Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

In the present digital age, social media has revolutionised our way of communication and interaction. However, it has raised several ethical issues and challenges. Describe the key ethical dilemmas in this regard.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2025	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Privacy and consent, misinformation and deepfakes, hate speech, algorithmic manipulation, digital addiction, cyberbullying, echo chambers, data exploitation, freedom of expression versus social responsibility

Model Answer

Introduction

Social media has democratised communication and enabled unprecedented participation, but its speed, anonymity and algorithm-driven ecosystem have created complex ethical dilemmas.

Key Ethical Dilemmas

1. Privacy versus commercial interests: Personal data may be collected, profiled and monetised without meaningful informed consent.
2. Freedom of expression versus harm: Free speech may conflict with hate speech, harassment, misinformation and incitement to violence.

3. Truth versus virality: Sensational content often gains greater visibility, while deepfakes and manipulated information undermine epistemic trust.
4. Individual autonomy versus algorithmic manipulation: Recommendation algorithms can exploit behavioural biases, create echo chambers and influence choices.
5. Anonymity versus accountability: Anonymity protects whistleblowers but can also facilitate trolling, cyberbullying and abuse.
6. Innovation versus responsibility: Platforms must balance technological innovation with duties towards children, vulnerable groups and democratic institutions.

Conclusion

The ethical principle should be “freedom with responsibility”. Digital literacy, privacy-by-design, transparent algorithms, effective grievance redressal and accountable platform governance can help make social media an instrument of democratic empowerment rather than social harm.

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