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# ALGORITHMIC JUSTICE IN INDIA: FROM HUMAN ARBITRARINESS TO ALGORITHMIC ARBITRARINESS

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Aditya Singh Rajput, BBA LLB (Hons.), Amity University, Patna, Bihar

*“Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master”*

-Christian Lous Lange

## ABSTRACT

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Indian court systems shows a substantial revolution in the administration of justice. In India, AI tools such as the Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court Efficiency (SUPACE) and the Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software (SUVAS) attempt to increase the efficiency, decrease case pendency in court and improve accessibility. However, the rise of “Algorithmic Justice” presents fundamental constitutional and ethical questions pertaining to equality and procedural fairness, transparency, and accountability. This essay utilises a doctrinal and comparative approach to critically assess the usage of AI in the Indian court. It advances the thesis that algorithmic systems, if left uncontrolled, may grow into structures of algorithmic arbitrariness, so compromising constitutional protections. While AI has the potential to increase judicial efficiency, its implementation must be consistent with constitutional values. The essay offers a rights-based regulatory framework stressing explainability, accountability, and inclusion to guarantee that technology innovation supports, rather than compromises, the administration of justice.

**Keywords:** Algorithmic Justice, Artificial Intelligence in Judiciary, Constitutional Law, Algorithmic Bias, Explainable AI, Judicial Accountability, Digital Justice, Algorithmic Arbitrariness

## **Introduction**

The Indian court is today burdened with an enormous backlog of cases, resulting in severe delays in the delivery of justice. In such a circumstance, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a great option to boost efficiency and speed in judicial operations. This technological transformation that is commonly termed as “Algorithmic Justice, ” shows an increased dependence on data-driven technologies in the administration of justice.

Algorithmic Justice includes the application of AI systems that help court duties such as in legal research, case administration, translation of judgements, and procedural automation in courts. While these innovations increases speed and efficiency, the administration of justice cannot be just reduced to simple technology optimization. Justice is inherently anchored on fairness, openness, accountability, and commitment to constitutional ideals. The implementation of AI in judicial procedures presents various important challenges. Algorithmic systems may perpetuate existing societal prejudices contained in historical data, function via opaque decision-making methods and lack explicit accountability procedures. These difficulties pose crucial constitutional questions:

Can AI-driven systems provide justice and equality?

Can they fulfill the criteria of due process?

Can automated technologies accord with the core values of the Indian Constitution?

This paper advances the thesis that the incorporation of AI into the court generates a new type of risk—algorithmic arbitrariness. While conventional constitutional law has concentrated on preventing arbitrary state action by human authorities, the emergence of AI involves expanding this examination to algorithmic systems that may institutionalize prejudice and opacity.

Accordingly, this essay investigates the function of AI in the Indian court via a constitutional perspective. It explores the benefits and problems connected with Algorithmic Justice and provides a rights-based framework to guarantee that technology innovation promotes, rather than destroys, the principles of justice.

## **2. Theoretical Framework: Algorithmic Justice and Constitutionalism**

The concept of Algorithmic Justice is built for purpose of streamlined the decision making

processes by data-driven technologies such as Artificial Intelligence. These systems depend on algorithms, statistical models and predictive analytics that help in decision-making. However, the administration of justice is not only a technical exercise but a moral role governed by constitutional ideals.

The Indian constitutional framework is constructed around the concepts of the rule of law, equality, and due process, which put substantive and procedural constraints on all kinds of governmental activity. The rule of law mandates that choices must be reasonable, clear and free from any type of arbitrariness. However, AI systems generally work via complicated and opaque methods that usually referred to as the “black box” dilemma, where the logic behind choices is not clearly comprehensible.

The concept of equality under Article 14 bans arbitrary and discriminatory governmental action. In *E. P. Royappa v. State of Tamil Nadu*<sup>1</sup>, 1974 the Supreme Court concluded that arbitrariness is antithesis to equality. If AI systems are taught on basis of biased historical data, then they may repeat and even exacerbate existing inequalities that breaking the constitutional mandates.

Similarly, the norm of procedural fairness under Article 21, as reinforced in *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*<sup>2</sup>, stipulates that any method impacting rights must be just, fair, and reasonable. The opacity of algorithmic systems undermines this need, since users may be unable to comprehend or argue judgements affected by AI.

This gives rise to a key constitutional concern—the advent of algorithmic arbitrariness. While conventional constitutional jurisprudence has concentrated on preventing arbitrary acts by human authorities or states but because of the rising dependence on AI demands expanding this examination to algorithmic systems also. Unlike human arbitrariness, which is visible and contestable algorithmic arbitrariness works secretly and at scale, making it potentially more harmful.

Therefore, it is vital that the use of AI in the court must be subjected to constitutional mandates. Algorithmic systems must respect to the principles of openness, accountability and non-discrimination to guarantee that technical innovation does not undermine the core ideals of justice.

### **3. AI in the Indian Judiciary: Institutional Developments**

India has chosen a cautious and gradual approach towards the incorporation of Artificial Intelligence in judicial proceedings. Rather of replacing human judges, the Indian court adopts a “human-in-the-loop” paradigm, whereby AI acts as an auxiliary tool but the final decision-making power remains with judges.

One of the primary projects in this area is the Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court Efficiency (SUPACE). SUPACE is an AI-based program that aimed to help judges in legal research by finding for them important precedents, evaluating vast amounts of case data and expediting case preparation. Importantly it does not decide judgements but only lends support to judicial reasoning by aid the judges.

Another notable advancement is the Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software (SUVAS), which applies machine learning methods to interpret court rulings into several regional languages. This effort serves as a important role in expanding accessibility and ensuring that justice is not restricted by language barriers as limitation.

The E-Courts Project Phase III reflects a larger attempt that is to improve court infrastructure via digitization and technology integration inside the court. This includes features such as e-filing, digital case management systems and the incorporation of AI tools that improve efficiency and transparency in court operations.

Additionally, AI-based transcription systems are being employed in constitutional bench procedures to enable real-time transcription of oral arguments. This enhances accuracy and permits better documenting of court procedures.

Furthermore, the concept of Digital Lok Adalats has arisen as an innovative platform for online dispute settlement. These platforms offer fast and also cost effective resolution of disputes, hence reducing the pressure on conventional courts.

These projects illustrate that the Indian court is progressively adopting technological innovation while also preserving human supervision. However the present application of AI remains mostly helpful in nature suggesting that its full potential and related risks are yet to be completely realized.

## **4. Opportunities and Advantages of AI in the Judiciary**

The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence into the court system provides number of substantial benefits that have the potential to change the administration of justice in India. These advantages generally related to efficiency, accessibility and enhanced judicial functioning.

### **4.1 Reduction in Case Pendency**

One of the most significant difficulties that is faced by the Indian court is the large backlog of cases. AI play a important role in resolving this problem by automate the common administrative operations such as case sorting, scheduling and document analysis. By minimising the time spent on procedural matters now AI allows courts to focus on substantive adjudication that accelerating the disposition of cases.

### **4.2 Enhanced the Efficiency in Judicial Processes**

AI technologies enhance efficiency of court work by facilitating faster legal research and analysis. Systems like the Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in court efficiency (SUPACE) that scan large amounts of legal material and identify the relevant precedents within seconds. This deployment of AI reduced the load on judges and also legal experts by allowing them for more data driven and faster decision making.

### **4.3 Improved Accessibility to Justice**

The use of AI based tools such as the Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software (SUVAS) enhances accessibility by translating judicial decisions into regional languages. This helps overcome linguistic barriers and ensures that a wider section of society can understand and engage with legal processes. Additionally digital platforms and online dispute resolution mechanisms enable individuals to access justice remotely, thereby promoting inclusivity.

### **4.4 Consistency and Predictability in Decision-Making**

AI systems can analyse patterns in past judicial decisions which may assist in promoting consistency and predictability in legal outcomes. While such systems cannot replace judicial discretion, they can serve as valuable tools in supporting uniform application of legal

principles.

#### **4.5 Cost-Effective Justice Delivery**

The digitalization of judicial processes through AI tools reduces the cost associated with litigation by minimizing paperwork, travel and administrative delays. This makes the justice system more affordable and accessible to the general public.

#### **4.6 Efficient Data Management**

AI technologies enable better organization and management of judicial data. They can identify errors in filings, structure case information, and streamline record keeping thereby improving overall court administration.

Despite these advantages, it is necessary to recognize that the benefits of AI must be balanced with constitutional safeguards to ensure that efficiency does not come at the cost of fairness and justice.

### **5. Constitutional and Ethical Challenges**

Despite the significant advantages that is offered by Artificial Intelligence it's integration into the judicial system raises serious constitutional and ethical concerns. These challenges must be carefully examined to ensure that technological advancement does not compromise fundamental rights.

#### **5.1 Algorithmic Bias and Equality**

One of the most critical concerns associated with AI is the risk of algorithmic bias. AI systems are trained on historical data that may reflect existing societal inequalities based on caste, gender or socio economic status. As a result, these systems may reproduce or even amplify discriminatory patterns.

This directly conflicts with the principle of equality that is given Article 14 of the Constitution. In *E. P. Royappa v. State of Tamil Nadu 1974*, the Supreme Court held that arbitrariness is antithesis to equality. If algorithmic decision making leads to biased outcomes, it would amount to violation of constitutional guarantees. In this context bias embedded within code can effectively translate into bias in law.

## **5. 2 Procedural Fairness and the “Black Box” Problem**

Another major concern is the lack of transparency in AI systems, often referred to as the “black box” problem. Many AI models operate through complex algorithms whose decision making processes are not easily explainable and even easily understandable.

This lack of transparency weakens the principle of procedural fairness, which is an essential component of Article 21. In *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India* 1978, the Supreme Court emphasized that any procedure affecting rights must be fair, just and reasonable. The inability to understand or challenge algorithmic decisions raises serious concerns regarding natural justice.

## **5. 3 Right to Privacy and Data Protection**

The functioning of AI systems depends on the collection and processing of large volumes of data, including personal and sensitive information. This raises significant concerns regarding the right to privacy.

In *Justice K. S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court recognized privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21. The use of AI in judicial processes must therefore ensure that data protection standards are strictly maintained to prevent misuse or unauthorized access.

## **5. 4 Digital Divide and Access to Justice**

The effective use of AI in the judiciary requires access to digital infrastructure and technological literacy. However, in a country like India, there exists a significant digital divide between urban and rural populations.

This disparity may restrict access to AI enabled judicial services for marginalized communities, thereby undermining the principle of equal access to justice. In *Hussainara Khatun v. State of Bihar*, the Supreme Court recognized access to justice as a fundamental right. Any technological reform that excludes certain sections of society would be inconsistent with this principle.

## **5.5 Accountability and Liability Gap**

The integration of AI also raises complex questions regarding accountability. In cases where

AI system produces biased outcomes, it becomes difficult to determine responsibility. The lack of a clear legal framework defining liability whether of developers, users or the State creates a significant governance gap.

### **5.6 Algorithmic Arbitrariness: A New Constitutional Challenge**

These concerns collectively point towards a deeper issue- the emergence of algorithmic arbitrariness. While constitutional jurisprudence has traditionally focused on only preventing arbitrary actions by human authorities but now the rise of AI introduces a new form of arbitrariness that operates invisibly and at scale.

Unlike human decisionmaking, algorithmic systems can institutionalize bias and opacity making them potentially more difficult to challenge. Therefore, it is imperative that constitutional safeguards evolve to address this new form of risk and ensure that justice remains fair, transparent and accountable.

## **6. Regulatory Framework in India**

At present, India does not have a comprehensive legal framework that specifically governing the use of Artificial Intelligence in the judiciary. The regulation of AI related issues is largely dependent on existing laws, which are not adequately equipped to address these complexities of algorithmic decision making.

The primary legislation in this domain includes the Information Technology Act, 2000 which focuses on cyber related offences and electronic governance and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 which regulates the processing and protection of personal data. While these laws provide a foundational structure for digital regulation but still they do not specifically address critical concerns associated with AI such as algorithmic bias, transparency and accountability.

The Information Technology Act, 2000 does not inspect the use of AI in decision making processes particularly within the judicial context. Similarly, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 is limited in scope to data privacy and does not extend to issues such as explainability of algorithms or liability for automated decisions.

The judiciary in India has adopted a cautious approach towards the use of AI. Courts have

consistently treated AI tools as assistive mechanisms rather than authoritative sources of decision making. This reflects an awareness of the potential risks associated with over reliance on technology specifically in matters involving fundamental rights and judicial discretion.

Despite these developments, significant regulatory gaps still remain. There is no dedicated legislation that govern AI in the judiciary nor there are clear standards for algorithmic transparency, accountability or oversight. The absence of defined liability frameworks further complicates the issue as it remains unclear who would be responsible in cases of AI induced errors or any type of bias.

This regulatory vacuum poses a serious challenge, as the increasing integration of AI into judicial processes without adequate safeguards may lead to violations of constitutional principles. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive and specialized legal framework to regulate the use of AI in the Indian judiciary.

## **7. Way Forward: Towards a Rights-Based AI Framework**

In order to ensure that the integration of Artificial Intelligence into the judiciary aligns with constitutional principles, it is essential to adopt a comprehensive and rights based regulatory approach. The following measures may be considered to address the challenges associated with Algorithmic Justice.

### **7.1 Algorithmic Impact Assessments (AIAs)**

Before deploying AI systems in judicial processes, it is necessary to conduct Algorithmic Impact Assessments. These assessments would evaluate the potential risks associated with AI employment including bias, discrimination and adverse effects on fundamental rights. Such a mechanism would enable early identification and lead to mitigation of constitutional concerns.

### **7.2 Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI)**

Transparency is a fundamental requirement of justice. Therefore, AI systems used in the judiciary must be explainable and capable of providing clear reasoning for their outputs. Explainable AI ensures that decisions can be understood, scrutinized and challenged thereby upholding the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

### **7. 3 Establishment of an Independent Oversight Authority**

An independent regulatory body should be established to oversee the use of AI in judicial processes. This authority would be responsible for evaluating AI systems and monitoring compliance with legal standards and ensuring that algorithmic tools do not perpetuate bias or discrimination.

### **7. 4 Bridging the Digital Divide**

To ensure equal access to justice, it is essential to address the digital divide in India. This requires investment in digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas as well as initiatives that promote digital literacy. Without such measures the benefits of AI-driven judicial reforms may remain limited to a privileged section of society.

### **7. 5 Development of a Comprehensive Legal Framework**

There is an urgent need to enact legislation specifically governing the use of AI in the judiciary. Such framework should clearly define standards for transparency, accountability and liability. It must also establish guidelines regarding the admissibility and use of AI generated outputs in judicial decision making.

### **7. 6 Formulation of Judicial Guidelines**

The judiciary particularly the Supreme Court, should develop guidelines regulating the use of AI tools. These guidelines should clarify extent to which AI can be relied upon and ensure that final decision making authority remains with human judges.

Ultimately, technological advancement must be guided by constitutional values. Artificial Intelligence should function as an aid to justice, not as a substitute for human judgement. A carefully designed regulatory framework is essential to ensure that innovation strengthens the rule of law while preserving fairness, equality and accountability.

## **8. Conclusion**

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the Indian judiciary represents a significant step towards modernization and efficiency in the administration of justice. AI-driven tools have the potential to reduce case pendency, improve accessibility and enhance the overall

functioning of the courts. These developments indicate a progressive shift towards a more technologically advanced judicial system than traditional one.

However, the adoption of AI is not without challenges. As this article has demonstrated the issues such as algorithmic bias, lack of transparency, privacy concerns and also the absence of clear accountability frameworks that leads to serious threats to constitutional principles. Justice cannot be reduced to efficiency alone it must remain grounded in fairness, equality and due process.

This article has advanced the argument that the rise of AI introduces a new form of risk - algorithmic arbitrariness. Unlike traditional forms of arbitrariness, which are visible and subject to scrutiny, algorithmic arbitrariness operates invisibly and at scale, making it potentially more difficult to detect and challenge.

Therefore, it is essential that the integration of AI into the judiciary be guided by a robust rights based framework. Constitutional values must remain the foundation of all technological innovations within the judicial system. AI should function as a tool to assist human decision making not as a substitute for it.

In conclusion, the future of Algorithmic Justice in India depends on achieving a careful balance between technological advancement and constitutional integrity. Artificial Intelligence must serve justice, not redefine it.

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