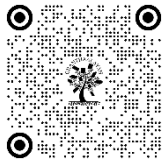


BEYOND BLACK-LETTER LAW: BRIDGING THEORY AND PRACTICE IN LEGAL EDUCATION

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DOI
[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.6008](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.6008)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

Legal education has historically been a theory driven subject, often detached from the ground realities of legal practice, thus leaving fresh graduates to navigate the labyrinthine of the real world legal challenges on their own. However, with the evolution of time, place and society the legal pedagogy has evolved too. The 21st century has witnessed a significant shift from doctrinal legal education to more hands-on and holistic one, this shift was driven by technological advancements, globalisation and realisation of growing demand of practice-ready graduates. Although legal education has evolved tremendously there still exists a disconnect between doctrines and practice. This paper seeks to trace the evolution of legal pedagogy, critically examine the existing lacunae in the legal education sector, and propose a comprehensive way forward to bridge the gap between theoretical instruction and practical training.

Keywords: Black-Letter Law, Theory, Practice, Legal Education

1. INTRODUCTION

For decades, legal education has emphasized doctrinal knowledge like rules, precedents and application of analytical tools to interpret statutes and judgements by employing methods like traditional lectures, case studies, strenuous written examination and Socratic questioning. Yet this theoretical foundation has often been divorced from the realities of lawyering, with lack of training in negotiation, advocacy, drafting, counselling and problem solving in the real world context with involvement of real stakeholders¹. Doctrinal knowledge cannot be utilised and implemented without these tools of drafting, counselling and advocacy thus stimulating the demand for more practical and skill oriented education.

¹ India Today, *Evolving Law Education: Moving from Theory to Practice*, <https://bestcolleges.indiatoday.in/news-detail/evolving-law-education-moving-from-theory-to-practice> (last visited May 18, 2024).

At this juncture it would be pertinent to note that this demand is not new and can be traced to the 19th century as well as evident from criticism of the “Langdellian” approach, which placed disproportionately higher importance on abstract analysis rather than practical skill building. Today the call is louder and more apparent. Legal literacy and professional competency go hand in hand and a successful law graduate must be legal literate, professionally sound, socially and morally responsive, adaptive and technologically agile to survive and thrive in this profession.

2. TRACING THE TRAJECTORY: A SHIFT FROM DOCTRINAL LEARNING

The traditional methodology to teach law, most notably in the United States was the Langdellian approach given by Christopher Columbus Langdell in the late 19th century, this method was known as the case method². This approach involved an analytical study of appellate decisions and soon became a hallmark of elite legal instruction. It influenced teaching models across common law jurisdictions³. This method remained largely resistant from pedagogical innovations for a long time. While it foster legal and logical reasoning, it is now increasingly viewed as insufficient for equipping students with tools to navigate the complex and multidimensional nature of modern legal practice⁴.

In contrast the 20th and 21st centuries have witnessed a seismic shift towards the experiential learning model, including clinical legal education, moot court, simulations and the most recent one being case study based instruction⁵. Post war legal realism championed by scholars like Karl Llewellyn and Jerome Frank – began to question the formalist vision. Realists highlighted the insufficiency of law and centrality of judicial discretion, arguing that law could not exist in vacuum divorced from politics, society, and human behaviour. This method has been adopted from business schools, situates students in real world problems requiring application of the theoretical knowledge taking in practical consideration thus bridging the gap between theory and practice which paved the way for clinical legal education, socio-legal studies and development of interdisciplinary curricula. Thus, we notice a shift from langdell’s case method to more practical innovations like the case study method wherein instead of static legal opinions, these case studies are narrative-driven⁶, multidimensional, and discussion-based, fostering critical thinking and collaborative learning. Case studies employ a broader set of competences like teamwork, innovation, crisis management, application of doctrines and professional judgement- which are essential in modern standards of legal practice but often absent in appellate decisions. This method is a subset of immersive learning model and isn’t focused on finding the “right” answer but rather aim to explore diverse perspectives and prepare students for the unpredictable high stakes socio-legal environment. Thus in recent decades, due to globalisation, technological advancements and legal pluralism legal academia has seen a shift from ivory towers to law lab model. Law schools worldwide — from NYU to NLSIU, from LSE to Cape Town — have moved toward what might be called a **“law lab” model**, integrating theory, practice, and impact.

3. INDIA SPECIFIC TRAJECTORY

The Vedic period (approximately 1500 BCE – 500 BCE) is one of the earliest phases of Indian civilization and offers a unique foundation for understanding the development of law and legal systems in ancient India which was deeply intertwined with religion, morality, and ritual practice. Vedas, Shatras, and Smritis were taught using the gurukula method, emphasizing metaphysical, spiritual knowledge, and societal rules⁷. Law during this period was not an isolated state imposed set of rules, but rather ran as an element of dharma. The primary sources of law were the Shruti (the four Vedas: Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda), which were considered divine revelations, and the Smriti, comprising remembered traditions and customs. These formed a loosely structured but widely respected system of normative order which was not uniformly applicable. Legal institutions in the Vedic age were community-based and decentralized. The Sabha and Samiti were important assemblies that played advisory and quasi-judicial roles, functioning as early precursors to modern panchayats. Texts like the Manusmriti, Yajnavalkya Smriti, and Narada Smriti

² *Jazzing up the Classroom*, HARVARD LAW SCHOOL CENTER ON THE LEGAL PROFESSION, <https://clp.law.harvard.edu/article/jazzing-up-the-classroom/> (last visited May 18, 2024).

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *The Case Study Teaching Method*, <https://casestudies.law.harvard.edu/the-case-study-teaching-method/> (last visited May 18, 2024).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Lari G Prasad & Radhakrishnan Radhakrishnan, *Legal Education in India- Issues and Challenges*, 9 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF NOVEL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT 528 (2024).

emerged in the post-Vedic period, consolidating dharma into more formal legal codes⁸. Manusmriti laid down detailed rules regarding both civil and criminal law⁹, and it places the king as holder of dharma and vested with judicial authority. The Yajnavalkya Smriti, composed later than the Manusmriti, is generally considered more pragmatic, systematic, and concise. While it draws on Manu's work, it reflects the evolution of legal thinking by introducing greater emphasis on procedure, evidence, contracts, and codified penalties.

Formal Legal Education system was established in the 19th century with the establishment of three universities in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay¹⁰ but these colonial foundation were theory heavy and formalist with focus on lectures, rote learning, legal principles and English common law with a great disconnect between theory and practice. Students learned black letter law, ignoring customary laws and socio-legal realities of India. Since then the education apparatus has undergone significant changes but until 20th century legal education received limited attention from both academia and government, resulting in numerous challenges¹¹. Initially, legal education struggled to attract bright students due to poor infrastructure and intellectual environment. The establishment of National Law Schools of India Universities (NLSIUs) marked a turning point, reversing this trend as it came with five year integrated B.A LLB program and was designed to bring legal education closer to practice by: embedding internships in each year, incorporating clinical legal education, promoting moot courts, seminars and research projects. The Law Commission, in its 14th report in 1958, noted deterioration in legal education standards since the Radhakrishnan Commission set up in 1948 to evaluate the state of university education in India¹². However, the success of the National Law University at Bangalore in 1987 boosted quality legal education and spurred demand for similar institutions in other states. Governments began to focus more on legal education, and the private sector's entry further impacted the system¹³.

The Constitution of India entrusts the regulation of legal education to both the Bar Council of India and the University Grants Commission¹⁴.

The Bar Council of India (hereinafter referred as BCI) is a statutory regulatory body established under the Advocates Act, 1961¹⁵. It also played a significant role to address the theory practice divide as evident from the Legal Education Rules, 2008 mandating CLE, moot as part of curricula and internships. Its roles include curriculum designing, practical training. BCI is also responsible for institutional recognition and periodic inspections to assess compliance with the infrastructure, faculty and curriculum standards thus it keeps an oversight on legal educational institutions¹⁶. University Grants Commission (UGC), established under the UGC Act, 1956, oversees standards in higher education, including legal education offered by universities and affiliated colleges. UGC's focus is primarily academic neglecting professional training. It also encourages choice based credit system and recommends model syllabi.

UGC yields policy influence and via its work on the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, it has advocated for multidisciplinary and experiential learning across disciplines¹⁷, including law.

4. PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATIONS: EMERGING MODELS OF LEGAL LEARNING

Several innovations are helping to narrow the theory practice divide, ushering in a more holistic model of legal education.

- 1) **CLE or clinical legal education** has emerged as a transformative tool. Under this method, students engage in real legal cases under the supervision of faculty members, this aims to equip law students with practical skills through hands-on experience, integrating theory and practice. Some examples include: The Environmental Law Clinic at

⁸ *Sources of Hindu Law*, <https://www.drishtijudiciary.com/ttp-hindu-law/sources-of-hindu-law> (last visited May 18, 2024).

⁹ Admin, *ECHOES OF MANUSMRITI: EXPLORING PARALLELS BETWEEN ANCIENT INDIAN LAW AND CONTEMPORARY LEGAL SYSTEM - Jus Corpus*, (Feb. 8, 2024), <https://www.juscorpus.com/echoes-of-manusmriti-exploring-parallels-between-ancient-indian-law-and-contemporary-legal-system/>.

¹⁰ Prasad and Radhakrishnan, *supra* note 7.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Legal Education in India: Challenges, Innovations, and a Vision for Tomorrow*, (Jan. 5, 2024), <https://ksandk.com/regulatory/legal-education-in-india-challenges-and-innovations/>.

¹⁵ The Advocates Act, No. 25, Acts of Parliament, 1961, (India)

¹⁶ *About | Bar Council of India*, <https://www.barcouncilofindia.org/info/about-bci> (last visited May 18, 2024).

¹⁷ *Thematic Session - 2022 | Government of India, Ministry of Education*, <https://www.education.gov.in/nep/multidisciplinary-holistic-education> (last visited May 18, 2024).

Stanford, Legal Services Clinic at NLU, Delhi. Emergence of clinical legal education began in the United States, followed by Canada, Australia and UK. CLE's origin in India can be traced back to the Legal Aid and Legal Education Reform Movements¹⁸. In 1949, The Bombay Legal Education Committee proposed mandatory practical courses, including lectures, group discussions, and moot court competitions. The Law Commission in its 14th Report in 1958 emphasized vocational training alongside academics thus aiming to bridge the persistent divide¹⁹, with the BCI suggesting hands-on training in 1977²⁰. UGC reports further influenced CLE development, emphasizing professional skills and social justice engagement, leading to the Law Commission of India recommending compulsory CLE teaching in 2002²¹. The introduction of the five-year integrated law course in 1978 and the establishment of National Law Schools, starting with NLSIU Bangalore in 1987, further emphasized practical training. By 1997, the BCI directed universities to align curricula with the NLSIU model, including practical papers.²²

2) Problem-Based and Case Simulation Learning- marks a stark shift from the case method, this engages students hypothetical yet still realistic legal problems with a wide range of activities ranging from contract drafting to criminal defence strategies. This develops practical skills like drafting, advocacy, communication and strategic thinking skills. Simulated environments — arbitration chambers, mock trial courts, corporate boardrooms — help students experience law in action.

3) Moot Courts and Trial Advocacy: While the moot court concept is far from new, originating hundreds of years ago, it remains an appropriate way for law students to hone their skills and learn new skills like that of drafting, arguing and courtroom etiquettes. It also presents an opportunity for professional networking to law students. By way of moots law students can gain a deeper understanding of law while practically applying it. The roots of moot court can be traced back to medieval England, where law students engaged in moots, simulated legal exercises designed to sharpen their skills in legal reasoning and making legal arguments²³. In the U.S., Harvard is often cited as an originator of mooting tradition dating back to 1820. Moot court in its modern sense emerged in early 20th century, with law schools organising simulated appellate proceedings to provide practical exposure to advocacy²⁴. Success in moot courts builds confidence and can also bring peer recognition and create better career opportunities. It helps ease the transition of law graduates into the courtroom,

Legal Education Rules, 2008 mandate moot courts be made a part of curricula, a university seeking registration must necessarily possess Facilities for imparting practical legal education specified in the curriculum under the Rules and Legal Aid Clinic, Court Training and Moot Court exercises. Rule 18(1) (iii) read with schedule II is pertinent for the same. But they are still not a mandatory requirement for students' assessment.

4) Internships and Externships: Internships and Externships serve as a key experiential learning tool that bridges the abstract real theory by connecting it to real-world practice. These provide practical exposure to the students which help in developing practical skills like legal research, document drafting courtroom and procedural familiarity client interaction, professional judgement and contextual understanding. Internships and externships may also provide career pathway clarity.

Law schools like Harvard²⁵, Stanford²⁶, and NYU offer credit-bearing externships where students work under licensed attorneys or judges, with simultaneous academic supervision.

¹⁸ Jitendra Kumar & Jutirani Talukdar, *Clinical Legal Education in India*, 2 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEGAL SCIENCE AND INNOVATION 383 (2020).

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ Somlata Sharma, *Clinical Legal Education In India- An Analysis*, 2 ASIAN JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH & REVIEW 145 (2021).

²¹ *Id.*

²² G. Singh, *REVAMPING PROFESSIONAL LEGAL EDUCATION: SOME OBSERVATIONS ON REVISED LL.B. CURRICULUM OF BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA*, 41 JOURNAL OF THE INDIAN LAW INSTITUTE 237 (1999).

²³ fedbarblog in General Interest, *The Value of Moot Court Competitions Explained*, FEDERAL BAR ASSOCIATION (Mar. 20, 2024), <https://www.fedbar.org/blog/the-value-of-moot-court-competitions-explained/>.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Externship Clinics*, HARVARD LAW SCHOOL, <https://hls.harvard.edu/clinics/externship-clinics/> (last visited May 18, 2024).

²⁶ *Externship Program - John and Terry Levin Center for Public Service and Public Interest Law - Stanford Law School*, <https://law.stanford.edu/levin-center/externship-program-2/> (last visited May 18, 2024).

In United Kingdom, future solicitors are required to complete a mandatory 2-year training contract with a law firm post-LPC but it can be reduced if you have relevant previous legal experience.²⁷

In India Schedule III, Rule 25 (Internship) under the BCI Rules, 2008 mandates that every law student must complete a minimum of 12 weeks internship for 3-year courses and 20 weeks for 5-year integrated courses, during the entire period of legal studies

- 5) **Trans-disciplinary Integration-** Law does not and possibly cannot exist in isolation from subjects like business, technology, health and climate change etc. Thus curriculum and courses that integrate economics, behavioural sciences, data analytics, and environmental studies expand a law student's conceptual tool kit equipping them to deal with real world legal problems after graduating. Law and AI programme at MIT is one such example. These promote holistic conceptual development. The evolution of tech has also shaped curricula with institutions like NLSIU and Jindal offering electives in subjects like Artificial Intelligence and Law²⁸, Block-chain and Smart Contracts, Legal Ethics in the Age of Automation, Cyber Law and Data Protection.
- 6) **Flipped classroom models:** Although it is not very common, it strives to impart practical knowledge. Under this model, students study material beforehand and only come to the class to solve problems²⁹. This model has become synonymous with active learning and provides more opportunities for higher level learning³⁰. This approach assumes that there exists no significant difference between a student listening to a lecture individually and with other others in class³¹ which is not fully true and thus its efficiency is debatable. AI driven theoretical learning may help to address the pitfalls of this model.
- 7) **Capstone project:** A capstone project is a penultimate culminating academic project, usually in the final year of a degree³², where students apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired to solve a real world legal or policy problem. It aims to demonstrate a student's mastery of particular subject or field of study³³. It is highly research-intensive, requiring final year students to get involved in deep legal and interdisciplinary research equipping them with practical skills for the future and thus helping to bridge the theory and practice divide.
- 8) **Legal drafting courses:** many advocates or independent bodies offer legal writing courses focus on drafting pleadings, contracts, legal opinions, and other essential documents, good writing skills are imperative for effective communication with clients, courts, and colleagues³⁴. It also sharpens one's attention to details.

These courses can be offered parallel to the doctrine-heavy curriculum in the respective institutions mandatorily to create practice ready graduates; it would prove to be an investment in the country's future.

- 9) **Digital Pedagogy:** Technology has transgressed into every sphere of our lives; law and legal education are no exceptions to this fact. Digital transformation has revolutionized access to legal materials, databases, and learning modules across the globe.
 - Platforms like Coursera, HarvardX, and SWAYAM offer world-class courses on legal theory and practice. Furthermore, Legal databases like SCC Online, Manupatra, and LiveLaw now offer training modules, research analytics, and judgment visualizations. Students learn citation formatting, case extraction, and legal summarization digitally—skills previously taught through rote methods.
 - Virtual Simulations and Courtrooms-Online or virtual simulations provide law students with the opportunity to rehearse real world legal situations, including negotiation, advocacy and it may also support them in learning drafting and client interviewing skills helping bridge the divide³⁵. These tools help the law students

²⁷ *Period of Recognised Training*, <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/career-advice/becoming-a-solicitor/qualifying-with-a-degree/period-of-recognised-training> (last visited May 18, 2024).

²⁸ *Course Catalogue*, NATIONAL LAW SCHOOL OF INDIA UNIVERSITY, <https://www.nls.ac.in/study/courses/> (last visited May 18, 2024).

²⁹ *Flipped Classrooms | The Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning*, <https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/flipped-classrooms> (last visited May 18, 2024).

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² NU Editorial Contributors, *What Is a Capstone Project?*, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY (Jun. 16, 2023), <https://www.nu.edu/blog/what-is-a-capstone-project/>.

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Today, *supra* note 1.

³⁵ *A New Era of Learning: Impact of Technology on Legal Education | Asian LAW College*, (Nov. 23, 2024), <https://alc.edu.in/blog/a-new-era-of-learning-impact-of-technology-on-legal-education/>.

practice and improve their skills in a controlled as well as realistic setting³⁶ Suffolk University has adopted this method as part of experiential learning model³⁷.

- Live streaming of courtroom proceedings provides valuable insights to viewers especially law students, they can model courtroom etiquettes learn procedure and develop deeper understanding of law and skill of advocacy.
- Online dispute resolution (ODR) - Institutions like the University of Missouri-Columbia offer courses in ODR³⁸, AI, and data analytics, providing students with hands-on experience in modern dispute resolution techniques.
- Virtual moot courts: have reduced costs of a moot court competition as students don't have to travel, thus saving time, money, and resources.
- Integration of tech has made E-internships and digital internship diary submission possible which has created an ease for students to fulfil mandates while also gaining actual hands on training.
- AI-based legal research tools (like ROSS or CaseMine) prepare students for the tech-driven future of law. For traditional lawyers conducting research has been one of the most labour and time intensive task, AI-powered research engines can provide legal professionals with a competitive edge by improving the speed, scope and accuracy of research.³⁹ When AI-powered research tools are used, time and resources saved can be utilised on other core tasks- such as drafting and advocacy. Apart from legal research, artificial intelligence is also helping to examine contracts and other legal material⁴⁰

5. THE PERSISTENT DIVIDE: CHALLENGES IN BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Many law schools around the globe cling to the out-dated syllabi that gives higher weightage doctrinal courses over skill based learning. The curriculum is dense with complex legal theories and terminologies thus complying with the traditional model. This curriculum rigidity leads to a disconnect between theory and practice as often procedural laws, interpretation of statutes, and jurisprudence are taught in isolation from litigation, drafting, or mediation practices. The assessment criteria in most colleges and universities remain predominantly theory-oriented, relying heavily on memory-based examinations. These assessments emphasize rote learning and recall rather than evaluating a student's ability to apply legal principles, engage in critical analysis, or solve real-world legal problems.

Bar exams in numerous jurisdictions ((e.g., U.S. Bar Exam, India's AIBE) lay a weighty emphasis on theoretical knowledge rather than practical competence. Additionally, accreditation bodies often emphasize research output over teaching practical skills, further widening the gap.

This leads to inefficiency in legal practice as new lawyers often require extensive on the job training and lack the ability to undertake real cases independently, increasing costs throughout the value chain of legal practice. Another psychological outcome being that many young lawyers and fresh graduates feel unprepared for practice leading to job dissatisfaction, impostor syndrome and burnout.

Further the faculties although might excel in theoretical exposition many lack courtroom experience thus fail to impart the same in students in way that would make them ready for the real world challenges. Conversely, seasoned practitioners rarely take up full time teaching roles, thus leaving students deprived of experiential insights. Infrastructural and fiscal constraints exacerbate thus creating a lack of access to legal aid clinics, simulated environments and digital tools hampers, practice- based learning i.e. lack of experiential learning opportunities. These problems worsen in under-resourced institutions.

³⁶ India Today, *The Role of Technology in Modern Legal Education*, <https://bestcolleges.indiatoday.in/news-detail/the-role-of-technology-in-modern-legal-education> (last visited May 18, 2024).

³⁷ *Clinics & Experiential Opportunities - Suffolk University*, <https://www.suffolk.edu/law/academics-clinics/clinics-experiential-opportunities> (last visited May 18, 2024).

³⁸ *Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) – Promise and Pitfalls*, ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN LAW SCHOOLS, <https://www.aals.org/sections/list/technology-law-and-legal-education/online-dispute-resolution-odr-promise-and-pitfalls/> (last visited May 18, 2024).

³⁹ A New Era of Learning, *supra* note 35.

⁴⁰ Ramit Kaur, *The Role of Technology in Modern Legal Education - CaseFox*, (Aug. 30, 2024), <https://www.casefox.com/blog/role-of-technology-in-legal-education/>.

The technology being leveraged to buttress the legal education system is not without its flaws- it strips people of natural creativity and can lead to overdependence, it may generate false information and thus concerns remain.

India specific problems include: While BCI aims to promote practice-oriented learning, enforcement remains weak. Legal aid clinics, internships, and CLE programs are not uniformly implemented. Further, the historical jurisdictional tension between UGC and BCI leads to inconsistencies in curriculum design, accreditation and learning outcomes. 184th Law commission report had recommended integrated oversight mechanisms and better alignment between these bodies to ensure legal education that is both academically sound and professionally relevant. Currently, legal education in India also faces challenges such as adjusting to technological advancements, bridging the urban-rural divide, and eliminating the digital divide⁴¹. In addition, the absence of dedicated law universities across all states and the continued affiliation of many law colleges with general universities have contributed to inconsistencies and rigidity in curriculum design⁴². The unchecked rise of inadequately equipped private law colleges has further diluted educational quality. Students from economically weaker sections often face barriers to access, while graduates struggle with limited job prospects and concerns around declining professional standards⁴³. Legal aid services remain underfunded, research and innovation receive minimal attention, and the sector suffers from a persistent shortage of well-qualified, motivated faculty members.⁴⁴

6. SUGGESTION TO BRIDGE THE THEORY-PRACTICE DIVIDE

Legal curricula must move beyond the traditional rigid framework to inculcate multidisciplinary and clinical components such as technology, climate change, legal aid cells, live client clinics and simulation based learning. The practical papers should be made credit bearing. Institutions should diversify pedagogical methods by leveraging technology in forms of digital labs, ODR platforms, VR courtrooms, and AI-based legal tools. 184th Law Commission Report's recommendation for integrated oversight mechanisms should be operationalized via statutory or regulatory reform to do away with the problem of jurisdictional tensions between BCI and UGC.

Incentives and fellowships should be created for legal academicians and professionals to take on capacity building and teaching roles respectively. Even faculties should be made to engage with real cases to nip the problem in the bud.

Accreditation systems and examinations should focus on evaluating both theoretical and practical legal knowledge and capstone projects should be made compulsory. Various workshops for skill and holistic development of the students should be undertaken by the university. Fiscal and intellectual support should be provided to students to gain hands on experience. Practice ready graduates would bolster the public confidence in judicial legal apparatus of the nation.

Revitalising teaching methods: modern and adaptive teaching methods should be employed to ensure the effectiveness of legal education system.⁴⁵

7. CONCLUSION

Legal education today stands at a critical crossroad, where the age old dominance of doctrinal teaching is undergoing a shift to a more holistic model, but with a persistent divide between legal theory and practice still surviving evident from out-dated theory driven curriculum, teach to test ideology and a lack of practice ready graduates.

The transformation requires a paradigm shift: from focusing solely on legal knowledge to cultivating legal competence, ethical reasoning, adaptability, and technological fluency. Legal education at these crossroads demand this shift and the theory-practice divide can't be bridged using an incremental model.

Institutions must move beyond tokenism and symbolic compliance and should genuinely invest in practice based legal learning, where theory and practice go hand in hand. This includes rethinking assessment methods, upgrading faculty capabilities and infrastructure as per time and needs, and creating inclusive and innovation-driven learning environments.

⁴¹ *Bridging The Urban-Rural Digital Divide In India*, <https://inc42.com/resources/bridging-the-urban-rural-digital-divide-in-india/> (last visited May 19, 2024).

⁴² Legal Education in India, *supra* note 14.

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ *Id.*