



AI: Promises & Perils

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This article is based on **“The promise and perils of Artificial Intelligence partnerships”** which was published in The Hindustan Times on 16/06/2021. It talks about the promises and perils associated with Artificial intelligence.

Historically, Technology competition has been a main aspect of geopolitics. In this day and age, it can be increasingly reflected in geopolitical battles between the US and China. One such technological competition can be easily witnessed in the field of **Artificial intelligence (AI)**.

Artificial intelligence is that activity devoted to making machines intelligent or to make them think like humans. AI has emerged as one technology of particular importance because of its role as an accelerator, its versatility, and its wide applicability.

However, AI can also be used for a host of undesirable purposes — generating misinformation, criminal activity, and encroaching upon personal privacy or inducing technological unemployment.

Therefore, as the global community seeks to leverage the promises of AI, they should also confront similar challenges when it comes to the development and deployment of AI and develop a human-centric approach to AI.

Promises of AI

- **Some Primary advantages of AI are as follows:**
 - AI drives down the time taken to perform a task. It enables multi-tasking and eases the workload for existing resources.
 - AI enables the execution of hitherto complex tasks without significant cost outlays.
 - AI operates 24x7 without interruption or breaks and has no downtime
 - AI augments the capabilities of differently abled individuals
 - AI has mass market potential, it can be deployed across industries.
 - AI facilitates decision-making by making the process faster and smarter.

- **360-degree Effect:** Based on these advantages, AI can be used in many positive ways — to foster innovation, increase efficiency, improve development, and enhance consumer experience.
For India, AI deployment will be tied closely to inclusive growth and its development trajectory, with potentially positive implications for agriculture, health, and education, among other sectors.
- Driven by recent breakthroughs in machine learning & Big data, AI is a good bellwether for the possibilities and challenges of international cooperation on emerging technologies.

Perils Associated With AI

- **Promoting Prejudices and Inequalities:** It shouldn't be forgotten that AI systems are created by humans, who can be biased and judgemental. Thus, AI can promote prejudices and inequalities, if initial training of the AI algorithms are biased.
For example, it can lead to AI facial recognition and surveillance technology to discriminate against people of color and minorities.
- **Comprising Privacy:** AI systems learn by analyzing huge volumes of data and they keep adapting through continuous modelling of interaction data and user-feedback.
Thus, with the increasing use of AI, the right to privacy can be under threat due to unauthorized access to one's activity data.
- **Disproportionate Power and Control:** Technology giants are investing heavily in regard to artificial intelligence, both at the scientific/engineering and also at the commercial and product development level.
These big players have an unmatched advantage when compared to any ambitious competitor out there which is a symptom of data-oligarchic society.
- **Technological Unemployment:** AI companies are building intelligent machines that perform tasks typically carried out by low-income workers.
 - For example self-service kiosks to replace cashiers, fruit-picking robots to replace field workers, etc.
 - Moreover, the day is not far when many desk jobs will also be edged out by AI, such as accountants, financial traders, and middle managers.

Way Forward

- **International Cooperation:** Given that various governments have only recently established AI policies, and in some cases are still formulating them, international cooperation is still very much a work in progress. In the setting of standards at the multilateral level.
- **Building Resilient Supply Chains:** Beyond talent, additional challenges like, securing the necessary infrastructure; ensuring resilient supply chains, alignment on standards, governance, ensuring critical minerals and other raw materials required for the development of the necessary physical infrastructure, needs to be addressed.

- **Right Steps Taken:** AI technological revolution brings great opportunities for prosperity and growth—but it has to be ensured that the technology will be applied and used in the right direction.

In this regard, some steps are already being taken in different parts of the world, like Explainable AI (XAI) and the **European Union’s GDPR—General Data Protection Regulation**.

Conclusion

The critical decisions made in the near future could have transformative effects for international cooperation on AI, which, in turn, could decisively shape the contours of what some have described as the **Fourth Industrial Revolution**.

Drishti Mains Question

As the global community seeks to leverage the promises of Artificial Intelligence, they should also confront similar challenges when it comes to the development and deployment of it. Discuss.
