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Institute for Governance, Policies & Politics

AI KNOWLEDGE CONSORTIUM

AI-POWERED CAMPAIGNS: ENGAGING WITH LOK SABHA 2024 CONTESTANTS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We, at the Institute for Governance, Policies & Politics, would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to this report, 'AI-Powered Campaigns: Engaging with Lok Sabha 2024 Contestants.'

First and foremost, we express our deepest appreciation to the Lok Sabha 2024 contestants who generously shared their time, insights, and perspectives during the virtual sessions. Their willingness to engage in thoughtful discussions about the impact of artificial intelligence on elections and campaigns has been invaluable to this research.

We are grateful for the support of both AIKC (Artificial Intelligence Knowledge Consortium), whose assistance and support were crucial for the successful completion of the study. Additionally, we acknowledge the contributions of our team of researchers, analysts, and writers whose dedication, expertise, and hard work made this report possible. Your commitment to excellence and rigorous analysis has ensured that this report is both comprehensive and insightful.

Special thanks go to our communication team for facilitating the virtual sessions and ensuring a seamless experience in reaching out to Lok Sabha 2024 candidates. Your proficiency and communication skills were crucial in executing this project successfully.

We would also like to acknowledge the support and guidance of our advisory board. Your strategic direction and thoughtful feedback have greatly enhanced the quality and relevance of this report.

We hope this report serves as a valuable resource for understanding the evolving role of artificial intelligence in electoral processes and inspires further dialogue and innovation in this critical area.

EXECUTIVE **SUMMARY**

This report titled, 'AI-Powered Campaigns: Engaging with Lok Sabha 2024 Contestants', released by the Institute for Governance, Policies & Politics (IGPP) aims to explore the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in electoral processes, particularly in the context of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in India from the perspective of candidates contesting Lok Sabha elections. By engaging directly with 112 candidates through our initiative, 'AI and Your Electoral Fortune', we were provided with invaluable insights and experiences. The study offered a perspective on the state of AI applications, as well as challenges and opportunities in elections and campaigns in India. The primary objective is to examine perception and use of AI in reshaping the landscape of political campaigns in India.

Our virtual interactions with candidates from diverse background shed light on some hidden realities of the popular narratives on the use of AI. Contrary to the prevalent discourse suggesting that AI would take over this election, these interactions highlighted that AI did not have as significant impact and that its impact varied significantly across demographics and regions. Candidates reported using AI to enhance voter engagement through hyper-personalised outreach, data-driven decisions, and optimised campaign strategies. However, they also expressed concerns about AI's potential for voter manipulation, misinformation and the creation of synthetic media like deepfake videos.

During the interactions, it was observed that the impact and use of AI in campaigns by candidates is uneven and largely dependent on demographic factors and available resources. The digital divide, particularly evident in capital-intensive election campaigns, present significant challenges. Additional obstacles identified include the lack of quality voters' data, inadequate female participation, infrastructure and financial constraints. There is also noted lack of awareness among stakeholders about the AI, its potential misuses, and opportunities, which further exacerbates confusion and chaos, significantly undermining trust in the electoral processes.

This study is crucial in identifying the trends and patterns of technology- driven elections. It underscores the necessity of implementing training programs for candidates and political parties on responsible use of AI in campaigns and elections. It calls for the government to establish clear guidelines and regulations to ensure ethical use of AI in elections.

The insights provided by the Lok Sabha candidates offer a valuable glimpse into the future of political campaigning in India, where technology and human ingenuity converge to shape a more informed and engaged electorate. The Institute for Governance, Policies and Politics hopes this study serves as a catalyst for further discussion, innovation, and policy development regarding deployment of AI in political campaigns.

ABOUT AI &
YOUR ELECTORAL FORTUNE

Overview

IGPP launched the initiative, 'AI and Your Electoral Fortune,' aimed at unravelling the intricate relationship between AI and electoral processes. As technology continues to evolve, AI has emerged as an indispensable tool for political strategists, candidates, and parties. However, it is crucial to grasp both the opportunities and potential harms associated with its integration into the electoral process.

What sets, 'AI and Your Electoral Fortune,' apart is its mission to enlighten Lok Sabha contestants about the dynamic impact of AI on elections and political campaigns. In an era where technology reigns supreme, understanding the nuances of AI is no longer a luxury but a necessity for every aspiring leader. By facilitating discussions, providing insights, and offering guidance on best practices, we aim to empower candidates to make informed decisions about incorporating AI into their electoral strategies. It is imperative to highlight the importance of utilising technology responsibly in this election season, ensuring it benefits society and aids in reaching out to voters without fostering confusion, chaos, or mistrust.

Stages of the Programme

Short Video: Our journey began with a compelling short video that served as a primer for Lok Sabha contestants. It introduced them to the realm of AI in elections, emphasising the need to comprehend its influence on electoral outcomes and campaign strategies.

Virtual Sessions: IGPP left no stone unturned in its quest to foster awareness. We conducted short virtual sessions with candidates from diverse political backgrounds, providing them with invaluable insights into the positive applications of AI, as well as cautionary tales of its potential misuse. Our research team engaged candidates in interactive discussions, utilising real-world examples to illustrate the transformative power of AI in electoral dynamics.

Furthermore, the sessions incorporated insights from esteemed experts in the field of AI. Notably, Mr. Jaspreet Bindra, the Founder and Managing Director of The Tech Whisperer, and Advocate N.S. Nappinai, a Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court and Founder of CyberSaathi, graciously shared their perspectives on the intersection of AI and Elections.

Overall, the 'AI and Your Electoral Fortune' initiative successfully highlighted the importance of AI in electoral campaigns and provided valuable insights into candidates' perspectives on its use. This report, 'AI-Powered Campaigns: Engaging with Lok Sabha 2024 Contestants' , is an assessment of the feedback gathered from the sessions, which we feel will be instrumental in shaping future initiatives aimed at integrating AI into the electoral process, ensuring that technology benefits society and upholds the principles of transparency, integrity, and accountability in democratic practices.

OBJECTIVES

TO RAISE AWARENESS OF AI'S POTENTIALS AND PERILS IN ELECTIONS:

To enlighten candidates on the dynamic impact of AI on elections and campaigns. To inform them about the dangers of AI-generated content and its potential to influence electoral outcomes, while providing strategies to safeguard against its misuse.

TO UNDERSTAND CANDIDATES' PERCEPTION OF AI:

To gain a deeper understanding of candidates' perceptions and attitudes towards AI and assess their readiness to discuss and adopt these technologies in their campaigns and policy-making processes in the future.

TO PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE AI USAGE IN ELECTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

To highlight the importance of using AI responsible to benefits society, ensuring that technology aids in voters' outreach without creating confusion, chaos, or mistrust.

TO ENCOURAGE ETHICAL PRACTICES

To advocate for the ethical use of AI in political campaigns, underscoring the need for clear guidelines and regulations to safeguard electoral integrity.

TO FACILITATE DISCUSSION ON AI'S USE IN ELECTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

To create a platform for candidates to engage and interact, fostering the exchange of insights, experiences, and concerns regarding AI's role in elections.

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a transformative force, revolutionising how we live, work, and interact. Its integration into campaign strategies, voter engagement, and election management is profound and marking a new era in electoral processes. In 2024, over 70 countries will hold elections, making this a crucial year for democracies. AI's influence on electoral outcomes and political campaigns is significant, offering both opportunities and challenges. While AI can enhance the electoral processes by improving efficiency and accessibility, it also threatens electoral integrity through risks such as deep fakes and misinformation.

Purpose of Study

Recognising the critical importance of this multi-purpose technology and its varied impact, IGPP launched an outreach and awareness initiative 'AI and Your Electoral Fortune.' The program aimed at unravelling the complex relationship between AI and electoral processes by ensuring that Lok Sabha contestants and our future representatives can leverage AI effectively, while also protecting themselves and the electoral system from its potential harms.

In the fast-paced world of electoral politics, the choices we make today shape the course of tomorrow. With this initiative, IGPP invited candidates to seize the opportunity to craft strategies that not only resonate with voters but also uphold the principles of transparency, integrity, and accountability. As AI becomes an indispensable tool for political strategists, candidates, and parties, it is vital for our representatives to grasp both the potentials and pitfalls associated with its use in elections. Through facilitating discussions, providing insights, and offering guidance on best practices, our initiative and awareness campaign aims to empower candidates to make informed decisions about incorporating AI into their electoral strategies. It is imperative to emphasize the responsible use of technology this election season, ensuring it benefits society and aids in reaching out to voters without fostering confusion, chaos, or mistrust such as deepfakes, misinformation, etc.

However, the question, how interested are our representatives in learning about emerging technologies such as AI, is not just theoretical but highlights an urgent need for understanding and action. Reaching out to the candidates contesting the Lok Sabha elections during their campaigning period was a challenging task itself, especially to discuss a relatively new technology often highlighted in the news for its negative aspects.

Aim of the Study

This study is the sociological thick description of our engagements with political representatives and narrate our many pleasant and sometimes not-so-pleasant interactions with the contestants. Through meticulous documentation of these interactions, we seek to provide a comprehensive understanding of the diverse perspectives held by candidates regarding emerging technologies such as AI. Our experiences varied widely, from enthusiastic and inquisitive candidates who eagerly embraced the transformative potential of AI in enhancing campaign efficiency and voter engagement, to those who approached the topic with scepticism, voicing concerns about ethical implications, data privacy, and the risk of misinformation. By detailing both the positive and challenging encounters, this study offers valuable insights into the perceptions and opinions of contestants towards usage of AI in the electoral process. These narratives serve not only to illustrate the current scenario of technological awareness among political figures but also to guide readers on how to effectively approach and engage with their representatives on complex and technical subjects such as AI. Ultimately, our goal is to bridge the gap between technology and politics, fostering informed decision-making and responsible integration of AI into electoral processes, thereby upholding the principles of transparency, integrity, and accountability in democratic practices.

Highlights

1 Interest in AI Tools and Social Media Integration

Candidates were keen on integrating AI tools into their social media strategies to reach more voters quickly and with greater personalisation. They focused on practical applications to enhance their campaign efforts.

2 Concerns About Quality Data and Hyper-Personalisation

Candidates expressed concern over the lack of quality data, hindering effective AI use. They emphasised the need for AI tools to solve hyper-personalisation issues and highlighted the necessity of accurate voter data for leveraging AI.

3 Deepfake Detection and Misinformation

Candidates were concerned about deepfake videos and misinformation, seeking tools to detect and counteract these threats.

4 Practical Challenges and Infrastructure Issues

Candidates from rural areas faced significant challenges in implementing AI tools due to poor internet, lack of smartphones, and inadequate infrastructure. Despite the potential of social media, these barriers highlighted the digital divide in many parts of the country.

5 Apprehensions and Reluctance

Despite some enthusiasm, many candidates were apprehensive about using AI tools. Misconceptions about needing permission and fears of AI misuse were common, especially among smaller parties with limited resources and tight schedules.

Highlights

Optimism and Positive Outlook

7 6

Despite some apprehensions, many candidates were optimistic about AI's potential. They recognised its advantages in creating effective campaign strategies and shared positive experiences from other sectors.

Financial Constraints and Resource Allocation

Financial constraints were a major concern for smaller party candidates, who noted that implementing AI tools could be prohibitively expensive.

BACKGROUND & SCOPE

Since the inception of democratic elections, the quest for a more efficient, transparent, and secure voting process has driven the adoption of various technological innovations. This literature review highlights the historical milestones of digitalised systems, the widespread influence of social media, and now, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in parliamentary operations and electoral processes.

The Rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The origins of AI can be traced back to the 14th century with Ramon Llull's proposal of a paper-based method to generate new knowledge by combining concepts. By the 1950s, British scientists had developed computers capable of playing checkers, marking early advancements in AI (Williamson, 2023).

Over the ensuing decades, AI technology evolved through several significant phases. In the 1960s and 1970s, the development of algorithms capable of problem-solving and theorem proving marked a shift towards more sophisticated AI applications (Toosi et al., 2021). The 1980s saw the rise of expert systems, which could emulate the decision-making abilities of human experts in specific fields. The subsequent decades introduced machine learning, allowing computers to learn from data and improve their performance over time (AI History: The 1980s and Expert Systems, n.d.).

The 2010s heralded the era of big data and powerful computing, which facilitated advancements in deep learning, a subset of machine learning characterised by neural networks with many layers. These deep learning models achieved groundbreaking results in image and speech recognition, natural language processing, and autonomous systems (Jahani et al., 2023).

Fast forward to 2023, AI, particularly generative AI, had become a technological buzzword. Technologies such as GPT-3, a generative AI platform, developed by OpenAI, demonstrated remarkable capabilities in generating human-like text, driving widespread interest and adoption across various sectors.

AI technology has evolved significantly, leading to its current sophisticated applications in various fields, including politics. Its ability to analyse large datasets, generate insights, and create content has made it indispensable in modern applications.

The integration of AI in parliamentary operations is reshaping legislative processes and decision-making frameworks globally. Several parliaments have adopted AI technologies with varying degrees of success. The Estonian Parliament uses AI to improve its e-legislation system (Artificial Intelligence, Big Data and Fundamental Rights, 2020), while in the Brazilian Senate, AI assists in the legislative process (Menezes, 2024). India's Digital Sansad app, launched in 2023, leverages AI to transcribe real-time proceedings in 22 languages, enhancing accuracy and efficiency in documenting parliamentary activities. The app includes features for accessing parliamentary resources and enabling citizen engagement through the Constituency Connect feature, promoting transparency and democratic participation (Digital Sansad App, 2023). These case studies illustrate the diverse applications and benefits of AI in parliamentary settings.

Although nations are incorporating AI into their parliaments, policymakers are also highlighting significant ethical and regulatory concerns. Stemming from our previous survey and report titled, **"What Indian Parliamentarians Think of AI?"**, which shed light on MPs' perceptions and expectations regarding technology, we sought to delve deeper into their awareness and regulatory preferences concerning AI. The survey unveiled MPs' nuanced grasp of AI, acknowledging its transformative emerging threats about societal impacts like deep fakes and data privacy (Tiwari et al., 2024). Establishing clear guidelines and regulatory frameworks is essential to mitigate these risks. In India, the discourse on AI governance is active, with efforts to establish robust regulatory frameworks while fostering innovation and economic growth.

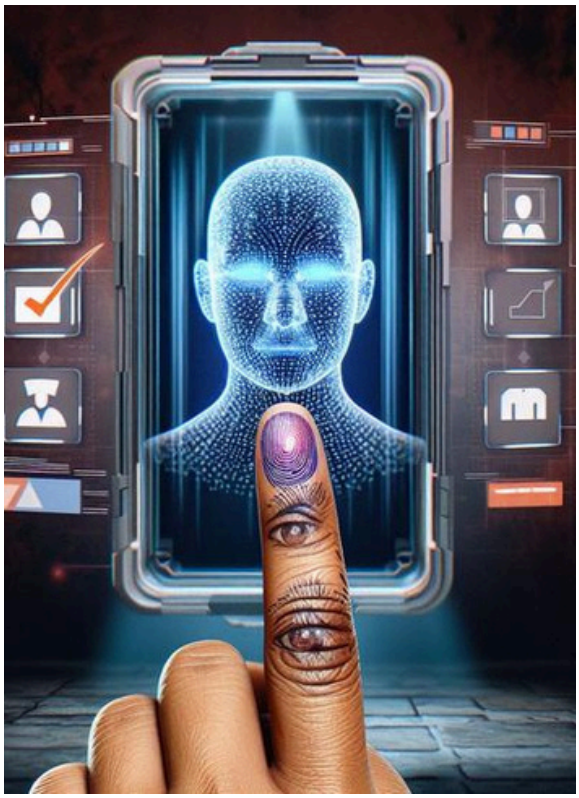
According to Stanford University's AI Index report, India ranks fifth in investments received by AI startups (The AI Index Report 2021, 2021). The government aims to position India as a global AI leader by 2030, emphasising ethical application and regulatory safeguards (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, n.d.). Initiatives like the National AI Strategy, National AI Mission, National AI Platform, and the National AI Ethics Guidelines, along with the Digital India Act, 2023, underscore the commitment to responsible AI development and deployment.

AI in Electoral Processes

As more than 70 elections unfold worldwide this year, the role of AI in shaping electoral outcomes and political campaigns has garnered widespread attention in academic and policy circles. The 2023 EPTA Report, titled 'Artificial Intelligence and Democracy: Risks and Opportunities,' delves into the profound ways AI technologies are reshaping electoral processes and impacting democratic integrity. AI technologies, with their ability to create and spread fake news and deepfakes, emerge as formidable tools for deception. These synthetic media forms can mislead voters, sow confusion, and disrupt the electoral process, posing serious threats to democracy Adam et al., 2023).

While AI offers potential benefits for enhancing electoral processes, its deployment also introduces risks that require careful consideration. Global studies, including the World Economic Forum's "Global Risks Report 2024," highlight the significant concern over AI's impact on election outcomes, ranking AI-derived misinformation and disinformation as top risks ahead of climate change, war, and economic weakness.

The report's authors warned that these combined risks are "stretching the world's adaptive capacity to its limit," urging global leaders to focus on cooperation and establishing robust guardrails (World Economic Forum, 2024). Moreover, research from Queen's University Belfast published in AI Magazine warns against the use of AI in election administration, citing threats to democracy and adverse effects on minority groups. The study's emphasis on the need for public debate on AI's potential risks in elections highlights the importance of fostering informed discussions and decision-making processes surrounding AI integration in electoral contexts (Queen's University Belfast, 2023).



A nationwide survey carried out by Elon University in the USA on the upcoming 2024 presidential election revealed widespread apprehension among 78% of American adults regarding the influence of AI misuse. With a significant portion of respondents anticipating various forms of AI manipulation, including social media manipulation, the spread of fake information through AI channels, and attempts to dissuade voter participation, these findings underscore the urgency of addressing public concerns and implementing safeguards to protect the integrity of democratic processes (AI & Politics' 24, 2024).

Global case studies illustrate the diverse applications of artificial intelligence (AI) in electoral campaigns across different countries. In the United States, both Barack Obama's 2012 re-election campaign (Issenberg, 2012) and Donald Trump's 2016 campaign leveraged AI for sophisticated voter targeting and data analytics (Damplo, 2020). Similarly, during the 2017 German federal election, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) employed AI-powered chatbots on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. These chatbots were instrumental in disseminating information about the party's policies, addressing inquiries, and fostering voter engagement (Brachten et al., 2017).

In India's 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Narendra Modi utilised NaMo, an AI-powered platform, to interact with voters via messaging apps, delivering personalised information and real-time responses (Rakesh, 2024). Likewise, during the same year's federal election in Canada, Justin Trudeau's campaign harnessed LiberalistAI to craft tailored messages for specific voter segments (AP, 2021).

In the 2017 French presidential election, Emmanuel Macron's campaign team employed AI algorithms to target distinct voter segments and refine their messaging strategies. "Project Apollo," a tool utilising machine learning algorithm, was instrumental in analysing data from diverse sources, including social media activities, polling data, and voter demographics (Pruchnicka, 2023).

While AI presents promising opportunities for electoral campaigning, its deployment has not been without controversy. In various parliaments, particularly in South Asia, AI has been experimented with for campaigning, sometimes leading to misuse. In Bangladesh, pro-government factions have deployed deepfake technology against opposition parties, (Maxwell, 2024) while in Pakistan, former Prime Minister Imran Khan utilised AI-generated audio speeches derived from his written notes for campaigning, even while incarcerated (Reuters, 2023).

India, hosting the world's largest elections this year, offers a preview of how the proliferation of AI tools is transforming the democratic process, making it easier to develop seamless fake media around campaigns. While the exact number of AI-generated fakes of politicians is unknown, experts have noted a global uptick in electoral deep fakes.

In 2020, India witnessed its inaugural use of deepfakes in electoral campaigning, marked by BJP politician Manoj Tiwari's authorisation for the creation and dissemination of deepfake videos (Christopher, 2020). These videos depicted Tiwari speaking in Haryanvi and English, languages he does not naturally speak. Moreover, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) employed AI to virtually resurrect its late founder, M. Karunanidhi, for public engagements (Ram, n.d.).

In the Lok Sabha election of 2024, the BJP introduced AI-generated videos mocking opposition leaders, igniting a meme war on social media platforms (Reuters, 2024). The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) also utilised AI to transform jailed chief Arvind Kejriwal's letters into speeches, enabling ongoing communication with the public.

Notably, several political parties, including the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist), enlisted AI anchors Vaibhavi and Samata, respectively, for campaign updates (Saha, 2024).

AI Anchor Samata

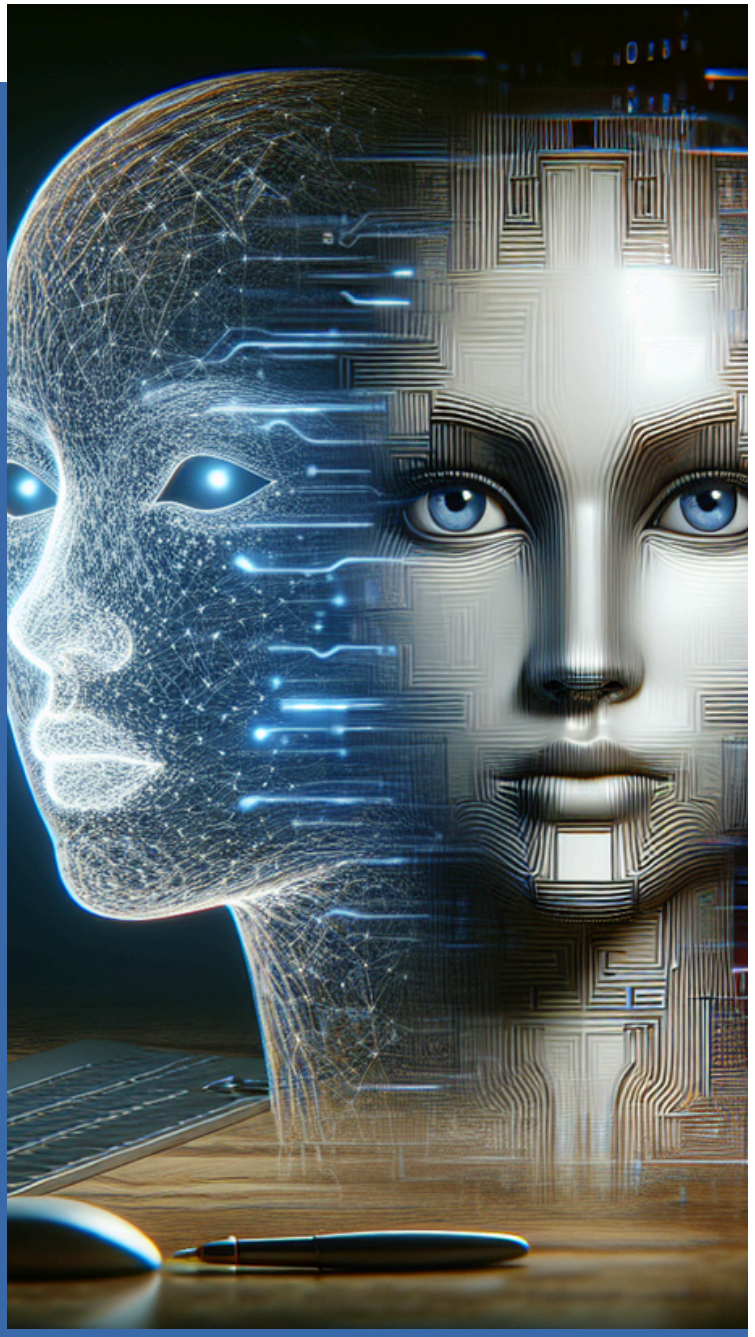
In response to the pressing challenges posed by the increasing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in electoral processes, several initiatives have emerged to uphold ethical standards and transparency. Notably, twenty-four leading tech companies committed to collaborating in detecting and countering harmful AI-generated content and signed, 'Tech Accord to Combat Deceptive Use of AI in Elections, 2024' (AI Elections Accord - A Tech Accord to Combat Deceptive Use of AI in 2024 Elections, 2024).

Recognising the potential risks associated with AI in electoral campaigns, the Election Commission has issued directives to political parties, urging them to ensure the responsible and ethical use of AI-based platforms during election campaigns. Of particular concern is the misuse of AI-based tools to generate deepfakes, which can distort information and propagate misinformation, thereby jeopardising the integrity of the electoral process (Election Commission of India, 2024). As AI continues to evolve, its transformative potential in revolutionising electoral processes remains significant. However, alongside its advancements, it is imperative to initiate dialogues addressing the ethical implications of AI to safeguard democratic integrity. Given that 2024 heralds an era of AI-driven elections, particularly significant for India, there is a growing recognition of the need for candidates to be well-informed about the utilisation of emerging technologies such as AI in electoral campaigns. It is also pertinent that those deploying AI have a positive perception of the technology, in order to put it to good use.

Despite several studies exploring the interplay of AI and elections and campaigns, none of the study mentioned above discusses about the perceptions of our representatives or candidates contesting elections about AI is.

With this study we want to fill this gap and understand the perception and opinions of Lok Sabha contestants on AI and its role in elections and campaign and also share their insights and experiences in relation to the technology.

In the following pages, we share the journey of interacting with Lok Sabha contestants and our analysis and findings from the same.



METHODS AND **DATA**

This report provides an account of the direct interactions with candidates contesting in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in India. It presents a qualitative analysis of these interactions, focusing on the candidates' interventions, experiences, and responses. The study aims to understands contestants' perceptions of AI as well as associated challenges. The following sections provide a detailed description of the methodology involved.

METHODS

In-depth Interactions:

Various in-depth interactions with the candidates have helped in deducing the findings of this study. In these interactions, the candidates shared their on-ground experiences if they are implementing AI into their campaigning and if they have seen anyone else on the ground implementing this technology to enhance their campaigns. Also, how do they think this technology will impact the elections- in a positive or negative manner and if the results of this year's elections will see the influence of AI in any manner.

Observations and Experiences:

The personal experiences and observations of those who contacted the candidates and conducted virtual sessions with them.

Research Objectives

- To examine candidates' awareness and openness towards using AI in their campaigns and elections.
- To understand the practical challenges and barriers candidates face in adopting AI technologies.
- To identify the differences in AI adoption and attitudes across various regions, political parties, and demographic segments.

Who Participated in the Sessions?

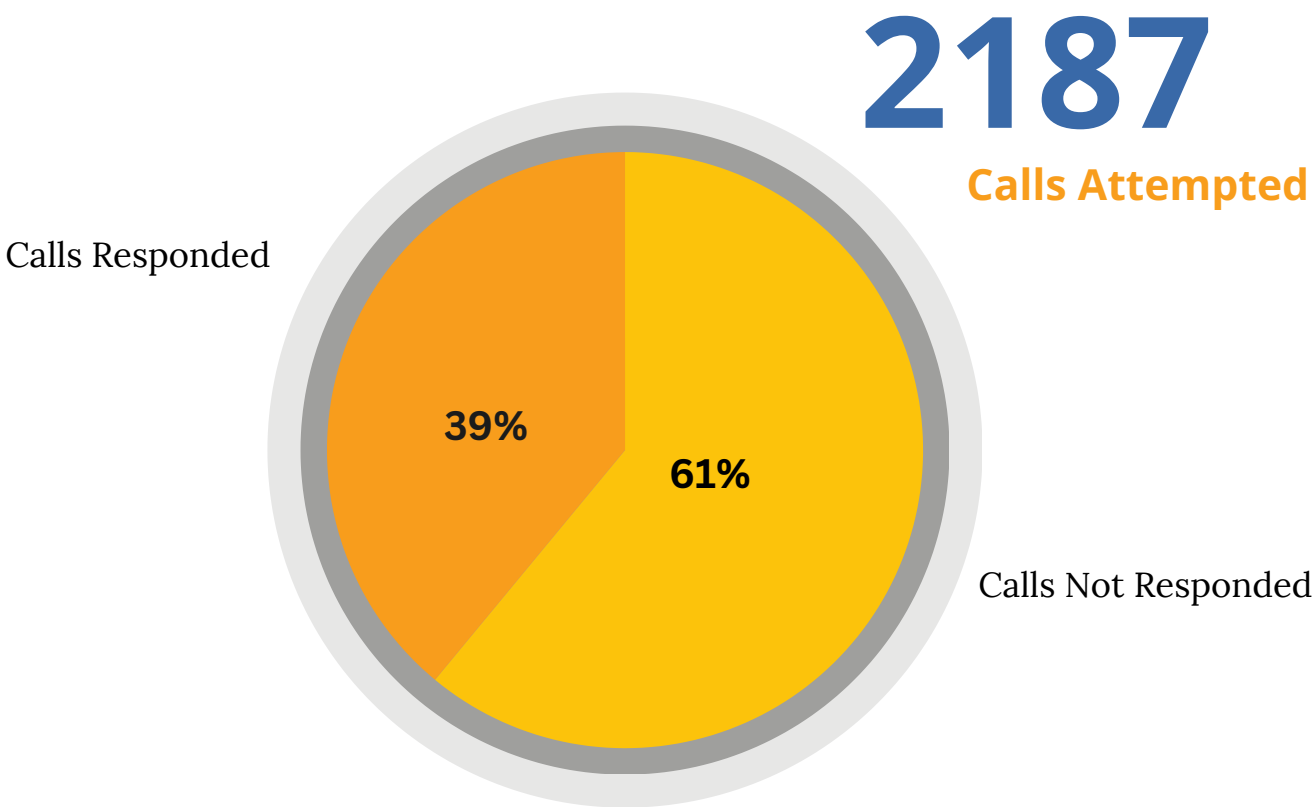


Fig1: Candidates Who Responded to our Calls

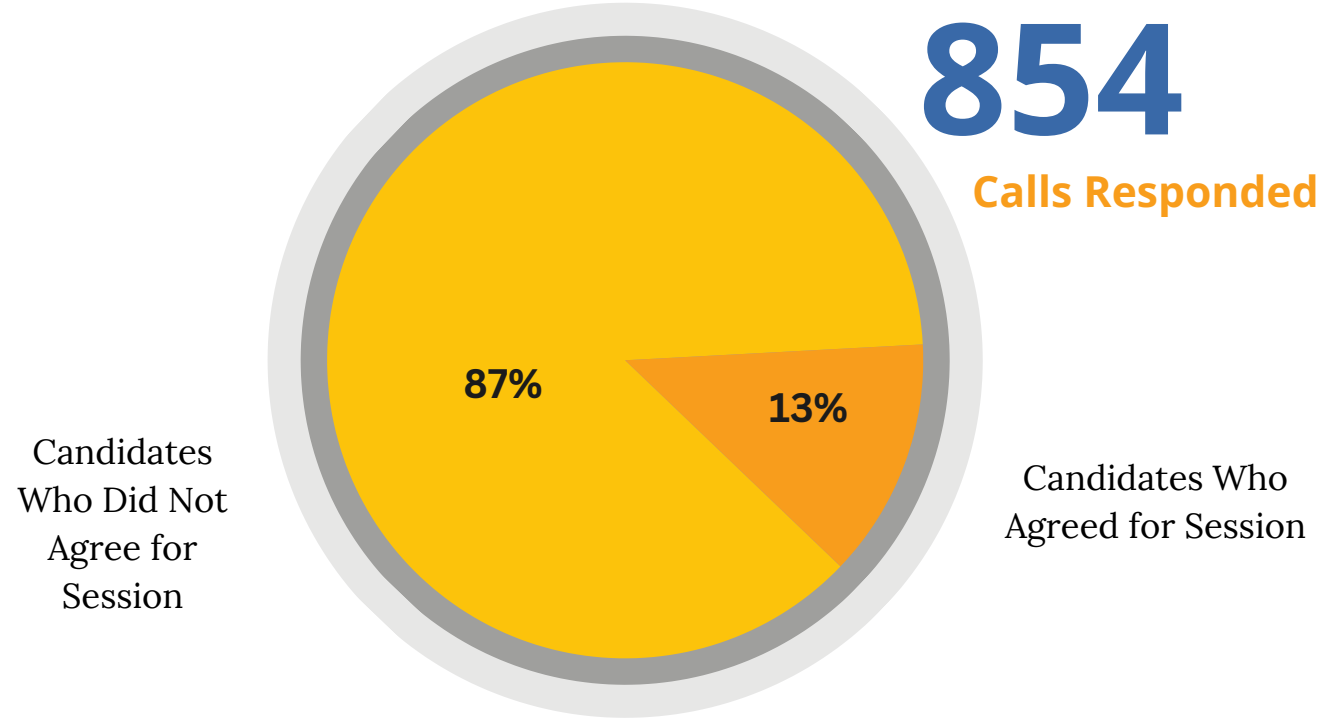
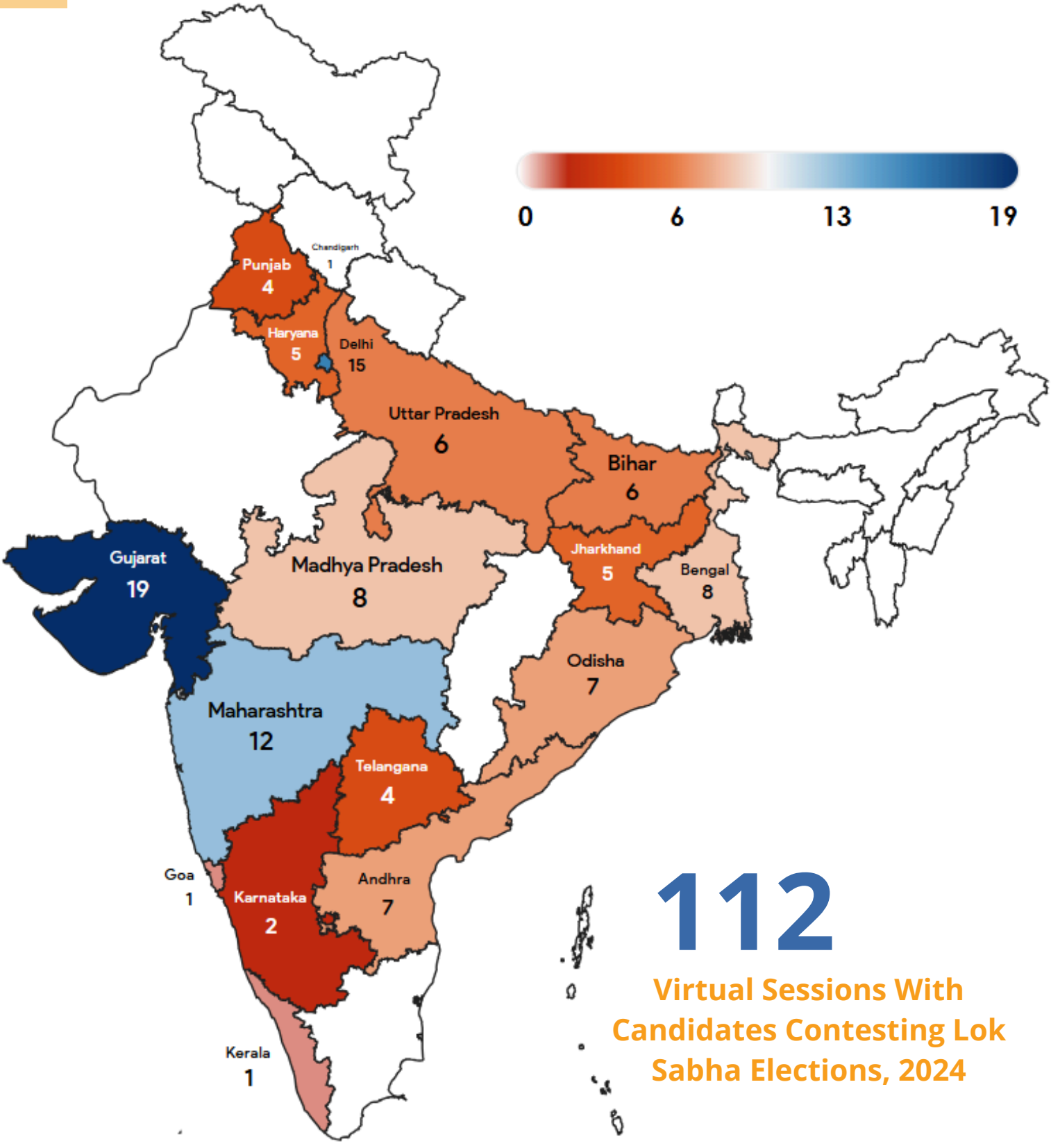


Fig2: Candidates Who Agreed for Sessions



Across States and Party lines

Fig3: State-wise Sessions Conducted

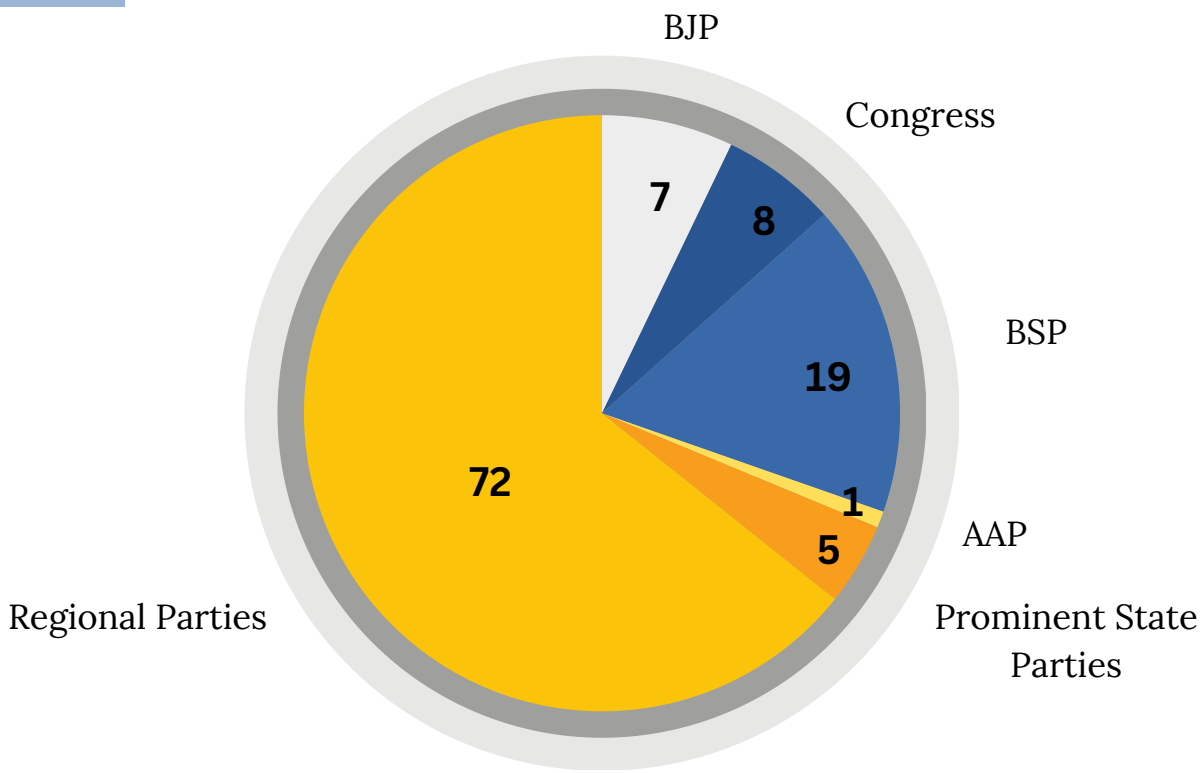


Fig4: Party-Wise Sessions Conducted

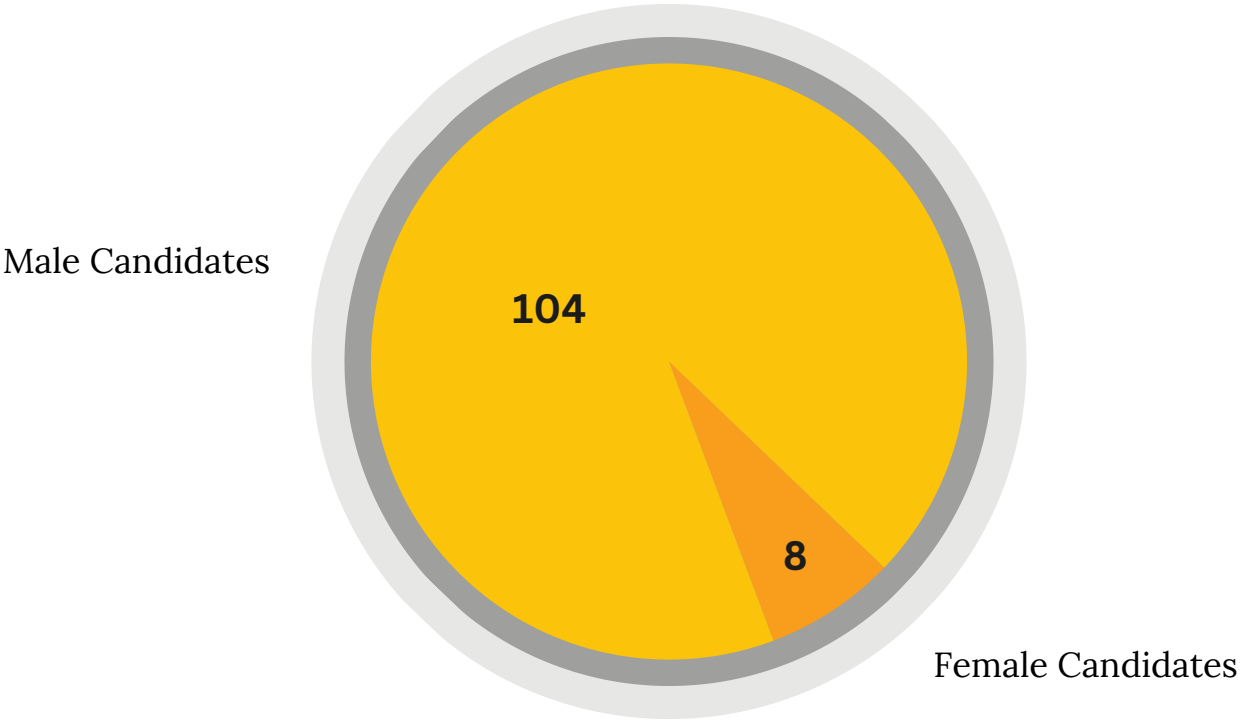


Fig5: Gender- Wise Sessions Conducted

PERSPECTIVES ON AI IN ELECTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

AN IN-DEPTH STUDY & ANALYSIS OF INTERACTIONS WITH CANDIDATES CONTESTING LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

As this study is an amalgamation of the observations and experiences of the IGPP team members who reached out to these candidates or interacted with them. Below mentioned is a detailed account of varied experiences, shortcomings, positives, negatives and outcomes from different perspectives.

> **Authored by IGPP team members, Priyal Jain & Pranjal Garg, who initially approached candidates contesting Lok Sabha Elections, 2024**

At Institute for Governance, Policies & Politics as Communication and Development team, we knew we would be calling candidates contesting the Lok Sabha elections, and it felt surreal. We had only seen these figures in newspapers and on TV, and we already had the perception that they were unapproachable, busy, and sometimes even rude. As we prepared to dive into this task, our minds buzzed with curiosity and uncertainty. The idea of speaking directly with these influential figures seemed daunting, and we couldn't help but wonder about the journey ahead.

Starting with making a list, many questions came to our mind, “How can we reach the candidates? Where can we find their phone numbers and email addresses?” As we began compiling candidates' information, we found their details surprisingly accessible on newspaper websites and election affidavits. And behold, we had Google spreadsheet contact info of not just Lok Sabha contestants but also sitting MPs and ministers! Though compiling the contact list was no easy feat. We faced all sorts of challenges: delayed or incomplete election affidavits, illegible prints, overlapping information, multilingual content, and incorrect contact details. It was like trying to piece together a puzzle with missing pieces. But amidst these hurdles, an interesting pattern emerged. Some candidates were incredibly accessible, providing multiple contact numbers, social media handles, and even personal websites, making communication a breeze. On the flip side, others were nearly impossible to reach, often lacking even a single contact number. This discrepancy highlighted just how differently candidates coming from different backgrounds in India use social media and technology to engage with voters and run their campaigns.

Once the list was ready, we shifted our focus to refining our approach. Our colleagues participated in the mock calls, acting as challenging candidates and their assistants, posing tough questions to ensure we were well-prepared for real interactions. We iterated on the script during mock calls, incorporating examples of AI applications in electoral processes and how these virtual interactions can help them understand the potential challenges and opportunities during elections and campaigns.

Chasing Shadows: A Journey to Introduce AI to Candidates Contesting Lok Sabha Elections, 2024

It all started with a simple yet audacious goal: to reach out to thousands of candidates contesting in the Lok Sabha elections. The mission? To invite these candidates to a free, 10–15-minute virtual session on the wonders of AI in election campaigning and the crucial shield it offers against the sinister threat of deep fakes. But as any great adventure goes, the path was fraught with obstacles, such as unanswered calls that left us feeling demotivated and frustrated, but we persisted. But it was surely disheartening to see our messages go unanswered and hearing endless ringing and facing silent rejections. Some people hung up as soon as they heard why we were calling. Others said they'd call back or reschedule but never did. One call was put on hold and then disconnected. A few even mentioned that Electoral Commission rules restricted them from using AI for campaigning. Few of the candidates, we called, responded like: ***"jaldi boliye mam, humare paas waqt nahi hai"***. Sometimes, they started laughing on hearing our purpose, making fun, like: ***"aree sunniye, hume yeh sab nai chahiye, free of cost bhi nai"*** (used to laugh with other people surrounding them), few used to start saying, ***"humare pass time kaha hai yeh sabke lie, hum apne logo se mil milkar prachar krenge".***

Most candidates expressed that we reached out too late. While they appreciated our initiative, they expressed that it would have been more beneficial if we had contacted them earlier. Though the delay in initiating this session earlier happened due to insufficient information and confirmation, hearing this feedback was disheartening, and we often questioned ourselves, 'Should we have tried to contact them sooner? Will any candidates join our session now?'.

Despite these hurdles, the support of our team and some encouraging conversations kept us motivated and ready for the journey ahead.

Glimmer of Hope

Amidst the trials, a glimmer of hope emerged. Some candidates welcomed the idea with open arms and finally after making around 150-170 calls, we finally had our first successful session with a BJP candidate's team from Gujarat, the session was joined by his PA and IT consultant. They were polite and patient. To our surprise, we ended up doing five sessions at the end of the first week successfully boosting our confidence for the journey ahead. Other sessions included : two from the Gujarat BJP and Congress, one from YSR, Andhra Pradesh, and one from BJP, Kerala.

However, in this whole journey of reaching out to candidates we couldn't predict the right time for calling candidates because of their busy schedule. During the daytime they were mostly busy campaigning. We tried contacting them early in the morning, but they did not answer. Some responded during the campaign, while others did not and among those responded some of them asked us to call back late evening, due their busy schedule. Then, few candidates asked to do follow up calls. Although, follow-up calls presented their own set of challenges, with candidates often forgetting or dismissing previous conversations. This required patience and gentle reminders to keep the dialogue alive. Making a new call is not as difficult a task but doing a follow up call is. As they kept on rescheduling, we often asked ourselves questions like, "Should we try calling them once more or is it better to invest our time in a new call?" But then too, the chances always were very low, but still we always made that one call. The success rate for the candidate attending the follow up was very low and being in that loop was very frustrating.

When it came to high-ranking MPs and Ministers, most of the time the calls were picked up by the candidates' team but smaller parties' candidates themselves picked up the call and talked to us. It appears they were inaccessible, possibly due to their higher level of activity in campaigning compared to smaller parties. It also largely depended on luck and their willingness to answer after seeing our institution's name. But a few questions always strike our mind during this process, "How difficult it is for the general public to reach high-level politicians and MPs? If it's challenging for us, how much harder must it be for their constituents? What could be the most effective way to contact our representative?"

WhatsApp's Intervention

A major setback occurred when frequent bulk messaging led to our account being disabled for spamming, deleting all shared messages and hindering follow-ups. Frustrated but undeterred, we decided to message only those showing interest in the sessions and transitioned to a business account for better management. This experience underscored WhatsApp's strict privacy policy, designed to prevent spam and protect users, even if it meant an obstacle in our outreach efforts.

Regional Parties Intrigued by AI possibilities

To ensure that we could reach out to more contestants, we re-strategised, shifting our focus more towards regional parties. Prior to this project, we were unaware of any of the regional parties we have now contacted. These contestants showed a keen interest in learning "how they could use AI in their campaigning." It seems what made them more interested is they perceived it as we were offering them services free of charge.

So, we tweaked the script to emphasise that this was a free outreach and awareness session. This simple change was a game-changer, significantly improving the response rate and helping us maintain both the quality and quantity of the sessions we provided. Including regional parties in our outreach efforts proved to be a significant catalyst. By increasing the number of daily calls to around 60-70, we noticed a marked rise in follow-up engagements. The insights from these diverse candidates provided a broader perspective on their views regarding AI. As a result, we were able to conduct an average of 5-6 sessions daily, showcasing the success of our re-strategise approach.

AI Toolkit and Feedback Polls

Many candidates showed their interest in AI tools and their potential use in the campaigns and requested us to provide them some toolkit. Based on feedback we prepared a toolkit of AI tools and organisations offering AI services to political leaders (Appendix I). After the session, we began circulating a list of AI tools through WhatsApp. To understand candidates' opinions about our sessions we circulated a feedback question for candidates who attended our virtual session on 'AI and Your Electoral Fortune' (Appendix II). These feedback polls on WhatsApp, inquired about whether they found our session informative, if they would like to attend more AI-related sessions, if they would recommend our session to other parliamentarians and candidates, and if they would be comfortable with us sharing photos of the session on our social media. While most of the contestants left these polls on "seen," there were some who responded positively, expressing interest in staying connected and recommending our session to other sitting MPs.

Throughout our journey we got an idea of how we can effectively engage with our representatives. Additionally, it offered a unique glimpse into the dynamics of political parties, from national to regional, and their approaches to election campaigning. Our experiences underscored the importance of adaptability and persistence in navigating the complexities of political communication in India.

> **"Authored by IGPP team members, Ranjana Kushwaha and Amrita Tiwari, who conducted sessions with candidates contesting Lok Sabha Elections, 2024"**

The initiative 'AI and Your Electoral Fortune', was launched with an objective to provide future representatives insights on how they can use AI to stay ahead while also highlighting its potential misuse and strategies to ward off threats. While there are numerous studies on the use of AI in parliaments and policymaking, and on how parliamentarians and policymakers perceive AI, our approach of interacting directly with candidates was an uncharted territory. Given our prior experiences with policymakers and politicians, we were skeptical about how this new venture would unfold, especially considering the typical responses of parliamentarians to requests for their participation in various awareness and outreach programs on AI.

Despite our reservations, we forged ahead, our journey began with a spark of inspiration and a vision to ignite curiosity among candidates about the transformative potential of AI in shaping their electoral fortunes. The first step was to craft captivating and informative videos, meticulously designed to captivate the attention of candidates contesting elections. The creation of short primer videos in both the languages, Hindi and English of one minute and forty seconds. We believed that these videos, which explained the impact of AI on elections, would be the most accessible and engaging format for candidates giving them an idea of our program. Given their tight schedules during the election season, we kept these videos and our session short considering the busy schedule of candidates during campaigns. Our communication team reached out to candidates and due to paucity of time many sessions were scheduled late evening for instance, we conducted many sessions around 10-10:30 PM. Many candidates despite committing their time for the session, to our disappointment, refused to join at last moment.

Overview of Virtual Sessions: What We Discussed?

The time of the session was contingent upon on candidates' interest in learning about AI. The longest session lasted approximately thirty minutes. The session comprised of five sections.

Firstly, we outlined the session's objectives, why it important and what they can gain from these sessions? Second, foundation of AI such as what is AI and foundational working and the role of the data in it. Third, Positive use cases of AI in elections and campaigns. Fourth, amidst the promising tales of AI, we dared to confront the darker side of AI. Issues such as deepfakes loomed large, prompting candid discussions and introspection. The candidates expressed their concern on their inability to grapple with the implications of AI and pondered over strategies to safeguard themselves against emerging threats. Fifth, the presentation was followed by the interactions and candidates' perspective on AI's practical applications within their constituencies. Interactive discussion was most exciting as candidates had some very interesting questions and valuable insights to share with us. The session was not just about imparting knowledge; they were about sparking meaningful conversation and empowering candidates with the tools to navigate the AI landscape confidently. This direct interaction not only provided them with valuable insights but hopefully, will also mark the beginning of a deeper engagement with AI in elections and campaigns. This newfound knowledge and insights from session were the building blocks of our studies.

Experts

For our sessions we requested **Adv. N. S Nappinai,** Senior Advocate, Supreme Court and Founder of CyberSaathi to share her insights on the issue and our leaders can stay safe from the abuse of technology.

Adv. N. S Nappinai, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court and Founder of CyberSaathi

We also invited **Mr. Jaspreet Bindra,** Founder and MD, The Tech Whisperer to debunk the popular negative narrative about AI and negative portrayal of AI in election. He highlighted the positive use of AI to strengthen the foundations of democracy, enhancing efficiency of electoral processes and reducing cost.

Mr. Jaspreet Bindra, Founder and MD, The Tech Whisperer

With their insights, we managed to create content that was both authoritative and engaging. The dual focus on credibility and captivation played a crucial role in capturing the candidate's interest and maintaining their attention throughout the sessions. The carefully crafted materials resonated with the candidates, making complex AI concepts accessible and relevant to their campaigns. As a result, the sessions not only informed but also inspired the candidates, ensuring sustained engagement and enthusiasm for the subject matter.

The Process

Kick starting 'AI and Your Electoral Fortune'

Our inaugural session was with a candidate's team from Gujarat, he was a sitting MP. This session was highly interactive and significantly boosted our confidence. The candidate's team asked numerous questions about tools for detecting and countering deepfakes, combating misinformation, enhancing campaigns, and developing smarter strategies to reach voters efficiently. This engagement reassured us that our initiative was on the right track.

As we conducted more sessions, the positive responses flowed in, with many appreciating our unique approach. For instance, a representative of a candidate from Gujarat, commended our effort, noting that it was rare for people to focus on awareness and understanding rather than just offering paid services. She said,

She also suggested expanding the initiative to address candidates' issues in person, recognising its potential to be groundbreaking, particularly in overcoming language barriers with the help of AI and countering deepfakes.

> **"This is a unique initiative because nobody talks about creating awareness.....these translation tools like Bhashini can be of great help as our candidate also faced issues while communicating to wider masses coming from the lands of different language"**
>
> -A Candidate from Gujarat (Sitting MP)

OBSERVATIONS

Throughout our journey with the 'AI and Your Electoral Fortunes', we've gathered invaluable insights from political candidates across India about their attitudes towards AI technology in the Lok Sabha elections. Following are we notable experiences, observations and insights.

REGIONAL DISPARITIES

Candidates from North India, particularly Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, were often abrupt and reluctant to engage. For instance, a PA from the BSP party in Uttar Pradesh bluntly responded over a call, ***"Madam, don't bother us. We don't need social media or AI campaigning because we are sure to win this election without it".*** This resistance highlighted a deep scepticism towards new technologies, especially from those confident in their traditional methods.

Conversely, candidates from Western, Central, and Southern India, including Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, were far more receptive. A YSR candidate and sitting MP from Andhra Pradesh, who knew about our organization from a previous AI workshop, politely said,

> **Due to campaigning, we are busy now, but I will try to join the session after elections. Thank you for calling.**
>
> - A Candidate from Andhra Pradesh (Sitting MP)

This openness reflected a higher degree of professionalism and a willingness to explore AI's potential benefits, even if not immediately. Reactions from states like Odisha, Jharkhand, Haryana, Punjab, and West Bengal were mixed. It often depended on the constituency's demographics. In more urban areas like Gurgaon, Haryana, candidates were more willing to discuss AI, likely due to better internet connectivity and a younger voter base. In comparison, people from Gujarat were polite and conversed in a mix of Gujarati and Hindi, addressing respectfully as 'ben' (sister).

We also faced many other obstacles also, such as, one candidate kept delaying our session despite us calling them around 21-22 times over eight days. They never showed up as promised. This indicates a lack of consideration for others' time, as they kept rescheduling and ultimately did not attend the session despite confirming their participation.

However, a Congress candidate from a rural area in Gujarat pointed out the practical challenges: "In our area, electricity is costly, phones are unaffordable, and high GST rates make technology inaccessible."

> **In our area, electricity is costly, phones are unaffordable, and high GST rates make technology inaccessible**
>
> -A Candidate from Gujarat (Rural Area)

This reflected a deference to higher-ranking figures and a touch of political banter.

Some candidates had unique perspectives shaped by their experiences. A BJP candidate from West Bengal preferred sticking to traditional methods, saying, "We are in the last phase of campaigning and don't want to introduce any new technology now." Meanwhile, a candidate from a regional party in Gujarat used chess terms to describe their strategies, referring to high-profile opponents as 'pawns.'

One memorable interaction was with a BSP candidate from West Bengal who suggested, "You should talk to Rahul Gandhi; he needs these things more than we do." (Kya aapne Rahul Gandhi se baat kri hai? Nahi kari, toh unse baat kariye, unhe in sabki jyda jarurat hai, humse).

DIGITAL LITERACY

Sometimes, candidates from rural areas expressed great enthusiasm about attending the sessions but faced significant challenges due to digital illiteracy. They struggled with tasks like turning on the internet, understanding Google Meet or Zoom, and answering video calls.

One candidate candidly admitted, ***"I don't have an internet pack on my mobile,"*** while another said, "I don't even have a smartphone." Additionally, adverse weather conditions, particularly in regions like Odisha and West Bengal, exacerbated connectivity issues, further hindering seamless engagement during sessions.

> **I don't even have a smartphone.**
>
> -A Candidate

DIGITAL SAFETY

The reluctance of some candidates, particularly those from rural constituencies, to embrace social media campaigning and virtual communication platforms is indicative of prevalent concerns regarding lack of awareness about online platforms and their potentials. One of the candidates we came across said, "I will not join through any link but will watch your video".

> **I will not join through any link but will watch your video**
>
> -A Candidate

He was cautious about potential scams or fraudulent activities that occur online. Another example is from a candidate from a rural constituency in Madhya Pradesh, who expressed strong reservations against social media and AI campaigning due to a past experience involving financial fraud amounting to 1-1.5 lakh rupees during his MLA election campaign. As he said, ***"I will never use social media campaigning and AI, this is your tricks so you can loot us by taking our money. I already lost my Rs. 1-1.5L when an agency fraud me during the Vidhan Sabha election.***

I am a down-to-earth person and I'll do door-to-door campaigning only". Many candidates were also reluctant to click on Google Meet or Zoom Meeting link for joining the session but ready to join through WhatsApp video call. This implies the responsible online behaviours and adopting digital safety measures.

GENDER REPRESENTATION: OBSERVATION ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

During the calls, we noticed a significant gap in women's participation in election campaigning compared to their male counterparts. For example, a woman candidate from a regional party in Odisha told me, "Please call me at 9 PM when my husband is back from work. Ask him about this. I can't join the session without his permission."

Despite reaching out to many candidates, the response rate from women candidates was strikingly low. Out of a pool of 20-30 women candidates contacted per phase, a mere 3-4 candidates responded, with the majority redirecting communication to their male team members or spouses or their children. Moreover, we were only able to get 8 women candidates in total in which 4 women candidates all were from small regional parties who demonstrated direct involvement by attending sessions, with the 4 sessions from national and big regional parties delegating representation to their team members.

> **"Please call me at 9 PM when my husband is back from work. Ask him about this. I can't join the session without his permission."**
>
> -A Female Candidate from Odisha

In terms of female representation among the team members attending the session on behalf of the candidates, there was only the personal secretary of one BJP candidate, who is a sitting MP from Gujarat attended. She was impressed by the session and our initiative to make candidates aware about these new technologies. All other sessions were attended by male team members representing the candidates.

We observed a noticeable pattern: female candidates often preferred their male associates to attend the sessions and respond on their behalf. Despite the sessions being designed to enhance the candidates' knowledge, there was a certain reluctance, and many female candidates did not participate directly. For instance, a female candidate from Odisha had her husband attend the session. She only thanked us and posed for a photograph. This reluctance drew our attention and highlighted ongoing gender dynamics in the political sphere.

LANGUAGE BARRIER

Another major challenge we faced was the language barrier. We mostly faced this challenge with candidates from Southern and North-Eastern states when we called them, they said in English and Hindi, to talk in their regional languages.

Communication barriers exist and pose a challenge in effectively conveying information and ideas and the importance of considering regional language preferences. For sessions, two presentations were prepared in Hindi and English. However, challenges remained while we were interacting with different candidates with different languages. Because they could not understand Hindi or even English completely, for instance, a candidate from West Bengal, who primarily spoke Bengali, couldn't understand our presentation.

> **Madam, if you don't speak Odia, call katiye, cut the call**
>
> -A Candidate from Odisha

He said, ***"Aami kicchu boojhte paari na"*** (I am not able to understand anything) and mentioned that his team member would contact us, but that follow-up never happened. Hence, a major challenge was to present our content in a more accessible manner and also to reach wider candidates with different languages. To tackle these language barriers, we improvised and tailor-made session for every candidate, switching languages and tailoring message to reach more people. However, despite our efforts we could not reach out to candidates who could not understand either Hindi or English.

DIFFERENT DEMANDS FROM DIFFERENT CANDIDATES

Our flexibility extended beyond just language. We listened carefully to what the candidates wanted to hear. Some were more interested in the practical applications of AI, while others were concerned about the ethical implications. By adjusting our focus to address their specific interests and concerns, we were able to engage them more effectively. A recurring question from almost every session was about the tools to help candidates reach many voters. We ended up answering the same question after almost every session- "***We understood what all you had to say about AI, our main question was what are the tools that could help us to reach lakhs of our voters?***" For example, A female candidate from Haryana, had a quick intervention in-between the presentation ***"I am well aware of how AI works—just tell me what tools you have that can help me enhance my campaign."*** This highlighted a significant gap: despite the plethora of AI tools available, there isn't one perfect tool for election campaigning. Candidates were eager to know how they could get the best results from this technology.

AGE BARRIERS

Through countless calls across diverse regions, parties, and demographics, we've encountered different candidates of India's political landscape. Engaging with candidates of varying ages, genders, and backgrounds has provided rich insights into their views on technology, both in elections and society at large. Take, for instance, an elderly BSP candidate from Bihar who expressed scepticism about adopting social media for campaigning saying, "there is less time to implement any new technological changes. I believe offline campaigns are more effective than online campaigning."

> **There is less time to implement any new technological changes. I believe offline campaigns are more effective than online campaigning**
>
> - A Candidate from Bihar

> **Because of financial constraints, I am not able to afford the agency and pay for them to campaign. I will definitely join your free knowledgeable session as if it can help to save my cost and time by using AI for my campaigning.**
>
> - A Candidate from Bihar

Conversely, a younger candidate from BSP party in Bihar, optimist of the transformative potential of AI and technology, expresses keen interest in our initiative. As he said, “Because of financial constraints, I am not able to afford the agency and pay for them to campaign. I will definitely join our free knowledgeable session as if it can help to save my cost and time by using AI for my campaigning”. He saw our program as an opportunity, equipping him with the free of cost knowledge to navigate AI's intricacies without taking support or paying to agencies and raising awareness of its pitfalls, such as deepfakes.

Also, lesser awareness of the platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom and other video call platforms, added with reluctance towards any form of technology in the elderly and the dependency on their offsprings or younger generations made it difficult for us to connect with them smoothly.

LACK OF BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE

While another candidate from BSP Party of Bihar, faced with the stark realities of his constituency's economic challenges prioritises immediate needs over technological advancements, questioning the relevance of AI in a context where basic necessities like food are scarce as he said over on call that, “I need money more than the AI session because the people in my constituency does not have food to eat so how can I campaign through AI”.

> **I need money more than the AI session because the people in my constituency does not have food to eat so how can I campaign through AI**
>
> - A Candidate from Bihar

"92% of the voters in my constituency are from rural background and they need personal interaction with leaders which does not leave much space for campaigning with the help of technology"

ONLY BIG PARTIES CAN AFFORD IT, NOT THE SMALLER PARTIES

Many candidates had their own opinions, stories, and agendas, which they were eager to share, sometimes at the expense of listening to our presentation. Some candidates voiced that using technology to enhance campaigning strategies seemed like a distant dream for smaller parties and candidates due to limited financial resources.

The whole initiative was filled with challenges and learning experiences. Each session provided valuable insights, and the overall positive feedback confirmed that we were making a significant impact in bridging the gap between advanced technology and electoral processes. The experience underscored the importance of adapting our approach to diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, engaging with candidates on their terms, and continually refining our methods to better serve their needs.

Some candidates expressed reservations about the adoption of AI and other technologies, citing concerns that only larger parties or candidates possess the necessary funds and resources to implement cutting-edge technologies for bolstering their campaigns.

WAY FORWARD

This initiative has been a pioneering effort to bridge the gap between advanced technology and electoral processes by directly engaging political candidates. Despite our initial scepticism and the various challenges that we encountered, our unique approach of using informative videos and interactive virtual sessions proved effective. The positive response from candidates confirmed the importance of educating them about AI's potential impact on their campaigns.

As the journey unfolded, immersing us in the lives of our representatives, we gained a profound understanding of the intricate tapestry of India. Our journey revealed several key insights. Firstly, there is a significant interest among candidates in leveraging AI tools, especially for enhancing social media strategies and countering deepfake threats. However, the effective use of these technologies is often hindered by the lack of quality data and infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, financial constraints pose a significant barrier for smaller parties, highlighting the need for cost-effective AI solutions.

Language diversity and technological apprehensions were also notable challenges. We quickly learned the importance of flexibility and improvisation in our presentations to cater to a diverse audience. Moreover, gender dynamics and the reluctance of some candidates to directly engage with technology underscored the ongoing need for inclusive and accessible approaches.

Despite these challenges, the overall feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Candidates appreciated the initiative's focus on raising awareness and providing practical insights rather than just offering paid services. Their enthusiasm and optimism about AI's potential in modernising electioneering were encouraging. In rural and remote areas, technological barriers such as limited internet connectivity and technical challenges persist, hindering access to vital resources. But in the end as the Lok Sabha elections raged on, one thing was clear - the power of AI had arrived, and it was here to stay. And our team? They had paved the way, one call, one candidate, one virtual session at a time.

CONCLUSION

In a land as diverse as India, where every corner tells a different story, the journey of political campaigns is no less varied. Picture this: in the heart of election season, candidates eagerly gear up, armed with hopes, dreams, and a sprinkle of apprehension. But here's the twist – while some are equipped with state-of-the-art digital infrastructure, others find themselves in areas where mobile towers are as scarce as rain in the desert.

As we delved into the world of AI awareness sessions for these candidates, it was like stepping into a gallery of perspectives. From the eager beavers excited about AI's potential to the sceptics with furrowed brows, each had a story to tell.

One candidate's representative couldn't contain her curiosity about AI tools, wondering if they could bridge the gap across languages and communities. Meanwhile, concerns about the wild west of deepfakes and misinformation floated around, leaving candidates eager for shields against these digital dragons. But amidst the flurry of questions and concerns, a ray of optimism shone through. A candidate saw AI as the magic wand to whisk him across the vast voter landscape. Even in the face of financial hurdles, the hope for a more connected, AI-powered campaign strategy flickered brightly.

Yet, reality struck hard for candidates from rural backdrops, where dreams often clash with the harsh truth of infrastructure woes. From shaky internet connections to voters with nary a smartphone in sight, the digital divide yawned wide, reminding us that progress must trickle down to every corner. In this mosaic of political fervour, there's a stark contrast between the haves and the have-nots. While candidates from larger parties flaunt their resources with billboards towering over cityscapes – smaller parties and independent candidates find themselves in a different league altogether.

For them, the struggle isn't just about crafting the perfect message or harnessing the power of AI; it's about competing in a race where the starting line is miles away from the podium. Despite their determination and grit, the reality remains that AI tools, like many other resources, often come with a hefty price tag. So, while the giants of politics effortlessly weave AI into their campaign tapestries, smaller parties and independents are left to navigate the labyrinth of financial constraints, where every rupee counts.

Yet, amidst the imbalance, there's a glimmer of hope – a belief that even in the face of towering billboards and deep pockets, the power of ideas and innovation can level the playing field, one pixel at a time.

In the end, these AI sessions weren't just about bytes and algorithms; they were about empowering voices, bridging divides, and shaping the future of Indian democracy. As the curtains closed on this chapter, the echoes of optimism mingled with the sober acknowledgment of challenges, paving the way for a more inclusive, tech-savvy electoral landscape.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Protect Voters' Data

Implement comprehensive laws to protect voter data and ensure ethical use of AI in elections. Ensuring that voter's data is handled with the highest standards of privacy and security. Also, ECI should mandate transparency in how political parties and candidates use data for campaign purposes.

2. Clear Guidelines to Hold Political Entities Accountable

Develop clear guidelines to hold political entities accountable for any misuse or unethical practices. The Election Commission of India should examine the extent of microtargeting and its influence on voters. Hold violators accountable to foster a culture of integrity and responsibility within the political community.

3. Invest in Advanced Deepfake Detection Tools

Develop and deploy user friendly, accessible tools for detecting deepfakes to counter the spread of misinformation. Prioritize the development of robust detection tools to protect candidates from malicious activities that can tarnish reputations and disrupt campaigns. Collaborating with technology experts and organizations specializing in AI ethics to create effective solutions.

4. Promote Ethical Standards Among Leaders

Political leaders and parties must commit to ethical standards that discourage the use of misinformation, deepfakes, or any deceptive AI content. Establish a code of conduct for the use of AI in political campaigns and amend the Model Code of Conduct in line with technological advancements.

5. Enhance Awareness and Education

Conduct educational programs, workshops, seminars and clear communication from electoral authorities about the risks and legalities associated with AI in campaigns. Bridge the knowledge gap among candidates to help them use AI responsibly and protect themselves against AI generated threats. Address the lack of awareness regarding legal frameworks to prevent reluctance in adopting beneficial AI technologies.

Increase public awareness about data privacy rights and the implications of data driven political campaigns. Educate voters to empower them to make informed decisions about their personal information.

6. Addressing Infrastructure Challenges

To enable the widespread adoption of AI, it is crucial to address infrastructure challenges, especially in rural areas. Investments in digital infrastructure, such as better internet connectivity and access to smartphones, are essential.

7. Creating a Support Network

Establishing a support network for candidates can help address their concerns and provide guidance on AI-related issues. This network could include experts in AI, data analytics, and political campaigning.

7. Monitoring and Mitigating Misuse

Mechanisms should be put in place to monitor and mitigate the misuse of AI, such as deepfakes and misinformation. Collaboration with tech companies and regulatory bodies can help develop effective strategies to combat these threats.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The feedback from these sessions indicates a need for ongoing dialogue and support for candidates as they navigate the complexities of AI. Future initiatives could include:

1. Advanced Training Programs

Developing advanced training programs for candidates and their teams to deepen their understanding of AI and its applications in political campaigns.

2. Pilot Projects

Implementing pilot projects in collaboration with candidates to demonstrate the practical benefits of AI tools. These projects can serve as case studies for wider and responsible adoption of AI.

3. Research and Development

Investing in research and development to create innovative AI solutions tailored to the unique needs of political campaigns in India. For instance, AI systems trained in Indian languages and data.

4. Collaborations with Tech Firms

Building partnerships with technology firms to provide candidates with access to cutting-edge AI tools and resources.

5. Policy Advocacy

Advocating for policies that support the ethical use of AI in politics, including regulations to prevent misuse and promote transparency.

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