



DECCAN EDUCATION SOCIETY'S
SHRI NAVALMAL FIRODIA LAW
COLLEGE

ONE DAY SEMINAR ON:

CHANGING PARADIGMS OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN INDIA

CONVENORS

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**‘EVOLVING CRIMINAL JUSTICE FOR A
CHANGING SOCIETY’**

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INTRODUCTION

The one-day seminar on “Changing Paradigms of Criminal Justice System in India” was organized to address the historic and ongoing transformation of the country’s justice delivery framework. The criminal justice system, which includes the police, prosecution, judiciary, and correctional institutions, forms the basis of India's democratic governance by safeguarding individual rights and maintaining law and order. Despite strong constitutional foundations, the system faced persistent challenges such as trial delays, case backlogs, overcrowded prisons, limited victim protections, and insufficient technological integration.

Significant reforms have been introduced recently to modernize and strengthen the system. With the implementation of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam in 2024, India has replaced its colonial-era Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, and Indian Evidence Act with laws focused on transparency, efficiency, and victim-centered justice. These reforms mandate strict timelines for investigations, trials, and judgments, incorporate technology such as digital evidence and e-filing, and enhance victim rights including timely updates and protection.

The seminar gathered academicians, legal experts, law students, and researchers to critically examine these evolving legal paradigms. Discussions focused on challenges such as understaffed police and judiciary, infrastructural gaps, and the need for broader implementation of forensic and digital tools. Emphasis was placed on fostering a justice system that is not only timely and accountable but also compassionate, ensuring dignity and protection for victims.

Overall, the seminar underscored the urgent need for continued reform, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and innovation to build a criminal justice system in India that reflects 21st-century realities and constitutional ideals, thereby delivering fair and accessible justice to all citizens.

INAUGURAL SESSION

ADV. UJJWAL NIKAM

The inaugural session featured Padma Shri Adv. Ujjwal Nikam, a legendary Special Public Prosecutor known for his work in landmark cases such as the 1993 Bombay bombings and the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. With a distinguished career spanning over four decades, Adv. Nikam brought practical insight into contemporary legal reforms.



The most awaited one day seminar set stage with the welcoming of the Guest of Honor Adv. Ujjwal Nikam and the other esteemed guests subsisting of the resource persons from a vast diaspora of fields each acing in their respective arena of work. The welcoming was followed by the initiation of the ceremony at the Fergusson Amphitheatre with a grand showcasing of a few glimpses of all the pronounced interviews of the chief guest and the felicitation of all the resource persons present.



“All kings are mortals, all kings are men and hence all kings are also mortal” Adv Ujjwal Nikam started off his speech with these lines, perfectly explaining the students how the concepts learned so far was perfectly fitting for the practical aspect of a lawyer’s profession. He also gave us a coup d’oeil into his life experiences as a lawyer who began his practice in Jalgaon and as an individual who procured such an esteemed position throughout his lifetime.

He gave an indispensable lesson of “Irresistible inference” to apply in our professional as well as personal lives. He explained to the students the objective behind the vast changes made in the criminal law which predominantly was transparency in all legal proceedings and the effectiveness it thereby offers us.

He brought into limelight important facets of the recently recasted criminal laws including:

- BNS being a victim centric and citizen friendly law
- Use of technology in legal sector
- Gender sensitisation and neutrality
- Zero FIR

He was also keen on gauging and appraising the ideas of young minds and their knowledge with regards to his personal cases. The session with the guest of honour was wrapped up with a quick interactive session with the students who posed the following questions:

Q.1) How should a lawyer be apt enough to serve justice with rising heinousness of crime and technology

Q.2) The concept of pragmatic idealism with such intense experiences and the formula to his moral compass.

Q.3) Increasing social media crimes and how is it affecting the mentality of people.



TECHNICAL SESSION - 1

HON'BLE JUSTICE K.P. NANDEDKAR

Thereafter the technical session 1 commenced which was conducted by K.P. Nanadedkar sir, a retired district judge. He brought up the topic of judicial activism and explained the entire concept in a detailed manner and also mentioned various cases including the famous Vishakha case. What set the seminar apart was the positive aspect or point of view provided by Nandedkar sir regarding judicial activism.



Judicial activism in India refers to the proactive role played by the judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court and High Courts, in upholding citizens' rights and promoting social justice beyond traditional dispute resolution. It involves the judiciary actively interpreting laws, sometimes expanding or shaping legal principles to address contemporary issues and ensure constitutional mandates are fulfilled.

While judicial activism strengthens democracy by holding the executive and legislature accountable and protecting individual rights, it sometimes faces criticism as judicial overreach, when courts are perceived to encroach upon the domains of elected bodies. However, judiciary's willingness to interpret the Constitution dynamically has been crucial in addressing India's complex social challenges and delivering justice to the vulnerable. Sir enlightened the students with his immeasurable knowledge that he has acquired through years of practice and experience. Judicial activism has transformed the Indian judiciary from a passive arbiter to an active agent of reform and justice, ensuring that constitutional values and fundamental rights remain robust and meaningful.

TECHNICAL SESSION - 2

PROF. DR. ALOK SHARMA

Technical session 1 was followed by the introduction of the next resource person Prof. Dr. Alok Sharma who gave a simple yet effective speech regarding various legal aspects majorly focusing on the origin of various laws. She gave examples and reasons asserting how important and effective our legal system is. She specifically raised the issue of Juvenile

Delinquency and increased awareness and knowledge about the issue among students present there. She introduced the importance of family and how society plays an important role in the shaping of young minds. She gave a few examples wherein the wrong influence of society and people around led children to wrong paths choosing illegal and unlawful methods to accomplish things.



However, she also pointed out the challenges in implementation — such as inadequate facilities in observation homes, lack of specialized training for staff, and recurring offenses by juveniles due to lapses in follow-up and support. The speech called for stronger government commitment, improved infrastructure, and increased awareness among stakeholders to build an effective framework for youth rehabilitation.

TECHNICAL SESSION - 3

MR. PRAKASH SINGH

Technical session 2 started off with the introduction of Mr. Prakash Singh who was a former director general of Border Security Force, Former DGP of U.P. and Assam, a Padma Shri Awardee and an architect of police reforms in India. He brought in front of the students the harsh reality of the present legal system in India. He also shared his personal experiences and the struggles that he faced in order to bring justice to the police reforms through the legal system or judiciary of our nation. He mentioned the many problems in the system that were and are still persistent like corruption, ineffective judicial or legal system and many more. He also provided us with the advancement of technology and how it affects our lives both positively and negatively as well mentioning the concept of “Internet of Things (IOT)” along with that.



A very important aspect of prioritising the issues or problems present in our nation was also brought up. He explained how prioritising of irrelevant or rather less relevant matter over the more pressing issues was also a major reason why our legal system is lagging behind.

He encouraged the students to think about nation and also gave a very important life lesson that nation should come above all and mentioned that law is a noble profession and that the students should utilise this golden opportunity to serve the nation through its legal system in the best way possible. This was followed with a short break and the technical session 3 was continued in the Kundalimal auditorium.



TECHNICAL SESSION - 4

SHRI. JAYANT UMRANIKAR

The fourth technical session featured guest lecturer Shri Jayant Umraniyar, a retired 1973-batch IPS officer from Maharashtra, former Police Commissioner of Pune and Nagpur, ex-DGP (Special Operations), author, and international law enforcement representative at forums like the UNODC and IAEA.

Sir spoke about the Frazer Commission which gave a report about the working of police administration pre-independence. He called the police the 'sword arm' as well as the 'whipping boy' for the people, signifying that the police were enforcers as well as the scapegoat.

He noted outdated infrastructure, inadequate forensic and cybercrime training, political interference undermining independence, and low public trust due to perceptions of bias and corruption.

Umraniyar Sir stated Supreme Court directives for Police reforms which were an attempt at reformation of the police system



Shri Umraniyar highlighted India's judicial crisis marked by over five crore pending cases, severe judge shortages, vacancies, poor infrastructure, and unequal access to justice.

He urged urgent reforms—more judges and courts, digital systems, better infrastructure, expanded legal aid, and safeguards for autonomy—stressing that comprehensive changes in both police and judiciary are vital for fair and effective justice.

VALEDICTORY SESSION

SHRI JAINARAYAN PATEL

After the technical session, the program veered onto the valedictory session for which the chief guest was Shri Jainarayan Patel. Justice Jainarayan Patel (b. 1950) practiced law for 12 years in Nagpur before becoming a City Civil Court Judge in 1987 and later presiding over the 1993 Bombay Blast trial as a TADA Judge. Elevated to the Bombay High Court in 1996, he also served as Acting Chief Justice before being appointed Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court (2010–2012). Known for clear, innovative judgments in diverse fields, he now practices arbitration and serves on law school committees.

Patel sir started off the session at an energetic note, sharing his experiences in the court room. Shri Patel focused on the evolution of India's judiciary, highlighting the increasing shift toward a victim-centric justice system. Traditionally centered on adjudication and protecting rights, the judiciary now places greater emphasis on victims' dignity and participation.



He acknowledged challenges such as slow case disposal and limited victim awareness of their rights. Shri Patel urged for judicial sensitivity toward victims' needs and the integration of restorative justice principles. Reforms should expand victim support services, provide prompt legal aid and compensation, and create court procedures that minimize victim traumatization. Technology can facilitate better communication and case updates for victims.



VALEDICTORY SESSION

PANKAJ DESHMUKH GUEST OF HONOUR

Shri Pankaj Deshmukh, Additional Commissioner of Police, Pune, addressed students on the crucial relationship between law and policing. He explained that the police serve as the frontline enforcers of law, responsible for maintaining order, preventing and investigating crime, and safeguarding citizens within the legal framework. Law defines their powers, duties, and responsibilities, ensuring that policing remains accountable, rights-based, and just.



He emphasized that effective policing requires not only enforcement but also sensitivity to public needs, with trust built through community engagement. Highlighting present-day challenges, he pointed to the shift from rural to urban policing amid rapid urbanization, which demands evolving strategies and the integration of technology.



He stressed how legal statutes empower police to act preventively, investigate scientifically, and prosecute offenders while following due process. Emerging issues such as cybercrime and organized networks, he noted, require modern tools, recruitment, and specialized training. Concluding, Shri Deshmukh underscored that law and police must work in harmony: law provides legitimacy, and police uphold it through protection and justice, forming the foundation of a stable and fair society.

OUTCOME OF THE SEMINAR

The seminar on “Changing Paradigms of Criminal Justice System in India” concluded with broad agreement on the urgent need for comprehensive reforms to modernize criminal justice. A key focus was the 2024 implementation of the three new laws—Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA)—replacing colonial-era statutes. These laws aim to make the system transparent, timely, and victim-centric, introducing strict timelines for investigations and trials, digital and forensic evidence management, electronic hearings, and enhanced protections for women and children.

Speakers also noted systemic challenges such as severe understaffing of judges and police, overcrowded prisons, inadequate infrastructure, and unequal access to justice for marginalized groups. Addressing these requires capacity building, modernization of infrastructure, technology adoption like e-filing and video hearings, and expanded legal aid and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms.

Reforms in policing and prosecution were emphasized, including the integration of forensic science, better police-prosecutor coordination, and fixed tenures to reduce political influence. A victim-centric approach, with active participation, compensation, and support services, was highlighted as essential for restoring trust and dignity. Judicial independence, activism, and accountability were also underlined as crucial for upholding constitutional rights.

For students and young legal professionals, the seminar offered insight into both the doctrinal and practical implications of the new laws. Participants understood the significance of replacing colonial statutes, the potential of technology-driven processes, and the importance of balancing efficiency with fairness. The event promoted multi-disciplinary dialogue and collaboration to ensure effective implementation of reforms.

In conclusion, the seminar reinforced the vision of a fair, efficient, and accessible criminal justice system that upholds constitutional values, meets the needs of a diverse population, and evolves with contemporary challenges, while inspiring continued advocacy for reform.

WINNERS

The winners for the Research Paper Competition were **Ms. Shivaneesh Deshpande** and **Ms. Abhilasha Kulkarni**, the topic being, “Challenges in Criminal Justice Delivery System with Reference to Juveniles in India.”



GLIMPSES





**WE LIVE AND STRIVE BY
OUR MOTTO**

**“MAKING EXCELLENCE
A PREVAILING
ATTITUDE”**

**“EVOLVING CRIMINAL JUSTICE FOR
A CHANGING SOCIETY”**