



The Indian Journal for Research in Law and Management

Open Access Law Journal – Copyright © 2026

Editor-in-Chief – Dr. Muktai Deb Chavan; Publisher – Alden Vas; ISSN: 2583-9896

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International (CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0) License, which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium provided the original work is properly cited.

THE FUTURE OF LEGAL TECHNOLOGY IN INDIA

~ *Hrithika Ranjan*

ABSTRACT

The Indian legal system has reached a crossroads with respect to its intersection of technology and judicial reforms. This blog explores the journey, applications, and prospects of legal technology in India from the launch of the e-Courts Project in 2005 to the normalization of virtual hearings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The blog highlights the incorporation of artificial intelligence in the field of legal research and law through platforms like SUPACE and SCC Online AI Search. It also explores the exponential growth in the sector of legal technology startups, along with an investment of ₹7,200 crore in the e-Courts Project Phase III by the Indian government. While legal technology is disruptive and promises to solve issues like case backlog and democratisation of the legal process through online dispute resolution, this blog emphasizes several major obstacles associated with the technology including algorithmic bias, data privacy under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, and the failure of existing professional codes of conduct for legal professionals. It makes it clear that the test of legal technology's success is not its advancement but its ability to promote justice and good governance.

INTRODUCTION

India's judicial system is confronting an unprecedented crisis of scale. And with more than 50 million cases pending in its courts, structural reform alone cannot fix what technology can,¹ more and more. Legal technology, such as the application of artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure and data systems in the practice of law, is rapidly transforming the way law is

¹ Law Commission of India, Arrears and Backlog: Creating Additional Judicial (Wo)manpower, Report No. 245 (2014).

practiced, adjudicated and accessed. With Government digitalization initiatives and a burgeoning private legal tech ecosystem, India is at the cusp of a fundamental shift in its legal architecture. This article traces this trajectory, examining the opportunities it presents and the ethical complexities it entails.

EVOLUTION OF LEGAL TECHNOLOGY IN INDIA

India's institutional engagement with legal technology was seen through the e-Courts Project (2005) which digitalized case records, enabled online cause list management and established a server infrastructure in subordinate courts.² Then came the Digital India initiative (2015) that created a wider digital ecosystem for judicial processes to tap into.³ This trajectory was decisively accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2020 the Supreme Court mandated video conferencing for court proceedings across all jurisdictions, normalizing virtual hearings almost overnight.⁴ All of these developments together create the digital stage for more sophisticated legal technologies to be developed today.

ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE INDIAN LEGAL SECTOR

AI has made inroads into various strata of Indian legal practice. Tools such as SCC Online's AI search, Manupatra's predictive analytics and platforms such as LawRato use natural language processing to parse judgements, trace precedential patterns and extract relevant authorities far more efficiently than traditional research.⁵ In 2021, the Supreme Court, at the institutional level, launched SUPACE (Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency), an AI tool expressly designed to assist judges in information processing, but without autonomous decision-making authority. There are also state-level pilots of machine learning applications for predictive adjudication and bail-risk assessment. But the danger of embedding existing biases into algorithmic systems requires careful scrutiny in a country where caste, religion and socio-economic status have historically skewed legal outcomes.⁶

² Department of Justice, Government of India, eCourts Project Phase I and II Report (2022), available at <https://ecourts.gov.in>.

³ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Digital India Programme Overview (2015), available at <https://digitalindia.gov.in>.

⁴ Supreme Court of India, Video Conferencing Guidelines, S.M.W. (C) No. 3/2020, Order dated April 6, 2020.

⁵ NITI Aayog, Discussion Paper: National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (2018), available at <https://niti.gov.in>.

⁶ Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar, (2014) 8 SCC 273.

LEGAL TECH STARTUPS AND DIGITAL COURTS

India's legal tech startup ecosystem has grown up a lot. Platforms such as Legality (digital signing), Spot Draft (AI-powered contract management) and Vakilsearch (corporate compliance) are making legal services available to all that were initially available only to large corporations. The e-Courts Phase III project, approved in 2023 with an outlay of ₹7,200 crores, envisages paperless proceedings, digital evidence management and interoperable case management systems across all judicial tiers.⁷ The first pilot of traffic challan was tested via virtual courts, where technology-enabled adjudication proved scalable for high-volume disputes. Another frontier is Online Dispute Resolution (ODR). The Justice Srikrishna Committee Report (2021) recommended a national policy on ODR and recognition of digital arbitration awards under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.⁸

ADVANTAGES OF LEGAL TECHNOLOGY

The benefits to the system are enormous. Automated case management reduces administrative delay, virtual hearings overcome the geographic barriers that have traditionally disadvantaged rural litigants, AI-driven research closes the information gap between the well-resourced and under-resourced parties. One promising application of blockchain technology is for immutable land registration records and smart contracts, such as self-executing agreements on distributed ledgers that could reduce transactional friction and contractual disputes. These are not incremental but potentially transformative improvements in settings where land title litigation and enforcement failures are chronic.

CHALLENGES AND ETHICAL CONCERNS

The most pressing concern is privacy of data. The Supreme Court's recognition of privacy as a fundamental right in *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*⁹ and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023¹⁰ offer a rudimentary framework, but data governance standards specific to legal tech are lacking. Live vulnerability, that is, client communications are made confidential via third-party cloud platforms. The Bar Council's rules of professional conduct, designed for the analogue age, need to be systematically revised to address AI-assisted

⁷ SCI, e-Committee Report on Phase III of the eCourts Project (2023), at 8.

⁸ Ministry of Law and Justice, Online Dispute Resolution Committee Report (Justice Srikrishna Committee) (2021).

⁹ *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 1.

¹⁰ The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (Act No. 22 of 2023).

advocacy and cross-border digital legal services.¹¹ There are other risks that policymakers cannot afford to defer, algorithmic bias, displacement of junior legal professionals, and uneven distribution of digital infrastructure across India's judicial geography.

FUTURE SCOPE AND EMERGING TRENDS

Incorporating large language models into legal drafting, compliance, and precedent mapping will become more prominent in the future. Crucially, India needs to develop its own AI models based on its own jurisprudence, which is essential for the technology to be consistent with India's legal and constitutional framework.¹² Tools such as Legal Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS) and Integrated Case Management System (ICMS) are laying down the foundation for such an endeavour.¹³ Regulatory technology (RegTech) adoption will grow quickly within industries including finance, environment, and corporate law. Formalising ODR and establishing the legitimacy of digital arbitral awards will increase avenues for resolving disputes among India's millions of citizens.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Legal technology is not a silver bullet that can solve all the problems associated with the Indian judicial system, but it has to be an indispensable tool of change. What remains is not if, but how we can implement it in an equitable manner. There are three actions that need to be taken. First, there should be technology-specific guidelines issued by the Bar Council of India and the e-Committee of the Supreme Court on issues like data confidentiality, client consent in using AI technologies, and information requirements. Secondly, any algorithmic technology used in a judicial context must be subject to mandatory auditability and human supervision. Finally, spending on infrastructure at the district level for the implementation of legal technology must be seen as a constitutional obligation under Article 21. Ultimately, the success of legal technology will depend not on the advancement of the technological systems, but rather their utility in furthering justice and good governance.

¹¹ Bar Council of India, Rules on Standards of Professional Conduct and Etiquette, Part VI, Chapter II (as amended 2021).

¹² NITI Aayog & MeitY, Responsible AI for All: Approach Document for India (2021), at 22.

¹³ Law Commission of India, Legal Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS), Report No. 274 (2022), at 6.