

## ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE LEGAL CLINICS IN ENHANCING PRACTICAL SKILLS FOR LAW STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

*"The Legal Clinic" is a programme that teaches aspiring attorneys how to apply their academic knowledge and abstract ideas to real-world legal challenges, as stated in one description of the programme. Not only is the notion of a legal clinic relatively new, but the concept of a legal clinic itself has been around for quite some time. For the purpose of providing students of law with the opportunity to get experience with real-world law, which includes court processes and interpersonal issues, legal clinics have come into existence. Within the context of industrialised countries, both institutions and literature pertaining to legal clinics were written. Individuals who had graduated from law school were consequently skilled at applying the theoretical information they had acquired. It is unfortunate that Turkey does not make advantage of the approach, given the widespread respect that it has across the globe. As a consequence of this, students who graduate from law school in Turkey are seldom equipped with information that is suitable for actual situations. Consequently, since there is a gap between theory and practice, students are not adequately equipped to apply their knowledge when they are presented with circumstances that are taken from real life. The primary emphasis of this study is on the procedures that must be followed in order to establish a legal clinic in Turkey. Law students will have the opportunity to get practical experience by using the information they have gained in the classroom, and the road to justice will be paved with ease and speed.*

**Keywords:** Effectiveness, Online Legal Clinics, Enhancing Practical.

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### Introduction

Students of law have the opportunity to put their classroom knowledge into practice in what is known as a legal clinic or law clinic. So, according to Anglo-Saxon law, legal clinics originated as a way for students to get practical experience by working on actual cases and participating in legal aid initiatives. Students aspiring to careers in law might benefit from the use of a legal clinic, among other tools. In many ways, it's the legal equivalent of the famous medical clinic in terms of medical education. The legal clinic is an example of how the legal aid and law school movements have come together to address specific needs in the field.

While the concept of a legal clinic has its roots in the past, the idea itself is relatively new. There are a variety of methods that students may put what they study in law school into practice, including internships as an attorney, a prosecutor, or a notary public; simulated trials; solving actual cases; analysing adjudication; and many more. Nonetheless, this description is a location where individuals often go to receive legal assistance in the area of international law. These health centres do not charge patients since they are run by nonprofits. In its early days, legal clinics served as a way for students of law to get practical experience in a select number of nations. Nonetheless, these days you can find legal clinics all over the world, including the US, UK, Germany, France, Australia, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. By providing free legal representation to low-income people, they may have a significant impact on their communities. Meanwhile, legal clinics are maintained by law schools to teach students practical law

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practice while also providing free services to the public. For both academic and practical reasons, law students often volunteer their time in community legal clinics. However, the purpose of this paper is to argue that a legal clinic should include not just these specific locations but also any feasible means of doing so. Keep in mind that "the law is what the lawyers are." They are essential. What law schools produce determines both the law and the attorneys.

Clinic provides several advantages to educational institutions by exposing students to real-life conflicts. This is a great opportunity for students and recent grads to get practical experience while also showing that they care about their career prospects. Students get the opportunity to put their classroom knowledge into action at law clinics, where they may study the ins and outs of the legal profession from seasoned professionals while receiving hands-on training. Professional ethics and real-world experience may help students learn more effectively in the legal field, just as they do in the medical field, according to almost all educational experts. A legal clinic helps students apply what they learn in class by giving them real-life experience meeting with clients, filing cases, doing case research, and managing cases. Another way of looking at it is as a process. Legal education programmes often include case study and the memory of norms and exceptions as pedagogical tools.

While both are helpful, they fall short in providing students with a comprehensive enough image to grasp some concepts. Legal education and experience are inseparable. Under normal circumstances, students are not given much opportunity to present their arguments orally in front of a judge. The chance to work directly with clients throughout the case, much as a professional lawyer would, is made possible by legal clinics. A student enrolled in a clinical legal education programme may work towards many goals simultaneously. Skills in self-learning, choice-making, decision-implementation, legal practice, and moral education are all part of these goals. So is an awareness of the theory and practice of law in context. Giving low-income people access to legal representation and fostering better interpersonal skills are two other goals. When both the law school and the clinical teacher place an emphasis on one or more of these goals in a given programme, it results in programme differences.

#### **The Place of Legal Clinic in the Field of International Law**

Economic, political, cultural, and social addictions have all been amplified by globalisation in today's more interconnected world. Consequently, there has been a growing need for a variety of legal services that include many legal systems. In this manner, it has been assumed that attorneys, no matter where they reside, should be able to resolve any kind of conflict. After decades of being nothing more than a basic approach, legal clinics have become actual establishments in a big number of nations around the globe. The American, British, French, German, Austrian, Swiss, Australian, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Danish, and Chinese legal clinics are among the most prominent in the world. Those in need might get aid from legal clinic institutions in these nations. To get free legal representation, anybody may go to a clinic. Different kinds of legal clinics, categorised by region and the kinds of cases that students there manage, are available in the majority of these nations.

Legal clinics all throughout the globe are pretty much the same. Through providing legal help to members of the community, they want to enhance their students' abilities to practise law by applying their knowledge of legal theory. Clinicians and students from nearby law schools provide pro bono legal representation to low-income members of the neighbourhood. Human rights, animal rights, asylum-refugee, disability, intellectual property, technology, mediation, criminal, women's, and domestic violence clinics sometimes participate on an international level. Through community legal education, law students are able to hone their public speaking abilities while expanding the scope of their legal education to include law change, research, and advocacy. Additionally, each clinic serves as a hub for legal information, training, and rights activism.

The local dependence on tribal and customary methods for conflict settlement also gives law students a chance to see the intersection of custom and law in action. An essential part of the Clinic's mission is continuing the long-standing practice of providing pro bono legal representation, which has been the responsibility of legal clinics worldwide. Law students enrolled in the clinical course or volunteers supervised by the Clinic personnel provide clients direct legal counsel. The Clinic may recommend clients to other agencies, such as private solicitors, international organisations, or applicable government agencies. International human rights organisations, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and a number of sensitive media outlets (radio, television, newspapers, and online) are among their external relationships. In order to better serve their communities, several law schools throughout the globe have opened legal clinics in conveniently located areas. Certainly, the law schools that have been instrumental in establishing legal clinics have had an internship programme.

**Objectives**

- The Study Effectiveness of Online Legal Clinics.
- The Study Enhancing Practical Skills for Law Students.

**The Place of Legal Clinic in Turkish Law**

The concept of a "legal clinic" has been around for a while in Turkey, although not even lawyers or academics are familiar with the name. Maybe the word is new to them, which is why this is happening. Undergraduate and graduate school programmes in Turkey's legal clinic may be examined separately. Nevertheless, legal clinics often place a premium on pregraduate education. Language proficiency and practice-based education are severely lacking in pre-licensure programmes. Lessons that include basic legal ideas, in addition to providing pupils with outstanding native language instruction, may remedy this deficiency.

In Turkey, a legal clinic might include an internship for undergraduates, an internship for graduates, virtual trials, assessments of adjudication, and field trips to various governmental institutions. These legal clinic apps clearly aren't up to snuff when it comes to training competent lawyers. Conversely, nations that have been successful in establishing legal clinics often see an increase in student activism, publication of school-run periodicals, and the organisation of vocational symposiums, in addition to the aforementioned benefits. In addition, they devote a greater amount of time to these pursuits. For instance, undergraduates in Turkey hardly ever participate in virtual trials or vocational symposiums as part of their legal clinic. Concurrently, law schools do not provide an internship programme for undergraduates. Additionally, not all law schools provide legal clinics. A growing number of colleges now feature law schools among their academic offerings. There is a severe lack of faculty capable of providing students with even the most basic theoretical background in the vast majority of recently founded schools of law. This rules out the possibility of using a legal clinic at the undergraduate level.

Nevertheless, these challenges should not be used as an excuse to not establish a legal clinic. As part of their clinical rotations at law schools, students intern with solicitors and notaries as part of their postgraduate coursework. Furthermore, the length of these internships varies by occupation. For instance, criminal law clerks often spend six months to two years in the field, with half of that time spent in court and the other half in private practice. According to popular belief, the amount of time spent interning as an attorney or prosecutor is insufficient to provide a satisfactory foundation for a career in either field. Students in nations with thriving legal clinics, on the other hand, take a test right after graduation and begin their internships right away. Their long wait is over, and they must now pass a second test before they can begin their careers as professionals. In this light, it's reasonable to propose a six-year licensure programme, with four years devoted to theory and two to practice. If you want to pass those proficiency exams, you need to put in the time and effort into your internship.

**Legal Services Clinics During Pandemic**

Because of the epidemic, the clinics that were housed inside the law school were unable to function efficiently. As was indicated before, law school clinics used to be able to assist persons who were in need by making direct contact with them. Therefore, it was essential for the students to physically go to the areas that were stated. They learn about the challenges that other people are going through and teach them about the rights that they have while doing so. On the other hand, students were unable to have direct contact with law school clinics because of the pandemic lockdown, which resulted in social isolation and physical constraints. The demand for access to justice actually increased by a factor of two during the pandemic; nevertheless, law school clinics were unavailable as a result of the influenza outbreak.

Immediately after the pandemic, all parties concerned in the administration of justice saw how critical it was for law school clinics to collaborate in order to guarantee that everyone had equal access to the judicial system. On the other hand, the feasibility of law school clinics was called into doubt due to the fact that they became caught up in the pandemic rules as well. In the midst of a pandemic, are law school clinics able to listen to the cries of the most vulnerable persons who are looking for access to justice? This was one of the key issues that was brought up about the feasibility of clinics affiliated with law schools. Is it feasible for law schools to encourage social distance without restricting access to justice to those who need legal representation? Would it be possible for law school clinics to prevent the limitation of access to justice in the event that a nationwide lockdown has been implemented? After careful consideration, it was established that in order to preserve the long-term survival of law school clinics during a pandemic, it was essential to use new teaching methods and a different approach to the management of legal services camps.

In the goal of restarting legal service clinics that had been drastically reduced in number as a result of the pandemic, a new operating model for these clinics was created. The implementation of virtual law clinics was an innovative approach to the conventional paradigm of law school clinics. Clinics started communicating with patients online in order to learn about the challenges that they were facing and to give legal counsel. Because of this, it became more difficult to avoid social distance, which in turn made it more difficult to get justice. The virtual law clinics, on the other hand, had the added challenge of efficiently interacting with persons who were looking for legal aid and settling their grievances with the appropriate authorities. Virtual law clinics were able to bridge the gap between individuals who were in need of justice and those who were really able to supply it by forming partnerships with government agencies that provide legal aid.

The National Law University Clinics and the Delhi State Legal Services Authorities collaborated on this project. NLUD and the Delhi State Legal Services Authorities collaborated on a variety of legal awareness projects in order to educate the general population about their rights. Volunteer paralegals who had received training from the Delhi Legal Services Authority assisted in disseminating information to those who were in need of legal counsel on the organization's programmes and services. NLUD collaborated with the Department of Justice to expand access to justice via the use of its legal services clinics. The Pro-Bono club at NLUD has been founded in order to give legal aid as a result of the collaboration that has been formed. Additionally, the Department of Justice has made available a digital application known as Pro-Bono. Students in the pro-bono club were the ones who educated people about this programme that was provided free of charge and instructed them on how to utilise it.

The purpose of this app is to provide a simple mobile gateway for those who are in need of legal guidance or representation to submit grievances and get in contact with solicitors who are provided free of charge. Alumni of the National Law University of the District of Columbia are joining current students in campaigning for universal access to justice via the acceptance of pro bono cases and the defence of low-income clients in court as part of our Pro-Bono programme. Legal services clinics were able to continue operating during the pandemic as a result of relationships between the Department of Justice and the Delhi State Legal Services Authorities. These partnerships allowed students to participate in a range of projects that aimed to promote access to justice. As a result of these agreements, students were able to interact with pro-bono advocates and other individuals who were in need of legal aid via the use of web-based platforms and mobile apps. In the event that individuals were in need of legal aid, the pro bono advocate provided them with advice and virtually represented them in front of the appropriate venue. Legal Services Clinics at National Law University are able to weather the pandemic because they collaborate with government agencies that provide pro bono and legal aid. This allows them to give support to those in need. By reducing the barrier of social distance, the virtual platform that was given by these departments made it possible for law students to get practical experience and offered free legal services to people.

### **Suggestions for Developing Legal Services Clinic**

In India, it may be challenging to develop effective legal aid clinics, and the country's novel approach to clinical legal education has not yet realised its full potential. Both of these factors may complicate the situation. It is imperative that all parties concerned recognise the significance of legal aid clinics inside law schools in order to ensure that they have access to the resources they need to function effectively. Regrettably, a significant number of legal education institutions do not possess the resources required to develop legal help clinics. Individuals who are in need of legal aid should be able to attend a permanent location in order to have their concerns considered and resolved. When it comes to the establishment of legal aid clinics, it is important to take into consideration how easy it is for the general community to access them. It should be placed at a location that is easily accessible to the general public, and there should be no unreasonable impediments to access that stand in the way of its placement.

In order to ensure that clinical activities are carried out in an effective manner, it is essential that clinical instructors maintain constant supervision. Once the legal aid clinic has been established, this aspect should get the necessary amount of attention. In India, there is a severe shortage of clinical academic workers. There are not enough particular training alternatives available in the field of clinical education. As a result of the bar council's prohibition on the full-time employment of advocates registered with it, professionals in the field who have previously held positions as clinical professors at educational institutions are unable to get full-time employment as advocates. In the event that they are employed by legal aid clinics on a part-time basis, the need for monitoring by a clinical professor around the clock will

not be satisfied. It is important for professors to be experienced in teaching clinical education. Regarding the provision of legal aid services by full-time university solicitors, the Bar Council of India need to relax the limitations that are now in place.

Another key subject to investigate in regard to legal aid clinics is the nature of the help that students are able to give about legal matters. Due to the fact that they do not possess the appropriate training, the students are unable to function as advocates for the cases in court. It is imperative that the work that legal aid clinics provide for free be acknowledged by the bar and the court in a more widespread manner.

A more cooperative relationship between the bar and the bench should be encouraged to be maintained between legal aid clinics. The Department of Justice and the Legal Services Authorities are encouraging law students to engage in their various legal aid programmes as a first step towards improving access to justice. This is being done in partnership with the Legal Services Authorities. Those who were in need of legal counsel were assisted, and students were given the opportunity to learn the law in a setting that was true to life. Law school clinics may be able to make the most of the limited resources that are available as a result of the pandemic if they collaborate with one another. It is possible that what seems to be an unattainable goal might become a reality if we are able to overcome all of these challenges, as was suggested earlier: the establishment of competent legal services clinics at each and every law school. In light of the one-of-a-kind circumstance that COVID-19 has brought about, we have been confronted with a number of obstacles as well as opportunities. It is possible that these possibilities may be beneficial to the battle for universal access to justice, both during and after a pandemic, given that they are recognised. Through the use of virtual legal clinics, which are dependent on partnerships and technological assistance, it is possible to preserve access to justice as well as after pandemics have occurred.

### **Conclusion**

Various reasons, including globalisation, the establishment of quasi-governmental entities such as the European Union, and other considerations, have contributed to an increase in the need for lawyers who are able to give legal assistance across international borders. Because of this, the general public has grown to expect that attorneys will act as mediators in disputes that include persons who come from different backgrounds and speak different languages. One of the reasons why there has been an increase in the need for legal clinics all over the world is that being a good lawyer involves a significant amount of practical experience. The original components of the legal clinic are now more significant than they have ever been before as a consequence of this. The following are some of the things that a competent legal clinic and school ought to give for its pupils. According to a discussion of higher education issues that was conducted by the Law Commission, there have been revolutionary changes in legal education as a result of advancements in information, communication, transportation, intellectual property, corporate, cyber, human rights, alternative dispute resolution, international business, comparative taxation, space, environmental, and other related fields. These advancements have affected legal education in a variety of ways. In the fundamental underpinnings of law, the institutions of law, and the practice of law itself, a paradigm shift is now taking place inside the legal system. There has been a significant increase in the atmosphere for legal education ever since the national legal services plans of the country were put into effect. Students are now actively engaged in delivering legal services to those who are economically disadvantaged, and they are also trying to improve the substance of legal education as well as other methods of instruction. Many law schools have established Legal Services Clinics both on and off campus in order to better serve their students. The provision of paralegal services and the enhancement of legal literacy became the major emphasis of these clinics after they were established. In addition, law schools have been playing an important role in the provision of legal education by working in conjunction with regional legal aid administrations.

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