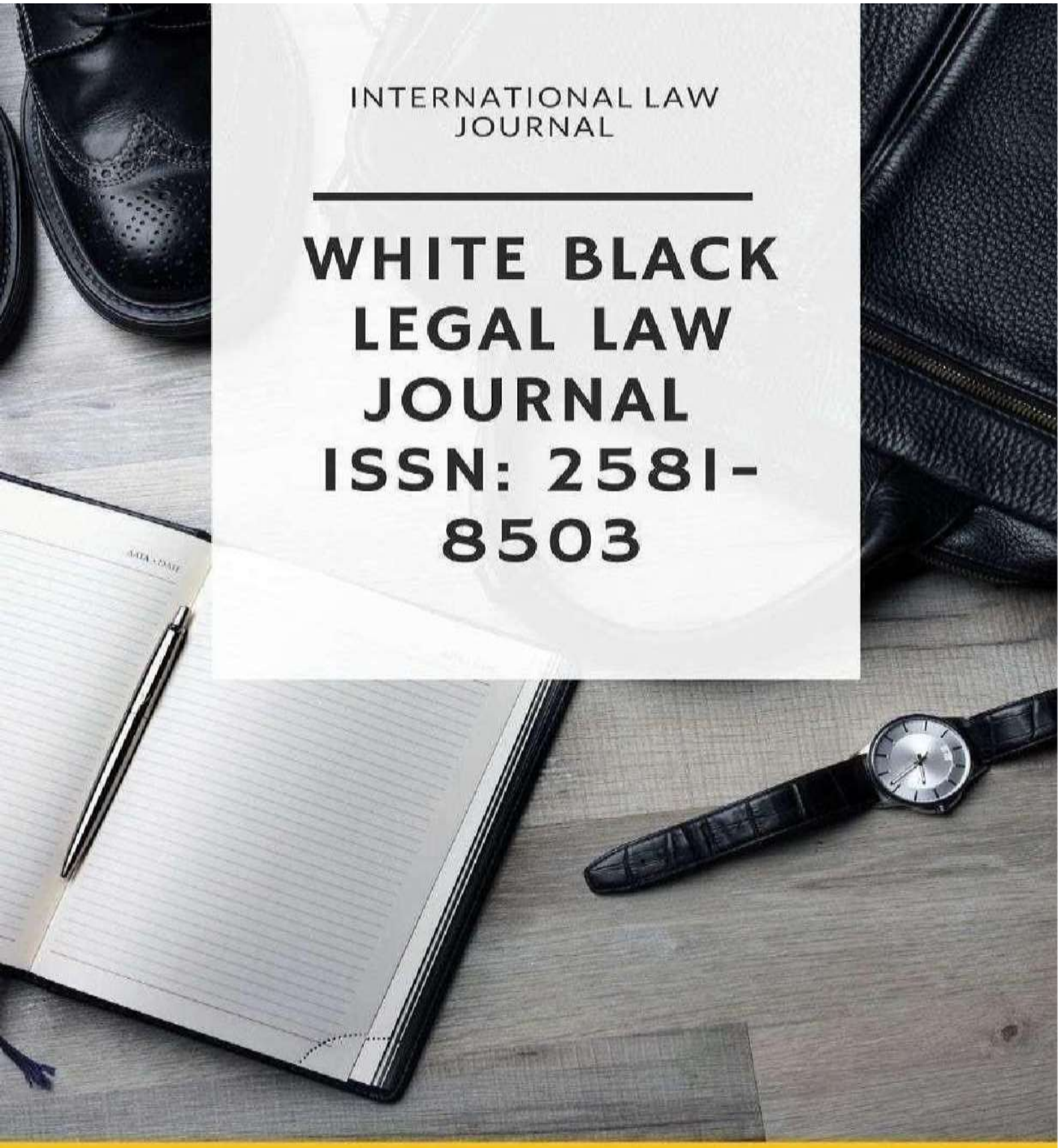

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BBA. LL.B. (Hons.) (Amity University, Rajasthan); LL. M. (UPES, Dehradun) (Nottingham Trent University, UK); PH.D. Candidate (G.D. Goenka University)

Subhrajit did his LL.M. in Sports Law, from Nottingham Trent University of United Kingdoms, with international scholarship provided by university; he has also completed another LL.M. in Energy Law from University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, India. He did his B.B.A.LL.B. (Hons.) focussing on International Trade Law.

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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal provide dedicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

AI, PRIVACY & DATA PROTECTION IN INDIA

AUTHORED BY - MR. JAISHIK S[1] & MR. SANNKALP KS[2]

ABSTRACT:

The rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed the way personal data is collected, analysed, and used in India. From digital payments and healthcare to governance and social media, AI systems increasingly rely on large volumes of personal information, creating new concerns about privacy, security, and accountability. As India moves toward a data-driven economy, questions arise about how personal data is protected, whether individuals have control over their information, and what responsibilities AI developers and platforms must carry. The introduction of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, along with existing laws such as the Information Technology Act, 2000, marks an important step toward regulating digital ecosystems. However, the rapid speed of technological innovation has exposed gaps in enforcement, transparency, and oversight.

This research examines the intersection of AI, privacy, and data protection in India. It analyses the existing legal framework, the challenges created by automated decision-making, and the ethical issues surrounding surveillance, consent, and algorithmic bias. A comparative study of global models, including the European Union's GDPR and AI Act, the United States' emerging AI principles, and the United Kingdom's data protection standards, highlights lessons India can adopt while shaping its own regulatory path. The paper also reviews major incidents and judicial developments that reveal the risks of unchecked data practices.

Ultimately, the study suggests that India needs a balanced approach that protects individual rights without hindering technological progress. Strengthening accountability, implementing transparent data practices, and developing AI-specific regulations will be essential for building a safe, trustworthy, and inclusive digital future.

Keywords

Artificial Intelligence; Data Privacy; Data Protection; Digital Personal Data Protection Act; Algorithmic Accountability; Surveillance; Automated Decision-Making; Digital Rights; India.

[1] Student – 3rd Year BBA LLB, MKPM RVILS, (KSLU), Bangalore.
[2] Student – 3rd Year BBA LLB, MKPM RVILS, (KSLU), Bangalore.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has reshaped the digital landscape in India, influencing sectors such as banking, healthcare, education, policing, and public administration. AI systems work by analysing large amounts of personal data, learning patterns, and making automated decisions that often affect individuals in ways they may not fully understand. As these technologies continue to evolve, concerns about privacy, security, and misuse of personal information have become more prominent. The increasing dependence on data-driven systems has raised a fundamental question: how can India encourage technological progress while ensuring that individual rights remain protected?

India's digital transformation has been accelerated by government initiatives promoting online services, digital identity systems, and the growth of private technology companies. While these developments have improved efficiency, they also highlight the risks of uncontrolled data collection, profiling, and surveillance. The Supreme Court's recognition of privacy as a fundamental right in *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* marked an important shift, directing attention toward the need for stronger legal safeguards. The enactment of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act), represents a significant step toward regulating personal data in an AI-driven ecosystem; however, several uncertainties remain regarding accountability, transparency, and enforcement.

AI technologies also raise ethical issues, such as bias in automated decisions, lack of explainability, and unequal access to digital systems. These challenges underline the importance of a clear regulatory framework that balances innovation with protection. As India aims to become a global hub for AI development, the need for responsible governance is more urgent than ever.

This research explores the evolving relationship between AI and privacy in India, analyses existing laws, compares international models, and identifies gaps that must be addressed to ensure a safe, fair, and trustworthy digital environment for all.

Chapter 1: Understanding Artificial Intelligence and Data Privacy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, analysing information, recognising patterns, and making predictions. Modern AI technologies depend heavily on data, especially personal data,

to function effectively. Everyday applications—recommendation systems, facial recognition tools, digital assistants, and automated verification systems—collect and process large amounts of information to improve accuracy and efficiency. As a result, AI has become deeply integrated into public and private digital services in India.[3]

However, the expanding use of AI has created serious concerns about privacy. When personal data is collected on a large scale, individuals often have limited awareness or control over how their information is used. AI systems may analyse behaviour, location, preferences, and identity-related details, leading to risks such as profiling, discrimination, and unwanted surveillance.[4] These risks are higher in countries with large digital populations like India, where technology adoption has outpaced the development of strong data protection practices.

Data privacy refers to the right of individuals to control how their personal information is collected, stored, and processed. In an AI-driven ecosystem, this right becomes essential because automated systems can make decisions that affect real lives—approving loans, flagging security risks, or determining eligibility for welfare schemes. If such decisions are based on inaccurate or biased data, they may harm individuals or communities.[5]

Understanding the relationship between AI and privacy is critical for shaping effective laws and policies. While AI offers significant benefits for innovation and public services, it also requires responsible handling of personal data. For India, achieving this balance is challenging but necessary. A clear understanding of the risks, benefits, and ethical concerns surrounding AI will help lawmakers, institutions, and users build a safer and more trustworthy digital environment.

Chapter 2: Legal Framework Governing AI and Data Protection in India

The legal framework governing Artificial Intelligence and data protection in India is still developing, as the country works to adapt its laws to rapid technological change. The foundation of digital regulation in India is the Information Technology Act, 2000, which provides basic rules for electronic records, cybersecurity, and intermediary responsibility.

[3] A. Mehra, "Artificial Intelligence and Its Growing Role in India," Journal of Emerging Technologies, Vol. 8, 2022.
[4] R. Kapoor, "Data-Driven Systems and Privacy Risks," Indian Law Review, Vol. 15, 2021.
[5] S. Patel, *Ethics of Automated Decision-Making*, TechPolicy Publications, 2020.

However, the Act was not originally designed to address the complex issues raised by AI, such as automated decision-making or algorithmic profiling.[6]

A major development occurred with the Supreme Court's judgment in *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017), which declared the right to privacy a fundamental right under the Constitution. This judgment created a strong constitutional basis for regulating how personal data is collected and used in AI systems.[7] Following this decision, the Government of India enacted the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act). The DPDP Act introduces principles such as consent, purpose limitation, data minimisation, and user rights, making it the most important legislation governing data in the country.[8]

In addition to these laws, sector-specific regulations also influence AI governance. The Reserve Bank of India has issued guidelines on data security for financial institutions, while the National Health Authority enforces privacy rules under the National Digital Health Mission. These frameworks indirectly affect AI systems that rely on sensitive data. Although these laws mark significant progress, India still lacks a dedicated AI law that clearly defines accountability for developers, deployers, and digital platforms.

Overall, India's legal framework is moving in the right direction, but stronger enforcement mechanisms and AI-specific regulations are needed to ensure responsible and transparent data practices.

Chapter 3: International Approaches to AI Governance and Privacy Protection

Countries around the world have developed different approaches to regulate Artificial Intelligence and protect personal data. The European Union has taken the most comprehensive approach by introducing two major frameworks: the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the newly proposed EU Artificial Intelligence Act. The GDPR sets strict rules on consent, transparency, and user rights, making it one of the strongest privacy laws globally. The EU AI Act classifies AI systems based on risk and imposes specific obligations, such as

[6] P. Banerjee, "IT Act and Technological Challenges in India," Indian Journal of Cyber Law, Vol. 11, 2021.
[7] *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 1.
[8] Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (India).

accuracy, fairness, and human oversight for high-risk systems.[9] This combination of privacy and AI regulation aims to create a safe and trustworthy digital environment.

In the United States, AI governance is more fragmented. Instead of a single nationwide privacy law, the country follows a sector-based approach where different states and industries have their own rules. The White House released the "AI Bill of Rights," which outlines principles such as safe systems, protection from discrimination, and data privacy. While not legally binding, it guides companies and government agencies toward responsible AI development.[10] The United Kingdom follows a mixed model. After adopting the UK Data Protection Act in line with the GDPR, the country also introduced guidelines for ethical AI use. The UK emphasizes transparency, fairness, and accountability in automated decision-making. It has also created the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation to support responsible innovation.[11]

These international models offer important lessons for India. The EU highlights strict rights and risk-based controls, the USA promotes innovation-friendly guidelines, and the UK focuses on ethics and accountability. India can draw from all three approaches while shaping a balanced regulatory system that supports AI growth without compromising personal privacy.

Chapter 4: Accountability and Liability in AI-Driven Systems

The question of accountability in Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems has become one of the most debated issues in digital governance. Unlike traditional technologies, AI systems make automated decisions based on complex algorithms and large datasets. This makes it difficult to determine who should be responsible when an AI system causes harm or makes an incorrect decision. The responsibility may fall on developers who create the algorithms, organisations that deploy AI tools, or data fiduciaries who collect and process personal information.[12]

In India, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 places primary responsibility on the "data fiduciary," meaning the entity that decides how personal data is used. This includes obligations to ensure accuracy, security, and lawful processing of data.[13] However, the Act does not clearly define accountability for algorithmic errors, biased outcomes, or misuse of AI-

[9] European Commission, "EU Artificial Intelligence Act Proposal," 2021.
[10] White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, *Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights*, 2022.
[11] UK Government, "Data Protection Act and AI Ethics Framework," 2021.
[12] S. Kulkarni, "Liability Challenges in Artificial Intelligence Systems," Technology Law Review, Vol. 9, 2021.
[13] Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (India).

generated insights. As a result, there is uncertainty regarding liability when AI decisions affect individuals, such as in hiring processes, credit scoring, or digital identification.

Globally, models like the EU AI Act introduce specific duties for high-risk AI systems, including human supervision, risk assessments, and transparency requirements. These rules help identify the responsible party and prevent harm.[14] India may benefit from adopting similar principles, ensuring that AI remains safe, fair, and accountable.

Chapter 5: Challenges and Ethical Dilemmas in AI and Privacy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents a range of complex challenges and ethical dilemmas that directly influence privacy and data protection in India. One of the most significant concerns is the lack of transparency in how AI systems make decisions. Many modern algorithms operate through deep-learning models, which are highly accurate but difficult to interpret. This "black box" nature means users often cannot understand why an AI system approved, denied, or flagged their information.[15] When such opaque systems are used in essential services—such as healthcare diagnostics, automated surveillance, credit scoring, or digital identity verification—the lack of clarity can lead to confusion, loss of trust, and potential harm.

Another major challenge is algorithmic bias. AI systems learn patterns from large datasets, and if these datasets contain historical inequalities or inaccurate information, the system may unintentionally reinforce discriminatory outcomes. Examples include biased hiring algorithms, unequal loan approval systems, and misidentification in facial recognition tools.[16] In a diverse country like India, where social, regional, and economic disparities already exist, biased AI can worsen existing inequalities. This raises serious ethical concerns about fairness and equal treatment.

Surveillance and data misuse represent further dilemmas. AI-driven technologies such as predictive policing, biometric tracking, and behavioural analysis can collect massive amounts of personal information without explicit consent. When used by public authorities or private companies, these systems risk creating an environment of constant monitoring, which threatens

[14] European Commission, "EU Artificial Intelligence Act Proposal," 2021.
[15] A. Nair, "Transparency Issues in AI Systems," Indian Journal of Ethics & Technology, Vol. 7, 2022.
[16] L. Deshmukh, "Bias in Automated Decision-Making: An Indian Perspective," Law & Policy Review, Vol. 13, 2021.

individual freedoms and privacy.[17] Without clear legal limits, such systems may be misused or expanded without accountability.

India also faces challenges related to digital illiteracy. Many citizens remain unaware of how much data they share online or how AI systems process their information. This makes individuals vulnerable to manipulation, misinformation, or exploitation. Ethical AI development requires transparency, informed consent, and respect for user rights, but these principles are difficult to uphold when awareness is low.

To address these challenges, India must implement stronger accountability frameworks, ethical guidelines, transparent practices, and public awareness initiatives. AI should be designed and deployed in a manner that prioritizes fairness, safety, dignity, and human values.

Chapter 6: Reported Incidents and Landmark Cases on AI & Privacy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and large-scale data processing have led to several reported incidents worldwide, revealing the risks of misused personal information and privacy violations. One of the most prominent global examples is the Cambridge Analytica scandal, where personal data from millions of Facebook users was harvested without consent and analysed using AI-driven profiling tools. This incident demonstrated how powerful algorithms can influence political behaviour and manipulate public opinion.[18] It also triggered global discussions about consent, digital surveillance, and platform accountability.

In India, privacy issues surfaced strongly in the *Aadhaar* case. The Aadhaar system, which involves extensive collection of biometric data, raised concerns about risks of data breaches, unauthorized linking, and surveillance. Petitioners argued that the large database could be misused to track individuals or discriminate based on personal information. While the Supreme Court upheld the Aadhaar program for welfare purposes, it emphasized the need for strict safeguards, data minimization, and protection of privacy as a fundamental right.[19] This case reshaped India's privacy discourse.

Another notable incident involves the increasing use of facial recognition systems in public

[17] R. Thomas, *Surveillance Technologies and Privacy Risks in India*, Digital Policy Press, 2020.
[18] D. Miller, "Cambridge Analytica and the Global Data Scandal," Journal of Digital Ethics, Vol. 6, 2019.
[19] *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, (2018) 1 SCC 809.

spaces, particularly during law enforcement activities. Reports have shown that some of these systems had low accuracy rates and disproportionately misidentified women and individuals from marginalized communities.[20] Such errors raise serious concerns about algorithmic fairness and potential wrongful targeting.

Additionally, several data breaches in India, involving telecom companies, e-commerce platforms, and government databases, exposed millions of records containing names, addresses, Aadhaar numbers, and financial details. These incidents highlighted weaknesses in data security practices and the urgent need for stronger regulatory oversight.[21]

These events collectively demonstrate the risks of unregulated AI use and insufficient data protection measures. They underline the importance of accountability, robust legal safeguards, and continuous monitoring of AI-driven systems. Without responsible regulation, such incidents can undermine public trust, compromise individual rights, and threaten democratic values.

Chapter 7: Future Prospects and Regulatory Reforms in India

As India expands its digital ecosystem, the future of Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance depends on the development of stronger regulatory frameworks and responsible innovation. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 provides a foundational structure for safeguarding personal data, but it does not directly address the unique risks posed by AI systems, such as automated decision-making, profiling, and algorithmic bias.[22] Therefore, India may need a dedicated AI law that clearly defines obligations for developers, deployers, and data fiduciaries.

One promising direction is the creation of risk-based regulation, similar to the European Union's AI Act, which classifies AI systems according to their potential impact and assigns specific safety and transparency requirements. Such an approach would help ensure that high-risk applications in areas like healthcare, law enforcement, and financial services follow strict accountability standards.[23] Another important reform is the implementation of independent

[20] S. Rao, "Facial Recognition and Accuracy Concerns in India," Technology & Society Review, Vol. 10, 2022.
[21] A. Gupta, *Data Breaches in India: Causes and Consequences*, Cyber Policy Research Series, 2021.
[22] Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (India).
[23] European Commission, "EU Artificial Intelligence Act Proposal," 2021.

oversight bodies capable of conducting audits, monitoring compliance, and addressing grievances related to AI use.

Additionally, India can promote innovation by establishing regulatory sandboxes where companies can test AI technologies under supervision. Strengthening digital literacy, encouraging ethical AI research, and investing in privacy-enhancing technologies will also play a key role in shaping a safe and inclusive AI future[24]. With thoughtful reforms, India can build a framework that supports both technological growth and fundamental rights.

Chapter 8: Suggestions / Recommendations for Strengthening AI and Privacy Protection

Strengthening AI governance and privacy protection in India requires a combination of legal, technical, and institutional reforms. First, India would benefit from introducing a dedicated Artificial Intelligence law that clearly defines key concepts such as algorithmic accountability, automated decision-making, and high-risk AI systems. While the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 establishes basic data rights, it does not fully address the unique challenges posed by AI-driven technologies.[25] A specialised AI framework would help set clearer duties for developers, deployers, and data fiduciaries.

Second, mandatory algorithmic audits should be introduced for systems used in sensitive sectors such as finance, policing, healthcare, and education. These audits would examine fairness, accuracy, and potential bias to ensure that AI systems do not discriminate against individuals or groups.[26] Transparency measures, such as requiring organisations to explain how important AI decisions are made, would also improve user trust.

Third, India should establish an independent AI regulatory authority responsible for monitoring compliance, investigating misuse, and issuing guidelines. Such a body could work with experts in law, ethics, and technology to ensure that innovation aligns with public safety.[27] Regulatory sandboxes can further support responsible experimentation by allowing companies to test AI systems under supervision.

[24] M. Krishnan, "Building Ethical AI Frameworks for India," Journal of Law & Technology, Vol. 12, 2023.
[25] Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (India).
[26] R. Mehta, "Algorithmic Fairness in High-Risk AI Systems," Journal of Emerging Technologies, Vol. 9, 2022.
[27] P. Srinivasan, *Regulating the Future: AI Governance Models for India*, TechPolicy Press, 2023.

Additionally, public awareness and digital literacy programs must be strengthened. Many users are unaware of how their data is collected and processed, making them more vulnerable to privacy violations. Educating citizens about their rights and the risks associated with AI is essential for building an informed digital society. Finally, promoting privacy-by-design and ethical AI research within institutions will help ensure that technological advancements protect, rather than compromise, individual rights.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in India marks a major turning point in the country's digital transformation. AI-driven systems now influence a wide range of sectors, including finance, healthcare, education, governance, transport, and law enforcement. With every advancement, however, comes the growing challenge of protecting personal data, ensuring fairness, and maintaining transparency in automated processes. As India becomes increasingly dependent on digital technologies, addressing concerns related to privacy and algorithmic decision-making has become not only a legal requirement but also a moral and social necessity.

The recognition of the right to privacy as a fundamental right in *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* created a strong constitutional foundation for India's digital future. This landmark decision emphasized that individuals must have control over their personal information, especially in an era where AI systems collect, analyse, and utilise data at unprecedented scales. Following this, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act) was introduced to protect digital rights, regulate data practices, and hold data fiduciaries accountable. However, while this Act represents a significant step forward, it does not fully address the unique challenges arising from AI, such as automated profiling, opaque algorithms, unintended discrimination, or the risks of mass surveillance.

International developments further illustrate the need for a comprehensive legal and ethical framework. The European Union's GDPR and AI Act highlight the importance of transparency, risk assessment, and strong user rights. The United States' AI Bill of Rights underscores fairness and safety in automated systems. The United Kingdom emphasizes accountability and ethical oversight. These global models make it clear that India must adopt a balanced approach—one that supports innovation while ensuring individual protection.

Several incidents and case studies, including the Cambridge Analytica scandal, Aadhaar litigation, and issues with facial recognition technologies, demonstrate how easily data misuse can harm individuals and society. These incidents highlight the dangers of unregulated AI adoption, insufficient data security, and lack of public awareness. They also show that privacy breaches are not theoretical risks but real-world harms with lasting consequences.

Moving forward, India must strengthen its regulatory frameworks by introducing AI-specific legislation, enforcing algorithmic audits, and establishing independent oversight mechanisms. AI systems used in sensitive areas must undergo fairness testing, data protection assessments, and continuous monitoring to prevent discrimination or inaccuracies. Additionally, transparency obligations should require companies and public authorities to explain how automated decisions are made, especially when such decisions affect rights, opportunities, or access to essential services.

Equally important is the need to improve digital literacy. Many individuals in India are unaware of how their data is collected or used, leaving them vulnerable to manipulation or exploitation. Public awareness campaigns, educational programs, and clear communication from institutions are essential for empowering citizens to protect their rights.

In conclusion, India stands at a crucial moment in its technological journey. AI offers remarkable opportunities for economic growth, improved governance, and social development. But these benefits must not come at the cost of privacy, dignity, or fairness. By adopting responsible regulations, promoting ethical innovation, and strengthening institutional safeguards, India can build an AI ecosystem that is not only powerful and efficient but also safe, transparent, and respectful of individual rights. The future of AI in India depends on finding this careful balance—one that protects people while embracing progress.

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