

Ye AI kya hai? (What is this AI?)

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Recently called a plumber for some work and during the discussion he asked, ye AI kya hai bhai? (What is this AI?). I told him that it is an intelligence which is not natural but manmade and helping the generation to get all things done at one place and also helping to reduce the workload. Giving an example I asked him how he use WhatsApp, he said usme kya hai bolo aur wo ya to bola hua likh deta hai ya recording bhej deta hai. (I speak and it transcribes it and sometimes I send the audio recording as it is). Then I asked him did he use instagram or facebook? he smiled and said bikul updated hu bhai (I am updated with facebook and instagram). I asked what type of reels and advertisement he look at? He said wahi jo mai dekhta hu ya kabhi kabhi mai kuch baat karta hu to wo bhi ad aa jaata hai. (all thing which I watch and like in the reels, even I get advertisements of all those things which I discussed with someone but not in facebook or instagram). Now, I told him this is AI which helps you transcribe your voice or which curate the advertisement and reels for you. And this is just the beginning; it has much more potential than we think of. I shared an incident; I got a call from police wala on whatsapp and he told me that my number has been given by a woman who has charged me of some bad behavior and he want me to report in the police station of Delhi. I was in dehradun and he was very loud in asking me questions. After some time of discussion, I noticed his lips were not following the words, so I asked him please give some guidance, and he shared a link and asked to send ony Rs.2000/- and said he will give that money to her and warned me not to do it again. That was the trap, I blocked and reported the same to the Whatsapp and deleted the chat too. It was an AI generated video. The plumber said, he also got a chat message from his relative asking for money, and he paid the same but later on it was found that it was a fraud and I lost my money too.

Now, he asked a deeprooted question, hamne hi ise banaya hai aur ye hamari hi naukri khaa rahaa hai ye to pairon me kulhari maarne jaisa hai. (it is like Frankenstein that we made it and it is taking our jobs). Aur to aur ye to hamare sochne ko bhi rok raha hai, ham ko sochne tak ki zaroorat nahi hai sab tahi kar lega, aakhir me ham kahaa jayenge? ye to ham par raaj karega aur hamare paas iski baat maanane ke alawa kuch nahi bachega. (Moreover, it is hindering our thought process, we need

not to think as AI will do everything, what will we do at the end of the day then? it will start ruling us and we don't have the choice except to follow it. I told him there would be policies, regulations, safeguards — that governments and companies were already working on this. But I also admitted something quieter: that much of what feels free and effortless today may carry a cost tomorrow, simply because we will have grown so used to it, so dependent on it, that doing without it will no longer feel possible. He said, *koi baat nahi tab tak mai nahi rahunga*, is generation ko isko sochna chahiye. (No issue as I will not be in this world till that time but this generation has to think on this as they will be the main sufferers. He left.

I kept turning the conversation over in my head, and it inevitably led me back to my own work in education, where I have started noticing a quieter, more familiar version of the same pattern.

Take a fairly ordinary workflow: someone is asked to develop a teacher training module. They turn to AI, generate the content, and simply copy, paste, and format it before passing it to a reviewer. The reviewer, in turn, asks AI for review criteria, feeds the module back into AI for evaluation against those criteria, and copies, pastes, and formats the feedback before returning it. The original creator then hands AI the reviewer's comments, asks it to revise the module accordingly, and once again copies, pastes, and formats the result. The module is now ready for use at scale — having passed through several human hands, yet barely touched by human thought.

Or consider a grade-one classroom equipped with an interactive screen donated by some well-meaning organization. The teacher simply types in the day's learning outcome, and AI generates not just a lesson plan but full videos, cartoons, and activities to go with it. The teacher plays the video; the children watch. By the teacher's own account, they are learning. Are they?

Organizations such as the World Health Organization and the American Academy of Pediatrics have long pointed to the risks excessive early screen time can carry for language development, attention, sleep, physical activity, and social interaction. Researchers continue to debate exactly how, when, and how much AI should enter a young child's learning experience — but the debate itself is a reminder that convenience and learning are not automatically the same thing.

I don't claim any expertise on AI — this is simply one person's view, shaped by limited but real encounters with what it can do and what it can quietly take away. But if that conversation with a plumber left me with anything, it's this: the antidote to drifting along with AI isn't rejecting it, but staying awake while using it. It would help all of us — in classrooms and beyond — to talk, to think, and to work, rather than simply to copy, paste, and format.

Yashvendra