

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE INDIAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: ADVANCEMENTS, CHALLENGES, AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

Aishwarya Sharma¹
Shivangi Chauhan Sharma²
Srishti Dixit Soni³
Pooja Agrawal⁴
Pratishtha Mishra⁵
Geeny Mourya⁶

ABSTRACT

Objectives: The objective of this paper is to explore the current state of Artificial Intelligence (AI) usage in the Indian criminal justice system, with a focus on its legal and ethical implications. It aims to examine how existing legal frameworks, such as the Information Technology Act of 2000 and the Indian Penal Code of 1860, could be adapted to regulate AI within the legal profession. Additionally, the paper seeks to highlight the relevance, issues, and future prospects of AI applications in law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional centers, stressing the need for multi-stakeholder cooperation among legal professionals, policymakers, and technologists.

Methods: This paper employs a qualitative analysis of the current implementation of AI in India's criminal justice system. It reviews existing laws, including the Information Technology Act and the Indian Penal Code, to assess their applicability in regulating AI practices. Furthermore, the roles of the High Courts and the Supreme Court of India in overseeing AI applications across the country are examined. Ethical and legal concerns related to AI are explored, particularly regarding transparency, accountability, and public participation in the regulatory process.

Results: The study found that there is currently no dedicated legislation in India specifically governing the use of AI in criminal justice. However, existing laws like the Information Technology Act of 2000 and the Indian Penal Code of 1860 can be utilized to regulate AI applications in the legal profession. The involvement of the Indian High Courts and the Supreme Court is crucial in ensuring that AI practices align with legal standards and ethical norms. The paper also identifies several challenges in the adoption of AI in criminal justice, such as concerns about bias, fairness, and transparency.

Conclusion: The use of AI in India's criminal justice system presents both significant opportunities and challenges. While AI can enhance crime prediction, detection, and offender management, its application raises important legal and ethical concerns. The absence of specific legislation dedicated to AI regulation calls for a comprehensive legal framework that integrates the best practices of transparency, accountability, and ethical standards. Multi-stakeholder cooperation among legal professionals, policymakers, and technologists is essential for ensuring that AI applications in the criminal justice system uphold the principles of justice, equity, and human rights. By fostering such collaboration, India can effectively harness the benefits of AI while safeguarding the integrity of its legal system.

¹ Faculty of Law, Mangalayatan University Jabalpur, India. E-mail: aishwarya103@gmail.com

² Faculty of Law, Mangalayatan University Jabalpur, India.
E-mail: shivangichauhan2016@gmail.com

³ Faculty of Law, Mangalayatan University Jabalpur, India.
E-mail: srishti.soni@mangalayatan.ac.in

⁴ Faculty of Law, Mangalayatan University Jabalpur, India.
E-mail: pooja.agrawal@mangalayatan.ac.in

⁵ Faculty of Law, Mangalayatan University Jabalpur, India. E-mail: Adv.pratishtha@gmail.com

⁶ Faculty of Law, Mangalayatan University Jabalpur, India.
E-mail: geeny.mourya@mangalayatan.ac.in

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1 INTRODUCTION

AI adoption in the criminal justice system is indeed a subject of much discussion and controversy in India. The promises of the AI technology are quite vast, as it can bring many changes to the field of the justice system in the country, including crime prediction and detection as well as administration and judicial decision-making. However, it has provoked a number of issues that need to be discussed with regard to legal and ethical aspects of the programme. However, presently there is no specific law in India for regulating the aspects of AI in the criminal justice system. However, its introduction must be in line with the existing laws and the constitution of the states. According to the Information Technology Act, 2000 of India, there may exist some legal effects of Artificial intelligence on criminal justice system if they fall under the sections 66 and 66A of IPC, 1860 of India (Sayyed, 2024). In the criminal justice system of India the jurisdiction to deal with this aspect of AI remains with the High Courts of respective state and the Supreme Court of India. These courts can consider the enforcement of legislation and provide directions for the implementation of artificial Intelligence in the criminal justice system that would not infringe the constitution or other protections. For this reason, as AI becomes more established and further entwined into criminal justice, it is imperative that legal actors, policy makers, and interested parties remain attentive to how the technology is used, to what extent it is effective, and how it can be used appropriately to promote the achievement of justice, fairness, and adherence to the rules of law (Jauhar, Misra, Sengupta, Chakrabarti & Ghosh, 2021).

2 UNDERSTANDING THE POTENTIAL OF AI TECHNOLOGIES

Consequently, AI technologies are seen as powerful tools that could bring about changes across the healthcare industry, finance, transport, and education. In the legal domain, there are many opportunities for AI including; use in legal research, document review, predicting possible outcomes of a case, and increasing access to justice (Aguila *et al.*, 2024). Today, Artificial Intelligence and related technologies are gradually gaining popularity in India too in connection with the legalization of processes in the legal field (Xhafa, 2012). AI tools can come in handy by providing a set of results for case laws and precedents for a matter in question without spending long hours of researching. It can be useful in the administration of contracts by providing automated tools for analysing legal documentation. In addition, the adoption of AI technologies in the legal field may enhance the presence of virtual assistants and chatbots that will educate and inform those clients who cannot afford legal services (Davenport & Kalakota, 2019). This can go a long way in dealing with the much-publicized issue of disparate justice, where one side of the community hardly gets justice from the legal institutions (Nwosu *et al.*, 2023). Even though AI technologies are quite beneficial, there are several legal and ethical issues associated with it. Some of the challenges that should be met include privacy and data protection, security vulnerabilities, algorithm bias, and governance when using AI application in the legal sector. As for the AI technologies, their usage in India is regulated by the Information Technology Act, 2000 with certain regulations and guidelines. To understand the opportunities offered by AI technologies, and to legally implement them for the benefit of the legal sector and society, legal professionals and policymakers should keep up to date with the changing legal frameworks within which AI technologies will operate.

3 APPLICATION OF AI IN LAW ENFORCEMENT, COURTS, AND CORRECTIONS

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in policing, judiciary and the carrying out of substantive punishments presents an opportunity but also a challenge within the criminal justice system. These sectors are gradually being

depicted and advanced in India with the help of AI technologies to improve the performances, manage decisions, and results. They apply artificial intelligence in the criminal justice system and help in activities such as predicting crime trends, recognizing individuals' faces, reviewing surveillance videos, and identifying trends in crime statistics. These technologies can be used to assist law enforcement in detaining criminals, investigating, and also identifying suspects (Gawali & Sony, 2020). However, it is essential to admit that there are concerns about bias in algorithms, privacy violation, and the future misuse of artificial intelligence that similarly have ethical and legal implications that must not be ignored. So, in the courts there are opportunities for AI technologies to be used in the courtroom usage, case and research area and to predict the future of the cases. Such tools help judges and other legal practitioners in managing cases faster and in making legally sound decisions after analyzing the statistics involved. But it is prudent to establish procedural fairness, accountability and other constitutional rights especially when technology is applied to more judicial work. There are also applications of AI Technologies in corrections; these include the use of Trust and Appropriate Force, Classification and Management, AI in rehabilitation programs for inmates. They can be used in screening out potential or high-risk subjects, plan for rejection prevention tactics and even track them in cases where they are inmates. However, issues such as patient's privacy, proper management of their identity, and possibility of bias in the algorithms when determining appropriate measures to be taken on inmates should not be overlooked when applying the AI in Prisons. Currently, there is no primary legislation that specifically governs the use of AI in areas like policing, courts, and corrections systems in India (Benneh, 2023). However, it is pertinent to note that the existing Indian laws for instance the Information Technology Act, 2000 and sections of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 can possibly be enacted to regulate the Role of Artificial Intelligence in Enhancing the Performance of Indian Sectors. Understanding the legal and ethical issues pertaining to the use of AI technologies and then exhibiting professionalism concerning these technologies is the key to ensuring that the public safety and the justice system in India do not become an easy prey to the social vices that the future proffers.

4 BENEFITS AND PROMISES OF AI IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Application of AI in the criminal justice system has several benefits and potentialities to bring change to diverse components of policing, judiciary and corrections. As technology in criminal justice continues to advance and become more integrated itself globally, it is gradually being adopted in India with vast potential in enhancing its effectiveness.

Some of the key benefits and promises of AI in criminal justice include:

1. **Enhanced Crime Prevention and Detection:** AI tools can analyze vast amounts of data to identify patterns and trends, enabling law enforcement agencies to predict and prevent crimes more effectively. Real-time data analysis can assist with creating crime scenarios, identifying wanted individuals, and mitigating new threats;
2. **Expedited Judicial Processes:** AI technologies can automate routine legal tasks, such as legal research, document review, and case management, thereby speeding up judicial processes and reducing backlog in courts (Dakalbab, Talib, Waraga, Nassif, Abbas & Nasir, 2022). It can arise in the form of efficiency in case handling and the delivery of mechanisms that may enhance citizens' ability to obtain justice;
3. **Improved Decision-Making:** AI algorithms can assist judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys in evaluating evidence, assessing risks, and predicting case outcomes based on data analytics. This can lead to; higher accuracy, less individual judgments, and improved equity when it comes to issues of law;
4. **Rehabilitation and Recidivism Reduction:** In correctional facilities, AI tools can be used for risk assessment, personalized rehabilitation programs, and monitoring inmate behavior to reduce recidivism rates. When appropriate treatment and support measures are aimed at one's necessities and potential menace, AI helps achieve effective reintegration of the ex-convicts into society and create a safer environment;
5. **Enhanced Public Safety:** AI technologies, such as facial recognition, predictive analytics, and surveillance systems, can bolster efforts to

ensure public safety and national security. In this way, AI has the potential to help maintain law and order in the society by offering the law enforcement agencies effective equipment for prevention and forcing crimes (Barysè & Sarel, 2023).

5 LEGAL AND REGULATORY CHALLENGES

The incorporation of AI in the criminal justice system has implications that present several legal and regulatory issues, which can only be dealt with under the rule of law to maintain accountability, transparency, and fairness. Some of the key legal and regulatory challenges associated with AI in the criminal justice system include:

1. **Data Privacy and Security:** AI systems rely on vast amounts of data, including sensitive personal information, to function effectively. Since the data protection laws are mechanisms that protect the rights of individuals, especially in instances like the Personal Data Protection Bill, such laws should be ratified in order that protection of human rights in the use of artificial intelligence in the law enforcement, courts and corrections agencies is achieved (Rodrigues, 2020);
2. **Algorithmic Bias and Transparency:** AI algorithms may exhibit biases that reflect historical injustices or perpetuate discrimination in decision-making processes. AI systems must be developed with state-of-art tools and should follow a transparent model which can be audited and tested for bias during development, testing, and when it is deployed in the criminal justice system to ensure fairness in decision making without discriminating on the basis of color, origin, or race;
3. **Accountability and Liability:** Assigning responsibility and accountability for decisions made by AI systems poses a complex legal challenge. It is essential to determine how, when, or under what circumstances government departments, corporations, or anyone using AI systems can, will be held legally responsible for those systems' errors, biases, or malfunctions, to protect basic rights and provide redress for those impacted by AI decisions (Borgesius, (2018; Maltare *et al.*, 2023);

4. **Ethical considerations:** AI raises significant ethical dilemmas in the criminal justice system, such as the use of predictive policing, facial recognition, and autonomous decision-making processes. There is a need to trade off between cost benefits and ethically acceptable practices within the society as well as upholding ethical virtues like equity, openness and respect for persons;
5. **Regulatory Framework:** The absence of specific regulations governing the use of AI in the criminal justice system in India necessitates the development of clear legal frameworks, guidelines, and standards to govern the deployment and oversight of AI Technologies;
6. **Navigating these legal and regulatory challenges** requires collaboration among policymakers, legal experts, technologists, and stakeholders to develop holistic approaches that uphold the rule of law, protect individual rights, and promote trust in AI technologies within the criminal justice system. Proactively addressing these challenges is essential to harnessing the benefits of AI while safeguarding against potential risks and ensuring justice and accountability in the legal domain.

6 OVERCOMING TECHNOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

To revolutionize the criminal justice system, it is important to recognize and address technological limitations that might hamper its efficiency. In India, overcoming such limitations requires strategic investment, interdisciplinary collaboration and adoption of a proactive approach while responsibly exploiting AI technologies in the legal domain.

Some of these include:

1. **Data Quality and Accessibility:** The success of AI systems relies on quality data. Ensuring the provision of accurate datasets that can be used to train reliable algorithms which are free from biases or errors is critical. This can be achieved by improving data collection practices, mechanisms for sharing data as well as governance frameworks in place for AI use in criminal justice;

2. **Interoperability and Integration:** Integrating existing systems with AI technologies within law enforcement, courts or corrections may prove difficult due to compatibility issues between them, siloed environments where different information units exist individually and finally fragmented IT architectures. Developing interoperable solutions, standardized protocols and seamless interfaces will also facilitate smooth integration of AI's;
3. **Scalability and Adaptability:** Scalability limitations can impede the widespread adoption of AI technologies in the criminal justice system. Ensuring that AI solutions can scale to accommodate large volumes of data, diverse use cases, and evolving requirements is essential for maximizing their impact and efficiency. Investing in robust infrastructure, cloud computing solutions, and flexible AI platforms can enhance the scalability and adaptability of AI systems in criminal justice;
4. **Transparency and Explainability:** The opacity of AI algorithms and decision-making processes poses challenges in ensuring transparency and accountability in the criminal justice system. Enhancing the explainability of AI systems, enabling human oversight, and establishing mechanisms for auditing and interpreting AI-generated outcomes can promote trust and confidence in AI technologies among legal professionals, policymakers, and the public.

7 CASE STUDIES: INSTANCES OF AI CHALLENGES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

While the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the criminal justice system offers numerous benefits, there have been instances globally where AI technologies have posed challenges and raised concerns regarding legal, ethical, and societal implications. Here are a few case studies highlighting AI challenges in criminal justice:

1. **COMPAS Algorithm in the United States:** In the United States, the Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS) algorithm was used to assess the risk of recidivism in criminal defendants. However, studies revealed that the algorithm exhibited

racial bias, with African-American defendants being classified as higher risk compared to white defendants with similar profiles. This raised concerns about algorithmic fairness, transparency, and the potential for discriminatory outcomes in sentencing decisions (Mattu, 2023);

2. Predictive Policing in the United Kingdom: The deployment of predictive policing algorithms in the United Kingdom has faced criticisms for reinforcing and exacerbating existing biases in law enforcement practices. Critics argue that these algorithms may disproportionately target marginalized communities, perpetuate racial profiling, and undermine trust in the police. Questions regarding accountability, oversight, and the ethical implications of predictive policing technologies have been raised. (Hung & Yen, 2023);
3. Police Use of Facial Recognition in China: In China, police use of facial recognition technology for surveillance and law enforcement purposes has sparked concerns about mass surveillance, privacy infringements, and human rights violations. The lack of regulations governing the use of facial recognition technologies, coupled with the potential for misuse and abuse of biometric data, raises significant ethical and legal challenges in balancing public safety with individual rights (Murray, 2023);
4. AI Sentencing Tool in Estonia: In Estonia, the use of an AI tool to assist judges in sentencing decisions raised questions about the opacity of the algorithm, its reliance on historical data that may perpetuate biases, and the accountability of AI-generated outcomes. Critics argued that the lack of transparency, human oversight, and interpretability of the AI sentencing tool compromised due process rights and judicial discretion (Mercan, 2024).

These case studies underscore the importance of addressing AI challenges in the criminal justice system, such as algorithmic bias, transparency, accountability, and ethical considerations, to ensure that AI technologies are deployed responsibly and ethically. Learning from these instances, policymakers, legal professionals, and stakeholders can work towards developing robust regulatory frameworks, ethical guidelines, and

oversight mechanisms to mitigate risks and safeguard against potential harm in the use of AI in criminal justice.

8 PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND TRUST IN AI SYSTEMS

Public perception and trust in Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems are crucial, especially in the context of the criminal justice system in India. As AI technologies are increasingly integrated into legal proceedings, law enforcement, and corrections, it is essential to prioritize factors that influence public perception and trust in these systems (Benneh, 2023).

1. **Transparency:** Transparency in AI systems, including their functioning, decision-making process, and data handling, is key to building public trust. Greater transparency can help address concerns about biases or errors in AI technologies within the criminal justice system;
2. **Accountability:** Establishing clear lines of accountability for AI systems and decisions is crucial for instilling public trust. Mechanisms for redress, oversight, and ensuring accountability are necessary to maintain confidence in AI technologies. Holding developers, operators, and users of AI systems accountable for their actions is important for promoting trust;
3. **Ethical Standards:** Adhering to ethical standards in the development and deployment of AI systems is essential for fostering public trust. Respect for human rights, fairness, justice, and societal well-being can enhance public perception of AI technology in the criminal justice system;
4. **Data Privacy and Security:** Protecting individuals' data privacy and security in AI systems is fundamental for building trust. Clear policies, safeguards, and data protection mechanisms can reassure the public that their rights are respected in AI applications within the criminal justice domain;
5. **Public Engagement and Education:** Engaging with the public, stakeholders, and communities to raise awareness and understanding of AI technologies in the criminal justice system can help build trust. Education initiatives, dialogues, feedback mechanisms, and public input

opportunities empower individuals to shape AI policies and practices, contributing to greater trust and acceptance.

9 BRIDGING THE GAP: COLLABORATION BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

Collaboration between stakeholders is crucial to facilitate the successful integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the criminal justice system in India. Key stakeholders, including policymakers, legal professionals, law enforcement agencies, technology experts, academia, civil society organizations, and the public, all have significant roles to play in ensuring the responsible and effective deployment of AI technologies in the legal domain. Under Indian law, the integration of AI in the criminal justice system would fall under various Acts and regulations such as the Information Technology Act, 2000, and relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, and Evidence Act. The jurisdiction concerning the implementation of these Acts would vary based on the nature of the legal issue at hand. Collaboration among stakeholders can lead to knowledge sharing, interdisciplinary approaches, and addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by AI in the criminal justice system (Sayyed, 2024). Policymakers can work with other stakeholders to craft legislation, regulations, and policies governing the use of AI, ensuring its ethical and transparent deployment. Legal professionals can provide insights into the legal implications of AI technologies and ensure compliance with existing laws, while law enforcement agencies can enhance crime prevention and investigation through tailored AI solutions. Engaging with technology experts and academia can drive research, innovation, and the development of cutting-edge AI tools specific to the legal domain. Furthermore, involving civil society organizations and the public in discussions can foster transparency, accountability, and trust in the use of AI in criminal justice. By working collaboratively, stakeholders can develop comprehensive strategies and guidelines that consider legal, ethical, and societal implications, ensuring that AI applications in the criminal justice system adhere to principles of justice, fairness, and accountability. This collaborative effort can lead to a more

efficient, fair, and trustworthy legal system that harnesses the benefits of AI for the well-being of society.

10 CONCLUSION

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) evolves within the criminal justice system in India, it is imperative to emphasize ethical considerations to guarantee responsible implementation of AI technologies in alignment with legal and moral principles. To progress, it is vital to formulate explicit ethical guidelines that prioritize fairness, transparency, and accountability in the utilization of AI. Improving the transparency and explainability of AI algorithms will cultivate trust and enable stakeholders to comprehend and evaluate AI-generated decisions. Steps to combat algorithmic bias and ensure equity in AI systems should be taken, coupled with robust protocols for data privacy and security to protect sensitive information. Collaboration among stakeholders, including legal experts, technologists, policymakers, and the public, is pivotal in devising comprehensive strategies for the ethical implementation of AI. Under Indian law, ensuring ethical implementation of AI in the criminal justice system would involve adherence to the Information Technology Act, 2000, and relevant provisions of other laws such as the Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, and Evidence Act. The jurisdiction pertaining to the implementation and oversight of these Acts would vary based on the specific legal context. Engaging the public through education initiatives can raise awareness and empower individuals to contribute to the framework of AI policies and practices. Establishing independent oversight mechanisms and accountability frameworks will be crucial in supervising AI implementations and guaranteeing conformity with ethical standards and legal norms. By embracing these forthcoming strategies and recommendations for ethical AI implementation, India can leverage the advantages of AI technologies in the criminal justice system while upholding core principles of justice, fairness, and human rights.

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