

SOUTHERN REGION LAW TEACHERS CONCLAVE

2023-24



Manupatra in collaboration with RV University, Bengaluru organized the Southern Region Law Teachers Conclave 2023-24 on the theme of 'Empowering Legal Educators for tomorrow' on 20th January 2024 at the campus of RV University.

The one-day conclave strived to inspire discussion on how educators can navigate the challenges and opportunities in the evolving landscape of legal education. The Conclave witnessed participation of around 150 teachers from across law schools and colleges.

The Chief Guest for the Conclave was Hon'ble Mr. Justice P.S Dinesh Kumar, Judge, High Court of Karnataka who is now recommended by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India for alleviation to the office of Chief Justice of High Court of Karnataka. Other Dignitaries included Prof. (Dr.) Y.S.R Murthy, Vice Chancellor and Founding Dean, School of Law, RV University who delivered the plenary address and Mr. Deepak Kapoor, CEO, Manupatra who shared the vision behind the Law Teachers Conclave.



Mr. Justice Dinesh Kumar emphasized the need for law teachers to be abreast of latest developments to be able to equip the students given the rapid technological changes which are expected. He spoke of the evolving nature of legal education by contrasting the methods employed by practitioners and scholars over different generations. He pointed out that observation and assistance under senior lawyers was no longer the sole source of learning and growth for the current crop of legal professionals. With the exponential increase in access to data and information, there is a need for legal professionals to prepare for an imminent overhaul of the system in the next decade. He thus stressed the need for legal educators to undergo training on the implications of cyber law and related legislations to ensure that they remain at the forefront of evolving educational methodologies that incorporate technology.

Mr. Deepak Kapoor CEO, Manupatra shared that the Law Teachers Conclave is a first of its kind event that recognizes the significant role of law teachers, and seeks to empower the educators to excel in their mission of nurturing the next generation of legal professionals. This unique opportunity envisions creating something that does not yet exist – a platform where law teachers can come together, collaborate, facilitate knowledge sharing, and grow networks. The Conclave made its debut with the Western Region Conclave held in association with GNLU, Gandhinagar. And the Northern Region Conclave is being held in association with NLU, Delhi on 3rd February 2024.

The Conclave consisted of panel discussions and insights from around 20 eminent speakers. The speakers ranged from partners of law firms, general counsels of companies and legal academicians, all of whom deliberated on the essential competencies required for students of law and the role of law teachers in facilitating the development of these competencies. It included 4 sessions on various sub-themes.

Session 1: Cultivating Global Competencies: A Teacher's Guide to Student Preparation



The session provided a dynamic platform for industry professionals to share invaluable insights into the skills essential for students and the criteria they consider when hiring team members.

The panel comprised:

Prof. (Dr.) Avinash Dadhich, Dean and Director, Manipal Law School, Bengaluru, Ms. Deepalakshmi Vadivelan, General Counsel, Vice President Legal, Qness Corp Ltd., Ms. Tejal Patil, Senior Vice President, General Counsel, WIPRO Ltd. The session was moderated by Dr. Arpitha H.C, Assistant Professor, School of Law, RV University.

The session discussed the multifaceted dimensions of cultivating global competencies. Ms. Tejal Patil, emphasized that beyond being a foundational degree, law education should focus on essential skills such as Project Management, Analytical Thinking, Innovation, Active Learning, Technology, and Resilience. She highlighted the significance of revisiting the fundamentals of ethics and suggested a critical evaluation of the number of elective courses offered in the curriculum.

Prof (Dr.) Avinash Dadhich, urged for legal studies to extend beyond the confines of classrooms, advocating for exploration beyond textbooks and embracing interdisciplinary learning. He emphasized the need for law schools to prepare students for life rather than just jobs.



Deepalakshmi Vadivelan, eloquently delved into the intricate facets of a lawyer's role. Beyond legal intricacies, she underscored the importance of up-skilling, adopting a global approach, and transforming lawyers into strategic partners and decision-makers. She emphasized that soft skills are crucial and can become a competitive advantage in the evolving legal landscape.

The session served as a thought-provoking launch into discussions on global competencies, highlighting the evolving nature of legal professions and the imperative for educators to align legal education with the dynamic demands of the industry.

Session 2: Technology in the Classroom

The session was led by Ms. Suhasini Rao, Founder and Director at Cube Route Advisory Ltd. She delved upon the use of technology in three aspects of Learning, Classroom & Academic Management, Content Dissemination & Consumption and for Internal & External Interaction.

The advantages of technology, from bringing about transparency, enabling independent learning, ensuring inclusivity, to providing a one-stop solution for all stakeholders, were compelling. The plethora of tech tools recommended, from LMS platforms to voice-to-text applications, Google classroom and workspace, Moodle platform, YouTube, public website etc. threw light on the untapped potential of use of tech within classrooms today.

She emphasized that utilizing technology does not have to be capital-intensive. Many times, it is assumed that incorporating tech will involve significant costs. The fact is that there are numerous tools available in the public domain or free to use, allowing you to experiment and get started without substantial expenses.

The session also highlighted concerns such as efficacy, content quality, skill training, and the potential for overload. While the omnipresence of technology in education is undeniable, maintaining a delicate balance is essential to ensure it effectively serves its intended purpose.



Session 3: Legal Education in the 21st Century: Role of Law Teachers

Professor Balakista Reddy's insightful session delved into the future of legal education, shedding light on five pivotal factors influencing its trajectory: Globalization, Liberalization, Privatization, Digitalization, and Covidization.

One significant aspect discussed was the impact of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) within the World Trade Organization (WTO) on legal education. This international agreement added a layer of complexity to the evolving global legal landscape, prompting law teachers to contemplate adapting their teaching methodologies to align with emerging global standards.

He also dwelled upon the concept of Academic Social Responsibility, emphasized the need for multidisciplinary teaching in legal education, stressed on the necessity of collaboration between academia, industry, and government, and drawing parallels with advancements in other fields, he questioned why legal education could not similarly benefit from technological innovations.



Session 4 - Decoding Expectations from Law Educators



The session brought together seasoned professionals, Prof. A. V. Narasimha Rao, Director of ICFAI Law School, Hyderabad, Dr. V. Vijaykumar, former Vice Chancellor of National Law Institute University, Bhopal, and Prof. (Dr.) Chidananda Reddy Patil, Research Head at KILPAR. Their insights into the multifaceted role of law teachers, encompassing both classroom instruction and administrative responsibilities, deeply resonated with the audience.

Few of the key points made were, that the teachers need to know the nature of classroom. While leveraging technology is essential, it's crucial not to become overly dependent. In the event of a technological glitch, the class should be able to continue seamlessly.

They encouraged educators to learn on the job, drawing inspiration from role models and being unafraid to make and learn from mistakes.

Teaching goes beyond mere employment; it is a commitment. Educators are encouraged to foster an academic environment that promotes effective teaching and learning.

Need for Teacher Training: The panel recommended that the University Grants Commission (UGC) should provide a list of qualified individuals with Ph.D. and mandate a six-month diploma course for teachers before they commence teaching.

The session highlighted the reciprocal learning process between teachers and students. Encouraging educators to learn from students and the questions posed by them.



In his concluding remarks, Prof. (Dr.) V. Vijaykumar aptly summed up the essence of the session: "I should become the teacher whom I wanted to have."

In the session on "Inclusive Teaching: Strategies for Legal Education," Dr. Ananth Padmanabhan, Dean of Vinayaka Mission's Law School (VMLS), presented a case study showcasing innovative approaches being tested at his institution. At a time when society increasingly emphasizes diversity, equity, and inclusion, VMLS is experimenting with actively addressing these themes within the classroom, by using techniques such as visual learning, translation of materials, activity-based learning and contextualizing content to bridge language barriers.

The Northern Region Law Teachers Concave is scheduled to be held on February 3, 2024 in association with NLU, Delhi at the university's Dwarka Campus.

Register here for your invitation.

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