International Journal of Web of Multidisciplinary Studies
(Peer-Reviewed, Open Access, Fully Refereed International Journal)
website: https://ijwos.com OPEN ACCESS E-ISSN : 3049-2424
Volume 3 Issue 4 , April 2026
DOI: https://doi.org/10.71366/ijwos03042647634

Karma and Accountability in AI: A Philosophical and Ethical Analysis

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Article Info

Article History:

Published:13 April 2026

Publication Issue:
Volume 3, Issue 4
April-2026

Page Number:
136-147

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Abstract:

This article Karma and Accountability in AI: A Philosophical and Ethical Analysis examines how actions performed by artificial intelligence systems generate consequences, and how responsibility for those outcomes is assigned, drawing on ethical theories and the concept of karma to evaluate moral agency and accountability. It examines the conventional understandings of karma in Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism, highlighting the connection among action, intention, and outcome. According to karmic theory, deliberate acts that invariably result in commensurate outcomes, often referred to as karma-phala, give birth to moral obligation. This principle emphasizes the moral significance of personal accountability and the broader moral ramifications of human behaviour. The study further investigates contemporary challenges related to accountability in artificial intelligence, including the difficulty of assigning responsibility in complex technological systems, the problem of machine autonomy, and the emergence of the "responsibility gap" in AI decision-making. By comparing karmic theory with Western ethical frameworks, the article analyzes how different philosophical traditions address moral responsibility and ethical evaluation. It also explores the question of whether AI systems themselves can possess karma, concluding that while machines lack consciousness and moral intention, the humans involved in designing and deploying AI systems remain ethically accountable for their outcomes. Finally, the article argues that karmic philosophy provides a valuable ethical perspective for understanding accountability in AI development. By emphasizing the connection between intention, action, and consequence, the concept of karma can contribute to discussions on responsible AI and the establishment of ethical governance in emerging technologies.

Keywords: Karma, Accountability, Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, Responsibility

1. Introduction

The everyday expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed many aspects of modern society, including healthcare, transportation, finance, education, and governance. Advanced AI systems now perform tasks that previously required human intelligence, such as decision-making, data analysis, and prediction. While these developments bring significant benefits, they also raise serious ethical concerns. As AI systems become more autonomous, they increasingly influence human lives and social structures. This situation raises important moral questions regarding responsibility, fairness, and the potential consequences of automated decisions.

The issue of accountability is one of the main ethical challenges in AI research. It is challenging to decide who should be held accountable when an AI system causes harm or results in an undesired consequence. Programmers, designers, businesses, and users are just a few of the actors who may be held accountable. Additionally, a lot of AI systems use intricate algorithms that act as "black boxes," making it challenging to understand how they make decisions. The chain of moral accountability becomes unclear as a result of this lack

of openness, which academics frequently refer to as a "responsibility gap." Establishing precise ethical frameworks for accountability becomes more crucial as AI technologies develop.

In this regard, the philosophical idea of karma provides an insightful viewpoint for analyzing accountability in AI ethics. The idea that every action has commensurate consequences is known as karma in several Indian philosophical traditions. Intention, action, and the outcomes are all directly related to moral responsibility. The idea of karmic causality can nonetheless offer a helpful ethical comparison even though AI systems themselves might not have moral consciousness or intention. It highlights that technology activities, such as creating, implementing, and utilizing AI systems, have an impact on people and society and are not morally neutral.

Applying the idea of karma to AI ethics promotes a more comprehensive view of accountability. This viewpoint emphasizes the network of human actors participating in the AI lifecycle, including developers, institutions, policymakers, and users, rather than just the machine. Each participant shares some ethical responsibility since they all contribute to the results produced by AI systems.

The objective of this paper is to investigate how the philosophical concept of karma can aid in the creation of an ethical framework for AI accountability by examining the relationship between action, intention, and consequence. The article argues that a karmic perspective can help clarify moral responsibility in the design and use of artificial intelligence. Ultimately, this approach aims to promote more responsible and ethically grounded AI development.

2. Concept of Karma in Indian Philosophy

The concept of karma refers to the moral principle that every action produces corresponding consequences. In Indian philosophical traditions, karma connects intention, action, and result, emphasizing moral responsibility for one's deeds. This idea can help explain accountability in AI ethics by highlighting those technological actions, such as designing and deploying AI systems, also have societal consequences. Although machines lack moral intention, the humans involved in AI development remain responsible for the outcomes created by these systems.[1]

In Indian philosophy, the concept of karma refers to the universal moral law that connects actions with their consequences. The term "karma," derived from the Sanskrit root *kri* (to act), signifies that every action performed by an individual, whether physical, verbal, or mental, produces corresponding results. This principle operates as a moral cause-and-effect relationship governing human life and ethical responsibility. In many Indian philosophical traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, karma explains how actions influence both present and future experiences. Moral actions generate positive outcomes, while harmful actions lead to negative consequences. According to Surendranath Dasgupta, karma represents the causal relation between human actions and their moral consequences, emphasizing that individuals are responsible for the outcomes of their deeds.[2] Similarly, Chandradhar Sharma explains that karma operates as a universal ethical law in Indian thought, linking intention, action, and result within a system of moral accountability.[3]

[1] Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli. *Indian Philosophy*. Vol. 1, Oxford University Press, 1923,
[2] Dasgupta, Surendranath. *A History of Indian Philosophy*. Vol. 1, Cambridge University Press, 1922, p. 89.
[3] Sharma, Chandradhar. *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1960, p. 72.

In Indian philosophy, karma is broadly classified into three types: Sanchita Karma (Accumulated Karma), Prarabdha Karma (Fructifying Karma) and Agami Karma (Future Karma). These three together explain the continuity of moral causation across past, present, and future in Indian philosophical thought.

Sanchita Karma refers to the entire accumulation of actions (karma) performed by an individual across countless past births (Brahma Sutras (3.2.38–41). It includes every thought, intention, and deed, both virtuous (punya) and non-virtuous (papa), that have not yet produced their results. Philosophically, Sanchita Karma explains the continuity of the soul (atman) across rebirths and preserves the moral order of the universe (Chandogya Upanishad (5.10.7) and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (4.4.5)). It also emphasizes that no action is ever lost; every deed leaves an imprint (samskara) that remains until it is experienced or neutralized through knowledge (jnana), devotion (bhakti), or right action (karma yoga).

Prarabdha Karma is the portion of Sanchita Karma that has begun to bear fruit in the present life (Brahma Sutras 3.2.38–41). It is responsible for determining key aspects of one's existence, such as birth, physical body, family, lifespan, and major life experiences. The Prarabdha governs the general framework of life; it does not eliminate human freedom. Individuals still have the capacity to respond to circumstances with wisdom or ignorance. In many Indian philosophical systems, even enlightened beings (jnanis) continue to experience Prarabdha Karma until the body falls, though they remain inwardly detached.

Agami Karma refers to the new karma generated by actions performed in the present life. Every intentional act, whether physical, verbal, or mental, creates consequences that will manifest in the future (Bhagavad Gita 3.5, 3.9). This type of karma highlights the role of free will and moral responsibility. Unlike Prarabdha, which must be experienced, Agami Karma is continuously created and can be shaped through conscious and ethical living. After death, Agami Karma is added to the store of Sanchita Karma, thereby influencing future births. However, spiritual practices such as selfless action, devotion, and knowledge can purify or even prevent the accumulation of new karma.

Therefore, in artificial intelligence (AI), the threefold concept of karma offers a meaningful ethical parallel. Sanchita resembles accumulated data and embedded biases shaping system behavior, while Prarabdha reflects real-time outputs produced from prior programming and inputs. Agami represents the future consequences generated through ongoing learning and interactions. Together, they highlight how past data conditions present decisions and future outcomes, raising critical questions about accountability, ethical responsibility, and the need for transparent, responsible development in AI systems.

Concept of Karma in Hinduism

The concept of karma in Hinduism denotes the moral principle that every action, mental, verbal, or physical, produces consequences that shape an individual's present and future experiences. Functioning within the cycle of rebirth (*samsara*), karma links ethical conduct with cosmic order. Righteous actions aligned with *dharma* yield beneficial results, while wrongful deeds lead to suffering. Although past actions influence current conditions, human beings retain the capacity for conscious choice. Through disciplined paths such as selfless action, devotion, and knowledge, one can reduce karmic effects and ultimately attain liberation (*moksha*)[4]. When applied to AI ethics, karma provides a framework emphasizing that developers and users are morally responsible for the consequences produced by AI systems they create or deploy. Just as karma links intention and action to

[4] Bhagavad Gita 3.9; Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli. Indian Philosophy, Vol. 1 108–110; Hiriyanna, M. Outlines of Indian Philosophy, p. 146–148

results, AI governance should connect human decisions in design and deployment with ethical responsibility for technological impacts.[5]

Concept of Karma in Buddhism

In Buddhism, karma refers to intentional action (*cetana*) that shapes future experiences within the cycle of rebirth. Unlike a purely mechanical law, karma is fundamentally ethical and rooted in intention rather than mere action. Good intentions generate wholesome results, while harmful intentions lead to suffering. Karma operates alongside dependent origination, explaining how present conditions arise from past causes. Although past actions influence life circumstances, individuals retain the ability to transform their future through right understanding, ethical conduct, and mental discipline, ultimately aiming at liberation (*nirvana*).[6] In the context of AI ethics, the Buddhist view of karma highlights accountability for the intentions behind technological design and use. Developers and institutions must act with ethical awareness, recognizing that the impacts of AI systems, whether beneficial or harmful, reflect the moral quality of the decisions guiding their creation and deployment.[7]

Concept of Karma in Jainism

In Jainism, karma is understood as a form of subtle material substance (karma pudgala) that attaches to the soul (*jiva*) due to actions driven by passions such as anger, pride, and greed. Unlike purely ethical interpretations, Jain philosophy treats karma as a physical reality that binds the soul and obscures its inherent qualities of knowledge and purity. Every action, mental, verbal, or bodily, attracts karmic particles, leading to bondage and continued rebirth. Liberation is achieved through stopping the influx of karma (*samvara*) and shedding accumulated karma (*nirjara*) by means of right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct. In the context of AI ethics, this concept emphasizes human accountability for technological outcomes, encouraging responsible design and use of AI systems that minimize harm and promote ethical awareness. Padmanabh S. Jaini explains that in Jain philosophy, karma is a material entity that attaches to the soul through actions driven by passions, binding the soul to worldly existence.[8] Similarly, Paul Dundas notes that moral discipline and non-violence are essential in Jain ethics because actions inevitably produce karmic consequences affecting future experiences.[9]

Consequently, the concept of karma in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism provides a profound philosophical lens for understanding accountability in artificial intelligence. While differing in interpretation, all three traditions affirm that actions generate consequences and entail responsibility. Hinduism highlights the continuity of past, present, and future actions, paralleling data-driven AI systems; Buddhism emphasizes intention, drawing attention to ethical design and developer responsibility; and Jainism underscores accumulated effects, resembling systemic bias and error. Together, they illustrate how conditioned systems still allow ethical intervention, reinforcing responsible AI governance.

Karma as moral causation: Unity of Intention and Action

It refers to the idea that ethical consequences arise from the inseparable link between one's inner intentions and outward deeds. Actions are not judged merely by their visible outcomes, but by the motivations that generate them. This unity emphasizes responsibility, where thought and conduct together shape moral results, influencing

[5] Sharma, Arvind. *The Concept of Karma in Indian Thought*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1983, p. 112.
[6] *Dhammapada*, Translated by Eknath Easwaran, Nilgiri Press, 2007, pp. 3–5.
[7] Keown, Damien. *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 2005. P.69.
[8] Jaini, Padmanabh S. *The Jaina Path of Purification*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1979.
[9] Dundas, Paul. *The Jains*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002.

both personal character and future experiences within a continuous chain of cause and effect. The doctrine of karma also highlights the role of intention behind actions. Actions performed with awareness and moral purpose lead to beneficial consequences, whereas harmful actions result in negative outcomes. As noted by S. C. Chatterjee and Dhirendra Mohan Datta, karma functions as a principle of ethical justice that ensures individuals experience the results of their actions either in the present life or in future existence.[10] When applied to discussions of artificial intelligence, the concept of karma provides a philosophical perspective on accountability, suggesting that those who design and deploy technological systems remain morally responsible for the consequences of their actions. Based on Indian philosophy, karma is a type of moral causality in which each deliberate action has a proportional effect. Positive consequences are produced by activities driven by good intentions, and negative outcomes are produced by destructive behaviors. This moral precept creates a moral hierarchy in which people are accountable for the consequences of their actions. According to Surendranath Dasgupta, karma establishes a causal relationship between human behavior and unavoidable ethical consequences.[11] In the same way, Chandradhar Sharma observes that the concept of karma highlights responsibility through the connection between deeds and their outcomes.[12] This principle emphasizes the accountability of persons who create and implement technology systems in debates about AI ethics.

According to Indian philosophy, an action's moral worth is determined by its aim within the framework of the karma system. In addition to their results, actions are assessed based on the inspiration behind them. Since moral responsibility results from conscious choice, intention (cetana) is regarded in Buddhist thinking as the primary component of karma. As explained by Peter Harvey, karma is essentially dependent on deliberate action, which means that moral consequences result from the reason behind actions.[13] In a similar vein, Damien Keown highlights that actions' karmic outcomes and ethical significance are determined by their intention.[14] Because designers' and developers' intentions influence the outcomes that AI systems create, this concept is pertinent to AI ethics.

In Indian philosophy, karma as action refers to deliberate acts performed through body, speech, or mind that generate moral consequences. These actions are not ethically neutral; they form part of a causal moral order in which individuals become responsible for the results of their deeds. According to Surendranath Dasgupta, karma signifies intentional activity that inevitably produces corresponding effects within the moral structure of the universe.[15] Similarly, Chandradhar Sharma explains that actions motivated by intention determine the ethical experiences individuals encounter.[16] In AI ethics, this principle highlights that human actions in designing and deploying AI systems carry moral accountability.

3. Consequence (Karma-Phala)

In Indian philosophy, karma-phala refers to the consequence or “fruit” of actions. Every intentional action inevitably produces results that affect an individual’s present or future experiences. This doctrine emphasizes moral accountability, since individuals must face the outcomes of their deeds according to the law of moral causation. As noted by S. C. Chatterjee and Dhirendra Mohan Datta, karma-phala represents the ethical result

[10] Chatterjee, S. C., and D. M. Datta. *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. University of Calcutta Press, 1960, p. 110.
[11] Dasgupta, Surendranath. *A History of Indian Philosophy*. Vol. 1, Cambridge UP, 1922, p. 91.
[12] Sharma, Chandradhar. *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1960, p. 75.
[13] Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhism*. Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 40.
[14] Keown, Damien. *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 69.
[15] Dasgupta, Surendranath. *A History of Indian Philosophy*. Vol. 1, Cambridge UP, 1922, p. 94.
[16] Sharma, Chandradhar. *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1960, p. 77.

that follows actions within a universal moral order.[17] Likewise, Karl H. Potter explains that the doctrine of karma ensures that actions inevitably generate appropriate consequences.[18] Thus, Karma-Phala becomes a powerful ethical lens: it shifts focus from merely what AI does to who is responsible for its consequences. Developers, organizations, and users become the moral agents whose "actions" (coding, training, deploying AI) generate "fruits" (Karma-Phala). This reinforces accountability, emphasizing that technological actions are never value-neutral and must be evaluated based on their real-world impact.

Individual and Moral Responsibility in Karmic Philosophy

Individual and Moral Responsibility in Karmic Philosophy refers to the principle that each person is accountable for their thoughts, intentions, and actions, which together generate moral consequences. It emphasizes that responsibility is personal and cannot be transferred, as individuals shape their own ethical outcomes through conscious choices. This view highlights the continuity between inner disposition and external conduct, affirming that moral responsibility operates within a causal order governing human experience. In karmic philosophy, individuals are morally responsible for the actions they intentionally perform and the consequences that follow from them. The doctrine of karma emphasizes that no external authority determines moral outcomes; rather, individuals themselves shape their future through their deeds. According to Chandradhar Sharma, the law of karma establishes a system of ethical accountability where every person must bear the results of their own actions.[19] Karl H. Potter stated that karma reinforces personal responsibility by linking moral conduct directly to future consequences.[20] This perspective highlights accountability, a principle relevant to ethical discussions of artificial intelligence.

Ethical Implications of Karmic Accountability

Ethical Implications of Karmic Accountability state that the moral significance of recognizing that every action, intention, and decision carries consequences that shape individual and collective well-being. It encourages ethical awareness, self-regulation, and responsibility, as individuals are accountable for outcomes arising from their conduct. This perspective promotes justice, compassion, and prudence by linking actions to their effects, reinforcing the idea that moral order is sustained through conscious and responsible behavior.

The doctrine of karma carries significant ethical implications because it emphasizes accountability, moral responsibility, and the inevitability of consequences for one's actions. In Indian philosophical thought, ethical behavior arises from the understanding that every intentional action generates results that affect both the individual and society. Surendranath Dasgupta explains that karma functions as a moral law governing human conduct, ensuring that virtuous actions lead to positive outcomes while harmful actions produce negative consequences.[21] Similarly, J. N. Mohanty argues that karmic accountability promotes ethical awareness by encouraging individuals to act responsibly, knowing that their choices inevitably shape future consequences.[22] This principle of moral causation offers a useful framework for understanding accountability in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence ethics.

4. Accountability in AI

[17] Chatterjee, S. C., and D. M. Datta. *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. University of Calcutta Press, 1960, p. 112.
[18] Potter, Karl H. *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1991, p. 245.
[19] Sharma, Chandradhar. *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1960, p. 78.
[20] Potter, Karl H. *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1991, p. 246.
[21] Dasgupta, Surendranath. *A History of Indian Philosophy*. Vol. 1, Motilal Banarsidass, 1922, p. 71.
[22] Mohanty, J. N. *Classical Indian Philosophy*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2000, p. 132.

Accountability in AI refers to the obligation to ensure that artificial intelligence systems operate responsibly, transparently, and in alignment with ethical and legal standards. It involves identifying who is answerable for the design, development, deployment, and outcomes of AI technologies. This concept emphasizes oversight, fairness, and harm prevention, requiring that decisions made or influenced by AI can be explained, evaluated, and corrected to protect individuals and society.

In technological systems, accountability refers to the duty of people or organizations engaged in the creation, development, and application of technology to accept accountability for their actions and outcomes. Accountability in the context of artificial intelligence guarantees that the results generated by technology systems may be linked to human decision-makers who are able to defend and provide an explanation for those results. Luciano Floridi asserts that accountability in digital and AI systems necessitates traceability, transparency, and the capacity to elucidate the decision-making process within technical processes.[23] In a similar vein, Helen Nissenbaum highlights that procedures for holding developers, organizations, and consumers accountable for the effects of technology on society are part of accountability.[24] Because they guarantee that technical innovation stays in line with human values and societal responsibilities, these concepts are crucial for tackling ethical issues pertaining to AI.

The Problem of Accountability in AI

The rapid development of artificial intelligence has created significant challenges regarding accountability. AI systems increasingly make decisions in areas such as healthcare, finance, and criminal justice, yet determining responsibility for their outcomes remains complex. When an AI system causes harm or produces biased decisions, it is unclear whether responsibility lies with the programmers, developers, organizations, or users. This situation is often described as the "responsibility gap," where autonomous systems act without clear human accountability. Andreas Matthias argues that as machines become more autonomous, traditional models of moral responsibility become difficult to apply because the actions of AI cannot always be directly traced to a single human agent.[25] Similarly, Luciano Floridi and J. W. Sanders note that the distributed nature of AI development creates a complex network of responsibility among designers, engineers, and institutions.[26] Understanding this accountability problem is essential for developing ethical frameworks for AI.

Karma as a Framework for AI Ethics

The relationship between karma and AI accountability highlights how actions inevitably produce consequences and therefore require moral responsibility. In the ethical discussion of artificial intelligence, the decisions made by programmers, developers, and institutions influence how AI systems behave and affect society. Similar to the karmic principle found in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, responsibility cannot be separated from the outcomes of actions. This perspective suggests that humans must remain accountable for the ethical consequences of AI technologies.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan explains that the doctrine of karma establishes a moral law where every action inevitably leads to corresponding consequences.[27] Damien Keown notes that moral responsibility arises from

[23] Floridi, Luciano. *The Ethics of Information*. Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 68.
[24] Nissenbaum, Helen. *Privacy in Context: Technology, Policy, and the Integrity of Social Life*. Stanford University Press, 2010, p. 142.
[25] Matthias, Andreas. "The Responsibility Gap: Ascribing Responsibility for the Actions of Learning Automata." *Ethics and Information Technology*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2004, p. 177.
[26] Floridi, Luciano, and J. W.Sanders. "On the Morality of Artificial Agents."*Minds and Machines*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2004, p. 17.
[27] Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli. *Indian Philosophy*. Vol. 1, Oxford UP, 1923, p.76.

intentional actions and their ethical outcomes.[28] Similarly, Paul Dundas emphasizes that actions inevitably produce effects that bind agents to their consequences.[29]

Karmic philosophy teaches that every action, guided by intention, inevitably produces consequences (Karma-Phala). This aligns naturally with the precautionary principle, which urges careful, foresighted action in situations where outcomes may be uncertain or potentially harmful. When applied to AI ethics, karma provides the moral reasoning, while precautionary principles offer the practical method.[30]

In this connection, developers and policymakers are seen as moral agents whose decisions (designing, training, deploying AI) generate consequences affecting society. Since these consequences may be far-reaching and irreversible, a karmic perspective reinforces the need to act with responsibility, awareness, and restraint. Thus, precaution becomes not merely a regulatory strategy but an ethical necessity grounded in the understanding that all actions carry moral weight.

Integrating Karma Theory with Western Ethical Frameworks

The theory of karma in Indian philosophy can be compared with Western ethical frameworks such as deontology and utilitarianism. Karma emphasizes the moral relationship between intention, action, and consequence, where individuals are responsible for the results of their deeds within a moral order. Western ethical theories similarly address responsibility but from different perspectives. For instance, deontological ethics focuses on moral duties and rules, while utilitarianism evaluates actions based on their outcomes and overall benefit. Immanuel Kant argues that moral actions must be guided by duty and universal moral law rather than consequences.[31] In contrast, John Stuart Mill explains that ethical actions should be judged by their ability to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number.[32] Comparing these frameworks with karma helps broaden ethical discussions about responsibility and consequences in the development and use of artificial intelligence. While karma integrates both intention and consequence into a unified moral process, Western theories often treat them separately. By bringing them together, karma offers a holistic ethical model that complements Western approaches, enriching contemporary discussions, especially in areas like AI ethics, by combining inner motivation with external accountability.

Can AI Possess Karma? A Philosophical Analysis

The question of whether artificial intelligence can possess karma raises important philosophical issues about moral agency and responsibility. In traditional Indian philosophy, karma is closely connected with intention, consciousness, and moral awareness. Since AI systems operate through algorithms and programmed instructions, they lack self-awareness and intentionality, which are essential for generating karmic consequences. Therefore, AI cannot possess karma in the same sense as human beings. However, the outcomes produced by AI systems can still be ethically evaluated because they originate from human actions in designing and deploying these technologies. Peter Harvey explains that karma fundamentally depends on intentional action arising from

[28] Keown, Damien. *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 2005. P. 70.
[29] Dundas, Paul. *The Jains*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002. P. 96.
[30] Sangma, Chelcia B., and S. Thanigaivelan. "Exploring the Philosophy of Consciousness in AI: An Ethical Appraisal." International Journal of Research and Innovation in Applied Science (IJRIAS), vol. 11, no. 2, Feb. 2026, pp. 916–923. DOI: 10.51584/IJRIAS.2026.110200077

[31] Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 31.
[32] Mill, John Stuart. *Utilitarianism*. Hackett Publishing, 2001, p. 14.

conscious mental states.[33] Likewise, Luciano Floridi argues that artificial agents may act autonomously but lack genuine moral responsibility.[34] Thus, ethical accountability for AI actions ultimately rests with human creators and institutions. It examines whether artificial intelligence can be considered a bearer of moral consequences within a karmic framework. It questions whether intention, agency, and consciousness, central to karma, can exist in AI systems. Since AI operates through programmed algorithms without self-awareness, the analysis shifts responsibility to human creators, suggesting that karmic accountability lies not in machines but in those who design, deploy, and govern them.

Machine Autonomy and Human Autonomy

The distinction between machine autonomy and human autonomy is central to discussions of accountability in artificial intelligence. Human autonomy involves conscious reasoning, moral judgment, and the capacity to make decisions based on ethical reflection and responsibility. Humans possess intentionality and self-awareness, which allow them to evaluate the moral consequences of their actions. In contrast, machine autonomy refers to the ability of AI systems to perform tasks or make decisions without direct human control, based on algorithms and programmed rules. However, machines do not possess genuine moral agency or intentionality. Luciano Floridi argues that artificial agents may operate autonomously in a functional sense, but they lack moral responsibility because they lack consciousness or ethical understanding.[35] Nick Bostrom explains that AI systems act according to computational processes rather than moral reasoning.[36] Therefore, ethical accountability for AI actions ultimately remains with human designers and institutions. This concept explores how increasing machine independence interacts with human control, raising ethical questions about responsibility, authority, and the limits of delegating decisions to intelligent technologies.

The Responsibility Gap in AI Decision-Making

The term "responsibility gap" describes the challenge of assigning moral or legal accountability for the actions and outcomes produced by autonomous artificial intelligence systems. It gets harder to pinpoint a single human agent in charge of AI systems' actions as they grow more sophisticated and capable of making decisions on their own. The operation of AI systems may involve contributions from developers, programmers, businesses, and consumers, resulting in a dispersed network of accountability. According to Andreas Matthias, standard theories of moral responsibility are insufficient because learning machines can behave in ways that their designers did not completely anticipate.[37] Furthermore, Luciano Floridi and J. W. Sanders also explain that because no single person directly supervises every choice made by the system, the complexity of artificial agents frequently results in gaps in accountability.[38] Establishing ethical frameworks for AI governance requires addressing this accountability gap.

Ethical Challenges in AI Accountability

AI Accountability refers to the responsibility of ensuring that artificial intelligence systems are developed, deployed, and used in ways that are ethically sound, transparent, and answerable to human oversight. It involves identifying who is responsible for the decisions and outcomes produced by AI, including errors or harm. This

[33] Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhism*. Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 40.
[34] Floridi, Luciano. *The Ethics of Information*. Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 147.
[35] Ibid., p. 145.
[36] Bostrom, Nick. *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*. Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 129.
[37] Matthias, Andreas. "The Responsibility Gap: Ascribing Responsibility for the Actions of Learning Automata." *Ethics and Information Technology*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2004, p. 177.
[38] Floridi, Luciano, and J. W. Sanders. "On the Morality of Artificial Agents."*Minds and Machines*, vol.14, no. 3, 2004, p. 18.

concept emphasizes the need for clear governance, explainability, and mechanisms to evaluate, regulate, and correct AI-driven actions in society.

Since AI systems frequently use complicated algorithms and enormous datasets that are challenging to fully comprehend or manage, artificial intelligence poses serious ethical responsibility concerns. It is difficult to decide who should be held accountable for judgments made by AI systems that have an impact on people, such as in the fields of healthcare, finance, or law enforcement. Assigning moral responsibility is made more difficult by the distributed nature of AI development, which encompasses programmers, data scientists, corporations, and users. Luciano Floridi contends that the complexity of digital environments and the opacity of algorithmic systems make it challenging to guarantee accountability and transparency.[39] In a similar vein, Virginia Dignum highlights that in order to control the societal impact of AI technology, responsible AI necessitates clear ethical governance, human monitoring, and accountability systems.[40] Addressing these challenges is essential for developing ethical frameworks that ensure AI systems remain aligned with human values and social responsibility.

Ethical issues and their implication in AI

Artificial intelligence raises several ethical issues because its decisions increasingly affect individuals and social institutions. AI systems may produce biased outcomes, threaten privacy, reduce human control over decision-making, and create uncertainty about responsibility when harm occurs. The use of large datasets can reinforce existing social inequalities if the data contains hidden biases. Moreover, the growing autonomy of AI systems raises concerns about transparency and accountability in technological decisions. Nick Bostrom notes that advanced AI technologies can generate powerful impacts on society, making it essential to carefully address ethical risks and governance.

Hence, the development of artificial intelligence carries significant ethical implications because AI systems increasingly influence decisions that affect human lives and social institutions. Issues such as fairness, transparency, privacy, and accountability become critical when AI technologies are applied in fields like healthcare, finance, and governance. Ethical implications arise when algorithmic decisions produce biased results or when the reasoning behind AI outcomes remains unclear. Luciano Floridi argues that the ethical evaluation of AI should focus on ensuring transparency, responsibility, and respect for human values within digital environments. Virginia Dignum emphasizes that AI systems must be designed with ethical principles and human oversight to ensure that technological innovation benefits society while minimizing harm. Considering these ethical implications is essential for establishing responsible AI governance and accountability.

5. Towards Responsible AI

The concept of responsible AI emphasizes the need to design, develop, and deploy artificial intelligence systems in ways that align with ethical principles and social responsibility. It means moving in the direction of developing and using Artificial Intelligence in an ethical, safe and trustworthy way so it benefits society without causing harm. As AI technologies increasingly influence decision-making in areas such as healthcare, finance, and governance, it becomes essential to ensure that these systems operate transparently, fairly, and accountably. Responsible AI requires clear mechanisms that allow developers, organizations, and institutions to take responsibility for the outcomes produced by AI systems. According to Virginia Dignum, responsible AI involves

[39] Floridi, Luciano. *The Ethics of Information*. Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 153.
[40] Dignum, Virginia. *Responsible Artificial Intelligence: How to Develop and Use AI in a Responsible Way*.Springer,2019,p. 87.

embedding ethical values such as accountability, transparency, and human oversight throughout the entire lifecycle of AI development.[41] Hence, Floridi argues that ethical governance of digital technologies must ensure that AI systems promote human well-being while minimizing harm and respecting fundamental rights.[42]

From a philosophical perspective, the principle of karma can offer a useful framework for understanding responsibility in AI systems. Just as karmic theory connects actions with consequences, responsible AI emphasizes that the decisions made by developers, policymakers, and users lead to outcomes that affect society. Therefore, integrating ethical reflection, accountability mechanisms, and transparent decision-making processes is crucial for ensuring that AI technologies are developed and used responsibly.

6. Conclusion

This article has examined the relationship between karma and accountability in artificial intelligence by exploring how traditional philosophical concepts can contribute to contemporary discussions in AI ethics. The study first highlighted the rapid growth of AI technologies and the ethical concerns surrounding responsibility for their actions. It then explained the philosophical concept of karma, emphasizing the connection between intention, action, and consequence within Indian philosophical traditions. By comparing karmic theory with modern debates on AI accountability, the article demonstrated that ethical responsibility remains closely linked to the human agents involved in designing, developing, and deploying AI systems.

Therefore, Karmic philosophy contributes to AI ethics by offering a moral framework that stresses the inevitability of consequences for actions. Although AI systems themselves lack consciousness and moral intention, the people and institutions behind these technologies remain ethically accountable for their outcomes. This perspective encourages developers, policymakers, and organizations to recognize their moral responsibility for the social impacts of AI technologies. As AI systems become more independent and pervasively incorporated into society, the significance of accountability will only increase. Therefore, ethical governance, transparency, and responsible innovation must be incorporated into future AI development. In order to create more robust ethical frameworks for regulating artificial intelligence in a quickly changing technological world, future studies may examine interdisciplinary approaches that integrate philosophy, technology studies, and public policy.

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