



NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, JODHPUR

THE JODHPUR DECLARATION ON ENVISIONING A TRANSFORMATIVE, EQUITABLE AND GLOBALLY RESPONSIVE ARCHITECTURE FOR LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA (2025)

PREAMBLE

THE VICE-CHANCELLORS, DEANS, SENIOR LEGAL ACADEMICS, POLICY ARCHITECTS, AND STAKEHOLDERS IN LEGAL EDUCATION ACROSS THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA, ASSEMBLED AT THE VICE-CHANCELLORS' CONCLAVE 2025 AT NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, JODHPUR ("NLUJ"), RECOGNISE DELIBERATIONS OF THE CONCLAVE, SUBSTANTIALLY ENRICHED BY THE RIGOROUS ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENTS DOCUMENTED IN THE NLUJ LAW REVIEW (VOL. 11, ISSUE 1) AND THE COMPREHENSIVE TECHNICAL SESSION REPORTS, HAVE LAID BARE THE STRUCTURAL, PEDAGOGICAL, AND INFRASTRUCTURAL EXIGENCIES AFFLICTING THE PRESENT LEGAL EDUCATION APPARATUS.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE FOUNDATIONAL ROLE PLAYED BY LEGAL EDUCATION SHAPING DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP, ACCESS TO JUSTICE, AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE, WE AFFIRM OUR SHARED COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING A LEGAL EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM THAT IS INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE, FUTURE-READY, AND GLOBALLY ENGAGED.

REITERATE OUR AWARENESS OF THE NECESSITY TO ADDRESS LONG-STANDING REGULATORY FRAGMENTATION, INSTITUTIONAL DISPARITIES, PEDAGOGICAL STAGNATION, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC EXCLUSION THAT CONTINUE TO HINDER THE REALISATION OF LEGAL EDUCATION AS A TRANSFORMATIVE PUBLIC GOOD.

DECLARE THROUGH THIS INSTRUMENT, WE RESOLVE TO FORGE A TRANSFORMATIVE, EQUITABLE, AND GLOBALLY RESPONSIVE LEGAL EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM, AND TO PURSUE ITS REALISATION THROUGH SUSTAINED INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION, POLICY DIALOGUE, AND PRINCIPLED REFORM.



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I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

WE REAFFIRM OUR CONVICTION TO UPHOLD:

- THAT LEGAL EDUCATION IS A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT AND A DEMOCRATIC NECESSITY, TO BE TREATED AS A VITAL COMPONENT OF THE NATION'S PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE.
- THAT FISCAL INVESTMENT IN LEGAL EDUCATION MUST BE ENHANCED, EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTED, AND TRANSPARENTLY ADMINISTERED.
- THAT CURRICULAR AUTONOMY, ACADEMIC FREEDOM, AND REGULATORY CLARITY ARE INDISPENSABLE TO VITALITY OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.
- THAT INCLUSIVITY—REGIONAL, POLITICAL, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC—MUST BE THE BEDROCK OF ALL POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN ADMISSIONS AND INSTRUCTION OF LAW.
- LEGAL EDUCATION MUST CULTIVATE NOT ONLY COMPETENCE BUT ALSO CONSCIENCE, COMPASSION, AND COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE.
- THAT FACULTY DEVELOPMENT, PEDAGOGICAL RENEWAL, AND INCENTIVISED RESEARCH ARE CENTRAL TO THE FUTURE OF INDIAN LEGAL EDUCATION.
- THAT NLUS AS AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTES MUST LEAD THE WAY IN IMPLEMENTING A PARADIGM SHIFT TOWARDS INTER-DISCIPLINARILY, PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING, AND EXPERIENTIAL LEGAL EDUCATION.
- THAT TECHNOLOGICAL ADOPTION MUST BE HUMANE, INCLUSIVE, AND ETHICALLY GOVERNED. AI MUST AUGMENT, NOT REPLACE, THE ETHICAL AND HUMANISTIC FOUNDATIONS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION.
- THAT LAW SCHOOLS MUST PREPARE STUDENTS WITH GLOBAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE WHILE STAYING GROUNDED THE INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL ETHOS.



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II. ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT, UNIVERSITIES, AND REGULATORS:

1. REFORMING THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF LEGAL EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGING INVESTMENT

- REAFFIRM THE NEED TO GRANT NLUS THE STATUS OF INSTITUTIONS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE, ENSURING PREDICTABLE FUNDING, INFRASTRUCTURAL SUPPORT, AND EQUITABLE RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION.
- URGE THE UNION AND STATE GOVERNMENTS TO JOINTLY ESTABLISH A DEDICATED NATIONAL FUND TO ENSURE INFRASTRUCTURAL PARITY, TECHNOLOGICAL ENABLEMENT, STUDENT WELFARE, AND INNOVATION IN CURRICULUM DELIVERY.
- BESEECH THE STATE GOVERNMENTS TO RELEASE THE DEDICATED SEED-FUNDING FOR NEWLY ESTABLISHED NLUS IN COMMITTED AND SCHEDULED BOUND MANNER.
- GREATER AUTONOMY TO NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITIES.

2. DEMOCRATISE LEGAL EDUCATION

- PROMOTE PREPARATORY FELLOWSHIPS, OUTREACH INITIATIVES, AND SUPPORT FOR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES.
- ENCOURAGE INCREASE SCHOLARSHIPS, HOSTEL SUPPORT, AND DIGITAL ACCESS FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED STUDENTS.
- ENDORSE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN FACULTY RECRUITMENT TO ENSURE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND IDEOLOGICAL HETEROGENEITY ON CAMPUSES.



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- STANDARDISE DIVERSITY INDICATORS ACROSS NLUS TO MONITOR INCLUSION, AND SUPPORT REGULAR DIVERSITY AUDITS.
- DEVELOP AND INSTITUTIONALISE COMPREHENSIVE MEASURES AND INTERNAL MECHANISMS AIMED AT SAFEGUARDING THE RIGHTS, DIGNITY, AND WELL-BEING OF ALL MINORITY GROUPS WITHIN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES.

3.CURRICULAR TRANSFORMATION AND ACADEMIC FLEXIBILITY

- REDESIGNING UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE CURRICULA TO PRIORITISE SOCIAL JUSTICE, ETHICS, LEGAL TECHNOLOGY, INTERDISCIPLINARY, AND CLINICAL TRAINING.
- LEGAL AID, POLICY RESEARCH, AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING SHALL BE INSTITUTIONALISED AS CREDIT-BEARING, MANDATORY COMPONENTS OF ALL LAW DEGREES.
- REITERATE THE NEED TO DEVISE METHODS FOR FACILITATING RESOURCE SHARING (BOTH MATERIAL AND HUMAN) ACROSS NLUS VIA BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL AGREEMENTS.
- ENCOURAGE THE CREATION OF JOINT PROGRAMMES WITH FOREIGN INSTITUTIONS TO GLOBALISE INDIAN LEGAL EDUCATION WHILE MAINTAINING CULTURAL INTEGRITY.
- COMMIT TO FULLY IMPLEMENT OTHER EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN THE SPIRIT OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY, 2020 (“NEP 2020”).



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4..FACULTY CAPACITY BUILDING AND RESEARCH PROMOTION

- ESTABLISH FACULTY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTES FOR PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING TO ENCOURAGE SOCIALLY IMPACTFUL LEGAL RESEARCH.
- WORK WITH GOVERNMENTS, PRIVATE CORPORATIONS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO CREATE FUNDEDRESEARCH CHAIRS AND INTERDISCIPLINARY GRANT SCHEMES
- INCENTIVISE FACULTY PUBLICATION, GLOBAL COLLABORATION, AND POLICY-ORIENTED STUDIES.
- INSTITUTIONALISE MENTORSHIP FELLOWSHIPS AND ACADEMIC SABBATICALS

5.ARTICULATION OF INSTITUTIONAL VISION

- MANDATE STRUCTURED VISIONING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR EVERY LAW UNIVERSITY, WITH PUBLIC ARTICULATION OF GOALS IN RESEARCH, PUBLIC SERVICE, AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION.
- FORMULATE EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMES TO ENSURE REGIONAL RELEVANCE OF NLUS IN LIGHT OF THEIR STATUS AS AUTONOMOUS STATE INSTITUTIONS.

6.DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ETHICAL AI USE

- DEVELOP A DIGITAL EQUITY CHARTER ENSURING UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO DEVICES, CONNECTIVITY, AND DIGITAL LIBRARIES.
- CONGRATULATE THE UNION GOVERNMENT ON THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF ONE NATION ONE SUBSCRIPTION SCHEME, AND HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR FURTHER EXPANSION OF SUCH OPEN-ACCESS PLATFORMS FOR BROADER DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE.
- FORMULATE NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE ETHICAL DEPLOYMENT OF AI IN PEDAGOGY, EVALUATION, AND ADMINISTRATION OF LAW.



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7. JUSTICE - CENTRIC LEGAL EDUCATION

- TEACH STUDENTS TO BECOME LAWYERS WHO SOLVE REAL PROBLEMS, RESPECT HUMAN DIGNITY, AND RESTORE PUBLIC FAITH IN JUSTICE.
- PREPARE STUDENTS FOR DIVERSE ROLES, NOT ONLY AS LITIGATORS OR LAW-FIRM EMPLOYEES, BUT AS POLICY-MAKERS, MEDIATORS, REFORMERS, AND EDUCATORS.
- EMPHASISE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, PUBLIC SERVICE, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS PILLARS OF LEGAL TRAINING.
- CALL FOR A RENEWED FOCUS ON LEGAL AID CLINICS, AND PUBLIC INTEREST LAW INITIATIVES.

8. PROMOTION OF LIFELONG AND DECENTRALISED LEGAL LEARNING

- ENDORSE SHORT-TERM, MICRO-CREDENTIALLED LEARNING FOR PRACTITIONERS AND NON-LAW PROFESSIONALS.
- RE-ENVISION THE STRUCTURE OF THE FIVE-YEAR INTEGRATED LAW DEGREE BY INCORPORATING MULTIPLE ENTRY AND EXIT PATHWAYS, AND BY DEVELOPING ROBUST CREDIT TRANSFER MECHANISMS. RECOGNISE ONLINE CERTIFICATIONS WITHIN NATIONAL ACADEMIC CREDIT FRAMEWORKS IN LINE WITH THE NEP 2020.

9. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF REFORM REVIEW AND PERIODIC DIALOGUE

- ORGANISE AD PERIODICUM NATIONAL COLLOQUIUMS ON LEGAL EDUCATION, IN THE SPIRIT OF VICE-CHANCELLORS' CONCLAVE, TO DELIBERATE ON EMERGING ISSUES IN THE FIELD, EXCHANGE BEST PRACTICES, AND EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORM INITIATIVES.



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- CULTIVATE STRUCTURED THEMATIC CONSULTATIONS WITH THE LEGAL PROFESSION — INCLUDING THE JUDICIARY, THE BAR, AND CORPORATE LAW FIRMS — TO ENSURE THAT LEGAL EDUCATION REMAINS BOTH SOCIALLY ANCHORED AND PROFESSIONALLY RESPONSIVE.

IV. CONCLUSION

THE JODHPUR DECLARATION 2025 IS HEREBY ADOPTED AS A SOLEMN AND BINDING ARTICULATION OF COLLECTIVE INTENT. IT SEEKS TO SERVE NOT MERELY AS A BLUEPRINT FOR REFORM BUT AS A MORAL AND INSTITUTIONAL COMPASS TO STEER INDIAN LEGAL EDUCATION THROUGH THE COMPLEX TERRAIN OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

LEGAL EDUCATION MUST CONTINUALLY EVOLVE TO MEET THE ASPIRATIONS OF A DEMOCRATIC POLITY, THE DEMANDS OF AN INCREASINGLY GLOBALISED LEGAL ENVIRONMENT, AND THE ENDURING IMPERATIVE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE. THE FUTURE OF LEGAL EDUCATION IS NOT A SETTLED QUESTION; IT IS AN OPEN AND ONGOING DISCOURSE THAT MUST REMAIN ADAPTIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND THE BROADER SOCIETY IT SERVES.

IN REAFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT TO THIS SHARED ENDEAVOUR, WE PROPOSE TO OPERATIONALISE THESE COMMITMENTS THROUGH COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATIVE POLICY ENGAGEMENT, PROGRESSIVE REORIENTATION OF INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES, AND SUSTAINED PUBLIC ADVOCACY.

ADOPTED ON THIS 19TH DAY OF JANUARY 2025, AT NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, JODHPUR.