



AI Dependence and the Future of Human Decision-Making: A Review of Implications for Global Leadership and the Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract

Background: Artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled disease surveillance systems have become increasingly prominent in public health, particularly during recent global health emergencies. While these technologies offer potential benefits for early outbreak detection and response, their widespread deployment raises complex ethical and legal questions that remain insufficiently synthesised.

Objective: This scoping review aimed to map the existing legal and ethical frameworks governing AI-powered disease surveillance systems, identify dominant themes across jurisdictions, and highlight gaps relevant to policy and governance.

Methods: A qualitative scoping review was conducted following the Arksey and O'Malley framework and reported in accordance with the PRISMA-ScR guidelines. Searches were performed across major biomedical and legal databases, supplemented by authoritative policy and regulatory documents. The included sources were synthesised using thematic analysis to capture recurring ethical and legal concerns.

Results: The reviewed literature demonstrated substantial heterogeneity in governance approaches across regions. Privacy and data protection emerged as the most frequently discussed ethical concerns, alongside challenges related to informed consent, accountability, transparency, and equity. Legal frameworks varied widely, with comprehensive data protection regimes in some jurisdictions contrasted by fragmented or outdated regulatory structures elsewhere. Across settings, a consistent gap was observed between high-level ethical principles and their operationalization in enforceable governance mechanisms.

Conclusion: AI-powered disease surveillance is governed by diverse and evolving legal and ethical frameworks, yet significant governance gaps persist. Addressing these gaps through context-sensitive, enforceable, and equity-oriented regulatory approaches will be essential to ensure responsible and trustworthy use of AI in public health surveillance.

Introduction

This paper looks at one crucial question that emerges due to the growing embedding of artificial intelligence: if algorithms play a key role in high-level decision-making, how does institutional dependence on technology undermine human leadership and global equity? This problem acquires greater importance with the development of AI from an auxiliary instrument into a critical element of public management, military operations, and strategic planning.

For several decades, institutional architecture of decision-making in governance, military issues, and economic planning became highly dependent on algorithms, with the fast pace of development becoming a marker of power (OECD, 2021; World Bank, 2022). Decision-making processes that were previously lengthy became quick and instantaneous, bringing both efficiency advantages and governance challenges related to the lack of accountability and transparency. For example, in January 2023, US Major General William "Hank" Taylor stated that he was using ChatGPT AI software to improve his logical reasoning capabilities while keeping the final decision-making process in human hands (Taylor, 2023). Similarly, Swedish PM Ulf Kristersson used the phrase "second opinion" to define the incorporation of algorithms into the processes of decision-making and planning (Kristersson, 2024). Such examples reflect growing dependency on algorithms that should be further explored with regard to governance implications.

Over the past decade, artificial intelligence advanced from an experimental approach to a constitutive component of the system of decision-making, being commonly discussed as GovTech (OECD, 2021; World Bank, 2022). The academic literature on the topic of adoption of AI in governance is vast and informative, however, mostly concentrating on the advantages of AI in terms of efficiency improvement. Other scholars (Dafoe, 2018; Taddeo and Floridi, 2018) offer more controversial approaches, arguing that there are important governance and ethical issues related to incorporating AI into governance practices, which cannot be overlooked in light of the institution-based view on this problem. Based on the principal-agent theories from political sciences, this paper proposes an analysis of AI adoption from the perspective of human agency vs algorithmic rule and discusses risks related to the loss of human leadership autonomy.



For instance, according to UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, decision-making through AI software creates risks of human dependence if the latter operates beyond its constitutive functions. Such decision-making may create serious harm to human autonomy, which requires a framework built around transparency and accountability (UNESCO, 2021). The issue is most critical in such fields as healthcare, national security, public administration, and law enforcement. In the field of healthcare, AI helped improve diagnostics and prediction of health outcomes; however, according to the World Health Organization and UNDP, excessive usage of such systems poses the threat of neglecting hidden biases, which contributes to greater inequity in providing healthcare (WHO, 2021; UNDP, 2023; Obermeyer et al., 2019). In public administration, AI-based decision-making in the field of welfare provision, risk management, and law enforcement became a black-box technology, undermining the possibility of challenging decisions (OECD, 2021; Eubanks, 2018). Finally, AI-powered systems of enhanced situational awareness in national security and border control raised concerns related to proportionality of response measures and violation of human rights, as well as concentration of discretionary powers in large data-based organizations (UNDP, 2023).

From the systemic perspective, the integration of AI creates problems with distinguishing human agency and algorithmic decision-making, thereby making it impossible to understand who is the decision-maker in a particular case. It becomes especially problematic to design accountability mechanisms in democracy based on information and communication technologies, which make up the basis of power in today's world (Nye, 2004; Nye, 2011). Furthermore, the concentration of infrastructure for artificial intelligence among few countries and corporations exacerbates global power inequalities. In this context, developed countries strive for the creation of regulatory instruments and achieve substantial progress in the sphere, evidenced, for example, by the European Union's AI Act and the US Executive Order on AI governance. Developing countries, on the other hand, continue to rely on external technology, with no control over it, illustrated by the examples of Ethiopia relying on the infrastructure created by the company Palantir and the application of agricultural AI platforms built by foreign experts in Kenya (World Bank, 2022; UNDP, 2023). Consequently, AI-related gaps in the governance systems pose the risks of failure in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which are connected with inequality and peace. Although AI holds the potential to advance health (Goal 3), education (Goal 4), and innovation (Goal 9), uneven access to the instruments of AI governance can become the source of problems with reaching SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). In other words, this paper aims to argue that although AI holds promising prospects with regard to speeding up decision-making and achieving SDGs, poor human agency-based frameworks can lead to dependency that will jeopardize leadership autonomy and equality.

Research Objectives

In order to investigate this issue, this paper aims to reach three research objectives:

1. To discuss the implications of institutional dependence on AI for decision-making across governance systems;
2. To investigate the implications of AI reliance for leadership autonomy and democratic accountability;
3. To explore disparities in the governance capacity in AI and their influence on the realization of SDGs.

Literature Review

This section focuses on and reviews past literature on AI and decision-making. It focuses on governance and sustainable development goals while also highlighting key themes and gaps in the literature relevant to our research on AI and dependence and decision-making.

The quick integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into administration and policy-making, as well as socio-technical infrastructures, has brought forth two interwoven streams of research: (a) opportunities such as advanced prediction capabilities, scalability, and possible support for SDGs; and (b) risks such as governance gaps and democratic effects. Past studies on this topic have covered largely complementary aspects of this issue: techno-policy and political economy perspectives; governance infrastructures and toolkits; cognitive interfaces; decision-making interfaces; socio-ethical consequences for human capacities; SDG opportunities and threats; and democratic/participatory harms.



Theme 1 - AI for effective governance and sustainable development

A significant body of literature related to AI positions it as a transformative agent that speeds up development outcomes and improves the effectiveness of governance. Literature regarding AI and the SDGs highlights the capabilities of AI-assisted analysis and prediction to positively influence the management and use of resources, as well as the design and delivery of services, in areas like the health sector, education, urban planning, and environmental management (Mhlanga, 2022; Visvizi, 2022). One key strength of the studies is their empirical demonstration and sector-specific usage, which portrays the relevance of AI in those contexts. Bibliometric and systematic reviews go further to suggest that AI, IoT, and AIoT are interlinked technological ecosystems that support transitions toward sustainability by means of real-time monitoring, optimization, and adaptive governance (Lampropoulos et al., 2024). However, such reviews are usually based heavily on accumulated data and trends, which limits their capacity to demonstrate context-specific and ground-level implementation. Other studies have found that AI can enhance public decision-making capabilities for sustainable development by building anticipatory capabilities, allowing early detection of risks for the environment and society, and supporting adaptive governance among interrelated systems (Bolton et al., 2021).

The literature on the macro level emphasizes the use of AI on an instrumental level, centering on how AI increases the speed of decision-making, enhances coordination in difficult settings, or uses data for diverse insights. This focus is useful for policy application but often portrays AI as a neutral tool, overlooking the power dynamics embedded within and around it. Nevertheless, in regard to AI's influence on decision-making, a number of such studies tend to make assumptions about preserving human autonomy in decision-making. There continues to be a fixation on what AI can do, rather than its impact on the location of decision-making power.

Existing literature indeed demonstrates AI's capacity to contribute both to achieving the SDGs and to enhancing governance efficiency, but virtually all of them have overlooked one very significant risk: that the efficiency-oriented adoption might further foster institutional dependence on AI outputs. The present study fills this gap by turning the analytical focus away from outcomes, namely efficiency and the SDGs, toward processes of decision-making, inquiring into how sustained reliance on AI reshapes leadership autonomy and accountability.

Theme 2 - Human-machine collaboration in governance and decision-making

A second major theme explores AI within the context of human-machine collaboration. Rather than the framing of AI either as a tool that augments or substitutes for human judgment, the literature thinks through governance in terms of a hybrid cognitive system wherein human reasoning and machine computation interrelate (Van Rooy, 2024). Drawing from the dual-process theories of cognition, a number of scholars have argued that AI systems, while enhancing the analytical or Type II reasoning, may also affect intuitive or Type I judgment, a development that might redefine the ways in which policy decisions are framed and estimated. Further literature related to human-AI synergy shows that while AI can enhance the quality of decisions, poor affordances may cause automation bias, reduced human involvement or overreliance on algorithmic suggestions (Bao et al., 2023). These studies are important as they identify and demonstrate the various cognitive risks. However, they may rely on controlled or experimental settings that may not replicate governance settings. Glickman and Sharot (2025) found that human-AI feedback loops can systematically influence judgment over time, often amplifying biases and reinforcing biases in AI-influenced perceptions, rather than correcting them. This may eventually lead to overdependence on AI systems in decision-making and governance.

Empirical and theoretical achievements in this field have indicated the opportunities and challenges. On one hand, decision-support systems could decrease the impact of certain cognition biases and achieve greater consistency and the extension of informational scope (Bao et al., 2023). On the other hand, a bad collaboration architecture could perpetuate automation bias and propagate the tendency to follow the recommendation algorithm while hiding accountability. Significantly, the current literature is more concerned with the design-level approach for automation level, human-in-the-loop models, and the strategies for bias reduction rather than the political implications.

Literature on human-machine collaboration sheds interesting micro-level perspectives on decision architectures but does not often include macro-level aspects of leadership dependency or implications for global politics. The present study brings a development in the field by introducing the concept of global governance into the consideration of human-machine collaboration in relation to the implications of AI in global politics.



Theme 3 - Governance, policy frameworks and political economy

A lot of systematic reviews and policy analyses have been conducted. Most point towards heavily fractured environments of governance. One study identified gaps wherein they first categorized the components of governance in terms of various levels, such as team, organizational industry, etc., and then pointed out gaps with regard to who, what and when governance should take place within the AI world and how it is exercised (Batool et al., 2025).

Another study put forward a criticism of political economy, arguing that national policies prioritize only data infrastructure and market development, with very little focus on self-regulation regarding possible harm related to AI usage (Joshi, 2024). Such critiques are valuable, though they are often normative and lack empirical findings. Internationally, Emery-Xu et al. (2024) map options, concluding there is no 'dominant' path but rather 'trade-offs' on which all options depend. Taken together, these contributions evidence a proliferation of normative values on the one hand and implementational gaps on the other, which are perhaps inevitable, given current values and aims.

The literature is strong on taxonomy and normative principles; however, there is a weakness in the area of operational governance, the empirical assessment of which governance approaches are indeed lowering harm (e.g., discriminatory outcomes, dependence) on the ground. This gap highlights a bigger issue, that is, limited real-world validation of policy frameworks. There is also a geographic imbalance, where the focus of the literature is on high-income settings and top-down regulatory approaches and less on concrete research about LMICs and hybrid public and private ecosystems. The present study fills the gaps by identifying the dependency on AI as another form of risk associated with its governance and an indication of its need for leadership development models that include human judgment.

Theme 4 - Dependence on Artificial Intelligence: Deskilling and Devaluation of Human Judgment

Specific links between the notion of dependency on AI and human abilities have been emphasized by the new socio-technical and philosophical approaches. Ferdman (2025) proposes that the deskilling effects of AI are seen not only in terms of individual behavior but also as a structural issue generated by "capacity-unfriendly environments." The researcher's perspective comes out to be a strength as it moves beyond individual-level explanations to systemic analysis. With increasing dependence on AI for support on decision-making, the possibility of loss of opportunity to enhance judgment, ethics and reflection increases and might become a major issue. Domains such as healthcare and education are already highlighting the loss of human capabilities of diagnostic reasoning and ethics due to overreliance on AI. AI has been found to be associated with increased laziness in students and the erosion of their decision-making capabilities (Ahmad et al., 2023). Such claims are based on emerging or limited evidence that requires further longitudinal study and cross-cultural validation.

This situation is quite concerning, as today's students will become future leaders, and with declining decision-making abilities, the future outcomes for society as a whole remain uncertain. Other literature focuses on how there might be erosion of human autonomy if and when AI replaces humans' place entirely in making judgment (Buijsman et al., 2025). Further, it has been argued that the design of AI systems that underscore meaningful human control and transparency can help in alleviating the downskilling of human abilities and maintaining the roles of humans in decision-making (Buijsman et al., 2025).

The literature regarding the deskilling of human abilities is quite insightful, as it highlights the risks posed by reliance on AI. However, there remains a lack of research on leadership situations and governance. This indicates a gap between theoretical concepts and the actual application of them in governance settings. The present study aims to fill this gap by applying ideas about overreliance on AI to global governance, putting forward the argument about how dependency may lead to erosion of autonomy, just decision-making and responsibility among countries.

Theme 5 - Democracy, inequality and participation

Scholars have put forward the argument that the values of democracy may get undermined due to heavy reliance on AI algorithms for decision-making, largely affecting middle- to low-income countries (Zidouemba, 2025). Studies like these are important, as they highlight power asymmetries; however, they often generalize across diverse political situations.



Jha (2024) found AI systems increased social inequalities through historical biases and discriminatory notions, which unduly affect the underprivileged groups. Having empirical evidence on biases such as the one mentioned in this study is a key strength; however, causal pathways are not always clearly defined in such studies.

The above-mentioned studies remind us that adoption of AI does not take place in a politically neutral landscape. Rather, predetermined dynamics of power shape the beneficiaries and risk-bearers of AI-assisted governance. There is substantial literature on inequality and participation; however, the role of AI dependence in leadership is underexplored. The gaps covered in the present study are highlighting the decreased leadership autonomy brought on by overreliance on AI, as such dependence may widen inequality in global power.

Methodology

This paper studies how AI is changing the way people make decisions and lead others, especially in relation to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It does not collect new data but uses information from existing research papers, policy documents and guidelines.

The main aim of this study is to understand how too much dependence on AI affects human control, accountability and fairness in decision-making, especially in government. And problems can happen because of it. The paper took different sources into accounting, compared ideas with older theories, and explained topic in a simple way.

In overall, the study tries to show how humans and AI work together in better decision-making. It also explains both the positive effects and negative effects of AI on leadership and achieving SDGs. There are four processes into it.

This process is divided into four main stages :

Stage 1: Identifying a New Theme

In this study, first I tried to understand how or how much people are depending on AI. After reading different materials, I found some main areas where this dependence is more though this will increase government efficiency. These include using AI in government work to make it faster, how humans and AI work together so work will be done more efficiently, how people start depending too much on AI, and how it affects fairness and democracy.

For this, I go through research papers, policy reports, and ethics documents from 2018 to 2025. This time was selected because AI was growing fast during this period and people got more aware about AI during 2018-2025, especially in government areas. These topics helped me to understand what to study and focus on, mainly about leadership, fairness, and responsibility.

Stage 2: Analysis of Documents and Data

After finding the main topics, the next step was to read important documents in detail. These included reports from UNESCO, OECD, and the United Nations, and also some research papers on AI ethics and governance. The main aim was to understand common ideas, new points, and what is not discussed much about AI dependence.

I have read and compared all these materials to understand the good and bad sides of using AI in government. If there are some positives of AI, then there are some negatives of AI as well. For example, UNESCO (2021) says that AI should help humans but should not take full decisions, and there should be transparency. On the other side, OECD (2023) talks about making proper and fair policies for safe use of AI.

To understand everything better, I used the HAGI framework. The HAGI framework mainly looks at how much people depend on AI, how much control humans have over AI, and whether rules(like ethical etc.) are followed properly. This framework helped me to compare this information and make conclusions.

Stage 3: Linking Ideas

In this stage, the study tried to combine different ideas about leadership and ethics. It used Joseph Nye's idea of informational power and Amartya Sen's capability approach to see how technology affects freedom, fairness, control, and government to better understand its impact on society. These ideas were also combined with ethics principles like being open, responsible, and clear about how AI works. So that people can trust how AI is used.

After going through these ideas and with the help of real examples, the study shows what is happening and why it is important. For example, some countries have better technology than others like the USA and China, which creates gaps in leadership and equality. This shows that depending too much on AI is not just a technical problem, but also a political and moral problem.



Stage 4: Summarizing Findings

In the last part, the study combined all ideas and gave conclusions. It looked at how AI is used in schools, hospitals, and government services to understand its real impact on people's lives. This helped to see which problems are the same and which are different compared to different places.

The study showed that AI helps make decisions faster, but it can be risky without human control. For example, if the government depends too much on computers to decide who gets help or punishment, people may think it is unfair. Which can reduce people's trust in the government

The study also found that EU countries have better rules and policies for AI compared to poorer countries. Such countries usually depend on richer countries because they do not have enough skills, tools, or technology for AI or there could be other reasons. Because of this, countries are not equally ready to use AI around the world.

Ensuring Reliability and Ethics

The research made sure the information was correct by checking it from different sources. It also compared the information with global rules. like UNESCO's AI Ethics Framework (2021) and OECD AI Principles (2019). Looking at different opinions helped reduce bias and made the results more reliable. So the people can trust the results more.

The study followed the idea that technology should support people, not replace them, and it tried to find a balance between human decisions and AI to ensure safe and proper use of AI.. It also included opinions from both rich and poor countries to keep it fair. So the study gives a fair and balanced view.

Policy Recommendations

In this context we need people to control the thinking and judgement when we are using systems that enable machine processing, and where values about ethical practice are embedded in all phases of the process associated with developing these systems. Policy that manages these systems should therefore also support goals for development across societies, by enabling growth that benefits different groups, protecting natural systems and helping reduce differences between groups. Responses in policy can take shape at multiple levels that have to do with each other: the level of individuals and education, institutions and nations, and governance across the globe.

1. Individual and Educational Level Problem: As systems that use machine processing proliferate in contexts such as education, healthcare, workplaces and legal processes — it would make people dependent on them for decision making. This can also diminish thinking and judgement about values of these commonest situations.

1.1: Understanding of machine systems and judgement about values

Individual schools and courses are developed by processes in organizations and workplaces where machine-enabled processing and decision making about values is incentivized, the uses of which must be handled to ensure responsible actions. These programs should show the need to understand where these systems fall short as well as how judgement by humans still needs to be part of the review process.

Rationale: Work in learning theory that examines how people form understanding and work on judgement that focuses on people suggests that working with these systems can make thinking stronger and reduce depending on automated processes too much (Floridi et al., 2018; Kahneman, 2011).

Expected Outcome: People who learn and people who work make judgements about values with more understanding and depend less on these systems.

Alignment with Goals: Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)

1.2: Maintain review by people for exams, hiring, healthcare, and assessment of risk in legal contexts

Machine processing systems can act as supportive tools for decision-making, but these systems should never be a substitute of human judgement in decisions made regarding exams, hiring, healthcare and risk assessment in legal situations. These systems should assist in these judgements, not render them without humans.

Rationale: Values can not be given by machines and theory that disputes this about inspecting of technical frameworks through social settings highlights need for complex judgements made by people inside the system (Russell & Norvig, 2021).

Expected Outcome: Values and justice appearing in measures depend on the safety net.



2. Institutional and National Level

Problem: The use of machine processing systems with high-risk public administration and governance capabilities could potentially present issues for clarity in processes, fairness in treatment, and accountability.

2.1: Required review by people for systems in public administration that present high risk

Rules should mandate that people review systems using machine processing in the administration by public bodies, healthcare, support through social programs and work enabling law enforcement.

Rationale: Theories on governance and risk recommend greater scrutiny be applied to systems holding high levels of risk, while relationship theories drawing connections between those who control and those who enact suggest that these systems may not always reflect the values present in the individuals that comprise them (OECD, 2019). Expected Outcome: The result is fewer mistakes and greater public confidence in institutions. 2.2: Standards for transparency and the ability to contest decisions made using AI Individuals must be provided with information sufficiently relevant and comprehensive to the decisions of any AI which is involved in that individual, along with the ability to query that information. Justification: Such accountability principles in working systems in democratic settings, and fairness theories on process advocate for transparency as well as the right to appeal such AI decisions (Wachter et al., 2017) Expected Outcome: Greater confidence in the entities that administer governance, as well as greater authenticity of these bodies. 3. Level of governance operating globally Problem: The availability of resources for research and development in AI and the diffusion of capabilities to utilize AI exhibit regional disparities that might exacerbate existing inequalities, threatening to render efforts powered by AI less supportive of achieving SDGs. 3.1: Cooperation between countries and programs that build capacity in countries with limited resources Aid to low-income countries must also be technical assistance, they should be supported in developing frameworks for policy and access to shared knowledge networks. Theoretical Basis: One approach to implement this is by bringing diversity in contexts into the development of AI (Sen, 1999; WEF, 2020), backed up by theory that forwards who governs spans levels and principles relating to justice at a global level. Expected Outcome: This can lead to more equitable access by reducing divides in AI and developing better technology tailored for regions. 3.2: Programs relating to equity in digital access that focus on capabilities for AI, access to cloud platforms, and datasets that are open Access should be broadened in education around AI, cloud service providing platforms and public datasets partnering government with private sector. Theoretical Basis: In addition to the resources used, including technology needed for actual development (Sen 1999) it is also important to provide capabilities and opportunities according to the capability approach. Expected Outcome: Outcomes include participation that is wider in innovation using AI and in economic systems that involve AI. 3.3: Observatory operating at the global level to monitor effects on SDGs, transparency, and safety relating to AI There should be a system that tracks impacts that AI has in areas such as the SDGs, transparency, security and principles with respect to ethics in governance. Justification: Evidence-based approaches to policy and theory of systems indicates that continuous monitoring is key to foster responsible and adaptive governance (OECD, 2019; WEF, 2021). Expected Outcome: Outcomes are global governance of A.I. that is coordinated, includes accountability and can evolve. SDG : SDG 17

Discussion

This study explains how nowadays people are depending more on AI for making decisions to ensure safe and proper use of AI. It is not just a new technology, but it is slowly changing how decisions are taken and who is responsible if something goes wrong. so it is important to use it carefully. Earlier, most decisions were made by humans, but now many of them are handled by AI systems. For example, AI is used to decide who gets government support. This is helpful because it saves time and makes work easier, but at the same time, it also creates some issues. When machines make too many decisions, people may ignore important things like fairness and human values.

The study mainly talks about three things. First, how AI affects human leadership and people's ability to think on their own. showing that too much AI can reduce human thinking and control. Second, whether AI can increase inequality or create differences between people. It shows that AI can increase inequality if not used properly. Third, whether AI is really helping in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or not. Which means its impact depends on how it is used.



Human Leadership and Independent Thinking

Nowadays, AI is used a lot in different areas like government work, defense, and the economy. It helps in making decisions faster, but sometimes leaders may not think properly about fairness or what is right. For example, the government may use AI to make quick decisions, but it may not always be fair to everyone as we discussed earlier.

Sen and Nye say that leaders depend a lot on information systems controlled by big companies or powerful countries. Because of this, people may trust computers more than their own thinking. Ferdman (2025) calls this a ‘capacity-unfriendly environment,’ where people stop thinking on their own and depend too much on AI. This problem is not new, but AI is more powerful because it can learn by itself so people need to use AI carefully. In many government offices, AI systems are now making decisions which are hard for people to understand. So, leaders often follow what AI suggests. For example, AI may decide which areas need police attention, and leaders may just follow those suggestions.

Governance, Inequality, and Power Imbalance

I think AI in government has both advantages and disadvantages. It helps to make work faster and sometimes more efficient, but it also creates some problems. One major problem is that it gives more power to a few countries or big companies, which can create inequality between countries and people. Reports like UNESCO and OECD say that most AI systems are owned by rich countries. Because of this, poorer countries have to depend on them, and they lose some control over their own decisions.

A well-known example is the Dutch childcare benefits scandal. In this case, an AI system wrongly accused many families of fraud, especially poor and immigrant families. This caused serious financial problems and reduced people’s trust in the government. It even led to the government’s resignation, showing that wrong use of AI can harm people and trust. This shows that AI can be unfair if it is biased or not properly checked.

In many countries, AI is used in areas like welfare, credit scoring, and policing. But it is not always fair. Sometimes it repeats the same biases that already exist in society, so it is important to make AI fair and unbiased. Because of this, people who are already disadvantaged may suffer more, and they may not even know it is happening.

This situation is also called ‘data colonialism’ by Joshi. It means that some countries depend on technology made by others, and the control is not in their hands.

So overall, too much dependence on AI is not just a technology issue, but also related to power and fairness. It shows the need for proper rules and human control. If poorer countries do not get proper access to AI tools and training, they will fall further behind. This will widen the gap between rich and poor countries, which is already big, and make it difficult to achieve equality and global cooperation.

Role of AI in Achieving 2030 Goals

The study shows that AI has both good and bad sides in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On one hand, AI helps to do work faster. For example, it is useful in hospitals, farming, and climate change tracking. But on the other hand, if it is not used properly, it can create problems like unfair decisions and lack of transparency. This can affect goals like justice and strong institutions. When people do not understand how AI works, they may start losing trust in it. This has already happened in countries like the Netherlands and Australia, where AI systems in welfare programs made wrong decisions.

For example, in India, Aadhaar is used to give welfare benefits using biometric data. It makes the process faster, but sometimes problems like fingerprint mismatch and poor internet stop people from getting benefits. This shows that depending too much on technology can create issues.

The study also talks about the “AI capacity divide.” Rich countries have more money and technology for AI, but poor countries do not. So, they have to depend on others, which makes them fall behind.

So overall, AI is useful but it should be used carefully. It should be fair and clear, and humans should take final decisions. Only then it can help in achieving the 2030 goals.



Conclusion

Usage of artificial intelligence and its integration in global decision-making creates both opportunities and governance risks, especially when the context includes sustainable development goals. AI utilisation offers a blend of proficiency and efficiency with robust evidence-backed prescience as never before however, it questions human autonomy and accountability and gradually leads to the erosion of ethics in the act. The study disclosed that AI dependence is not uniformly performed all around the world; still some world leaders and administrators use it as an advisory tool. Some instances like U.S military strategy and Swedish policy deliberation revealed that AI is also used as a constitutive governance component. If this approach continues, this will trigger increased ramification of insufficient transparency of algorithmic logic, erosion of evaluative reasoning, widening global inequalities; which directly threaten the progress of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as reduced inequalities (SDG 10), strong institutions (SDG 16), and global partnerships (SDG 17). By synthesizing findings from the literature which includes five thematic areas and applying analytical frameworks like HAGI and Nye's power theory, study indicates that without proper and robust human oversight AI will entrench biases, diffuse responsibility, dilute accountability and create technological power imbalances among developed and developing and underdeveloped; which directly undermines the human-centered ethos of the 2030 Agenda. Even though AI has the capacity to advance the progress in health (SDG 3), climate action (SDG 13) and beyond, positive outcomes remain uneven; developed nations with high income will become dominant; developing and underdeveloped nations might face digital divide. Multi-tier policy interventions to preserve human centered leadership; AI literacy oversight from individual to national institutions with mandatory transparency; global watchdog mechanisms for ensuring that AI reinforces human judgement rather than replacing it; such measures enable leaders to serve humanity without compromising on global fairness and equity. Proactive approach is crucial for this domain to safeguard human ethics since AI is a double edged sword.



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