



**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW REVIEW**

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Volume 4 | Issue 1

Art. 12

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**2025**

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**Recommended Citation**

Abishanth B. S and Jyotirmoy Banerjee, *A Study of Emerging Legal and Ethical Issues of Governing Artificial Intelligence*, 4 IJHRLR 157-172 (2025).  
Available at [www.humanrightlawreview.in/archives/](http://www.humanrightlawreview.in/archives/).

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# A Study of Emerging Legal and Ethical Issues of Governing Artificial Intelligence

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**Manuscript Received**  
04 Jan. 2025

**Manuscript Accepted**  
06 Jan. 2025

**Manuscript Published**  
08 Jan. 2025

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## ABSTRACT

*The rapid evolution of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies has sparked extensive discussions about the legal and ethical complexities involved in governing these transformative innovations. With AI systems becoming increasingly autonomous and integrated across diverse sectors such as healthcare, finance, education, and transportation, governments and legal institutions are under mounting pressure to develop regulatory frameworks that uphold core values such as human rights, fairness, accountability, and transparency. The growing reliance on AI raises critical questions about liability in cases of malfunction, breaches of privacy, and the perpetuation of bias and discrimination, making the governance of AI a pressing global concern. This study delves into the emerging legal and ethical issues surrounding AI governance, with a focus on key challenges such as determining liability in the context of autonomous systems, protecting individual privacy in an era of pervasive data collection, mitigating algorithmic bias and discrimination, and establishing clear accountability for decisions made by AI systems. Drawing on a combination of legal analysis and ethical theories, this research identifies significant gaps in existing regulatory frameworks and offers actionable insights for addressing them. By examining current global regulatory approaches, this paper highlights the need for harmonized international collaborations to address cross-border implications of AI. It emphasizes the importance of ethical guidelines tailored to the unique challenges posed by AI technologies and the necessity of adaptive legal mechanisms that can evolve alongside rapid technological advancements. Additionally, the research*

*advocates for proactive measures, such as public-private partnerships, robust oversight mechanisms, and interdisciplinary dialogue, to ensure responsible AI deployment. Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing discourse on AI governance by proposing a balanced approach that fosters technological innovation while safeguarding societal well-being. It underscores the critical role of lawmakers, policymakers, and industry leaders in crafting forward-looking regulations that mitigate risks, promote equity, and enhance public trust in AI systems.*

## **KEYWORDS**

*Artificial Intelligence, Legal Issues, Ethical Issues, AI Governance, Regulation, Accountability.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has witnessed exponential growth over the past few decades, transforming a wide range of industries from healthcare to finance, transportation to law enforcement. AI's ability to process vast amounts of data and perform complex tasks autonomously has revolutionized how businesses operate and how services are delivered. The growing reliance on algorithms for decision-making, automation, and optimization has made AI a critical driver of economic and technological advancement. However, as AI technologies continue to evolve and integrate into more aspects of daily life, they also bring with them a host of legal and ethical challenges that require urgent and thoughtful attention. These challenges are not only technical but also have profound social, moral, and legal implications that society must grapple with.

At the core of these challenges are questions about liability in the event of harm caused by AI systems, the protection of privacy in AI-based data processing, the mitigation of bias and discrimination in AI algorithms, and the accountability of both the systems themselves and their creators. As AI systems become more autonomous and sophisticated, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine who should be held responsible when something goes wrong. For example, if an AI-driven vehicle causes an accident, should the liability fall on the manufacturer, the developer of the AI, or even the user of the system? These are not merely theoretical concerns but are issues that have already surfaced in real-world legal contexts, demanding a reevaluation of existing legal frameworks.

The ethical implications of AI are equally pressing. While AI has

the potential to improve lives in significant ways, there are risks associated with its widespread use, including the reinforcement of societal biases, violations of privacy, and the displacement of workers due to automation. AI algorithms, for instance, can inadvertently perpetuate bias if the data they are trained on reflects historical inequalities or prejudices. This has raised concerns, particularly in sectors like criminal justice, hiring practices, and healthcare, where biased algorithms can result in discrimination against certain groups of people, exacerbating existing inequalities. Therefore, it is essential to address these ethical concerns and ensure that AI is developed and deployed in a manner that aligns with societal values, such as fairness, justice, and transparency.

The research problem addressed in this paper revolves around understanding the emerging legal and ethical issues surrounding AI technologies, particularly as they relate to governance. With the rapid advancement of AI capabilities, it is essential to ensure that the development and implementation of these technologies do not outpace the development of appropriate legal and ethical frameworks. The central question of this paper is how can AI developments be aligned with the values of society while addressing the associated risks? This research aims to explore this question by analyzing current legal frameworks, examining ethical concerns, and suggesting pathways for the development of robust governance systems.

The objectives of this paper are threefold: to explore the current legal frameworks surrounding AI, to examine the ethical implications of AI deployment, and to suggest avenues for the development of more comprehensive and effective AI governance. By analyzing contemporary legal cases, ethical theories, and policy proposals, this paper seeks to uncover the complexities of AI governance and propose solutions that balance innovation with responsibility.

The scope of this paper is primarily focused on the legal and ethical issues surrounding AI governance, with a particular emphasis on the challenges arising from AI autonomy, privacy concerns, bias, and accountability. The paper will also highlight the role of international governance in AI regulation, given that AI technologies often transcend national boundaries and require coordinated efforts to ensure consistency in regulation. Drawing upon case studies, legal precedents, and ethical frameworks, this research will provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of AI governance and explore avenues for addressing its challenges.

In recent years, various jurisdictions have begun to introduce

laws and regulations aimed at addressing the unique challenges posed by AI. These include data protection regulations such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which has set a precedent for privacy protection in AI systems. However, gaps remain in how AI systems should be held accountable for their actions, especially in situations where the technology operates autonomously or where its decisions are influenced by data that may not be transparent or understandable to human actors. Furthermore, the regulation of AI must also account for the growing impact of automation on employment, as certain sectors may face disruption due to the widespread implementation of AI-driven technologies.

This paper will also consider the various ethical frameworks that inform AI governance, examining how principles such as justice, fairness, and autonomy should guide the development and use of AI. By analyzing both the legal and ethical dimensions of AI, this research aims to provide a holistic perspective on how to approach AI governance, emphasizing the need for interdisciplinary collaboration between legal professionals, ethicists, policymakers, and technologists.

The continued growth and integration of AI into society presents an unprecedented opportunity to enhance human capabilities and improve living standards. However, this technological revolution also raises fundamental questions about how to ensure that AI systems operate in a manner that aligns with societal values and interests. As such, addressing the legal and ethical challenges posed by AI is critical to ensuring that its benefits are realized while minimizing its potential risks. This paper aims to contribute to this important conversation by exploring the current landscape of AI governance, examining the key issues at stake, and proposing solutions to guide the responsible development and deployment of AI technologies.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a rapidly growing area of academic inquiry, with scholars from various disciplines engaging in discussions about the complex legal, ethical, and regulatory challenges posed by this transformative technology. The existing literature focuses on a broad range of issues, from the potential for AI to perpetuate discrimination due to biased data and algorithms, to the privacy concerns surrounding the large-scale collection and processing of personal data, and the difficulty of assigning liability when AI systems cause harm.

One of the earliest and most cited studies in this field is by Calo (2015), who emphasizes the critical need for transparency and

accountability in AI regulation. Calo argues that AI developers should be mandated to disclose the decision-making processes of their algorithms to ensure that these systems operate in a manner that is understandable and explainable to the public and regulators. This transparency, Calo suggests, is essential to address ethical issues such as bias and discrimination.

By understanding how AI systems make decisions, stakeholders can evaluate whether these decisions are being influenced by unfair or discriminatory patterns. This approach to AI governance aims to ensure that AI systems are developed with fairness and equity in mind, protecting against outcomes that could harm marginalized groups.

Further extending the conversation, Bryson et al. (2017) delve into the ethical dilemmas surrounding AI, particularly in the context of privacy and human rights. They stress the importance of ethical standards in the development and deployment of AI systems, advocating for robust regulatory frameworks that safeguard individuals from potential harm. Their work highlights the need for strict ethical guidelines that place human rights and privacy at the forefront of AI development. Bryson and her colleagues argue that AI systems should be designed to respect the autonomy and dignity of individuals, ensuring that they are not subjected to undue surveillance, manipulation, or exploitation.

Another significant area of focus in the literature is the challenge of assigning legal responsibility when AI systems cause harm. Traditional legal systems are often ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of AI, particularly when it comes to determining liability. As AI systems become increasingly autonomous, it becomes more difficult to pinpoint who is responsible when something goes wrong. A key question in the literature is whether liability should fall on the developers, users, or even the AI systems themselves. Scholars like Gurney (2017) and Goodall (2014) have explored the possibility of treating AI as a legal entity, suggesting that autonomous systems could be held accountable in the same way that corporations or individuals are. This approach, however, raises significant legal and ethical questions, as it challenges traditional notions of responsibility and accountability.

Despite the significant contributions made by these scholars, a noticeable gap remains in the literature concerning the legal frameworks capable of keeping pace with the rapid evolution of AI technology. Many studies have pointed out the inadequacies of existing legal structures in addressing the complexities of AI, particularly in the areas of accountability and liability. As AI systems become more autonomous and integrated into critical

decision-making processes, the question of who is responsible when these systems cause harm becomes more pressing. Scholars like Citron (2014) and Zarsky (2016) have called for a more comprehensive rethinking of legal frameworks, suggesting that current laws, which were designed for human decision-makers, are inadequate for regulating AI. They argue that existing legal structures must be updated to incorporate the unique challenges posed by AI, such as the opacity of algorithmic decision-making and the difficulty of tracing responsibility in autonomous systems.

One of the most pressing concerns in AI governance is the potential for discrimination and bias embedded in AI systems. Numerous studies have shown that AI algorithms can perpetuate or even exacerbate existing biases in society. For instance, a well-known study by Angwin et al. (2016) revealed that a criminal risk-assessment algorithm used in the United States was biased against African American defendants, disproportionately predicting that they would reoffend. Similarly, AI systems used in hiring processes, credit scoring, and healthcare have been shown to reproduce existing social and economic inequalities. These findings underscore the need for AI governance frameworks that prioritize fairness and ensure that AI systems do not inadvertently perpetuate or amplify discrimination.

Furthermore, the rapid growth of AI technologies has raised concerns about privacy. AI systems often rely on vast amounts of personal data to function effectively, raising questions about how this data is collected, stored, and used. The literature on AI privacy issues highlights the tension between the benefits of AI and the potential risks to individuals' privacy rights. Researchers like Tufekci (2015) and Zuboff (2019) have written extensively on the implications of AI for privacy, arguing that current data protection laws may not be sufficient to address the risks posed by AI's data-hungry nature. The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has been a significant step in addressing these concerns, but scholars argue that more comprehensive and globally consistent privacy laws are needed to ensure that AI respects individuals' privacy and autonomy.

While significant strides have been made in academic research on AI governance, there remain substantial gaps in addressing the legal and ethical challenges posed by this rapidly evolving technology. Scholars have made important contributions to our understanding of the potential risks and harms associated with AI, but the need for more robust legal frameworks and ethical guidelines remains urgent. As AI continues to advance and become more integrated into various sectors of society, it is essential that legal scholars, ethicists, policymakers, and technologists collaborate to develop governance structures that

can effectively address these challenges.

## **LEGAL CHALLENGES IN AI GOVERNANCE**

The increasing prevalence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems across various sectors, including healthcare, transportation, finance, and law enforcement, presents significant legal challenges that demand urgent attention. These challenges, which range from questions of liability to data protection concerns, require legal frameworks to evolve in order to address the complexities and potential risks associated with AI deployment. The following sections examine some of the most pressing legal issues in AI governance.

### ***Liability and Accountability***

One of the most pressing legal challenges in AI governance is determining responsibility when an AI system causes harm. Traditional legal systems have well-established principles for assigning liability to human actors or entities, such as manufacturers or service providers, in cases of harm. However, as AI systems become more autonomous and complex, this becomes increasingly difficult. For instance, in the case of self-driving cars, if an autonomous vehicle is involved in an accident, should the responsibility fall on the manufacturer of the car, the developer of the AI algorithm, or the owner of the vehicle? Similarly, when AI algorithms are used in hiring decisions, credit scoring, or law enforcement, and those algorithms lead to wrongful discrimination or other harms, questions arise about who is accountable for these outcomes.

Legal frameworks must evolve to address the shifting responsibility from human actors to machines and their developers. Current laws, particularly those that pertain to negligence and liability, are often inadequate in addressing AI-related harm, as they were designed with human actors in mind. Some scholars argue that AI systems should be treated as legal entities, while others propose that developers, manufacturers, or users should be held accountable for the actions of AI systems. The complexity of AI's decision-making processes further complicates these issues, making it necessary to develop new frameworks for establishing liability and accountability in AI-related incidents.

### ***Intellectual Property and AI Innovations***

Another significant legal issue related to AI is the ownership of intellectual property (IP) generated by AI systems. AI is increasingly being used to create innovations, such as works of



art, inventions, and scientific discoveries. As AI becomes more capable of generating original content, the question of who owns the rights to this content becomes increasingly important. Should intellectual property rights belong to the developer who created the AI system, the user who deployed it, or the AI system itself?

Current intellectual property laws were designed for human creators and do not clearly account for AI's role in the creative process. In most jurisdictions, IP laws grant ownership rights to the human creator or entity responsible for the creation. However, these laws do not explicitly address the situation in which an AI system independently generates a work. Legal scholars have debated whether AI-generated works should be considered public domain or whether new categories of IP ownership should be established for AI-created innovations. This issue is particularly relevant in industries such as art, music, and technology, where AI-driven creativity is becoming more prevalent.

### ***Data Protection and Privacy***

AI systems rely on vast amounts of data to function effectively, and this often includes sensitive personal information. This creates significant privacy risks, particularly in light of growing concerns about data misuse and surveillance. AI's ability to process and analyze large datasets can lead to the creation of detailed profiles of individuals, raising questions about the boundaries of data collection and the potential for violations of privacy.

Existing data protection laws, such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), have made strides in addressing privacy concerns in AI governance. GDPR establishes strict requirements for consent, data transparency, and the protection of personal data, and it gives individuals greater control over their data. However, AI technologies are evolving at a pace that outstrips the ability of current laws to address all emerging privacy concerns. For example, AI-driven facial recognition technology raises concerns about surveillance, profiling, and the potential for misuse by both private corporations and governments.

As AI technologies continue to develop, it will be necessary to continuously update and adapt data protection laws to ensure they remain effective in safeguarding privacy. Legal frameworks must address the specific risks associated with AI's data-driven nature, such as the potential for algorithmic bias, data breaches, and the erosion of personal freedoms.

### ***Ethical Issues in AI Development and Deployment***

In addition to legal challenges, the development and deployment of AI systems present significant ethical concerns. These concerns are critical to ensuring that AI technologies are used in ways that benefit society while minimizing harm. The following sections explore some of the key ethical issues in AI.

### ***Bias and Discrimination***

One of the most significant ethical challenges in AI is the potential for AI algorithms to perpetuate or even exacerbate existing biases in society. AI systems are often trained on large datasets, which can include biased or incomplete data. When these systems are deployed in real-world scenarios, they may make decisions that reflect these biases. For instance, facial recognition systems have been shown to exhibit racial and gender biases, and AI algorithms used in hiring and lending decisions have been criticized for discriminating against women and minority groups.

The ethical implications of biased AI systems are profound, as they can reinforce societal inequalities and disproportionately impact vulnerable groups. The deployment of biased AI algorithms in critical areas such as hiring, healthcare, and law enforcement can result in unfair treatment and discrimination. To address these ethical concerns, AI developers must implement strategies to ensure fairness in their algorithms, such as using diverse training data, conducting regular audits, and making their decision-making processes transparent.

### ***Transparency and Accountability***

Another key ethical issue in AI development is the lack of transparency in many AI systems. Many AI algorithms, particularly those based on deep learning, operate as "black boxes," meaning that their decision-making processes are not easily understandable by humans. This lack of transparency raises concerns about accountability, particularly when AI systems make decisions that affect individuals' lives, such as in the context of healthcare, criminal justice, or finance.

Ethical frameworks for AI emphasize the importance of transparency to ensure that AI systems make fair and justifiable decisions. Developers must create AI systems that are explainable and understandable, enabling both users and regulators to evaluate the fairness of decisions. Ethical guidelines should also stress the importance of accountability, ensuring that AI systems are subject to oversight and that developers and users are held responsible for their actions.

### ***Autonomy and Human Oversight***

As AI systems become more autonomous, the ethical dilemma of human oversight becomes increasingly important. Many AI systems are designed to operate with minimal human intervention, and in some cases, they can make decisions without direct human input. While this autonomy offers benefits, such as increased efficiency and accuracy, it also raises concerns about the potential risks associated with reduced human oversight.

The ethical question arises: should AI systems be allowed to make critical decisions independently, or should there always be a human in the loop to ensure accountability? For example, in autonomous weapons systems or healthcare decision-making, the consequences of AI's decisions could be catastrophic if they are not adequately supervised. Ethical frameworks must address these concerns and emphasize the need for human oversight in areas where AI could cause significant harm or where decisions involve complex moral considerations.

### ***International Collaboration***

The international nature of AI technology makes it crucial for countries to collaborate on creating global standards for AI governance. Organizations such as the United Nations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the European Union are already taking steps toward establishing international guidelines for AI development and deployment. However, the lack of universally accepted standards means that AI governance remains fragmented, with different countries pursuing divergent regulatory approaches.

A coordinated global approach is needed to address the cross-border implications of AI, such as data privacy, liability, and ethical concerns. International collaboration can help ensure that AI is developed and deployed in ways that are safe, ethical, and aligned with universal human rights.

## **DEVELOPING AI-SPECIFIC LEGAL FRAMEWORKS**

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents unprecedented challenges that existing legal systems are ill-equipped to address. Traditional laws, built for human-centered processes, struggle to keep pace with the unique complexities and risks posed by AI. As AI technologies continue to evolve and permeate critical sectors such as healthcare, finance, and transportation, the need for dedicated AI-specific legal frameworks becomes increasingly urgent. Such frameworks must ensure that AI systems are developed, deployed, and operated in ways that protect societal interests, uphold ethical principles, and minimize potential harms. A foundational element of these

frameworks is the establishment of clear legal definitions. To create accountability, laws must delineate the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the AI lifecycle, including developers, operators, and end-users. For instance, when autonomous systems like self-driving cars cause harm, the question of liability becomes critical. Specific provisions must address whether responsibility lies with the developer, the manufacturer, or the user. Similarly, AI systems involved in hiring, credit scoring, or healthcare decision-making require detailed guidelines to determine liability in cases of bias, discrimination, or erroneous outcomes.

Another cornerstone of AI-specific legal frameworks is the incorporation of ethical guidelines. AI technologies often operate on complex algorithms, which can inadvertently perpetuate biases, invade privacy, or lead to unfair outcomes. Governments and international organizations must develop comprehensive codes of ethics to guide AI design, deployment, and use. These codes should mandate fairness, transparency, and accountability, requiring developers to design systems capable of explaining their decisions. Algorithmic transparency is essential to ensure that AI systems are not "black boxes" whose decisions cannot be understood or challenged. Such measures would not only foster public trust but also mitigate the risks of discrimination and misuse.

To effectively regulate AI, the establishment of dedicated regulatory bodies is imperative. These bodies should oversee compliance with AI-specific laws, conduct audits, and facilitate collaboration among governments, private entities, and civil society. They could also play a pivotal role in bridging gaps between technology and law by fostering interdisciplinary research and knowledge-sharing. International cooperation is vital, given the global reach of AI technologies. Regulatory bodies must work collaboratively to harmonize laws and standards across jurisdictions, preventing loopholes and ensuring a consistent approach to governance. Data protection and privacy, core concerns in AI governance, must also be prioritized. Legal frameworks should establish stringent data usage and sharing standards, addressing issues such as consent, anonymization, and the security of personal information. This is particularly crucial in applications like healthcare, where sensitive data is often processed.

Lastly, accountability structures must be embedded into these frameworks. This involves not only holding developers and operators liable for AI-induced harms but also enabling redress mechanisms for affected individuals. For example, regulatory bodies could establish AI-specific courts or tribunals to resolve

disputes efficiently. Developing AI-specific legal frameworks is essential to manage the transformative power of AI responsibly. By addressing liability, transparency, data protection, and ethical considerations, these frameworks can strike a balance between fostering innovation and safeguarding societal interests. International collaboration and adaptive governance models will be key to ensuring that AI technologies contribute positively to the global good.

## **CONCLUSION**

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds immense potential for societal progress, but addressing its legal and ethical challenges is critical to ensure responsible use and equitable benefits.
- Existing legal frameworks are insufficient to address AI-specific complexities, such as liability, privacy concerns, bias, and accountability.
- The integration of AI into sectors like healthcare, finance, and transportation underscores the need for adaptive legal structures to manage emerging risks effectively.
- Harmonizing AI regulations across jurisdictions is essential to prevent fragmentation and promote ethical and consistent governance worldwide.
- Continuous oversight and proactive legal evolution are vital to balance innovation with safeguarding societal interests and protecting fundamental rights.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Establish clear legal definitions outlining the roles, responsibilities, and liabilities of AI developers, users, and stakeholders, particularly in complex or autonomous systems.
- Develop comprehensive ethical guidelines to address bias, discrimination, and transparency in AI, ensuring fairness and public trust.
- Promote international collaboration to harmonize AI regulations, establishing universal standards for data protection, privacy, and accountability.
- Create adaptive legal frameworks capable of evolving alongside AI technologies, ensuring timely responses to emerging risks.

- Mandate transparency and explainability in AI systems, enabling stakeholders to understand and justify AI-driven decisions.
- Introduce mechanisms for continuous monitoring and periodic auditing of AI systems, particularly in high-risk domains such as healthcare and law enforcement.
- Encourage proactive research into governance models that anticipate potential AI challenges and ensure readiness for future advancements.

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