**Artificial Intelligence and Elections**

The World Economic Forum, while identifying the 'biggest global risks we face in 2024 and beyond,' highlighted the threat posed by disinformation and misinformation as 'the most severe' in the short term.' The severity of threat of disinformation and misinformation owes to the potential of Artificial Intelligence playing in the hands of what are termed as 'bad actors.' According to the report 'foreign and domestic actors alike will leverage misinformation and disinformation to widen societal and political divides.' It has been suggested that the phenomenon may on one hand lead to civil unrest and on the other to censorship by the governments and curbs on free flow of information.[1] The Freedom House report on Freedom on the Net 2023, entitled 'The Repressive Power of Artificial Intelligence,[2] has identified 16 countries where Artificial Intelligence was used to 'sow doubt, smear opponents, or influence public debate.' This report also flags the deployment of Artificial Intelligence by at least 21 countries to increase and 'refine their online censorship' capacities. The Economist magazine in its report on The World Ahead (in 2024), forecast that Artificial Intelligence would likely make election-rigging easier. "The volume and verisimilitude of fake videos of opposition leaders doing unspeakable things will surely increase in 2024, and that may sway some voters, especially in countries with low literacy and declining press freedom, such as India and Pakistan.[3] The warning to this effect had already been sounded by the Secretary General of the UN, Antonio Guterres, in First Debate on Artificial Intelligence in the Security Council, on 18th July 2023. The UN Secretary General did acknowledge the potential of Artificial Intelligence in accelerating human development. He, however, was equally wary of how its malicious application could jeopardise social cohesion and undermine elections.

The reality of malicious application of artificial intelligence is, unfortunately, undeniable. For instance, in the US primaries in New Hampshire on 21st January, 2024, thousands of messages were sent to prospective voters. These messages were actually fake clips purporting to be in President Biden's voice asking the voters not to vote in the primaries otherwise they would lose eligibility to vote in presidential elections to be held in November 2024. It was a fake audio, of course, designed to mimic real people, without their knowledge and agreement. The New Hampshire attorney general's office declared it an obvious 'unlawful attempt' to deprive voters of their intention to vote for Biden in the primaries. Almost a year earlier, in February2023, in Chicago's mayoral elections, candidate Paul Vallas' campaign was shocked by a video posted on a recently opened account. Vallas' campaign team immediately condemned it as a 'deceptive impersonation video.' This video which had been viewed thousands of times showed Paul Vallas, ostensibly, saying that in his days it was commonplace for police to kill 17 or 18 people and 'nobody would bat an eye.[4] Justifying police brutality in Chicago, in a fake video, was a sure dirty trick to undermine Vallas' chances of winning. Lose he did, in the end. In democracies where rules of the game are comparatively lax, Artificial Intelligence

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[1] reform.org, 6/01,2021

[2] freedomhouse.org

[3] Robert Guest, The World Ahead, The Economist, 13/11/2023

[4] Megan Hickey, CBS News, 27/02/2023

spreading disinformation can have a field day. In the 2024 Indian elections, deployment of Artificial Intelligence to create fake videos and audios has been nothing but commonplace. “Dead politicians resurrected to support a candidate in Tamil Nadu; a Muslim party leader intoning Hindu devotional songs; usually discreet Bollywood stars Ranveer Singh and Aamir Khan openly criticising the Indian Prime Minister and lending their support to the Congress’ according to Le Monde were just a few examples.[5] As BBC reported in May 2024, even more disconcerting for the politicians was the ‘pornographic imagery and morphing of videos and audios of their rivals to damage their reputation.’ In the course of elections which can be termed as India’s ‘’tryst’ with AI, to borrow from Nehru, even Prime Minister Modi was forced to cry foul. Narendra Modi, not known, for uncontroversial campaigning, decried fake audios of BJP leaders making ‘statements that we have never even thought of’ being a conspiracy ‘to create tension in society.’ In neighbouring Pakistan, just a day before the polling on 8th February 2024, videos began surfacing on social media spaces with figures having likeness with the incarcerated Imran Khan and a colleague of his asking supporters to boycott the elections.[6] Although, the 2024 Pakistani elections will be remembered for, among other things, Imran Khan’s AI generated speeches and videos, no less viral were fake clips of politicians to damage and ridicule them. Artificial Intelligence was particularly in action in creation of memes during the elections justifying, according to government authorities, interruptions in internet services and at times crackdowns. In an outrageously bizarre video circulating during these elections in Pakistan, international football stars like Ronaldo, Neymar, Messi and Mbappe were shown as participating in voting process. What is perhaps a more disturbing face of Artificial Intelligence generated fake videos in the course of electioneering was visible in the Taiwanese presidential contest in 2024. In one viral video, Lai Ching-te, now president of Taiwan, was heard as talking about himself as ‘immoral Lai’ and his party as facing scandals. In another video, a female host was shown alleging that Lai had mistresses with whom he had had children also. In the run up to South Korean general elections in 2024, President Yoon’s allegedly fake video was circulated in which he reportedly confessed to committing corruption. Earlier, President Yoon’s fake video in the 2022 local government elections had caught public eye endorsing an opposition party candidate. In Indonesian presidential elections early this year, a fake video of late President Suharto exhorting voters to vote for Golkar Party founded by him, caused quite a stir. In the video an artificially created likeness of Suharto was seen saying, “I am President Suharto, the second president of Indonesia, inviting you to elect representatives of the people from Golkar.” Resurrecting a dead person for electoral gains raised serious ethical and legal issues. The instances and list of Artificial Intelligence created fake content during elections at a global scale is long. Even most well entrenched democracies have not been able to break free from the malice thus spread by disinformation tools in elections.

Artificial intelligence, as we know, has been on the scene for many years now as has been uses of technology in elections. Electronic voting has been widely used in a number of countries. Various forms and designs of electronic voting machines have been deployed, fairly successfully , during elections as expansive as in India or as small scale as in Estonia. Online voting systems are also in place, particularly for overseas voters. Similarly,

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[5] Sophie Landrin, Le Monde, 21/05/2024

[6] Emily Kohlman, Blackbird.AI

a number of electronic results transmission systems, controversies and hiccups notwithstanding, have been introduced in a variety of jurisdictions. Cybersecurity has been the biggest challenge in this context. In 2021, cyber attackers were able to enter the Electoral Register containing information of millions of prospective voters. The security lapse was ascribed to lax protocols although electoral activity itself was not impacted. Much before this in 2014, hackers were able to delete key files of Ukraine elections data just prior to key presidential election in the country. There have been various similar cyber attacks on elections data in Europe and other countries. The opportunity for this has historically been created by dependence on digital voter registration, electronic voting and computerised tabulation.[7] Despite such digital challenges, gradual and incremental integration of technology and artificial intelligence in electoral processes has been recognised as a significant development over the years.

The question, therefore, is not that of mere use of technology per se in electoral cycles. Various applications of digital and electronic technology or artificial intelligence are innovative approaches, in ideal circumstances, to facilitate holding of elections which should be fair and free. It is not even a debate about necessity of democracy. The larger concern was well expressed by Tom Standage writing for The Economist. According to him there were 70 elections scheduled world over in 2024 in countries having population of more than 4 billion people. 'But despite more people voting than ever, many elections will neither be free nor fair.' It is a bold statement manifesting an increasing concern about challenges of fair and free elections. The doubts created and acrimony unleashed by malicious uses of artificial intelligence lead one to ask how these impact electoral processes or their very credibility. It will be in order, at this point, to ask what are credible elections and to have an overview of the concept of fair and free elections. International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance, commonly known as IDEA, has worked out a comprehensive list of International Electoral Standards. These standards are based on various international, regional and UN Declarations and Conventions on human rights. For instance, these include Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 and a number of other sources. Interestingly, according to IDEA, reports of election observation missions and model codes of conduct duly recognised by local and international NGOs are among supplementary sources setting electoral standards. The list of electoral standards identified by IDEA include a country's legal framework, electoral system (whether it is proportional or first past the post), delimitation of constituencies, the right to elect and be elected, electoral management bodies, voter registration, ballot access for political parties and candidates, democratic election campaigns, media access and freedom of expression, campaign finance, balloting, counting of votes, role of polling agents, election observers and compliance with election laws. The electoral standards set by the IDEA are very exhaustive but do not define what are specifically fair and free elections. For instance, the 'Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections' by the Inter-Parliamentary Council (IPC) has provided a list of 'rights and responsibilities that constitute a free and fair election.' The Declaration states for an election to be free all adult citizens must have the right to vote and join any political party and campaign freely while fairness in elections is

[7] Kartikay Mehrotra et al, Fortune, 27/12/2019

considered to be availability of equality of opportunity in elections.[8] Based on this, Sylvia Bishop and Anke Hoeffler of University of Oxford developed a database of elections held in 169 countries between 1975 and 2011 to measure 'freeness' and fairness of elections. Bishop and Hoeffler generated a list of ten dimensions to measure to what extent an election is fair and free. These dimensions consist of a) legal framework, b) electoral management bodies, c) electoral rights, d) voter register, e) ballot access, f) campaign process, g) media access, h) voting process, i) role of officials and j) counting of votes. In the list reflective of the electoral standards developed by the IDEA, writers have concluded that freeness of elections depend on the environment and processes including role of media and campaign quality leading up to elections while fairness depends on what happens on the voting day ie whether votes were counted fairly or not.[9] General finding of this study is that quality of elections has declined over the years measured against various dimensions. Of these, two variables relating to campaign process and media access were recorded as the worst performing. These two variables are where polluted narratives can fester and create fissures in the electoral system. What is of interest for our purposes is the concern about more and more elections tending to be 'unfree' even if fair. 'Our results suggest that international organisations should closely monitor the run-up to elections, that is, whether the elections were free.' This means that votes may have been counted fairly but the events including media behaviour and campaign trends culminating in the polling day are not free. Our premise therefore is that fed with more fiction than fact about the political parties, their manifestos and candidates, public loses the freedom to choose what is best for them. There is also no doubt that lies have never been in short currency in the history of elections.

Propaganda is in the very nature of elections. Coincidentally, growth of suffrage and newspaper industry has evolved concomitantly over the years. Prevalence of print and later on the electronic media, opened a floodgate of promotional stuff, partisan reporting, self-aggrandisement, ridicule and character assassination of contestants, scandalous disclosures, deriding of opposition and eulogising one's own credentials during the course of elections. Advertising agencies, newspapers, television networks, pollsters, psephologists, speechwriters etc have all had field days over the election years. While democratisation was riding the waves of history, in Huntington's terms, electoral contestation was also getting more intense and uglier. Being in power in democracies, emerging and old, required more and more votes, by rigging or by appealing to electorate through media. The necessity of instant communication in a globally integrated 21st century led to a social media revolution. Within no time, elections started to have strong reliance on uses of social media. Obama's election in 2008, Modi's in 2013 and Imran Khan's in 2018 have been widely termed as social media elections. As compared to the press or to the television, social media connects people directly. Mark Zuckerberg once said that all sorts of opportunities abound when people are connected. Being thus connected is the promise of the social media, presenting voters and candidates direct access to each other and enabling election management bodies quick sharing of information. The peril of social media, however ,did not take long to surface. It was Cambridge Analytica which first exposed the insidious side of social media in elections. In

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[8] Bishop and Hoeffler, Journal of Peace Research, 2016, pp 609

[9] Ibid, pp 608-616

the US elections in 2016, voters' choices were swayed by tricking 270000 Facebook users to share data to ascertain personality types which helped build up a database of 87 million Facebook users. Using this psychometric data, Cambridge Analytica ascertained personality types and then discovered correlation between personality traits and 'likes.'[10] These 'predictive models of voters' susceptibility to persuasion' were deployed exploiting their favourite topics and content.[11] These so-called 'personality traits based predictive algorithms' hacked whole political system.[12] Similar manipulation was at play in the Brexit campaign using targeted advertising on Facebook by the Vote Leave.[13] Possibility of manipulation using social media tools in the 2016 US elections and the Brexit referendum gets eerily credible when we see that the vote difference in the US election was only 70000 and in the Brexit it was less than 4 percent of the vote.[14] According to Anne Applebaum, people always had different opinions but post social media they now had different facts.[15] Facebook vote buttons have been used in Scottish referendum in 2014, Irish referendum 2015, UK election 2015, German federal elections 2017.[16] Transparency is the victim when we are not informed by the Facebook as to how many users were nudged to vote and as to who were these users to whom vote button was made available. Harvard University's Prof Zittrain believes that Facebook has the capacity to engineer elections and even challenge democracy.[17] It is this very capability of predictive analytics which creates doomsday scenarios, even if exaggerated, for future of democracy.

The peril of social media usage in elections, however, takes on challenging proportions when voters are confronted with Artificial Intelligence. As we know, till recently propaganda and even disinformation in elections has been the handiwork of human beings. Now we have been challenged by what is widely known as Generative Artificial Intelligence. In ordinary circumstances, generative Artificial Intelligence can turn text samples into near perfect images, voice bytes into realistic videos, mimic speeches and produce professional research papers within no time. Churning out synthetic versions of propaganda in elections is now a routine expression. Ever since the advent of Chat GPT in November 2022, generative Artificial Intelligence has not looked back.The question is what challenges these large-language models can pose in elections, at least in the short term. First of all, these models are capable of producing huge quantity of of disinformation. 'If the volume of nonsense were multiplied by 1000 or 100000, it might persuade people to vote differently.'[18] Secondly 'hyper-realistic deepfakes could sway voters before false audio,

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[10] Clarissa Veliz, Privacy is Power, pp 70

[11] Sinai Aral, The Hype Machine, pp 35

[12] Clarissa Veliz, ibid, pp 70

[13] Anne Applebaum, Twilight of Democracy, pp 88

[14] Clarissa Veliz, ibid, pp 111

[15] Anne Applebaum, ibid, pp 113

[16] Clarissa Veliz, ibid, pp 112

[17] Shoshana Zuboff, Age of Survillance Capitalism, pp 300

[18] The Economist, AI Voted, 31/08/2023

photos and videos can be debunked.'[19] The third challenge is 'micro targeting. With AI, voters may be inundated with highly personalised propaganda at scale. Networks of propaganda bots could be harder to detect than existing disinformation efforts are.' Just to have an idea of the extent of what generative Artificial Intelligence can do, one has to keep in mind that Facebook's machine intelligence is capable of making 200 trillion predictions per day.[20] Making use of these capabilities of platforms like Facebook, ChatGPT can take electioneering to uncharted territories. It has been calculated that currently 100 million hours are being spent by us watching Facebook videos on daily basis. Another baffling fact is that video content comprises 80 percent of all consumer Internet traffic. It is also to be noted that viewers retain only 10 percent of the messages they go through while they retain 95 percent of the video content. This means that it is the videos which are the new medium through which information is being spread and not through text messaging.[21] It has already been well researched and recorded how Artificial Intelligence deep learning algorithms can produce responses of requisite choices. It has been said that artificial intelligence produces what it is fed. It is the generative power of Artificial Intelligence which has scared even people like Elon Musk claiming that 'AI is a fundamental risk to the existence of human civilisation.' How can such apprehensions be built as possible scenarios in electoral environment to highlight our predicament?

Seen in the context of discussion earlier on the question of fair and free elections, Artificial Intelligence generated material militates against some of the very basic concepts of fairness and 'freeness.' Already technically advanced bots have started engaging with voters and initiating political conversation with them. Machine learning algorithms are being used to convey loaded political messages. So the opportunity for political propaganda are being utilised by profiteering technical companies and political parties and their campaign managers alike. 'AI-driven fake citizens' as they have been termed, will be used to influence public opinion. Artificial intelligence being based on deep learning algorithms, takes advantage of hoards of data in producing, distributing and marketing political lies. There is near unanimity on the part of experts in the belief of the Faustian character of Artificial Intelligence. According to some writers, based on current trends, AI will be widely deployed to polarise voters on non-existent issues or by amplifying minor incidents.This is particularly true in case where matters of faith, race or ethnicity are concerned. To further deepen electoral crisis, foreign players may use AI to project or to discredit candidates, politicians and other public figures. It is a phenomenon which is already widespread making use of generative Artificial Intelligence by creating deep fakes. Again based on contemporary practices, voter suppression is not unknown in elections using Artificial Intelligence driven political campaigns for the purpose. Governments or political parties can use advanced Artificial Intelligence to identify voters not prone to vote in their favour and deter them from voting through disinformation. There is also the possibility, and certain evidence, that Artificial Intelligence generated content is ready tool for international governments to construct specific narratives targeting electoral institutions

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[19] ibid

[20] Sinai Aral, The Hype Machine, pp 78

[21] Ibid, pp 78

of the opponents, at times to deliberately create chaos and at others to support favoured candidates or to undermine some.[22]

While perils of Artificial Intelligence in electoral arena are many, so are the benefits of the promise it holds. According to UNESCO's Guide for Electoral Practitioners: 'Elections in Digital Times,' Artificial Intelligence offers a number of opportunities for improving efficiency and accuracy of elections. One application of Artificial Intelligence driven engagement with voters is through communication based on individual performance and behaviour. Artificial Intelligence created chatbots can be deployed for real-time details of polling schemes, voters' lists, polling procedures etc in order to facilitate the voters. Even more importantly, as per UNESO Guide, Artificial Intelligence can be used to enhance electoral data management for timely and efficient decision making by officials. This can improve compilation and announcement of results in time as well as making of polling schemes indicating polling stations, their locations and formula-based voters' allocation to polling stations. This can give big boost to transparency in elections preparations as well as predictability of interpretation of election rules. But the most important role Artificial Intelligence can play is by strengthening electoral security by taking cybersecurity measures against cyber threats and by identifying fraudulent and inconsistent activities in the electoral infrastructure.[23] Some other very practical positive uses of Artificial Intelligence have been at play recently. In the 2024 Indian elections where we saw deep fakes of Bollywood stars, doctored audios and videos going viral some very interesting instances of Artificial Intelligence generated products also came to the fore. Narendra Modi and his supporters have been successfully using an Artificial Artificial created tool called Bhashini for translating Modi's speeches with voiceovers in Telegu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Odia, Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi etc. India with more than 22 official languages, had already grown familiar with Modi's live translations during his speeches even well before the onset of election campaign. Modi proudly called it his 'new AI technology (23) There were even deep fakes without the deception, in words of Shukla and Shneier. Political parties reportedly spent US$50 million on authorised AI-generated content 'for targeted communication with their constituencies' quite successfully.[24] Similar uses of Artificial Intelligence were witnessed in the 2024 elections in Pakistan when certain political parties not able to engage with their voters shared relevant information about polling stations and candidates online.

There is certainly a case also for being sanguine in the application of Artificial Intelligence driven tools in elections. It is, however, with a lot of trepidation that one has to accept the reality of, particularly, generative Artificial Intelligence at play in elections world wide. We have seen that disinformation spread through deep fakes and concocted content can turn fiction into fact. Thus flooded with faking reality and misleading images, speeches, news and forecasts, voters are destined to be deprived of freedom of making informed choices in elections. It is in this context of public importance that governments and election management bodies have to play policy roles. As we know, most of generative Artificial

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[22] Philip Howard, Lie Machines, pp 142-153

[23] Can Artificial Intelligence (AI) influence elections? Unric.org 07/06/2024

[24] Ibid

Intelligence driven content uses social media platforms. The laws and regulations being envisaged and enacted to regulate social media in a number of countries can be made applicable to generative Artificial Intelligence material. The European Union, taking then lead, has set robust perimeters for regulating social media platforms and search engines. The EU Code of Practice on Disinformation calls for major digital platforms to voluntarily contest disinformation. The EU has issued guidelines for online platforms and search engines under the recently promulgated Digital Services Act. These guidelines though non-binding are a pioneering effort to combat disinformation and reduce harmful content. Specific mitigation measures for generative Artificial Intelligence like VIA labelling have been suggested. The African Union has also issued 'Principles and Guidelines for the Use of Digital and Social Media in Elections.' The UK parliament passed an 'Online Safety Bill' in 2023. France, like the European Union, has enacted new laws to counter disinformation, particularly during elections. Countries like Brazil and South Korea have passed certain laws to curb disinformation online particularly in the course of elections. The drawback with most of these laws and regulations is that the technical companies and social media platforms are not ascribed liability of disinformation, deep fakes or hate material. Another problem is that technology companies lack 'effective technical countermeasures against disinformation distributed by states.' Technical companies are trying to use watermarks and digital branding of content as AI-generated. According to Madeleine Daepp and Robert Ness, senior researchers at Microsoft, 'disinformation-fighters don't yet have the tools for video monitoring at scale or the methods to track what content algorithms are suppressing or amplifying.' These experts believe that (deep fake) video will kill the truth if monitoring does not improve. AI-generated disinformation can only be countered by a policy based response with governments, technology Intelligence companies, fact-checkers and think-tanks partnering.[25] Despite the virality of generative Artificial Intelligence material like deep fake images and videos, experts are not unanimous on the extent of their impact on elections. It is also true that rather than 'waiting and seeing,' to witness the true face of Artificial Intelligence in elections, governments should act. There is consensus on three things. Firstly, Artificial Intelligence companies be incentivised to brand their content for better detection. Secondly, media literacy needs to launched at every level, particularly having elections in sight. Thirdly, governments need to have very effective monitoring systems and third party evaluations of future Artificial Intelligence models.

Discussion on Artificial Intelligence and its impact on elections is very much of relevance In case of Pakistan also where footprints of uses of Artificial Intelligence in elections have been indicated in earlier paragraphs. Actually potential of application of generative Artificial Intelligence in elections is greater than one realises, particularly in view of the vastness of social media space in the country. Pakistan has more than 190 million mobile connections which is equivalent to 78 percent coverage of the population. There are 110 million mobile internet users with internet penetration at 46 percent. Out of this number, 71.70 million are social media users being 29.5 percent of the population.[26] It is interesting to note that the total number of registered voters in the country is 128 million out of which 59 million turned out to vote on 8th February 2024. An educated guess, therefore, is that the 59 million voters in 2024 elections were, almost all, social media users. There are more than 64

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[25] Daepp and Ness, The Economist, 26/03/204

[26] Digital 2024:Pakistan, dataportal.com

million YouTube accounts in the country, 17.3 million Instagram users, Facebook has a following of 44.50 million, 11.95 million use Facebook Messenger while another 12 million use LinkedIn. Snapchat users are 30.12 million while Tik Tok has 54.38 users. In addition, 4.50 million people are on X (Twitter). According to surveys, 38 percent of population in Pakistan spends at least 2 hours on smartphones every day.[27] It is estimated that 73 percent of digital traffic is through mobile phones. Despite low literacy levels, Pakistan ranks 10th globally in mobile phone usage.[28] It is also interesting to note that 33 percent of news and information is gathered through social media platforms and internet.[29] This brief description of social media landscape in Pakistan should give sufficient food for thought to policy makers in the country in order to strategise against malicious application of Artificial Intelligence contents, especially in the context of elections. It is largely social media platforms which are carriers of generative Artificial Intelligence disinformation. Therefore, considering the wide spread of social media in Pakistan, chances of its vulnerability to ills of disinformation in elections, and even otherwise, cannot be underestimated. The government response on the other hand is outdated and insufficient. Basic law dealing with what are termed as offences is called Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (PECA). The focus of the law is cyber terrorism, theft of cyber data, electronic forgery and fraud, cyber stalking, hate speech and offences against human dignity and religious sensitivities. It is obvious that the law is not meant to deter malicious uses of Artificial Intelligence. Defamation laws have been reinforced while a Digital Authority is also in the cards. According to independent analysts these laws are only meant for stifling political dissent. Even Elections Act, 2017 or codes of conduct issued under it, before the polling date, are silent on what harm Artificial Intelligence has the potential to unleash. Pakistan Telecommunications Authority has tried to create linkages with social media platforms on voluntary basis. Partnerships with civil society are few and far between. Again, monitoring regime of social media and expression of Artificial Intelligence on it is a matter more of political surveillance than the necessity of curbing harmful content. One can say that like most countries in the world where governments are changed after elections, Pakistan is vulnerable to the manipulation of Artificial Intelligence with little or no regulatory regime in sight.

In order to conclude one may recapitulate earlier discussion that Artificial Intelligence has been pitched as one of the biggest global risks and according to some people a sinister digital innovation which can render electoral arena topsy turvy, societies asunder and political opponents at daggers drawn. While the election management bodies were still determining the pros and cons of social media, it was generative Artificial Intelligence which took the world by storm. Election campaigns have witnessed dead men resurrected, incarcerated leaders addressing public meetings, candidates endorsing opponents and all sorts of deep fake videos and audios going viral. It has been recognised that Artificial Intelligent has already impacted the disinformation landscape. It is not the text or still images which can enhance the tone of disinformation but Artificial Intelligence driven videos and audio which boost the impact. Recent experience of election campaigns has

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[27] https://gallup.com.org

[28] thenews.com.pk 19/04/2024

[29] https://gallup.com.org 11/11/2024

shown that the level of disinformation generated by Artificial Intelligence driven material in during elections has posed serious questions about how far the electoral contests can be free and fair. Judged against international electoral standards, mass circulation of fake information created by Artificial Intelligence and going viral on social media, challenges the very concept of integrity of elections. As observed by Bishop and Hoffler, the two variables of media access and campaign process have historically been the weakest links in holding fair and free elections. With generative Artificial Intelligence bursting on the electoral scene, media and campaign process may face further pressure of transparency. This may be undoing of a number of elections globally including in Pakistan. It is after all ordinary human beings who have to make choices in a democracy and not Artificial Intelligence. 'Democracy must retain human qualities- - -protecting the integrity of democratic deliberations and elections. Meaningful deliberation requires more than the opportunity to speak; it also requires the protection of human speech from AI distortion.[30] Protection of human speech from 'AI distortion' through regulatory, technical and financial measures notwithstanding, the promise of Artificial Intelligence also cannot be discounted. One very dreadful scenario, though equally futuristic, can consist of replacing voting 'with a sufficiently powerful and well trained artificial intelligence.[31] In this scenario a program can be built with a profile of every voter, on the basis of choices in various areas in order to use these to predict preferences over the best possible available candidates. The question is should we allow Artificial Intelligence to take over the role of human agency in matters electoral?

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[30] Kissinger,Schmitt and Huttenlocher, The Age of AI, pp 199-200

[31] Emilee Chapman, Election day, pp 215