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Restructuring legal education system in India

Dr. Joshua N. Aston



The author is a professor

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FROM A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

The education system in India is in a continuous process of transformation. This transformation takes place with changes in the content, delivery process and organisation so as to provide quality legal education. While such a process of continuous transformation is observed mostly in the higher education system in general, the legal education system particularly needs restructuring. This will enable it to compete with the world's best legal education system prevailing in developed countries such as the US, the UK and the European Union.

In India, legal education has transformed drastically since the reforms of 1960 and 1985. Besides the basic three year LLB degree, the legal education system was developed further with the introduction of the five-year integrated LLB programme. This was done with a view to provide the students, a longer duration to study law covering a vast curriculum with inclusion of new subjects and teaching, evaluation & assessment methods.

The legal education system was further strengthened with the establishment of several National Law Universities in the country, which has escalated the level of legal education in India. The quality of legal education has also improved with the inter-disciplinary approach of various private and the NLUs.

But a challenge in the current set up is that there are very few law graduates who take up practice. An increasing number of students is inclined towards joining the corporate law firms being lured by hefty pay-packages.

The legal education, thus, needs a few more reforms, so as to generate interest among students for taking up law practice in the trial courts and district courts and eventually join the judiciary, since there is a dearth of officers in the bar and the bench.

To achieve this, students and faculty members must be more involved in the practical part of legal profession. Students should be made to interact with practicing lawyers during their curriculum. At the same time, the faculty members at law schools should also be permitted to practice law as a part-time profession so that they gain experience in the practical aspects of the law. This will help the legal education system to strengthen itself and improve the quality of teaching.

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