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Artificial Intelligence in Legal Practice: Enhancing Efficiency, Access to Justice, And Professional Responsibility

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ABSTRACT

AI is transforming legal services delivery, access, and regulation. AI can improve justice system efficiency and responsiveness by automating mundane legal work, improving legal research through advanced data analytics, improving case administration, and enabling novel online legal service delivery. Courts, law firms, corporate legal departments, and legal aid organisations worldwide are using AI-driven solutions to handle expanding caseloads, decrease procedural delays, and lower legal fees. AI has great potential to improve justice in India, where judicial backlogs and little legal aid persist. AI's rising usage in law creates difficult legal, ethical, and professional issues. The legal profession's fundamental principles are threatened by algorithmic bias, openness of automated decision-making, client data protection, and accountability for AI-generated outcomes. Predictive analytics and automated legal tools raise challenges about how much technology can replace or limit human judgement and discretion. These considerations are especially important in a fair, due process, and professional responsibility-based legal system. This study critically investigates artificial intelligence in legal practise in three areas: efficiency, access to justice, and professional accountability. It examines how AI can spread legal services to marginalised groups using low-cost digital platforms, legal chatbots, and online dispute resolution. It also examines how over-reliance on automated systems may undermine professional autonomy, ethical accountability, and client trust. The study claims that AI has great potential to improve the legal system, but it must be regulated, ethically protected, and professionally supervised. A balanced and principled strategy is needed to use AI to empower rather than exclude, safeguarding legal practice's key ideals of justice, openness, and human judgement.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Legal Profession, Access to Justice, Legal Ethics, Professional Responsibility*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the past, being a lawyer meant a lot of hard work, using specialised thinking, and making decisions based on each case. Legal work has always needed a lot of time and skill for things like thorough study, careful writing, reviewing documents in great detail, and managing cases all the time. Lawyers, judges, and legal institutions have mostly depended on people's minds and manual processes to figure out what the law means, look at evidence, and dole out justice. But in the last ten years, fast progress in artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies has started to completely change the way these traditional law practices are done.[3] AI-powered systems can now search through huge databases of court decisions and laws, look at contracts, guess how lawsuits will turn out, find trends in legal disputes, and even help with negotiations and settlements.

In many places, courts and law companies are using AI-based tools more and more to handle more cases, speed up the process, and make the whole system work better. E-courts, online filing systems, automated case tracking, and online conflict resolution platforms are just a few of the technologies that are changing the way justice is delivered around the world. Especially in India, this change is very important. There are millions of cases waiting to be heard in courts at different levels in India, and the system is often backed up, slow, and hard to get to. Many people still have a hard time getting timely and reasonable legal help, especially those who live in rural areas or areas with low incomes.[4] In this situation, AI has the potential to make the justice system more efficient, lower the cost of legal services, and give more people access to justice than ever before.

At the same time, the growing use of AI in law brings up a lot of difficult social, legal, and professional issues. Traditional ideas of responsibility, skill, and professional judgement are put to the test when automatic decision-making systems are used. There are concerns about who is responsible when an AI system gives wrong or unfair results, how to make sure that algorithm-based processes are open, and whether lawyers' reliance on technology could weaken their freedom and honesty. Fairness and due process are also in danger from algorithmic bias, data misuse, and too much automation. This is especially true in a justice system that relies on fairness and human thinking.

These conflicts show the main problem with AI in legal practice: technology has a lot of potential to make things more efficient and give more people access to justice, but it also has

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[3] Richard Susskind, *Tomorrow's Lawyers: An Introduction to Your Future* (Oxford University Press 2017).
[4] Richard Susskind, *The Future of the Professions* (Oxford University Press 2015).

the potential to shake up the moral and professional roots of the legal system. The goal of this study is to look into this problem by looking at the use of AI in law from three interconnected points of view: professional responsibility, efficiency, and access to justice.[5] The goal of this paper is to find out if AI can be used in a way that improves the core values of the rule of law instead of weakening them by looking at the pros and cons of applying AI to legal services.

II. UNDERSTANDING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN LEGAL PRACTICE

Artificial intelligence is the study of computer systems that are made to do things that normally require human intelligence, like learning from data, spotting patterns, understanding language, and making predictions or choices. Artificial intelligence (AI) is not used to make decisions on its own in the legal field. Instead, it is used as a sophisticated analytical tool to help lawyers manage information, find important legal principles, and make decisions.[6] AI is mostly used in law because of technologies like machine learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics. These technologies make it possible for computers to quickly and accurately handle large amounts of legal data. By looking at old data, machine learning lets AI systems get better at what they do. In the legal field, this means that AI tools can look at old court decisions, contracts, and court cases to find patterns and trends.

Legal texts, like laws, court decisions, pleadings, and contracts, are often very complicated and technical. Natural language processing helps computers understand and analyse these texts. Predictive analytics uses these data-driven insights to guess what will happen, like how likely it is that a lawsuit will be won, how long it will probably take, or how much money the other side will have to pay. Legal study is one of the most common ways that AI is used in the legal field. Lawyers used to have to look through huge amounts of case law, statutes, and commentaries by hand, which took a lot of time and made mistakes more likely.[7] Research tools that use AI can quickly look through thousands of court decisions and legislative documents to find relevant precedents and highlight important legal principles.

This not only makes things run more smoothly, but it also makes legal research more accurate and in-depth. A lot of people also use AI to read and understand contracts and documents. Lawyers often have to look through a lot of papers in court cases and business deals to find important information, evaluate risks, and make sure rules are followed. AI tools can automatically sort papers into groups, find strange things in them, and pull-out key clauses,

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[5] Harry Surden, 'Artificial Intelligence and Law: An Overview' (2014) 35 University of Georgia Law Review 1305.
[6] Dana Remus and Frank Levy, 'Can Robots Be Lawyers?' (2017) 5 Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics 501.
[7] Frank Pasquale, *The Black Box Society* (Harvard University Press 2015).

which makes these tasks much faster and cheaper. In contract management, AI systems can point out terms that might be problematic, such as ones that don't make sense or that don't follow standard forms. This helps lawyers give better advice. Another important way that AI is being used in law is in predictive analytics.

By looking at trends in past court decisions, these tools can guess how likely it is that a case will be won, how judges will likely act, or how much a dispute is likely to settle for.[8] Even though these kinds of predictions can't replace a judge's decision, they can help with planning for lawsuits and giving advice to clients. More and more, chatbots and virtual assistants that are powered by AI are being used to give people basic legal knowledge. These tools can help people write easy legal documents, answer common legal questions, and walk users through the steps of the process. Because of this, they play a bigger part in making legal services more available, especially for people who can't pay a lawyer. It is important to remember that AI tools are not meant to take the place of lawyers and courts.

Instead, they work as decision-support tools that make people better at what they do. AI frees up lawyers to focus on more important tasks like legal thinking, advocacy, ethical judgement, and interacting with clients by automating routine and repetitive tasks. So, using AI correctly could make law practice faster, more accurate, and more responsive, while still recognising the important part of human knowledge and professional duty.

III. ENHANCING EFFICIENCY IN LEGAL PRACTICE

Most people agree that one of the best things about artificial intelligence in law practice is that it can make things a lot more efficient. The traditional way of practicing law takes a lot of time and resources because lawyers have to do a lot of study, review documents, write documents, and coordinate with other people in the office.[9] A lot of a lawyer's work hours are spent on these processes, which involve doing the same things over and over again. AI-based technologies can help solve this issue very effectively by handling common legal tasks. This cuts down on the time and money needed to provide legal services.

AI tools work especially well for things like legal study, document classification, and due diligence. Lawyers may have to look over thousands of papers in court cases and business deals to find important facts, figure out legal risks, and make sure they follow rules set by regulators. AI-powered document review systems can quickly scan, organise, and analyse huge amounts of data, finding key clauses, trends, and outliers at a speed and consistency that is much faster

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[8] Bar Council of India, *Standards of Professional Conduct and Etiquette* (BCI 2020).
[9] Supreme Court of India, *E-Courts Project Report* (2022).

than humans can do it. This speeds up the process of preparing cases and lowers the chance of mistakes that people might make because they are tired or forget to do something. When it comes to legal study, AI platforms can quickly search through huge databases of court decisions, laws, and secondary sources.

These systems let lawyers do more thorough and correct research in a lot less time than traditional methods. They do this by finding relevant precedents and connecting them to specific legal problems. Because they are more efficient, lawyers can focus on more important jobs like analysing the law, coming up with strategies, and counselling clients. The benefits of AI for speed are just as important in the legal system. More and more courts around the world, including those in India, are using e-courts, digital filing systems, and case-management software that is powered by AI. These systems make it possible to automatically assign, schedule, and keep track of cases. This cuts down on routine delays and speeds up the legal system. AI-assisted writing tools can also be used to make routine orders, notices, and procedural papers.

This frees up judges and court staff to spend more time on important cases. AI makes law firms and other legal service providers more productive by letting them turn things around faster and use their staff more efficiently. Firms can free up their lawyers' time to work on more difficult legal tasks that need innovation, judgement, and advocacy by automating low-value, repetitive tasks. This makes law services better and lowers the costs of running the business. When there is competition in the legal market, these cost savings can be given to clients. This makes legal services more cheap and easy to get. These are some of the ways that artificial intelligence could make the law field more efficient, responsive, and client-centered. AI helps the justice system work better by speeding up processes, making them more accurate, and cutting costs. This makes it better able to meet the needs of society while still letting human expertise and legal judgement play a key role.

IV. AI AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Having access to justice is an important part of the rule of law and a basic constitutional ideal in democracies. Access to legal solutions is still limited in India and many other places because of high legal fees, complicated procedures, long travel times to courts, and a general lack of legal knowledge. Poor people, people who live in rural areas, women, and other marginalised groups are more likely to be affected by these barriers, which essentially keeps them out of the formal justice system. Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a strong technology that could solve these long-standing problems by changing how legal services are provided and how

people can get them. The use of legal chatbots and digital tools for legal help is one of the most promising ways that AI can help people get access to justice.

These tools can give people basic legal information, like what their rights and duties are, and help them through steps like filing complaints, writing simple legal papers, or getting to know how the court system works.[10] A low-cost and easy-to-reach alternative for people who can't afford professional legal help or who live in places where lawyers are hard to reach is AI-driven legal assistance. These systems can work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and in many languages. This means that legal services can reach more people who didn't have access to them before. Online dispute resolution (ODR) methods make it easier for people to get justice by letting people settle their differences without going to court.[11] Through digital interfaces, AI-powered ODR platforms can make it easier to negotiate, mediate, and even decide on small claims and customer disputes.

This cuts down on the need to travel, lowers the cost of court cases, and speeds up the process of settling disagreements. In India, where court backlogs and procedural delays are common, ODR systems that are backed by AI could make the justice system much more efficient and easy for everyone to use.[12] Additionally, AI can help legal aid groups and public interest lawyers by making it easier for them to handle more cases. Legal aid organisations can better use their resources and find cases that need immediate attention with the help of automated case management systems, document writing tools, and predictive analytics. This increases the strength of organisations that help people who are weak and makes it easier for them to provide quick and useful legal help. Even with these benefits, the use of AI to make justice more accessible also makes people worry about being left out of the digital world.

A lot of people, especially those who live in rural or economically poor places, don't have access to reliable internet, smartphones, or know how to use technology.[13] If specific steps aren't taken to close the digital gap, AI-powered legal services could make inequality worse instead of better. Aside from that, using computerised legal tools should not lower the quality, accuracy, or fairness of legal help. As a result, AI has a lot of potential to make access to justice more fair for everyone, but its benefits can only be seen with open digital infrastructure, user-friendly design, and extra human help. The best way to make sure that new technologies lead to real and fair access to justice is to use a hybrid model that combines AI-based tools with standard legal

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[10] World Economic Forum, *AI in Justice Systems* (WEF 2021).

[11] Ministry of Law and Justice, *National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms* (Government of India 2019).

[12] Reserve Bank of India, *Report on Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in Banking* (RBI 2021).

[13] Supreme Court of India, *AI Committee Report* (2023).

services.

V. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICAL CHALLENGES

Artificial intelligence is being used in legal work, which brings up important questions about professional and moral duty. People trust lawyers, and they have duties to be knowledgeable, keep secrets, be independent, and be loyal to their customers. It's not that these professional duties get easier as technology advances; instead, they get harder as more and more automatic systems help judges make decisions. If lawyers use AI-powered tools to do legal research, write documents, or give strategic advice, they are still legally and morally responsible for the correctness, dependability, and results of what those tools produce. The duty of competence is one of the most important ethical problems.[14] Lawyers are expected to defend their clients in a way that is both informed and effective.

Because of this, lawyers who use AI tools need to know at least the basics of how these technologies work, what their limits are, and what the risks are of using them. If you rely on AI-generated results without giving them a critical look, you might make mistakes, get the law wrong, or use the wrong legal tactics, which would be bad for your clients and professional standards. Another big problem with ethics is algorithmic bias. AI systems learn from past data, which may show how social, economic, and societal biases are still present. If these biassed data are used to make tools that can predict bail choices, sentencing suggestions, or court outcomes, the results may keep discrimination against some groups going or even make it worse. For the justice system to work, it needs to be fair, equal, and not discriminate against anyone.

This directly goes against those ideals. So, lawyers and judges need to be careful when using insights created by AI and make sure that they don't replace human judgement with complicated algorithmic processes. Data security and privacy are both very important issues. As a lawyer, you have to deal with a lot of private information, like your clients' personal, financial, and strategic data. Processing and storing huge amounts of data, usually through cloud-based tools, is how many AI systems work. This makes it much more likely that data will be stolen, accessed without permission, or used in the wrong way. Lawyers need to make sure that using AI doesn't break any data security laws or their duty to keep client information secret. Also, they need to make sure that client information doesn't get leaked or used in a bad way.

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[14] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Artificial Intelligence in Society* (OECD Publishing 2019).

The problem of responsibility makes things even more difficult when it comes to ethics.[15] It might be hard to figure out who is responsible when an AI system does something wrong or damaging, especially if the system works like a "black box" with little information available.[16] But because it's wrong and against the law, blame can't be put on technology. Lawyers, law firms, and other organisations that use AI tools need to take responsibility for their use and the choices they make that are affected by these tools. In this situation, ethical rules, professional codes of conduct, and government oversight are very important for making sure that AI is used in a way that is in line with the values of the legal field. To make sure that new technologies build trust in the justice system instead of breaking it down, we need a principled strategy that stresses openness, human oversight, and respect for basic rights.

VI. REGULATORY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Artificial intelligence is being used more quickly in legal practice than a complete and specialised regulatory framework has been able to be put in place. At the moment, there isn't a single set of laws that directly control how lawyers, law firms, and courts use AI. Instead, the rules for AI in legal practice come from a mix of professional standards, data protection laws, consumer protection laws, and more general principles of administrative and constitutional law.[17] These legal tools give us a basic way to hold people accountable and keep us safe, but they aren't always good at dealing with the risks and difficulties that come with algorithmic decision-making and automatic legal services. Professional codes of behaviour are a big part of how lawyers can and can't use AI.

In India, the Bar Council of India sets standards for professional ethics that say lawyers must be competent, independent, keep client information private, and be loyal to their customers. These duties are the same whether legal services are provided through technology or not. Lawyers who use AI-powered research platforms, software for writing documents, or prediction analytics are still responsible for making sure the advice they give is correct and dependable. Lawyers may be breaking the rules of their profession if they trust AI results without checking them properly or if they don't look out for their clients' best interests when using digital tools. One more important part of the rules that govern AI in legal practice is data security law.

A lot of personal and sensitive data, like client records, court records, and banking information, is used by AI systems. More and more legal technologies are being used in the cloud, which raises the risk of data breaches, illegal access, and misuse of information. In this case, data

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[15] United Nations, *Guidance on AI and Human Rights* (UN 2021).
[16] United Nations Development Programme, *Artificial Intelligence for Justice* (UNDP 2022).
[17] European Commission, *Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI* (2019).

protection laws require processing to be legal, processing to be limited in purpose, data minimisation, and security measures to be put in place. Following these law requirements is very important to protect client privacy and public trust in the legal system. Legal services that are powered by AI should also be regulated by consumer protection law. This is especially true when legal help is offered through online platforms, legal chatbots, or digital markets.

People who use these kinds of services might be thought of as customers, and they should be protected from unfair business practices, false information, and services that don't work right.[18] Consumer protection laws may hold AI-based legal tools legally responsible if they give bad or missing advice, don't tell you what their limits are, or lie about what they can do.[19] More and more people are realising that special rules are needed to make sure that AI is used in a legal setting in a way that is decent and responsible. Bar councils, judicial authorities, and law reform groups play a big part in making rules about things like AI systems' openness, their ability to be explained, who is responsible for their automated choices, and what kinds of legal services can use AI.

These rules can help make sure that AI improves speed and access to justice without hurting professional ethics, due process, or the public's faith in the justice system.[20] In the end, a good regulatory system needs to find a balance between protecting basic legal values and encouraging new technologies. Legal systems can make it possible for AI to help with justice while still being supervised by humans and held legally responsible by incorporating AI governance into areas like professional ethics, data protection, and consumer law, as well as adopting forward-looking regulatory standards.

VII. BALANCING INNOVATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

One of the most important things for bringing artificial intelligence into law practice is finding the right balance between new technology and legal responsibility. AI can make law services more efficient, accurate, and available in ways that have never been seen before, but it should be seen as a tool to help people make decisions, not as a replacement for human judgement.[21] Law is more than just following rules and applying them to facts; it's also about making sense of things and figuring out what they mean. It takes logic, empathy, moral judgement, and knowledge of the situation. No matter how advanced the algorithms are, they can't fully copy

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[18] Gautam Bhatia, *The Transformative Constitution* (HarperCollins 2019).
[19] Consumer Protection Act 2019 (India).
[20] Urs Gasser and Virgilio Almeida, 'A Layered Model for AI Governance' (2017) 21 IEEE Internet Computing 58.
[21] Luciano Floridi et al, 'AI4People, Ethical Framework for a Good AI Society' (2018) 28 Minds and Machines 689.

these traits. Because of this, lawyers and judges must still be responsible for all legal choices, even if AI-based tools help them make those decisions.

It would be against the basic concepts of professional responsibility, due process, and accountability to give all important legal tasks to automated systems. The person who relied on an AI-generated recommendation must be held responsible, not the technology itself, if that recommendation leads to the wrong legal result. This concept makes sure that legal responsibility stays clear and that people who are hurt have real ways to get justice. Being open and able to explain things are important parts of this accountability system. A lot of AI systems, especially those that use machine learning, work like "black boxes", they give results without making it clear how those results were reached. This kind of lack of clarity is very difficult when it comes to making legal decisions.[22] People who are in a dispute have the right to know how choices that affect their rights and duties are made.

Because of this, AI systems used in law must be built and chosen in a way that lets lawyers and courts understand, evaluate, and, if necessary, question their results. Human supervision is just as important. AI should help lawyers by giving them information, finding patterns, and suggesting choices.[23] However, a person should always make the final decision and evaluate the information. This makes sure that the results of the law are based on moral thinking, awareness of the situation, and a sense of justice that goes beyond simple statistical analysis. Being watched over by a person also protects against mistakes, bias, and unexpected outcomes that can happen with automated processes. Support from institutions and rules is also needed to find a balance between innovation and responsibility.[24]

Courts, bar councils, and regulatory bodies need to set clear rules about how AI can be used in legal practice. These rules should include requirements for quality control, paperwork, and being able to be audited. These rules can help make sure that new technologies improve the way justice is done without hurting its integrity. In conclusion, AI can be a very useful tool for making justice more efficient and easy to access, but only if it works in a way that protects human responsibility, openness, and moral responsibility. To make sure that AI improves the rule of law instead of weakening it, we need a balanced approach that combines new technology with strong professional and institutional safeguards.

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[22] Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 (India).
[23] A Sharma, 'AI and Access to Justice' (2020) 12 Journal of Law and Technology 76.
[24] P Bhatt and R Sharma, 'Artificial Intelligence and Legal Practice in India' (2021) 4 Indian Journal of Law and Technology 45.

VIII. FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND REFORMS

The continued and responsible integration of artificial intelligence into legal practice requires a forward-looking reform agenda that addresses both institutional capacity and ethical governance. One of the most critical areas of reform is legal education. As AI increasingly becomes a part of everyday legal work, future lawyers must be equipped not only with doctrinal knowledge but also with a basic understanding of technology, data analytics, and the ethical implications of automated systems.[25] Law schools should incorporate courses on legal technology, algorithmic decision-making, and digital ethics into their curricula. Such training will enable legal professionals to use AI tools competently, critically evaluate their outputs, and recognise potential risks such as bias, data misuse, and over-reliance on automation.

Professional training and continuing legal education also need to evolve. Judges, lawyers, and court administrators must be regularly trained in emerging technologies and best practices for their use in legal processes. Without such institutional capacity-building, the benefits of AI may be unevenly distributed, and the risk of misuse or misunderstanding will increase. A technologically literate legal profession is essential for ensuring that AI is used as a tool for justice rather than as an opaque or unaccountable authority.[26] Regulatory reform is equally important. Existing legal frameworks must be adapted to address the specific challenges posed by AI in legal practice. This includes the development of clear standards on transparency, explainability, accountability, and data protection in the use of AI-based legal tools.

Regulatory authorities, including bar councils and judicial bodies, should issue guidelines on permissible and impermissible uses of AI, ensuring that core professional values such as independence, confidentiality, and loyalty to clients are preserved. At the same time, regulation should not stifle innovation. A balanced regulatory approach should encourage experimentation with AI-driven legal services, particularly those aimed at improving access to justice and reducing systemic delays. Regulatory sandboxes and pilot projects can allow new technologies to be tested in controlled environments, enabling policymakers to learn from experience while protecting users from harm. Finally, reform efforts must be guided by a commitment to inclusiveness and fairness.

AI-driven legal services should be designed to serve diverse populations, including those with limited digital literacy or access to technology. Public investment in digital infrastructure, legal aid platforms, and multilingual AI tools can help ensure that technological progress translates

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[25] National Judicial Data Grid, *Annual Report* (NJDG 2023).
[26] Information Technology Act 2000 (India).

into broader access to justice.[27] In this way, a comprehensive reform strategy; combining education, regulation, and institutional innovation can enable artificial intelligence to fulfil its potential as a force for efficiency, fairness, and integrity in legal practice.

IX. CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence represents one of the most significant technological developments to influence the legal profession in modern times. By automating routine legal tasks, enhancing legal research, improving case management, and enabling new forms of digital legal service delivery, AI has the potential to greatly improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the justice system. In places like India, where courts have a lot of cases that need to be heard and many people have trouble getting affordable legal help, AI-powered tools could help make justice faster, easier to get, and cheaper. At the same time, using AI in law raises serious concerns about ethics, professionalism, and the Constitution.

The use of algorithmic tools in legal decision-making challenges traditional notions of accountability, transparency, and human judgment. Risks associated with algorithmic bias, lack of explainability, misuse of personal data, and over-reliance on automated systems threaten the foundational principles of fairness, due process, and equality before the law. If left unregulated or improperly supervised, AI could deepen existing inequalities and undermine public trust in the legal system. So, finding the right mix between new ideas and responsibility is important for the future of AI in legal practice. Artificial intelligence should be seen as a tool that helps people do their jobs better, not as something that takes their place.

Lawyers and judges must always be fully responsible for the legal advice they give and the choices they make, even if AI-based tools help them. Transparency, human oversight, and ethical governance must be central to any framework governing the use of AI in law. By adopting clear regulatory standards, strengthening professional ethics, and investing in technological and legal education, legal systems can ensure that artificial intelligence serves as a force for justice rather than disruption. When guided by human values, constitutional principles, and the rule of law, AI can become a powerful ally in building a more efficient, inclusive, and fair legal system.

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[27] NITI Aayog, *National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence* (Government of India 2018).