Cambridge Analytica’s Facebook Scandal

Why in news?

\n\n

A global data analytics company is in spotlight for involving in a data scandal during US election.

\n\n

What was the scandal about?

\n\n

\n
- The UK based company has involved in a data breech of more than 55 million Facebook users during the US president’s election.
\n
- This had created a shock across the globe as the scandal revealed how democracy is struggling to come to terms with complex technological developments.
\n
- As of now there are no clear details about the exact nature of this scandal, what laws were violated, who is responsible.
\n
- It is also not entirely clear whether such similar violations have not happened in the past.
\n

\n\n

How such breeches are being a threat to the democracy?

\n\n

\n
- In recent times many tech companies uses their ability to attract clients depending on their ability to socially engineer electoral outcomes.
\n
- In computer science parlance, it is a kind of confidence trick that gets you to divulge information.
\n

- It is that the voters think they are getting what they want, but all the time it is the clients who are getting out of the voters what they want.
  \n
- The democracy increasingly becoming such a confidence trick, merely with an effect of social engineering that a good combination of surveillance and data extraction.
  \n
- This lead to the concern than Voters are manufactured instead of exercising their sovereignty.
  \n
- By which both state surveillance and private power are a challenge for democracy.
  \n

\n\n

What are the implication for India?

\n\n

  \n
- In India like other developing nations the technology players are given free pass and there is a debate about their credibility in recent times.
  \n
- India’s information architecture has a handful of large private players who can exercise near monopoly power, with very little accountability.
  \n
- Indian citizens are much concerned about the government’s data collection initiatives like Aadhaar but not cautious about the privacy of the data which are being compromised with the private players ranging from Selfies to CCTV footages.
  \n

\n\n

What measures needs to be taken?

\n\n

  \n
- Various safeguards against contracting of data needs to be brought in by tech companies.
  \n
- Both the public and private sector need to be transparent and accountable about their data collection protection, and its monetisation mechanism
  \n
- Regulatory architectures must ensure that the collection of data, the use

and profiting from data, do not subvert the ideals of citizenship.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express

\n