



NALSAR University of Law Hyderabad

PERFORMANCE OF THE INSTITUTION IN ONE AREA DISTINCTIVE TO ITS PRIORITY AND THRUST

Social Justice Mission of NALSAR

As a higher educational institution of a public character, NALSAR has an obligation to not only deliver taught courses but also to facilitate independent research. A third important function is to bring the knowledge of law closer to the general public so as to make legal knowledge relevant for solving practical problems. Hence, the University seriously invests in a range of extension activities that are focused on questions of social justice. Among these, there are four noteworthy interventions that have evolved over the period under report (2017-2022). *Firstly*, sponsored research projects that are focused on the delivery of socio-economic rights. *Secondly*, assistance for legislative drafting rendered to the Government of Telangana, Government of Andhra Pradesh as well as other State and local Governments on land rights. *Thirdly*, clinical legal education programmes that are focused on the needs of communities in the proximity of the NALSAR campus. *Fourthly*, the expansion of the distance education offerings to include areas focused on social justice.

1. With respect to the first line of engagements, the Centre for Legal Philosophy and Justice Education has anchored long term research projects supported by the Ford Foundation. The first of these projects that ran between 2014 and 2018 was focused on creating knowledge based interventions for improving the delivery of socio economic rights. As part of this project, the researchers produced full length books that examined issues such as housing, land use, rights of informal workers and education. This project led to scholarly publications which were brought out by leading international and domestic publishers. It also included an international conference hosted in November 2017 where external experts were invited to comment on the issues covered by the research project. With the support of the Ford Foundation, the University is now pursuing a second research project (2018-2023) which is focused on incubating an alternative theory of justice based on cooperation, contentment and care. As part of this project, a sizeable group of independent researchers and doctoral scholars are working on contemporary issues that lie at the interface of legal philosophy and social justice. This effort will culminate with the production of several doctoral dissertations and independent books that will become useful reference material. Further, the project has allowed for forging collaborative connections with other like-minded initiatives.



2. The Centre for Land and Tribal Rights (CLTR) has regularly assisted the State Governments of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in drafting Statutes, administrative regulations. Their interventions have led to the updating of older laws related to subjects such as land revenue, forest management and the delivery of social welfare schemes. The CLTR in partnership with LANDESA has organized numerous training programmes aimed at farmers with small land holdings so as to help them in protecting their interests. This has been done through legal literacy programmes, publications in multiple languages and legal assistance with drafting and engagement of advocates in pending cases. In the recent years, the Centre is also creating digital content to improve awareness about the legal remedies that are available to land owners in cases involving claims for partition, illegal encroachments and clarification of titles over land. Awareness is also being developed on how to use technology for creating more accurate and reliable records of land ownership. The Government of Telangana has also acknowledged the role of the Centre as it implemented block chain-based solutions for creating land records.
3. As part of the Clinical programmes of the University faculty members have created thematic clinical programs such as those focused on prison reforms, anti-poverty schemes and the investigation of cyber-crimes. This means that the students who are part of these clinical courses are taken for field visits and also involved in data collection that directly feeds into proposals for reforms and legal advice rendered to those in need. For example, the clinical programme on prison reforms is closely aligned with a research project funded by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India that generated suggestions for the better management of prisons. Another clinical programme involves students going on weekly visits to the villages in the proximity of NALSAR campus, where faculty and students give practical advice to the residents on how to solve local disputes related to private property, family relations and common property resources. In partnership with external collaborators, dedicated computer labs have been set up on campus that provide hands on training for the investigation and prosecution of cyber-crimes. These facilities are also used for our distance education courses focused on cyber security and data protection. The long-term goal is to equip law students, serving police officers and other personnel with the relevant technological and legal knowledge.
4. Earlier the distance education programmes at NALSAR had largely focused on practice areas of commercial law. With the Post Graduate Diploma in International Humanitarian Law being the only offering which was not based on commercial considerations. In recognition of the need to disseminate specialized knowledge in areas that address the needs of the society, the University started newer courses in areas such as the Protection of Animal Rights, Family Dispute Resolution, Criminal Law and Forensic Sciences. These courses were consciously added to the basket of distance education courses to meet the requirements of the general public. The distance education programmes as a whole are now catering to the needs of learners across age groups, professional



backgrounds and different parts of the country. Their reach has increased through the hybrid mode of instruction which became possible due to the early investments made in digital infrastructure.

These developments demonstrate the University's commitment to social justice concerns, both in terms of research-based interventions and direct interventions in ongoing social movements and litigation. The University has supported these interventions by deploying human capital and financial resources, often from its own revenues. Going forward the University plans to scale up its engagement in research, social advocacy and assistance in legislative drafting so as to better fulfill its duties to the general public.



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