

LEGAL LITERACY: IGNITING EMPOWERMENT THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

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Abstract: Democracy cannot function without the rule of law, which ensures equality and justice; nevertheless, owing to inequalities and restricted access to justice for disadvantaged groups, India confronts formidable obstacles in attaining this goal. To address these concerns, the Legal Services Authorities Act of 1987 provides free legal assistance to low-income people, those living in rural areas, and women, and works to increase public understanding of the law. This research emphasises the significance of legal awareness in enabling vulnerable people, as well as those not aware of their rights, to better understand and hold their government accountable, ultimately leading to better social justice. It highlights the linguistic, sociocultural, and infrastructure hurdles to legal literacy programs' implementation and analyses their function in enabling effective legal aid.

Keywords: Legal Aid, Legal Literacy, Democracy, Rule of Law, Legal Services Authorities Act 1987.

INTRODUCTION

Legal literacy is a basic prerequisite for the realisation of constitutional guarantees in a democracy in general. The Indian legal system guarantees equality in principle, but in rural India, people's experience reveals a serious lack of knowledge about and access to legal rights. This paper critically interrogates the systemic rural-urban divide in legal literacy and argues that access to law, in terms of both knowledge and institutional support, has become an urban-centric phenomenon, rendering constitutional privileges functionally ineffective for a large part of the rural population. To be politically active in a constitutional democracy like India's, one must be well-versed in the law. As a fundamental aspect of citizenship, legal empowerment, and access to justice, it enables individuals to understand their rights, navigate legal systems, pursue remedies, and actively participate in the formation of law and governance. Without legal understanding, constitutional guarantees lose their significance—rights exist merely on paper, and justice remains an abstract concept instead of a catalyst for change.¹

The legal system of India, originating from the Vedic period, has undergone substantial evolution, yet it encounters difficulties concerning public understanding of legal rights. A multitude of persons, including those who are read, are oblivious to their legal entitlements. Organising legal literacy camps and training sessions is essential to solve this issue. These activities represent a shared obligation among law students, non-governmental organisations, and social welfare committees. These camps effectively educate the public, especially the impoverished and underdeveloped, empowering them to comprehend their rights and benefits.²

"A rule put down for the guidance of an intelligent being by an intelligent entity having power over him" is how John Austin described law. Laws benefit society and maintain authority when applied properly. Legal literacy seeks to enhance citizens' understanding of their rights and the regulations that apply to them. In India, a large segment of the population is unaware of legal terminology and the benefits it offers, a situation worsened by low literacy levels. The government is currently updating existing laws to guarantee that individuals can obtain their basic rights. The Constitution of India in Part III guarantees advocates for Equality, freedom of speech and expression of thoughts, and the right to Assemble Peacefully, among others.³ Unawareness of legal regulations often leads to exploitation, while informed individuals may misinterpret legal provisions.

The principle of law is a crucial foundation of democratic society, guaranteeing uniform enforcement of laws for all citizens, irrespective of their history or position. In India, meanwhile, socioeconomic inequalities and a large, varied populace hinder the actualisation of this notion. Numerous individuals, especially marginalised populations like the impoverished, women, and children, struggle to manoeuvre within the legal framework owing to restricted access to information and resources. Acknowledging these

¹ Bhardwaj, Naavya, The Two Indias of Justice, Legal Literacy, and the Rural Urban Divide (July 27, 2025). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5368303> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5368303>.

² DAISY CHANGMAI, "Legal Literacy: Need to Go a Long Way for the Much-Desired Impression", Vol. 2, *International Journal of Legal Science and Innovation*, 167-173, p. 167, (2020), available at: <https://www.ijlsi.com/wp-content/uploads/Legal-Literacy-Need-to-Go-a-Long-Way-for-the-Much-Desired-Impression.pdf>.

³ Constitution of India.

difficulties, the Indian government implemented the Legal Services Authorities Act of 1987⁴, which seeks to offer complimentary legal services and enhance legal awareness. This law aims to guarantee that individuals unable to bear the cost of legal counsel are nevertheless able to engage with the judicial system, therefore protecting their rights and upholding justice. The legislation promotes multiple measures, such as legal assistance and literacy programs, aimed at enabling residents to comprehend and advocate for their legal entitlements. It underscores that legal literacy ought to enable citizens to adeptly navigate the legal system, translating information into tangible access to justice. Furthermore, although the Act seeks to connect legal structures with the general public, considerable obstacles to its implementation have undermined its effectiveness. The dialogue will examine these execution challenges and provide remedies to improve legal literacy to convert the theoretical principles of justice and equality enshrined in the Indian Constitution into a concrete reality for every citizen. Ultimately, it emphasises the vital need for legal literacy in upholding legal rights and promoting the rule of law in India.⁵

LEGAL LITERACY AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

In India, legal literacy pertains to the understanding of one's rights, responsibilities, and the judicial framework, which is derived from constitutional articles, especially Articles 14, 21, and 39A. In the past, access to legal knowledge was restricted to those in privileged positions, resulting in marginalised communities being neglected and uninformed about their rights. The judiciary started to enhance legal awareness through significant rulings, like *M.H. Hoskot v. State of Maharashtra* (1978)⁶, which recognised the entitlement to free legal aid and advocated for more straightforward legal processes. In the case of *State of Haryana v. Darshana Devi* (1979)⁷, the Supreme Court highlighted that financial hardship should not hinder one's ability to seek justice. Cases such as *Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar* (1979)⁸ highlighted the importance of understanding one's rights to avoid exploitation, connecting legal education to basic rights and prompt judicial proceedings.

Legal aid had significant growth in 1980s, highlighted by the case of *Khatri v. State of Bihar* (1981)⁹, which confirmed the State's duty to offer free legal assistance, acknowledging the needs of marginalised communities. In the case of *People's Union for Democratic Rights v. Union of India* (1982)¹⁰, the Court highlighted that understanding legal rights encompasses knowledge of labour rights, stressing the importance of collective empowerment. In the 1990s, the establishment of institutional structures was solidified with the Legal Services Authorities Act (1987) and the creation of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), which introduced community-based programs such as legal literacy camps and Lok Adalats. India's path to legal literacy has progressed from personal judicial acknowledgement to comprehensive reforms focused on educating the populace, setting the stage for digital legal literacy in the 21st century.¹¹

WHAT DOES LEGAL LITERACY MEAN?

"Legal literacy" means knowing your rights and responsibilities under the law and how to use them while dealing with the justice system. Knowing the basics of the law and how they relate to real-life scenarios, including understanding my rights and responsibilities and how to get what is legally mine, is different from being able to read and understand a legal document. Having a basic understanding of the law gives people the tools they need to stand up for themselves, understand their rights, and seek justice when they need it. The term "legal literacy" refers to a more general idea that includes:

Acquiring Legal Rights Knowledge: Every individual has a right to be aware of the safeguards afforded to them by law and the constitution. Among these are being aware of one's basic rights, such as one's right to exist and one's right to personal freedom, as well as one's right to equality before the law and access to justice.

Acquaintance with the Procedures of Law: An additional component of legal literacy is knowing how the judicial system works, including how to initiate a lawsuit, what forms to fill out, and what kinds of remedies are available in specific cases.

How to Put Legal Knowledge to Use: Legal literacy entails not just knowing the law but also being able to put that information into practice, such as knowing who to call for aid in a time of need and how to assert one's rights when faced with practical challenges.

⁴ The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, [Act No. 39 of 1987].

⁵ Veer Vikram Singh, "Significance and role of legal literacy and awareness in establishing the rule of law in India: In reference to Legal Service Authority Act 1987", Vol. 7, *International Journal of Political Science and Governance*, 247-253, p. 248, (2025), Doi: <https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26646021.2025.v7.i5c.556>, available at: <https://www.journalofpoliticalscience.com/uploads/archives/7-6-13-565.pdf>.

⁶ *M.H. Hoskot v. State of Maharashtra*, AIR 1978 SC 1548.

⁷ *State of Haryana v. Darshana Devi*, AIR 1979 SC 855.

⁸ *Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar*, AIR 1979 SC 1360.

⁹ *Khatri v. State of Bihar*, AIR 1981 SC 928.

¹⁰ *People's Union for Democratic Rights v. Union of India*, (1982) 3 SCC 235.

¹¹ Dr. Anshu Jain, Dr. Shikha Dhiman, et. al., "Access to Justice via Digital Legal Literacy: An Analysis", Vol. 3, *Advances in Consumer Research*, 676-682, p. 677, (2026), available at: <https://acr-journal.com/article/access-to-justice-via-digital-legal-literacy-an-analysis-2881/>.

For a society like India's, where many lack familiarity with the ins and outs of the legal system, increasing people's legal literacy is seen as a crucial step toward achieving social justice and removing barriers to social change.¹²

SIGNIFICANCE OF LEGAL LITERACY AND ITS AWARENESS:

The ownership of knowledge about legal matters and justice. Legal literacy serves as an intersection of law, education, and gender, as well as social and political engagement. It is referred to as the *4A's: Awareness, Assertion, Attitudinal Change, and Action*.¹³

Individuals navigating the legal structure should be capable of steering themselves through a comprehensible process at suitable intervals. Acknowledge their legal entitlement or obligation to act upon or take it on. Identify whether an issue or dispute is a legal dispute and ascertain the availability of a legal remedy. Understand how to implement the requisite measures to prevent issues and, if prevention is unfeasible, how to assist themselves suitably. Understand the methods and locations for obtaining legal information and possess the ability to locate accessible resources. Understand the appropriate timing and methods for acquiring adequate legal support.

Many people in democracies, like India's, do not know their rights and responsibilities under the law, which makes legal literacy all the more important. A better grasp of the significance of legal literacy can enhance justice, equity, and engagement in democratic processes. Legal literacy is crucial because citizens in first-world nations are more likely to exercise their rights when they know the law. You can improve legal literacy through a variety of means:

1. Ensuring that policies and constitutional mandates are effectively carried out.
2. Setting up various social mechanisms to inform the public about the contemporary legal system, including lectures, camps, and workshops.
3. The participation of advocates, academics, professors, and jurists to enhance comprehension of laws and how they are applied.
4. Enforcing a fundamental legal education for all individuals.
5. Assisting low-income and uneducated people in obtaining legal representation.

When combined, these methods have the potential to greatly improve the general public's understanding of the law.¹⁴

LEGAL LITERACY: A NEED IN THE PRESENT

Given that the massive population in India lacks legal literacy, especially in rural areas beset by social and economic obstacles, legal literacy is vital in India. Effective social involvement, which promotes human growth and the reduction of poverty, depends on literacy. When it comes to their legal rights, even literate people frequently feel powerless. Millions of people continue to struggle to meet their basic requirements and are disengaged from welfare programs and constitutional values meant to lessen social injustice. Significant societal reforms are required to address ingrained problems, even as government initiatives seek to improve access to justice. To guarantee that no citizen is deprived of their rights because of financial difficulties, the Constitution requires states to advance justice and offer free legal aid. Educating people about their rights empowers them and promotes open, rule-based governance. Since many people are now ignorant of their rights, legal literacy entails educating people about them so they may effectively contest infringement.¹⁵

LEGAL AWARENESS AND EDUCATION:

Understanding legal rights and education play a crucial role in enabling individuals and promoting societal advancement in India. The understanding of legal principles is essential for the preservation of constitutional democracy, allowing individuals to comprehend their rights and interact with the legal framework. It emphasises that a lack of awareness regarding the law obstructs societal progress, resulting in problems such as child labour and human trafficking. To address this issue, the government and the judiciary need to focus on fundamental legal education, making sure it is accessible to every segment of society. Establishing legal education initiatives, workshops, and educational strategies in rural and disadvantaged regions is essential for cultivating an informed population that can champion their rights and aid in national advancement. These initiatives may tackle ongoing social challenges, guaranteeing that the law fulfills its role and enabling individuals to bring about transformation.¹⁶

¹² Supra note 3 at 249.

¹³ S.S.Patil and Lavanya C, "A Study on Legal Literacy Among Secondary School Students", Vol. 2, *Indian Streams Research Journal (ISRJ)*, 1-4, p. 1, Aug 2012, available at: <https://oldisrj.lbp.world/UploadedBData/1190.pdf>.

¹⁴ Shalini Sharma, "LEGAL LITERACY GROWING NEED OF THE SOCIETY", Vol. 4, *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies (SRJIS)*, 2758-2762, p. 2759, (2016).

¹⁵ Barbudhe, Bhavana, "Importance of Legal Literacy In Growth and Development of India", 1-9, available at: https://www.academia.edu/7627860/Importance_of_Legal_Literacy_In_Growth_and_Development_of_India.

¹⁶ Tarunika Rajesh, "Legal Literacy in India", (Blog), *LexQuest Foundation*, (Jan 23, 2015), available at: <https://www.lexquest.in/legal-literacy-india/>.

INFLUENCE OF GLOBALISATION ON LEGAL LITERACY AND AWARENESS IN INDIA

Globalisation poses considerable difficulties for the legal field, requiring a broadening of the traditional limits of legal education beyond just national legal frameworks. This change is shaped by the emergence of supranational legal frameworks, like those from the European Union and the WTO, which make the concept of state sovereignty more complex due to the increasing recognition of humanitarian intervention. Conventional legal theory, which has primarily concentrated on domestic and public international law, now needs to embrace different types of legal frameworks, such as the transnational *lex mercatoria*, which regulates interactions among global business entities mainly via international arbitration.¹⁷

In order to respond to these transformations, it is essential to create an all-encompassing legal framework that connects various legal traditions, as well as to enhance the conceptual language that includes concepts such as group, conflict, organization, and governance. Legal professionals need to develop a perspective that tackles new challenges, a commitment to fairness, and the ingenuity to create solutions that meet the changing demands of society. At present, legal education lacks the necessary tools to tackle upcoming challenges, highlighting the importance of a transformative method informed by historical insights and plans.

A well-functioning legal system is essential for a just society, where the law is upheld, guaranteeing that every person is treated equally under it. In India, the Bar Council oversees legal practice and education, encouraging adaptability in legal regulations to support progressive societal environments. A thriving legal framework depends on skilled legal practitioners, whose functions in interpretation are crucial. To improve the quality of future legal professionals, legal education should conform to international benchmarks, as demonstrated by the creation of National Law Universities (NLUs), which aim to raise Indian law students to a globally competitive standard. At present, ten national law universities are functioning to update the law and its enforcement to align with international standards.¹⁸

The Legal Services Authorities Act of 1987¹⁹ seeks to furnish complimentary legal aid and enhance legal consciousness across India. It creates legal services authorities at national, state, and district tiers to improve access to justice for underprivileged groups in society.

- Principal segments emphasise legal assistance and awareness initiatives, guaranteeing that at-risk populations are educated about their rights and legal alternatives.
- The legislation is founded on the constitutional principle of legal equality and aims to remove obstacles to justice stemming from economic limitations.
- The principal stipulations encompass the establishment of national, state, and district legal services. Officials are assigned to execute legal services proficiently.
- Criteria for complimentary legal assistance are established, focusing on economically disadvantaged individuals, women, children, and underrepresented or vulnerable groups to ensure equitable access to justice.
- The statute upholds the rule of law by guaranteeing that every citizen can assert their rights, irrespective of their socioeconomic standing.²⁰

The LSA Act, 1987 is designed to guarantee that all citizens, especially those who are economically disadvantaged, have access to justice and receive free legal assistance. The success of the Act largely depends on the public's understanding of the law, enabling people to claim their rights and manoeuvre through the legal framework. Programs aimed at strengthening legal awareness strive to educate individuals about their rights, empowering them to confront systemic inequalities and improve their ability to seek justice. Understanding the law is essential in avoiding legal problems, as it informs people about regulations concerning property, contracts, employment, and family rights, helping to avert accidental breaches of the law. Additionally, it encourages a proactive attitude among individuals, minimising trivial claims and alleviating the pressure on the judicial system.

Understanding the existence of complementary legal services is crucial for the effectiveness of the Act. Numerous individuals do not realize the legal assistance options that are accessible to them, highlighting the necessity for impactful legal education initiatives. These initiatives assist people in discovering how to obtain legal support and comprehend alternative methods for resolving disputes, including the Lok Adalat framework. Additionally, a population that understands the law can hold public institutions accountable, confront injustices, and encourage transparency. A knowledgeable populace guarantees that justice is not merely an abstract concept but a concrete entitlement that can be upheld, thereby strengthening the rule of law and the credibility of the justice system.²¹

¹⁷ Amit Dhall, "LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA: THE EMERGING CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS", Vol. 6, *Dehradun Law Review (DLR)*, 51-60, p. 53, (2014), available at: <https://www.dehradunlawreview.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/5-Legal-education-in-India-The-emerging-challenges-and-prospects.pdf>.

¹⁸ Supra. note 14.

¹⁹ The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, [Act No. 39 of 1987].

²⁰ Supra. note 3 at 250.

²¹ Id. at 251.

BARRIERS IN EXPANDING LEGAL LITERACY:

The rise of an emerging economy, globalisation, and technical progress have posed considerable problems for legal education worldwide. These modifications require a reformation of legislative frameworks, especially in safeguarding at-risk communities. As the legal framework experiences a fundamental transformation, it is imperative for the State to formulate methods that improve professional legal education and elevate law as a liberal arts discipline. This entails establishing robust supervisory frameworks to guarantee excellence in education and scholarly pursuits. Principal concerns encompass unaddressed legal requirements, access to justice, and the impact of globalisation on equity and human rights. In this scenario, attorneys are crucial in promoting justice, equity, and fairness, especially during transitional phases, by aiding diverse social participants.²²

Major obstacles consist of:

Rural regions frequently do not have sufficient access to solicitors and legal assistance centers. Options consist of mobile legal assistance units, community outreach initiatives, and partnerships with regional non-governmental organizations.

Language obstacles: they arise from the variety of languages spoken in India, leading to difficulties in comprehending legal terminology, particularly since numerous legal documents are still written in English. It is essential to adapt materials and provide training in multiple languages.

In rural regions, a lack of formal education affects many individuals, making it difficult for them to grasp legal concepts. Using clearer legal terminology and community initiatives can assist in addressing these challenges.

Cultural elements: A lack of faith in the formal justice system influences community involvement. Programs for legal education ought to engage community leaders to foster trust in legal systems and make the law more familiar.²³

The current landscape of legal education in India faces numerous obstacles that require thorough reform. Initially, law schools need to improve their physical facilities and financial assets to create a setting that supports academic independence and research activities. Although national law schools possess better facilities than conventional universities, there is still a need for enhancements throughout the system. Furthermore, encouraging charitable giving in legal education is crucial, given that existing financial support mainly originates from government programs or inadequate business ventures. It is essential for entities like law schools, the bar, and businesses to work together in encouraging charitable donations to enhance educational quality.²⁴ The demand for skilled educators and researchers is essential, as effective teachers inspire students and improve the standard of legal education. Nevertheless, inadequate incentives result in a lack of skilled individuals in teaching roles, as numerous people choose more profitable professions. Additionally, the privatisation of legal education has led to a surge in law schools that frequently undermine the quality of education, causing legal education to appear subpar when compared to global benchmarks.²⁵

The presence of international universities and legal experts presents a distinct challenge for law schools in India. Students might choose to pursue international degrees at a similar expense, and the necessity for skilled lawyers to cater to the requirements of multinational companies in India points out the importance of improving curriculum quality. Law schools ought to include subjects related to international corporate law, taxation, and bankruptcy to enhance students' readiness for the global legal landscape. Furthermore, progress in internet technology and globalisation has made matters of jurisdiction and territorial sovereignty more complex, requiring changes in legal education to tackle issues like cybercrime.²⁶

After gaining independence, legal education in India experienced a downturn; however, it has since advanced through scholarly endeavours and governmental actions. The emphasis on instructional techniques, practical legal training, and facility enhancements has greatly elevated the status of legal education. The progress in this field should persist to counter any complacency about pursuing law as a profession and to tackle the fresh governance issues arising from globalisation and the changing economic environment in India.²⁷

LEGAL LITERACY AND ADVOCACY OF CHILD RIGHTS

Legal literacy is essential for children's substantive engagement in justice systems, influencing their capacity to pursue justice through an understanding of rights, legal processes, and safeguards. It bolsters adolescents by augmenting self-assurance and decision-making capabilities. In India, children's understanding of legal matters is limited by socio-economic obstacles, an absence of organised legal education, and inadequate community engagement. Juveniles within the juvenile justice system frequently do not

²² Supra. note 14 at 55.

²³ Ibid. note 17.

²⁴ Supra. note 14 at 56.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Id. note 20.

grasp their rights as outlined in the *Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015*²⁸, resulting in diminished involvement and greater reliance on adults. Organisations involved in juvenile justice, such as law enforcement and legal assistance services, often show deficiencies in their training and comprehension of approaches that are suitable for children. This leads to poor communication regarding rights. Children in vulnerable situations, particularly those hailing from low-income or marginalised communities, encounter extra challenges, including restricted access to education and the spread of misinformation. Research indicates that there is a necessity for community legal education initiatives and resources designed specifically for children's understanding and language skills to tackle these issues.²⁹

The gap in legal awareness among young individuals arises from more profound structural problems, rather than merely an absence of information. Numerous young individuals find themselves in the juvenile justice system during times of crisis, rendering even fundamental legal ideas overwhelming. Interviews indicate that individuals frequently depend on assumptions instead of having a true understanding of their rights, underscoring the importance of implementing early legal education programs in educational institutions and local communities. Organisations like police stations and Child Welfare Committees strive to support children, yet their success can differ; some personnel express themselves with clarity and compassion, while others may come across as hurried or unclear, which can make children feel uneasy. The lack of consistency in communication impacts a child's journey through the justice system, indicating that enhancing training and standardising language is essential. Additionally, there is an urgent need for interactive, child-friendly approaches to legal education, such as visual tools, videos, and community workshops, to help children understand their rights in a comfortable setting. Global instances demonstrate that when young individuals have access to legal education, they engage more proactively and with greater assurance in judicial processes. In India, numerous young individuals lack awareness of their rights as outlined in the Juvenile Justice Act, including their entitlement to free legal assistance and to procedures designed to be child-friendly. This suggests that these protections are frequently out of reach due to insufficient communication.³⁰

CONCLUSION

The calibre of information differs significantly across institutions; whereas certain staff members offer compassionate clarifications, others convey messages in intricate language that can bewilder children. This lack of consistency not only obstructs children's participation in the justice system but also increases their stress and reliance on adults. Moreover, kids from low-income families encounter additional obstacles stemming from poor literacy, inconsistent schooling, and minimal familiarity with legal principles, which is reinforced by their families' limited understanding of legal matters. To fill these gaps, it is essential to integrate legal knowledge into educational and community environments through straightforward language and engaging techniques. Improving training for law enforcement, members of the Child Welfare Committee, and legal aid attorneys is essential for maintaining effective communication. A comprehensive national approach to legal education is essential to bridge the gap between the rights established by law and their actual implementation for young individuals.³¹

A fundamental comprehension of legal principles is crucial for anyone engaged in administration, commerce, or industry, underscoring the necessity for improved legal education across society. Understanding legal entitlements, obligations, and accessible recourse is essential, particularly in India where illiteracy is prevalent. Numerous individuals are oblivious to legal stipulations designed to assist them. Educational programs should concentrate on disseminating information to the general populace regarding legal processes and regulations. Legal Aid, acknowledged by the Constitution as a fundamental right, is crucial for the impoverished who lack the means to access legal assistance, as numerous individuals are deprived of justice owing to their economic limitations. Article 39-A of the Constitution stipulates the provision of Legal Aid for indigent and marginalised plaintiffs.³²

A functional democracy requires widespread legal literacy in an era of increased bureaucracy and state surveillance. Heightened legal consciousness enables individuals to scrutinise governmental authority and contest autocratic inclinations. Authorities and non-governmental organisations have initiated several programs such as workshops, seminars, and the dissemination of educational materials to enlighten the populace about their entitlements. Notwithstanding these initiatives, participation in legal frameworks minimal; individuals frequently refrain from engaging in legal issues due to apprehension of police retaliation. Legal literacy involves more than just an understanding of statutes; it seeks to foster a critical perspective, promoting civic engagement within the legal system. Individuals must to be educated not just on their rights and legal procedures but also on how to

²⁸ *Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015*, (Act No. 2 of 2016).

²⁹ Suchitra Chaudhary, "JUVENILE JUSTICE AND LEGAL LITERACY: BRIDGING THE AWARENESS GAP IN INDIA'S LEGAL AID FRAMEWORK", VII, *Indian Journal of Law and Legal Research (IJLLR)*, 5779 – 5790, p. 5781, (Nov 21, 2025), available at: <https://www.ijllr.com/post/juvenile-justice-and-legal-literacy-bridging-the-awareness-gap-in-india-s-legal-aid-framework>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Supra note 27.

³² Supra note 12 at 2761.

contest legislation and champion their own interests as well as those of under-represented communities. Effective legal literacy initiatives should cultivate a community of knowledgeable individuals who can scrutinise and assess laws.³³

To foster active legal involvement, educational establishments ought to introduce hands-on legal classes and seminars, enhancing accessibility and comprehension of the legal framework. Joint initiatives with students can disseminate legal awareness, particularly in remote regions, thereby improving openness and fairness in the administration of justice. The paradox in India is evident in the fact that uneducated individuals have the ability to vote for legislators while simultaneously being unable to comprehend the legal frameworks that regulate their lives. Similar to environmental and financial literacy, legal literacy is crucial for attaining socio-political and economic equity, empowering individuals to pursue legal recourse and promote accountability within legal institutions.³⁴

Conveying legal knowledge to those without literacy presents considerable difficulties, chiefly because of their unfamiliarity with legal principles and absence of formal education. Conventional legal education techniques have demonstrated their insufficiency, underscoring the necessity for inventive approaches customised to the language inclinations of the audience, particularly vernaculars. Comprehending the participants' backgrounds, encompassing their literacy competencies and legal knowledge, is essential for achievement. Engaging with community organisations like Astha can improve outreach initiatives by offering valuable perspectives on the audience's strengths and limitations.³⁵



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³³Aadil Raza, 'Legal Literacy: A Key to Socio-Economic Justice', blog, available at: <https://www.ashoka.edu.in/legal-literacy-a-key-to-socio-economic-justice/>.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.