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Artificial Intelligence, Human Behaviour and Society: An Interdisciplinary Psychological and Sociological Perspective

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not only reshaping global technology, significantly influencing psychological processes and social structures. Recent empirical research highlights that AI's rapid integration into daily life, notably in highly diverse societies like India, presents both substantial benefits and critical risks that necessitate careful interdisciplinary exploration. This paper investigates the impacts of artificial intelligence from psychological and sociological perspectives, looking at how technological advancements are altering human behaviour, cognition, social structures and interactions.

The study employs a systematic review methodology, analysing peer-reviewed articles, empirical studies, and theoretical contributions published between 2010 and 2024. Literature was sourced from databases such as PsycINFO, Scopus, JSTOR, and Google Scholar using terms including "AI and cognition," "AI and society," and "AI in India." Inclusion criteria emphasized research at the intersection of AI and human behaviour, identity and social order.

Findings reveal that AI technologies influence psychological dimensions like attention, decision-making, emotional regulation, and human-machine trust, while simultaneously reshaping sociological domains including labour, surveillance, inequality, and social interaction. Both psychological and sociological perspectives offer essential insights into the human-AI relationship, guiding the development and deployment of AI with a holistic view of human values, social equity, and ethical responsibility.

Keywords; AI technology, psychological aspects, sociological aspects

Introduction

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has ushered in transformative changes across various sectors, including healthcare, education, employment, and social interaction. Beyond its technological innovations, AI presents profound psychological and sociological implications that merit in-depth exploration. Central to this discourse is the examination of how AI challenges our understanding of the human mind and influences behaviour, cognition, and social relationships.

From a psychological standpoint, AI's capabilities in mimicking human cognitive processes prompt questions about the nature of consciousness, self-awareness, and emotional intelligence. While AI systems can process information and perform tasks with remarkable efficiency, they lack the subjective experiences that characterize human consciousness (Searle,

1980). This distinction raises debates about the extent to which AI can truly replicate or understand human mental states. Research by Dehaene (2014) and Friston et al. (2017) underscores the difference between symbolic processing and conscious awareness, reinforcing these conceptual boundaries. Moreover, studies like Huang et al. (2022) and Inkster et al. (2023) explore artificial empathy and the psychological risks of emotional over-reliance on AI in therapeutic settings.

Sociologically, the integration of AI into daily life alters social dynamics and interpersonal relationships. For instance, the use of AI-driven communication tools and virtual assistants influences how individuals interact, potentially leading to reduced face-to-face interactions and changes in social behaviour (Turkle, 2011). Recent analyses by West et al. (2019) and Crosby & Monaghan (2022) show that conversational agents are shaping not just communication patterns but also power relations in digital environments. Moreover, the reliance on AI for decision-making in areas like hiring, law enforcement, and healthcare introduces concerns about bias, accountability, and the erosion of human agency (O'Neil, 2016; Eubanks, 2018; Noble, 2018).

AI and Human Behaviour: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a powerful Psycho-socio-technological force that not only automates tasks but also influences human behaviour shaping decisions, emotions, attention, and social patterns by learning from and adapting to users through psychological, behavioural, and technological mechanisms. This section examines how AI interacts with human behaviour through psychological, behavioural, and technological lenses.

Cognitive and Behavioural Influences: AI systems such as recommendation algorithms, chatbots, and digital assistants influence human decisions by personalizing experiences (Sundar & Narayan, 2021; Rathore & Dey, 2019). Algorithms used by platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Netflix learn user preferences and subtly nudge behaviour through curated content. This phenomenon, referred to as algorithmic reinforcement, can enhance user satisfaction by delivering relevant and engaging material, but it may also lead to filter bubbles that reinforce preexisting behaviours and beliefs, thereby limiting exposure to diverse perspectives (Pariser, 2011).

Moreover, AI affects cognitive functions like attention and memory. On the positive side, AI-based tools such as digital calendars, voice assistants, and navigational aids help users streamline daily tasks, optimize productivity, and manage cognitive load. In education, AI-driven learning platforms provide personalized feedback and adaptive pacing, supporting diverse learner needs (Kumar & Rose, 2020). However, there are concerns that over-reliance on such systems may reduce individuals' engagement in cognitive mapping and time management skills (Barr et al., 2015; Bhattacharya & Singh, 2018). A study by Ward et al. (2017) found that even the mere presence of smartphones many of which are AI-integrated—can diminish cognitive capacity by diverting attention from complex tasks. Similarly, Indian research by Chakraborty, Srivastava, and Singh (2020) found that excessive smartphone dependency among college students significantly impaired working memory and sustained attention

Emotional and Psychological Responses: AI-driven tools can elicit strong emotional reactions, including empathy, frustration, or even trust. People may unconsciously anthropomorphize AI agents, attributing them human-like characteristics (Nass & Moon, 2000). As such, virtual assistants like Siri, Alexa, or Replika can become emotionally significant to users, particularly

among the lonely or socially isolated (Purington et al., 2017). In India and elsewhere, many individuals have grown emotionally attached to their virtual assistants or AI chatbots. For example, some users of the Replika chatbot regard it as a friend or confidant sometimes even describing it as if it were a human. Such AI companions can become particularly significant for those who are lonely or socially isolated, with studies reporting that a majority of users feel these AI "friends" help reduce their loneliness or anxiety (Maples et al., 2024).

While beneficial in mental health interventions (e.g., AI chatbots for therapy), it raises ethical concerns about surveillance and manipulation. For instance, AI-driven advertisement platforms can target users when they are emotionally vulnerable, maximizing the likelihood of impulse purchases or engagement (Koene et al., 2021).

Behavioural Economics and Predictive Control: AI systems are increasingly applying principles like nudging, framing, and loss aversion to influence user decisions across platforms in finance, health, and education (Rathore & Dey, 2019; Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). Positively, these strategies leverage cognitive biases to enhance motivation, improve decision-making, and promote behaviour change, such as saving habits or medication adherence (Bhattacharya & Singh, 2018). However, such persuasive design can also exploit cognitive vulnerabilities, especially among users with low digital literacy or impaired self-regulation (Rao, 2022). Psychologically, this raises concerns about diminished autonomy, external locus of control, and learned helplessness over time. Emerging research also shows that AI agents can simulate deceptive intent, influencing emotional and cognitive responses in interactive tasks (Sabour et al., 2025; Zheng et al., 2023). This dual impact calls for designing AI that supports psychological empowerment, ethical persuasion, and transparent decision architecture in the Indian context (NITI Aayog, 2021).

Social media, Identity, and Behavioural Shifts: Social media platforms have reshaped behaviour and identity, particularly among Indian youth, by leveraging psychological mechanisms like social comparison, operant conditioning, and observational learning (Bandura, 2001; Nesi & Prinstein, 2015). Reinforcement through likes, shares, and comments acts as a digital reward system, fostering performative self-presentation and external validation-seeking (Kaur & Singh, 2021). This often leads to identity diffusion, low self-esteem, and heightened anxiety, especially in adolescents (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). In India, increased digital access (TRAI, 2023) has amplified these effects, influencing behaviours ranging from body image concerns to political expression (Pal, 2020). AI-driven moderation and algorithmic filtering—while ensuring safety—can induce self-censorship, create echo chambers, and contribute to psychological alienation (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Rathore & Dey, 2019). These patterns underscore the need for digital literacy, resilience training, and culturally sensitive media policies to protect mental well-being in India's rapidly evolving digital landscape (Mehta, 2020; NITI Aayog, 2021).

Artificial Intelligence: Insights from Psychology: The intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and psychology is a rapidly evolving domain where human cognitive, emotional, and social processes provide the foundation for the design, development, and evaluation of intelligent machines. Psychological theories offer not only blueprints for building human-like machines but also insights into how users perceive and interact with these systems.

Theory of Mind (ToM) and AI: Theory of Mind (ToM) refers to the human capacity to attribute mental states such as beliefs, desires, and intentions to others (Premack & Woodruff, 1978). In AI, ToM is mirrored in systems that attempt to infer user emotions, intentions, or future actions based on behaviour. For instance, empathetic virtual assistants or AI counsellors (e.g., Replika, Wysa) respond based on inferred emotional states, encouraging user engagement and emotional bonding (Zhou et al., 2019). This simulative ToM enables AI to interact socially and adaptively with humans.

Social Presence Theory: Social Presence Theory suggests that the degree of perceived "realness" in mediated communication influences emotional and cognitive involvement (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976). AI systems that include natural language, facial cues, or vocal tone are seen as more "present" and thus more effective in evoking emotional responses. Research shows that users often report feeling comforted or understood when interacting with emotionally intelligent AI chatbots (Ho et al., 2018).

Computational Theory of Mind: The Computational Theory of Mind posits that cognitive processes can be described in terms of information processing and symbolic manipulation (Fodor, 1975). This theory underpins much of symbolic AI and cognitive modelling. AI architectures like ACT-R or SOAR are inspired by psychological models of reasoning and decision-making, reflecting how machines simulate human mental processes (Anderson, 2007).

Cognitive Load Theory: According to Cognitive Load Theory, learning is optimized when instructional designs minimize unnecessary cognitive effort (Sweller, 1988). Adaptive AI learning platforms are developed using this principle by tailoring content difficulty, reducing extraneous load, and enhancing working memory retention (Van Merriënboer & Sweller, 2010). Such systems support cognitive processing through personalized learning paths.

Attribution Theory: Attribution Theory explains how people interpret others' behaviour by attributing it to internal or external causes (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1985). Users tend to anthropomorphize AI systems, attributing intent or emotion to machines even when responses are rule-based. Nass and Moon (2000) found that people often interact with computers using social norms, expecting fairness, politeness, and reciprocity, revealing a psychological projection onto AI agents.

Operant Conditioning and Reinforcement Learning: Operant Conditioning theory explains learning via reinforcement and punishment (Skinner, 1953). AI uses this model through reinforcement learning, where systems learn from trial-and-error interactions. Simultaneously, human behaviour is shaped by AI-driven platforms that reinforce engagement such as social media "likes" and notifications that serve as intermittent rewards, fostering habitual use (Montag et al., 2019).

Flow Theory: Flow, a concept developed by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), describes a state of deep focus and enjoyment during tasks. AI tools designed for learning, fitness, or gaming use user modelling and adaptive feedback to maintain this optimal experience. For example, gamified apps adjust difficulty to match skill levels, ensuring sustained motivation and immersion (Hamari et al., 2016).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT): Self-Determination Theory posits that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fundamental to intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). AI applications like habit trackers or mental wellness apps (e.g., Calm, Headspace) use this theory by enabling users to set personal goals (autonomy), receive constructive feedback (competence), and feel connected to a broader community (relatedness), which increases long-term engagement (Mekler et al., 2017).

Eliza Effect: The Eliza Effect describes users attributing more understanding and empathy to AI than the system possesses (Weizenbaum, 1966). Despite being rule-based, early systems like ELIZA convinced users of their sentience. Today, AI chatbots evoke similar responses, as users often share personal emotions, believing the machine "understands" them (Purington et al., 2017).

Conclusion: AI development is deeply intertwined with psychology, drawing on theories of cognition, emotion, and behaviour to predict and influence human actions. Integrating psychology enhances AI usability but also raises ethical concerns, making it essential for designing responsible and human-cantered technologies.

Artificial Intelligence: Insight from the Sociological Perspective: AI is more than technology; it is a social construct shaped by institutions and culture. A sociological lens reveals how AI can both reinforce and challenge caste, class, gender, and regional inequalities, while also offering transformative possibilities for inclusion and empowerment within India's complex social fabric. This section examines the reproduction of inequalities, the transformation of labour, and the impact of AI on social identity and community through key sociological lenses.

AI and Social Structures: While AI is often praised for neutrality and efficiency, sociological analyses reveal that it frequently reproduces existing social inequalities. Eubanks (2018) demonstrates how automated systems in welfare penalize the poor and marginalized, particularly gender stereotypes and racial minorities (Noble., 2018)).

In India, such patterns persist through Aadhaar-linked technologies, where authentication failures disproportionately exclude Dalit, Adivasi, and rural communities from essential services mistakenly labelled as technical glitches rather than manifestations of systemic bias (Khera, 2019). AI systems thus become tools of digital exclusion embedded in caste and class hierarchies. Moreover, the corporate concentration of AI development in tech giants like Google and Amazon reinforces undemocratic forms of governance, where algorithmic decision-making lacks public accountability (Zuboff, 2019). “AI reflects the values of its creators and when those creators are disproportionately elite, male, and Western, so too are the technologies” (Noble, 2018, p. 4).

Labor, Capital, and Automation: AI-driven automation is not merely a technological shift but a profound transformation of labour shaped by class, power, and capital. From a sociological lens, platforms like Uber, Swiggy, and Zomato represent a new form of digital Taylorism, where algorithmic control replaces human supervision, intensifying labour fragmentation and precarity (Scholz, 2017). In India’s informal economy, these platforms institutionalize “platform precarity,” eroding traditional labour rights under the guise of flexibility. Workers are constantly monitored, rated, and incentivized through data-driven systems that lack transparency and accountability. Zuboff (2019) describes AI-driven economies as surveillance capitalism, where human behaviour

becomes a source of profit. AI also relies on "ghost work"—invisible, low-paid labour such as content moderation—often outsourced to marginalized workers in the Global South (Gray & Suri, 2019). These dynamics reveal how AI reinforces existing inequalities in both global and Indian labour systems.

AI, Identity, and Everyday Social Life: AI systems increasingly shape how individuals form identities, interact socially, and experience belonging. Cheney-Lippold (2017) explains "algorithmic identity" as predictive profiling that determines access to services and opportunities. In India, this intersects with caste, religion, and region, reinforcing digital exclusion (Bailey & Parsheera, 2021). Social media platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube intensify echo chambers and polarization (Udupa, 2019; Banaji & Bhat, 2020). Digital assistants, often gendered and class-coded, normalize biases (Crawford, 2021; Arora, 2019), while English-centric AI marginalizes non-elite language users (Pathak & Sengupta, 2021). Thus, AI reproduces social hierarchies, demanding critical, inclusive sociological engagement.

AI in Governance: AI is reshaping public governance in India through initiatives like ration fraud detection, eCourts, e-Pathshala, and predictive policing, improving efficiency and reducing corruption (Mehta & Kalvet, 2021). The JAM trinity, supported by AI, has boosted financial inclusion (Khosla et al., 2021). However, scholars warn that such systems often enable surveillance and exclusion, especially of marginalized groups (Bailey & Parsheera, 2021; Khera, 2019). Aadhaar-linked AI has led to welfare denial due to biometric mismatches, disproportionately affecting Dalits and rural users (Drèze, 2018). Predictive policing may also reinforce historical bias (Rao, 2022). Hence, AI must prioritize justice and accountability.

Cultural Sensitivity and Language Inclusion: India's linguistic diversity, with over 22 official languages and hundreds of dialects, poses challenges to mainstream AI systems often biased toward English-speaking, urban users. This linguistic exclusion reinforces cultural hierarchies and digital marginalization, sidelining rural and marginalized communities in the digital ecosystem (Pathak & Sengupta, 2021; Arora, 2019). From a sociological lens, such exclusion reflects broader patterns of knowledge inequity and elite dominance in technology. Initiatives like AI4Bharat (IIT Madras) aim to democratize AI through open-source Indian language models (Kunchukuttan et al., 2020), while global firms now support regional languages (Rao, 2022). However, without sensitivity to dialects, context, and social use, AI may still enable linguistic erasure. Inclusive digital transformation requires both technological innovation and cultural respect.

Social Perception and Ethical Awareness in India: A Sociological Lens: Social perception of AI in India is shaped by a mix of trust, cultural values, education, and media narratives. Studies reveal that rural farmers are more likely to adopt AI-driven agricultural tools when these technologies are explained in locally relevant terms, often via community networks (Tripathy et al., 2021; Singh & Dey, 2022). Meanwhile, religious institutions have embraced AI-based darshan experiences and virtual pujas, illustrating the hybridization of tradition and technology (Raj, 2020). This fusion represents India's culturally embedded pathway to technological modernization. Simultaneously, ethical discourse around AI including concerns over surveillance, bias, and data rights is gaining traction through civil society organizations like the Internet Freedom Foundation

and academic initiatives on algorithmic accountability (Bailey & Parsheera, 2021; Srikumar & Kumar, 2023). These developments show a growing public consciousness that balances spiritual familiarity with technological scrutiny, a distinctly sociological trait of India's digital transition.

Conclusion: AI is not merely about automation or algorithms, it is about humans, power, culture, and opportunity. The Indian sociological landscape marked by diversity, disparity, and deep tradition makes it a rich terrain to explore AI's dual potential: liberation and domination. While AI threatens to replicate existing hierarchies, it also provides tools for empowerment, inclusion, and social mobility when steered by inclusive design, equitable policy, and participatory governance. A sociological perspective urges us to move beyond efficiency and profit to focus on fairness, dignity, cultural representation, and social justice. Only then can AI become truly transformative in the Indian context.

Sociological Theories Explaining AI and Society: Sociological theories provide rich conceptual tools to interpret how artificial intelligence (AI) shapes and is shaped by society. Below are key theoretical approaches that help explain the social embeddedness of AI technologies, their institutional consequences, and their impact on identity, labor, and inequality.

Structural functionalism, advanced by Émile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, sees society as a system with interdependent parts working to maintain stability. Within this perspective, Artificial Intelligence (AI) functions as a systemic optimizer, enhancing sectors like healthcare, education, and governance. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, AI-enabled public health surveillance systems facilitated early detection and efficient resource distribution (Nguyen et al., 2020; Vaishya et al., 2020). In education, AI-driven adaptive learning platforms have improved instructional efficiency and student engagement (Holmes et al., 2019). However, this approach often overlooks structural inequalities. While AI is assumed to benefit all segments equally, studies show it can perpetuate social biases embedded in historical data (Eubanks, 2018; Obermeyer et al., 2019). Thus, although AI contributes to societal stability, its uneven impact necessitates critical scrutiny. A balanced sociological understanding must consider both its functional advantages and the risks of reinforcing existing inequalities.

Conflict theory, based on the ideas of Karl Marx, sees society as a place where powerful groups control resources and maintain their dominance over weaker groups. From this view, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not just a helpful technology—it is often used by the rich and powerful to stay in control. Big companies and governments use AI for their own benefit, such as making more profit, watching people through surveillance, and reducing labor costs. For example, AI used in hiring or giving loans often favors upper classes and discriminates against lower castes or poor people (Eubanks, 2018). Also, tech companies collect personal data and make money from it without sharing the benefits with ordinary users (Zuboff, 2019). AI can also replace human jobs, forcing many into insecure work. So, conflict theory sees AI as a tool that helps the powerful stay in power and increases social and economic inequality

Symbolic Interactionism: Meaning-Making and Human-AI Interaction: Symbolic interactionism, shaped by thinkers like George Herbert Mead, Erving Goffman, and Herbert Blumer, focuses on everyday social interactions and how individuals create meaning. This

perspective helps us understand how people relate to Artificial Intelligence (AI) on a personal level. Rather than seeing AI as just machines, people often treat them as social actors—especially when these technologies mimic human behaviour. For example, users may talk to Siri or Alexa as if they were real people, showing trust, dependence, or even emotional attachment (Nass & Moon, 2000). These interactions reveal how humans assign symbolic meaning to AI, shaping their identities and relationships through daily use. Mental health chatbots, for instance, are often perceived as caring companions, influencing how users express themselves (Purington et al., 2017). Thus, symbolic interactionism highlights that our engagement with AI is not just functional it's deeply social and meaning-driven.

Postcolonial and Decolonial Theory: AI and Epistemic Injustice this theory advanced by Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak, Walter Mignolo. Postcolonial theory critiques how Western knowledge systems dominate and erase indigenous perspectives. AI, often trained on Western datasets and models, reflects epistemic colonialism marginalizing local languages, cultural logics, and indigenous knowledge. For example, African faces or Indian dialects are often misclassified by global AI systems, leading to technological misrepresentation and social harm (Birhane & Prabhu, 2021). Decolonial AI advocates emphasize plural ontologies, culturally-grounded ethics, and community participation in AI design (Mohamed et al., 2020).

Feminist Theory: Gendered Impacts and Techno patriarchy: Feminist theory, informed by scholars such as Dorothy Smith, Judith Butler, and Patricia Hill Collins, critiques how AI systems reinforce gendered power structures. Facial recognition often misclassifies women and people of colour (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018), while voice assistants' default to female voices, perpetuating submissive stereotypes (UNESCO, 2019). Feminist theorists highlight the underrepresentation of women in AI development and advocate for intersectional frameworks that address overlapping identities of gender, race, and class (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020). They call for inclusive data practices and participatory design to challenge techno patriarchy and build more equitable AI system

Actor-Network Theory (ANT): AI as Socio-Technical Assemblage: Actor-Network Theory (ANT), advanced by Bruno Latour and Michel Callon, dissolves the divide between human and non-human actors, viewing AI as part of a socio-technical network. AI systems—such as predictive policing tools—are not isolated software but assemblages involving data, developers, legal frameworks, users, and the public (Amoore, 2020). ANT helps explain how such tools co-produce social realities, with agency and accountability distributed across networks (Jasanoff, 2004). For instance, the impact of an algorithm depends on training data, institutional values, and societal interpretations. Thus, ANT reveals how AI operates through dynamic power relations and collective meaning-making.

Synthesis of Insights and Research Gaps

Cross-Cutting Themes: Psychological and sociological perspectives agree on a fundamental insight: AI is not neutral. It reflects and shapes human behavior, institutional logic, and cultural meaning. Across disciplines, several themes repeatedly surface:

Trust and Emotional Engagement: Users often anthropomorphize AI agents such as Siri or Replika, forming emotional bonds that influence behavior and well-being (Nass & Moon, 2000; Purington et al., 2017).

Identity and Selfhood: AI affects how individuals perceive themselves and others, especially in social media, mental health and social identity contexts (Turkle, 2011; Shin & Park, 2019).

Surveillance and Social Control: AI systems play a growing role in monitoring behavior, influencing privacy and autonomy (Zuboff, 2019; Lyon, 2018).

Inequality and Bias: Algorithmic systems reproduce systemic biases along race, gender, and class lines (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018; Eubanks, 2018).

Meaning-Making and Social Interaction: Symbolic interactionism shows how AI acquires social meaning through everyday interaction (Luger & Sellen, 2016; Goffman, 1959).

Consensus and Divergence: Psychology vs. Sociology: Psychology and sociology approach AI from different but complementary lenses. Psychological research emphasizes individual-level impacts including emotional attachment, cognitive overload, empathy toward AI, and mental health effects of AI-based interactions (Barr et al., 2015; Ward et al., 2017). Sociological approaches focus on macro-structural forces, examining AI's role in reinforcing power hierarchies, controlling labour, and shaping governance (Noble, 2018; Amoore, 2020; Lyon, 2018).

Despite this divergence, interdisciplinary convergence is emerging in areas such as:

1. Emotional AI ethics, blending psychological insights on affect with sociological questions of power (McStay, 2018)
2. Digital labor and precarity, linking worker psychology with algorithmic control (Gray & Suri, 2019)
3. Algorithmic fairness and accountability, drawing from both empirical and normative traditions (Crawford, 2021; Mohamed et al., 2020).

Critical Research Gaps: Neglected Dimensions and Understudied Communities: Despite growing research, several critical gaps persist:

Long-term Mental Health Impacts: While AI-based apps are used for therapy and self-care, few longitudinal studies assess their sustained psychological effects (Luxton, 2016; Vaidyam et al., 2019).

Epistemic Injustice and Knowledge Hierarchies: AI development remains dominated by Western epistemologies, sidelining indigenous, local, and non-Western worldviews (Mohamed et al., 2020; Birhane, 2020).

Lack of Intersectional and Community-Based Studies: Research often isolates variables like gender or class, neglecting how identities intersect and co-construct AI experiences (D'Ignazio & Klein, 2020).

Caste-Based Algorithmic Discrimination in India: Unlike race-based AI bias studies in the West, there is little examination of caste-coded data systems in India (Bhatia & Gajjala, 2021).

Policy and Ethical Oversight: There is a disconnection between sociopsychological findings and their translation into AI governance frameworks, especially in the Global South (Abebe et al., 2021).

Conclusion: Though often presented as futuristic, rational, and technologically objective, Artificial Intelligence is deeply embedded in the lived experiences, social structures, and cultural narratives of human societies. It is neither autonomous nor apolitical. Rather, AI systems are co-constructed within contexts marked by power relations, emotional complexity, economic asymmetry, and historical inequality. Interdisciplinary insights from psychology, sociology, feminist theory, postcolonial studies, and critical data science clearly reveal that AI: Shapes how individuals feel, think, behave, and relate influencing identity, cognition, emotional expression, and interpersonal interaction, Reorganizes labour systems, state governance, and surveillance regimes—impacting employment, privacy, law enforcement, and public policy and Reflects, reproduces, or if consciously directed challenges structural inequalities related to gender, race, caste, class, and geographic location.

These insights challenge the dominant techno-centric narratives that prioritize innovation over impact, and efficiency over ethics. Theoretically, this demands a paradigm shift toward relational, inclusive, and critical frameworks approaches that recognize AI as a socio-technical system entangled with human values, institutional logics, and community histories. Such frameworks must move beyond reductionist models of utility or risk and instead embrace epistemic diversity, affective intelligence, and contextual sensitivity.

Recommendation: Practically, realizing this vision requires multi-pronged action:

1. Interdisciplinary collaboration among psychologists, sociologists, technologists, ethicists, legal scholars, and policymakers to build frameworks that are both empirically grounded and ethically robust.
2. Participatory and community-based design especially involving marginalized and underrepresented groups whose voices are often excluded from AI research and development.
3. Policy innovation rooted in epistemic justice, including the formal inclusion of Global South, indigenous, and non-Western knowledge systems in AI governance structures.
4. Capacity-building at all levels from digital literacy and critical AI education in schools to ethics training in engineering curricula.
5. Institutional accountability and transparency, through regulatory mechanisms, algorithmic audits, and rights-based approaches to data and automation.

Ultimately, the future of AI must not only be technologically advanced it must also be socially just, emotionally intelligent, ecologically sustainable, and culturally inclusive. Only then can AI serve as a tool for collective empowerment rather than a vector of exclusion, control, or harm.

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