure that elections are fair and transparent.
- Global Political Dynamics: On a broader scale, AI influence extends to global political dynamics and international relations as well. Countries use AI to enhance diplomatic strategies, analyse global trends, and monitor geopolitical developments. XXII Can assist in assessing the potential impacts of international agreements, sanctions, and conflicts, thereby aiding in the formulation of more strategic foreign policies. This capability helps countries and international organizations respond quickly to emerging crises and conflicts.

**Evolutionary Context of AI in India :** Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a transformative force that has reshaped technology and productivity worldwide. India, as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, is also standing at the critical juncture of this technological shift. Historically, AI's roots can be traced back to ancient mythologies, xxiii but modern AI began with Alan Turing's 1936 design of an algorithmic machine. xxiii The formal introduction of AI as a field occurred in 1956 at the Dartmouth Conference, where John McCarthy coined the term 'Artificial Intelligence.' understanding AI's journey in India is very important to examining its growth in different sectors and assessing future prospects.

The history of AI in India dates back to the 1960s when Professor H.N. Mahabala at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur conducted some of the earliest AI research in the country. However, significant progress was made in the 1980s. The Indian government, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), started the Knowledge-Based Computing System (KBCS) program. This was part of a broader effort called the Fifth Generation Computer Systems (FGCS) research initiative, aimed at creating advanced AI environments for research.xxv Since then, several significant projects were taken up by Key institutions like the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), IIT Madras, Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) Kolkata, and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) to scale up the AI advancement.

Between 1986 and 1995, these centers received funding of INR 15 million. They produced around 15 PhDs each and employed 20 to 35 full-time researchers. Their work led to the creation of AI applications such as IIT Madras' 'Eklavya,' a tool to help community health workers diagnose toddler illnesses, CDAC's 'Sarani,' a flight scheduling system, and IISc's computer vision-based image processing system. From 2010 to 2016, institutions like IISc, IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Madras, IIIT Hyderabad, IIT Kanpur, IIT Kharagpur, and ISI Kolkata became leading centers for AI research in the country. India now ranks 10th globally for the number of AI PhDs and 13th for presentations at major AI conferences. \*\*xxviii\*

The government funds research and development projects, with institutions like the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR) and DRDO Laboratory leading the way. xxix In 2018, the Indian government launched the "AI for All" by the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, as detailed in the NITI Aayog report. This initiative aims to guide AI research and development, focusing on key areas like agriculture, health, education, and smart cities. xxx This shows India's strong commitment to AI development. The National AI Portal, supported by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and industry partners, provides a platform for sharing AI-related information, resources, and future projects.

In recent years, India has experienced a surge in AI adoption, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. Reports indicate that India saw a 45% increase in AI use in 2020, surpassing other major economies like the USA, Japan, and the UK.xxxi This rise in adoption highlights India's growing role in the global AI landscape. A Nasscom report suggests that AI and data strategies could add about \$500 billion to India's GDP by 2025. If India continues to focus on AI, it could achieve a \$1 trillion GDP by the 2026-2027 fiscal year.xxxii Currently, 65% of Indian organizations have AI strategies in place, either at the functional or enterprise level. About 44% have dedicated AI teams, and 25% focus on outsourcing AI talent. AI is becoming increasingly important across various industries in India.xxxiii Despite these advancements, India faces challenges in AI adoption, including limited data ecosystems, high failure costs, and inadequate AI research. To compete globally, India must overcome these obstacles and enhance its AI capabilities.

Challenges and Opportunities of Integrating AI into Indian Politics: As AI continues to evolve, its role in shaping the future of democracy and political decision-making becomes increasingly complex. AI is becoming increasingly prevalent in Indian politics, especially during election seasons. This trend raises

several concerns about data privacy, ethics, and the integrity of democratic processes. In this context, it is essential to address the potential risks associated with AI in politics.

- Personal Data: One of the most pressing issues related to AI in politics is the collection and use of personal data. With the advent of AI, the ability to gather, store and analyse vast amounts of personal information has expanded in a dramatic manner. Political campaigns and governments often utilise AI-driven tools to target voters, tailor messages and predict voter behavior. However, this extensive data collection raises serious privacy concerns. Citizens may be unaware of how their data is being used, leading to a lack of trust in the political system. Furthermore, the potential for data breaches and unauthorised access to personal information poses a significant threat to individuals' privacy and security.
- Ethical Concerns: Additionally, the use of AI in politics also brings about various ethical dilemmas. As AI systems become more integrated into political processes, questions arise regarding accountability and responsibility. The lack of clear regulations and legal frameworks governing AI in politics further complicates these issues. Without proper guidelines, there is a risk that AI could be misused or manipulated for unethical purposes, undermining democratic principles. The need for robust ethical standards and legal regulations is evident to ensure that AI is used responsibly in the political sphere.
- Algorithm Biasness: Another critical challenge is the potential for AI to aggravate biases in political decision-making. AI systems are often trained on historical data, which can reflect existing biases and inequalities in the society. When these biases are embedded in AI algorithms, they can lead to discriminatory outcomes. For instance, AI-driven tools used in political campaigns may unfairly target or exclude certain groups based on race, gender or socio-economic status. This can deepen existing social divisions and undermine the fairness of political processes. Addressing bias in AI requires a concerted effort to ensure that algorithms are transparent, fair and inclusive.
- The concentration of AI building blocks in the hands of a few dominant companies or countries is additional significant concern in the integration of AI into politics. This concentration poses a threat to India's ability to pursue its national interests and maintain strategic autonomy in this critical technology. When a small number of powerful entities control the development and deployment of AI technologies, it creates an imbalance that can have far-reaching implications.
- In the political sphere, this concentration could lead to biases if these companies or countries have affiliations or leanings towards specific political ideologies or parties. For instance, if an AI system is developed by a company with a particular ideological stance, it might influence political decision-making processes in subtle but impactful ways. This could manifest in biased algorithms, skewed data interpretations or the selective dissemination of information that favours one political ideology over others. Such biases can undermine the fairness and neutrality that are foundational to democratic processes. In a diverse country like India, where multiple political ideologies co-exist, the risk of AI systems being used to tilt the political landscape in favour of certain groups is particularly concerning. This not only threatens the democratic principle of equal representation but also risks alienating significant portions of the population.

- Moreover, relying on AI technologies controlled by foreign entities can compromise India's strategic autonomy. If these external players wield significant influence over AI tools used in India's political processes, it could lead to a scenario where Indian political decisions are indirectly shaped by foreign interests. This could weaken India's ability to make independent decisions that align with its national interests. To address this challenge, it is crucial for India to invest in developing its own AI capabilities. By fostering a domestic AI ecosystem that is diverse, inclusive and aligned with national values, India can reduce its dependency on external entities. Additionally, implementing strict regulations to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of AI in politics can help lessen the risks of political bias and ensure that AI serves the broader interests of the nation rather than the narrow interests of a few.
- Influence of Process: The influence of AI on democratic processes is another area of concern. AI has the potential to shape public opinion and influence voter behavior through targeted messaging and manipulation of information. While AI can be used to enhance voter engagement, it also poses a risk to voter autonomy. The ability of AI to predict and influence voter behavior raises questions about the fairness of elections. Furthermore, the use of AI-generated content in political campaigns, such as deepfakes or AI-driven social media bots, can distort public discourse and spread misinformation. This can erode trust in democratic institutions and undermine the integrity of elections.
- **Digital Divide:** The digital divide and technological inequality present significant challenges in the equitable application of AI in politics. Access to AI technology is not uniform across different regions or demographic groups. This disparity can lead to unequal participation in the political process, where certain groups have greater access to AI-driven tools and resources than others. The gap between those who can leverage AI and those who cannot may widen existing inequalities in political representation and influence. Ensuring that AI is accessible and beneficial to all citizens is crucial to preventing further marginalization of vulnerable populations.

**Opportunities**: The integration of AI into politics offers both opportunities and challenges. While AI has the potential to enhance political processes and improve governance, it also raises significant concerns related to data privacy, ethical and legal issues, bias and discrimination, the impact on democratic processes, and technological inequality. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that *includes the development of robust legal frameworks, ethical guidelines,* and efforts to ensure that *AI is used in a way that is fair, transparent, and inclusive*. Only by tackling these issues head-on can we harness the benefits of AI in politics while safeguarding the principles of democracy.

AI also has the potential to boost voter engagement and participation. *By making information more accessible and relevant, AI can encourage more citizens to take an active role in the political process.* For example, AI-driven platforms can provide personalized information about candidates and issues, helping voters make more informed decisions. AI can also identify and address barriers to participation, such as misinformation or lack of access to polling stations, thereby increasing voter turnout and ensuring a more representative democracy.

Looking ahead, the future trends of AI in Indian politics are likely to see deeper integration of this technology. AI could become a standard tool in various aspects of governance, from policy formulation to

public service delivery. The use of AI in predictive analytics might help in forecasting social and economic trends, enabling more proactive governance. Additionally, AI could play a role in enhancing cyber security, protecting the electoral process from threats like hacking and misinformation.

**Recommendations:** To fully realize these opportunities, it is essential to implement thoughtful policy recommendations. First, there should be a **focus on developing robust ethical guidelines** for AI usage in politics. These guidelines must ensure that AI applications do not infringe on privacy rights or perpetuate biases. Second, policies should **promote digital literacy** to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that all citizens can benefit from AI advancements. Additionally, the government should **invest in AI research and development** to build domestic capabilities, reducing reliance on foreign technology. Finally, there must be **clear regulations to govern the use of AI** in political campaigns, ensuring transparency and fairness.

Conclusion: Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds immense potential to reshape Indian politics which offers both opportunities and challenges. As India stands on the crossroad of integrating AI more deeply into its political processes, it's clear that this technology has the potential to revolutionise how elections are conducted, how governance is carried out and how citizens engage with their government. AI has already begun influencing electoral campaigns that enable targeted voter outreach, optimising messaging and facilitating more dynamic engagement with the voters. These advancements can enrich political processes, improve leaders' understanding of public sentiment and potentially increase citizen participation. But at the same time there is need of clear regulations and legal frameworks otherwise there is a danger that AI could be manipulated for unethical purposes which will undermine democratic principles and worsen existing biases in society.

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