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# CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## REPORT ON LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "REPORT ON LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "POLITY AND GOVERNANCE" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

### WHY IN THE NEWS?

In a recent report on legal education in India, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law, and Justice made some important recommendations.

### SIGNIFICANT RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE

- **Restricting Authority:** The committee proposed limitations on the regulatory powers of the Bar Council of India (BCI) concerning legal education in India.
- **Cultivating a Research Culture:** Within law schools, complete academic freedom and autonomy are essential. The committee emphasises that the objectives of a law school or any academic institution can only be achieved if academicians are free to express their thoroughly researched perspectives without apprehension.
- **Global Competitiveness:** The committee suggested the development and implementation of a curriculum aligned with global standards, the encouragement of international exchange programs for students and faculty, the inclusion of additional international law courses, and heightened exposure of students to diverse legal systems
- **Concerning Litigation:** Various aspects of legal education, particularly at the postgraduate level, extend beyond litigation. The committee suggested the establishment of an autonomous entity named the **National Council for Legal Education and Research (NCLER)**.
  1. **Objective:** Its objective will be to formulate high-quality benchmarks for overseeing legal education.
  2. **Composition:** The NCLER is envisioned to comprise judges, practicing lawyers, and distinguished law professors with a commendable record of research and contributions to legal education.
- **Enhancing Research:** The committee underscores the importance of prioritising and fostering research, anticipating improved teaching outcomes and the cultivation of a critical perspective among students.
- **Government Funding:** Recognizing the significance of the research, the committee acknowledged the necessity for increased state funding to strengthen research initiatives..

- **Leadership Roles:** Leadership positions should be occupied by passionate, charismatic, and visionary academicians who inspire and foster an inclusive and supportive environment.

## **KEY CHALLENGES IN LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA**

### **OUTDATED CURRICULUM:**

One significant challenge is the outdated curriculum in many law schools. The legal education system often struggles to keep pace with the evolving legal landscape and the changing needs of the legal profession.

### **INSUFFICIENT PRACTICAL TRAINING:**

Legal education often focuses more on theoretical aspects, leaving a gap in practical training. Students may lack adequate exposure to real-world legal scenarios, courtroom practices, and legal research skills.

### **OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS:**

Many law schools in India face issues of overcrowded classrooms, which can hinder the teacher-student interaction crucial for effective legal education. Large class sizes make it challenging for educators to provide personalised attention to students.

### **LIMITED INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH:**

The legal curriculum tends to be siloed, with limited integration of interdisciplinary subjects. This lack of a holistic approach may hinder students from developing a comprehensive understanding of legal issues in their broader societal context.

### **QUALITY OF FACULTY:**

The quality of faculty members varies across institutions. Some law schools struggle with a shortage of experienced and qualified faculty, impacting the delivery of high-quality legal education.

### **LACK OF RESEARCH CULTURE:**

There is often a dearth of emphasis on research activities in legal education. Limited resources and inadequate support for research initiatives hinder the development of a robust research culture within law schools.

### **OVEREMPHASIS ON THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE:**

The legal education system tends to place excessive emphasis on theoretical knowledge, sometimes at the expense of practical skills. This imbalance can leave graduates ill-prepared for the demands of legal practice.

### **LACK OF TECHNOLOGICAL INTEGRATION:**

Many law schools face challenges in integrating technology into the education process. The digital divide and a lack of resources can impede the adoption of modern teaching tools and methodologies.

### **ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY:**

Legal education may not be easily accessible to all sections of society. Financial constraints, regional disparities, and a lack of inclusivity in the admissions process can contribute to underrepresentation of certain groups in legal education.

## WAY FORWARD

- Allocate resources to cultivate a research-oriented culture in law schools by supporting research funding, enhancing infrastructure, and providing academic assistance.
- Promote academic leadership that nurtures an environment of creativity, distinction, and unrestricted academic expression.

## PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q1. With reference to India, consider the following statements:**

1. Government law officers and legal firms are recognised as advocates, but corporate lawyers and patent attorneys are excluded from recognition as advocates.
2. Bar Councils have the power to lay down the rules relating to legal education and recognition of law colleges.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (b)**

## MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q1. How can legal education institutions address gender-based barriers to entry and create a more inclusive environment for women in the field of law?**



**Himanshu Mishra**