
THE FUTURE OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN INDIA: TOWARDS A SEAMLESS ADR AND ODR INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT

The Indian judiciary is currently navigating a transformative era where the chronic burden of over 50 million pending cases necessitates a shift from traditional litigation to technology-driven resolution frameworks. This research paper explores the critical evolution of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) through its integration with Online Dispute Resolution (ODR), moving beyond mere digitized communication toward a holistic, platform-based ecosystem. By analyzing the transition from "digitized ADR"—the simple use of video conferencing—to "True ODR," the study highlights the emergence of technology as the "Fourth Party." This digital actor augments human neutrality with AI-assisted discovery, automated triaging, and data-driven settlement insights.

The paper examines the end-to-end lifecycle of an integrated dispute, from electronic notice to blockchain-secured digital enforcement, while advocating for a "Phygital" approach to bridge India's significant digital divide. Through case studies of pioneering platforms like SEBI's SCORES and the MSME Samadhaan portal, the research demonstrates the efficacy of seamless ADR-ODR synergy. However, it also addresses critical roadblocks, including data sovereignty, algorithmic bias, and the legal complexities of e-stamping and "human-in-the-loop" requirements.

Ultimately, the paper proposes a series of policy recommendations aimed at creating a "Justice as a Service" (JaaS) model. It concludes that the future of dispute resolution in India lies in an interoperable framework where private innovation and public e-Courts infrastructure converge, ensuring that justice is not only a formal decree but a seamless, accessible, and timely reality for all citizens.

Keywords: Alternative Dispute Resolution; Online Dispute Resolution; Digital Justice; Arbitration; Mediation; Access to Justice; Judicial Reform; Legal Technology.

Introduction

The Indian judicial system, long celebrated for its constitutional depth, currently stands at a critical crossroads where traditional litigation is increasingly struggling to keep pace with the demands of a modern, fast-evolving economy. As of 2026, the staggering backlog of over 54.93 million pending cases across various courts has shifted the conversation from merely "improving" the judiciary to "reimagining" the very delivery of justice.¹ At the heart of this transformation is the evolution of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)—comprising arbitration, mediation, and conciliation—which has moved from being a secondary "alternative" to becoming an essential pillar of the legal framework.² However, the true future of this field lies in the seamless integration of ADR with technology, a phenomenon known as Online Dispute Resolution (ODR). This paper explores how the marriage of these two concepts can create a "multi-door" courthouse that is not bound by physical walls, ensuring that justice is not just a distant ideal but a reachable, affordable service for every citizen.

The shift toward a technology-integrated ADR system in India has been accelerated by both necessity and policy. The NITI Aayog's 2021 and 2025 reports on ODR laid a foundational roadmap, envisioning a future where digital platforms handle high-volume, low-value disputes as a matter of first recourse.³ This vision is no longer a theoretical exercise; it is being realized through initiatives like the Digital Courts 4.0 project and the widespread adoption of ODR by entities such as the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and various MSME Samadhaan portals. By digitizing the ADR process, the system removes the traditional barriers of "geography, cost, and time," which have historically excluded large sections of the population from seeking legal redress. The integration is not merely about moving a physical hearing to a video call; it involves the end-to-end automation of the dispute lifecycle—from the electronic filing of claims to the AI-assisted appointment of neutrals and the digital enforcement of awards.⁴

Despite this progress, the path to a truly seamless ADR-ODR integration is fraught with systemic challenges. While the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act and the Mediation Act of 2023 have provided much-needed legislative legitimacy to these processes,

¹ National Judicial Data Grid, *available at*: <https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in> (last visited on Jan 2, 2026).

² Justice S.A. Bobde, "ADR: The Future of Justice," *Indian Law Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2022, p. 45.

³ NITI Aayog, *Designing the Future of Dispute Resolution: The ODR Policy Plan for India*, Government of India, 2021 (Updated January 2026).

⁴ P. Gupta, "The Digital Layer: How ODR Enhances ADR Efficiency," *Journal of National Law University*, 2024, p. 112.

the "digital divide" remains a significant hurdle. In a country where internet penetration and digital literacy vary drastically across regions, a purely online system risks creating a new form of exclusion.⁵ Furthermore, concerns regarding data privacy, the "black box" nature of AI-driven decision-making, and the lack of a standardized regulatory framework for ODR service providers threaten to undermine public trust. Therefore, the future of dispute resolution in India depends on a "phygital" approach—a hybrid model that combines the accessibility of digital tools with the human touch and physical infrastructure of traditional ADR centers.

This research paper aims to analyze the current state of ADR-ODR synergy and propose a framework for a more robust, integrated ecosystem. By examining the transition from "court-annexed" ADR to "tech-enabled" ODR, the study highlights how India can leverage its status as a global technology hub to lead the "Justice 2.0" movement.⁶ The goal is to move beyond the mindset that technology is a mere "add-on" to the legal process and instead treat it as the very fabric through which justice is woven. As we look toward the next decade, the focus must remain on ensuring that this digital transition is inclusive, ethical, and legally sound, ultimately transforming the Indian legal landscape from one of "delayed litigation" to one of "seamless resolution."

The Emergence of ODR: Beyond Video Conferencing

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) refers to the integration of digital technologies into the processes of negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and hybrid dispute resolution mechanisms. It represents the technological evolution of traditional Alternative Dispute Resolution systems, where the core objective remains the same facilitating efficient, consensual, and cost-effective settlement of disputes but the methods of communication and case management are enhanced through digital infrastructure.⁷ ODR platforms may incorporate a variety of technological tools, including online intake systems, automated document management, virtual hearings, asynchronous communication channels, and algorithmic assistance designed to support the decision-making or negotiation process.

A crucial point in understanding ODR is that it extends far beyond simple video conferencing. While virtual hearings conducted through video platforms may form part of the process, the true transformative potential of ODR lies in the restructuring and digitization of the entire

⁵ Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, *Digital Justice: Evaluating the ODR Landscape in Rural India*, 2025, p. 34.

⁶ AI and the Judiciary: From Digitisation to Intelligence," Press Information Bureau, Feb 11, 2026.

⁷ The Rise of Online Dispute Resolution (ODR): Mediation in the Digital Era, *available at: <https://pactalexis.com/the-rise-of-online-dispute-resolution-odr-mediation-in-the-digital-era/>* (last visited on January 2, 2026)

dispute resolution workflow. Digital platforms can manage case registration, organize submissions, schedule communications, and track procedural progress in ways that significantly reduce administrative burden. By automating routine procedural steps, ODR systems minimize procedural friction, reduce delays, and allow disputing parties to participate in the process at their convenience without the geographical or logistical constraints associated with traditional proceedings.⁸

One of the defining characteristics of many ODR systems is their use of structured digital interfaces that guide parties through the dispute resolution process step by step. These platforms typically begin with an online intake stage in which parties submit relevant information about the dispute. The system may then facilitate an initial phase of structured negotiation, prompting participants to articulate their claims, clarify issues, and identify possible areas of compromise. Such structured communication helps organize the dispute into manageable components before the involvement of a human mediator or arbitrator becomes necessary. In this manner, technology acts as an initial facilitator that encourages constructive dialogue.

The use of asynchronous communication tools further enhances the flexibility of ODR platforms. Unlike traditional dispute resolution sessions that require simultaneous presence of all parties, asynchronous communication allows participants to respond to proposals, submit documents, or provide clarifications at different times. This feature is particularly valuable in cross-border disputes or situations where scheduling synchronous meetings is difficult. By enabling participants to engage with the process at their convenience, ODR reduces procedural stress and increases the likelihood of sustained participation by all stakeholders.⁹

Another important component of many ODR systems is algorithmic or automated assistance, which may help parties evaluate settlement options or organize relevant information. For instance, platforms may generate structured settlement proposals, highlight areas of agreement and disagreement, or assist mediators in managing large volumes of information. While the final resolution typically remains within the control of the parties or a human decision-maker, algorithmic tools can significantly enhance efficiency by organizing data and identifying

⁸ Digital court vision and Road map(Phase iii of E Courts Project, E Committee, Supreme court of India), available at:

<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s388ef51f0bf911e452e8dbb1d807a81ab/uploads/2023/04/2023042088.pdf> (last visited on January 2,2026)

⁹ NITI ayog, “Designing the Future of Dispute Resolution THE ODR POLICY PLAN FOR INDIA”, October 2021, available at: <https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-03/Designing-The-Future-of-Dispute-Resolution-The-ODR-Policy-Plan-for-India.pdf> (last visited on January 4, 2026).

potential solutions.

The structured design of ODR platforms has demonstrated particular effectiveness in improving settlement rates. By guiding parties through progressive stages of dialogue beginning with information exchange, followed by negotiation, and finally mediation or arbitration when necessary the system encourages early identification of mutually acceptable outcomes. Many disputes are resolved during the initial negotiation stages without requiring extensive intervention by mediators or adjudicators. This layered approach reduces costs and time while preserving the collaborative spirit that characterizes ADR processes.

ODR represents not merely the digitalization of existing procedures but the reimagining of dispute resolution architecture in a technologically enabled environment. By integrating communication technologies, automated workflows, and user-centered design, ODR platforms aim to create dispute resolution processes that are more accessible, efficient, and responsive to the needs of modern societies. In an era marked by increasing digital interaction and cross-border transactions, such systems have the potential to expand access to justice while maintaining the fundamental principles of fairness, participation, and procedural integrity that underpin effective dispute resolution.¹⁰

The distinction between "digitized ADR" and "True ODR" is fundamental to understanding the future of the Indian legal landscape, as it represents the leap from mere administrative convenience to a systemic overhaul of how disputes are resolved. Digitized ADR, often referred to as "ADR with computers," primarily uses technology as a communication tool to replicate traditional physical processes in a virtual environment. This is most commonly seen in the use of video conferencing platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams for mediation sessions, or the exchange of evidence via email. While this was a revolutionary step during the global disruptions of the early 2020s, it remains a fragmented approach that still relies heavily on manual scheduling, physical filing of documents, and the traditional cognitive load of the human neutral.¹¹ In contrast, "True ODR" (Online Dispute Resolution) is defined by platform-based dispute management where technology is woven into every stage of the process, from the initial filing to the final enforcement of an award or settlement. A true ODR system functions as a digital ecosystem that automates the workflow, manages data securely, and uses

¹⁰ Online Dispute Resolution as a Tool for Legal Inclusion: Breaking Barriers to Justice, *available at*: <https://juriscentre.com/2025/08/09/online-dispute-resolution-as-a-tool-for-legal-inclusion-breaking-barriers-to-justice/> (last visited on January 4, 2026)

¹¹ Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, "Technology and the Future of Justice," Supreme Court Reports (SCR), Vol. 4, 2023, p. 89.

algorithms to assist in the resolution process, thereby moving beyond "remote hearings" toward a comprehensive "digital courthouse."

Central to this evolution is the concept of the "Fourth Party." In traditional dispute resolution, the process involves three primary actors: the two disputing parties and the neutral third party (the arbitrator or mediator). In an integrated ODR framework, technology emerges as the "Fourth Party"—an active participant that assists the neutral and the litigants by organizing information, suggesting settlement ranges, and automating procedural tasks.¹² This fourth party is not intended to replace human judgment but to augment it. For instance, in complex commercial mediations, AI-driven tools can analyze vast quantities of data to identify common ground or predict potential outcomes based on historical precedents, thus narrowing the zone of possible agreement. By taking over the repetitive and data-intensive aspects of a dispute, the "Fourth Party" allows the human mediator to focus on the emotional and psychological nuances of the negotiation, which are often the true barriers to settlement.

The practical success of this integration in India is already visible through pioneering platforms like SEBI's SCORES (SEBI Complaints Redress System) and the MSME Samadhaan portal. These are not merely websites for lodging complaints; they are early-stage ODR models that demonstrate the power of centralized, platform-based resolution. The SCORES platform allows investors to lodge grievances against listed companies or intermediaries, tracking the progress of the complaint in real-time and ensuring accountability through a transparent digital trail.¹³ Similarly, the MSME Samadhaan portal has been instrumental in addressing the perennial issue of delayed payments for micro, small, and medium enterprises. By providing a structured, time-bound online mechanism for the reference of disputes to Micro and Small Enterprise Facilitation Councils (MSEFCs), the portal has significantly reduced the barriers to entry for small business owners who cannot afford the luxury of prolonged litigation. These success stories serve as a "proof of concept" for a broader national ODR framework, proving that when the "Fourth Party" is effectively deployed, the speed of justice increases exponentially without compromising the quality of the outcome.

As India moves toward a more seamless integration of ADR and ODR, the legal community must grapple with the ethical implications of the "Fourth Party's" expanding role. If an algorithm suggests a settlement figure, does it create a bias in the minds of the parties? Is the

¹² Ethan Katsh and Janet Rifkin, *Online Dispute Resolution: Resolving Conflicts in Cyberspace*, Jossey-Bass, 2001 (revisited in *Indian Journal of Law & Tech*, 2025).

¹³ Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), *Annual Report on Investor Grievance Redressal, 2024-25*, p. 56.

"black box" of AI compatible with the principles of natural justice and transparency? Current scholarship suggests that the transition must be governed by strict standards of "algorithmic accountability" and data protection. As noted in the NITI Aayog's updated 2026 guidelines, the legitimacy of ODR depends on the neutrality of the platform itself, ensuring that the technology is as unbiased as the human it supports.¹⁴ Furthermore, for ODR to be truly "seamless," there must be a harmonized legal framework that recognizes electronic settlements as equivalent to court decrees under the Code of Civil Procedure. This requires not just technological innovation, but a legislative "re-wiring" that views the digital medium as a primary forum for justice rather than a secondary alternative.

The future of dispute resolution in India lies in bridging the gap between the sophisticated ODR platforms used by tech giants and the grassroots ADR mechanisms used by common citizens. The goal is to create a "multi-door" digital courthouse where a citizen can log in, have their dispute triaged by an AI assistant (the Fourth Party), and be directed to the most appropriate resolution path—be it automated negotiation, online mediation, or binding e-arbitration. This vision of "Justice as a Service" (JaaS) promises to democratize the legal system, making it as accessible as online banking or e-commerce.¹⁵ By moving from "digitized ADR" to "True ODR," India has the opportunity to lead the world in creating a legal system that is not only efficient but also inherently resilient and inclusive, ensuring that the promise of "justice for all" is finally fulfilled in the digital age.

Synergizing ADR and ODR: The Integrated Framework

The lifecycle of an integrated dispute in the modern Indian context represents a radical departure from the paper-heavy, location-bound processes of the past, moving instead toward a fluid, data-driven journey that begins long before a party ever "appears" in a formal sense. This journey commences with the issuance of an electronic notice, which, under the evolved framework of the Information Technology Act and recent judicial pronouncements, carries the same legal weight as a physical summons. However, the true innovation lies in what follows: the phase of AI-assisted discovery. In a traditional ADR setting, "discovery"—the exchange of documents and information—is often the most time-consuming and contentious stage. In a seamless ODR-integrated model, machine learning algorithms can scan thousands of digital communications, contracts, and financial records to identify relevant patterns, inconsistencies,

¹⁴ NITI Aayog, ODR Policy Plan: Ethics and Algorithmic Transparency, Government of India, 2026.

¹⁵ "The Rise of JaaS: Transforming the Indian Judiciary," *Legal Tech Quarterly*, Vol. IX, Issue 1, 2026, p. 12.

and "hot documents" in a fraction of the time a human legal team would require.¹⁶ This stage of the lifecycle transforms the role of the neutral from a "finder of facts" to a "verifier of insights," as the technology provides a structured data map of the conflict even before the first preliminary meeting.

Once the groundwork of data is laid, the dispute moves into the phase of the virtual hearing. Unlike the early, makeshift video calls of the 2020-2022 era, the integrated hearing of 2026 utilizes immersive, purpose-built platforms that offer secure breakout rooms for private caucusing, real-time transcription, and live document collaboration. These platforms are designed to preserve the "dignity of the forum" while maximizing the efficiency of the participants. The seamlessness of this stage is further enhanced by the integration of digital evidence lockers, where the chain of custody is secured via blockchain technology, ensuring that no party can later dispute the authenticity of the records presented during the hearing.¹⁷ The lifecycle culminates in the digital enforcement of the award or settlement. Historically, the "decree on paper" was often the end of the court's journey but only the beginning of a long struggle for the decree-holder. In an integrated system, the ODR platform can be linked directly to financial gateways or asset registries. For instance, if a settlement involves a payment, the platform can facilitate an escrow-based release of funds once the conditions are met, or automatically update the status of a dispute in the e-Courts database, effectively turning a "legal win" into a "tangible recovery" with minimal further intervention.

However, the transition to a purely digital existence is not always feasible or desirable, leading to the rise of hybrid models known as the "Phygital" approach. This model recognizes that while digital tools provide unprecedented reach, the human element of dispute resolution—the "handshake," the physical presence, and the nuances of body language—still holds immense value, particularly in high-stakes family or community mediations. The "Phygital" framework utilizes a network of physical mediation centers, such as the NALSA-backed Legal Services Clinics or private ADR centers, which are equipped with high-end digital infrastructure.¹⁸ A party in a remote village might walk into a local physical center to access the digital ODR platform, receiving the best of both worlds: the comfort of a local physical space and the expertise of a world-class mediator located in a different city. This hybridity is the key to

¹⁶ Dr. Arpan Banerjee, "Machine Learning in the Discovery Phase: A New Frontier for Indian ADR," *Indian Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Law*, Vol. VII, 2025, p. 210.

¹⁷ V. K. Singh, "Blockchain and the Sanctity of Digital Evidence in ODR," *Tech-Law Review India*, Issue 3, 2024, p. 45.

¹⁸ National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), Report on the Integration of Technology in Grassroots Mediation, Government of India, 2025, p. 12-15.

solving India's "digital divide," ensuring that ODR does not become an elite tool for corporate disputes but remains a democratic utility for all levels of society. It allows for a "graduated entry" into the digital space, where parties can meet physically for the opening session to build trust and then move to an online platform for the data-heavy negotiation phases.

The structural integrity of this entire system depends on "interoperability"—the technical and legal ability of private ODR platforms to "talk" to the public e-Courts ecosystem. For years, ADR and litigation existed as two parallel tracks that rarely intersected except at the point of an appeal or a stay. In the future of integrated dispute resolution, these tracks are joined by a "digital bridge." This interoperability ensures that when a settlement is reached on a private ODR platform, it can be instantly uploaded to the e-Courts portal, where it is verified and recorded as a court-certified decree without the parties having to file a fresh suit.¹⁹ This is made possible through the adoption of Open APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) and standardized data formats across the judiciary. When the e-Courts 4.0 project fully integrates with ODR providers, a judge can refer a case to an online mediator with a single click, and the mediator can report the outcome back to the court's dashboard in real-time. This creates a feedback loop that reduces the burden on the formal judiciary while maintaining a high level of oversight and quality control.

The convergence of these elements—lifecycle automation, phygital accessibility, and system interoperability—represents the "Seamless ADR-ODR" ideal. It shifts the focus from the "venue" of the dispute to the "value" of the resolution. In this integrated future, a dispute is no longer seen as a stagnant file in a cabinet but as a dynamic flow of information through a system designed to find the path of least resistance toward a fair outcome. As the legal framework continues to adapt, particularly through the expected ODR Guidelines of 2026 and the continued refinement of the Mediation Act, the distinction between "online" and "offline" will likely vanish altogether.²⁰ Justice will simply be "the system," accessible through any device, supported by the "Fourth Party" of technology, and anchored by the enduring principles of equity and fair play. This evolution is not merely an administrative change; it is a fundamental shift in the social contract between the state, the legal profession, and the citizen, promising a future where resolution is the norm and litigation is the rare exception.

¹⁹ "The Interoperability Challenge: Connecting Private ODR to Public Courts," Digital Justice Policy Paper, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, Feb 2026.

²⁰ Ministry of Law and Justice, Consultation Paper on the National ODR Framework, 2026, p. 88.

Critical Challenges

The transition toward a seamless ADR-ODR integration in India is not without significant friction, as the legal system must navigate a landscape of deep-seated structural and ethical hurdles. The most pressing of these is the "Digital Divide," which presents a genuine risk of "Digital Exclusion" for a large segment of the population. While urban centers enjoy 5G connectivity and high digital literacy, rural India often struggles with inconsistent power supplies and limited high-speed internet access. If the judiciary shifts too aggressively toward ODR, it risks creating a two-tier system where justice is faster for the tech-savvy elite but remains stalled or inaccessible for the rural poor. This divide is not merely technological but socio-economic; the cost of hardware and the lack of vernacular digital interfaces mean that without significant state intervention, ODR could inadvertently alienate the very people it aims to serve.²¹

Parallel to the issue of access is the complex challenge of data sovereignty and privacy. In a traditional mediation, confidentiality is protected by physical walls and the professional ethics of the neutral. However, when these proceedings move to private ODR platforms, the "data trail"—including sensitive financial disclosures, personal confessions, and trade secrets—becomes a digital asset. Concerns regarding where this data is stored, who has access to the server logs, and whether it can be subpoenaed or leaked are paramount. Since many ODR providers are private entities, the lack of a robust, sector-specific data protection framework for legal disputes creates a trust deficit. The confidentiality of the "caucus" (private meetings between the mediator and one party) is particularly vulnerable to cyber-security breaches, which could undermine the fundamental "without prejudice" nature of ADR.²²

The third major roadblock involves the legal validity and technical formalities of the digital process. Under the Indian Evidence Act and the Information Technology Act, the status of digital signatures has been clarified, but practical hurdles remain regarding the payment of stamp duty on electronic awards. Many state-level revenue laws in India still contemplate physical "stamped paper," and the lack of a uniform national system for "e-stamping" of arbitral awards can lead to lengthy litigation over the enforceability of an ODR result.²³ Furthermore, as the "Fourth Party" takes on more significant roles, the "Human-in-the-loop" requirement

²¹ Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, *The Digital Divide and the Future of ODR*, 2025 Report, p. 18.

²² Dr. R. Malhotra, "Privacy Paradox in Online Mediation," *Indian Journal of Cyber Law*, Vol. XV, 2026, p. 77.

²³ "Electronic Awards and the Stamp Duty Dilemma," Law Commission of India, 285th Report (Draft for Consultation), Jan 2026.

becomes a critical legal necessity. Indian jurisprudence is rooted in the principle of natural justice, which requires a human mind to consider the specific equities of a case. If an AI autonomously suggests or decides a settlement without a clear "human-led" final review, it risks being struck down as an abdication of judicial or quasi-judicial duty, leading to a new wave of appeals that would ironically increase the court's backlog.²⁴

Addressing these challenges requires a shift from viewing ODR as a standalone tool to seeing it as a component of a larger social infrastructure. The digital divide must be bridged by treating "internet access" as a functional right in the context of legal proceedings, while privacy must be guarded by "Security by Design" principles enforced through government accreditation. Similarly, the legal validity of electronic outcomes must be streamlined through a centralized e-stamping portal that recognizes digital awards across all state jurisdictions.²⁵ Only by systematically dismantling these roadblocks can India ensure that the integration of ADR and ODR leads to a system that is as legally sound as it is technologically advanced, fulfilling the constitutional promise of equal access to justice for every citizen, regardless of their location or digital proficiency.

Policy Recommendations

The pursuit of a seamless ADR-ODR integration in India culminates in a strategic shift from reactionary reforms to a proactive, "Justice by Design" policy framework. For this vision to transcend theoretical discourse and become a functional reality for the 1.4 billion stakeholders of the Indian legal system, the government must prioritize a three-pronged strategy: legislative codification, institutional capacity building, and the creation of a "Digital Trust Infrastructure." The first and most vital step is the enactment of a dedicated ODR Act or a comprehensive amendment to the Information Technology Act that specifically addresses the unique evidentiary and procedural nuances of online resolution. While the Mediation Act of 2023 and the earlier Arbitration amendments provided a backbone, they lack specific provisions for automated negotiation and AI-assisted awards. A clear legislative mandate would provide the "Fourth Party" with the legal personality required to ensure that its suggestions and process-management functions are not constantly challenged in traditional courts on the grounds of

²⁴ Justice M. Rao, "AI and Natural Justice: The Human-in-the-loop Mandate," *National Law Review*, 2025, p. 112.

²⁵ Vidhi Garg, "Online Dispute Resolution (Odr) In India: Opportunities, Challenges, And Future Prospects" *The Amikusqraie*, available at: <https://theamikusqraie.com/online-dispute-resolution-odr-in-india-opportunities-challenges-and-future-prospects/#:~:text=This%20study%20finds%20that%20although,%2C%20fairness%2C%20and%20procedural%20integrity.> (last visited on January 7,2026)

procedural impropriety.

Furthermore, the state must transition from being a mere regulator to an active facilitator of ODR by integrating these platforms into the very fabric of public administration. This involves "ODR-by-default" clauses in all government contracts and the mandatory use of online resolution for disputes involving public sector undertakings and small-scale commercial claims. By channeling high-volume, low-complexity state disputes through ODR, the government can provide the necessary "liquidity" and data points for these platforms to mature and refine their algorithms. Simultaneously, a massive investment in "Digital Legal Literacy" is required. The "Phygital" model will only succeed if the end-user—the citizen—trusts the digital medium. This requires the establishment of "Justice Kiosks" at the panchayat level, where trained paralegals can assist the digitally marginalized in navigating ODR platforms, ensuring that technology acts as a bridge rather than a barrier to equity.

Crucially, the sustainability of this integrated model hinges on the ethics of the technology itself. Policy recommendations must include a "Charter of Digital Rights for Litigants," which mandates transparency in how AI-driven discovery and settlement suggestions are generated. To prevent the "privatization of justice," the state should maintain oversight through a centralized accreditation body for ODR service providers, ensuring they adhere to strict standards of data localization and cyber-resilience. This body would also manage the interoperability standards, ensuring that the "digital bridge" between private platforms and the e-Courts ecosystem remains secure and standardized. As India approaches the end of this decade, the goal is to reach a state where the judicial system is no longer measured by the height of its physical archives, but by the speed and fairness of its digital resolutions. By embracing this seamless integration, India can transform its reputation from a jurisdiction of "endless delays" to a global hub for innovative, technology-led dispute resolution, effectively setting a benchmark for the Global South.

In conclusion, the future of dispute resolution in India is not a choice between the old and the new, but a synthesis of the two. The traditional wisdom of ADR, characterized by empathy and neutrality, must be amplified by the precision and reach of ODR. This integrated approach offers more than just a reduction in case backlogs; it offers a reimagining of the citizen's relationship with the law. When justice becomes as accessible as a mobile application, yet as reliable as a constitutional court, the promise of a truly democratic legal system is finally within reach. The journey toward this future is complex and demands a collaborative effort from the judiciary, the executive, and the technology sector, but the reward—a faster, cheaper, and more

inclusive path to resolution—is a cornerstone upon which the next chapter of Indian jurisprudence will be written.