

In 1977, Prof. Upendra Baxi authored his widely prevalent essay titled “*A Note Towards a Socially Relevant Legal Education*”. In his essay, Prof. Baxi extended proposals to reform the qualitative curriculum and pedagogy of the existing system of legal education to meet social and modern needs of society. Prof. Baxi recommended revisions to *inter alia* the structure of law schools, enrolment patterns, curricular profiles, pedagogy, library resources.

However, the state of legal education witnessed little change. Hoping to address the crisis of credibility faced by legal education in India, Prof. N.R. Madhava Menon dared and established the 1st integrated 5-year legal curriculum in 1987, hoping to transpose the American Law School model. This course was tailored to the emerging needs of industry and adopted modern curricular and pedagogic processes. However, the lack of structural reforms since the inception of the first national law school has challenged the diffusion of legal education.

Resultantly, the hope of achieving the reality as envisaged by Prof. Baxi and Menon is far and bleak. The Hon’ble Delhi High Court, as recently as on 11th January 2023, has requested the Bar Council of India to revisit their curriculum and pedagogy to meet the inter-disciplinary demands of the contemporary times.

Apart from the curriculum, the accessibility to quality legal education poses a damp outlook. Over the last 2 decades, there has been a proliferation of law schools. Yet, the accessibility and availability of quality legal education is mired by costly courses and a façade of merit. The price of premium law schools is becoming increasingly unaffordable for the common man. At the same time, the mechanism of admitting young pupils to the profession is spread across entrance exams which lay emphasis on the knowledge of English in place of vernacular languages and critical thinking.

Such processes result in the profession of law becoming exclusively a privileged & rich people’s club - while excluding diversity & plurality of backgrounds. Given the importance of legal education in any democratic society, it is essential that the issues associated with legal education be discussed, deliberated and addressed. In this vein, the Society desires to reflect upon the present state of legal education in India that critically requires an overhaul to be socially responsive and accessible.