

Growing globalisation and subsequent developments have broadened the scope of the legal profession. With a huge gap in the demand-and-supply of professionals in this field, law is moving from being a chance choice to an aware choice

The Long Arm of Law

V. BALAKISTA REDDY

Law has always been one of the most sought after professions. This field is closely associated, directly or indirectly, with the life of a common man.

Most of the prominent of freedom fighters and political leaders of our nation, like Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi, the first President of the country Dr. Rajendra Prasad, first Prime Minister Pandit Nehru, the first Home Minister Sardar Patel, Father of the Constitution Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, all had championed the art of advocacy. But legal education lost its luster post-independence and failed to get the importance that it deserved. It was disregarded and its dissemination was tendered to be taken care of by Central and State Universities as one of the departments or faculties of the Arts departments. Unlike engineering, technology, medicine or management, no premier institution was created solely for giving a boost to legal education in the country. The credibility of a law degree and legal education was very low and the study of law was taken as a loser's choice or a last resort in one's career.

This obliviousness and indifference towards the profession did pose multiple challenges to the future of legal education and legal profession in the country. However, with the growing globalisation and developments the tide has changed and the legal profession is once again becoming one of the most sought after career options. It is moving from being a mere chance to an aware choice.

Students interested in opting for law as a career option may opt to pursue an integrated five-year course after the completion of their intermediate education or choose a three-year law course after graduation in any discipline. In the present scenario, the traditional three-year course is fast giving way to the five-year course which is seen as a more comprehensive and practical option. The five-year course attracts those who are more serious and dedicated to the profession and wish to take up law as a career — be it as a litigator, or any other kind of legal professional, as it seeks to train the students in a focused and specialised manner. In most cases colleges run the three-year course mainly for those whose main discipline in graduation is something other than law, or for working professionals who want to pursue legal education as an additional qualification.

Emergence of national law schools

The 1990s brought the era of globalisation and opened up vast opportunities for young law graduates in newer areas of legal practice like corporate, economic and intellectual property rights laws, amongst other nascent turfs of practice. Indian and international law firms opened their doors for law school graduates. At present India has 18 National Law Schools or Universities, each created by a legislation passed by the respective state governments in order to enable the creation of an atmosphere of world-class quality legal education in the country.

Though created by separate state governments, the National Law Schools are similar in their nature of establishment, objectives, autonomy, faculty, syllabus, admission process and even the campus placements. Each of these Law Schools has close links with the higher judiciary, either the Chief Justice of India or the Chief Justice of the respective High Court happens to be the Chancellor of these Law Schools. All National Law Schools are fully residential and the intake of the students is through a highly competitive common entrance examination, the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) just like in the case of IITs or IIMs. Currently, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad is rated the top law school in India. These premiere institutions also provide financial assistance and fellowships to deserving students.

New career opportunities

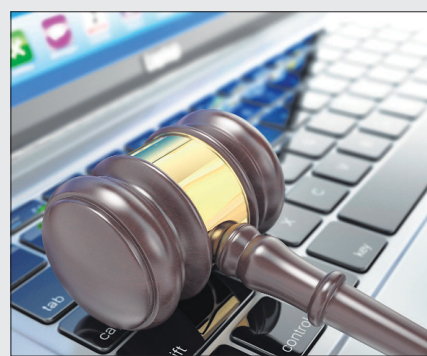
The traditional career options for law graduates were to join legal practice as a civil or a criminal lawyer and either argue for settlement of property or land disputes or defend an alleged offender. Another option



NEW ARENAS FOR LEGAL EAGLES

Air and space law

Air and Space Law is fast emerging as an important branch of law. The scientific and technological developments in the field of air and space are so rapid that they have posed challenge to the legal fraternity. The increasing volume of disputes in the field of air and space has also resulted in manifold increase in the legal practitioners working in the field of air and space in developed countries like United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Russia, Japan, France, Australia etc. NUJS, Kolkata is offering Post Graduate Diploma in Air and Space Law (PGDASL). NALSAR, Hyderabad also offers a similar course. The course is designed to provide an in depth understanding of Air Law and Space Law along with some fundamental principles of public international law related to air and space. The course would be extremely useful to the candidates having wide-ranging background, from legal to scientific. The objectives of these courses are to cater to the needs of unprecedented aviation growth coupled with commercialisation of space and telecom industries, which calls for thousands of skilled manpower to meet the managerial requirements of rapidly growing airports, airlines, aerospace and telecommunication sectors.



Cyber law

Cyber Law is an emerging career in the field of law which covers the legal issues related to use of the Internet. It is less a distinct field of law than intellectual property or contract law, as it is a domain covering many areas of law and regulation. Some leading topics include internet access and usage, privacy, freedom of expression, and jurisdiction. Cyber law tends to relate to issues including both Internet law and the patent and copyright aspects of computer technology and software.

How to get in

To opt for a course in Cyber Law one

should have passed Class XII and to pursue a Post Graduate course one needs to have an LLB degree. Candidates should be able to work with lots of agility and dedication and should have proper knowledge of the ever-changing Cyber world and its emerging trends. Law students can specialise in Cyber Laws to have a professional edge and be equipped to face challenges of the changing tech. Studying Cyber Laws can help the IT professionals to provide better organisational security to their organisations and let them know about the better legal aspects of the issues related to e-commerce.

Where to study

NALSAR University, Hyderabad (www.nalsar.ac.in)

Department of Law, University of Delhi (www.du.ac.in)

Cyber Law College NAAVI (www.cyberlawcollege.com)

The Indian Law Institute, New Delhi (www.ili.ac.in)

National Law School of India University, Bangalore (www.nls.ac.in)

Asian School of Cyber Laws, Pune (www.asianlaws.org).

was to join the Judicial Services of the state as a Munsif or Magistrate after passing a competitive examination and work as a Civil Judge or Judicial Magistrate. While the traditional options remain open, students also have a whole new range of options thrown open by the emerging global economy to a graduate from the top law schools in the country. Emerging options for a law school graduate are as follows:

- International Law Firms
 - Indian Law Firms
 - Consulting and Advisory Companies
 - Corporate Legal Departments
 - Legal Process Outsourcing (LPO) Companies
 - NGOs and Global Organisations
 - Higher education
 - In-house counsels in government sector enterprises.
- Even in litigation or legal practice, the traditional options of civil and criminal law no more hold the key. In the post-liberalisation period, newer areas of legal practice have emerged, like Corporate Laws, Securities Laws, Economic Laws, Taxation Laws, Arbitration Laws, Intellectual Property Laws, Real Estate Laws, Cyber Laws, Environment and Consumer Protection Laws, etc.

Role call

As mentioned above a lawyer's role is multifaceted and varied so it is very important for students to know about the range of

roles that they can fit into in their career and then decide on the specialisation that they want to pursue in their course.

Firm issues: A lawyer working in a law firm works in either litigation or corporate side of the law firm. He ensures all legal compliances for the firm's clients which are deals of the company. From a simple fund-raising or issue of shares to a complex joint venture, amalgamation or merger or technology collaboration, a law firm associate is an integral entity of such undertakings. He provides inputs to the company's lawyers in the court if company is facing a legal dispute. Similarly, a lawyer working in a consulting group or advisory company plays a critical role by providing expert legal advice on issues ranging from environment protection to investment banking.

Framing government policies: The government recruits lawyers to work in a range of capacities. Some may have a more traditional role as "counsel" while the others are responsible for the formulation of the nation's governing policies and principles. While the counsel's work is more like that of a "lawyer" where their client is the government and they will represent and advise the government and will engage in litigation. The lawyers working in the policy units of the government guide the government through policy forming and legislative decision making, which includes articulating strategies and community

initiatives, negotiations and the development of government policy itself. Whether it is from a gender, racial, economic, environmental or social perspective, advising the government on policy related issues offers law graduates the chance to use their critical analysis abilities.

Conflict resolution: Recent trends have shown that more and more people, including corporates, are moving to the resolution of disputes by way of alternative mechanisms, without having to approach the labyrinth judicial system of courts. This development has opened up vistas for a career in conflict resolution which may be appropriate for students who have particular interest in helping others formulate creative solutions to disputes within an informal setting. Mediation and arbitration are the popular alternative dispute resolution processes that employ many lawyers. The process calls for a trained, neutral party to assist disputing parties to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement.

A mediator or an arbitrator may be involved in the resolution of a variety of disputes dealing with significantly diverse subject matter; disputes can include everything from family law to commercial law. A person interested in becoming a mediator should focus on acquiring the requisite skills for the profession; the Faculty of Law offers comprehensive training in alternative dispute resolution. On a more pragmatic note, students should be aware that there are relatively few full-time paid positions available in this field.

For students who don't want to pursue the mainstream options, may find an alternative legal career option, in accordance with their area of interest which would be equally lucrative and fruitful as the conventional ones. That is to say that, with your LLB in hand, a successful career in the corporate sector, the public sector, or in the growing spectrum of alternative areas is equally possible and promising. Some examples of alternative areas of practice in which your legal training may become an asset are in multitudinous dimensions of law-related and in non-law areas. In today's marketplace, a legal education can provide a range of opportunities extending far beyond the realm of traditional law firm work.

— Prof Reddy is Professor, International Law and Head, Centre for Air and Space Law (CASL), NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad

TOP Law colleges

National Law University, Delhi

www.nlu.edu.ac.in

Seats: 80

USP: The university strikes a balance between academics, extra curricular and co curricular activities with phenomenal success at national as well as international moot court competitions, debates and sporting events. It also has short-term diploma courses in Competition Policy and Law, environment law etc.

Campus Law Centre, Delhi University Delhi

www.du.ac.in

Seats: 500

USP: Five-year integrated BA LLB (Hons). The Campus Law Centre is claimed to be one of the largest law schools in India. The school attracts students from every state of India and more than 20 countries of Asia, Europe, America and South Africa

Amity Law School Noida-Delhi/NCR

www.amity.edu/als.

Seats: 80

USP: Five-year integrated BA LLB (Hons) It has been ranked as one of the Top-10 law schools in the country in a recent survey.

University School of Law and Legal Studies

Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIPU)

Delhi

www.ipu.ac.in/

Seats: BA LLB(Hons)-40, BBA LLB(Hons)-20

USP: Five-year BA LLB/BBA LLB course in University Campus and 5 other affiliated institute.

Army Institute of Law Mohali

www.armyinstituteoflaw.org

Seats: 80

USP: Established under the aegis of Army Welfare Education Society (AWES) it offers five-year integrated BA LLB (Hons) .

University Institute of Legal Studies Panjab University, Chandigarh

<http://uils.puchd.ac.in>

Seats: 150

USP: Focus on honing 'DRAIN' — Drafting, Research, Advocacy, Interviewing and Negotiation— skills of the students.

Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law Patiala

www.rgnupatiala.org

Seats: 80

USP: Five-year integrated bachelor's course with extensive and intensive classroom instruction and participative learning atmosphere.

School of Legal Studies Guru Nanak Dev University, Jalandhar

www.gndu.ac.in

USP: Started in 2002 it is approved by Bar Council of India (BCI), Government of India. School of Legal Studies imparts undergraduate level programme in the field of law— BA LLB. It is a five-year integrated programme

Jindal Global Law School Sonapat

www.jgls.org

Seats: 180

USP: It is a non-profit university established by the Haryana Private Universities (Second Amendment). Offers specialisation in three streams. Foreign collaborations are a highlight of this institute.

Faculty of Law, MDU Rohtak

www.mdurohtak.com

Seats: 320

USP: It has a rich collection of 26,000 books in its library and it is regularly publishing its own MDU Law Journal on annual basis

Institute of Law and Management Studies Gurgaon

www.indiastudychannel.com

Seats: 120

USP: Five-year integrated BA LLB (Hons), Established: 2002

Dehradun School of Law Dehradun

www.lawcollegedehradun.com

Seats: 240

USP: A premier institute of Uttarakhand this law school offers a five-year integrated course for law enthusiasts.

(Based on selected lists from India Today, Outlook and other surveys)

Placement scenario

Annual campus placements at the top law schools such as NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad have started witnessing the active presence of Magic Circle Firms of UK (London's top law firms) like Allen & Overy, Link later Herbert Smith and Clifford Chance — also largest in the world, every year in law schools. Top consulting companies like Boston Consulting Group, McKinsey, Ernst & Young and KPMG are recruiting law school graduates on a regular basis. Almost all top Indian law firms and companies as well as regulatory bodies of the government like SEBI and Legal Process Outsourcing (LPO)



companies like Pangea3 are recruiting students. Some of the law school graduates opt out of placements

each year either to start a career in legal practice under India's top lawyers in the Supreme Court and High Courts or to study at some of the world's best law schools like Oxford, Cambridge, Yale, Harvard, Columbia, LSE and the Fletcher School. They are claiming the prestigious Rhodes and British Chevening scholarships almost every year.

The purse

Since the nature of job prospects is very diverse, the salary can vary tremendously. By and large Law has always been regarded as one of the most highly paid professions not only in India but all over the world. The

remuneration of a lawyer depends on many factors. It may vary depending upon the nature of the legal case and the status of the client involved. A fresh independent lawyer earns "zero to Rs 15,000" a month in litigation. While firms have fewer vacancies, "good" ones noticed in courts get picked by seniors, says Pravin H Parekh, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India. Further on, a lawyer's income depends on factors such as reputation, expertise and kinds of cases handled. There are advocates who are said to charge Rs 5 lakh to Rs 1 crore for one court appearance.