

India: Festival of Democracy: Use of AI

April 13, 2024

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EDITORIAL COMMENT by www.DiGiNews360.com: *Balancing technological advancements with ethical safeguards is paramount for preserving the integrity of the democratic systems. Voters, political parties, and tech companies must collaborate to ensure that AI is not used as a tool for manipulation.*

April 13, 2024: **Delhi, India:** As India gears up for the world's largest elections in 2024, the role of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is offering novel strategies that can sway voters. Some of the ways, AI is being used in Election Campaigns:

USE of AI: 1. In the **General Election of 2014, Narendra Modi**, as a candidate of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), had used Holograms to address multiple meetings at different places at the same time.

2. This year an open-source software, called **Bhashini**, for translation between Indian languages, using smart phones, has been developed. **PM Modi** is using **Bhashini** to address people in their language, while he speaks in Hindi.



*March 2, 2024: 7, Lok Kalyan Marg, Delhi, India: a free-wheeling exchange between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bill Gates on the future of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**.*

PM Modi showed Bill Gates the use of Bhashini for translation between languages.

Besides **Sanskrit** and **English**, which are understood and used by many people all over the country, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, Gujarati, Oriya, Malayalam, Asami and Panjabi are well-developed languages with their own good writers, media and literature of hundreds, and in some cases of thousands of years.

3. In the neighboring country of Pakistan, **Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi**, the Leader of **Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)**, has used **AI to convert his written-messages, smuggled out of his jail, into speeches in a voice**, which is quite similar to **Imran Khan's voice**.

PTI had been banned in 2023.

In Pakistan, the Army controls the Government in many important areas and the leaders, who are designated as the President or Prime Minister, can exercise a limited authority, as granted by the Chief-of-Staff of the Army. **Imran Khan**, PM from 18 August 2018 to 10 April 2022, tried to be a little independent of the Army's control. He lost the majority in the parliament. Thereafter, he was prosecuted for corruption and is in jail.

4. **Nayagam, the founder of generative AI startup Muonim Inc**, has recreated a lifelike digital version of **Muthuvel Karunanidhi** (3 June 1924 – 7 August 2018), who was the Chief Minister of the State of Tamil Nadu for almost two decades over five terms between 1969 and 2011 and was a leader of **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam**. Karunanidhi died in 2018 but an **AI version of him delivered an eight-minute speech at the book launch of a party member in January**.

---- DANGERS of MISUSE----

(i). **Deepfakes**: These AI-generated videos convincingly manipulate real footage, making it challenging for voters to discern between genuine and fabricated content. During State elections in India in November 2023, deepfakes flooded social media, causing confusion and potentially influencing voter decisions.

(ii). **Chatbots and Misinformation**: AI-powered Chatbots disseminate information across platforms, including WhatsApp and social media. These bots can amplify misleading narratives, spread false news, and create an illusion of widespread support for a particular party or candidate.

(iii). **AI-Generated Voice and Video**: AI tools can clone real voices or create entirely synthetic ones. This technology poses a significant threat, as fake audio messages can mislead voters about election-related matters.

---- PUBLIC EFFORTS to ENSURE that AI is not MISUSED----

A group of Indian AI companies, including **Dubverse** and **Polymath Synthetic Media Solutions** and **Muonim**, have issued an “**Ethical AI Coalition Manifesto**”. The manifesto emphasises that the “integrity of the democratic processes” is to be upheld by ensuring that “AI technologies are not used to manipulate elections, spread misinformation, or undermine public trust in political institutions”. It states that AI tools deployed in the political arena must be “transparent, accountable, and free from bias”.

“The biggest risk with AI today is **hallucinations**,” said **Rakesh Dubbudu**, the founder of India’s data journalism and information portal **Factly**, referring to generative models providing false or made-up information.

Dubbudu has launched a new platform “**tagore.ai**”, which he describes as a “credible information ecosystem with the power of AI”. The platform has organised information from sources like parliamentary records, government databases, budgetary speeches, historical government press releases among others, enabling an insight into government policy.

The portal, yet to be released for wider use, offers detailed information about the Centre’s government’s welfare schemes, analysis of election results with a simple query, verbatim texts of the previous promises made by politicians and access to historical parliamentary questions along with a trove of official financial information.

STEPS by MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS (MNC): MNC Platforms are already putting in place measures anticipating a flood of misinformation.

In **January 2024**, **Open AI** said it was working on tools that will “empower voters to assess an image with trust and confidence in how it was made.” In **February 2024**, **Meta** announced the launch of a **fact-checking helpline in India**.

A member of **Meta’s Oversight Board**, said that a **WhatsApp helpline** is a welcome measure with its support for English and three other languages, but it will still fall short. “With **only four languages** covered, many people will not be able to red flag misinformation, disinformation, and deepfakes because they speak a different language,” she said. She added that the use of deepfakes has underscored the

urgent need for collaborative efforts to address the role of AI in electoral disinformation.

Independent fact-checking organizations play a vital role in debunking misinformation. www.DiGiNews360.com hopes that these platforms, set up by the media and the technology companies, will be made more effective and will become available in all the major languages of India.

In Pakistan, in FEBRUARY 2024, there were several deepfake videos, some of which called for boycotting the polls.

ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS: To combat the risks posed by AI, various measures are being implemented:

- (a) Awareness Campaigns: Voters are being educated about the existence of deepfakes and AI-generated content so that they may verify information before forming opinions. Understanding AI's capabilities and limitations is essential for making informed decisions.
- (b) Regulation and Accountability: Governments and tech platforms must enforce stricter regulations on political advertising and content. Holding parties and individuals accountable for spreading disinformation is essential.
- (c) Transparency: Political campaigns should disclose their use of AI tools. Transparency builds trust and allows voters to make informed choices.
- (d) AI Detection Tools: Developing AI algorithms to detect deepfakes and manipulated content is critical. These tools can flag suspicious videos and prevent their widespread dissemination.

Notes: 1. Please read about the great **success stories of India and Senegal**, two vibrant democracies at <https://diginews360.com/senegal-and-india-great-democracies-of-the-world/> dated April 2, 2024.

2. Please refer to "Canada: China Interferes in Elections; Relations with India" dated April 7, 2024 at <https://diginews360.com/canada-china-interferes-in-elections-relations-with-india/>.

3. Please read "Canada: China Interferes; Celebration of Indian Democracy" dated April 11, 2024 at <https://diginews360.com/canada-china-interferes-celebration-of-indian-democracy/>.