

Introduction:

Recently, **O.P. Jindal Global University** in partnership with **United Nations India**, conducted a polylogue discussion on “Ethics of Artificial Intelligence: Exploring Pluri-Perspectives”. The discussion included four broad thematic and two inaugural sessions on “*Ethical AI for Sustainable Development Goals*”, “*Reimagining Humanity*”, “*Morality of Robotics*” and “*Operationalizing AI ethics from a pluri-philosophical lens*”. These discussions were aimed at opening up avenues for multi-disciplinary and intensive debates on the implications of AI in framing a distributionally just society.

The emergence of artificial intelligence has been a major technological breakthrough. It has challenged pre-existing systemic structures and has raised questions about its ethical implications. Moreover, there have been concerns, like with previous technological advancements, where AI is shaping our responses and arguably changing humanity itself. Such influential patterns of AI on people’s perceptions, ethical issues, and problems are intrinsically impacting people’s preferences and behaviour. Therefore, it is important to raise fundamental questions on ethicality especially its challenges, needs, architecture, potentiality, and regulations for implementation in an ever-evolving material world.

Reimagining Humanity

One of the main contemplations in the wake of emergence of AI is its profound disruptive impact on society, particularly social norms, and behavioural patterns as they exist. This session unfolded a view in reimagining humanity on the moral and ethical implications of AI and human-machine integration. Professor Wallach highlighted that intelligence is collective and participatory and cannot navigate alone in challenges the world faces today. Therefore, the need for a ‘Salt March’ Movement is critical in achieving an ethical AI global governance network. Prof. Pogge held that AI has the power to trump the influence of both guns and pens: it influences every individual in different ways. A social compact approach was put forward by Prof. Bawa. As human meetings machines, there can be ethical issues. Additionally, the influence AI has on Power and inequality was emphasized by Dr Chinmayi Arun based on three views; Process of datafication, use of AI in public/Private services, construction of legal frameworks to support equality instead of problems of power. States need to support human autonomy and use the law to regulate companies to reduce inequalities.

Can a robot be a moral agent?

The second session followed a discussion around the “Morality of Robots” as having emerged as a distinct component of Artificial Intelligence. Several important questions were raised by theoreticians and philosophers, on the potentiality of robot’s “processing thoughts” and

“rationalizing decision making.” This discussion aimed at conceptualizing a framework for designing an ethical machine, via internalizing legal personhood, responsibilities of an application that bridges the human-machine divide, determinism, and bioethics. Prof. Chetan Prakash, drawing from theorems of “Physicalism” and “Interface Evolution theory” proposed that robots are meagre physical objects with which human interact within the space-time dimension. It would be highly unlikely for these objects to grow consciousness and veridically represent an observer-independent reality. Another lobby of philosophers like Prof. Jee Loo Liu (Confucianism) and Prof. Jonathan Edelman (Theologist) believed in bringing together the Eastern and Western philosophical ethics together for creating ethical principles for robots, which would help in programming a humane robot. There were several concerns raised by the renowned experts on the complexity and convergence of multivariate ethical designs into a robot, pointed to challenges that might come along the way.

Ethical AI for the SDGs

The third session aimed at understanding the ethics of AI from a pluri-philosophical approach. AI, if truly intelligent, should be able to help us conceive of more intelligent approaches to human flourishing that do not leave large swathes of humanity behind, nor irreparably damage the planet and its natural environment. The keynote address for the session was given by Dr Bibek Debroy who mentioned that ethics draw its roots from history and society and questioned the legality of ethics and its application in AI during his address. Dr Debroy’s address was followed by discussions from imminent panelists such as Dr Soraj Hongladarom, Dr Pak-Hang Wong, Dr Danit Gal and Dr Ketaki Bapat. Concerns and comparisons were raised about the optimizing nature of AI to the equalizing nature of SDGs and some speakers raised concern on choosing the “AI path” for achieving SDGs. The session concluded that the lack of complementarity between AI and SDGs further reinforces this aspect as AI focuses on return on value for money while SDG goals are aimed at ensuring value for society.

Operationalizing AI ethics from a pluri-philosophical lens

The session highlighted the need for the adoption of pluri-perspectives for the development of ethical artificial intelligence. The current ethical system for AI is informed mostly by the western legal and philosophical systems. The eastern philosophies predate the western philosophies by thousands of years. Countries such as India and China with their history and rich philosophical school's enquiry thought have much to offer in the development of ethical AI. The presenters highlighted the negatives impacts of the technological developments such as the attention

economy and stressed the need for the development ethical AI system which incorporates values and ethics of the multiple cultures of the world.

Conclusion

The session ended on a rich feast of ideas, deep thinking, and meaningful conversations from a plurality of perspectives on the technology that could influence future thinking. The two days of discussion brought together 27 speakers, including technology ethicists, mathematicians, philosophers, logicians, AI policy authors, anthropologists, diplomats, robotic experts, legal experts, tech-governance experts, educationists, and policymakers and spiritual leaders. The enormous work going on at international and national levels includes UN Secretary-General's road map on the digital corporation, UNESCO's initiative on developing a comprehensive global standard-setting instrument to provide AI with a strong ethical basis and NITI Aayog's publication on India's approach to responsible AI for all. The conference highlighted that Intelligence is a work in progress, and it is collective and participatory, autonomy comes with responsibility, AI is not an equalizing technology but an optimizing one. There is a great need for international collaboration to create a Global Compact approach to AI Ethics.

In the hope that the salt march moment will find us soon and develop a comprehensive global understanding and agreement of the foundational principles of AI Ethics, the thinking and collective action will continue.

PICTURES FOR SESSION: by [@cfs_jsgp](#) (Twitter Handle for Centre of Sustainability, JSGP)

Mr. Bibek Debroy, Inaugural Session Special Address



#Ethics is always society specific, and we are constantly faced by #Ethical dilemmas, between rules, ethics and laws which are relative to managing interactions. The question still remains around #culpability of #AI."
@bibekdebroy

Mr. Amitabh Kant, Special Guest for Session



"Principles towards ensuring responsible #AI ecosystem are not sufficient, there must be a robust and reliable enforcement mechanism that protects the safety of citizens, govt and businesses while promoting equal opportunity for research and innovation"-
@amitabhk87

