LEGAL ASPECTS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR ANIMAL WELFARE: NAVIGATING THE REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

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Abstract: Artificial intelligence can be described as a simulation of human intelligence in machines, enabling them to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. AI systems use algorithms and computing power to mimic human cognitive functions. In recent years, the application of AI in the context of animal welfare has emerged as a promising avenue to address critical challenges in animal care, protection, and conservation. The utilization of these innovatory creations is not limited to human requirements only. Animal welfare refers to the well-being and quality of life of animals, both domestic and wild. It encompasses the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of an animal's life and addresses their comfort, health, and ethical treatment. An animal can be identified to have been residing in a good state of welfare if it is healthy and has freedom from unnecessary suffering. The sole objective of inserting the idea of artificial intelligence into animal welfare is to protect and develop a healthy and uplifted residing condition of the animals. This paper analyzes how the animal kingdom can benefit from AI technologies in relation to the existing legal provisions under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, of 1960.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Animal Welfare, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act,1960

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, artificial intelligence has proliferated the possibility of supervising the well-being of animals. The term "well-being" has become a comprehensive concept, since the recognition of animals as "sentient beings" is spiraling. Being sentient means having the ability to decipher both negative and positive feelings. Negative feelings encompass pain or unnecessary suffering, while positive feelings include happiness, a sense of satisfaction, or joy. The United Kingdom passed the Animal Sentience Act in 2022[1]. Sweden's Animal Welfare Act of 2018 states that animals are sentient beings[2]. Spain has also changed the status of animals from

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[1] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/22/enacted
[2] https://api.worldanimalprotection.org/

objects to sentient beings[3]. These bold legislative actions imply that animal sentiency has become a matter of global importance. This concept can be effectively promoted and protected with the help of artificial intelligence. Nobel pieces of machinery and inventories could be put to use to protect the animals from the unnecessary distress they go through regularly. Starting from behavioral patterns to health conditions, every single aspect occurring throughout the lifespan of an animal can be detected and ameliorated with the help of artificial intelligence. In India, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, of 1960 deals with the penal provisions against animal cruelty. Artificial Intelligence can help to trace the felonious humans associated with offenses towards animals and maintain an authenticated record of offenses against such offenses.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The sole objective of the study is to scrutinize and explore the possible repercussions and efficacy of utilizing advanced artificial intelligence systems for animal welfare with respect to legal provisions.

FORESTALLING UNNECESSARY PAIN OR SUFFERING

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, of 1960 dictates that its objective is to prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering on animals and to amend the law accordingly[4]. This pain or suffering can be restrained when the methods of its infliction and the persons responsible for such activities can be outlined. Artificial Intelligence, especially the pieces of machinery, can help delineate the exact location of the crime and the criminal's identity. It has been witnessed quite often that a criminal abusing an animal, such as a dog or a cat, on the road, easily gets out of the clutch from the place of crime and it becomes an impossible task to pin down that particular malefactor. This stumbling block can be avoided through artificial intelligence.

ALLEGIANCE OF PERSONS HAVING CHARGE

Section 3 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act,1960 lays down that it shall be the duty of every person having the care or charge of any animal to take all reasonable measures to ensure the well-being of such animal[5]. The "well-being" of a domestic or a captive animal includes both physical as well as mental well-being. Artificial intelligence, such as robot veterinary doctors or a piece of machinery with advanced medical analysis for the animals, can help maintain an animal's physical wellness. Pieces of machinery, like an advanced surveillance system, can help to record the changing patterns in the behavior of an animal. This system can keep an eye on the owner's aptitude to provide the required living conditions for its animal

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IMPART EDUCATION ABOUT THE HUMANE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

One of the functions of the Animal Welfare Board of India is to impart education about the humane treatment of animals and to encourage the formation of public opinion against the infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering on animals[6]. In the present era, yielding education is not constrained to books or magazines. Artificial intelligence, such as advanced streaming services through bulletin boards, can help educate the wider population about the humane treatment of animals. Also, when it comes to the formation of public opinion, social media feeds can stand as a game-changing artificial intelligence unit for animal protection.

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[3] ibid
[4] https://dahd.nic.in/prevention-cruelty-animals-act-1960
[5] ibid
[6] https://dahd.nic.in/prevention-cruelty-animals-act-1960

EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS

Section 14 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act,1960 states that the performance of experiments (including experiments involving operations) on animals shall not be unlawful, for advancement by discovery of physiological knowledge or of knowledge which will be useful for saving or for prolonging life or alleviating suffering or for combating any disease, whether of human beings, animals or plants[7]. Beneficial experimentation on animals can be brought off with the help of artificial intelligence. For instance, the doctor can seek the help of AI assistants to guide and record the procedures and outcomes of the experiments.

ANIMAL BIRTH CONTROL PROGRAMS

The Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act,1960[8] lays down the provisions for the application and post-surgery treatments for dogs and cats who have undergone birth control surgery. Artificial intelligence can monitor and superintend the health condition of the dog who has undergone the surgery. For instance, an advanced surveillance system can monitor the pace at which the condition of the dog is improving post-surgery. Also, the health records of such patients can be maintained extensively.

OTHER ANCILLARY ADVANTAGES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ANIMAL WELFARE

- Smart collars can aid in avoiding cases of abandonment. This in turn would truncate the number of offences against any animal.
- Microchipping can prevent an animal from being stolen from its owner.
- An advanced recording system can help the investigating officer, record and systematically maintain the details of an offence against an animal.
- An advanced surveillance system in animal farms can restrict the owner from any unnecessary abuse.

CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence holds the prospect of revolutionizing animal welfare. By leveraging AI pieces of machinery and technologies, the implications of legal provisions for the protection of animals can be easily accessed. Studies have proved that human beings have been reaping benefits from the existing AI technologies for tracing persons acting against the law. Justice through these technical furtherances should not be limited to human beings only. The animal kingdom also deserves similar access to justice when it becomes a casualty of a crime. However, the ethical use of AI in animal welfare must remain at the forefront of our efforts, ensuring that our technological advancements align with our responsibilities towards the animal kingdom. Developing a plethora of rules, guidelines, and circulars will not be adequate for fortifying the animal kingdom from the wrongdoers of society. Effective maneuvers have to be opted for proper implications of those laws.

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[7] ibid

[8] http://www.awbi.in/