

Online Dispute Resolution (Odr): A Paradigm Shift in Access to Justice

Dhatri Singh¹, Dr. Kalpana Devi²

¹LLM Student (ADR), Gitarattan International Business School, Indraprastha University

²Assistant Professor, Gitarattan International Business School, Indraprastha University

ABSTRACT

India's justice delivery system is at a crossroads, burdened with over 43 million pending cases (National Judicial Data Grid, 2023) and an average case lifespan of 15 years, which has rendered traditional litigation inaccessible, inefficient, and exclusionary. While Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms such as arbitration, mediation, and Lok Adalats have emerged as alternatives to courtroom litigation, they have struggled to address modern challenges like scalability, geographical barriers, and procedural delays. Against this backdrop, Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) has emerged as a transformative solution that combines ADR principles with cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and video conferencing. ODR not only facilitates dispute resolution but also promotes legal empowerment and dispute avoidance by leveraging preemptive tools like smart contracts and AI-driven compliance systems.

Globally, ODR platforms such as the EU ODR Portal, Modria, and ICANN's UDRP have proven effective in resolving high-volume disputes efficiently. In India, legislative milestones like the Information Technology Act (2000) and the Consumer Protection Act (2019) have laid the foundation for ODR adoption, while landmark judgments such as *Trimex International v. Vedanta Aluminium (2010)* have legitimized electronic agreements in arbitration. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated ODR's adoption, with initiatives like e-Lok Adalats resolving millions of cases remotely. Startups like SAMA and Presolv360 exemplify ODR's potential to resolve disputes swiftly and cost-effectively. Despite its promise, ODR faces challenges such as the digital divide, regulatory fragmentation, and lack of awareness among citizens. This paper explores ODR's evolution from ADR principles to digital innovation, analyzes global best practices, examines India's legal framework and judicial precedents, and proposes actionable strategies to overcome barriers. By addressing infrastructure gaps through initiatives like BharatNet, expanding vernacular platforms for rural accessibility, aligning laws with UNCITRAL guidelines, and fostering public awareness campaigns, India can mainstream ODR as an essential component of its justice delivery system.

Keywords: Online Dispute Resolution (ODR), Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Arbitration, Mediation, Blockchain

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian judiciary, long regarded as the protector of constitutional rights, faces a mounting crisis. With 43 million pending cases (National Judicial Data Grid, 2023) and an average case lifespan of 15 years, the system is overwhelmed, inefficient, and inaccessible for many citizens. Traditional litigation,

characterized by procedural delays, high costs, and complex formalities, has failed to deliver timely justice, especially for marginalized communities. This has necessitated a reimagining of dispute resolution mechanisms. While Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)—including mediation, arbitration, and Lok Adalats—emerged as vital alternatives to courtroom battles, systemic flaws such as geographical barriers, inconsistent implementation, and reliance on physical presence have limited its effectiveness. ADR's promise of swift and cost-effective justice often falls short in practice, with arbitration sometimes devolving into a “second appeals court system” (*Guru Nanak Foundation v. Rattan Singh*, 1981).¹ These limitations underscore the need for a more inclusive and technology-driven approach: Online Dispute Resolution (ODR).

ODR represents the evolution of ADR into the digital age. By leveraging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and video conferencing, ODR facilitates negotiation, mediation, and arbitration entirely online. It transcends traditional dispute resolution by fostering legal empowerment through preemptive tools like AI-driven compliance systems and ensuring dispute avoidance via smart contracts. Globally, platforms like eBay (resolving 60 million annual buyer-seller disputes through automated negotiation) and ICANN's Uniform Domain-Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) have demonstrated ODR's scalability and efficiency in addressing high-volume disputes. In India, legislative milestones such as the Information Technology Act (2000)—which validated electronic records—and the Consumer Protection Act (2019)—mandating e-commerce platforms to adopt ODR—have laid the groundwork for its adoption.

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst for ODR's growth in India. Courts turned to virtual hearings to avoid systemic collapse during lockdowns. Initiatives like e-Lok Adalats, which resolved millions of cases remotely, showcased ODR's potential to deliver justice outside physical courtrooms. Startups such as SAMA and Presolv360 have leveraged AI to resolve commercial and consumer disputes within weeks rather than years. Landmark judgments like *Trimex International v. Vedanta Aluminium* (2010), which upheld email-based arbitration agreements under Section 7 of the Arbitration Act, further legitimized ODR's legal framework.

Despite its promise, ODR faces significant challenges in India. The digital divide remains a critical barrier: only 45% of Indians have internet access, with rural connectivity lagging at just 17% (Oxfam, 2022). Additionally, a lack of awareness hinders adoption; surveys show that 70% of consumers are unaware of ODR mechanisms (CUTS International, 2022).² Regulatory fragmentation further complicates implementation; scattered provisions across the IT Act, Arbitration Act, and Civil Procedure Code create ambiguity. A dedicated National ODR Act, aligned with UNCITRAL guidelines for cross-border disputes, is urgently needed to standardize procedures and ensure enforceability.

To harness ODR's transformative potential fully, India must bridge infrastructure gaps through initiatives like BharatNet to expand rural connectivity and establish vernacular ODR platforms accessible in regional languages. Training programs to develop skilled mediators and arbitrators are essential; NITI Aayog's vision includes training 10,000 practitioners by 2025.³ Public-private partnerships modeled on

¹ Singh, Ratan. "ODR PPT." Construction Industry Arbitration Council, April 2018. <http://www.ciac.in/april2018/ODR%20PPT%20-%20Mr%20Ratan%20Singh.pdf>

² Sharma, Aditya. "Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) in India." International Journal of Law and Social Issues 1, no. 1 (2021). <https://ijlsi.com/wp-content/uploads/Online-Dispute-Resolution-ODR-in-India.pdf>.

³ NITI Aayog. "Designing The Future of Dispute Resolution: The ODR Policy Plan for India." March 2023. <https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-03/Designing-The-Future-of-Dispute-Resolution-The-ODR-Policy-Plan-for-India.pdf>.

Rajasthan's e-Mitra kiosks can democratize access to justice at the grassroots level. Awareness campaigns led by ASHA workers and NGOs can educate citizens about ODR's benefits while fostering trust in digital processes.

As Justice D.Y. Chandrachud aptly noted: "*The future of justice lies not in more courtrooms but in better technology.*" ODR is not merely an alternative but an essential evolution—a paradigm shift toward making justice swift, affordable, and inclusive for India's 1.4 billion citizens. This paper explores ODR's journey from ADR principles to digital innovation while analyzing global best practices and proposing actionable strategies to transform this vision into reality.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: FROM ADR TO ODR

2.1 The Rise of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

The limitations of traditional litigation—protracted timelines, exorbitant costs, and adversarial rigidity—catalyzed the global adoption of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the 20th century. In India, the Arbitration Act, 1940, introduced arbitration as a formal dispute resolution mechanism but suffered from systemic inefficiencies, including prolonged proceedings and judicial interference. The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, modeled on the UNCITRAL Model Law, marked a paradigm shift by institutionalizing arbitration and mediation.⁴ This Act emphasized party autonomy, minimal court intervention, and enforceability of awards, aligning India's ADR framework with international standards. Landmark cases like *Guru Nanak Foundation v. Rattan Singh* (1981) highlighted systemic flaws, with the Supreme Court lamenting that arbitration had devolved into a "second appeals court system" due to excessive delays. This critique underscored the need for reforms to restore ADR's original purpose: delivering swift, cost-effective justice. Over time, ADR expanded to include mediation, conciliation, and Lok Adalats, setting the stage for ODR's evolution by fostering a culture of out-of-court settlements.

2.2 Digital Revolution and Birth of ODR

The 1990s digital revolution, marked by the internet's rise and e-commerce expansion, created novel disputes in cyberspace, intellectual property, and cross-border transactions that traditional ADR struggled to address. This gap birthed Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)—termed "ADR 2.0"—which integrated negotiation, mediation, and arbitration with digital tools like AI and blockchain. Pioneers like eBay (1995) resolved 60 million annual disputes through automated negotiation, demonstrating ODR's scalability. SquareTrade (1999), the first dedicated ODR platform, handled 2 million disputes by 2004, while ICANN's Uniform Domain-Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) streamlined domain name conflicts globally. These platforms proved that technology could resolve high-volume, low-value disputes efficiently, bypassing geographical barriers. ODR's emergence signaled a shift from merely resolving disputes to preventing them through preemptive legal tech tools, such as smart contracts and AI-driven compliance systems.⁵ This era laid the foundation for today's ODR ecosystem, blending ADR principles with cutting-edge technology.

2.3 ODR in India: Early Steps

India's ODR journey began with the Information Technology Act, 2000, which validated electronic reco-

⁴ Legal 500. "Resolving Disputes Virtually: An Analysis of Position in India." Accessed [Date]. <https://www.legal500.com/developments/thought-leadership/resolving-disputes-virtually-an-analysis-of-position-in-india/>.

⁵ Schmitz, Amy J. "Expanding Access to Remedies through E-Court Initiatives." *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy* 67 (2022): 65-128. https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2166&context=law_journal_law_policy.

rds and digital signatures, providing a legal basis for virtual proceedings. The judiciary further catalyzed ODR adoption through the *Salem Advocate Bar Association v. Union of India* (2005) judgment, which mandated courts to refer disputes to ADR under Section 89 of the Civil Procedure Code (CPC). This ruling indirectly encouraged digitizing ADR mechanisms, as seen in e-Lok Adalats that resolved 10 million cases during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶ Legislative amendments, including the 2015 and 2019 revisions to the Arbitration Act, introduced time-bound arbitrations (12–18 months) and institutional arbitration, fostering ODR-friendly policies. Startups like SAMA and Presolv360 emerged, offering AI-driven platforms for consumer and commercial disputes. However, challenges like low digital literacy and fragmented regulations hindered growth. Despite this, India's early steps—combining legislative foresight, judicial advocacy, and tech innovation—positioned ODR as a critical tool for achieving the constitutional promise of accessible justice.

3. INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON ODR

3.1 Global ODR Models

The European Union (EU) has been a pioneer in ODR with its EU ODR Platform (2016), which is mandatory for e-commerce businesses to resolve cross-border consumer disputes. Handling over 80,000 cases annually, the platform connects consumers and traders with ADR entities, ensuring efficient resolution. Additionally, AI-driven mediation platforms like IMI employ chatbots to facilitate preliminary negotiations, reducing human intervention and expediting settlements. In the United States, platforms like Modria are used by courts in Utah and Ohio to resolve small claims, reducing case backlogs by 30%. Similarly, the American Arbitration Association's (AAA) WebFile handles over 200,000 commercial disputes annually through online arbitration. In Canada, the Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT) resolves strata, small claims, and motor vehicle injury disputes with a 95% online participation rate, showcasing the efficacy of virtual dispute resolution. Meanwhile, Singapore's SIAC ODR Initiative integrates AI for document analysis in cross-border disputes, ensuring faster and more accurate resolutions. These global models demonstrate how ODR can address jurisdictional challenges and provide cost-effective solutions for diverse disputes.

3.2 Key Trends and Innovations

ODR is evolving rapidly with innovations like AI and automation, which enhance efficiency by resolving disputes in hours instead of months. Platforms like DoNotPay use chatbots to handle parking tickets and insurance claims, offering real-time suggestions during negotiations. Another transformative trend is blockchain arbitration, where platforms like Kleros use decentralized juries to resolve crypto-related disputes transparently and securely. Blockchain also ensures tamper-proof records of proceedings, enhancing trust in ODR systems. Additionally, hybrid models, such as the UK's Money Claim Online, combine AI-driven negotiation with human mediation for complex cases, ensuring flexibility and fairness. These advancements make ODR faster, impartial, and accessible across borders while addressing traditional ADR limitations. However, challenges like algorithmic bias and data security require careful regulation to maximize these technologies' potential in dispute resolution.

3.3 UNCITRAL's Role

The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) has played a pivotal role in standardizing ODR practices globally. Its Technical Notes on Online Dispute Resolution (2016) provide

⁶ Sharma, Aditya. "Online Dispute Resolution: An Indian Perspective." International Journal of Law Management & Humanities. Accessed [Date]. <https://ijlmh.com/online-dispute-resolution-an-indian-perspective/>.

a framework for resolving cross-border e-commerce disputes efficiently and securely without physical hearings.⁷ The notes emphasize principles like impartiality, transparency, efficiency, and data security while outlining three key stages: negotiation, mediation, and arbitration. Although non-binding, these guidelines have influenced laws in over 50 countries by encouraging the adoption of technology-driven dispute resolution systems tailored to low-value cross-border sales or service contracts. UNCITRAL's initiative underscores the importance of developing accessible ODR platforms that cater to both developed and developing economies while addressing issues like enforceability and neutrality in international disputes. This global framework has significantly advanced ODR adoption worldwide.

4. INDIAN PERSPECTIVE ON ODR: LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND CHALLENGES

India's journey toward institutionalizing Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) reflects a blend of legislative foresight, policy innovation, and persistent systemic challenges. The legal framework for ODR in India is anchored in three key statutes: the Information Technology Act, 2000, the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, and the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. The IT Act serves as the cornerstone, with Sections 4–5 validating electronic agreements and digital signatures, while Section 65B of the Indian Evidence Act ensures the admissibility of digital evidence in courts. These provisions have been pivotal in legitimizing virtual proceedings, as seen in cases like *Trimex International v. Vedanta Aluminium (2010)*, where the Supreme Court upheld the enforceability of arbitration agreements concluded via email under Section 7 of the Arbitration Act. The 2019 amendments to the Arbitration Act further bolstered ODR by mandating time-bound arbitral awards (within 12 months) and promoting institutional arbitration,⁸ thereby aligning India's dispute resolution mechanisms with global standards. Complementing this, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 mandates e-commerce platforms to adopt ODR under Section 94(1)(g), ensuring consumer grievances are resolved swiftly through digital channels.

On the policy front, NITI Aayog's ODR Policy Plan (2023) proposes a transformative three-tiered ecosystem to scale dispute resolution. Tier 1 focuses on AI-driven negotiation for low-value disputes (e.g., e-commerce refunds), Tier 2 employs human-assisted mediation for complex cases (e.g., contractual disagreements), and Tier 3 utilizes arbitration with enforceable awards for high-stakes commercial disputes. This framework aims to integrate technology at every stage, from dispute avoidance to resolution. Simultaneously, the Digital India Mission⁹ seeks to bridge infrastructure gaps by connecting 250,000 gram panchayats with high-speed broadband by 2025, a critical step given that rural areas account for 65% of India's population but face severe connectivity deficits. Initiatives like BharatNet and proposals for ODR kiosks in villages aim to democratize access, ensuring marginalized communities benefit from digital justice mechanisms.

However, India's ODR ambitions face formidable challenges. The digital divide remains a glaring obstacle: only 45% of Indians have internet access (ITU, 2023), with rural connectivity lagging at 17% (Oxfam, 2022). This disparity is exacerbated by low digital literacy—38% of households lack basic skills

⁷ NITI Aayog. "Designing The Future of Dispute Resolution: The ODR Policy Plan for India." March 2023. <https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-03/Designing-The-Future-of-Dispute-Resolution-The-ODR-Policy-Plan-for-India.pdf>.

⁸ Srivastava, Abhishek. "Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) in India: Challenges and Way Forward." SSRN, June 13, 2023. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4855121.

⁹ NLIU Law Review. "Revolutionizing Justice: NITI Aayog's ODR Blueprint for India." <https://nliulawreview.nliu.ac.in/blog/revolutionizing-justice-niti-aayogs-odr-blueprint-for-india/>.

to navigate online platforms. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, rural students struggled with remote learning due to inadequate devices and connectivity, mirroring the barriers faced by citizens attempting to access ODR services. The awareness gap is equally critical: 70% of consumers are unaware of ODR options (CUTS International, 2022), leading to underutilization of platforms like the Consumer Commission's online portal. Even when aware, mistrust in digital processes and preference for traditional litigation hinder adoption.

Regulatory fragmentation further complicates ODR's growth. Unlike jurisdictions like Singapore or the EU with dedicated ODR laws, India relies on scattered provisions across the IT Act, CPC, and Arbitration Act. This patchwork framework creates ambiguities—for example, while Section 89 of the CPC mandates courts to refer disputes to ADR/ODR, the absence of standardized procedural rules leads to inconsistent implementation. The lack of a National ODR Act means issues like data security, neutrality of platforms, and enforceability of awards remain inadequately addressed. While the IT Act's Section 43A provides some data protection safeguards, it falls short of global standards like the EU's GDPR, raising concerns about confidentiality in sensitive disputes.

Moreover, systemic inefficiencies persist. The NITI Aayog Report (2023) highlights the need for "behavioral change" among stakeholders, including government bodies reluctant to adopt ODR for public disputes. For instance, despite the 2020 e-Lok Adalats resolving 10 million cases, many state agencies continue to resist digitizing processes like tax disputes or land conflicts. Capacity-building is another hurdle: India has fewer than 1,000 trained ODR practitioners, necessitating urgent skill development programs.

5. PROMINENT CASE LAWS SHAPING ODR IN INDIA

1. State of Maharashtra v. Dr. Praful B. Desai (2003)¹⁰

Facts:

This landmark case revolved around the admissibility of video-conferenced witness testimony in a criminal trial. The complainant's wife had undergone surgery despite being advised against it by a U.S.-based doctor, Dr. Ernest Greenberg, who later agreed to testify via video conferencing due to his inability to travel to India. The prosecution applied for his testimony to be recorded electronically, raising questions about whether virtual evidence could satisfy procedural requirements under Section 273 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), which mandates evidence to be recorded in the presence of the accused.

Ruling:

The Supreme Court upheld the validity of video conferencing for recording evidence, stating that electronic presence constitutes "presence" under Section 273 CrPC. It further recognized electronic records as admissible evidence under Section 3 of the Indian Evidence Act, emphasizing that advancements in science and technology should be leveraged to streamline judicial processes.

Impact:

This judgment legitimized virtual hearings and electronic evidence in both criminal and civil proceedings, paving the way for their adoption in arbitration and litigation. By recognizing video conferencing as a valid mode of recording evidence, the court set a precedent for integrating technology into judicial proceedings, laying a foundational pillar for Online Dispute Resolution (ODR).

¹⁰ State of Maharashtra v. Dr. Praful B. Desai." (2003) 4 SCC 601

2. Trimex International v. Vedanta Aluminium Ltd. (2010)¹¹

Facts:

This case involved a commercial transaction between Trimex International FZE Ltd., Dubai, and Vedanta Aluminium Ltd., India. The parties exchanged emails negotiating terms for the supply of bauxite, culminating in Vedanta's acceptance of Trimex's offer via email on October 16, 2007. Subsequently, Trimex finalized deals with suppliers and entered into shipping agreements based on this acceptance. However, Vedanta later refused to honor the contract, arguing that no formal written agreement had been signed between the parties.

Ruling:

The Supreme Court held that the exchange of emails constituted a valid contract under Section 4 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872, and validated the arbitration clause embedded in these communications under Section 7 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. The court emphasized that contracts concluded electronically are enforceable even without physical signatures.

Impact:

This judgment accelerated paperless arbitration and ODR adoption by affirming the validity of electronic agreements. It demonstrated that technology could simplify contract formation and dispute resolution processes, especially in cross-border commercial transactions where physical documentation is impractical.

3. Salem Advocate Bar Association v. Union of India (2005)¹²

Facts:

This case challenged the constitutional validity of amendments made to the Code of Civil Procedure (CPC) by the Amendment Acts of 1999 and 2002. Among these amendments was Section 89 CPC, which mandated courts to refer disputes to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms like arbitration, mediation, conciliation, or Lok Adalats when settlement elements existed in cases. The petitioner argued that these amendments were unconstitutional and required clearer modalities for implementation.

Ruling:

The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of these amendments and directed courts to implement ADR mechanisms effectively. It formed a committee headed by Justice M. Jagannadha Rao to suggest operational modalities for ADR processes under Section 89 CPC. This judgment institutionalized ADR practices across India.

Impact:

The case inspired e-Lok Adalats that resolved over 10 million disputes in 2020, showcasing ADR's potential in reducing judicial backlog. It indirectly catalyzed ODR adoption by creating a framework for court-referred dispute resolution mechanisms that could be digitized for greater efficiency.

4. SBI Cards v. Rohidas Jadhav (2018)¹³

Facts:

In this case, SBI Cards sought to serve litigation notices on Rohidas Jadhav via WhatsApp after repeated failures to locate him at his residence due to frequent relocations. The bank sent a PDF notice through WhatsApp, which was marked as delivered and opened based on WhatsApp's "blue tick" indicators.

¹¹ Trimex International FZE Limited, Dubai v. Vedanta Aluminium Limited, India." (2010) 3 SCC 1

¹² Salem Advocate Bar Association v. Union of India." AIR 2005 SC 3353

¹³ SBI Cards & Payments Services Pvt. Ltd. v. Rohidas Jadhav." 2018 SCC OnLine Bom 1262

Ruling:

The Bombay High Court validated service through WhatsApp under Order V Rule 9(3) CPC and acknowledged electronic communication as sufficient proof of delivery under the Information Technology Act, 2000. The court reasoned that modern communication tools like WhatsApp align with procedural requirements for serving legal notices.

Impact:

This judgment normalized digital communication in dispute resolution processes by recognizing WhatsApp as a legitimate mode for serving legal notices. It underscored technology's role in enhancing accessibility and efficiency within India's justice system.

Conclusion

These four cases collectively illustrate India's gradual embrace of technology-driven dispute resolution mechanisms. From legitimizing video conferencing (*Dr. Praful B. Desai*) and validating electronic contracts (*Trimex v. Vedanta*) to institutionalizing ADR (*Salem Advocate Bar Association*) and recognizing WhatsApp as a valid mode of service (*SBI Cards v. Rohidas Jadhav*), these judgments have laid critical legal foundations for ODR adoption.

India's judiciary has demonstrated adaptability by integrating technological advancements into its procedural framework while balancing traditional principles with modern needs. As ODR continues to evolve globally, these precedents position India as an emerging leader in leveraging technology for accessible justice delivery.

By addressing challenges like digital illiteracy and fragmented regulations through legislative reforms and public awareness campaigns, India can fully harness ODR's transformative potential—ensuring justice is not only accessible but also efficient and equitable for all citizens.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) has become indispensable for India's justice system, offering a transformative solution to the challenges of traditional litigation. With over 43 million pending cases in Indian courts, ODR provides a faster, cost-effective, and inclusive alternative to conventional dispute resolution mechanisms. Platforms like SAMA, which resolved 10,000 cases in just six months, exemplify the efficiency of ODR in addressing disputes swiftly and reducing the burden on courts. By leveraging technology such as video conferencing, AI-driven negotiation, and blockchain for enforceable awards, ODR aligns seamlessly with constitutional ideals of equality and accessibility.

ODR also significantly reduces costs—by up to 70%—by eliminating travel expenses, court fees, and lengthy legal processes. This makes it particularly beneficial for low-income individuals and businesses in rural areas who often face barriers to accessing justice due to financial constraints or geographical isolation. Moreover, its flexibility allows parties to resolve disputes remotely at their convenience, enhancing accessibility for those with mobility issues or other limitations.

However, challenges persist. The digital divide remains a critical barrier, with only 45% of Indians having internet access. Additionally, fragmented regulations and a lack of awareness about ODR options hinder its widespread adoption. Addressing these issues requires legislative reforms to establish a unified ODR framework, investment in digital infrastructure like BharatNet for rural connectivity, and public awareness campaigns to promote ODR's benefits.

In conclusion, ODR is not merely an alternative but an essential evolution in India's justice delivery system. By addressing existing challenges and scaling its adoption, ODR can ensure that justice is not only accessible but also efficient and equitable for all citizens.

6.2 Recommendations

To realize ODR's transformative potential, India must adopt a multi-pronged strategy. Legislative reforms are critical: enacting a National ODR Act would codify procedures, ethics, and enforceability, addressing the current fragmentation across the IT Act (2000), Arbitration Act (1996), and CPC. Aligning laws with UNCITRAL ODR Guidelines would strengthen cross-border dispute resolution, particularly for India's \$1.2 trillion digital economy. Technological infrastructure requires urgent scaling – while BharatNet has connected 2.14 lakh gram panchayats (Phase II), expanding it to 500,000 villages by 2030 with vernacular interfaces is essential to bridge rural-urban divides. Establishing ODR kiosks under the Digital India Mission could replicate the success of Rajasthan's e-Mitra centers, which resolved 8.5 lakh disputes in 2023.

Capacity building must prioritize training 10,000 ODR practitioners by 2025 through programs like WeVaad's certification courses (4-40 weeks) and NLSIU's specialized modules. Integrating ODR into law school curricula, as recommended by NITI Aayog, will create a future-ready legal workforce. Public awareness campaigns should leverage ASHA workers – who reached 90% households during COVID – through "ODR for All" drives in regional languages. Mandating e-commerce giants like Flipkart and Amazon to display ODR options at checkout pages, as required under Consumer Protection Act Section 94(1)(g), could boost utilization by 300%, mirroring eBay's 60 million annual ODR resolutions. These measures, combined with BharatNet's Phase-III 5G integration, can make India a global ODR leader by 2030.

7. REFERENCES

1. NITI Aayog. (2023). *Designing the future of dispute resolution: The ODR policy plan for India*. Retrieved from <https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-03/Designing-The-Future-of-Dispute-Resolution-The-ODR-Policy-Plan-for-India.pdf>
2. Singh, R. (2018). *ODR PPT*. Construction Industry Arbitration Council. Retrieved from <http://www.ciac.in/april2018/ODR%20PPT%20-%20Mr%20Ratan%20Singh.pdf>
3. Sharma, A. (2021). Online dispute resolution (ODR) in India. *International Journal of Law and Social Issues*. Retrieved from <https://ijlsi.com/wp-content/uploads/Online-Dispute-Resolution-ODR-in-India.pdf>
4. Taxguru. (n.d.). Introduction to online dispute resolution (ODR) in India. Retrieved from <https://taxguru.in/corporate-law/introduction-online-dispute-resolution-odr-india.html>
5. National Center for State Courts. (2020). *ODR case studies*. Retrieved from https://www.ncsc.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/16517/2020-01-28-odr-case-studies-v2-final.pdf
6. Schmitz, A. J. (2022). Expanding access to remedies through e-court initiatives. *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy*, 67, 65–128. Retrieved from https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2166&context=law_journal_law_policy
7. Marin, R. M. (2024). Online dispute resolution: The future of justice. *Tribuna Juridica*, 14(2), 59–68. Retrieved from <https://tribunajuridica.eu/arhiva/y14v2/5.pdf>

8. Corpzo. (n.d.). ODR: An emerging solution to disputes. Retrieved from <https://www.corpzo.com/odr-an-emerging-solution-to-disputes>
9. NLIU Law Review. (n.d.). Revolutionizing justice: NITI Aayog's ODR blueprint for India. Retrieved from <https://nliulawreview.nliu.ac.in/blog/revolutionizing-justice-niti-aayogs-odr-blueprint-for-india/>
10. Presolv360. (n.d.). Concept note on ODR. Retrieved from <https://presolv360.com/resources/concept-note-on-odr/>