



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ETHICS IN THE AGE OF ALGORITHMS: HUMAN VALUES AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA- A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS IN LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL EVIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of social media has fundamentally transformed human communication, social interaction and access to information. In the contemporary digital age, algorithm-driven platforms increasingly shape public opinion, personal behaviour, and social relationships. While social media has facilitated global connectivity and democratized information sharing, it has simultaneously generated significant ethical challenges, including misinformation, cyberbullying, hate speech, privacy violations, digital addiction, and algorithmic manipulation. Contemporary global reports by the World Economic Forum, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and other institutes indicate that these challenges have become critical concerns affecting democratic institutions, social cohesion and mental well-being. This paper examines the ethical implications of social media through the philosophical perspectives of Aristotle's virtue ethics, Kant's deontological ethics, Gandhi's ethics of truth and non-violence and Ambedkar's conception of dignity, equality and fraternity. The study argues that social media algorithms are not morally neutral instruments but powerful technological structures capable of shaping moral behaviour and influencing the cultivation or erosion of human values. Consequently, ethical challenges in the digital age cannot be addressed solely through technological regulation or legal frameworks. The preservation of truthfulness, responsibility, empathy, self-restraint and human dignity remains essential for promoting ethical digital citizenship and ensuring that technological advancement contributes to genuine human flourishing.

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century is frequently described as the age of information. Technological innovations, particularly the rise of social media platforms, have transformed the manner in which individuals communicate, acquire knowledge, participate in politics and construct social relationships. Social media has become an integral component of everyday life, connecting billions of individuals across geographical, cultural, and political boundaries. However, alongside these benefits, digital technologies have generated unprecedented ethical concerns that challenge traditional understandings of truth, responsibility, dignity, and human flourishing. The increasing influence of algorithms represents one of the most significant developments of contemporary digital culture. Algorithms determine what information users encounter, which perspectives receive visibility, and how individuals engage with online content. Although these systems are designed primarily to maximize engagement and efficiency, their influence extends far beyond technical functions. They shape perceptions, influence emotions, reinforce beliefs, and affect moral decision-making. The ethical significance of this

transformation has become increasingly evident. The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2025 identifies misinformation as among the most severe short-term global risks, emphasizing their capacity to undermine trust, intensify polarization, and weaken democratic governance. The report further notes that advances in artificial intelligence have significantly increased the difficulty of distinguishing authentic information from manipulated content. The growing prevalence of cyberbullying, online harassment, digital addiction, hate speech and privacy violations, has also generated widespread concern among policymakers, educators, parents, and scholars. Reports from UNESCO and UNICEF have highlighted the vulnerability of children and adolescents within digital environments, while the World Health Organization has drawn attention to the relationship between excessive digital engagement and mental well-being. These developments raise a fundamental philosophical question: Are social media platforms merely neutral tools used by individuals, or do they actively shape moral behaviour and influence the cultivation of human values? This paper seeks to address this question through a philosophical examination of contemporary ethical challenges associated with social media.

Contemporary Debates on Digital Ethics and Social Media:

The ethical implications of digital technologies and social media have attracted significant scholarly attention during the past two decades. Researchers from philosophy, media studies, sociology, psychology and political theory have examined how digital platforms influence individual behaviour, social relationships, democratic institutions, and moral values. Despite the growing body of literature, important questions remain concerning the relationship between algorithmic systems, human values and moral responsibility. The philosophical foundations of contemporary digital ethics can be traced to classical ethical traditions. Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, argued that human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) depends upon the cultivation of virtues such as honesty, moderation, courage and practical wisdom. For Aristotle, moral character is developed through habituation and repeated practice. Contemporary scholars have applied Aristotelian virtue ethics to digital environments, arguing that online interactions significantly influence character formation. Shannon Vallor (2016) contends that emerging technologies create new moral conditions requiring the development of “technological virtues” that enable individuals to flourish in technologically mediated societies. Vallor argues that virtues such as empathy, honesty, self-control, and responsibility remain essential despite technological change.

Similarly, Immanuel Kant’s moral philosophy continues to inform discussions of digital ethics. Kant’s emphasis on autonomy, rational agency, and respect for persons has been widely applied to issues of privacy, misinformation, and algorithmic manipulation. Luciano Floridi (2013) argues that digital technologies challenge traditional conceptions of autonomy because algorithmic systems increasingly shape human choices and behaviour. Floridi’s concept of “information ethics” emphasizes the moral significance of information environments and the responsibilities associated with their design and governance. The emergence of digital ethics as a distinct field has generated substantial scholarship. Floridi (2013, 2014) is widely regarded as one of the pioneers of information ethics. He argues that ethical analysis must extend beyond individual actions to include information systems and technological infrastructures. According to Floridi, digital technologies create new moral environments that shape human experiences and therefore require new forms of ethical evaluation. The social and political consequences of digital technologies have also received extensive scholarly attention. Manuel Castells (2010) describes contemporary society as a (network society) in which digital communication networks fundamentally structure social relations, power dynamics, and cultural production. Castells argues that digital platforms possess unprecedented capacity to influence public discourse and political participation. Shoshana Zuboff’s (2019) influential work on surveillance capitalism provides a critical examination of how digital corporations collect, analyse, and monetize personal data. Zuboff argues that contemporary digital platforms transform human experience into behavioural data that can be used to predict and influence future actions. Her work raises important ethical questions concerning autonomy, privacy, and manipulation. Research on social media has consistently highlighted concerns regarding misinformation and democratic governance. Sunstein (2017) argues that algorithmic personalization contributes to the formation of “echo chambers” in which individuals are exposed primarily to information that reinforces existing beliefs. Such environments may reduce exposure to diverse perspectives and

increase political polarization. Similarly, Pariser (2011) introduced the concept of the “filter bubble” suggesting that personalized algorithms limit opportunities for critical engagement with alternative viewpoints. The relationship between misinformation and democratic institutions has become a central concern in recent scholarship. Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) distinguish between misinformation, disinformation and mal-information, emphasizing the complexity of contemporary information disorders. Their analysis demonstrates how false information can spread rapidly through digital networks and undermine public trust. Contemporary reports from the World Economic Forum have similarly identified misinformation and disinformation as among the most serious global risks confronting societies.

The ethical implications of artificial intelligence and algorithmic decision-making have generated a substantial body of literature. O’Neil (2016) argues that algorithmic systems often reproduce and amplify existing social inequalities. Through her analysis of “weapons of math destruction” O’Neil demonstrates how opaque algorithmic systems can generate discriminatory outcomes while remaining largely unaccountable. Noble (2018) extends this critique by examining how search engine algorithms can reinforce racial and gender biases. These challenge assumptions regarding the neutrality and objectivity of digital technologies. Issues of privacy and surveillance have likewise attracted considerable scholarly attention. Lyon (2018) argues that digital technologies have transformed surveillance into an ordinary feature of everyday life. The increasing collection and analysis of personal data raise important concerns regarding individual freedom, informed consent, and democratic accountability. Nissenbaum (2010) similarly emphasizes the importance of contextual integrity in protecting privacy within digital environments. The impact of social media on mental health and well-being has become another major area of research. Twenge (2017) argues that increased smartphone and social media usage is associated with declining psychological well-being among adolescents. Haidt (2024) similarly contends that excessive social media use has contributed to rising levels of anxiety, loneliness, and depression among young people. UNICEF and WHO reports have echoed these concerns, emphasizing the need for responsible digital engagement and stronger protections for children and adolescents.

The phenomenon of cyberbullying has been widely studied within psychology and education. Hinduja and Patchin (2015) argue that cyberbullying represents a significant threat to adolescent well-being and educational development. Their research demonstrates that online harassment can produce severe emotional and psychological consequences. UNESCO’s reports on digital citizenship similarly highlight the prevalence of cyberbullying and the importance of fostering respectful online interactions. The ethical significance of empathy and care within digital environments has been explored through the framework of care ethics. Carol Gilligan (1982) challenged traditional approaches to moral development emphasizing relationships, empathy and responsibility toward others. Nel Noddings (1984) further developed the ethics of care, arguing that moral life is grounded in caring relationships. Contemporary scholars have applied these insights to digital communication, examining how online interactions may either strengthen or weaken empathetic engagement. Indian philosophical perspectives provide additional insights into contemporary digital ethics. Mahatma Gandhi’s concept of

Satya (truth) and Ahimsa (non-violence) remain highly relevant in addressing misinformation, online hostility, and irresponsible communication. Scholars such as Bhikhu Parekh (1997) emphasize Gandhi's belief that truthfulness is essential for ethical social life and democratic participation. Similarly, B.R. Ambedkar's emphasis on dignity, equality, fraternity, and constitutional morality offers a valuable framework for analysing online discrimination and hate speech. Scholars including Valerian Rodrigues (2002) Aakash Singh Rathore (2020) argue that Ambedkar's conception of social justice remains highly relevant in addressing contemporary forms of exclusion and inequality. Recent scholarship on digital citizenship has attempted to integrate ethical theory with practical concerns. Ribble (2015) argues that responsible digital citizenship requires ethical awareness, respect for others, and critical engagement with technology. UNESCO's framework for digital citizenship education similarly emphasizes responsibility, human rights, critical thinking, and democratic participation. Despite the richness of existing scholarship, several limitations remain. Much of the literature focuses either on technological aspects of social media or specific social consequences such as misinformation, cyberbullying, privacy concerns. Comparatively fewer studies provide an integrated philosophical analysis that combines classical Western ethical traditions with Indian ethical perspectives in evaluating contemporary digital challenges. Furthermore, existing research often treats technological problems primarily as issues of regulation or governance while paying insufficient attention to questions of moral character, virtue, and personal responsibility. The present study seeks to address this gap by bringing together Aristotle's virtue ethics, Kant's ethics of duty, Gandhi's ethics of truth and non-violence, and Ambedkar's ethics of dignity and fraternity. Through this comparative philosophical framework, the study examines how algorithm-driven social media environments influence human values and moral responsibility in contemporary society. By integrating empirical evidence from contemporary global reports with philosophical analysis, the paper aims to contribute to ongoing debates concerning the ethical future of digital civilization.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and normative research design grounded in the philosophical-analytical method. Unlike empirical studies that rely on surveys, experiments, or statistical measurements, philosophical research seeks to examine concepts, evaluate arguments, clarify meanings and develop normative frameworks for understanding human experience. The present study investigates the ethical implications of social media and algorithmic technologies through critical philosophical reflection and conceptual analysis. The research is interdisciplinary in orientation, drawing insights from moral philosophy, social philosophy, digital ethics, media studies, and contemporary policy discourse. The study combines classical ethical theories with contemporary empirical evidence in order to examine the relationship between algorithm-driven social media environments, human values and moral responsibility.

Philosophical-Analytical Method: The primary methodology employed in this research is the philosophical-analytical method. This method involves the systematic examination of ethical concepts, moral principles, and philosophical arguments

relevant to the digital age. The philosophical-analytical approach is particularly suitable for the present study because the central questions under investigations are normative rather than merely descriptive. Questions such as "What constitutes moral responsibility in digital environments?", "How should individuals should behave on social media?", and "What ethical obligations do technology companies possess?" require conceptual clarification and philosophical evaluation rather than purely empirical observation.

Through conceptual analysis, the study examines key notions such as:

- Human values
- Moral responsibility
- Human dignity
- Truthfulness
- Privacy
- Digital citizenship
- Algorithmic influence
- Ethical accountability

The method seeks to identify the underlying assumptions embedded within contemporary digital practices and evaluate them in light of established ethical principles.

Critical- Hermeneutic Interpretation: The study also employs a critical-hermeneutic approach in interpreting the writings of major philosophical thinkers. Hermeneutics refers to the system interpretation of texts and ideas within their historical and intellectual contexts. The ethical perspectives of Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Mahatma Gandhi, and B.R. Ambedkar are examined not merely as historical doctrines but as living philosophical resources capable of illuminating contemporary digital challenges.

The study includes the following:

- Aristotle's conception of virtue and character formation;
- Kant's theory of duty and human dignity;
- Gandhi's principles of Satya (Truth) and Ahimsa (Non-violence);
- Ambedkar's concepts of dignity, equality, fraternity, and constitutional morality.
- These philosophical frameworks are critically applied to contemporary issues such as misinformation, cyberbullying, online hate speech, digital addiction, privacy violations, and algorithmic manipulation.

Documentary and Report Analysis: In order to bridge philosophical theory and contemporary social reality, the study incorporates documentary analysis of major national and international reports.

The documentary sources include publications from:

- World Economic Forum (WEF)
- United Nations
- UNESCO
- UNICEF
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Pew Research Center
- Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)

- NITI Aayog
- Press Information Bureau (PIB)
- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)

These reports provide contemporary evidence regarding misinformation, digital behaviour, adolescent mental health, cyberbullying, artificial intelligence, online safety, and social media usage patterns. The purpose of incorporating such sources is not to conduct statistical analysis but to contextualize philosophical arguments with current social realities. The study therefore integrates empirical observations with normative ethical evaluation.

Comparative Ethical Framework: A comparative ethical framework is adopted to examine the ethical challenges of social media from multiple philosophical perspectives.

The framework consists of four major ethical traditions:

Virtue Ethics (Aristotle): This perspective evaluates whether social media contributes to the cultivation of virtues such as honesty, moderation, courage, and practical wisdom or encourages vices such as impulsiveness, vanity, and intolerance.

Deontological Ethics (Kant): This approach examines issues of truthfulness, privacy, autonomy and respect for persons, emphasizing moral duties and universal ethical principles.

Gandhian Ethics: The study employs Gandhi's concepts of truth, non-violence, self-restraint and moral accountability to assess the ethical quality of digital communication.

Ambedkarite Ethics: The study utilizes Ambedkar's emphasis on dignity, equality, and fraternity and social justice to evaluate the ethical implications of online discrimination, exclusion and hate speech. The comparative framework enables a multidimensional understanding of moral responsibility in algorithmic societies.

Sources of Data: The study relies primarily upon secondary sources, including:

- Classical philosophical texts.
- Contemporary books on digital ethics.
- Peer-reviewed journal articles.
- Government reports and policy documents.
- International organizational reports.
- Research publications on social media, artificial intelligence and digital citizenship.

Scope and Limitations: The scope of this study is limited to the ethical implications of social media and algorithmic technologies. The research focuses specifically on human values and moral responsibility rather than technical aspects of computer science or software engineering. While the study incorporates contemporary reports and global evidence, its primary objective remains philosophical rather than empirical. Consequently, the research does not attempt to establish causal relationships through statistical methods. Instead, it seeks to provide a normative and conceptual understanding of the ethical challenges emerging from digital environments.

Justification of Method: The philosophical-analytical method is particularly appropriate for the present research because the ethical challenges associated with social media are fundamentally questions of value, responsibility, dignity, truth and human flourishing. Such questions cannot be adequately addressed through empirical data alone. They require philosophical reflection capable of evaluating not only what is happening in digital environments but also what ought to happen. Accordingly, this methodology enables the study to combine philosophical rigor with contemporary relevance, thereby contributing to ongoing debates concerning ethics, technology and the future of human values in the age of algorithms.

Human Values and Moral Responsibility in the digital Age: Human values constitute the moral foundations upon which ethical societies are built. Values such as honesty, compassion, justice, respect, responsibility, and dignity guide individual conduct and facilitate harmonious social coexistence. Throughout the history of philosophy, thinkers have emphasized the importance of moral virtues and ethical responsibility in promoting human flourishing. The digital age, however, has introduced new conditions that complicate traditional ethical frameworks. Online interactions often occur anonymously, reducing personal accountability and weakening social restraints that typically govern face-to-face communication. The speed and the scale of digital communication further intensify these challenges by enabling information to spread rapidly across vast networks of users. Moral responsibility traditionally presupposes individual agency and rational deliberation. Yet algorithmic systems increasingly influence user behaviour by recommending content, predicting preferences and shaping online experiences. Consequently, ethical responsibility must now be considered not only at the individual level but also in relation to technological systems and corporate actors who design and manage digital platforms. The question is therefore no longer whether individuals possess moral responsibility online. Rather, it concerns how responsibility should be distributed among users, platform developers, corporations, governments and broader social institutions.

Algorithms and the Architecture of Digital Behaviour: Algorithms are often presented as neutral technological tools designed to organize information and enhance efficiency. However, recent scholarship in digital ethics suggests that algorithms possess significant normative implications. By determining which content receives visibility and which remains hidden, algorithms influence public discourse and shape collective understanding. Social media platforms operate within what scholars describe as an "attention economy", where user engagement functions as a primary economic resource. Content that generates strong emotional reactions whether outrage, fear, anger, or excitement is often rewarded with greater visibility. Consequently, sensational and polarizing content frequently receives more attention than balanced or nuanced discussions. This phenomenon has important ethical consequences. The design of digital platforms encourages rapid reactions rather than careful reflection, emotional responses rather than thoughtful engagement. Such tendencies may undermine virtues necessary for ethical citizenship, including patience, critical thinking, empathy, and intellectual humility. Furthermore, algorithmic personalization creates "echo chambers" in which users are repeatedly exposed to information that confirms their existing beliefs. This

environment can reinforce prejudice, intensify polarization, and diminish opportunities for meaningful dialogue across ideological differences.

Misinformation and the Ethical Crisis of Truth: Among the most serious ethical challenges of social media is the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation. False information spreads rapidly through digital networks, often reaching millions of users before fact-checking mechanisms can intervene. The World Economic Forum has identified misinformation as a major global risk due to its capacity to undermine trust in institutions, destabilize societies and threaten democratic processes. The emergence of artificial intelligence has further complicated this issue by enabling the creation of highly convincing deepfakes, synthetic voices and fabricated images. The ethical implications of misinformation extend beyond factual inaccuracies. Truth serves as a foundational value in ethical life. Without trust in shared facts, meaningful communication and collective decision-making become increasingly difficult. A practical example may be observed in the widespread circulation of misleading health information during public health crises. False claims regarding medical treatments, vaccines and public health measures have influenced individual behaviour and contributed to public confusion. Such incidents demonstrate that misinformation can produce tangible consequences affecting both individual well-being and societal welfare. From a philosophical perspective, misinformation represents a profound moral problem because it undermines the conditions necessary for rational judgement and informed consent.

Cyberbullying, Hate Speech and Human Dignity: Digital communication has created new opportunities for social interaction but has also facilitated new forms of abuse and harassment. Cyberbullying, online harassment and hate speech have emerged as significant concerns, particularly among young people. UNESCO's studies on digital citizenship and online safety have repeatedly emphasized the prevalence of cyberbullying among students and adolescents. UNICEF has similarly reported that online violence and harassment can have severe psychological consequences, including anxiety, depression and social withdrawal. The ethical significance of these developments lies in their impact upon human dignity. Online abuse frequently dehumanizes individuals, reducing them to objects of ridicule, hostility or discrimination. The anonymity afforded by digital environments often weakens empathy and moral restraints, encouraging behaviour that would be socially unacceptable in direct interpersonal encounters. Numerous real-life incidents demonstrate how coordinated online harassment campaigns can damage reputations, threaten personal safety and create long-lasting psychological harm. Such cases illustrate the urgent need for ethical reflection concerning the responsibilities of both users and platform operators.

Aristotle and the Ethics of Character: Aristotle's virtue ethics provides a valuable framework for understanding the moral challenges of social media. According to Aristotle, ethical life involves the cultivation of virtues that enable individuals to achieve human flourishing. Virtues such as honesty, courage, moderation, justice and practical wisdom are developed through repeated practice and habituation. From an Aristotelian perspective, social media environments can either cultivate virtues or reinforce vices. Platforms that encourage impulsive reactions, vanity, aggression and excessive self-

promotion may hinder the development of virtuous character. Conversely, digital spaces that promote respectful dialogue, intellectual curiosity and civic engagement may contribute positively to human flourishing. The ethical question is therefore not merely how social media is used but what kind of persons social media encourages individuals to become.

Kant, Gandhi, and Ambedkar: Truth, Dignity and Responsibility: Immanuel Kant argued that human beings possess intrinsic dignity and must always be treated as ends in themselves rather than as means to an end. Misinformation, manipulation and online harassment violate this principle by undermining the autonomy and rational agency of individuals. Similarly, Gandhi's concept of Satya emphasizes truth as the foundation of ethical life. For Gandhi truthfulness is not merely a personal virtue but a social necessity. The deliberate dissemination of false information therefore represents a violation of moral responsibility. Ambedkar's philosophy further enriches this discussion through his emphasis on dignity, equality, liberty and fraternity. Online hate speech, discrimination and exclusion undermine these values and threaten the ethical foundations of democratic society. Ambedkar's concept of constitutional morality remains particularly relevant in addressing digital intolerance and protecting vulnerable communities.

Indian Context: Social Media, Algorithms and Ethical Challenges: India represents one of the world's largest digital societies and therefore provides a significant context for examining the ethical implications of algorithmic technologies and social media. The rapid expansion of internet connectivity, smartphone penetration and social media usage has transformed communication, education, commerce and political participation across the country. According to the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and Kantar's Internet in India Report 2024, India had approximately 886 million active internet users, representing nearly 55 percent of the country's internet population. The report also found that 98 percent of internet users accessed content in Indian languages, highlighting the growing democratization of digital access beyond urban centres.

Misinformation and Mob violence: One of the most troubling consequences of social media in India has been the spread of misinformation through platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and other social networking services. In several states, false rumours circulated through social media have contributed to incidents of mob violence, communal tension, and public panic. Misinformation relating to child kidnapping, communal issues, health practices and health practices and political events has often spread rapidly because emotionally charged content receives greater engagement and algorithmic visibility. From a Kantian perspective, such incidents represent a violation of the moral duty of truthfulness. Gandhi's principle of Satya likewise suggests that the dissemination of unverified information constitutes an ethical failure that harms both individuals and society. The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2025 identifies misinformation and disinformation among the most significant global risks, underscoring the relevance of these concerns to India as well as the wider world.

Online Hate Speech and Social Division: India's social diversity makes the ethical management of digital communication particularly important. Social media platforms

have often become sites for the circulation of caste-based, religious, ethics and gender-based hostility. From an Ambedkarite perspective, online discrimination and hate speech directly undermines the values of fraternity, equality and human dignity. Ambedkar argued that democracy depend not merely upon political institutions but upon ethical relations among citizens. Digital platforms that amplify prejudice and exclusion therefore threaten the moral foundations of democratic life. The ethical challenge is not only the existence of hateful content but the tendency of algorithms to reward emotionally provocative material because it generates higher engagement.

Digital Citizenship and Youth: India possesses one of the largest youth populations in the world. Consequently, the ethical impact of social media on young people deserves particular attention. UNICEF AND UNESCO have repeatedly emphasized the importance of digital citizenship, online safety and responsible participation in digital environments. Their work highlights concern regarding cyberbullying, online harassment, body-image pressures and psychological well-being among adolescents. Educational initiatives in India increasingly recognize that digital literacy, must include ethical literacy, enabling students to critically evaluate information and reengage respectfully online. A practical example can be observed in the growing influence of social media “influencers” on adolescents’ perceptions of success, beauty and self-worth. Algorithmic recommendation systems frequently promote idealized lifestyles that may contribute to anxiety, social comparison, and unrealistic expectations.

Artificial Intelligence and Responsible Innovation: India has emerged as a major participant in the global AI ecosystem. Recognizing both the opportunities and risks associated with AI, NITI Aayog has developed a framework for “Responsible AI for All.” NITI Aayog’s Responsible AI documents emphasize principles such as fairness, accountability, transparency, privacy protection, inclusivity and the preservation of human values. The framework seeks to ensure that AI systems remain aligned with constitutional values and democratic principles. The ethical significance of this initiative lies in its recognition that technological innovation cannot be separated from moral responsibility. AI systems increasingly influence employment, education, healthcare, financial services and public administration. Consequently, questions concerning fairness, bias, accountability and human dignity have become central ethical concerns. Recent NITI Aayog assessments further suggest that AI could create millions of new employment opportunities by 2030, while simultaneously requiring substantial investments in education, skills and ethical governance.

Digital Inequality and Ethical Justice: Despite remarkable growth in internet access, digital inequality remains a significant challenge in India. Access to reliable connectivity, digital literacy, quality devices and online opportunities continue to vary across regions and socio-economic groups. An Ambedkarite analytical analysis highlights the importance of ensuring that digital transformation promotes inclusion rather than reproducing existing social inequalities. Ethical digital development must therefore address questions of accessibility, linguistic diversity, educational opportunity and social justice. The increasing availability of regional-language content represents an important step toward digital inclusion.

Nevertheless, ensuring equitable participation in the digital sphere remains an ongoing moral and policy challenge.

Relevance to North-East India: The ethical dimensions of digital transformation possess special significance. Social media has enabled greater visibility for indigenous cultures, local languages and regional concerns. At the same time, it has also created new challenges involving misinformation, identity politics, online harassment and cultural stereotyping. A philosophy of digital ethics grounded in dignity, truth and social responsibility can therefore contribute meaningfully to discussions concerning cultural preservation, democratic participation and inclusive development within the North-East and India as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The age of algorithms presents humanity with profound ethical challenges. While social media platforms have expanded opportunities for communication and participation, they have also contributed to misinformation, cyberbullying, polarisation, privacy violations and digital addiction. These challenges cannot be understood solely as technological problems; they are fundamentally moral issues concerning truth, dignity, responsibility and human flourishing. Drawing upon the ethical insights of Aristotle, Kant, Gandhi and Ambedkar, this paper has argued that social media algorithms are not morally neutral. They shape human behaviour, influence moral development and affect the cultivation of essential human values. Consequently, ethical responses to digital challenges must extend beyond legal regulation and technological innovation. The preservation of truthfulness, empathy, responsibility, moderation and respect for human dignity remains indispensable for building an ethical digital society. The future of digital civilization will ultimately depend not only upon the sophistication of algorithms but upon humanity’s capacity to ensure that technological progress remains aligned with enduring moral values.

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