

Natural Justice in Artificial Intelligence Legal Processes: Maintaining the Right to a Fair Hearing, Review and Appeal

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Table of Contents

Abstract..... 3
1.0 Introduction 3
2.0 Impact of Artificial Intelligence Legal Processes on Natural Justice 5
3.0 Maintaining the Right to a Fair Hearing, Review and Appeal in Artificial Intelligence Legal Processes.. 6
4.0 Conclusion..... 7
References..... 8

Natural Justice in Artificial Intelligence Legal Processes: Maintaining the Right to a Fair Hearing, Review and Appeal

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Abstract

This paper examines the need to uphold natural justice in AI legal processes. The paper observes that natural justice is a fundamental concept in legal processes since it ensures fairness and avoidance of bias in justice systems towards human rights. Despite AI playing a key role in improving legal processes, the paper observes that it can violate the principles of natural justice if not appropriately and ethically harnessed. The paper discusses how the integration of AI into legal processes can undermine natural justice. In light of this concern, the paper argues that it is imperative to integrate natural justice into AI legal processes in order to protect human rights. In order to realise this dream, the paper discusses how the right to a fair hearing, review and appeal can be maintained in AI legal processes.

1.0 Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being widely integrated into legal processes towards enhancing access to justice. It has been observed that AI can support justice systems by enhancing their resilience, efficiency, effectiveness and fairness¹. Further, AI has the capacity to bolster access to justice by making legal processes more efficient, affordable, and accessible². According to the United Nations, technology and AI can ensure scalable, transparent, responsive, innovative and data-driven transformation of justice systems as long as principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness and accountability are taken into account³.

The transformative power of AI is streamlining legal processes and fostering access to justice. For example, AI is enabling lawyers to streamline legal research, automate contract review, and manage large volumes

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¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'Governing with Artificial Intelligence' Available at https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/06/governing-with-artificial-intelligence_398fa287/full-report/ai-in-justice-administration-and-access-to-justice_f0cbe651.html

(Accessed on 29/04/2026)

² Okeke. U., 'Enhancing Access to Justice Through Technology in Developing Countries: Technology-Based Initiatives, Challenges and Emerging Technologies' *International Journal for Court Administration.*, Volume 16, Issue 3 (2026)

³ United Nations., 'Advancing Rule of Law, Justice for All through Technology Must Include Equal Internet Access, Human Rights Compliance, Sixth Committee Speakers Stress' Available at <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgzQbfVGtksmCfmrlxLQbCCknVLCW> (Accessed on 29/04/2026)

of data during court proceedings⁴. Further, it has been observed that AI has the ability to quickly sift through the mass of complex facts and evidence to identify the key issues at the heart of each dispute thus enhancing the efficiency and speed of dispute resolution⁵. AI is also being harnessed in court processes to automate and streamline processes including case management, filing of documents and allocation of cases⁶. In addition, it has been observed that judicial officers are increasingly adopting AI to evaluate briefs, undertake research, sift through vast amounts of pleadings and evidence and come up with more cogent and consistent rulings and judgments⁷.

Harnessing AI is therefore fundamental towards enhancing the efficiency, speed and accessibility of legal processes. It has been observed that the integration of AI into legal processes and justice systems can improve efficiency and responsiveness, enhance the delivery of services tailored to peoples' needs, support routine tasks and expand capabilities across a variety of justice domains⁸. However, the use of AI in legal processes raises several risks and concerns that can undermine the principles of natural justice. In particular, it has been observed that algorithmic biases and concerns over transparency, accountability and due process can hinder effective access to justice⁹. In light of these challenges, it is imperative to uphold natural justice in AI legal processes.

This paper examines the need to uphold natural justice in AI legal processes. The paper observes that natural justice is a fundamental concept in legal processes since it ensures fairness and avoidance of bias in justice systems towards human rights. Despite AI playing a key role in improving legal processes, the paper observes that it can violate the principles of natural justice if not appropriately and ethically harnessed. The paper discusses how the integration of AI into legal processes can undermine natural justice. In light of this concern, the paper argues that it is imperative to integrate natural justice into AI legal processes in order to protect human rights. In order to realise this dream, the paper discusses how the right to a fair hearing, review and appeal can be maintained in AI legal processes.

⁴ International Bar Association., 'The Future is Now: Artificial Intelligence and the Legal Profession' Available at <https://www.ibanet.org/document?id=The-future-is-now-AI-and-the-legal-profession-report#:~:text=5-,Foreword,of%20the%20rule%20of%20law>. (Accessed on 29/04/2026)

⁵ Kumtepe. C., 'A Brief Introduction to Blockchain Dispute Resolution.' *John Marshall Law Journal*, Volume 14, No. 2 (2021)

⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'AI in Justice Administration and Access to Justice' Available at https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/06/governing-with-artificial-intelligence_398fa287/full-report/ai-in-justice-administration-and-access-to-justice_f0cbe651.html (Accessed on 29/04/2026)

⁷ Artificial Intelligence in Court Rooms., Available at <https://www.clio.com/resources/ai-for-lawyers/ai-in-courtrooms/> (Accessed on 29/04/2026)

⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'AI in Justice Administration and Access to Justice' Op Cit

⁹ Ibid

2.0 Impact of Artificial Intelligence Legal Processes on Natural Justice

Natural justice is a concept that governs fairness in legal and administrative processes. This concept is founded on two fundamental concepts: rule against bias (*nemo iudex in causa sua*)¹⁰; and the right to a fair hearing (*audi alteram partem*)¹¹. It has been observed that the principle of *nemo iudex in causa sua* (no person ought to judge their own cause) prevents a judge or a holder of public office from deciding a matter on which they have a conflicting interest¹². This principle seeks to avoid bias by ensuring accuracy, impartiality and public confidence in decision-making processes¹³. On the other hand, the principle of *audi alteram partem*, safeguards access to justice by ensuring the right to a fair hearing for all parties¹⁴. According to this principle, no person can be condemned or punished without being given a fair opportunity to be heard¹⁵. The principle of *audi alteram partem* covers not only those formally joined in legal proceedings but also third parties whose rights may be affected¹⁶.

The concept of natural justice is therefore fundamental in ensuring access to justice. Natural justice comprises the duty to give every person a fair hearing¹⁷; the duty to ensure that a matter is decided by someone who is impartial¹⁸; and the duty to allow an appeal against a decision¹⁹. It has been observed that the principles of natural justice ensure fairness of legal and administrative processes, protection of fundamental rights and freedoms and respect for the rule of law²⁰. The principles of natural justice safeguard individuals against arbitrary and biased administrative decisions thus protecting fundamental rights and freedoms and promoting public trust and confidence in decision-making processes²¹.

With AI being widely adopted in legal processes, there is a risk that it could undermine the principles of natural justice without adequate safeguards. For example, it has been observed that AI can worsen existing biases in the justice system, particularly regarding race, sex or socioeconomic status²². Since AI models are only as accurate and non-biased as the data they are trained on, biased AI systems can lead to unjust outcomes which violate human rights²³. It has been correctly noted that given AI tools and systems rely

¹⁰ Principles of Natural Justice., Available at <https://blog.iplayers.in/natural-justice/> (Accessed on 29/04/2026)

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Moussa. M., 'Expanding the Nemo Judex Rule: Reflections on Non-Pecuniary Bias' Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10854681.2025.2503651#d1e81> (Accessed on 29/04/2026)

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Injunctive Relief and the Audi Alteram Partem Principle., Available at <https://www.legal500.com/developments/thought-leadership/injunctive-relief-and-the-audi-alteram-partem-principle/> (Accessed on 29/04/2026)

¹⁵ Principles of Natural Justice., Op Cit

¹⁶ Injunctive Relief and the Audi Alteram Partem Principle., Op Cit

¹⁷ Natural Justice Definition., Available at <https://www.lexisnexis.co.uk/legal/glossary/natural-justice> (Accessed on 29/04/2026)

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Principles of Natural Justice., Op Cit

²¹ Iqbal. S., 'The Principle of Natural Justice in Administrative Law' *International Journal of Law and Policy.*, 3 (9): 50-65

²² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'AI in Justice Administration and Access to Justice' Op Cit

²³ Artificial Intelligence in Court Rooms., Op Cit

on data to generate predictions and recommendations, algorithms trained on biased data sets can perpetuate discrimination leading to unjust outcomes²⁴. The use of biased data sets especially in criminal justice has produced skewed and unjust results, such as in certain aspects relating to bail and parole and at sentencing with disproportionate impacts on marginalised groups including people of colour²⁵. Algorithmic biases in AI can therefore undermine the rule against bias (*nemo iudex in causa sua*).

In addition, use of AI in legal processes can violate the right to a fair hearing. The concept of natural justice envisions transparent and accountable decision-making processes and due process requirements including the right to a fair hearing²⁶. However, it has been observed that the use of AI in legal processes makes it difficult to understand how legal decisions are made which undermines the fundamental tenets of fair hearing including transparency, accountability and due process²⁷. Ensuring fair hearing in AI legal processes is therefore important towards upholding the principles of natural justice.

3.0 Maintaining the Right to a Fair Hearing, Review and Appeal in Artificial Intelligence Legal Processes

AI provides numerous benefits towards enhancing access to justice. It is being widely integrated into legal processes for accessibility, resilience, speed, efficiency and effectiveness²⁸. However, without proper safeguards, the adoption of AI in legal processes can violate the principles of natural justice. In particular, natural justice seeks to avoid bias in decision-making processes and ensure every person is granted the right to a fair hearing²⁹. However, algorithmic biases and inadequate transparency, accountability and due process mechanisms in AI violate the fundamental tenets of natural justice³⁰.

It is therefore imperative to inculcate the principles of natural justice in AI legal processes in order to ensure fairness, transparency, accountability, due process and non-discrimination for enhanced access to justice. In particular, it is imperative to avoid algorithmic biases in AI legal processes including through training AI systems on accurate, inclusive and fair data sets³¹. This is vital towards preventing AI from perpetuating existing biases in justice systems, particularly regarding race, gender socioeconomic status³². In addition, conducting regular AI audits and fostering human oversight is necessary towards detecting and

²⁴ American Bar Association., 'Access to Justice 2.0: How AI-powered software can bridge the gap' Available at <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/journal/articles/2025/access-to-justice-how-ai-powered-software-can-bridge-the-gap/> (Accessed on 29/04/2026)

²⁵ Kondapalli. P et al., 'A Literature Review: Bias Detection and Mitigation in Criminal Justice' *Eng. Proc.* 2025, 107(1), 72; <https://doi.org/10.3390/engproc2025107072> (Accessed on 29/04/2026)

²⁶ Iqbal. S., 'The Principle of Natural Justice in Administrative Law' Op Cit

²⁷ Burgess. P., 'AI and the Rule of Law' Available at <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/ai-and-the-rule-of-law-9781509963171/> (Accessed on 29/04/2026)

²⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'Governing with Artificial Intelligence' Op Cit

²⁹ Principles of Natural Justice., Op Cit

³⁰ Burgess. P., 'AI and the Rule of Law' Op Cit

³¹ Simshaw. D., 'Interoperable Legal AI for Access to Justice' *The Yale Law Journal*, Volume 134, 2025

³² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'AI in Justice Administration and Access to Justice' Op Cit

tackling biases in order to avoid unfair and unjust outcomes³³. Through this it is possible to incorporate natural justice into AI legal processes by complying with the rule against bias (*nemo iudex in causa sua*).

Further, it is vital to maintain the right to a fair hearing (*audi alteram partem*) in AI legal processes towards upholding natural justice. In order to achieve this goal, there is need to adopt AI tools that explain the rationale behind their output and decisions for transparency, accountability and fairness³⁴. In addition, when deploying AI tools in legal processes, courts and tribunals have been urged to assess the implications of AI systems for procedural fairness throughout the AI system's life cycle and prevent deployments that breach this fundamental right³⁵. Further, when AI tools are used in legal decision-making processes, informing parties on why such tools were adopted, how they were utilised and the data relied on is key towards ensuring transparency and procedural fairness³⁶.

Giving parties affected by AI decision-making in legal processes a chance for review and appeal is also important towards upholding the tenets of natural justice. It has been argued that the ability to review and appeal decisions is both an ethical and legal principle when utilising AI in legal processes in order to avoid arbitrariness, bias, unfair and unjust outcomes³⁷. It has been observed that those affected by automated decisions through AI legal processes should have access to remedies such as human review or judicial appeal processes in order to contest and seek redress for decisions that are unfair, biased, unjust and violate human rights³⁸. Consequently, when utilising AI in legal processes, it is crucial to maintain the right to review and appeal in order to uphold natural justice.

4.0 Conclusion

With AI being increasingly adopted in legal processes, it is imperative to ensure that it is harnessed in an ethical and appropriate manner in line with the principles of natural justice. This involves avoiding algorithmic bias through inclusive, fair and accurate data sets, and ensuring regular audits and human oversight in order to detect and address biases³⁹. Further, it is imperative to maintain the right to a fair hearing when harnessing AI in legal processes through transparency, explainability and accountability⁴⁰. Giving parties affected by AI decision-making in legal processes an avenue for review and appeal is also necessary in order to enable them challenge and seek redress for decisions that are unfair, discriminatory, biased, unjust and violate human rights⁴¹. Inculcating the principles of natural justice in AI legal processes is a relevant ideal towards strengthening access to justice in the age of technology. It is imperative to maintain the right to a fair hearing, review and appeal in order to achieve this dream.

³³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization., 'Guidelines for the use of AI systems in courts and tribunals' Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000396582> (Accessed on 30/04/2026)

³⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization., 'Guidelines for the use of AI systems in courts and tribunals' Op Cit

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ability to Appeal., Available at <https://aiethicslab.rutgers.edu/e-floating-buttons/ability-to-appeal/> (Accessed on 30/04/2026)

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization., 'Guidelines for the use of AI systems in courts and tribunals' Op Cit

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Ability to Appeal., Op Cit

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