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# **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN INDIA: INNOVATIONS, CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS**

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**Key words:** Artificial Intelligence (AI), Access to Justice, Legal Technology, Judicial Reforms, Indian Judiciary, Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)

## **Introduction**

The Indian Constitution accords people the fundamental rights to equality before the law and protection of life and personal liberty under Articles 14 and 21, respectively, and emphasizes the provision of free legal aid and equal justice under Article 39A. Although there are laws in place to ensure access to legal services, many people, particularly those from marginalised communities, encounter substantial obstacles due to the expensive, intricate, and slow nature of the legal system (Bhuwania, 2016). Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a potent instrument in recent years, with the potential to revolutionise the legal field by enhancing accessibility, affordability, and efficiency of legal services. This paper makes an attempt to examine the influence of artificial intelligence (AI) on the availability of legal services in India, emphasising novel advancements, obstacles, and potential developments in the future.

## **Literature Review**

India has faced persistent difficulties in ensuring access to justice, mostly due to the judiciary's overwhelming caseload and limited resources (Bhadra & Mallick, 2020). While disadvantaged people do not have cash they need to access traditional law systems because of high costs it takes too long with limited information since they are unable to pay (Moog, 2018). Justice Ranjan Gogoi, a former Judge of the Supreme Court of India, highlights the significant obstacles encountered by the Indian judiciary. These include a substantial backlog of cases at different

levels of the judiciary, with millions of cases awaiting resolution. Additionally, India faces a shortage of judges compared to other nations, as well as inadequate infrastructure and technological support (Gogoi, R. 2013). To address these challenges, Justice Gogoi emphasises the necessity for judicial reforms, increasing the judiciary's capacity, and enhancing its accountability through performance standards and structural changes (Gogoi, R. 2013).

Surden (2014) posited that artificial intelligence (AI) offers hope towards solving this problem because it can process huge volumes of information, review documents from courts & come up with quick replies.

The legal profession around the world is rapidly adopting AI to a greater extent than before. AI is employed for a variety of uses, which include but are not limited to legal research, contract analysis, predictive analytics, and even online dispute resolution platforms (Susskind and Shalev 2016). Nevertheless, it is at an embryonic stage in this country where adoption has only started through initiatives from private concerns and governmental agencies (Katz 2013).

### **AI Technologies in Legal Practice**

AI technologies are revolutionising different facets of legal practice in India, providing inventive alternatives to conventional issues. Legal chatbots offer fundamental legal counsel and knowledge to users, assisting them in comprehending their entitlements and manoeuvring via legal protocols (Nyaaya, n.d.). These chatbots are especially advantageous for persons who lack the financial means to obtain professional legal counsel or who reside in rural places with restricted availability of legal services.

Predictive analytics, an AI tool, is revolutionising the field of law by examining previous cases and forecasting future results using historical data (Katz, 2013). This technology has the ability to assist lawyers and clients in making well-informed decisions regarding whether to proceed with litigation or reach a settlement outside of court. As a result, it might potentially decrease the number of meritless cases and alleviate the workload on the judicial system.

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) systems utilise artificial intelligence (AI) to expedite the resolution of conflicts outside of conventional courtrooms, providing a quicker and more economical alternative to litigation (Susskind, 2019). ODR platforms are gaining popularity in India for the resolution of minor claims, consumer conflicts, and family issues, offering a more

accessible avenue for justice to persons who may otherwise be marginalised by the judicial system.

### **AI and Legal Aid Services**

Legal aid services in India have historically suffered from insufficient resources and excessive workload, which has hindered their capacity to offer efficient support to individuals in need (Venkatesan, 2015). Artificial intelligence (AI) has the capacity to greatly improve the effectiveness and scope of legal aid services by automating mundane duties, such as reviewing documents and conducting legal research. This allows lawyers to concentrate on the more intricate parts of legal matters.

India is now implementing various AI-driven projects to enhance the availability of legal assistance. One instance is Nyaaya, a platform that is freely accessible and utilises artificial intelligence to streamline legal material and offer precise, practical guidance to users on different legal matters (Nyaaya, n.d.). These platforms have the ability to give individuals with minimal legal expertise the means to comprehend their rights and pursue suitable legal action.

### **Impact on Access to Justice**

The potential of AI to enhance access to justice in India is substantial. AI can enhance the affordability and accessibility of justice for a wider range of people by automating repetitive procedures and offering cost-effective legal services (Susskind, 2019). In addition, AI can aid in diminishing case backlogs by optimising legal procedures and expediting the resolution of disputes, therefore augmenting the overall efficacy of the judicial system.

Nevertheless, the influence of AI on the availability of legal services is not devoid of obstacles. A significant issue of concern is the digital divide, which denotes the disparity between persons who possess the means to access digital technology and those who lack such access (O'Neil, 2016). A substantial segment of the population in India still does not have internet connection and digital devices, which restricts the availability of AI-powered legal services. Moreover, the utilisation of artificial intelligence (AI) in the legal domain gives rise to ethical apprehensions concerning the protection of data privacy, algorithmic prejudice, and the possibility of automated systems making decisions without sufficient human supervision (Barfield & Pagallo, 2018).

## Challenges and Ethical Considerations

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in the legal industry is accompanied by several obstacles and ethical deliberations that need to be resolved in order to guarantee its conscientious application. An important obstacle is the potential for algorithmic bias, in which AI systems may unintentionally perpetuate existing prejudices found in previous data, resulting in unfair outcomes (O'Neil, 2016). Within the legal framework, this could lead to prejudiced rulings or suggestions that unfairly impact marginalised communities to a greater extent.

Data privacy is a significant worry when it comes to AI systems, as they typically depend on large quantities of personal data to operate efficiently (Chander, 2017). Preserving the privacy and protection of sensitive legal information is crucial for upholding public confidence in AI-powered legal services. India's lack of comprehensive data protection legislation adds more complexity to this matter, highlighting the urgent need for policymakers to set precise regulations around data usage and privacy in the realm of AI (Sahni, 2019).

An important ethical dilemma arises from the absence of human supervision in AI-powered legal procedures. Although AI can aid in decision-making, it is essential to have human intervention in the ultimate judgement to consider the subtleties and intricacies of legal matters (Goodman & Flaxman, 2017). It is imperative to ensure the transparency and explainability of AI systems in order to prevent unfair outcomes and uphold the integrity of the judicial system.

## Regulatory and Policy Framework

To ensure the effective integration of AI in the legal sector in India, it is crucial to establish a strong regulatory and policy framework that addresses both the advantages and difficulties connected with this technology. Presently, there are no explicit regulations dictating the utilisation of AI in the legal domain in India. However, there are general data protection and privacy laws, such as the Information Technology Act, 2000, and the proposed Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, which offer certain legal protections (Internet Freedom Foundation, 2020).

In order to promote ethical utilisation of artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of legal services, it is imperative for India to adopt comprehensive standards that specifically tackle concerns related to data privacy, algorithmic transparency, and accountability (Balaram, Greenham, &

Leonard, 2018). These policies should additionally foster ethical AI development by incentivising the incorporation of varied viewpoints in the design and implementation of AI systems to mitigate prejudice and guarantee impartiality.

Additionally, governments should prioritise the reduction of the digital gap through investments in digital infrastructure and the promotion of digital literacy within marginalised areas (Kumar, 2021). This will help guarantee that the advantages of AI-powered legal services are available to all individuals, irrespective of their socioeconomic background.

### **Case Studies and Examples**

Several initiatives in India demonstrate the potential of AI to enhance access to justice. As an example, the Supreme Court of India has introduced the SUPACE (Supreme Court platform for Assistance in Court Efficiency) AI-based platform, which helps judges with case management and legal research by utilising machine learning (India Today, 2021). The objective of the portal is to expedite the process of resolving disputes by equipping judges with pertinent case law and legal material in a more efficient manner.

In a similar vein, the Telangana High Court has implemented a virtual court system that utilises artificial intelligence to manage traffic challan cases. This enables individuals to pay fines online without the need to physically attend court proceedings (The Hindu, 2021). This initiative has not only alleviated the workload on the judiciary, but it has also facilitated the resolution of minor legal matters for individuals without paying substantial expenses.

These examples demonstrate how AI may be efficiently utilised to enhance the efficiency and accessibility of the legal system in India. Nevertheless, they also emphasise the necessity for meticulous execution and supervision to guarantee the ethical and responsible utilisation of AI technologies.

### **Future Prospects**

The potential advancements and developing trends in AI offer a bright outlook for improving access to justice in India. With the ongoing advancement of AI technology, it is reasonable to anticipate the emergence of increasingly advanced applications that will provide even more significant advantages to the legal industry (West, 2018). Advancements in natural language

processing and machine learning have the potential to enhance AI systems, allowing them to offer more refined and precise legal guidance. This would contribute to narrowing the divide between legal experts and the general public.

In addition, the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) with other developing technologies, like blockchain, has the potential to improve the clarity and protection of legal procedures, offering extra measures to prevent fraud and manipulation (Zhang, Xue, & Liu, 2019). These technologies have the potential to greatly enhance the efficiency and reliability of the legal system, hence increasing its accessibility to people from diverse backgrounds.

However, harnessing the whole capabilities of AI in the legal industry will necessitate collaborative endeavours from all parties involved, such as legislators, legal practitioners, and technologists (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). India can maintain a fair, efficient, and accessible legal system by promoting a collaborative approach to the development and implementation of AI.

### **Conclusion**

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the capacity to greatly alter the legal field in India by enhancing the accessibility, affordability, and efficiency of legal services. However, harnessing this potential necessitates tackling several obstacles and ethical considerations, such as algorithmic prejudice, data privacy, and the digital divide. To ensure responsible and equitable use of AI technologies in the legal sector, it is crucial to establish a strong regulatory and policy framework, encourage ethical AI development, and allocate resources to enhance digital infrastructure.

As artificial intelligence (AI) progresses, it is essential for all parties involved to stay watchful and take initiative in tackling the next challenges and opportunities. India can utilise the potential of AI to establish a legal system that is fair, just, and accessible to all citizens by embracing innovation.

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