



Mains Practice Question

Q. Impact of digital technology as a reliable source of input for rational decision making is a debatable issue. Critically evaluate with suitable example. (150 Words)

24 Mar, 2022 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Discuss how digital technologies can act as a reliable source of input for rational decision making.
- Discuss how it is not always a better option and has some challenges.
- Conclude with the point that technology is value neutral and depends on the man using it.

Introduction

A decision maker is characterised by two binary relations. The first reflects decisions that are rational in an “objective” sense: the decision maker can convince others that she is right in making them. The second relation models decisions that are rational in a “subjective” sense: the decision maker cannot be convinced that she is wrong in making them. Objectivity or rationality in decision making depends upon availability, quantity and quality of data.

Body

Digital technology has almost become ubiquitous in all phases of the decision-making process. At the data collection stage, people use technology to access information, and this information influences the decision maker in the following decision steps. Technology helps people filter, analyse, and process information as well as formulate alternatives and evaluate them, whether consciously or unconsciously.

Digital technologies can act as a reliable source of input for rational decision, as

- Big data analysis can predict future progression of an event like climate change, COVID-19 outbreak etc., which helps in rational decisions and course corrections.
- It enables data sharing and monitoring in real time, helping in identifying bottlenecks and undertaking necessary reforms.
- Digital technologies have also made it easier to collect and collate data and convert it using various algorithms, which can help in surveys like census, NFHS etc.
- It also helps in integrating data and information spread across different departments, ministries and geographies, which provides a holistic picture.
- Through correct measures and ways, it can act as a reliable source to spread information and make people aware.

As a coin has two sides, every situation too has its pros and cons too. **Digital technologies can be a reliable source, but at times, this perception changes.** It can be concluded so by:

- Digital technologies are devoid of human emotions and decisions based on such information can violate basic principles of compassion and fairness.
- Digital technologies have resulted in targeted messages changing the attitude of recipients and manipulating them, as seen during elections.

- Digital technology impacts decisions and leads to bounded rationality.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, digital media was the hub of unverified information creating confusions and cognitive dissonance.

Conclusion

Thus, digital technology provides information but objectivity of decisions is also based on human values, attitudes and conscience.

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