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## **BRIDGING THE JUSTICE GAP AI-ENABLED LEGAL AID WITH ADR AND PRO BONO INNOVATIONS**

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### **THEME: REIMAGINING ACCESS TO JUSTICE: ROLE OF ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISMS & PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES**

Use of AI technologies by the legal aiding system presents a chance to improve upon access to justice and therefore those who are vulnerable and at a disadvantage. The legal processes will be streamlined, expensive costs will be reduced, and timely legal assistance will be provided with the help of AI-supported tools like chatbots, automatic document generators, analytical tools, and virtual legal assistants. This tool could be useful in bridging any difference between individuals requiring and accessing to the legal advice.

The assistance of an AI-enabled service will allow individuals to be guided on their rights, create documents, and move through the processes without direct assistance of lawyers.

However, the move towards a more digital form of administering justice has a few problems as well. First, it is possible to discuss the digital divide and its effect on the access to legal services. Undoubtedly, without access to the Internet, the proper digital equipment, and understanding of their usage, some individuals may not have access to the use of AI-assisted platforms. Rural communities, poor people, elderly people, and those with disabilities might face such problems.

Second, it might relate to problems associated with the language barrier due to the lack of such platforms in many languages. The major issue is that algorithmic bias may arise, as AI-enhanced services based on incomplete or biased data sets may result in making discriminating decisions and inaccuracies, undermining the concepts of equality before the law and fairness. The next thing that makes AI-powered services widely implemented in legal assistance is the lack of data privacy, data protection, and ethical use of personally identifiable information. Furthermore, the lack of a human factor in the process of assistance may turn into a barrier to thorough analysis and insight, particularly, concerning a complex or a sensitive case. Overall, AI technology can bring tremendous benefits to improving the

provision of legal assistance.

Keywords- Artificial Intelligence in Legal Aid, Access to Justice, Algorithmic Bias, Digital Divide, Data Privacy and Ethics

### **1. Subject Matter of the Study**

The vision of legal aid has taken a centre-stage in the constitutional image of justice in India. The legal aid system is based on the right to equality before the law and equal protection of the laws of Article 14 of the Constitution, and with the support of Article 39A, the idea that injustice will not be deprived of equity to any citizen on economic or social disadvantages. The legal establishment of this commitment was the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which brought about an articulated structure to the provision of free and qualified legal assistance to the less privileged in the society. With this law came the establishment of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), State, District and Taluk Legal Services Authorities, in a pyramidal structure to expand access to justice nationwide.

Historically, legal aid development in India can be seen as an expansion towards a right-oriented legal aid policy that has been developed historically on the basis of a welfare-based policy. Early programs in the post-independence years were majorly haphazard and not well coordinated at an institutional level. But with the passage of the Legal Services Authorities Act, as Vaidya and Chauhan (2024)<sup>1</sup> point out, there was a cognitive shift in formalising legal aid delivery and instilling it as part of the justice system. The outreach of the legal aid institutions was further enhanced with the later development of the Lok Adalat and legal literacy programs. However, even within these improvements, the structural obstacles to access to justice, including poor infrastructure, insufficient legal professionals and unawareness among beneficiaries, remain an impediment to effective application of access to justice (Halder, 2022)<sup>2</sup>.

The concept of access to justice has undergone a significant change through the years. Cappelletti and Garth (1977) formulated it as a basic necessity of a just legal system, when they made it clear that legal rights need to be practically enforced, not merely as hypothetical. Under the Indian context, relating to access to justice, is not only limited to the access to courts and lawyers, but also the affordability, accessibility, and ease of procedures. According to Khubalkar (2024)<sup>3</sup>, the modern concept of access to justice includes the technological aspects of access to justice as well since the digital technology can be seen as a game changer in the area of closing the disparities in the domains of legal services. Nevertheless, the achievement of this dream is not even across board especially among the marginalized

members of the society like in rural populations, women, economically disadvantaged quarters and those with disabilities.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has also become a new reality in recent years, and it has also opened up new opportunities to improve legal aid systems. Artificial intelligence (AI) powered technologies such as chatbots, automated document creation software, predictive analytics, and virtual legal assistant could transform legal service provision. Such technologies will have the possibility to streamline complicated legal data, can guide immediately and can reduce substantially the cost and time to seek legal help. Saxena (2025)<sup>4</sup> underscores how the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed so rapidly into the Indian legal sector to implement digital technologies, such as e-courts, virtual hearings, and online dispute resolution systems, which creates an opportunity to realize the integration of AI into legal aid structures.

Specifically, AI-based services can have a beneficial impact on the issues of inefficiencies of the legal aid system, which have long existed in the system. As an example, they could automate repetitive legal services, aid in document preparation, and even offer preliminary legal services to individuals otherwise inaccessible to the professional legal counsel.

Empirical research, e.g., by Sood (2019)<sup>5</sup>, has found a major gap in the current legal assistance infrastructure, in terms of delays, uneven service-quality and outreach. These problems can be countered with AI technologies, when properly applied to provide standard and scalable delivery of legal services. Moreover, the examples of such projects as the Tele- Law campaign show that technology has the potential to reach out to rural residents with lawyers, which can further be expanded by AI, which allows organizing self-service law support sites (NCAER, 2020)<sup>6</sup>.

Meanwhile, the introduction of AI into the system of legal assistance has significant issues to consider and discuss. Among the most urgent issues is the digital divide which is the presence of gaps in the access to digital infrastructure, access to the internet, and technological literacy. As Prabhavathi and Durai (2024) point out, although AI can bring about democratization of access to legal information, its advantages may not trickle down to those people who need them the most since they may not have access to the resources or skills to operate digital platforms. The problem is especially acute in the rural and remote communities, where the penetration of technologies is low.

The other imperative issue is the concern of the bias and fairness of algorithms. AI systems are based on data to be trained and make decisions, and when these data are complete or biased, it can result in the discrimination of results. Malek (2022)<sup>7</sup> and Gans-Combe (2022)<sup>8</sup> warn that automated decision-making systems in law-related areas may perpetuate the status quo unless

with appropriate regulation. When applied to legal aid, this casts fundamental doubts of authenticity and objectivity of AI-generated advice, particularly with vulnerable populations. Problems of privacy and protection of data as well are uppermost considering the sensitivity of legal data. In Sharma (2025) he points out that there is a necessity of strong ethical and regulatory mechanisms to balance the use of technology in the justice system without infringing on the rights of individuals in the flow of technological development.

The lack of it is another major constraint of AI-based juridical services, where the human factor is missing. The socio-economic and emotive aspects of legal cases are frequently multifaceted and intricate, and thus demand delicate insights and compassion- which, as of now, AI systems cannot thoroughly duplicate. The criterion of the quality of legal assistance, as Akter (2021)<sup>9</sup> notes, does not always lie in technical precision, but also in the possibility to analyse the situation and provide personalized advice. Hence, an entirely technologicalized solution might not be enough to meet the wide range of needs of recipients of legal aid.

Based on these trends, this paper aims to explore the idea of AI-powered platforms to improve legal aid systems in India, specifically addressing the concerns of access and inclusivity. The main purpose is to examine whether AI technologies will be effective in addressing the differences between the needs in the law and in service delivery and also defining challenges and risks in relation to implementing AI technologies. The paper will measure the compatibility of AI-based solutions with the current legal aid system in place under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, and how such technologies can be incorporated in the most effective way that will not contradict the constitutional values and principles of justice.

Moreover, the paper provides the significance of an inclusive attitude towards technological innovation in law. Accessibility is not only a technical matter but also a socio-legal aspect with the consideration of the different needs of the users, such as language diversity, accessibility of the disabled, and digital literacy. The ability of AI to serve as many users as possible, especially those who are traditionally marginal to the legal system, defines whether it will effectively enhance access to justice, according to Westermann (2023)<sup>10</sup>. This will require the creation of user-friendly, multilingual and culturally sensitive platforms that can efficiently serve the heterogeneous population of India.

To sum up, though AI is a game changer in improving legal aid and access to justice in India, its use should be handled with caution and vision. The possible advantages of efficiency and scaling and cost saving should be offset by the opportunities of exclusion, bias, and ethical considerations. Through analysing these dimensions in the backdrop of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, this study will help add to the current discussion about the future of legal

aid in the digital era, which involves a balanced and inclusive path that considers the technological innovation, yet retains human control.

## **2. Literature Review**

Based on thematic review of literature in the field, the intersection of legal aid and artificial intelligence should be viewed through the following prism of dimensions, i.e. traditional institutional configuration of legal aid, the digitalization of legal services underway, the new role of AI in justice delivery as well as ethical issues in using it. Instead of a description of previous works, this section critically assesses the contribution of scholars and studies to the comprehension of the possible and the limitations of AI-enabled legal aid systems.

### **(a) Standard traditional legal aid Framework and NALSA Structure**

The legal aid in India is based on the Legal Services Authorities Act of 1987, which institutionalized free legal services through a hierarchical system in the form of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), State Legal Services Authorities, District Legal Services Authorities and Taluk committees. Vaidya and Chauhan (2024)<sup>11</sup> give a doctrinal examination of this architectural law of statute, pinpointing that it helps decentralize the legal-aid delivery line and provide outreach on the grassroots level. Their contribution emphasizes the prowess of this framework as far as the institutional design is concerned, especially the incorporation of the Lok Adalats and legal awareness initiatives.

But this ideal outlook is balanced by Halder (2022)<sup>12</sup>, who critically analyzes the system shortcomings on its operational functionality. Although the statutory framework looks strong on paper, there are bureaucratic inefficiencies, absence of trained staff and lack of funds which affect the implementation. Halder posits that presence of institutional innovations is not equal to effective justice access thus showing a discrepancy between the law and reality.

Khubalkar (2024)<sup>13</sup> further contributes a historical and prospective viewpoint by following the development of legal assistance as a matter of welfare programs to a rights-based system. Notably, Khubalkar opines that the existing structure, as fundamental as it may be, is not adequately prepared to deal with the needs of a fast-digitalizing society. This criticism is relevant since it places the conventional legal aid model as the necessary yet inadequate one, hence the necessity of the technological integration.

Consequently, although the literature also takes note of the significance of the NALSA-led framework, the literature also coalesces around the perception that structural and functional constraints weakening the efficacy and availability require new methods, especially

technological ones, to fulfil their efficacy and accessibility.

(b) Digital transformation and Tele-Law Initiatives

The second theme in the literature is the digitalization of legal services, especially in light of the increase in technology and the COVID-19 pandemic. Saxena (2025) captures the fast pace at which digital solutions have gained currency like e-courts, e-hearings, and e-filing systems with an argument that these innovations have radically transformed the environment of the delivery of justice services in India. Saxena considers this shift to be a fundamental facilitator of the implementation of more modern technologies (such as AI) into the legal-assistance system.

One breakthrough in this digital switch is the Tele-Law scheme, which was analysed by NCAER (2020)<sup>14</sup>. Tele-Law tries to break geographical barrier in legal service provision by linking rural citizens with the services of panel lawyers by use of video conferencing with Common Service centres (CSCs). The assessment points to its ability to increase outreach and decrease costs along with the difficulties related to low awareness, technology barriers, and variations in service quality.

Singh and Upadhyay (2024)<sup>15</sup> build on this discourse to the marginalized settings, especially prisons, where digital services on legal aid have been previously applied to support detainees. In their work, they draw attention to the opportunities of technology in reaching underserved groups of the population but also mention that the capabilities of the technology cannot be as effective due to infrastructural and administrative factors.

These works, although they collectively explain the transformative power of digital technologies, also disclose one of the significant shortcomings: digitization is not a panacea to inclusiveness. The effects of programs such as Tele-Law are reliant on digital literacy, accessibility of infrastructure, and awareness. This understanding will be vital, as it indicates that the process of modernization of conventional legal assistance into the digital format will have to be supplemented by the mechanisms of supporting systems to allow people to access it fairly.

(c) Indian Legal Services in AI: Comparative and Indian

The third thematic area focuses on discussing the status of artificial intelligence in legal services, in India, and in other comparative jurisdictions. Prabhavathi and Durai (2024)<sup>16</sup> specifically discuss the possibility of AI to increase access to justice in India and state that it can automate routine legal functions, providing immediate access to legal information, and

decreasing dependency on human intermediaries. According to them, AI has the potential to greatly enhance efficiency and scalability in providing legal aid, especially in a country with a high demand-supply disparity in legal services.

Nevertheless, Sood (2019)<sup>17</sup> is more conservative, stating that there is a gap of empirical studies concerning the use of technology within legal aid system. Sood explains that she finds systemic gaps, including delays, inconsistency, and limited outreach, indicating that although AI can be used to resolve them, the researchers do not thoroughly study the actual impact of AI. This criticism is significant, as it raises doubts against over-optimistic expectations of the technological solutions and demands evidence-based review.

This discussion is also enhanced with comparative studies. Armour and Sako (2020)<sup>18</sup> examine AI-enhanced business models in legal practice and show that, through automation, the traditional legal practice can become dramatically more efficient, but cost-effective.

Similarly, Kluttz and Mulligan (2019) also discuss the consequences of automated decision-support systems on the legal profession and ask the question of how the role of lawyers will change in an AI-driven world.

Westermann (2023)<sup>19</sup> offers empirical data regarding accessibility in terms of legal information on AI tools used by laypersons and concludes that the latter can be used to improve such accessibility yet should be thoroughly designed to be usable and reliable. This opinion is supported by Steinhuis (2024), who underlines that AI can be used in daily legal activities to automate and, therefore, in the future, every individual can be capable of dealing with a certain basic legal matter on their own.

All of these pieces of literature indicate that AI has a lot of potential to increase access to justice, which, in turn, is determined by cautious use and consistent examination. The comparative approach also shows that India can learn lessons of the experience of the world, but that unfamiliar socio-economic conditions demand solutions specific to India.

#### (d) Ethics: Prejudice, confidentiality, and non-representativeness

The last theme deals with the ethical and legal issues related to the use of AI in legal assistance. Gans-Combe (2022)<sup>20</sup> gives a detailed discussion on the irrationalities and advantages of automated justice systems with a focus on the possibility of using algorithms to produce bias and lack of accountability. Malek (2022)<sup>21</sup> echoes this worry by showing the ways AI systems in the case of criminal justice can deepen patterns of discrimination, specifically when they are trained on biased data.

Sharma (2025)<sup>22</sup> puts these issues in the Indian setting where he believes there need to be sound

ethical and legal standards to inform the implementation of the use of technology in the justice system. Sharma also illustrates the problem of the privacy of data, transparency, and accountability and shows that the utilization of AI in legal assistance is work with sensitive personal data that should be ensured with sufficient protection.

The other vital problem found in the literature is the risk of exclusion. While AI has the potential to democratize access to legal services, it may also exacerbate existing inequalities if certain groups are unable to access or use digital platforms. According to Prabhavathi and Durai (2024)<sup>23</sup>, groups that are economically disadvantaged, like the rural population, lack digital literacy, and so on are especially sensitive to exclusion.

Another issue voiced in the literature is the lack of human judgment in AI systems. According to Akter (2021)<sup>24</sup>, professional judgment and contextual understanding are crucial factors influencing the quality of legal assistance, and AI systems might not be able to replicate both. This emphasizes the need to embrace a hybrid approach that merges technology effectiveness with human savvy.

#### (e) Critical Synthesis

By critically analysing the literature, an obvious agreement on two important facts is seen. First, the classical legal assistance system is necessary but not sufficient to provide the modern-day needs of convenient and effective justice. Second, technological interventions, such as AI, can be considered as promising but can have great risks.

Yet, the literature on the implementation of AI into the current legal aid system in India presents a big gap. Although some works present the concept related to legal and AI separately, very few of them offer the analysis of their intersection. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical data about the success of AI-based legal aid systems, and enhanced studies in this field should be carried out.

Finally, the literature highlights the transformative power of AI to enhance access to justice but also requests the reader to adopt AI wisely. To fully achieve the potential of AI-enabled legal aid systems, a middle way that allows ethical considerations, is inclusive, and incorporates technology into the established institutional framework is necessary.

### **3. Statement of the Problem**

The rule of law includes the right to access to justice as its central element and the Indian legal system substantiates the aim to achieve it. Although institutional framework that has been put in place by the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, there is still a wide gap

between the legal needs of people and the real availability of the legal services. Such disparity is especially clear in vulnerable and marginal groups, such as the population living in rural regions, the economically disadvantaged, women, and inmates. Although statutory framework considers that everyone would have access to free legal aid, it has not always been evenly implemented or satisfactorily so.

The first problem is the gap between the legal demand and service delivery which persists. The experience of systemic failures in the law aid system, various systemic sources outline the problem with the delays in the provision of services, the unawareness of the beneficiaries, and the variability of the quality of legal assistance, can be observed in such empirical research as by Sood (2019)<sup>25</sup>. In the same vein, Akter (2021)<sup>26</sup> notes that the quality of aid legal aid attorneys offer differs greatly, and thus results in unequal treatment of similar cases. This disparity nullifies the aim of establishing equal justice under the law. On top of this, the shortage of qualified legal workers and the lack of infrastructure also contribute to this disparity, as the institutions providing legal assistance have a hard time assisting the huge and heterogenous Indian population.

The issues are aggravated by the fact that the digital divide has become a major obstacle when it comes to greater digitalization of legal services. Although projects like e-courts and the Tele-Law scheme have tried to use technology to deliver access, their appeal is dependent on digital infrastructure and the usability by users. The NCAER (2020)<sup>27</sup> assessment of the Tele-Law scheme shows that despite the increased outreach, the scheme has limited reach because of low internet access, digital illiteracy, and poverty of awareness in rural communities. Prabhavathi and Durai (2024) also highlight the fact that technological interventions, such as AI-based platforms, pose a threat of marginalization to individuals who do not have access to digital devices or cannot use them because of the necessary skills. This brings a paradox of having tools that aim to facilitate access to justice, but in the process, present another injustice within the society.

Besides infrastructural obstacles, the accessibility and language challenges also limit the accessibility of the digital legal services. The linguistic diversity of India is a major challenge to the process of coming up with inclusive legal technologies. Most of the digital sites are mostly in English or a few regional languages thus owing out many people. Moreover, people with disabilities or poor literacy might be unable to go through complicated online interfaces. These aspects emphasize the importance of designing usability and integrative technological solutions, which are not present in leading legal assistance programs at the moment.

Artificial intelligence among legal aid systems implies new complexities and risks.

Algorithms bias is one of the most crucial issues that occur when the AI systems are trained with incomplete or biased data. According to Malek (2022)<sup>28</sup>, AI uses in the legal field can consolidate the existing discriminatory trends, namely towards the marginalized populations. Gans-Combe (2022)<sup>29</sup> also issues the same warning that a lack of transparency and accountability could be an issue with automated decision-making systems, and it can be challenging to discover and correct mistakes. Such biases may be disastrous in the framework of legal aid, which might cite improper or prejudiced legal advice and compromise the principle of equality and fairness before the court.

Data privacy and protection is another critical issue. Legal AI systems are based on gathering and processing sensitive personal data, such as the information about legal cases, financial situation, and personal realities. Even Sharma (2025)<sup>30</sup> highlights that it is paramount to develop effective regulatory frameworks to regulate the application of such data and talks about the danger of unauthorized access to such data, data leakage, and information abuse.

Without introduced explicit and thorough data protection tools, becoming an AI-driven environment of the legal service provision can undermine the privacy rights of the clients and destroy the confidence to the digital legal services.

Moreover, with no human participation in the field of AI-based legal assistance, the quality and reliability of AI services are also questionable. The legal issues frequently presuppose the complicated factual and emotional aspects to be interpreted subtly and comprehended emphatically. Although AI can offer stabilized and streamlined solutions, the systems might not be prepared to work on complex or delicate cases. The value of legal assistance, like the technical error, is also determined by the availability of context-specific guidance, as Akter (2021)<sup>31</sup> emphasizes. Lack of human judgment in AI-oriented systems could thus restrict its usability under some circumstances, especially when it comes to dealing with vulnerable people.

The current legal aid system, despite current digital efforts, seems to be inadequate in conquering these complex issues. Although the statutory framework as provided in the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 gives a good institutional framework, the statutory framework still has not fully adjusted to the changing technologic environment. Khubalkar (2024)<sup>32</sup> proposes that the existing paradigm of legal aid needs to be radically redesigned to be used in the digital era. In the same vein, Saxena (2025)<sup>33</sup> observes that despite the pandemic increasing the implementation of digital tools in the judicial field, the introduction of advanced technologies in this field, including AI, is cursory.

Essentially, the issue is not the unavailability of legal services, but the inefficiency of the

mechanisms in place to fully take advantage of technological breakthrough in an inclusive and ethical way. Service delivery disparities and structural inefficiency sustain the discrepancy between legal needs and the provision of the services whereas the lack of digital divide and technological risks complicate the situation. The possibilities of AI to increase access to justice may not be realized without these problems or might lead to a further increase in inequalities. That is why the urgent necessity to critically discuss the integration of AI-enabled platforms in the legal aid system that could be developed in such a way that would resolve these issues. This involves the need to promote fair access, reduce the chances of bias, and exclusion, guarantee the privacy of data, and balance technological effectiveness with human control. The given work falls into this context and aims to examine the possibility of using AI as a potential solution to the flaws of the current legal aid system without disrupting the key principles of justice and equality.

#### **4. Research Hypothesis**

The hypotheses that the present study is based on are as follows and they were developed in the context of the current legal aid framework and the new technological advances:

**Hypothesis 1:** Artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled legal aid websites can increase access to justice significantly by becoming more efficient, decreasing prices, and increasing access points; still, their success depends on their organizational position within the institutional framework created under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

This hypothesis is supported by the fact that traditional legal aid mechanisms are structurally complete but have certain limitations in terms of their reach, uniformity, and accessibility to resources. Research like Prabhavathi and Durai (2024)<sup>34</sup> indicates that AI technologies can help overcome the following inefficiencies by facilitating the use of the tools, namely chatbots, automated documentation, and virtual legal assistants, that can deliver legal services at a scale and promptly. Meanwhile, the hypothesis acknowledges that AI does not work in vacuums and has to be embedded within the statutory and institutional presence of legal aid authorities to be legitimate, accountable and constitutional mandates.

**Hypothesis 2:** Although AI-driven legal aid systems can democratize legal information access, it is likely that they will further reinforce existing inequalities because of the digital divide, bias in algorithms, and concerns of data privacy, unless designed and deployed in an inclusive and ethically regulated way.

This hypothesis is born out of critical issues that have been raised in the literature on the risks of adoption of AI. As indicated by NCAER (2020)<sup>35</sup> and Prabhavathi and Durai (2024)<sup>36</sup>, the

digital divide acts as a hindrance to technology-based solutions in the rural and marginalized communities. Moreover, other researchers, such as Malek (2022)<sup>37</sup> and Gans-Combe (2022), show that an AI system may be biased in different ways, resulting in discriminatory policy, thus compromising the ethics of justice and equality. The need to protect the data and govern the system ethically was also brought up by Sharma (2025)<sup>38</sup> when implementing legal technologies.

Combined, these hypotheses represent the moderate stance to the research, as it acknowledges the potential of AI to transform access to justice as well as the great challenges that should be averted to implement it fairly and responsibly.

## **5. Examination of the Hypothesis**

The hypotheses proposed in this research aim to check the validity of the idea that artificial intelligence (AI) could have a positive impact on the access to justice and discuss the threats that will negatively affect its usefulness. The present section is a critical discussion of these propositions and how AI tools could be utilized in legal assistance, what their advantages are, what problems they entail, and how they are applied in practice both in the Indian and comparative contexts.

### **(a) Examination of Legal aid systems implementing AI tools**

Law AI technologies are widely becoming devices created to support the provision of legal services to clients, promising novel applications like legal chatbots, automated documenting systems, predictive analytics, and Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) systems. With these tools, legal processes are simplified, and legal information made much more accessible to the layperson. Prabhavathi and Durai (2024)<sup>39</sup> emphasize that AI-driven chatbots may offer immediate legal advice by responding to questions commonly asked, which will lower the reliance of human attorneys to give initial advice. Equally, document generation software lets the user to create legal notices, contracts and applications without having professional legal expertise.

ODRs, which Kaufmann-Kohler and Schultz (2004)<sup>40</sup> mention, are another important advancement, as it allows bringing a case to a resolution (without stepping in a real court) and doing so in a digital format. These platforms are especially relevant in resolving simple cases of disputes and lowering the court load. Moreover, AI-based analytics may also help predict the outcomes of the cases as well as the identification of the appropriate legal precedents that can enhance the decision-making process.

These tools, however, though showing their great possibilities, must be effective in terms of their availability, accuracy and their combination with the current legal systems. Unless these technologies are properly controlled, they will become susceptible to delivering partial or flawed information, which will influence the quality of legal services.

(b) The advantages of AI in Legal Aid

The application of AI to the legal aid systems has a few main benefits, especially regarding efficiency, cost-saving, and scalability. To begin with, AI technologies will have a tremendous impact on minimizing the time used to acquire legal information and services. Activities which used to involve a great deal of human labor, including legal research and drafting of documents, can be performed in minutes. This added efficiency is essential in such a country as India where legal services are significantly in demand and the resources available are even less.

Second, AI could help reduce the price of legal services, making them more affordable to the economically disadvantaged population. Armour and Sako (2020)<sup>41</sup> show how AI-based models can speed up legal procedures and minimise the cost of operation thus making it possible to offer services at a low cost. This comes especially with legal aid, where the affordability of legal aid is often an obstacle to people accessing legal aid.

Third, AI makes the thinking of legal services scalable. Compared to the conventional legal assistance systems that have limitations because of the human resources, the AI platforms can support a vast user base simultaneously. According to Westernmann (2023)<sup>42</sup>, AI tools may offer a steady flow of standardized information to the user, thus enhancing the quality of services and accessibility of legal services in general.

Although these advantages exist, it is essential to note that efficiency and scalability does not necessarily mean equitable access. The usefulness of AI should be gauged against its capability to respond to the various needs of users.

(c) There are also problems of challenges in AI-assisted Legal Aid

(i) Digital Divide

The digital divide is one of the greatest postulates to the successful application of AI in legal aid. On the one hand, digital platforms can widen the access, but on the other hand, it has a risk of excluding those who do not have access to technology or are not skilled to use it. The NCAER (2020)<sup>43</sup> assessment of the Tele-Law scheme emphasises that a low level of internet connectivity and lack of digital literacy still contributes to the unreachability of the use of

technology-based legal services in villages. Prabhavathi and Durai (2024) assert in a similar manner that, unless focused works are done to enhance digital inclusion, then AI-based solutions can contribute to the existing disparities instead of mitigating them.

(ii) Algorithmic Bias

The other vital issue is algorithmic bias. AI technologies also depend on historical data to be trained and when such data has biases, its outputs will also be biased. Malek (2022)<sup>44</sup> reveals the way AI applications in law-related environments can support discriminatory trends, especially against disadvantaged communities. Gans-Combe (2022) also points out that such biases are hard to detect and eliminate because the algorithms have not been disclosed (this is why it is challenging to make them transparent). This can be of great concern to the fairness and reliability of AI-generated advice in legal aid.

(iii) Privacy and Protection of Data.

Law legal assistance is an area where AI brings with it the risks of gathering and processing valuable personal data that is covered by the confidentiality of personal data. Sharma (2025)<sup>45</sup> emphasizes the importance of having strong regulatory frameworks in place whereby user data is governed so that there is no possible abuse. Lack of a holistic data protection system can break the trust of the users and dishearten the acceptance of AI-powered legal technology.

(iv) Lack of Human Judgment

The AI systems, regardless of its efficiency, have no capability of exercising any human judgment and empathy. Many cases related to the law are social and emotional in nature and demand subtle insights. Akter (2021)<sup>46</sup> highlights that legal assistance quality relies on the contextual interpretation and professional competence, which cannot be fully imitated by AI systems. The restriction implies that AI is not to replace human legal experts but rather complement them.

Indian Case examples (D) Tele-Law and E-Courts.

India has already made major steps to enable technology to be integrated in the law system. NCAER (2020)<sup>47</sup> found that the Tele-Law scheme, which links rural citizens and legal professionals via digital systems, has shown the potential of technology to overcome geographical barriers. Nonetheless, its poor performance is also restricted by infrastructural and awareness-related problems, which implies that the technological solutions should be

supplemented with supportive policies.

Equally, the e-courts system and virtual hearings proposed by Saxena (2025)<sup>48</sup> have enhanced efficiency and accessibility in court proceedings. Such advances give grounds to implement

AI in the legal aid systems. Nevertheless, the state of technological implementation is still skewed, and the shift towards AI-centred systems needs to be planned and controlled.

(e) Comparative Insights: U.S., United Kingdom and Canada

Comparative studies can provide helpful information regarding the opportunities and problems of the AI in the legal service. Kluttz and Mulligan (2019)<sup>49</sup> consider the application of automated decision-support systems in the United States and note their effectiveness but the danger they present to professional responsibility. Armour and Sako (2020)<sup>50</sup> examine AI-enabled business models in the United Kingdom that have disrupted the delivery of legal services the way they were before in the form of cost reduction and accessibility.

A valuable example, as shown by Westermann (2023)<sup>51</sup>, is the province of Canada, where AI tools are considered to enhance access to legal knowledge among the laypeople. The results are that although AI can be used to increase accessibility, the success of AI is determined by its user-focused design and constant monitoring.

These comparative experiences show that although AI can enhance access to justice, it should be implemented according to the socio-economic specifics of each state. In the case of India, it includes the problem of digital inequality, the ability to speak different languages, and the lack of control over regulation.

(f) Analytical Conclusion

Those two hypotheses put forward in this study are supported by the analysis. The introduction of AI-based legal assistance platforms can contribute to increasing the access to the justice through increased efficiency, lower costs, and broadening reach. Their efficacy is however constrained by the challenges including the digital divide, the biasing of algorithms, privacy of data, and lack of human judgment.

Thus, to achieve an effective implementation of AI into the legal assistance systems, a middle way should be taken, integrating the AI technological advancement with institutional fostering and ethical protection. Instead of solutions discontinuing the traditional legal aid mechanisms, AI should be employed to support and empower them so that, the advantages of technological progress can be availed to all layers of society.

## **6. Conclusion**

The current research aimed at evaluating the possibility of the so-called artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled platforms to increase the access to justice within the framework of the Indian legal aid system, specifically in the light of issues of accessibility and inclusivity. Basing on the institutional framework that has been created under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 analysis shows that although India has a clear legal aid structure; there are still a lot of loopholes in the legal aid provision and delivery structure. Such gaps occur due to structural deficiencies, inadequate targeting, poor awareness, as well as quality variations in legal assistance, as highlighted in the literature.

The results of this work obviously demonstrate that AI technologies present the opportunity of revolution in these issues. AI-based tools like chatbots, auto-document generators, and online dispute resolution can be used to improve efficiency, lower costs, and increase the accessibility of legal services to hitherto underserved groups. With AI, legal access can be democratized, according to Prabhavathi and Durai (2024),<sup>52</sup> as individuals can independently navigate legal processes using AI. Moreover, changes in India, such as the Tele-Law program, e-courts, show that technology can be used to geographically close geographical gap and enhance service delivery.

Yet, the study also shows that the implementation of AI in legal assistance does not lack any major constraints. The digital divide was not going to disappear so easily, and the digital divide is one of the key challenges that do not allow equal access to technology-based solutions. Those that are disadvantaged economically, in the rural areas, the less digitally literate, are especially prone to marginalization, thus diminishing the inclusivity that AI promises. Also, the issue of algorithmic bias, discussed by Malek (2022)<sup>53</sup> and Gans-Combe (2022)<sup>54</sup>, creates significant doubts about the fairness and accuracy of AI-based legal assistance. The possibility of the biased data resulting in discriminant outcomes is particularly worrisome in a system the purpose of which is to promote equality before the law.

The protection and privacy of data only contribute to the further difficulty of AI integration into lawful assistance. Since legal information is sensitive, lack of effective regulatory frameworks, as indicated by Sharma (2025)<sup>55</sup>, is a threat to confidentiality and trust.

Additionally, AI systems do not have human judgment, which restricts its application in complex and ambiguous legal cases. As Akter (2021) underlines, successful legal support should not only be technically correct but also possess a contextual understanding and empathy, which AI systems are unable to achieve completely.

Based on this, the hypotheses constructed in this study can be answered very much. The

initial hypothesis, that AI-enhanced legal aid sites can amplify access to justice through efficiency and outreach improvement, has a significant basis in theoretical and empirical literature. Artificial intelligence has already displayed its ability to automate legal procedures, cut down on expenses, and offer scalable services to deal with the increasing need of legal services. Yet, such potential depends on the relevance of the integration of AI in the current system of legal assistance formed under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which guarantees the institutional legitimacy and responsibility.

The second hypothesis, that without a design ensuring inclusiveness, AI can contribute to existing inequalities, is also strongly supported. The risks linked to the uncontrolled or slightly conceptualized AI systems are noted in the digital divide, algorithmic bias, and data privacy issues found during the analysis. These issues highlight the need to be inclusive and ethically sound when it comes to technological innovation in the legal field.

One of the primary conclusions that come out of this study is that the hybrid solution, which is to combine AI technologies with human intervention, needs to be considered a balanced approach. The AI cannot be seen as an alternative to the legal professionals but a supplementary tool that is able to make them more efficacious in providing the legal assistance. Although AI systems are able to perform routine tasks, offer initial guidance, and enhance efficiency, the services of human legal professionals cannot be replaced in cases where interpretation of complicated legal matters, judgment, and fairness are needed. This is a hybrid solution that concurs with the bigger goal, which is to uphold the integrity of the justice system but at the same time utilize technological development.

Moreover, the paper also shows that a multi-faceted approach to applying AI in legal assistance should be employed. This involves dealing with the infrastructural obstacles, fostering digital literacy, making it multilingual, as well as developing strong moral and regulatory frameworks. Devoid of such actions, the advantages of AI can be attracted by an elitist faction of society, which would render the use of legal assistance pointless.

Finally, AI has a major potential to bring more Indians closer to justice, yet its usage should be carefully and selectively applied. The goals of integrating AI in the legal support system should be informed by the principles of equality, fairness, and accountability and rely on the fact that technological innovation is a tool of empowerment, but not exclusion. A moderate and balanced strategy that encompasses the positive aspects of AI and the need to have human judgment and interpretation can help India to step closer to achieving the constitutional vision of equal justice to all.

## **7. Policy Recommendations**

The successful use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the legal aid system must be based on a realistic and non-discriminatory policy. Although AI has a lot of potential to increase the accessibility to justice, it has to be used in a way that is equitable, transparent, and accountable. In order to be clear and analyse it in a systematic manner, the following are the recommendations given in paragraph-pointer format.

### **(a) Inclusive AI Design and User-Centric Development**

Legal platforms powered by AI should be developed with consideration of the various socio-economic realities of India. A user-centred philosophy demands that technology should be easy, user-friendly and user-friendly even to those with very low literacy levels and exposure to technology. Guided steps, visual instructions, and voice-based assistance should be provided in interfaces to make sure it is usable by all types of users. Moreover, platforms should operate efficiently on low-end devices and in low-bandwidth settings to ensure that low-income and economically disadvantaged groups are not marginalized. The focus should be on coming up with systems that are user-friendly and not expecting users to become accustomed to complex technology systems.

### **(b) Multilingual and Culturally Sensitive Platforms**

Since India is a diverse country in terms of language, AI-based legal aid platforms should be created in a variety of regional languages to be inclusive. The provision of services in English or some of its dominant languages isolates many parts of the population. The AI systems must have language-processing features whereby the users can communicate using their own language of choice. Also, the legal information should be translated correctly and put in a manner that is culturally appropriate to ensure that the users can comprehend their rights and procedures easily. This will greatly increase access and user interactions in various locations.

### **(c) Digital Literacy and Legal Awareness Programs**

Digital literacy of the users is crucial to the success of AI in legal assistance. A significant number of people, especially those in rural and disadvantaged areas, do not have the knowledge to utilize and take advantage of digital platforms. Thus, legal awareness programs should be combined with digital literacy programs. The training should be done at the local levels via community centres, schools and panchayats. The gap can also be bridged with the creation of legal technology kiosks where people can be assisted in the use of AI tools. Such attempts must

be directed towards the vulnerable populations like women, old people, and poorer sections in order to have inclusive participation.

(d) Powerful Data Protection and Privacy Structures

Legal assistants AI systems presuppose the storage and processing of sensitive personal information, so data protection is a highly important issue. Strict policies should be implemented to govern the manner of data collection, storage and utilization. They should use secure encryption to protect data on the user and only collect as much data as is absolutely required in order to render legal services. Users have to be made aware of how their data is used and give informed consent before giving personal information. Also, there should be controls to deal with breaches of data and hold people accountable in case of abuse.

(e) Algorithmic Bias and Fairness: How to Address and Remedy it

The AI systems should be monitored so that they do not result in prejudice and discrimination. Given that these systems are based on data, there is the likelihood that biased datasets will yield biased results. To overcome this, different and representative data should be used to train AI models. Bias should be detected and removed by conducting regular audits and testing. Decisions made must be transparent enough to make users comprehend the process of making decisions. Moreover, redressal mechanisms should be put in place to enable people to appeal against wrong or discriminatory decisions produced by the artificial intelligence systems.

(f) Hybrid Model (AI with Human Intervention) Adoption

AI is supposed to serve as an auxiliary tool not to substitute legal professionals. The effective delivery of legal aid should be based on a hybrid model that will incorporate the efficiency of AI and human knowledge. Preliminary advice, writing of documents, and simple questions can be addressed using AI, whereas complicated or sensitive cases need to be solved by a lawyer. The system can be designed in tiers in which AI can offer initial-level support and send those cases that need further analysis to human specialists. Educating legal professionals to collaborate with AI tools will also raise efficiency and quality of services.

(g) Regulatory Framework in the Indian Legal System

Legal aid involving AI should be regulated by an effective and articulate regulatory framework. Ethical use, transparency, and accountability in AI systems should be provided

with guidelines. Legal entities are supposed to come up with standard operating practices regarding the implementation and regulation of AI tools. Mechanisms of independent oversight should be developed to assess how these systems are operating and to deal with any abuse. The regulatory framework should also be updated regularly to remain abreast of the technological changes and new challenges.

#### (h) Enhancing Digital Infrastructure

AI-based legal assistance can only be effective when there is a good digital infrastructure. There should be an attempt to increase the use of internet especially in the rural and remote regions. Digital facilities should be available at the public access points like community centres and legal aid clinics so that people can access AI platforms. The affordability of the devices and enhancement of the technological infrastructure will make sure that the benefits of AI are accessible to all spheres of society.

#### Intensive Monitoring and Assessment.

To make sure that AI implementation in law aid is effective, continuous monitoring and evaluation should be implemented. Indicators of performance must be created to determine accessibility, efficiency and user satisfaction. They should carry out periodic evaluations to determine the gaps and areas that can be improved. User-feedback should be actively suggested into the system design and upgrades. Further stimulation of the research and innovation in legal technology will also help to create more effective and inclusive solutions.

#### Overall Policy Direction

The introduction of AI in the legal support system should be accompanied by the principles of inclusivity, fairness, and accountability. It must be a moderate position between the use of technology to enhance justice delivery and human control to make sure that justice delivery is effective and fair. AI can serve as an effective instrument to close the divide between the legal requirements and access to justice by working on infrastructural, ethical, and regulatory issues that will, in turn, enhance the legal system and facilitate social justice.

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