

AI in Indian Judiciary: Opportunities, Risks, and Legal Implications for Fair Trial and Judicial Transparency

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Abstract

The Indian justice system is no longer an artificial-intelligence concept; it has become part of the judicial administration system through translation tools, online case management, online filing, virtual courts, and information-based infrastructure. The judiciary in India has been facing an alarming level of pendency, extreme digitization, and increasing demands from the population for access, speed, and transparency. According to the official sources, the e-Courts Phase III project has been passed, and the outlay is in the form of Rs. 7,210 crore. The Supreme Court and the e-Committee have persisted in increasing digital infrastructure like the National Judicial Data Grid, e-filing, live streaming, e-Sewa Kendras, virtual courts, SUPACE, and SUVAS. These advances open up significant possibilities to research and translation of law, scheduling, management of documents, access to citizens, and transparency of institutions. Meanwhile, they raise serious constitutional and legal issues concerning equality before the law, due process, privacy, explainability, accountability, bias, and maintenance of judicial independence. The current paper uses a descriptive doctrinal approach relying on secondary sources to discuss the ways AI can transform the Indian judiciary. It contends that AI can reinforce judicial capacity provided it is not decisional but supportive, is built into constitutional protections, and managed by an open techno-legal system. The paper also states that the appropriateness of AI in courts cannot be solely based on efficiency assertions but rather on whether it safeguards the principles of fair trial, rational adjudication, non-discrimination, open justice, and meaningful human supervision. The normative elements in the assessment of AI in judicial proceedings are found in the constitutional assurance of equality in Article 14, the safeguarding of life and personal liberty in Article 21, and the principles of privacy as established in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India, and the logic of transparency identified in the RTI jurisprudence in India.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Indian judiciary; Fair trial; judicial transparency; SUPACE; SUVAS; constitutional law

1. Introduction

The interaction of artificial intelligence and the justice system in India should be seen in the context of an overwhelmed judiciary, growing digital governance, and rising constitutional questioning of technology. The National Judicial Data Grid is currently indicating a huge number of pending cases in the district and taluka courts, and the dashboard of the

Supreme Court itself indicates a significant pending caseload. These statistics do not just show administrative overload, but reflect structural strain on timeliness, access, and citizen trust in the administration of justice. Technology has frequently been promoted in such a setting as a means to the ease of justice, and the official documents of policy of the judicial system now openly make transparency, accountability, accessibility, and efficiency central to digital court reform. The judicial digitalization project in India is not new; however, it has gained momentum[1]. The e-Committee of the Supreme Court identifies itself as the governing body that deals with ICT adoption in the judiciary, and the e-Courts initiative is pitched as a nationwide initiative to ensure justice delivery is made accessible, cost-effective, reliable, and transparent. According to the Department of Justice, the e-Courts Phase III aims to transform the system towards digital, online, and paperless courts. According to parliament responses and official press releases, this stage has a budgetary cost of Rs. 7,210 crore, and that particular investment has been allocated towards further technological development, such as AI and blockchain[2].

In this transformation, AI has been introduced in the Indian judiciary in a tentative yet tangible way. The most famous ones are SUPACE, the Supreme Court Portal to Help with Court Efficiency, and SUVAS, the Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software. Formal accounts outline SUPACE as an AI-assisted method of having knowledge of the factual matrix of cases, pinpointing precedents, and helping judges and researchers. Government material, too, says that SUPACE is still at the experimental level and is designed as a support system and not a judicial system on its own. In contrast, SUVAS is an AI-trained machine-assisted translation tool that is developed to encourage the use of the local languages in court and aid in the translation of the verdicts. The Supreme Court has also established AI-assisted legal translation programs on vernacular reportable judgments.

These tools are important because they not only transform the way the court is run but also the circumstances in which justice is enjoyed. Linguistic access can be increased by translation software. Legal research tools may save time wasted in searching through big records. Pattern recognition can assist the court management in spotting recurring litigation or bottlenecks in the process. Video and virtual courts can help ease the physical attendance in minor cases. In India, there is already a large-scale adoption of e-filing and e-payments in operations. Official government data as of early 2026 shows that approximately 1.03 crore cases have been filed using the e-filing system, and there is a massive digitalization of court fees and fines[3]. Crores of cases and massive fines have also been handled by virtual courts, and e-Sewa Kendras have been established in various parts of the country to assist litigants, particularly those who have no digital capacity, to access information regarding their cases and to access e-services. However, the introduction of AI in the work of the courts also creates more serious questions than in the typical automation of the administration. Courts are not just services of delivery. They are institutional bodies that are mandated with the responsibility of safeguarding liberty, equality, dignity, and procedural fairness. A court ruling is not the mere product but a rational exercise of state authority. This is the reason why the application of AI in the judiciary should be evaluated not just in terms of speed or cost-cutting, but on whether it maintains the key characteristics of adjudication: independence of mind, reasoned justification, equal treatment, contestability, and public accountability. These issues cannot be detached in India in relation to constitutional guarantees. Article 14 provides equality before the law and equality of protection under the

law. Article 21 guards life and personal liberty except in the procedure as laid down in law. The Supreme Court has identified privacy as a constitutionally safeguarded value, and informational privacy. Transparency, in the meantime, has been repeatedly associated by the Court with accountability in democracy and the right of the people to know. This paper, therefore, examines AI in the Indian judiciary as a constitutional governance issue. It does not assume that AI is either inherently beneficial or inherently dangerous[4]. Instead, it adopts a descriptive perspective: What opportunities does AI create? What risks follow when algorithmic systems enter judicial environments? What legal implications emerge for fair trial rights and judicial transparency? The paper concludes that India should pursue assistive AI in courts, but only with strong guardrails relating to explainability, auditability, human control, data protection, public disclosure, and institutional accountability.

2. Objectives of the Study

There are four objectives of this study. First, it aims to explain the present-day direction of the use of AI in the Indian judiciary, in particular, e-Courts, SUPACE, SUVAS, virtual courts, live-streaming systems, and data platforms. Second, it discusses the opportunities that AI can provide to access to justice, judicial efficiency, inclusion of languages, and transparency. Third, it examines the risks of bias, opacities, the harms of privacy, reliance on automation, and disparities in digital access. Fourth, it analyses the constitutional and legal consequences of AI with respect to guarantees of fair trial and judicial transparency in India. These are in line with the formally stated aims of the judiciary to enhance accessibility, accountability, and citizen-centric justice delivery, and maintain institutional legitimacy.

3. Research Methodology

The current paper is founded on the descriptive, doctrinal, and qualitative secondary research design. It is based on official and authoritative sources, such as documents and publicly available data of the Supreme Court of India, the e-Committee, the Department of Justice, the National Judicial Data Grid, the Press Information Bureau, India Code, and a few judicial decisions. The approach is descriptive in its nature since it traces the current initiatives, legal frameworks, and institutional developments as opposed to creating primary empirical data. It is dogmatic as the interpretation is based on constitutional principles, legislation, policy documents, and judicial rulings. The sources utilized are the Constitution of India, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, the official information on e-Courts Phase III, the official statements on SUPACE and SUVAS, the material on live streaming and RTI in the Supreme Court, and the Puttaswamy privacy judgment[5]. The method of analysis is thematic. The paper initially recognizes the current situation of the Indian judiciary in terms of AI and digital tools and then systematizes the discussion into two substantive dimensions, namely, opportunities and risks. These are then viewed in the constitutional perspectives of equality, due process, privacy, open justice and accountability. Recent official content is of special importance as the institutional and policy landscape of AI in India is changing. According to governmental sources published in 2025 and 2026, not just the

continued investment in e-Courts and digital courts, but also, more generally, the Indian shift to AI governance via guidelines and principle-based frameworks, as opposed to a single comprehensive AI law.

4. AI in the Indian Judiciary: New Horizons.

The involvement of the Indian judiciary in AI has been non-committal, practical, and formally described as supportive. This is important. The explanations of SUPACE given by the authorities frame it as an instrument of knowing facts, finding precedents, and facilitating legal studies. Those framing are indicative of a calculated institutional warning: AI should assist the judge, not substitute the judge. The position is important as adjudication in a constitutional democracy is normative and has appreciation of evidence, credibility, discretionary judgment, which cannot be reduced to purely computational optimisation. The judicial branch of the government implicitly recognizes that the judicial legitimacy is based on human responsibility by keeping AI in a support position[6].

Meanwhile, AI-powered translation has seen a more prominent functional presence. SUVAS has been advocated to facilitate translation of Supreme Court judgments into vernacular languages, and the official statements indicate the cooperation between the Supreme Court and the High Courts to translate e-SCR judgments in various languages. This growth is directly related to access to justice in a multilingual democracy[7]. Even though Article 348 upholds the use of English as the language of proceedings in the Supreme Court and the High Courts except where otherwise specified, to ensure meaningful public access to judgments, intelligibility needs to go beyond English-speaking legal elites[8]. It is thus highly inclusion justifiable that AI-assisted translation is, although accuracy of translation and legal subtlety are also sensitive factors.

It is also important to the broader judicial ecosystem. AI is not solitary, it resides on a fast-growing data and digital infrastructure. The NJDG provides high volume of judicial data visibility, e-filing, e-payments, High Court service portal, virtual courts, e-Sewa Kendras, and live-streaming of rules all add to a more digitalised adjudicatory environment. Formally, the goal is not only a quicker workflow but also more transparency and citizen-centricity. It is an infrastructural backdrop that facilitates the further adoption of AI in the future since machine systems rely on digitised records, standardised metadata, searchable databases and interoperable workflows[9]. That is, judicial AI is preconditioned by digitisation.

The wider AI governance situation in India is still applicable here. In India, the role of AI is primarily principle-based and policy driven, and not regulated by a specific AI law as of early 2026. The official and non-official sources refer to principles of responsible AI, consultation of the population on the governance of AI, and principles advocating transparency, accountability, classification of risks, safety, and human control. In the case of the judiciary, this implies that judicial AI should be assessed at this point in time by a mixture of constitutional doctrine, data protection law, current digital and cyber law, and soft-law governing principles[10].

5. Opportunities of AI for the Indian Judiciary

The initial significant opportunity is legal research and case processing efficiency. The Indian courts are faced with massive amounts of filings, precedents, pleadings, annexures, and procedural records. One tool, like SUPACE, can assist judges and their researchers to find pertinent factual patterns, recall similar case law, and more easily search the large records. Even small improvements in research efficiency can decrease the delay in listing, hearing preparation, and drafting orders in a system with a large pendency. Other administrative tasks that can be assisted by AI are clustering similar issues, detection of recurrent questions of law, and better management of internal workflow. This application, particularly in supplementing judicial judgment, is particularly appealing[11]. Language access and inclusion is a second opportunity. The translation of the language with the help of AI in the form of SUVAS can democratize the provision of judgments and legal knowledge among the language communities. In India, the cost and geography are not the only factors associated with legal exclusion: language often comes into play[12]. As judgments are increasingly available in vernacular languages, litigants, journalists, scholars, and citizens are in a better position to interpret legal outcomes. This not only impacts fair trial values but also judicial transparency. It enhances the capacity of the affected persons to ascertain that what the law states, the reason why the court made the decision it did and how precedent is likely to apply to them. It also closes the divide between constitutional rights as written and those as understood in law.

The third opportunity is the availability of justice via digital integration of services. The digital ecosystem may not and cannot directly provide justice, but enhanced citizen-facing services in an AI-enhanced ecosystem can include smart search, automatic retrieval of case information, hearing notifications, document categorisation and court help interfaces. There are already e-filing, e-payments, e-Sewa Kendras, and virtual courts within the existing judicial infrastructure[13]. AI can reconfigure such services to be more responsive, particularly in normal procedural interactions. In small disputes, traffic issues, time-related inquiries, or document navigation, smart help can decrease the transaction costs of litigants and lawyers. This is especially necessary in a nation in which distance, complexity of the procedures, and legal illiteracy tend to hinder effective access. The fourth opportunity relates to judicial openness and popular confidence. When applied in the right ways, AI may enhance the discoverability of judgments, allow systematic public access to case data, facilitate archives that can be searched, and promote transparency in the management of courts. Transparency in the judiciary does not only concern final decisions, but also pertains to listing, scheduling, access to proceedings, and publication of information. The Supreme Court has adopted the use of live-streaming of selected proceedings, and model rules of live streaming and recording have been given by the e-Committee. Artificial intelligence can be used to help in indexing, transcription support, translation, archives, and public retrieval systems. When designed in an open manner, these tools can strengthen open justice and not undermine it[14].

A fifth opportunity is data-informed governance. The judiciary has already made an investment in the NJDG as a national repository of case-related information. Analytics based on data can be used to determine the presence of systemic bottlenecks, case ageing, regional differences, and institutional delay patterns[15]. This can be enhanced by AI, which provides superior forecasting, workload management, and policy analytics. But this is the most defensible when applied at the system-governance level, and not as an obscure mechanism of individual adjudicatory results. With proper use,

AI analytics may be useful in assisting resource allocation, court administration, and reform planning without encroaching on the independent decisional space of the judge.

6. Risks and Challenges

Algorithms' bias and its collision with Article 14 is the most dangerous. AI operates based on the insights it gains through data and past legal or administrative data can recreate structural inequalities. Considering the assumptions that future judicial AI systems would be trained based on data that portrays socio-economic disadvantage, regional bias, inconsistent prosecutorial actions, language differences, or institutional bias of the past, they might indirectly harm groups that are already vulnerable. Although AI may be merely assistive, it is possible to influence attention, framing, and judicial intuition by means of recommendations. Under such a situation, unequal data may result in unequal justice. Given that Article 14 upholds equality before the law and equal protection of the laws, any judicial AI backed by the state that delivers discriminatory or systematically biased results would be subject to serious constitutional doubts[16].

The second risk is the black box problem or opacities. Just adjudication involves parties knowing the grounds on which decisions that impact them are made. When AI-generated classifications, rankings, recommendations, or summaries are used to handle a case, the parties should be made aware of their use and how they were applied. This is particularly perilous in an opaque system in a court context as courts are supposed to give reasons[17]. The institutional counterpart of unaccounted automation is the process of making decisions through reasoning. The reasoning behind a step in which technology is involved cannot be questioned by a litigant in any meaningful way. This compromises the procedural fairness and undermines confidence in adjudication. The constitutional culture of reason-giving, which cannot be reduced to a single Article, cannot be separated, however, from fair procedure in Article 21.

The third risk is related to privacy and judicial data. The contents of court records are intensely sensitive: personal identifiers, family conflicts, medical records, financial data, criminal charges, witness testimonies, and in some cases, data of children. The Puttaswamy decision clearly acknowledged the existence of informational privacy and stipulated that privacy limitations needed to be lawful, legitimate, and proportional. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, likewise provides a legal framework of digital processing of personal data. Any implementation of AI in the judicial system that relies on the mass ingestion, storage, analytics, or model training of court records must thus address the acute privacy concerns. The state cannot use efficiency to give unlimited consent to repurposing personal information of litigants. Judicial data do not constitute a free raw material to experiment on. Fourthly is the risk of automation bias in judicial culture. Although a given tool is officially non-binding, users can still follow its results since they seem rapid, technical or objective. Court staff and judges might tend to place increasing importance on machine-generated summaries or search results, especially when they are under the pressure of a high caseload. This poses a minor menace to judicial independence. It is not robot judges in the sense of science fiction, but the silent normalisation of human judgment according to the recommendations of machines[18]. When that occurs, finding the actual decision-maker is

challenging. Patterns created by computational models cannot be outsourced to carry out constitutional adjudication, the appreciation of evidence, and the assessment of credibility responsibly. A fifth risk is digital exclusion. Technological systems can expand access for some while deepening exclusion for others. Litigants with limited connectivity, disability barriers, low legal literacy, or language disadvantage may struggle even more in an increasingly digitised court ecosystem. e-Sewa Kendras exist precisely because digital legal systems require facilitation for many users. This means that AI adoption in the judiciary must be judged against substantive, not merely formal, access. A system that is efficient for urban and digitally skilled users but difficult for rural, poor, elderly, or marginalised litigants cannot be called just.

7. Legal Implications for Fair Trial and Judicial Transparency

The implications of judicial AI on fair trials in India can be found primarily in Articles 14 and 21, in combination with more general rule-of-law principles. Fair trial entails a fair decision making, fair adjudication, fair treatment, and fair opportunity to challenge adverse material. In case AI influences judicial research, cause-list prioritisation, the assessment of bail, the organisation of evidence, translation, or drafting assistance, the security measures would have to protect the parties by ensuring that the technological mediation would not be hidden. There must be a disclosure at least when AI has a material influence on a judicial or quasi-judicial step; there must be human verification of all substantive outputs; and contestability in cases where algorithms make an algorithmic summary or translation that is challenged.

Legal implications of transparency are also important. The transparency has been identified by the Supreme Court as the key to democracy, and the jurisprudence of RTI of the Court associates the right to know with Articles 19(1)(a) and 21. The courts have also shifted towards a live-streaming of key proceedings and the model rules of the e-Committee seek to strike a balance between openness and control. In this regard, AI cannot be considered an inside black box that cannot be subject to transparency standards. Instead, there must be public documentation of purpose, scope, datasets, limitations, audit procedures, and human controls on any use of AI in a judiciary. Not only is it necessary that justice be done, but that technologically mediated justice be accessible in a publicly intelligible way.

The privacy aspect requires commensurate regulation. Informational privacy is constitutional under Puttaswamy, and limitations must meet the test of legality, necessity, and proportionality. The DPDP Act introduces legal requirements in connection with the legal processing of digital personal information. In the case of the judiciary, this means that AI systems ought to observe the purpose limitation, data minimisation, controlled access, secure retention, and strict secondary use restrictions. Court records that are sensitive must not be used for training models randomly. Where there is a lack of anonymisation, the higher thresholds should be used. Criminal, family, juvenile, sexual offence, and health-related matters have special considerations.

One last legal implication is the lack of specific binding AI law by the courts. The existing framework in India is still scattered among constitutional standards, the IT and digital governance system, the DPDP Act, and the administrative rules of the judicial system, as well as new AI guidelines. This implies that the judiciary must not wait until the general AI statute is enacted. It is able to implement its own judicial AI protocol or charter based on the constitutional values.

This framework ought to clearly describe AI as assistance, outlaw self-governing adjudication, impose explainability and auditability, necessitate equality impact analysis, and provide judge and staff training. The Indian government is seeking wider AI governance principles, which only exacerbates the necessity of industry-specific judicial principles.

8. Conclusion

The Indian judiciary has a constrained yet real opportunity presented by AI. It is able to enhance research, translation, data management, and services to the citizens. Such tools can assist courts to work more efficiently in a system that is overloaded with huge caseloads and lengthy delays. Much of the digital infrastructure required to such integration has already been developed in India: e-Courts Phase III, the NJDG, e-filing, e-payments, virtual courts, e-Sewa Kendras, live-streaming systems, SUPACE, and SUVAS are evidence that the judiciary has already passed through the doorstep of digitization and is already in the active phase of institutional change. But judicial legitimacy is automatable. The Indian constitutional promise of justice needs to go beyond administrative efficiency. Article 14 equality, Article 21 liberty and fair process, Puttaswamy informational privacy and transparency as a democratic value collectively establish strict limits in the application of AI in the courts. AI should be able to aid judges, but it should not be an unseen co-adjudicator. It may widen access; it must not reproduce inequality. It could enhance transparency; it should never establish black-box computational power. The future of AI in the Indian judiciary must thus be constitutional, cautious, and human-focused. A constitutional assistive AI model is the most justifiable Indian direction. Within this kind of paradigm, AI would be allowed to be used in translation, search, help in scheduling, organisation of documents, and analytics in administration, but substantive adjudication would be strictly human. Disclosure, audit, bias testing, privacy compliance and institutional accountability must govern every meaningful use. The judicial officers need to be trained to realise the usefulness and scope of AI tools. The litigants should not be kept ignorant that some technology has been involved in a process that has impacted them. Whether courts embrace AI quickly will not matter as much as whether they embrace it justly will do so and will enhance public trust. This is what the future of AI in the Indian judiciary should be gauged.

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