Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Impact of digital technology as a reliable source of input for rational decision-making is a debatable issue. Critically evaluate with suitable example.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2021	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Evidence-based governance, big data, artificial intelligence, real-time information, predictive analytics, data quality, algorithmic bias, privacy, digital divide, human judgement, accountability, technology-assisted decision-making

Model Answer

Introduction

Digital technology provides large volumes of information that can improve administrative decisions. However, data-driven decisions are not automatically rational or ethical because their quality depends on accuracy, fairness and interpretation.

Benefits

- **Timely information:** Digital dashboards enable officials to monitor public services and respond quickly to emerging problems.
- **Evidence-based planning:** Data analytics can identify underserved areas and improve resource allocation.
- **Predictive capacity:** Artificial intelligence can help forecast disease outbreaks, crop stress and disaster risks.
- **Transparency:** Digitised records make decisions more traceable and facilitate audits.

Limitations

- **Data errors:** Incomplete or outdated databases may lead to wrongful exclusion from welfare schemes.
- **Algorithmic bias:** Systems trained on biased data may discriminate against particular communities.
- **Privacy concerns:** Excessive collection or misuse of personal data can violate individual rights.
- **Digital exclusion:** People without connectivity or digital literacy may remain invisible in official databases.
- **Overdependence:** Officials may ignore local knowledge, ethical considerations and exceptional circumstances.

Example

Digital monitoring can help identify malnutrition hotspots and direct nutrition resources accordingly. However, if an inaccurate database excludes a vulnerable household, a purely automated system may deny assistance. Human verification and accessible appeals are therefore necessary.

Conclusion

Digital technology should inform, not replace, rational judgement. Reliable decisions require verified data, algorithmic transparency, privacy safeguards, human oversight and mechanisms for correcting errors.

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