P259 / Governance in the Age of Gen AI: Problems and Prospects of Public Service Delivery and Privacy

Topic : Bureaucracy, Administration and Policy Process

Chair : Ramya C (ASCI Hyderabad)

Second Chair : FARAH NAZ (Jamia Hamdard University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

It is the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The adjectives for “governance” have transitioned from “democratic,” “participatory,” and “good” governance to “algorithmic” and AI governance. This is evident as governments globally use AI bots to interact with citizens, analyse policy evidence, determine eligibility for welfare programmes, detect fraud, redress citizen grievances, and customise public services. Further, Generative AI is now making its way into the policymaking processes, drafting and summarising documents and supporting administrative decision-making. This is a shift that earlier scholars anticipated as a move from “street-level” to system-level bureaucracy (Bovens & Zouridis, 2002). Similar to the other trends of policymaking, the dominant data-governance frameworks rest on Global North assumptions that may not be applicable in other contexts (Taylor, 2017; Milan & Trere, 2019). A critical component of AI-driven governance is the changing relationship between the state and the citizen characterised by public service delivery and privacy. The recent experience of the Dutch SyRi welfare fraud system (2020) and the Indian Supreme Court’s landmark legislation recognising privacy as a fundamental right (Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India, 2017) highlight how the state’s use of personal data has become a defining question of governance in the present day. The enactment and enforcement of India’s Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, is also a case in point. Legal mechanisms and state capacity play a pivotal role in how countries balance efficiency in public service delivery against privacy. While some regions place limits on automated decision-making, many Global South countries have been adopting data protection laws only in recent times. In this context, this Panel aims to (i) examine how governments are using AI and personal data for efficient public service delivery; (ii) understand the implications of AI-driven governance for citizens' privacy and accountability in the Global South.
Research Questions

· How and why are governments using AI and personal data in policymaking and public service delivery?

· What are the implications of AI-driven governance for citizens' privacy and accountability in the Global South?

Through the integration of perspectives on public service delivery and privacy, this Panel attempts to advance the study of policymaking by treating AI and data systems as policy instruments in their own right. By bringing in inputs from the Global South, where technology is more rapid than regulation, it proposes a research agenda of privacy as an important dimension of governance quality and democratic legitimacy. As new AI and data protection regimes take shape in different countries across the Global South, this Panel attempts to extend the digital governance literature beyond the Global North.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The advent of Gen AI has revolutionised various domains, and governments globally are no exception. The proposed Panel welcomes perspectives on public service delivery and privacy in the context of the emergence of Gen AI technologies in governance. It aims to (i) examine how governments are using AI and personal data for efficient public service delivery; (ii) understand the implications of AI-driven governance for citizens' privacy and accountability in the Global South.

As governments incorporate Gen AI into policymaking and public service delivery, personal data of citizens has become a problem as well as a prospect for governments worldwide. While it can help improve public service delivery, it also brings along issues of privacy, surveillance and misplaced public trust. In this

context, we invite early-career researchers, students, scholars, and policy practitioners to submit manuscripts that engage with the problems and prospects of public service delivery and privacy in the age of AI, especially in the context of the Global South. We welcome papers that can be in the form of theoretical or empirical studies, case studies, or comparative and practitioner contributions addressing, but not limited to, the following themes:

· Changing Governance Paradigms in the age of Gen AI

· Data-driven public services

· AI and welfare administration

· Privacy, personal data and data protection

· Accountability, oversight and redressal

· Legal and institutional framework for AI governance

· Other related themes

Please submit an abstract as per the guidelines on any of the above themes.