



LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract-- *Legal education in India plays a pivotal role in shaping the quality of legal professionals and ensuring access to justice. However, the current system is encountering many challenges ranging from outdated curricula to regulatory inefficiencies. This research paper examines the historical evolution of legal education in India, identifies the most common challenges affecting the quality of legal education and suggests comprehensive reforms to align it with global standards and societal requirements.*
Keywords: *Legal education, Bar Council of India, National Law Schools, curricula, Clinical Moot Court, legal profession.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Legal education is the cornerstone of a just and democratic society. In India, it serves not only to train future advocates, judges, and legal academics in addition to promoting the rule of law and democratic governance. The legal education has a direct impact on the quality of justice delivery. Despite its importance, the legal education system in India faces various structural and academic challenges.

II. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

Legal education in India is having history of several centuries. During British regime, the legal system was anglicized and law colleges were started only with an aim to produce clerks and junior lawyers. After the independence, it was seriously realised the need to integrate legal education with social justice and national development. The establishment of the first National Law School—National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bangalore in 1987, marked a landmark change as it introduced a five-year integrated course and modern pedagogy.

III. STRUCTURE OF LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

The present Legal education system in India is having the following courses., 3Year LL.B. Program for those passed the Graduation in any discipline with requisite percentage and a 5 Year Integrated LL.B. Program. This course is a combination of a bachelor's degree with legal education (e.g., B.A. LL.B., B.Com. LL.B. BBA LL.B; BSc,LL.B etc)

These courses are governed by the *Bar Council of India (BCI)*, a national level regulatory body for legal education in India, which stipulates certain minimum standards required for legal education. *The University Grants Commission (UGC)*, prescribes general academic standards of all courses Education under the control of various Universities across India. In addition to the above, several postgraduate (LL.M.) in various specialisations and doctoral (Ph.D.) programs offered by several universities across India.

IV. MAJOR ISSUES IN LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

1. *Outdated Curriculum:* Most of the legal institutions, offering LL.B courses in India, still not updated their syllabii so as to suit to the present digital/Internet and artificial Intelligence era.
2. *Poor Infrastructure:* Many institutions lack proper infrastructure, including moot court halls, modern libraries and digital learning tools. It is also seriously criticised that, the many law colleges not having proper infrastructure were also gives permission to newly started institutions and affiliation to the existing colleges.
3. *Shortage of qualified teaching Faculty:* There is a great dearth of qualified and experienced faculty. 90 percent of the Faculty are not having the qualifications, such as doctorate degree(Ph.D) or Pass in National Eligibility Test(NET) prescribed by the UGC and BCI for the teaching positions



4. *Legal Education as become a profit making Business:* Rapid rise in too many law colleges in the private sector with poor standards, led to a deterioration in the quality of legal education
5. *Weak Clinical Education:* There has been a less emphasis on the adequate practical training to the students pursuing legal education, thereby the passed out students are facing practical problems after they enter courts for their actual practice after completion of their LL.B Courses. Rigorous practices of the exercises in clinical/practical papers such as Drafting, Pleading and Conveyancing and the Moot Court exercises practices and arguments and exercises on alternative Dispute Resolution are prescribed only in final year of the LL.B course, which are taught namesake with out having proper seriousness both on the part of the students and on the part of the teaching institutions.
6. *Dilution of Standards in BA LL.B in certain Govt institutions:* Since there is no restriction for pursuing 5year BA;LL.B, some non serious students who are retired from the Govt services and and above 60 years also joining, It was also reported that, due to this heterogeneous educational atmosphere, young students who are committed to pursue their BA LL.B are disturbed by the students of higher ages who are lacking proper serious towards the course.
7. *Lack of awareness about National Law Schools in the society:* There has been not much awareness about National Law Universities (NLUs) in India.
8. *Hurdles of Language:* The Legal education is predominantly English-based. This seriously impacts the maximum number of students ,a hailing from rural/remote areas having studied their school education in their vernacular/ local languages.
9. *Poor Research in Legal Education:* Indian legal education greatly lacks a strong research culture. There is literally nil contribution to global legal scholarship.
10. *Poor Global Rank:* Indian legal education often fails to keep pace with global standards in different ares of law. Countries like the USA, UK, Australia, and Canada have adopted legal education practices that are both progressive and inclusive. Clinical legal education, emphasis on continuing legal education (CLE), experiential learning, interdisciplinary approach, and integrated use of technology are clearly needs to be adopted.
 - (a) Regularly revised and modular syllabi
 - (b) Rigorous bar admission standards
 - (c) Legal clinics and simulation-based learning
 - (d) Collaboration between law schools and legal firms
 - (e) International exchange programs and online certifications
11. *Legal Education inculcate integrity, justice, and service:* The competence of advocates, judges, and legal scholars is heavily influenced by their educational foundations. Legal education should therefore inculcate not just knowledge but also values such as integrity, justice, and service. The role of ethics in legal education is increasingly emphasized across global jurisdictions. The Advocates Act, 1961, and BCI guidelines also expect legal education to prepare students for ethical practice.
12. *Technology integration in Legal Education:* The legal profession has been drastically undergoing rapid digital transformation. Legal education must incorporate legal tech, digital research tools such as, SCC Online, Manupatra, and e-courts systems. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online teaching proved the dire need for integrating the technology a must for legal education. Certain technological Initiatives like, Virtual moot courts and webinars, Online internships and research for a and the ICT tools in legal research (e.g., SPSS, AI-based analysis)l
13. *The Role of National Law Universities (NLUs):* The creation of NLUs drastically changed the legal education by offering merit-based entry, integrated curriculum and faculty with high standards. Despite the above merits, the NLUs are criticised for Too high Fee, No representation of marginalized communities and too much emphasis on corporate placements. NLUs are highly appreciated for the a their achievements for excellence in moot courts, debates, and legal research. It is further criticised for their commercial orientation and social disconnect, and the low entry in to advocacy and public services.



14. *Dual regulatory bodies Overlapping*: The BCI regulates professional practice, while UGC oversees academic standards. Their overlapping jurisdiction leads to policy confusions. A single unified authority to oversee the prevailing legal education in India is desirable to have more coherent guidance and regulation such as an independent Legal Education Council (LEC).
15. *NEP 2020 and Legal Education*: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provided intended to revamp the Indian legal education with an emphasis on multidisciplinary education, course selection flexibility, Skill enhancement and outcome-based learning, and the digital integration. Unfortunately, implementation of NEP reforms in legal education in India is still in a budding stage.
16. *Under Representation Women and the Weaker Sections*: In the reputed national law schools in India, representation of the Women, the C/ST, and of the rural students are still remain underrepresented. Certain changes like inclusive policies, language options, implementation of reservations, and financial support are need of the Hour. It is further recommended to improve the access by providing scholarships and to set up legal education outreach centers in rural areas
17. *Future Prospects and Emerging Areas of Law*: The present legal education in India must equip the students for the latest emerging areas like Cyber-security and Data Protection, Artificial Intelligence and Ethics, International Commercial Arbitration, Maritime Law and Space Law and Climate Change and Environmental Law

V. SUGGESTIONS

1. Modernizing/Updating the age-old Curriculum: To introduce the subjects of contemporary relevance and update the syllabi from time to time to suit to the modern times with interdisciplinary content.
2. Strengthen the Clinical Legal Education Mandatory clinical courses, live-client clinics, and legal aid centers in every law school.
3. Promote Legal Research: Legal research journals, student research projects, and policy papers must be encouraged.
4. Improvement in Infrastructure: Well equipped digital Library with proper access to online data base ie, judgements of supreme court of India, various High Courts, Tribunals I enabling access to Online journals, Online e Books/ e-content/ material.
5. Organising Faculty Development Programms: To conduct regular Faculty Development Programs (FDPs), offer UGC/BCI incentives, and support academic research.
6. Accreditation and Quality Control Form a national accreditation framework with star ratings and public audits of law schools.
7. Inclusive Education Policies: Special fellowships, hostel facilities, and preparatory modules for marginalized students.
8. Regulatory Clarity Streamline regulatory architecture with a single point of academic and professional control.

VI. CONCLUSION

Now the Legal education in India is at cross roads. The huge gap between prominent high class premier law schools and the majority of law colleges needs to be bridged urgently through a unified policy and with fixed targets. The vision is to transform the legal education into an engine of justice, equity, and innovation. Only through a all round inclusive and tech-savvy legal education system alone can produce professionals of high quality who are expected to meet the aspirations of the generations to come.

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