

Goals and Objectives Of Law Schools In Their Primary Role of Educating Students*

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(1) INTRODUCTION

Legal education has assumed tremendous significance in the modern day post-globalised world. In the context of India in particular, we have seen establishment of a number of independent law schools and law universities in the recent past - a development that, inter alia, owes its origin to the successful functioning of India's first law school - National Law School of India University at Bangalore. The establishment of these specialized institutions is in addition to the existence of various law departments and law faculties in the traditional universities and, above all, in addition to a large number of private law colleges running in the country. Interestingly, the latest addition in the present day scenario is the establishment of a privately run Global Law School in one of the states in India in the recent past.

There is no denying the fact that the establishment of these law schools and law varsities is indeed a welcome and a commendable step as they are going to cater to the ever expanding market of legal services across the globe by way of providing young, articulate, well trained and professionally competent corporate lawyers and attorneys. However, their real success depends on more than one factor and only time will tell as to how far these law schools have been able to put a dent in the existing state of professional legal education and thereby improving the quality of legal services to be made available to the common citizens in the country.

In the present write up, I have endeavoured to briefly touch upon two important aspects of legal education, that is, goals and objectives of law schools in their primary role of educating students and purposes and objectives of law schools beyond educating students especially in the areas of research, capacity building, community service, and outreach and that how does law school achieve its goals actually. Let me touch upon both the issues one by one.

(2) GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF LAW SCHOOLS IN THEIR PRIMARY ROLE OF EDUCATING STUDENTS

It is primarily on the basis of my personal experience, first as the chairman of the law faculty in a traditional university and later on as the vice-chancellor of a newly established law school that I can argue that, unlike in the Western world, where the average level of thinking and consciousness amongst the students is quite high, most students entering the India law schools do not have identical aims and objectives, nor do they have identical career plans. Some are there undoubtedly by choice; many others are there by chance - a trend that, of course, is fast

changing now with more and more students opting out their career in the field of law by choice. Most law schools, therefore, face dilemma in inculcating the necessary interest and aptitude for legal studies amongst those students whose first choice was not law, but are there due to a variety of other reasons. In any case, once they are into a law school, there is a need not only to educate and to train them in the field of law but also to guide them about the variety of probable avenues that shall be open to them once they come out of law school with a formal degree or diploma whatsoever. We as the legal educators heading and working in the law schools have to educate them about their responsibilities as lawyers and advocates; their commitment towards the cause of their client and the like. There is also a greater need to inculcate in the minds of the young students a sense of concern, discipline, duty and social responsibility towards the society. In my view, therefore, our responsibility as administrators and educators does not simply end with providing young students the much coveted degrees and diplomas, rather it extends much further. As I said earlier, besides making them competent and articulate lawyers and attorney, we have to make them conscientious as well as socially responsible citizens and human beings who shall be potentially capable of making their contribution to the society. All this is to happen in the law schools. We need not only to educate them but to cultivate them so as to enable them to become the assets for the nation. We have to provide them the wholesome education and to motivate them to become good citizens thereby enabling them to become the chief instruments of nation building. We as teachers and educators have to act as their role models. I am sure, the emphasis on wholesome education shall go a long way in shaping the careers of the young students. It shall also lend credence to the law schools as the architects of the careers of the students studying therein. It is in the light of the above observations that the law schools should go ahead in the required direction.

(3) PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES OF LAW SCHOOLS BEYOND EDUCATING STUDENTS ESPECIALLY IN THE AREAS OF RESEARCH, CAPACITY BUILDING, COMMUNITY SERVICE AND OUTREACH

Once a student comes to a law school, it goes without saying that he/she will be trained in the field of law. Law Schools, however, are expected to go beyond this. We as the leaders in the field of legal education need to train them in various other areas besides educating them. We have to train them in the areas of research, capacity building, community service and outreach. It is my experience that in most law schools, a lot of emphasis is laid down on teaching advocacy and oratorical skills as well as on mootng techniques, whereas hardly any attention is paid towards developing research potential amongst the law students. Strictly speaking, this cannot be done till we introduce the subject of Legal and Social Sciences Research Methodology in the law curriculum. In the law school that I am heading, we have made an experiment by way of introducing this subject in the very first semester of the B.A.,LL.B.(Hons.) Five Year Integrated Course. Quite surprisingly, this has proved to be a boon for most students, especially when they are preparing their research projects as well as their memorials that are to be submitted as part of the moot court competitions. During the teaching of this course, students are encouraged to do practicals, too. These, inter alia, include preparation of interview schedules, questionnaires, research designs, research reports etc. etc. Similarly, they are also trained in the foot noting, referencing and bibliographic techniques which a student gets acquainted at the post-graduate

level. Therefore, when a student shall come out of our law school, he/she would not only be conversant with advocacy and mooted skills, they would also be apt in the research methodology and a number of research tools and techniques. It goes without saying that research occupies a very important place in a developing society and the modern day law graduate ought to be well trained in the tools and techniques of research. I am of the confirmed view that a good advocate needs to be a brilliant researcher, too. Once he learns about the research tools and techniques, this training is going to benefit him/her immensely in their professional work. These students should similarly be trained and well equipped for capacity building and outreach for which law schools are expected and are required to play their part.

(4) CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above discussion, the logical inference that one can draw is that law schools and law universities have the primary role in educating the students. This is their primary responsibility and there is hardly any escape from this responsibility. To conclude, I am of the opinion that we have to go a long way in educating the students in the law schools and inculcating in them a great sense of dedication, discipline, client's cause, community responsibility and social accountability. We need to work jointly in our endeavour for making legal education meaningful and socially relevant so that the students coming of the law schools are committed and dedicated individuals who are potentially capable of making difference in the society. This is perhaps the aim of any type of education.