



A STUDY OF LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA: CHALLENGES & REFORMS

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ABSTRACT

Legal education in India plays a pivotal role in shaping the legal profession and ensuring the effective administration of justice in a democratic society. Over the years, the legal education system has undergone several transformations, yet it continues to face significant challenges. This research paper examines the evolution, current structure, and regulatory framework of legal education in India, highlighting some key challenges of legal education like outdated curricula, lack of practical training, limited research output, inadequate or lack of faculty etc. The study also explores recent reforms and initiatives modernizing legal education including NEP 2020 (National Education Policy), UGC (University Grant Commission), BCI (Bar Council of India) etc. The paper proposes strategic recommendations to bridge the gaps and enhance the quality, accessibility, and relevance of legal education in India.

KEYWORDS : legal Education, Challenges, Legal Reforms, National Law University, NEP, BCI

INTRODUCTION

Legal education is a cornerstone of a just and democratic society, equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills and ethics grounding necessary to uphold the rule of law. In India, legal education has rich historical legacy that back to the colonial era, with early institutions laying the foundation for a formalized legal system. The structure and scope of legal education have expanded significantly, shaped by socio-political developments, constitutional ideas, and also needs of the legal profession.

The history of legal education back to the Vedic periods during Vedas, sastra and smritis in gurukul methods regarding taught system in India. formal education started in the mid-19th century in the year 1857, with the establishment of three universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras ⁽¹⁾ Legal education in India continuous face various challenges and issues such as lack of practical training, outdated curricula, limited research outputs, faculty shortage and quality issues etc.

In response, various reforms have been proposed and implemented, particularly in light of the NEP 2020, which advocates for a multidisciplinary and experiential learning approach. Institutions such as the Bar Council of India, the University grants commission and the judiciary have also played a critical role in shaping and reforming legal education. This study examines the current state of legal education in India, identify some key challenges and evaluate legal reforms regarding the needs of Indian society.

Object of Legal Education

- i. Legal education to develop and promote rule of law and justice.
- ii. They also develop knowledge and build critical thinking or advocacy skill.
- iii. Legal education also trains future professionals such as judges, advocates, legal advisors and academician.
- iv. To encourage research in contemporary legal issues, law reforms and policy development.
- v. To provide practical knowledge through internship, moot court, legal aid clinics and court visits.
- vi. Legal education also promotes interdisciplinary learning.

Regulatory Framework of Legal Education

Legal education in India is governed by a complex regulatory framework involving multiple statutory bodies and institutions. The bodies play a pivotal role in setting academic standards, approving curricula, accrediting institutions and maintaining the overall quality of legal education. Some key regulators include like such as Bar council of India (BCI) is the primary regulatory authority under the advocate act 1961. Their important role in legal education is prescribing

minimum standards for legal education across the country, recognizing law colleges and universities offering LL.B. and integrated law programs, conducting the All-India Bar examination (AIBE) to ensure minimum competence of law graduates before enrolment as advocate. The bar council of India visits and reviews universities and law schools in the country as a feature of its statutory function of advancing legal training and setting down standards in conference with the universities in India. ⁽²⁾

University Grant Commission (UGC) established under the UGC Act 1956, the UGC oversees the broader higher education landscape in India. It's important role in legal education such as coordinating with universities and institutions, providing funding, infrastructure grants and research support etc. The NEP 2020 proposes transformational reforms in higher education, including legal studies. Some key impact such as multidisciplinary education, experiential learning, and research & innovation etc. The NEP envisions legal education as more accessible, ethical and globally aligned, urging law institutions to traditional structure and pedagogy.

Law colleges, universities and particularly National Law Universities function as implementing institutions. These bodies such as develop and deliver curricula within the BCI and UGC guidelines, administer entrance examinations e.g. CLAT, AILET for admission, and also provide platforms for practical training such as moot courts legal aid clinics and internship etc. The concept of National Law University is the latest institutional development which is making our students at par with foreign students in the global scenario, at present there are 10 NLU's operating. ⁽³⁾

Challenges and Reforms of Legal Education:

In this paper some key challenges and legal reforms of legal education following affected in legal education system such as,

- i. The first important issue is outdated curriculum such as lack of focus on practical skills and emerging legal fields.
- ii. Poor faculty quality is important issue addressing shortage of trained, research-oriented law teachers.
- iii. Limited practical training is inadequate use of moot court, internships and legal clinics.
- iv. Regional disparities and weak research culture are also important issue in legal education.
- v. Overcrowding of law colleges-institutions with poor infrastructure and low standards.

Addressing these issues is crucial to ensure that legal education in India capable of producing highly competent and ethical legal professionals. ⁽⁴⁾

The challenges facing legal education in India, there are

significant opportunities for reform that can revitalize the system and ensure that it remains relevant in a rapidly changing legal environment.⁽⁵⁾ Some reforms focus on such as,

- i. The first reform is curriculum modernization- BCI and universities updating syllabus to include clinical legal education.
- ii. NEP 2020 focus on interdisciplinary and experiential learning also regarding legal reforms.
- iii. Legal aid clinics are promoting access to justice and practical exposure for students.
- iv. Develop use of technology and faculty development programs to initiatives to enhance teaching quality.

Role of Judiciary & Legal Profession: -

The judiciary and legal profession play a crucial role in shaping and strengthening legal education in India. The judiciary, especially the supreme court, has guided reforms through landmark judgements that emphasize quality, ethics and accessibility in legal education. Senior advocates, law firms, and bar associations help bridge the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that legal education remains relevant to real-world legal challenges.

CONCLUSION

In India legal education system facing many challenges and issues according to this paper. Legal education is pivotal role in democratic society, enhance to ensure some legal reforms and legal remedies. Which may examine this study such as some key challenges and reforms, object, regulatory framework and also important role of judiciary & legal profession in legal education.

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