
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND FOREIGN POLICY: INDIA'S ROLE IN PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE AI FOR PEACEBUILDING IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

DR. ALKA

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, AMITY UNIVERSITY, HARYANA,

DR. ANJALI YOGI

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, MAITREYI COLLEGE

ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) increasingly shapes global governance, diplomacy, and development cooperation, transforming foreign policy practices worldwide. While scholarly and policy debates largely emphasize technological rivalry among major powers, the contribution of emerging powers to responsible AI governance and peacebuilding remains underexplored. This paper examines India's evolving foreign policy strategy promoting ethical and inclusive Artificial Intelligence as a tool for sustainable peace in developing nations. Drawing upon constructivist international relations theory, technology diplomacy frameworks, and peacebuilding scholarship, the study employs qualitative policy analysis of India's domestic AI strategies and multilateral engagements. The findings demonstrate that India combines digital public infrastructure innovation with normative diplomacy to advocate human-centric and inclusive AI governance. Initiatives such as the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, India AI Mission, Digital Public Infrastructure, and India's leadership in the G20 and Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence illustrate an emerging governance model aligned with Global South priorities. The study argues that India functions as a norm entrepreneur shaping equitable technological governance while advancing peacebuilding objectives through inclusive digital transformation. The paper concludes that India's approach offers a replicable framework for developing countries seeking to harness AI responsibly while strengthening cooperative global governance.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence, Foreign Policy, Responsible AI, Peacebuilding, Technology Diplomacy, Global Governance, Global South

1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) represents one of the most transformative technological developments of the twenty-first century. Its influence extends far beyond automation and computational efficiency, reshaping economies, governance systems, military strategies, and international relations. In the contemporary global order, technological capability has increasingly become a major determinant of national power, alongside traditional indicators such as military strength, economic capacity, and political influence. Consequently, AI is no longer viewed merely as a scientific or industrial innovation; rather, it has emerged as a strategic instrument through which states pursue geopolitical influence, economic competitiveness, and diplomatic leverage.

The growing integration of AI into public administration, healthcare, agriculture, education, cybersecurity, and defence has altered the nature of global governance. Governments across the world are investing heavily in AI-driven systems to improve productivity, strengthen national security, and accelerate economic growth. International organizations and policy institutions have also recognized AI as a defining factor in future development trajectories. As a result, AI governance has become an increasingly significant component of foreign policy and international cooperation.

At the global level, discussions surrounding AI governance are often dominated by narratives of strategic competition and technological rivalry. Much of the existing literature and policy discourse focuses on the competition between technologically advanced powers, particularly the United States and China. AI is frequently portrayed as a strategic resource comparable to industrial power during the nineteenth century or nuclear capability during the Cold War era. This competition-driven framework emphasizes issues such as technological supremacy, data dominance, cyber warfare, and military modernization. While these concerns are important, such an approach tends to narrow the broader understanding of AI governance by framing technology primarily through the lens of power politics and strategic rivalry.

This dominant narrative often overlooks alternative models emerging from developing and middle-power countries that seek to use AI not only for economic or military advantage but also for inclusive development, democratic governance, and international cooperation. In this context, India has emerged as a significant actor in global digital governance. India's approach to AI differs considerably from the competitive and security-oriented

strategies adopted by major powers. Rather than focusing exclusively on technological dominance, India promotes AI within a framework centered on accessibility, affordability, democratic accountability, ethical governance, and developmental inclusion.

India's digital transformation over the last decade has strengthened its position as a leading example of technology-enabled governance. Initiatives such as Digital India, Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), CoWIN, and various e-governance platforms demonstrate how digital technologies can be utilized to expand public service delivery and improve administrative efficiency at a large scale. Building upon this experience, India increasingly views AI as a tool for social and developmental progress rather than merely a commercial or military asset. This orientation reflects a broader transformation in India's foreign policy, where technology cooperation and digital diplomacy are becoming important instruments of international engagement.

India's foreign policy approach toward AI governance is closely linked with its vision of South-South cooperation and development partnership. Through capacity-building initiatives, digital public infrastructure sharing, and technological assistance programs, India seeks to support developing nations in enhancing governance systems and achieving sustainable development goals. In recent years, India has actively promoted the idea of "AI for All," emphasizing that emerging technologies should remain accessible and beneficial to all sections of society, particularly vulnerable and marginalized populations. Such an approach positions India as an advocate of responsible and inclusive technological governance in international forums.

Simultaneously, the concept of peacebuilding within international relations and development studies has undergone significant transformation. Traditionally, peacebuilding was primarily associated with post-conflict reconstruction, ceasefire monitoring, and institutional rehabilitation in war-torn societies. However, contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes that sustainable peace depends not only on the absence of violent conflict but also on the presence of inclusive governance, social justice, economic opportunity, and institutional resilience. Modern peacebuilding therefore emphasizes prevention-oriented governance aimed at addressing structural inequalities, governance deficits, poverty, exclusion, and social instability.

In this evolving framework, AI technologies possess considerable potential to contribute to peacebuilding processes when governed ethically and responsibly. AI-driven systems can improve disaster management, strengthen healthcare accessibility, enhance agricultural productivity, support educational inclusion, and increase transparency in governance. These functions indirectly contribute to social stability by reducing inequalities, improving state capacity, and strengthening public trust in institutions. Furthermore, AI can assist governments and international organizations in conflict prevention through predictive analytics, early warning systems, and efficient resource management.

However, the relationship between AI and peacebuilding is not inherently positive. Unregulated or militarized AI applications may deepen inequalities, facilitate surveillance abuses, spread misinformation, and intensify geopolitical tensions. Therefore, the governance framework within which AI operates becomes critically important. Ethical regulation, democratic oversight, transparency, and inclusive participation are essential to ensuring that AI contributes to human security and sustainable peace rather than conflict and exclusion.

Against this background, India's approach offers an important alternative perspective within global AI governance debates. By combining technological innovation with democratic values, developmental priorities, and international cooperation, India seeks to position AI as an instrument of inclusive growth and global partnership. Its emphasis on digital public goods, capacity building, and affordable technological solutions has generated growing interest among developing countries seeking sustainable and equitable models of technological modernization.

This paper examines how India integrates AI governance into its foreign policy framework to promote peacebuilding and developmental cooperation in developing nations. It argues that India's model represents an emerging paradigm of responsible technology diplomacy that combines innovation with normative leadership. The study further explores how India's AI diplomacy contributes to institutional resilience, inclusive governance, and sustainable development, thereby expanding the role of technology in contemporary peacebuilding processes.

2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that combines insights from International Relations, Technology Studies, and Peacebuilding Theory. The integration of these perspectives helps explain how Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance has evolved from a purely technical issue into an important component of foreign policy and international cooperation. The framework further enables an understanding of how India employs AI diplomacy not only as a developmental instrument but also as a means of promoting normative leadership and sustainable peace in developing countries. The research primarily draws upon three interconnected theoretical approaches: **Constructivism and Norm Entrepreneurship**, **Technology Diplomacy**, and **Contemporary Peacebuilding Theory**. Together, these perspectives provide the conceptual foundation for analyzing India's AI governance model and its implications for global governance and peacebuilding. Anupama Vijayakumar's work on AI ethics in the Global South is particularly important in understanding India's emerging role. The study identifies four major concerns shaping Global South perspectives on AI: Extractivism, Exclusion, Ethnocentrism, and Enforcement. The paper argues that Global South countries seek AI governance models prioritizing inclusivity, sovereignty, development, and equitable technological access rather than purely commercial or geopolitical interests.

2.1 Constructivism and Norm Entrepreneurship

Constructivism emerged as a major theoretical approach in International Relations in response to realist and liberal assumptions that international politics is driven solely by material power and institutional interests. Constructivist scholars argue that international relations are socially constructed through ideas, norms, identities, and shared meanings. According to this perspective, state behavior is shaped not only by military or economic capabilities but also by values, ideational frameworks, and normative commitments.

A significant contribution within constructivist theory is the concept of **norm entrepreneurship**, developed by Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998). Norm entrepreneurs are actors—states, institutions, or individuals—who actively promote new standards of appropriate behavior in international politics. These actors seek to shape global discourse and influence international governance by advocating ethical principles and normative frameworks.

Within the context of AI governance, the constructivist approach is highly relevant because global debates around technology are increasingly centered on ethical questions such as transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, privacy, digital sovereignty, and human rights. Competing powers attempt not only to dominate technologically but also to define the norms and principles governing the future use of AI.

India's approach to AI governance reflects elements of norm entrepreneurship. Unlike technologically dominant powers that frequently frame AI within strategic competition and national security narratives, India emphasizes a **human-centric, inclusive, and development-oriented** approach. India's discourse around "AI for All" demonstrates an attempt to shape international understanding of AI as a tool for social welfare and equitable development rather than merely geopolitical advantage.

India's participation in global forums such as the G20, Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence, and United Nations further illustrates its normative engagement in digital governance discussions. Through these platforms, India promotes principles such as digital inclusivity, responsible innovation, open access, and democratic accountability. Thus, constructivism helps explain how India seeks to exercise influence through ideas, ethical discourse, and governance models rather than through coercive technological dominance alone.

2.2 Technology Diplomacy

The second conceptual pillar of this research is the theory of **Technology Diplomacy**, which examines how technological innovation increasingly shapes foreign policy and international cooperation. Traditionally, diplomacy focused on political negotiations, security alliances, trade agreements, and territorial interests. However, in the twenty-first century, technological advancements particularly in AI, cybersecurity, digital infrastructure, and data governance—have become central to diplomatic engagement.

Technology diplomacy conceptualizes technology ecosystems as instruments of strategic influence, international partnership, and global governance. Scholars such as Glenn and Monteiro (2021) argue that states now employ technological cooperation as a form of soft power capable of enhancing international legitimacy, economic connectivity, and geopolitical influence.

Under this framework, digital infrastructure, innovation partnerships, and technological capacity-building become important tools of international engagement. States capable of providing affordable and scalable technological solutions gain influence within the international system, especially among developing nations seeking modernization and digital transformation.

India's foreign policy increasingly reflects the principles of technology diplomacy. Over the past decade, India has emerged as a leading example of digital governance innovation through initiatives such as Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Digital India, DigiLocker, and CoWIN. These platforms demonstrate India's ability to build large-scale digital public infrastructure that is relatively low-cost, accessible, and adaptable to developing-country contexts.

Rather than restricting these innovations to domestic use, India has begun promoting digital cooperation internationally through South-South partnerships, technical assistance programs, and knowledge-sharing initiatives. India's digital public infrastructure model is increasingly presented as a global public good that can support governance reforms and developmental goals in Africa, Asia, and other developing regions.

In this sense, AI and digital governance become instruments of diplomacy through which India strengthens bilateral relations, expands development partnerships, and enhances its global influence. Technology diplomacy therefore provides an analytical lens for understanding how India integrates technological cooperation into foreign policy objectives while simultaneously promoting international development and institutional capacity-building. Furthermore, technology diplomacy also highlights the growing intersection between ethics and strategic interests. India's emphasis on "responsible AI" reflects an attempt to balance innovation with democratic governance principles, thereby differentiating its model from more surveillance-oriented or commercially monopolized approaches to technology governance.

2.3 Peacebuilding Theory

The third theoretical component of this research is **Contemporary Peacebuilding Theory**. Traditional understandings of peacebuilding were largely associated with post-conflict reconstruction efforts, including ceasefire implementation, state rebuilding, and humanitarian assistance in war-affected societies. However, modern peacebuilding scholarship has expanded significantly beyond these narrow definitions.

Scholars such as Johan Galtung (1996) introduced the distinction between **negative peace** and **positive peace**. Negative peace refers simply to the absence of direct violence, whereas positive peace involves the presence of social justice, institutional stability, equality, and inclusive governance structures. According to this perspective, sustainable peace cannot be achieved solely through military stabilization; it requires addressing the structural causes of conflict such as poverty, exclusion, weak institutions, inequality, and governance failures.

Similarly, Roland Paris (2004) emphasized the importance of institutional legitimacy and governance capacity in post-conflict societies. Effective institutions capable of delivering public services, maintaining accountability, and ensuring citizen participation are considered essential for long-term peace and stability.

Within this framework, AI technologies can contribute indirectly to peacebuilding by strengthening governance systems and improving developmental outcomes. AI-supported governance mechanisms may enhance administrative efficiency, healthcare delivery, disaster preparedness, agricultural productivity, and educational access. Such improvements can reduce social vulnerabilities and strengthen state legitimacy, thereby contributing to peaceful and stable societies.

For example, AI-based predictive systems may assist governments in disaster response and resource management, reducing humanitarian crises that often contribute to instability. Similarly, digital governance platforms can increase transparency and reduce corruption, enhancing public trust in institutions. AI applications in healthcare and education can also improve social inclusion by expanding access to essential services in underserved regions. However, peacebuilding theory also highlights the risks associated with unequal or unregulated technological expansion. AI systems may reinforce existing inequalities, enable mass surveillance, spread misinformation, or deepen digital exclusion if not governed responsibly. Therefore, the relationship between AI and peacebuilding is conditional upon ethical governance, democratic accountability, and inclusive implementation.

India's AI governance approach aligns closely with the broader objectives of positive peacebuilding. By emphasizing accessibility, digital inclusion, public welfare, and institutional strengthening, India presents AI as a developmental tool capable of enhancing governance capacity and social stability in developing countries. Its focus on affordable digital public infrastructure and cooperative technological partnerships further supports the principles of inclusive peacebuilding.

2.4 Conceptual Synthesis

The integration of these three theoretical approaches provides a comprehensive analytical framework for this research.

- **Constructivism** explains how India attempts to shape international AI governance through normative ideas such as inclusivity, ethical AI, and democratic accountability.
- **Technology Diplomacy** illustrates how digital innovation and AI cooperation function as instruments of foreign policy and international engagement.
- **Peacebuilding Theory** demonstrates how responsible AI governance can contribute to institutional resilience, social inclusion, and sustainable peace.

Together, these perspectives enable a deeper understanding of India's emerging role as a normative and technological actor in global governance. The framework highlights that AI governance is not solely about technological competition but also about the political values, developmental priorities, and governance models that shape the future international order.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing literature on Artificial Intelligence (AI), global governance, and peacebuilding reflects the growing recognition that emerging technologies are reshaping international politics, economic structures, and governance systems. Scholars across International Relations, Political Science, Technology Studies, and Development Studies increasingly examine AI not merely as a technological innovation but as a transformative force influencing power distribution, state capacity, and global cooperation. However, despite the rapid expansion of scholarship, important analytical gaps remain regarding the relationship between AI governance, foreign policy, and peacebuilding in the Global South.

This literature review examines six major strands of scholarship relevant to the present study: (1) AI and the transformation of global power, (2) ethical AI and responsible governance, (3) digital sovereignty and the Global South, (4) technology diplomacy and development cooperation, (5) AI and peacebuilding scholarship, and (6) the identified research gap.

3.1 Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of Global Power

The first body of literature situates AI within broader debates concerning global power transition and geopolitical competition. Contemporary scholars increasingly argue that technological capability has become a defining feature of international hierarchy in the twenty-first century. Similar to industrialization during the nineteenth century and nuclear technology during the Cold War, AI is now perceived as a strategic resource capable of reshaping global power relations.

Scholars such as Graham Allison (2017) and Elsa Kania (2018) argue that AI technologies are central to emerging geopolitical rivalries, particularly between the United States and China. Their work highlights how AI applications in military modernization, autonomous weapons systems, cybersecurity, intelligence gathering, and economic

productivity contribute to strategic competition among major powers. This perspective has led many analysts to characterize the current international environment as an emerging “AI race.”

Similarly, Kai-Fu Lee (2018) conceptualizes AI competition not primarily as an ideological struggle but as a contest between innovation ecosystems. According to Lee, countries possessing strong digital infrastructure, large-scale data access, advanced research institutions, and skilled human capital are likely to dominate future AI development. In this framework, technological ecosystems rather than traditional ideological blocs become the primary sources of geopolitical influence.

Michael Horowitz (2019) further argues that AI adoption may redistribute global power asymmetrically. States capable of effectively integrating data governance, digital infrastructure, and technological innovation are likely to gain disproportionate strategic advantages. This asymmetry may widen existing inequalities between technologically advanced countries and developing states lacking adequate infrastructure and institutional capacity.

However, several scholars criticize competition-centric narratives for excessively securitizing AI governance. Rebecca Crotoft (2020) warns that framing AI primarily through geopolitical rivalry risks encouraging regulatory fragmentation, technological nationalism, and reduced international cooperation. Excessive securitization may undermine the possibility of establishing collaborative governance frameworks capable of addressing global ethical and developmental challenges associated with AI deployment.

These debates collectively reveal an important tension within global AI governance discourse. While dominant powers emphasize strategic competition and technological supremacy, alternative perspectives advocate collaborative and development-oriented approaches. In this regard, India’s AI strategy represents a significant departure from zero-sum competition models. Rather than pursuing technological dominance alone, India promotes AI as a tool for inclusive development, international cooperation, and digital public welfare. This distinction makes India an important case study within contemporary debates on technology and global governance.

3.2 Ethical AI and Responsible Governance Frameworks

A rapidly growing body of literature focuses on the ethical challenges and governance dilemmas associated with AI technologies. As AI systems increasingly influence decision-making in areas such as healthcare, law enforcement, finance, education, and governance, concerns regarding accountability, bias, privacy, and human rights have become central to international policy discussions.

Luciano Floridi et al. (2018) propose foundational ethical principles for AI governance, including transparency, accountability, justice, beneficence, and non-maleficence. Their work emphasizes that AI systems must remain human-centered and aligned with democratic values to prevent technological harm and social exclusion.

These concerns gained further institutional recognition through the ethical framework adopted by UNESCO in 2021. UNESCO’s global recommendations on AI ethics emphasize the protection of human rights, cultural diversity, gender equality, and social inclusion. The framework calls for international cooperation to ensure that AI technologies contribute positively to sustainable development and global welfare.

A comparative analysis conducted by Anna Jobin, Marcello Ienca, and Effy Vayena (2019) demonstrates significant convergence among global AI ethics guidelines regarding principles such as fairness, transparency, and accountability. However, the study also identifies considerable divergence in implementation mechanisms, regulatory enforcement, and institutional capacity.

Importantly, much of the ethical AI literature originates from developed economies in North America and Europe. Critics argue that these frameworks may not fully address the realities of developing countries characterized by infrastructure limitations, digital inequality, governance constraints, and socio-economic disparities.

Scholars such as Nick Couldry and Ulises Mejias (2019) further critique the global digital economy by highlighting how multinational corporations increasingly concentrate control over data infrastructures. According to their analysis, digital capitalism creates new forms of dependency and inequality by transforming data into a source of economic and political power.

From this perspective, ethical AI governance must go beyond abstract principles and address structural inequalities embedded within global technological systems. Issues such as digital exclusion, unequal data access, and corporate monopolization become central concerns within debates on responsible AI governance.

India’s policy discourse attempts to reconcile ethical governance with developmental priorities. Rather than viewing ethics solely through regulatory restrictions, India emphasizes affordable, accessible, and public-oriented AI systems capable of supporting inclusive growth and governance reform. This developmental interpretation of ethical AI distinguishes India’s approach from purely market-driven or security-centered governance models.

3.3 Digital Sovereignty and the Global South

Another important strand of scholarship focuses on the concept of digital sovereignty, which refers to the capacity of states to control their digital infrastructure, data governance systems, and technological development pathways. Susan Aaronson (2021) argues that digital sovereignty has become a central concern for developing nations seeking to reduce dependency on major technological powers and multinational corporations. Control over data infrastructure increasingly influences economic autonomy, national security, and political independence.

At the same time, scholars such as Joseph Nye (2020) emphasize that technological interdependence reshapes contemporary soft power dynamics. In the digital era, countries can exercise international influence not only

through military or economic strength but also through governance models, technological standards, and digital cooperation frameworks.

India's export of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) systems—including digital identity platforms, digital payment architectures, and e-governance tools—illustrates this transformation. India increasingly positions itself as a provider of scalable and affordable technological solutions for developing nations.

Scholars focusing on the Global South, including reports by the United Nations Development Programme (2022), emphasize inclusivity, affordability, and accessibility as essential dimensions of digital governance. Many developing countries face challenges related to digital inequality, limited institutional capacity, and inadequate technological infrastructure. Consequently, governance models that prioritize low-cost and adaptable systems are often viewed as more suitable than highly commercialized Western models.

India's approach aligns closely with these priorities by promoting open architecture systems, public digital infrastructure, and technology-sharing partnerships. This has enhanced India's credibility among developing nations seeking alternatives to dependency on dominant technological powers.

3.4 Technology Diplomacy and Digital Development Cooperation

The literature on technology diplomacy explores how states increasingly employ technological innovation and digital cooperation as instruments of foreign policy and international engagement. In contemporary diplomacy, technological partnerships now complement traditional forms of economic assistance and strategic cooperation. Scholars such as Björn Fägersten and David Grimes (2021) demonstrate that digital cooperation has become an important component of international development strategies. Technology partnerships enable states to strengthen geopolitical relationships while simultaneously promoting innovation, economic integration, and governance modernization.

India's technology diplomacy differs significantly from conventional donor-recipient development models. Rather than emphasizing dependency-based aid structures, India promotes collaborative partnerships centered on capacity-building, technical assistance, and knowledge sharing.

India's digital cooperation initiatives often involve open architecture systems that can be adapted to local governance needs in developing countries. This collaborative approach increases legitimacy and trust among partner nations because it emphasizes institutional empowerment rather than technological dependency.

Furthermore, India's technological partnerships are closely linked to its broader South-South cooperation strategy. By sharing digital governance expertise and affordable technological solutions, India seeks to position itself as a developmental partner capable of supporting governance reform, financial inclusion, and public service modernization across the Global South.

3.5 Artificial Intelligence and Peacebuilding Scholarship

Traditional peacebuilding scholarship primarily focused on conflict mediation, humanitarian intervention, and post-conflict reconstruction. However, contemporary peace studies increasingly emphasize structural dimensions of peace, including governance effectiveness, institutional legitimacy, social inclusion, and economic justice.

Oliver Richmond (2014) argues that sustainable peace depends upon inclusive governance structures capable of addressing social grievances and institutional weaknesses. Peacebuilding therefore extends beyond ceasefire agreements toward broader processes of social transformation and institutional development.

Similarly, Roger Mac Ginty (2020) introduces the concept of "everyday peace," emphasizing local governance practices and institutional mechanisms that reduce grievances and improve citizen-state relations. In this context, digital governance technologies can contribute to peacebuilding by improving access to services, reducing corruption, and increasing administrative transparency.

Recent scholarship increasingly explores the application of digital technologies within humanitarian and peacebuilding contexts. Patrick Meier (2015) highlights how AI and data analytics can assist in humanitarian logistics, crisis mapping, misinformation monitoring, and disaster response coordination.

AI technologies also possess potential applications in climate risk prediction, conflict early warning systems, healthcare delivery, and resource management. Such functions may indirectly contribute to peacebuilding by reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening governance capacity.

Despite these developments, empirical research connecting AI diplomacy directly with peacebuilding outcomes remains limited. Existing literature often examines AI ethics, cybersecurity, or development separately without integrating these themes into broader analyses of foreign policy and international peacebuilding strategies.

3.6 Identified Research Gap

Although scholarship on AI governance, technology diplomacy, and peacebuilding has expanded significantly, several important gaps remain within the existing literature. In the literature gap there is limited integration between AI governance studies and foreign policy analysis. Much of the literature examines AI either as a technological issue or as a security concern without adequately exploring how states incorporate AI governance into diplomatic strategies and international cooperation frameworks. Existing scholarship remains heavily dominated by the US–China technological rivalry narrative. While this perspective is important, it often marginalizes the experiences and governance models of emerging and middle powers such as India. Consequently, alternative approaches emphasizing developmental cooperation, inclusivity, and ethical governance receive comparatively limited scholarly attention. There is a lack of comprehensive analytical frameworks linking AI

diplomacy with peacebuilding outcomes. Current studies rarely examine how responsible AI governance may contribute to institutional resilience, governance legitimacy, social inclusion, and sustainable peace in developing countries. This study seeks to address these gaps by analyzing India's approach to responsible AI diplomacy. It examines how India integrates technological innovation, ethical governance, and development cooperation into its foreign policy framework while simultaneously contributing to peacebuilding and institutional strengthening in the Global South.

4. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a **qualitative interpretive policy analysis** approach to examine the relationship between Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance, foreign policy, and peacebuilding within the context of India's international engagement. Since the study primarily focuses on ideas, governance models, diplomatic narratives, and policy frameworks rather than quantitative measurement, a qualitative methodology is considered most appropriate for understanding the normative and strategic dimensions of India's AI diplomacy.

The methodological framework is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing upon approaches from International Relations, Public Policy, Technology Governance, and Peace and Conflict Studies. The study seeks to interpret how India conceptualizes AI governance within its foreign policy discourse and how this approach contributes to broader objectives of development cooperation, institutional strengthening, and peacebuilding in developing countries.

Rather than treating AI solely as a technical innovation, the research analyzes AI governance as a political and normative process shaped by institutional priorities, ethical considerations, and geopolitical positioning. Therefore, interpretive policy analysis enables a deeper examination of the meanings, values, and strategic narratives embedded within policy documents and diplomatic initiatives.

4.1 Research Strategy

The study employs a multi-dimensional qualitative research strategy consisting of the following components:

• Document Analysis

The primary method used in this research is document analysis. Official government documents, policy frameworks, strategic reports, international declarations, multilateral statements, and institutional publications are systematically examined to understand India's approach toward AI governance and technology diplomacy.

Document analysis is particularly useful because AI governance is largely articulated through policy narratives, institutional frameworks, and diplomatic statements rather than through directly observable political behavior alone. The method allows the researcher to identify recurring themes, priorities, and normative principles within India's domestic and international policy discourse.

The analysis includes:

- National AI strategies and digital governance frameworks;
- Foreign policy statements related to technology cooperation;
- Multilateral declarations on AI ethics and digital governance;
- Reports published by international organizations;
- Public speeches and policy recommendations by governmental institutions.

Through this process, the research evaluates how AI governance is framed within broader discussions of development, inclusion, global cooperation, and responsible innovation.

• Normative Policy Interpretation

The second component of the methodology involves normative policy interpretation. This approach examines policies not only as administrative instruments but also as expressions of political values, ethical commitments, and governance philosophies.

Normative interpretation is especially relevant in the context of AI governance because debates surrounding AI increasingly involve questions of:

- ethical responsibility,
- transparency,
- inclusivity,
- human rights,
- digital sovereignty,
- democratic accountability,
- and equitable development.

The study therefore investigates how India constructs its identity as a responsible technological actor within international governance debates. Particular attention is given to concepts such as:

- "AI for All,"
- digital public infrastructure,
- responsible AI,
- inclusive innovation,
- and South-South technological cooperation.

By interpreting these policy narratives, the research seeks to understand how India attempts to shape international norms surrounding AI governance and development-oriented technology diplomacy.

• **Comparative Governance Evaluation**

The study also incorporates elements of comparative governance evaluation. India's AI governance approach is comparatively analyzed against dominant global governance models, particularly those associated with technologically advanced powers such as the United States and China.

This comparative perspective is important because global AI governance debates are frequently dominated by competition-oriented frameworks emphasizing strategic rivalry, surveillance capabilities, market dominance, and technological supremacy. India's approach appears distinct in its emphasis on:

- accessibility,
- affordability,
- developmental inclusion,
- and cooperative digital governance.

The comparative analysis does not seek to establish superiority among governance models; rather, it aims to identify differing normative orientations and diplomatic strategies within contemporary AI governance.

This approach enables the study to examine:

- how India's governance model diverges from dominant power-centric frameworks;
- how developing countries may perceive India's technological partnerships differently;
- and how alternative AI governance models contribute to evolving global governance structures.

4.2 Sources of Data

The research relies primarily on **secondary qualitative sources** obtained from governmental, institutional, and academic materials. Since the study focuses on policy discourse and governance frameworks, documentary evidence constitutes the most reliable and appropriate source base.

The major categories of sources include:

Government Policy Documents

These include:

- India's national AI strategy documents;
- Digital India initiatives;
- official policy statements on digital governance;
- Ministry reports;
- foreign policy documents related to technology cooperation;
- parliamentary discussions and policy recommendations.

Such documents help identify India's official policy orientation regarding AI governance and digital diplomacy.

Multilateral Declarations and International Frameworks

The study also examines declarations and policy frameworks issued by international and multilateral organizations such as:

- United Nations,
- UNESCO,
- G20,
- Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence,
- and the United Nations Development Programme.

These sources are important for understanding global debates concerning ethical AI, digital inclusion, and responsible governance frameworks.

Institutional and Think Tank Reports

Reports published by policy institutions, research organizations, and think tanks are used to evaluate contemporary debates on AI governance, digital sovereignty, technology diplomacy, and peacebuilding.

These materials provide:

- policy analysis,
- governance recommendations,
- comparative evaluations,
- and contemporary assessments of AI-related geopolitical developments.

Academic Scholarship

The study extensively engages with interdisciplinary academic literature from:

- International Relations,
- Political Science,
- Peace and Conflict Studies,
- Technology Governance,

- Development Studies,
- and Digital Policy research.

Books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, and scholarly reports are used to build the theoretical and analytical foundation of the research.

4.3 Analytical Framework and Logic

The analytical logic of this study is interpretive and constructivist in orientation. Policies are not viewed merely as technical instruments of administration but as expressions of normative positioning within international governance debates.

The research assumes that:

- states seek influence not only through material capabilities but also through ideas, governance models, and normative leadership;
- AI governance frameworks reflect broader political values and development priorities;
- and technology diplomacy increasingly functions as a mechanism of international legitimacy and soft power.

Accordingly, the analysis focuses on how India's AI-related policies and diplomatic initiatives communicate broader normative commitments concerning:

- ethical governance,
- democratic accountability,
- developmental inclusion,
- digital accessibility,
- and international cooperation.

The study further evaluates how these policy orientations contribute to peacebuilding indirectly through:

- institutional strengthening,
- governance modernization,
- service delivery improvement,
- digital inclusion,
- and social stability.

In analytical terms, the research proceeds through three interconnected levels: that it identifies the normative principles embedded within India's AI governance discourse. Secondly it examines how these principles are translated into foreign policy initiatives and international technological partnerships. It evaluates the broader implications of these initiatives for peacebuilding, governance resilience, and development cooperation within the Global South.

4.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this research is primarily conceptual and policy-oriented. It focuses on India's role in international AI governance and technology diplomacy rather than conducting technical evaluations of AI systems themselves. The study does not attempt to measure the quantitative effectiveness of specific AI programs. Instead, it analyzes the political, diplomatic, and normative dimensions of AI governance.

Certain limitations also exist:

- AI governance remains a rapidly evolving field with continuously changing regulatory frameworks;
- many international initiatives are still in developmental stages;
- and empirical evidence linking AI diplomacy directly with peacebuilding outcomes remains limited.

Nevertheless, the interpretive approach adopted in this research allows for a comprehensive understanding of emerging governance trends and provides an important foundation for future empirical and comparative studies.

5–10. Expanded Analytical Sections

The following analytical sections build upon the theoretical and methodological foundations established above. These sections provide an in-depth examination of India's AI governance model, technology diplomacy initiatives, ethical frameworks, and peacebuilding contributions within the Global South.

The analytical discussion explores:

- India's evolving digital governance architecture,
- AI as an instrument of foreign policy,
- India's role in shaping global AI norms,
- the relationship between AI governance and sustainable peace,
- challenges associated with digital inequality and regulatory fragmentation,
- and the future implications of responsible AI diplomacy for international governance.

These sections collectively aim to demonstrate that India's approach represents an alternative paradigm within global AI governance—one that emphasizes cooperation, inclusivity, institutional resilience, and development-oriented technological transformation rather than purely strategic competition.

5. Domestic Foundations of Responsible AI Governance

India's domestic digital transformation forms the foundation of its international advocacy for responsible and inclusive AI governance. Unlike many governance frameworks that remain largely theoretical or limited to advanced economies, India's digital systems have been implemented at an unprecedented population scale. The successful deployment of these systems in a diverse and resource-constrained environment has strengthened India's credibility as a model for technology-driven governance and development.

Over the past decade, India has developed a broad digital governance ecosystem through initiatives such as Digital India, Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), DigiLocker, and various e-governance platforms. These initiatives have transformed public administration by improving service delivery, increasing financial inclusion, and strengthening administrative efficiency. Importantly, these systems were designed not only for technological modernization but also for expanding accessibility among marginalized and economically weaker populations.

One of the most significant aspects of India's digital transformation has been the development of digital identity infrastructure. The Aadhaar system, which provides biometric-based digital identification, enabled millions of citizens to access welfare programs, banking services, healthcare schemes, and public subsidies more efficiently. By reducing duplication, corruption, and administrative leakages, digital identity systems contributed to greater transparency and inclusion in welfare distribution.

This transformation is important in the context of peacebuilding and governance because structural inequalities, exclusion from public services, and weak institutional delivery mechanisms are often associated with social instability and conflict vulnerability. India's experience demonstrates how technology-enabled governance can strengthen state capacity and improve citizen trust in institutions.

Furthermore, India's approach emphasizes affordability and scalability, making its governance model particularly relevant for developing countries facing similar developmental challenges. Rather than relying exclusively on high-cost technological systems, India developed relatively low-cost and adaptable digital public infrastructure capable of functioning at large scale.

India's domestic experience therefore serves as an important basis for its international promotion of "AI for All" and responsible technology governance. By demonstrating that digital technologies can support inclusion, transparency, and welfare delivery, India positions itself as a credible advocate for development-oriented AI governance within global policy debates.

6. India's AI Diplomacy

In recent years, India's foreign policy has increasingly incorporated digital cooperation, technological partnerships, and AI governance into its diplomatic strategy. As emerging technologies become central to global governance and economic development, India has sought to position itself not only as a technological innovator but also as a responsible and development-oriented digital partner for the Global South.

India's AI diplomacy is based on the idea that technology should function as an instrument of cooperation rather than merely a source of geopolitical competition. Unlike major powers that often frame AI within strategic rivalry and technological dominance, India emphasizes accessibility, inclusiveness, capacity building, and shared digital development. Through this approach, India aims to build international partnerships that strengthen governance systems and support sustainable development in developing nations.

A major component of India's AI diplomacy involves digital cooperation agreements, technical assistance programs, and institutional capacity-building initiatives. India has increasingly collaborated with countries in Asia, Africa, and other developing regions by sharing expertise in digital governance, public service delivery systems, digital payment infrastructure, and e-governance technologies. These partnerships often focus on improving administrative efficiency, financial inclusion, healthcare access, and digital connectivity.

India's technological engagement differs from traditional donor-recipient development models because it emphasizes collaboration and knowledge-sharing rather than dependency. Through training programs, digital skill development initiatives, and technological advisory mechanisms, India seeks to empower partner countries to develop their own governance capacities. This cooperative approach enhances India's image as a trusted development partner and strengthens its diplomatic influence among developing nations.

An important feature of India's AI diplomacy is its promotion of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). India's experience with platforms such as Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), DigiLocker, and CoWIN has demonstrated how scalable and affordable digital systems can improve governance and public service delivery. India increasingly presents these platforms as adaptable governance models that can support digital transformation in other developing countries.

India's G20 Presidency marked a significant moment in the internationalization of this approach. During its presidency, India strongly promoted discussions on Digital Public Infrastructure as a "global public good." This initiative represented an important shift in global technology governance discourse—from competitive technological nationalism toward cooperative and inclusive digital development.

By emphasizing open, secure, and accessible digital systems, India advocated a governance model that prioritizes public welfare and institutional inclusion. The focus on DPI also reflected India's broader belief that digital technologies should contribute to social and economic empowerment rather than deepen global inequalities.

At the multilateral level, India has actively participated in international discussions concerning ethical AI, data governance, and responsible innovation. Through engagement with organizations such as the United Nations,

UNESCO, and Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence, India promotes principles of transparency, inclusivity, democratic accountability, and human-centric AI governance.

India's AI diplomacy therefore reflects a broader transformation in contemporary foreign policy, where technological cooperation has become an important component of international engagement and soft power. By combining digital innovation with developmental partnership and ethical governance principles, India seeks to establish itself as a bridge between advanced technological economies and developing nations.

This approach also strengthens India's normative influence in global governance debates. Rather than competing solely for technological supremacy, India attempts to shape international discussions around the idea that AI and digital technologies should support inclusive growth, institutional resilience, and sustainable development. In this sense, India's AI diplomacy represents an emerging model of responsible technology governance within the evolving international order.

7. Responsible AI in Peacebuilding Practice

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can contribute to peacebuilding not only through direct conflict-management mechanisms but also through improvements in governance, institutional efficiency, and public service delivery. Contemporary peacebuilding increasingly recognizes that sustainable peace depends upon strong institutions, social inclusion, and effective governance. In this context, responsibly governed AI technologies can help reduce structural conditions that often contribute to instability, inequality, and social conflict.

Conflict Prevention

One important contribution of AI in peacebuilding is its potential role in conflict prevention. AI-based predictive analytics can assist governments and international organizations in identifying early signs of social unrest, economic stress, migration pressures, or political instability. By analyzing large volumes of data, AI systems can help detect patterns that may indicate rising tensions before they escalate into violent conflict.

Such early-warning mechanisms improve the ability of institutions to respond proactively through policy intervention, humanitarian assistance, or governance reforms. Although AI cannot replace political decision-making, it can support more informed and timely responses to emerging crises.

Disaster Governance

AI technologies also strengthen disaster governance and humanitarian response systems. Climate-related disasters, pandemics, food insecurity, and resource shortages often increase social vulnerability and may intensify existing conflicts in fragile societies. AI-driven forecasting systems can improve preparedness by predicting weather patterns, floods, droughts, disease outbreaks, and other humanitarian risks.

More effective disaster management reduces human suffering, displacement, and economic disruption, thereby contributing indirectly to social stability and peacebuilding. AI-supported logistics and resource management systems can also improve the efficiency of relief operations in crisis situations.

Institutional Trust and Governance Transparency

Another significant contribution of responsible AI governance is the strengthening of institutional trust. Weak governance, corruption, administrative inefficiency, and unequal access to public services often create grievances that undermine social stability. Transparent digital governance systems can reduce these problems by improving accountability and efficiency in public administration.

Digital platforms used for welfare distribution, financial inclusion, healthcare delivery, and public service management can reduce corruption and increase citizen confidence in state institutions. When citizens experience fair and efficient governance, trust in institutions tends to improve, reducing frustration and social tensions.

In this way, AI contributes to peacebuilding indirectly by supporting inclusive governance, strengthening institutional legitimacy, and addressing structural inequalities. However, these benefits depend upon ethical implementation, democratic oversight, and inclusive access to technology. Responsible governance therefore remains essential to ensuring that AI serves as a tool for peace and development rather than exclusion or surveillance.

8. India as a Norm Entrepreneur

India is increasingly emerging as a norm entrepreneur in the field of AI governance and digital diplomacy. Rather than promoting a model based solely on technological supremacy or strategic competition, India advances a governance philosophy that seeks to balance innovation with ethical responsibility, democratic accountability, and developmental inclusion.

India's diplomatic discourse consistently emphasizes concepts such as "AI for All," digital accessibility, public welfare, and inclusive technological growth. This approach reflects the belief that emerging technologies should serve broader social and developmental objectives rather than remain concentrated within a few technologically advanced economies or private corporations. By advocating affordable and scalable digital systems, India positions itself as a representative voice for the concerns and priorities of developing nations.

In international governance debates, norm entrepreneurship refers to the ability of states or institutions to shape global standards, values, and policy frameworks through ideas and persuasion rather than coercive power. India's role as a norm entrepreneur is visible in its efforts to promote responsible AI governance within multilateral forums and international partnerships.

India advances this normative influence in three important ways:

Agenda-Setting

India actively introduces issues related to digital inclusion, ethical AI, and digital public infrastructure into global policy discussions. During its G20 Presidency, India emphasized Digital Public Infrastructure as a global public good and encouraged discussions on inclusive technological governance. By bringing developmental concerns into AI governance debates, India broadens the international agenda beyond security competition and market dominance.

Coalition-Building

India also engages in coalition-building through partnerships with developing countries, multilateral organizations, and digital cooperation initiatives. Its South-South cooperation framework strengthens collaboration in areas such as digital governance, capacity building, and technological training. Through these partnerships, India promotes collective approaches to responsible technology governance and strengthens its legitimacy among Global South nations.

Institutional Embedding of Principles

Another aspect of India's norm entrepreneurship involves embedding ethical principles within international governance frameworks and institutional discussions. India consistently supports ideas such as transparency, accountability, accessibility, and human-centric AI in organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, and the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence.

Through these efforts, India seeks to institutionalize governance norms that prioritize cooperation, inclusivity, and responsible innovation. Its approach demonstrates that influence in the digital age is not determined only by technological capability but also by the ability to shape global ideas, governance principles, and developmental priorities.

Thus, India's role as a norm entrepreneur represents an important alternative within contemporary AI governance debates, offering a model that combines technological advancement with ethical and developmental concerns.

9. Challenges and Risks

Despite the growing potential of AI in governance and peacebuilding, several important challenges and risks remain. One major concern is **algorithmic bias**, where AI systems may produce unfair or discriminatory outcomes due to biased data or unequal representation. Such biases can deepen existing social inequalities and reduce public trust in institutions.

Another challenge is **digital inequality**. Many developing countries still face limited access to digital infrastructure, internet connectivity, and technological resources. Unequal access to AI technologies may widen developmental gaps between and within societies.

AI systems are also vulnerable to **cybersecurity threats**, including data breaches, cyberattacks, and misuse of sensitive information. Weak cybersecurity frameworks can undermine governance systems and create risks for national and international security.

In addition, the absence of uniform international regulations has resulted in **regulatory fragmentation**, where different countries adopt conflicting approaches to AI governance. This limits global cooperation and creates difficulties in establishing common ethical and legal standards.

Addressing these challenges requires stronger international coordination, ethical regulation, and inclusive governance frameworks to ensure that AI technologies contribute to development, stability, and sustainable peace.

10. DISCUSSION

India's AI diplomacy reflects an important shift in global technological governance from competition-based approaches toward responsibility-centered cooperation. Instead of focusing primarily on technological dominance, India promotes a model based on inclusivity, accessibility, ethical governance, and developmental partnership.

Through initiatives related to digital public infrastructure, capacity building, and responsible AI, India demonstrates that technological leadership can also emerge through cooperation and public-oriented innovation. This approach is particularly significant for developing countries seeking affordable and inclusive governance models.

India's experience suggests that AI governance is not only about strategic power but also about building institutional trust, supporting development, and strengthening international collaboration. In this sense, India offers an alternative framework for global AI governance that combines technological progress with social responsibility and peace-oriented development.

11. CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly transforming the nature of international relations, governance, and development in the twenty-first century. As AI increasingly influences economic systems, public administration, security policies, and global decision-making, it has become an essential component of contemporary foreign policy. In this changing environment, the challenge for states is not only to achieve technological advancement but also to ensure that emerging technologies are governed responsibly, ethically, and inclusively.

This study demonstrates that India has emerged as an important actor in shaping alternative approaches to global AI governance. Unlike dominant power-centric models that emphasize strategic rivalry and technological

supremacy, India promotes a development-oriented and human-centric vision of AI. Through its emphasis on digital inclusion, affordable technological infrastructure, capacity building, and international cooperation, India seeks to position AI as a tool for public welfare and sustainable development rather than merely geopolitical competition.

India's domestic digital transformation has strengthened its credibility in global governance debates. Large-scale initiatives related to digital identity, digital payments, and public service delivery illustrate how technology can improve governance efficiency, expand inclusion, and strengthen institutional capacity in resource-constrained environments. These experiences form the foundation of India's international AI diplomacy and its advocacy for responsible and accessible digital governance in developing nations.

The study also highlights that responsible AI governance can contribute significantly to peacebuilding processes. AI technologies, when implemented ethically, can support conflict prevention, disaster management, governance transparency, and institutional trust. By reducing administrative inefficiencies, improving service delivery, and addressing structural inequalities, AI can indirectly strengthen social stability and reduce conditions that contribute to conflict and insecurity.

India's role as a norm entrepreneur further reflects its growing influence within international technological governance. Through multilateral engagement, digital cooperation initiatives, and the promotion of Digital Public Infrastructure as a global public good, India advocates governance principles based on inclusivity, democratic accountability, and cooperative technological development. This approach provides an important alternative for Global South countries seeking equitable and development-focused models of digital transformation.

However, the future of responsible AI governance also depends upon addressing challenges such as algorithmic bias, digital inequality, cybersecurity risks, and regulatory fragmentation. These concerns require stronger global cooperation and the development of transparent, ethical, and participatory governance frameworks.

In conclusion, India's approach demonstrates that technological leadership in the contemporary world can emerge not only through economic or military dominance but also through inclusive innovation, ethical governance, and international partnership. By integrating AI governance into its foreign policy and development cooperation strategies, India offers a significant framework for promoting sustainable peace, institutional resilience, and cooperative global governance in the digital age.

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