

## **7.2 Best practices**

### **1. Promotion of research**

#### **A. Objective of the practice**

Promoting research is an essential best practice of the university which has contributed to its emergence as an eminent research institution in India in a short duration of time. Developing research capabilities is intrinsic to its vision of imparting comprehensive and interdisciplinary legal education. This strong culture of research along with academic rigor enables NLUD to work towards the dissemination of legal knowledge and contribute to national development.

#### **B. The Context**

The institutional research is aimed at promoting a comprehensive legal framework for contemporary issues of law which have appeared as a challenge to the society. Research promoted by the university should be informed by the ethical values which are the touchstone of a civilized society and a progressive nation. The research at the same time should promote rule of law and gives access of justice to all. It should be cross jurisdictional and multidisciplinary so that the solutions it advocates are informed by multiple perspectives and are scrutinized by the scholarship in multiple disciplines.

#### **C. The Practice**

The institution has identified contemporary issues of the society which should be resolved by law. Issues like criminal justice reform, gender justice, corporate governance, dispute resolution need policy reform and solutions which can be operationalized in the real-world environment. For a research-focused university undertaking such research is essential because it has to produce lawyers who are legally competent and socially relevant. The interface and the connect between legal education and research on areas on different dimensions of social and economic aspects assists the university in achieving its goal.

The faculty members at the university are producing extensive writings as papers, articles, research reports, chapters and books. Chapters in international books, edited books with international publishers like Springer and Routledge provide good examples. Some articles have been recognized on Scopus and Web of science indices. The university through its centres has produced extensive research which acknowledged both nationally and internationally. The P39A, CCG, CIIPC and CLJD are few centres which have contributed in writing many research reports and have also undertaken many international research projects. Another centre CCLG has carried out regulatory impact assessment studies and prepared a Commercial Court Guide for the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice.

Conducting research, especially inter-disciplinary research requires sufficient financial resources, the University constantly strives to acquire new grants and financial support from government bodies, authorities, agencies as well as undertake collaborations with other universities and private actors, in order to pursue its research agenda.

#### **D. Evidence of Success**

The institution has created a world class state of the art research infrastructure for promoting research. The University is committed to enabling and fostering an environment suitable for furthering research endeavors. It does so by providing access to resources including both online and offline resources. The library subscribes to every prominent database like SCC Online, Manupatra, Hein Online, JStor, Kluwer Arbitration, lexis Advanced as well as blogs including LiveLaw. Further, different journals, magazines, books and other resources are provided both in the offline and online mode. These resources are available to the students remotely where they can access the library digital resources even when they are not in Campus through Digital Access Portal.

It has established research centers and endowment chairs to promote and undertake path-breaking research. A spectrum of legal problems including death penalty, crimes against women and gender justice, access to justice for the marginalized, juvenile justice, corporate governance, open access of resources etc. have been studied and analyzed through various projects undertaken by faculty within the format of the centers. These endeavors actively engage students in different stages of diverse research projects helping young aspiring lawyers to think critically, become well-versed in legal concepts, and perceive and practice law from a holistic viewpoint. The institution has strengthened its academic, research and industry collaborations consistently over the years which has resulted in cutting edge research and innovative outcomes such as Startups project that are expected to contribute substantially to the innovation landscape in India. It promotes inter-disciplinary research of law, technology, copyright law and scholarly publications through joint seminars, certificate courses and research projects.

The University has set up an Academic and Research Planning Department (ARPD) to consolidate, strategize and execute the University's vision as an institution of higher education and research. ARPD moderates and facilitates research activities for the University and its faculty. It enables collaborations with foreign Universities and researchers, and creates an environment conducive to collective discourse to explore opportunities for professional partnerships.

#### **E. Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

The institution has to train its faculty for empirical research and new technological tools to facilitate the same. With an expanding staff, list of research centers and research agenda, the University has limited resources to provide for the infrastructural and logistical resources required for the smooth and efficient functioning of research centers and other research agendas. The documentation process required to the funding requires personnel trained in this behalf and consultants well experienced in these projects.

The institution has entered into collaborations with international and national academic institutions to facilitate exchange of faculty and students. This will open the door of cross exchange of ideas which will lead to interesting conversations and engagements. Interdisciplinary research, greater collaboration, academic courses, research output. This engagement will lead to policy and law reform. Students benefit greatly from such engagement because they get a first-hand insight of the real-life issues and challenges encountered in the implementation of law, especially by the marginalized groups in society. It also helps them to comprehend and critically interact with the workings of the law, as well as providing

them with a substantive method of bringing about real **change through the use of law as a social tool.**

## **F. Notes**

The institution has to keep the faculty motivated by coming up with incentive schemes and the curriculum updated in terms of the contemporary realities. Foremost to keep the research orientation on areas of law which need reform and contribute to their evolution is a requirement of the institution commitment for societal development and to balance this with the need to keep research agendas in sync with areas of law which will open job opportunities for students. Students have to be employable, training and skill development. The teaching assignment and administrative preoccupations, project evaluation engages the faculty time which takes away its focus from their research engagements.

## **2. Legal Aid and Outreach Programme**

### **A. Introduction**

The University engages in various activities and initiatives to promote and foster a culture of community engagement and service where students are sensitized to local and national public concerns and trained in the dissemination of legal awareness as well as counselling and representation of clients concerns with the assistance of empaneled lawyers.

### **B. Objectives of the Practice**

The idea of justice enunciated as a core theme of the Indian constitution is sought to be given a practical orientation through institutional outreach programs of the university. The journey of the law student through the extensive, rigorous academic program is attempted to be supplemented with the strong fervour to become an instrument of change in a largely disadvantaged society where they are situated. This is to be accomplished by sensitization of the impressionable minds to the barriers to access to justice due to indigency or ignorance and to effect potential solutions.

### **C. The Context**

The blueprint of action for such a mammoth task shall be achieved through collective and conscientious efforts of students supervised by faculty, sustained in a consistent manner with tangible action plans adhering to timelines. The various stakeholders including Non-Governmental Organizations, Legal Service Authorities etc will be partnered for effective outcomes. Potential conflict situations are to be deescalated and finally diffused through effective client counselling as well as alternative dispute resolution methods or litigation through representation in courts that may be taken as a last resort. Herein, the students in collaboration with lawyers can contribute in a major manner to this justice task.

#### **D. The Practice**

The larger institutional vision of securing access to justice is attempted to be instilled through a mandatory component collective as well as voluntary efforts of students. The institution has an active Legal Aid Committee that is engaged in a diverse range of activities. These include Para-Legal Volunteer (PLV) Training Workshop, writing petitions, Legal Awareness campaigns, Community Outreach Programs to increase awareness towards one's rights and Pro-bono Panels where committee student members actively participate in client counselling and representation at court alongside selected external lawyers. It also strives to provide legal assistance in collaboration with institutions like the National Human Rights Commission.

#### **E. Evidence of Success**

The university runs a Legal Aid Clinic through which students undertake clinical work by assisting people seeking legal counsel. There is a special clinic for assistance in Labour Laws. In this Clinic a network of volunteers undertakes the responsibility of liaising with trade unions and workers to ensure the implementation of labour laws and the dissemination of workers' rights. The University also carries out legal awareness and community outreach programmes to spread awareness about various rights.

#### **F. Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

The present momentum for legal aid remains underutilized in terms of the number of students who may voluntarily be involved in various projects and outreach programs relating to a vast majority of issues. The sources of funding are usually sparing without being able to cover the vast expenses involved in conducting successful outreach programs.

The relative lack of participation of students in a voluntary manner in various activities relating to legal aid/outreach in college life has to be given a major overhaul through reinforcing its significance in the long run pro-bono exercise as legal practitioners as well as in other avenues of the legal careers. It shall be an extension of their career trajectories to help them evolve a better human being.

An eminent institution placed in a strategic location as in the capital city of the country bestows it with conceivable advantages. The primary public institutions like Supreme Court, High Courts, NCW, NCPCR, NALSA can be partnered with to initiate a diverse portfolio of legal aid activities that can benefit the bereft sections of society.