

# **Integrating child rights education in Curricula of law university: Experience and strategy of using clinical legal education for advancing access to justice for children in conflict with the law**

**Neetu SHARMA**

Centre for Child and the Law, National Law School of India University, India,  
[neetusharma@nls.ac.in](mailto:neetusharma@nls.ac.in)

The Centre for Child and the Law (CCL), located within the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), utilises the Clinical Legal Education (CLE) space, to integrate child rights practice insights into the curricula of the law University, and facilitates the process of making CLE useful in enabling access to justice for children in conflict with law.

Juvenile Justice, despite being one of the core areas of child rights law research, education and practice, remains one of the most under-resourced sectors from the point of view of budgetary allocation, provision of human resources, training and even evolution of standard practices. (Bajpai, A. 2019). Not only is there a dearth of committed, motivated and competent free legal aid lawyers, the provisions that provide a legal right to free legal aid, are also marred with several challenges, consequently resulting in denial of the right to free legal aid for children. Child Rights Clinics that are part of the legal education framework provide opportunity to orient and sensitise young minds on various issues concerning child rights while training them on advocating for enabling justice to children.

The clinic facilitated by CCL NLSIU adopts multidisciplinary and system strengthening approach, draws from collaboration with state and civil society, and provide students opportunity to observe the challenges in the system. Hands on experiences during the clinical courses result in mutual learning for the students and the functionaries in the system along with leading to qualitative improvements in the lives of children. CLE, in addition to helping law students understand the processes involved in operationalisation of law, provides opportunities for making steady contributions towards reforming the systems. Positioned in between *probono* lawyering and extending legal service, the clinics of law universities have a lot to offer and CCL NLSIU offers a replicable model for the same.

## **References**

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## **Short CV**

Dr Neetu Sharma is currently Co-Director of Centre for Child and the Law (CCL), a research centre of National Law School of India University (NLSIU, Bangalore, where she has been working for more than 19 years now. She has been leading research programmes on right to food and child rights. Prior to joining NLSIU, she worked with child rights NGOs and international human rights organisations. She has her training in human rights and political science.