

Monthly Newsletter

October 2023



Dear Reader,

It gives us great pleasure to bring to you the October 2023 edition of the R M Consulting Newsletter that has “**AI & India**” as its theme.

The Newsletter features three write-ups by the R M Consulting team on:

- The need to undertake an India-specific study on the impact of artificial intelligence on various sector-wise jobs in India given the rapid advancements in generative AI,
- The urgent necessity for the country to take a call on the issue of an independent AI regulator, and
- Why it would be helpful to make high school students aware about AI-related ethics.

As always, we would look forward to your comments, feedback, and suggestions on our Newsletter, including on the issues that you would like us to focus on in the future.

Best wishes,

Team R M Consulting

AI impact on jobs in India: Let's have the data



Synopsis

An India-specific study undertaken by the NITI Aayog on the possible impact of artificial intelligence on different job roles can act as a powerful tool of citizen empowerment by enabling the country's existing and prospective workforce gain insight into how the rapid scaling and deployment of sophisticated AI technologies could impact their careers and what they need to do to in terms of skilling and/or upskilling to ride the AI wave.

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That advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) will have an impact on jobs globally is beyond dispute (https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/working-papers/WCMS_890761/lang--en/index.htm).

But, specific to an Indian context, some of the matters that remain open to question are how many new jobs will get created due to the increasing sophistication of AI, and how many current job roles, especially in the organized sector, would face an existential crisis going forward. Apart from the timeline within which these supposed new jobs would get created and some of

the present jobs lost due to the rapid progress of artificial intelligence technologies.

The answers to these issues assume importance when one factors in the reality that India is currently the world's most populous nation, with a correspondingly high number of people in the working age group on the lookout for jobs. **At over 400 million, the total size of India's current workforce, itself, exceeds the entire population of the United States, the world's richest nation.**

Neither India's jobseekers who hope to profit from the surge in AI usage nor those already in the workforce shuddering at the prospect of AI taking away their livelihoods stand to gain much from mere macro projections on the influence that AI would have on the worldwide job scenario. They also don't benefit in any way from grand proclamations on how AI could be a potential gamechanger in India.



What could help them, though, is a detailed, independent, data-backed, state-wide, industry sector-wise, and job role-wise study on how AI could influence the job scenario in a geographically diverse country like India where each state and, also, many of the businesses based therein are at their own level of growth and development. With such a study also factoring in the extent to which employers in diverse business segments in the country, including those falling in the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) category, would go as far as AI adoption is concerned. The MSME segment is one of the biggest job generators in the country.



Empowering citizens

As a powerful tool of citizen empowerment, an India-specific study would enable the country's current and prospective workforce obtain a clear insight into how AI could impact their careers. It would also let them determine which of the existing jobs would be put most at risk due to the giant strides being made by artificial intelligence technologies and enable them to decide what they need to do to in terms of skilling and/or upskilling to ride the AI wave.

Ideally, the NITI Aayog – that, in the past, has undertaken studies on the AI issue, including how to make AI work for all (<https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-02/Responsible-AI-22022021.pdf>) – should take the initiative for carrying out the study to determine the effect that artificial intelligence would have on the job front in India within the short, medium, and long terms.

The advantages of having the NITI Aayog conducting a study on the subject would be manifold. Apart from being rooted in the Indian context, a NITI Aayog report would be free of any form of bias, be thorough, credible, and most significantly, find acceptance among all stakeholders. However impartial it may be, a similar study carried out by any other organization may find it a challenge when it comes to acceptance of its findings by all stakeholders.

For the study, the NITI Aayog could hold stakeholder consultations with various categories of employers across states, key industry bodies, ministries

at the Central and state levels (*especially the Ministries of Electronics and Information Technology, Education, and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship*), technology professionals, and other reputed independent experts who can provide informed opinions on the extent to which AI can be a force for good in India regarding job creation. The NITI Aayog setting for itself an ambitious timeline to complete the study, given the rapid pace at which advancements in AI technology take place, would increase the effectiveness of the entire exercise.

Even as India has signalled its intent to leverage technology in a big way to fast-track the nation's progress, the country has always made it clear that none of its citizens should get left behind in the process of growth and development. Equipping those already in employment and those on the lookout for such with credible information on how AI could impact the job front in India would enable these people to take the necessary steps to become future-ready professionals in sync with the 'development for all' mantra of the country.



Independent AI regulator | Time for India to take a call



Synopsis

India must decide soon on the regulatory approach that it should adopt regarding artificial intelligence technologies considering the rapid developments in generative AI as also the wide deployment of AI technologies for various citizen-centric services in a nation that accounts for almost 18 per cent of the global population.

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Does India need an independent AI regulator? The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) evidently thinks so, going by the view expressed in its July 20, 2023 “*Recommendations on Leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in Telecommunication Sector*” where it proposed the establishment of an “Artificial Intelligence and Data Authority of India” (AIDAI). (https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendation_20072023.pdf)

Even as we await a decision on the independent regulator front, it may be relevant to point out that the necessity to have an oversight framework for AI to ensure that artificial intelligence technologies benefit everybody and not a select few was highlighted in the recent G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration (https://www.g20.org/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/document/G20-New-Delhi-Leaders-Declaration.pdf).

On the AI issue, this is how the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration summed up the decisions taken by the world's biggest economies:

“To unlock the full potential of AI, equitably share its benefits and mitigate risks, we will work together to promote international cooperation and further discussions on international governance for AI. To this end, we:

- i. Reaffirm our commitment to G20 AI Principles (2019) and endeavour to share information on approaches to using AI to support solutions in the digital economy.*
- ii. Will pursue a pro-innovation regulatory/governance approach that maximizes the benefits and takes into account the risks associated with the use of AI.*
- iii. Will promote responsible AI for achieving SDGs.”*

Addressing the B20 Summit India 2023 that was held in August 2023 and preceded the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had the following to say on AI:

“The world is currently brimming with excitement about AI, but within this excitement, there are ethical considerations as well. Concerns are being raised about skilling and re-skilling, algorithmic bias, and the societal impact of AI. We all need to come together to address these issues. Global business communities and governments must collaborate to ensure the expansion of Ethical AI”. (<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1952677>)



For the world's most populous country that has ambitions of emerging as a developed nation by 2047 and is committed to the principle of 'development for all', India must decide, and that too soon, on the regulatory approach that it should adopt regarding artificial intelligence technologies.

Doing so is imperative considering the rapid developments in generative AI as also the wide deployment of AI technologies for various citizen-centric services in a nation that accounts for almost 18 per cent of the global population. Besides the obvious question marks surrounding accountability in an industry-led self-regulatory system.

Any oversight framework that India chooses to put in place needs to be rooted in the local context. And factor in the unique challenges that the country faces, including in terms of digital literacy levels as also the last mile infrastructure pain points at many places that can come in the way of making AI for all everywhere a difficult proposition.

Although Nasscom came up with a document titled "*Responsible AI | Guidelines for Generative AI*" in June 2023 (<https://www.nasscom.in/ai/img/GenAI-Guidelines-June2023.pdf>), India's software industry body is yet to categorically spell out its stand on where it stands on the independent AI regulator issue.

Incidentally, the infrastructure challenge faced by India on the AI front was also flagged by Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani while addressing shareholders at the company's 46th AGM held on August 28, 2023. At that meeting, Ambani said: "*India has the scale. India has the data. India has the talent. But we also need digital infrastructure in India that can handle AI's immense computational demands.*"

As one of the fastest growing economies worldwide, India has before it the fantastic opportunity to leverage AI to promote inclusive development at a scale not seen before. Adopting a regulatory/governance mechanism where there are appropriate rules and regulations and a clearly defined compliance mechanism that advance the cause of responsible AI while not stifling innovation is clearly the way forward. If having an independent regulatory body could speed up the process of AI emerging as a powerful force for good in India, there should not be any hesitation in setting one up at the earliest.



Ethical AI: Let's start teaching high school students too...



Synopsis

Making Indian high school students, including those studying in government-run and/or funded educational institutions, aware of AI-related ethics could help them develop the moral compass for easily being able to tell right from wrong regarding issues connected with artificial intelligence, and thereby aid in the process of their character formation.

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As a country committed to promoting the responsible use of AI so that it can act as a visible force for good for all, it may be in the fitness of things to introduce Indian students to AI-related ethical principles from the high school level itself as part of their value education.

Incidentally, in its *“Recommendations on Leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in Telecommunication Sector”* dated July 20, 2023, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had also underlined the need for imparting “basic knowledge of Ethical Use of AI to all the students in schools and colleges” (https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendation_20072023.pdf).

In a world where AI has become ubiquitous and technologies are getting more sophisticated by the day, making students – the country’s future decision-makers – aware from a young age the benefits and perils of AI could help them develop the moral compass for easily being able to tell right from wrong regarding issues connected with artificial intelligence. And thereby aid in the process of their character formation by making them more responsible and caring citizens, going forward, willing to consider the interests of others also and not just their own.

As an immensely powerful tool, AI has the potential to have a mesmerizing effect especially on impressionable minds. Starting the process of making students from Standard IX onward, including those studying in government-run and/or funded educational institutions, aware of the ethical dos and don’ts regarding AI could ensure that learners from the school level itself begin to appreciate AI for what is, both a boon and a bane depending on how it is being leveraged.

Initially, an initiative of the kind proposed could be rolled out on a pilot basis in a few government schools affiliated to the CBSE with the learnings from this experience used to finetune a broader introduction across more schools in the country. Authorities could consider establishing a committee chaired by the Secretary of School Education at the Union Ministry of Education with members drawn from academia, industry, and the world of technology to work out the modalities for starting courses in Ethical AI at the high school level at all CBSE schools in future. Non CBSE-examination boards, including the different state education boards, could, of course, take steps on their own accord to start teaching AI-related ethics at the institutions affiliated to them.





JioAirFiber launch to raise the stakes for competitors

Wide availability of Jio's latest offering, coupled with its attractive pricing plans, could lead to a significant increase in the number of broadband subscribers even in areas where internet penetration has traditionally been low, and lower the digital divide in the world's most populous nation

SUMALI MOITRA | SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 / 06:21 PM IST



<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/opinion/jioairfiber-launch-to-raise-the-stakes-for-competitors-11392801.html>

India should take the lead in setting a global governance approach on AI

Such an initiative on the country's part in the wake of the successful G20 New Delhi Leaders' Summit will ensure that a middle ground can be reached more easily on an oversight mechanism for AI technologies that is acceptable to all stakeholders

SUMALI MOITRA | SEPTEMBER 14, 2023 / 03:16 PM IST



<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/opinion/india-should-take-the-lead-in-setting-a-global-governance-approach-on-ai-11363701.html>

India's Mission LiFE should find mention in G20 Delhi Leaders' Declaration

The Lifestyle for Environment initiative being included in the Delhi Declaration would be a fantastic way to underline the strong commitment of G20 member states to involve their citizens to play a part in the fight against climate change, and, also, be a huge feather in India's cap

SUMALI MOITRA | SEPTEMBER 04, 2023 / 01:01 PM IST



<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/opinion/indias-mission-life-should-find-mention-in-g20-delhi-leaders-declaration-11306451.html>



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