



DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

**APPROACH TO REGULATING AI
IN INDIA**

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Context

- India is witnessing rapid adoption of **Artificial Intelligence (AI) across sectors** like healthcare, education, agriculture, and governance. AI is expected to contribute up to \$15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030.
 - However, the **absence of a formal national strategy or legal framework** raises serious concerns regarding ethical deployment, accountability, and inclusive growth.

Global Trends in AI Governance

- In the past year, countries have shifted their focus on AI governance, from mainly protecting human rights and safety to also promoting innovation and boosting the economy.
 - Legislative Frameworks:** Countries like the European Union (EU), China, Canada, South Korea, Peru, and the United States have introduced formal laws to regulate AI.
 - Draft Legislations:** Nations such as the United Kingdom, Japan, Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Pakistan have proposed AI bills awaiting approval.
 - Strategic Documents:** Over 85 countries and the African Union have released national AI strategy documents outlining policy goals, ethical principles, budget allocations, and sectoral priorities.

Need For Regulating AI

- Preventing Misinformation:** Public opinion can be manipulated by deepfakes and disinformation created by Artificial Intelligence.
- Protecting Privacy:** Mass surveillance technologies without regulation will undermine civil liberties.
- Preventing Algorithmic Bias:** Artificial Intelligence can also reproduce discriminatory attitudes towards marginalized groups.
- Preventing Job & Labour Displacement:** Job automation is threatening jobs in traditional industries.
- Preventing Concentration of Power:** A handful of companies with AI pose monopolistic risk and social imbalance.
- Protecting from Existential Risk:** Advanced Artificial Intelligence might become superior to human control if left uncontrolled.
- Ethical Concerns:** Unethical and improper use of AI systems could impede the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - 2030**, weakening ongoing efforts across social, environmental, and economic dimensions.

India's Current Approach

- Lack of Formal Strategy:** India currently does not have an officially approved national AI strategy or dedicated legislation. The only strategic document available is a 2018 discussion paper released by NITI Aayog which was not officially adopted.
 - The **IT Act (2000)** and **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023** offer **indirect governance** of AI systems, primarily through data protection.
- IndiaAI Mission:** In the absence of a formal law, the government has launched the **IndiaAI Mission** through the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). The mission is built upon seven pillars aimed at fostering a responsible and innovation-driven AI ecosystem.
- Expert Advisory Group:** An advisory group has been established to develop recommendations for AI governance. However, the timeline and certainty of formal adoption remain unclear.

Key Initiatives and Strategies

- National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (NSAI):** It was released by **NITI Aayog** in 2018 to guide the responsible development of AI across key sectors like healthcare, agriculture, education, smart mobility, and smart cities.

- ♦ However, it is **non-binding** and **not followed up** with enforceable regulations.
- **AI Task Force (2018):** It is set-up by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to suggest frameworks to leverage AI in India's economic transformation.
 - ♦ However, recommendations acknowledged but **not formally codified**.
- **Responsible AI for Social Empowerment (RAISE 2020):** It was organized by MeitY and NITI Aayog, that focused on AI governance, Ethics and inclusivity, Public-private partnerships etc.
- **Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT (2021 & 2023 Reports):** These reports recommended a dedicated AI regulatory framework, and establishment of an AI regulatory authority.

Way Forward

- **Draft a National AI Policy:** A policy document should outline India's vision for AI, identify priority sectors (e.g., health, education, agriculture), lay down ethical principles, and specify institutional responsibilities.
- **Encourage Public Consultation and Awareness:** Structured dialogues with academia, industry, and civil society are essential to enhance transparency and ensure accountability in AI deployment.
- **Pilot Regulatory Mechanisms:** India should implement pilot-level regulatory tools—such as algorithmic audits or risk classification systems—before enacting a full-fledged AI law.
- **Invest in Institutional Capacity:** This includes support for AI research labs, open datasets, skill development initiatives, independent ethics committees, and sectoral oversight bodies.

Conclusion

- India's approach to AI regulation prioritizes development and adoption over strict legal frameworks. While this allows flexibility, it also leaves gaps in transparency, accountability, and ethical AI deployment.
- As AI adoption accelerates, India must consider a structured governance model to ensure responsible and inclusive AI growth.

Source: TH

Mains Practice Question

[Q] How does India's approach to AI regulation balance innovation, ethical concerns, and accountability, and what challenges might arise from the absence of a formal AI governance framework?

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