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A Conference Report on the Future of Law: *Emerging Technologies and Legal Innovation*

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The Prelude

The Faculty of Law at Manipal University Jaipur convened a three-day international conference themed "The Future of Law: Emerging Technologies and Legal Innovation," in association with GALTER. The conference took place on 8-10 January 2025.

It is an era of unprecedented technological advancement where innovative solutions in legal practice are more in demand than ever before. With this context in mind, the School of Law of Manipal University Jaipur has organised a conference titled "*The Future of Law: Emerging Technologies and Legal Innovation*", which happened to be a very crucial convergence point for scholars, practitioners, and technologists to come and explore the implications of technologies like artificial intelligence and blockchain within the legal landscape. Discussions highlighted how these technical tools transform the legal system to be more efficient, accessible, and equitable. Figure 1 represents the interconnection of different AI applications, shown through a Venn diagram. It shows how such technologies intersect and revolutionise the legal processes. This will thus pave the way for a future where legal innovation harmonises with evolving societal needs. The conference thus outlined a roadmap of how the complexity introduced by emerging technologies in law would be addressed.

The inaugural ceremony was honoured by the presence of Prof. Dr. Shantakumar, Vice Chancellor of Gujarat National Law University, as the Chief Guest.

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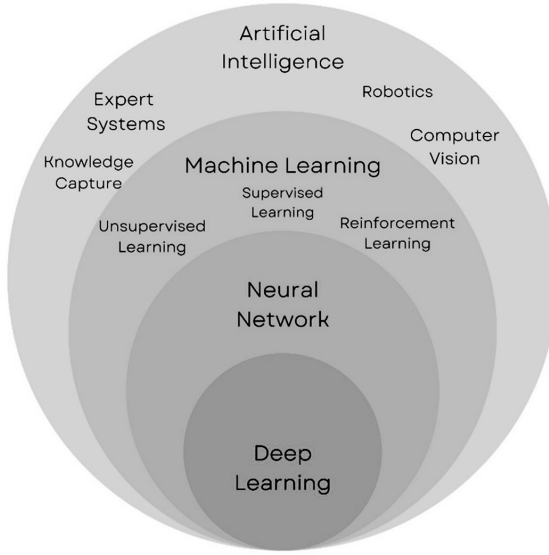
He remarked that emerging technologies – including artificial intelligence, blockchain, big data, and the Internet of Things – have transcended the realm of futuristic concepts and are now integral to contemporary discourse. They constitute current realities. By employing artificial intelligence, along with research conducted in this domain, it is possible to identify biases in dispute resolution and discern systematic patterns in the adjudication of conflicts. It also enhances the accuracy and efficiency of legal research.

Figure 1. Hierarchical Representation of Artificial Intelligence Concepts (self-developed)



Source: own elaboration.

Another speaker, Prof. Mike Mireles from University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, USA, highlighted the necessity of joint implementation of measures addressing the challenges associated with emerging technologies.

An overview of the conference objectives and the significance of the topic

The need for transforming technology and its legal adaptation has become a critical requirement in today's changing legal regime. The conference featured presentations on how technology advances such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and big data influence law and its associated potential challenges and needs. Academics

and practitioners attended the conference to analyse digital law ethics along with regulatory needs for balancing technology innovation with social accountability. The conference proved to be highly important because it showed the necessity of uniting current laws with modern technology to create efficient digital justice systems. The complexity of the subject and the integration of new ideas were vividly depicted through various sessions that made participants more enthusiastic and involved.

Thematic Presentation

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Legal Practices

The discussion started with the keynote address of Prof. Dr. M.K. Bhandari, academician and founder Director of GALTER. It was emphasised that the law must not only govern these advancements, but also evolve to leverage their potential for the promotion of justice, efficiency, and accessibility.

AI systems adapt themselves to take their positions in the legal industry by enhancing efficiency and accessibility at the very same time. AI is an inevitable aspect of legal dealings; hardly any task or quantum of data can be manipulated in a very fast and extremely accurate manner before the production of legal matters. The conference addressed both the ethical issues and regulatory adjustments that organisations need to follow when integrating AI technology into legal systems. The significant function of AI as a tool for procedural fairness maintenance during the elimination of systematic bias from algorithmic determinations became a central point of discussion. The speeches delivered demonstrated how necessary it is for legal systems to undergo full-scale modifications which safeguard intellectual property rights and maintain justice in current technological developments. The legal practice must harmonise technological advancement with moral review because this combination ensures social trust combined with professional accountability.

The discussion pointed to certain key areas (as depicted on Figure 2) of legal practice which are impacted by emerging technologies.

The current legal practice is undergoing a transformative evolution due to artificial intelligence integration that benefits legal research and document review activities. Research discussions about AIs technical capability emphasize that automated legal research will dramatically cut down lawyer time requirements for searching through extensive databases for legal precedents and statutes. Automation of document review processes enables precise legal work alongside increased productivity because lawyers can channel their efforts into essential tasks instead

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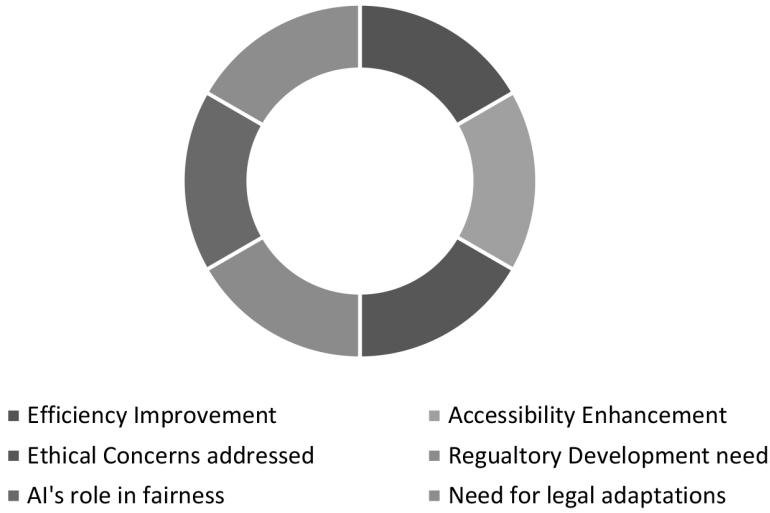
of administrative work. This advancement receives support from the insights which demonstrate how machine learning and other AI applications function within core legal procedures. Technological innovation must harmonise with human expertise to achieve justice and protect individual rights in modern legal research.

Figure 2. Areas of legal practice impacted by emerging technologies (self-elaborated)



Source: own elaboration.

Blockchain Technology and Its Implications for Legal Transactions

Blockchain technology in legal transactions has limitless potential for effecting a transformation. The highlight of the conference, as also illustrated in the presentation, also emphasised the adoption of blockchain, thereby embracing the measures of transparency and security demanded of any legal blockchain activity. There shall be automatic execution of legal agreements; that means no intermediaries under two parties trading; fragmentation of the rest will lower any further cost and expected delays. Furthermore, the integration of blockchain in legal practices aligns well with modern digital marketing trends, as highlighted by Ms. Ilma Javed, thus creating chances for enhancing brand reputation through trust and security. More broadly, these developments suggest a big step forward toward even more streamlined and effective legal practices, as envisioned in the presentation of Amith Sriram K S and Dr. Valarmathi from Christ (deemed-to--be-university), Bengaluru.

Legal Tech and Innovation

Inclusion of smart contracts into legal frameworks brings a fundamental change that is pushing both transparency and operational speed forward. Blockchain technologies come with contracts that automatically execute themselves. They are structured to enable the transactional journey the user has to undergo to be shorter, quicker, and less arduous – while at the same time enabling an expected major reduction in enforcement costs. Dr. Vikas Sharma and Shambhavi Vats from Mangalayatan University engaged in a discourse regarding the influence of emergent technologies on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It was emphasised that enterprises were increasingly adopting AI and blockchain to enhance their compliance frameworks. Yet, organisations must address ethical considerations, including the necessity of balancing privacy with transparency, the potential for bias in artificial intelligence, and the accountability issue around automated systems.

Another speaker explained that smart contracts use blockchain technology to automatically carry out deals. This process relies less on middlemen, reduces conflicts, and improves security. When used in the cloud, these contracts can grow easily, are easier to access, and are more affordable, which makes them better suited for many legal uses. Digitalisation of agreements must occur at the present time since we deal with specific requirements in the fusion of law and technology while guarding top-order principles and compliance frameworks.

The conversation around legal innovation mainly involved highly remarkable signs of the growing presence of technologies like artificial intelligence and blockchain. Putting these into symbiosis is now forcing lawyers to cannibalise traditional practice approaches to leave room for efficiency and justice. Attendees noted that collaboration between technologists and legal experts was essential to unlock the full potential of these innovations. There is a major call for updated regulatory frameworks based on technological inputs, not repressive of innovativeness and creativity. In the end, the conference revealed that the future of law rests on a delicate balance between innovation, ethics, and a commitment to equitable legal practices.

Emerging Technologies and IPR

The keynote speech of Prof. Dr. Raman Mittal stressed the significance of technological development and its impact in IPR and how far modern law is accommodative of this. Emerging circumstances allow for the creation of works by humans without specific creative skills through the use of generative AI tools. An overabundance of user-specific material, created for a single user in a certain context and then

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displayed only once – maybe never to be seen again – could be the result of generative AI. "Authorship" and "work" are two of the most fundamental ideas at the heart of intellectual property rights that are being tested by these new developments. Technological progress offers a unique opportunity to adapt to new circumstances and enhance the intellectual property system from a societal perspective, should revisions to IP laws become necessary. The discussion encompassed a variety of concerns, including authorship of AI in copyright law; inventorship of AI in patent law; regulation of AI-related intellectual property rights; facilitation of AI system development, training, and testing through IP protection exemptions; utilisation of AI tools by IP offices; and suitable software protection and data usage frameworks. Ms. Karolina Wilamowska, from Wilamowscy Adwokaci Spółka Partnerska and Gdansk University in Poland, elaborated on the intricacies of artificial intelligence and its implications within the framework of patent law. She argued that by harmonising international standards, enhancing the EPC framework, fostering transparency, and instituting ethical supervision, patent systems can more effectively accommodate the intricacies associated with AI-related inventions.

Discourse of Data and Privacy

The session commenced with the keynote speech of Dr. Uday Shankar from Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. He shed light on the recent emergence of rules pertaining to data protection law of India. He also highlighted that we need to develop international understanding of the concept of privacy, but the scope and ambit of that understanding must be customised according to societal norms. The understanding must also be developed from the economic perspective, i.e. considering how much individuals are free to innovate, and from the political perspective, i.e. taking into account how free are individuals to think.

Ms. Shruti Tandon and Ms. Prachi Sharma, affiliated with Bharati Vidyapeeth (deemed-to-be-university), Institute of Management & Research in New Delhi, delivered a presentation on the interplay between intermediary liability and individual rights in India. Their analysis was particularly focused on the Digital Personal Data Protection Act of 2023 and the Information Technology Act of 2000. They advocated for the harmonisation of legislation and the elucidation of the duties of intermediaries, as emphasised by the Supreme Court. Discussing the perspective of the issue of privacy in FINTECH, Ms. Prakriti. M from Vel Tech argued that the data protection law of India demands a significant technical and operational upgrade.

Krupa K Varghese and Dr. Adinarayana J from Christ University said that the quick adoption of AI in healthcare causes serious law problems. There is a need

for laws that find a balance between new technology and legal processes by creating standard rules for AI. Further, with respect to the relation between privacy and big data, Ms. Upagya Sharma and Dr. Amrita Rathi from Army Institute of Law, Mohali pointed out that as the set of big data gets bigger, the significance and degree of threat grows as well.

Conclusion

By addressing the conventional nature of emerging technologies in legal innovation, and charting a course for a future of law, the conference considered a more balanced policy making and regulatory approach. As evidenced throughout the conference, issues that came up – such as making transparent data privacy regulations and adopting AI in judicial processes – revealed challenging governance issues. It was observed that existing frameworks are incoherent, fragmented, and reactive in nature. Thus, there is an urgent need to legislate laws that are defined in response to such subtlety exhibited by these technologies. One of the key takeaways from the conference was the significant effect that technological advancements will have on existing legal systems. Another important insight is the importance of efforts aimed at a balanced approach to regulation – one that encourages innovation combined with ethical considerations and data privacy.

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