

Artificial Intelligence and Media Ethics: A Buddhist Perspective

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Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an integral component of modern communication and media systems. AI-based software is now being used for creating content, producing news, managing social media accounts, and sharing information. In Sri Lanka, the increasing use of social media sites like Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube and AI-based applications has had a considerable impact on communication and information practices, especially among youth users. Furthermore, AI technologies worldwide have transformed the conventional roles of journalism and communication through automated decision-making, automated content creation, and prediction analytics, thus influencing human intervention in media production.

The advent of these technologies has also created many ethical problems. Misinformation, fake content generated using AI technologies, online abuse, privacy concerns, and manipulation of the audience's opinions are some of the issues that have surfaced in the context of digital communications. Many questions arise in relation to ethical communication in this era of artificial intelligence. The digital acceleration that occurred following the pandemic in the Sri Lankan situation and the increased usage of smartphones has caused even greater dependence on digital platforms based on artificial intelligence.

Media ethics presents the basic principles that should guide the creation and dissemination of information and those that should be imposed on it. At the same time, the principles of truth, accuracy, accountability, transparency, privacy, fairness, and service to the community are essential elements of professional communication. Nevertheless, artificial intelligence (AI) challenges all of the above, as do programmed bias, the production of information, deepfake, misinformation, and a lack of transparency in new technologies. In this regard, the need for ethical values in the context of AI in the modern media is becoming extremely relevant.

The Buddhist faith is one that continues to be relevant in Sri Lanka. Buddhists promote responsible communication characterized by truth,

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mindfulness, compassion, and awareness of the impact of one's actions. There has, however, been no serious consideration regarding the problems associated with modern AI technologies from the perspective of Buddhist ethics. In addition to posing ethical dilemmas for users, these ethical issues have social ramifications as well, such as a decrease in the public's trust towards media organizations and a perversion of democratic debate.

The interdisciplinary method is useful for the integration of traditional ethics systems and modern developments in media communication. Thus, this paper attempts to analyze the ethical concerns involved in the usage of Artificial Intelligence in the field of media and digital communications, and how Buddhism-based ethical values could be of significance in encouraging responsible practices of communication.

Buddhist ethics is not limited to moral values but further expands to include an ethical philosophy that emphasizes the importance of wisdom (Paññā), compassion (Karunā), loving-kindness (Mettā), mindfulness (Sati), and other related concepts. Moral teachings, especially the Noble Eightfold Path and the Five Precepts (Pañca Sīla) guide the followers in cultivating truthfulness, non-violence, self-control, and responsibility. For this reason, it is possible to apply Buddhist ethics in the context of AI, including media ethics. Issues of fake news, manipulation, privacy, cyberbullying, and other challenges of unethical communication could be addressed using Buddhist teachings and promote responsible media use in the modern world, especially when communication is increasingly automated. These ethical principles have been extracted from the following canonical scriptures of Buddhism: the Dhammapada, Kalama Sutta, Abhaya Raja Kumara Sutta, and Sigalovada Sutta, to which we continue to turn for guidance in ethical communication and related topics.

Objectives

The first and foremost objective of this research study is to analyze the ethical dilemmas posed by the emergence of AI technology in media and digital communications and discuss the relevance of Buddhist ethics in resolving these dilemmas in the Sri Lankan society. With the advent of such technologies, several new ethical issues related to misinformation, responsibility, accountability, and proper conduct are becoming more and more relevant.

Consequently, in the scope of this research, an effort will be made to identify these ethical dilemmas arising out of AI-driven communication and their effects on communication and human behavior. In addition, another aim of the research study is to assess the applicability of Buddhist ethical principles, including Right speech (Sammā Vācā), mindfulness (Sati), compassion (Karunā),

the five precepts (Pañca Sīla), and the Noble Eightfold Path, in modern ethical issues raised by Artificial Intelligence and digital media communications.

Methodology

For this paper, a qualitative research design was used to understand the ethical dilemmas of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in media and digital communications as well as the possible use of Buddhist ethics in resolving these problems. Qualitative methodology was preferred for this study since the focus is more about conceptualization, ethical questions, and philosophical aspects rather than numeric measurements.

The sources used for the research were mostly secondary sources which were found through an extensive examination of academic journals, books, conference papers, policies, and reports relating to the topics of Artificial Intelligence, media ethics, digital communication, and Buddhism. Literature was scanned on matters like misinformation, deepfake videos, bias of algorithms, threats to privacy, digital manipulation, and online behavior among others. The goal was to establish the ethical challenges that can be identified in modern AI communication environments. Moreover, Buddhism teachings and the concepts of Right Speech (Samma Vacha), mindfulness (Sati), compassion (Karuna), and non-violence (Ahimsa) were studied to determine their suitability in today's debates on media ethics.

In addition to the above-cited scholarly literature, the current research also relied upon a number of Buddhist sources in order to develop the ethical framework for the present paper. In this regard, the Dhammapada, Kalama Sutta (AN 3:65), Abhaya Raja Kumara Sutta (MN 58), and Sigalovada Sutta (DN 31) were consulted in order to review the teachings of Buddhism on the topics of truthfulness, decision-making, and ethics. Moreover, in order to establish conceptual connections between Buddhist teachings and modern ethical issues pertaining to media and Artificial Intelligence, the current research also relied upon a number of articles dealing with media ethics and global concepts of AI ethics.

Analysis of the gathered data was done by employing the thematic approach. Using this approach, themes that emerged from AI-based ethical issues as well as from Buddhist ethics were recognized and analyzed. Based on the results obtained, connections have been made between contemporary technological advancement and Buddhist ethics. This allowed the research to explore how Buddhist ethics could help enhance ethical communication in the context of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence.

Results

The study of literature reveals that there is a marked impact of Artificial Intelligence on modern media and digital communication environments. The usage of AI systems, including content generation, automated journalism, and algorithmic content recommendation, plays an important role in determining the processes of information production, distribution, and consumption in Sri Lanka as well as globally.

In terms of the usage of Artificial Intelligence in media, the article raises several problems that are associated with it. The first one is connected to the dissemination of misinformation and the generation of fake news through the creation of synthetic media using deep learning technologies. Moreover, the use of algorithms in recommender systems leads to biases and inequality, which can be social and political. Another aspect that gains more attention is related to privacy and surveillance because of the mass gathering of personal data. Besides, cyberbullying, hate speech, and addiction issues are increasingly discussed.

Additionally, it can be concluded from the study findings that the above-mentioned issues may be addressed using Buddhist ethics. *Samma Vacha* can play a very important role in promoting effective, respectful, and truthful communication that will protect the Internet from any false information and content. *Sati* encourages a person to interact with the provided information in a mindful manner without acting in a rash manner. Such ethics as *Karuna* and *Ahimsa* motivate an individual to interact responsibly on the Internet by refraining from using abusive language.

Therefore, Buddhist ethics can be considered valuable in terms of promoting responsible digital communication behavior. In regard to AI-based media technologies, Buddhist ethics may prove useful in enhancing self-discipline.

In addition, the analysis presented above shows how Buddhist ethical teachings can be applied to modern challenges posed by the development of artificial intelligence. For example, the concept of Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*) is relevant to preventing fake news and other forms of intentional dissemination of false information through computer technologies. The principle of mindfulness (*Sati*) encourages avoiding delusion and carefully thinking about the information one consumes to create and share. The Five Precepts promote non-maleficence, truthfulness, and good conduct, which are essential for ethical AI development. Overall, Buddhist ethics can make significant contributions to developing ethical AI by supporting international initiatives in promoting responsibility, transparency, social awareness, and fair communication.

Discussion / Conclusion

The results obtained in the current study demonstrate how Artificial Intelligence has changed the process of media production and digital communication in the modern world by increasing the effectiveness and accessibility of information exchange, on the one hand, and creating various ethical issues, on the other. Ethical dilemmas created by modern technological advances involve issues related to the dissemination of misinformation, privacy rights infringement, biased algorithms, deepfakes, harassment in cyberspace, and lack of accountability on the part of users.

According to the results, Buddhism is able to offer an appropriate set of principles that may help in solving such dilemmas. To illustrate, based on the Right Speech principle, one should speak truthfully and meaningfully without resorting to disseminating disinformation and engaging in misconduct. Furthermore, the practice of mindfulness involves the ability to think critically and verify the accuracy and reliability of the information presented in order not to mislead others. Finally, compassion and non-harming are necessary for dealing with such ethical dilemmas as cyberbullying and other forms of aggressive interaction.

The ethical guidance found in the Dhammapada, Kalama Sutta (AN 3.65), and Abhaya Raja Kumara Sutta (MN 58) also adds to these results. The Kalama Sutta advises people to be wary of what others tell them and not just believe it blindly. This is an essential point when it comes to dealing with issues of AI-generated disinformation and manipulated content. The Abhaya Raja Kumara Sutta states that the right thing to say is something that is true, beneficial, and appropriate to the context, while the Dhammapada teaches that communication and conduct are both essential ethical components of a person's being. These can also be used, by extension, as points of guidance and ethical reference for communication within the context of Artificial Intelligence-driven media.

The research has demonstrated that Buddhist ethics could be an essential source of reference for responsible AI governance. The analysis has revealed that ethical values of truthfulness, compassion, mindfulness, non-maleficence, and accountability are highly compatible with the ethical principles of AI, such as transparency, fairness, human-centricity, and accountability. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that adding Buddhist ethics to the principles of ethical AI can make communication more responsible and trustworthy.

As for other implications, it would be appropriate to conclude that introducing the principles of Buddhist ethics into digital literacy training, media practice, and policy formulation might contribute to the rise of ethical awareness on the part of the technology users, especially young people from Sri Lanka. This

is likely to create a balance between technological progress and morality, which will ensure that AI-based technologies operate in the benefit of society.

From a global level, integrating Buddhism's ethical principles into journalistic professional practice, digital media literacy programs, artificial intelligence policy frameworks, and regulatory strategies is likely to lead to the emergence of ethical awareness among journalists, technologists, policymakers, and digital citizens. This, in turn, is likely to result in reduced dissemination of disinformation, increased responsibility when developing new technologies, and overall improvement of democratic communication processes and AI-assisted social systems that promote ethical values.

In conclusion, it is reasonable to assert that Buddhist philosophy still retains high significance in the context of the emergence and evolution of Artificial Intelligence. Buddhist philosophy helps to create a stable basis for developing communication ethically in the conditions of fast technological changes. The combination of technological progress and ethical awareness makes it possible to enjoy the advantages and avoid the drawbacks associated with the use of artificial intelligence in digital communication.

Keywords - Artificial Intelligence, Media Ethics, Buddhist Philosophy, Digital Communication, Sri Lanka

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