

Educating lawyers for the augmentation economy: a future-skills curriculum audit of Indian legal education

Higher Education,
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S. Harikrishnan

*School of Law, Governance and Public Policy, Chanakya University,
Bengaluru, India*

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Abstract

Purpose – This article examines the alignment between the skills demanded of future legal professionals and the curriculum mandated for Indian law degrees. It offers the first application of the future-skills cluster framework underpinning the QS World Future Skills Index to a single profession-facing discipline, using Indian legal education as the case.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative documentary analysis maps every component of the curriculum mandated by the Bar Council of India's Rules of Legal Education, 2008 against four future-skills clusters and digital/AI literacy, using a three-level coding scheme (direct, partial, absent). Curricular supply is then triangulated against employer demand evidence from the India Skills Report 2025, country-level alignment data from the QS World Future Skills Index 2027 and national labour-market analysis by NCAER.

Findings – Entrepreneurial capability and digital/AI literacy are structural gaps in the mandated curriculum; ethical instruction is present but confined to enrolment-oriented professional conduct; human-cognitive and leadership skills are exercised incidentally rather than taught or assessed as such. The discipline-level entrepreneurial void converges with the gap that QS independently identifies as India's largest national skills deficit. Legal education is additionally invisible in India's flagship employability measurement, removing the feedback loop through which other disciplines confront labour-market signals.

Research limitations/implications – The analysis maps the regulatory minimum rather than institutional practice, and demand-side evidence for the legal sector is inferred from economy-wide instruments. Both limitations define an agenda for primary research on legal employers and institutional curricula.

Practical implications – The findings support a periodic, market-referenced revision cycle for the mandated law curriculum, a mandated clinical paper on legal technology and artificial intelligence, relocation of entrepreneurial content into the compulsory core and structured practice pathways for legal academics.

Social implications – Access to justice depends on a steady supply of capable lawyers, many serving as sole practitioners in underserved regions. If artificial intelligence removes the junior work through which practitioners have traditionally developed, and curricula do not compensate, the resulting judgement deficit will fall hardest on litigants who cannot afford established counsel, widening existing inequalities in India's legal system.

Originality/value – The article contributes a replicable method for auditing a professionally mandated curriculum against future-skills frameworks, and advances the argument that artificial intelligence is dismantling the apprenticeship route through which legal judgement has traditionally been formed, converting curriculum reform from an employability question into a professional-formation question. The audit method is transferable: any profession or jurisdiction in which a statutory body mandates the curriculum can be examined in the same way, positioning the study as a case that speaks to curriculum evaluation across regulated professions.

Keywords Graduate employability, Legal education, Curriculum audit, Future skills, Artificial intelligence, India

Paper type Research article

1. Introduction

The QS World Future Skills Index 2027 is a comprehensive global benchmarking study, published by QS Quacquarelli Symonds, that assesses 89 economies on how ready their labour markets and education systems are for the skills that artificial intelligence, digital transformation and the green transition are making central to work; among other measures it reports an economy's Future of Work readiness, the strength of employer demand for these



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skills and its Skills Alignment, also called Skills Fit, which captures how well its education system supplies them (QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2026a). India presents one of the sharpest paradoxes in the contemporary global skills economy. In the QS World Future Skills Index 2027, the country ranks fifth of 89 economies for Future of Work readiness, a measure of how strongly its labour market demands the skills associated with artificial intelligence, digital transformation and the green transition and first in the world for Economic Capacity, with a perfect score of 100. Yet on Skills Alignment, the measure of how well its higher education system supplies those demanded skills, India ranks eighteenth, with a score 13.3 points below its Future of Work score (QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2026a). Employer demand for future skills is running ahead of the education system's capacity to produce them, and the gap is widest, on QS's own country diagnosis, in entrepreneurial and innovative capability (QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2026b). Domestic evidence points the same way: the India Skills Report 2025 places national employability at 54.81% of graduate test-takers (Wheebox, 2024), while the National Council of Applied Economic Research describes a "skills paradox" in which millions are trained but few are absorbed into quality employment (NCAER, 2025).

These pressures play out in an economy of exceptional scale and pace. India is now the world's fourth-largest economy, with nominal output of about 4.2 trillion United States dollars, and remains the fastest-growing major economy, expanding at over 6% a year and on course for third place within the decade (International Monetary Fund, 2025). Its legal profession is correspondingly vast: more than 1.5 million advocates are enrolled with the Bar Council of India and the state bar councils, and an estimated 60,000–70,000 law graduates enter the profession each year (Bar Council of India, 2024). A regulatory instrument that fixes the skills floor for a discipline of this size, in an economy transforming this fast, is a matter of more than domestic interest.

This article asks what that misalignment looks like inside a single profession-facing discipline. Legal education is a revealing case for three reasons. First, legal work sits almost entirely in the augmentation zone of the emerging division of labour between humans and machines: judgement, advocacy, negotiation and client counsel are complemented rather than replaced by artificial intelligence, while the routine layers of legal production, document review, first-draft research and standardised drafting, are precisely the tasks that large language models now perform (Suskind, 2023; Suskind and Suskind, 2015). Second, Indian legal education is governed by an unusually explicit and unusually old regulatory instrument. The Bar Council of India's Rules of Legal Education, adopted in 2008 under the Advocates Act, 1961, prescribe the minimum curriculum of every recognised law degree in the country, which makes the discipline's skills supply auditable in a way that few disciplines allow: the mandated curriculum is a public document that can be mapped, paper by paper, against any demand-side framework (Bar Council of India, 2008). Third, law is strikingly absent from the very instruments through which India measures graduate employability. The India Skills Report's domain-wise analysis scores information technology, computer science, every major engineering branch, management and general arts and commerce degrees, but law does not appear as a tested domain at all (Wheebox, 2024). A discipline that cannot see its own employability signal has no feedback loop through which to correct course.

The stakes are not peculiar to India. Across jurisdictions, artificial intelligence is reshaping legal work faster than almost any other white-collar field: Goldman Sachs (2023) estimates that generative artificial intelligence could automate roughly 44% of legal tasks, a higher share than nearly any other profession and well above the all-sector average of about a quarter, while industry analysts anticipate that the large majority of legal roles will be significantly reshaped rather than abolished. This distinction organises the argument that follows. Artificial intelligence is automating particular tasks within legal work, above all the routine and codifiable ones, while leaving the profession as a whole augmented rather than replaced, so that the surviving human work of judgement, advocacy and counsel becomes more valuable, not less. The difficulty, developed below, is that the tasks now being automated are also the tasks on which new lawyers have traditionally learned.

The article pursues three research questions. RQ1: what does the augmentation-economy framing of future skills imply for the skill profile of future legal work? RQ2: to what extent does the curriculum mandated for Indian law degrees supply the skills clusters that employers and future-skills frameworks demand? RQ3: which institutional features of Indian legal-education governance explain the misalignment that the mapping reveals?

It makes three contributions. Empirically, it provides the first systematic mapping of a professionally mandated curriculum against the QS future-skills clusters, finding that entrepreneurial capability and digital/AI literacy are structural gaps in the compulsory core of the Indian law degree, that ethical instruction is present but ritualised, and that the human-cognitive skills most valuable in an augmentation economy are assumed rather than taught. Methodologically, it demonstrates a replicable documentary audit that other professional disciplines and other jurisdictions can apply to their own regulatory instruments. Conceptually, it argues that artificial intelligence is not merely changing the skills graduates need; it is dismantling the apprenticeship ladder through which the profession has traditionally converted inexperienced graduates into experienced practitioners, because the low-stakes work on which juniors learned is exactly the work machines now do. If judgement can no longer be acquired on the job, it must be built during education, which converts curriculum reform from an employability question into a professional-formation question.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows. [Section 2](#) situates the study in the graduate employability literature, the literature on artificial intelligence and professional work, and the institutional context of Indian legal education. [Section 3](#) sets out the conceptual framework. [Section 4](#) describes the documentary sources and the coding method. [Section 5](#) presents the findings across four levels: the macro alignment gap, employer demand, the mandated curriculum and the institutional constraints that hold the pattern in place. [Section 6](#) discusses the findings, [Section 7](#) draws implications for policy and practice, and [Sections 8 and 9](#) address limitations and conclude.

2. Context and literature

2.1 Graduate employability and the alignment problem

The employability literature has long distinguished between employability as a property of the graduate and employability as an achievement of the system that produces the graduate. [Hillage and Pollard \(1998\)](#) defined employability as the capability to gain, maintain and obtain new employment, while [Harvey \(2001\)](#) cautioned against reading employment outcomes as a simple measure of institutional performance, since outcomes are jointly produced by graduates, institutions and labour markets. [Yorke \(2006\)](#) formulated the influential account of employability as a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations. [Tomlinson \(2012\)](#) traced how policy discourse has nonetheless pushed universities toward an increasingly explicit skills-supply role, in which curricula are expected to answer to labour-market signals. The present study sits squarely in that supply-demand tradition, but with a distinctive object: not an institution's curriculum, which institutions can change, but a regulator's mandated minimum curriculum, which institutions cannot lawfully go below and which therefore sets the floor of skills supply for an entire discipline.

Within this tradition, professional disciplines occupy a special position. Their curricula are co-governed by educational institutions and professional regulators, their graduates face licensure as well as labour markets, and their employability debate is often framed around technical competence rather than transferable capability. India adds a further layer: the National Education Policy 2020 commits the higher education system to multidisciplinary, flexibility and the integration of vocational and skills content ([Ministry of Education, 2020](#)), while professional councils retain statutory control over professional curricula. How that tension resolves inside a specific discipline is an empirical question, and it is the question this article answers for law. That emphasis places the vocational and skills dimension of

professional education, long treated as secondary to doctrinal knowledge, at the centre of the employability question, which is precisely the terrain on which this study proceeds.

Other professionally regulated disciplines show that statutory control of the curriculum need not mean curricular stasis. In medicine, the National Medical Commission introduced a competency-based undergraduate curriculum through its Graduate Medical Education Regulations, 2019, later refined in 2023 and 2024, replacing a scheme that had stood largely unchanged for two decades ([National Medical Commission, 2019](#)). In engineering, the National Board of Accreditation adopted outcome-based accreditation on becoming a signatory to the Washington Accord in 2014, assessing programmes against defined graduate attributes on fixed reaccreditation cycles ([National Board of Accreditation, 2014](#)). Beyond India, the Solicitors Regulation Authority of England and Wales replaced its route to qualification with the competence-based Solicitors Qualifying Examination in 2021 and defines the solicitor role through a published occupational standard ([Solicitors Regulation Authority, 2021](#)). These regimes treat the professional curriculum as an outcome-referenced instrument subject to periodic, evidence-led revision, which sharpens the contrast with a legal-education curriculum unrevised since 2008.

2.2 Artificial intelligence and the reconfiguration of professional work

Two decades of scholarship on technology and work converge on a task-level rather than occupation-level account of automation. [Frey and Osborne \(2017\)](#) estimated the susceptibility of occupations to computerisation, while [Autor \(2015\)](#) explained why automation complements as often as it substitutes: machines take over codifiable tasks and raise the value of the judgement, problem-solving and interpersonal tasks that remain. [Susskind and Susskind \(2015\)](#) applied the logic to the professions, arguing that professional work decomposes into tasks of very different automatability, and [Susskind \(2023\)](#) developed the implication for law specifically: document review, legal research at the retrieval level, standard-form drafting and process-heavy litigation support industrialise first, while advisory judgement, advocacy and client relationships persist as human work. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report (2025) reports the demand-side counterpart, with analytical thinking remaining the core skill most sought by employers and AI and big data among the fastest-growing skills requirements ([World Economic Forum, 2025](#)).

This task-level account carries a consequence for professional formation that the employability literature has largely not absorbed. In apprenticeship-structured professions, the codifiable tasks are not merely output; they are pedagogy. Junior lawyers have traditionally learned judgement by performing low-stakes, routine work under supervision and the profession has relied on that ladder to convert graduates into experienced practitioners. If artificial intelligence absorbs the bottom rungs, the ladder no longer reaches the ground, and the burden of forming judgement shifts backward onto formal education. This is where the augmentation reading and the language of replacement meet without contradiction. Augmentation describes the profession as a whole, whose surviving work grows more valuable; task-level automation describes the routine layer within it. Because that routine layer is also the layer on which juniors have historically trained, the same technology that augments the senior practitioner removes the apprenticeship of the junior one. National labour-market data are consistent with pressure at exactly this point: [NCAER \(2025\)](#) finds that the share of high-skill employment declined in both manufacturing (from 18 to 12%) and services (from 38 to 29%) between 2018 and 2024, even as medium-skill employment expanded, and that only 4% of Indian workers had received formal training as of 2024. The high-skill layer where legal work sits is not expanding to absorb graduates who lack the full skill stack.

2.3 The governance of Indian legal education

Indian legal education is regulated by the Bar Council of India under powers conferred by the Advocates Act, 1961 ([Government of India, 1961](#)). The Rules of Legal Education (2008)

prescribe two routes to the LL.B.: a three-year degree following any bachelor's degree, and a five-year integrated double degree following senior secondary school (Bar Council of India, 2008, Rule 4). Both routes share an identical mandated law core, specified in Schedule II of the Rules, together with standards for admission, attendance, semester length, infrastructure, faculty and internship set out in the Rules and their Schedules. Reform of legal education has been a recurring policy concern at least since the Law Commission of India's 184th Report (Law Commission of India, 2002), and the clinical legal education movement associated with Menon (1998) succeeded in embedding four skills-oriented papers in the 2008 Rules. The Rules have not, however, been comprehensively revised since 2008, a period spanning the smartphone, the platform economy, the industrialisation of legal process outsourcing and the arrival of generative artificial intelligence. The present study treats that regulatory instrument, in force in 2026, as its primary document.

3. Conceptual framework

The study adopts the skills framework underpinning the QS World Future Skills Index, which distinguishes labour-market demand for future skills (Future of Work) from the education system's supply of them (Skills Alignment, also reported as Skills Fit), and organises the demanded capabilities into clusters spanning human-cognitive skills such as judgement, reasoning and problem-solving; human-centred leadership skills such as collaboration, communication and client and team management; entrepreneurial and innovative capability; and sustainable and ethical capability; alongside the AI, digital and green technical skills whose diffusion drives the index (QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2026a). Two features make the framework suitable for a discipline-level audit. First, its augmentation-automation logic maps directly onto the task structure of legal work described in Section 2.2, so the clusters describe precisely the capabilities that remain valuable as the automatable layer of legal production is industrialised. Second, its supply-demand architecture scales down: what the index measures between a country's labour market and its higher education system, this study measures between a profession's labour market and its mandated curriculum.

The framework is operationalised through a coverage construct. A mandated curricular component covers a skills cluster directly when the cluster is an explicit object of instruction or assessment in the component's prescribed outline; partially when the cluster is exercised incidentally in the course of doctrinal or procedural instruction without being taught or assessed as such; and not at all when neither condition holds. Digital and AI literacy is carried as a fifth column alongside the four clusters, since the index treats AI and digital skills as the principal driver of changing demand. The construct is deliberately conservative: it measures what the regulator requires, not what the best institutions add and it therefore describes the guaranteed floor of skills supply across the discipline.

4. Data and method

The study is a qualitative documentary analysis combining a framework-based curriculum mapping with triangulation against three independent secondary sources. Table 1 summarises the documentary corpus.

The mapping proceeded in three steps. First, the unit of analysis was fixed as the mandated curricular component. In the terminology of the Rules, a paper is a taught subject with its own prescribed syllabus and examination, not a legal case or a court filing, so the mandated curriculum is expressed as a list of such papers. Schedule II, paragraph 4(a) of the Rules requires "not less than twenty eight papers" comprising compulsory, clinical and optional papers; the Schedule then enumerates twenty compulsory doctrinal papers (papers 1 to 20, with Family Law, Constitutional Law and Labour and Industrial Law carrying two papers each), four compulsory clinical papers (papers 21 to 24) and six optional papers to be chosen from listed groups. The Schedule's own text states "eighteen compulsory papers" while

Table 1. Documentary sources analysed

Document	Role in analysis	Key content used
Bar Council of India, Rules of Legal Education, 2008 (with Schedules)	Primary document; object of the curriculum mapping	Rule 4 (course structures); Schedule II (mandated papers and clinical course outlines); Schedule III (infrastructure, faculty and internship standards)
QS World Future Skills Index 2027 and India Spotlight (QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2026a, b)	Macro demand-supply frame; source of the skills clusters	India's Future of Work (96.0, rank 5), Skills Alignment (82.7, rank 18), Economic Capacity (100, rank 1) and overall (89.4, rank 13 of 89) scores; identification of entrepreneurial and innovative mindset as India's largest skills gap
India Skills Report 2025 (Wheebox, 2024)	Employer demand and employability measurement in India	Global Employability Test results ($n = 6.5$ lakh); national employability 54.81%; domain-wise employability coverage; employer-prioritised skills; global demand analysis for legal and regulatory roles
NCAER, India's Employment Prospects: Pathways to Jobs (2025)	National labour-market context and skilling diagnosis	Formal training share (4%, 2024); skill-composition trends 2018–2024; vocational education critique and reform recommendations
Source(s): Author's own work		

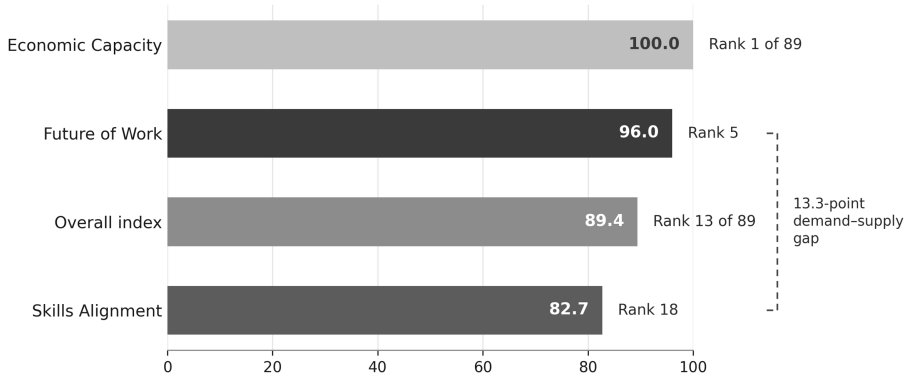
enumerating twenty; the enumerated structure of thirty papers is used throughout this study and the discrepancy is noted as a finding in its own right. Because Rule 4 gives the three-year and five-year routes an identical law core, the mapping was performed once on the common core; the five-year integrated route, which anchors the presentation, differs only in adding liberal-discipline papers and a longer internship floor of 20 weeks against 12 (Bar Council of India, 2008, Schedule III, clause 25).

Second, each component was coded against the four skills clusters and digital/AI literacy using the three-level coverage construct defined in Section 3. Coding relied exclusively on the course outlines and assessment specifications printed in Schedule II. To illustrate the decision rules: the Drafting, Pleading and Conveyance paper (paper 21) prescribes instruction and no fewer than thirty marked practical exercises in drafting and conveyancing, so it codes direct for human-cognitive skill; the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) paper (paper 23) prescribes negotiation and conciliation skills learned through simulation, so it codes direct for human-centred leadership; the doctrinal papers exercise legal reasoning through examination but do not teach or assess reasoning as an object in itself, so they code partial for human-cognitive skill; no mandated paper mentions entrepreneurial capability or digital technology as an object of instruction, so those cells code absent. Where a cluster is reachable only through optional papers, such as Corporate Governance, Competition Law, Bankruptcy and Insolvency or Information Technology Law in the Business Law group, coverage is attributed to the optional layer and coded partial there, since the Rules expressly permit universities to restrict the groups and subjects offered on the basis of faculty availability, so no student is guaranteed access.

Third, the supply-side mapping was triangulated against the demand-side sources. Employer-prioritised skills reported in the India Skills Report 2025 were mapped to their corresponding QS clusters and then to their coverage status in the mandated core, and the discipline-level findings were set against the country-level QS scores and the NCAER labour-market diagnosis. Coding was undertaken by the author from public documents and is fully reproducible; the complete coding is displayed in Figures 1 and 3 so that readers can audit every cell against the published Rules. Because the coding was performed by a single researcher, several steps guard against subjectivity: the three-level construct was defined in

India in the QS World Future Skills Index 2027: labour-market transformation outpacing the skills supplied by higher education

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Source: QS World Future Skills Index 2027 (QS Quacquarelli Symonds, June 2026).
The gap between Future of Work readiness (96.0, rank 5) and Skills Alignment (82.7, rank 18) evidences demand for future skills running ahead of the higher-education system's capacity to supply them.

Figure 1. India in the QS world future skills index 2027. Source: Author's own work, based on data from [QS Quacquarelli Symonds \(2026a\)](#)

advance with explicit decision rules; each code was tied to the verbatim text of the prescribed outline rather than to inferred intent; every coded cell is displayed in [Figures 3 and 4](#) for readers to check against the published Rules; and recurring borderline cases, such as clusters reachable only through optional papers, were settled by a single stated conservative rule rather than case by case. Independent inter-coder validation is identified as a limitation and a priority for extension in [Section 8](#).

Ethical review. This study analyses publicly available regulatory instruments and secondary published data. It involves no human participants, no personal data and no animal subjects, so formal ethical approval was not required; the research was conducted in accordance with the research-integrity and ethics policy of Chanakya University, Bengaluru.

5. Findings

5.1 The macro alignment gap (RQ1)

[Figure 1](#) locates India in the QS World Future Skills Index 2027. The country's labour market is transforming towards future skills at close to the global frontier, with a Future of Work score of 96.0 (rank 5 of 89) and the world's highest Economic Capacity score, yet Skills Alignment stands at 82.7 (rank 18), a 13.3-point gap between what the economy demands and what higher education supplies ([QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2026a](#)). QS's India-specific diagnosis identifies the largest component of the gap as entrepreneurial and innovative mindset ([QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2026b](#)). The national picture is corroborated domestically: overall employability among graduate test-takers stands at 54.81% ([Wheebox, 2024](#)), only 4% of workers hold formal training, and the share of high-skill employment contracted in both manufacturing and services between 2018 and 2024 ([NCAER, 2025](#)).

For legal work specifically, the augmentation-economy reading of RQ1 is direct. The tasks that artificial intelligence performs well, retrieval-level research, document review and standard-form drafting, are the codifiable layer of legal production; the tasks that remain and appreciate are judgement, strategy, advocacy, negotiation, client relationships and ethical navigation ([Susskind, 2023](#)). Those surviving tasks are, almost item for item, the QS clusters:

human-cognitive, human-centred leadership, entrepreneurial, and sustainable and ethical capability, exercised on a digital substrate. The skill profile of the future lawyer is therefore not a technical variant of the present profile; it is the cluster profile itself, and the question for legal education is whether the mandated curriculum supplies it.

5.2 Employer demand and the invisibility of law (RQ2, demand side)

The India Skills Report 2025 provides two demand-side findings and one measurement finding. First, employers surveyed for the report prioritise foundational capabilities over narrowly technical ones: ethics, collaboration and problem-solving, alongside digital literacy, management and cognitive skills, with emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and leadership highlighted across industries (Wheebox, 2024). These employer priorities map almost one-to-one onto the QS clusters, which supports using the clusters as a demand proxy for India. Second, the report’s global demand analysis identifies legal and regulatory roles as a sector of intensifying international demand, driven by data-protection compliance in Europe, legal advisory and contract management growth in the Middle East and North Africa, and technology-law and intellectual-property demand in Australia (Wheebox, 2024). Legal capability is thus globally mobile demand-side territory in the report’s own terms.

The measurement finding is the striking one. The report’s domain-wise employability analysis, built on a Global Employability Test taken by 6.5 lakh candidates, scores information technology (75%), computer science (78%), the major engineering branches, MBA graduates (78%) and general B.A. graduates (54%), but law does not appear as a tested domain at all. The nearest available proxy for a five-year integrated law graduate is the general B.A. figure, which sits at the national average. India’s flagship employability instrument, in other words, cannot see the legal discipline, and the QS index, on the global side, is likewise silent on law as a discipline. A profession whose employability is never measured receives no signal against which to calibrate its curriculum; the feedback loop that pushes engineering and management education toward labour-market alignment simply does not reach legal education. Figure 2 displays the demand-supply mapping.

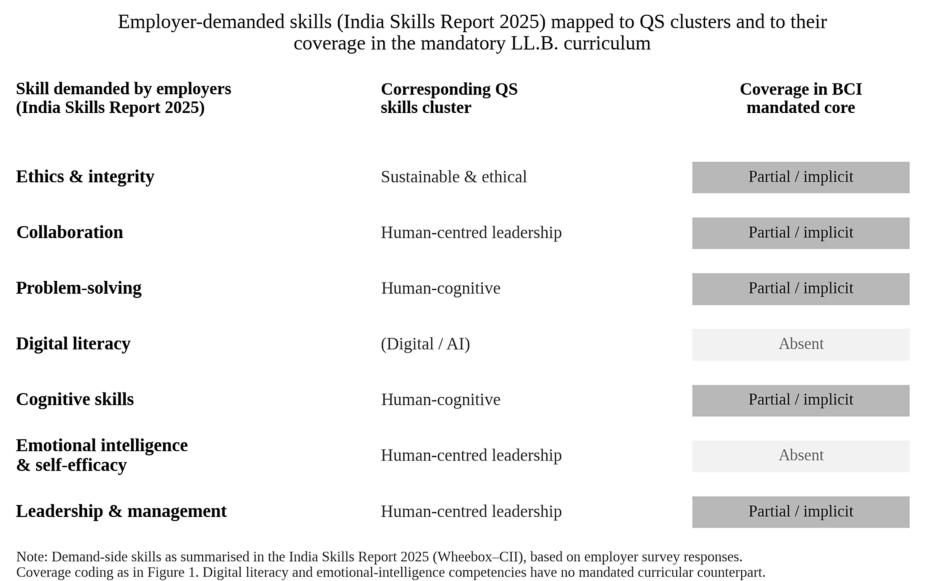


Figure 2. Employer-demanded skills mapped to QS clusters and to their coverage in the mandated LL.B. core. Source: Author’s own work, based on data from Wheebox (2024) and Bar Council of India (2008)

5.3 The mandated curriculum (RQ2, supply side)

Figure 3 presents the composition of the mandated course structure. Of the thirty enumerated papers, twenty (67%) are compulsory doctrinal papers, four (13%) are compulsory clinical papers and six (20%) are optional. The compulsory doctrinal core spans jurisprudence, contract, tort, family law, crimes, constitutional law, property, evidence, procedure, administrative law, company law, public international law, taxation, environmental law and labour law: a coherent map of legal doctrine, assessed by examination, in which transferable capability is exercised only incidentally. All skills-oriented instruction that the regulator guarantees to every Indian law student is concentrated in the four clinical papers.

Figure 4 presents the full coverage matrix. Three patterns organise the findings. First, entrepreneurial capability is a structural gap. No compulsory paper, doctrinal or clinical, addresses practice-building, legal innovation, service design or commercial capability in any form. The nearest content sits in the optional Business Law group, in papers such as Corporate Governance, Competition Law, Bankruptcy and Insolvency and Information Technology Law,

Composition of the minimum LL.B. course structure mandated by the Bar Council of India
(30 papers as listed in Schedule II: 20 compulsory doctrinal, 4 clinical, 6 optional)



Note: Schedule II, Rule 4(a) states "eighteen compulsory papers" but enumerates twenty (Family Law, Constitutional Law and Labour & Industrial Law carry two papers each); the enumerated structure is used here. Skill-oriented clinical instruction accounts for 13% of the mandated core; no mandated paper addresses entrepreneurial, digital or AI capability.

Figure 3. Composition of the minimum LL.B. course structure mandated by the Bar Council of India. Source: Author's own work, based on [Bar Council of India \(2008, Schedule II\)](#)

Coverage of QS future-skills clusters and digital/AI literacy in the
BCI-mandated LL.B. curriculum (Rules of Legal Education, 2008, Schedule II)

	Human-cognitive	Human-centred leadership	Entrepreneurial	Sustainable & ethical	Digital / AI literacy
Compulsory doctrinal papers (1–20)	Partial / implicit	Absent	Absent	Partial / implicit	Absent
Drafting, Pleading & Conveyance (21)	Direct	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
Professional Ethics & Accounting (22)	Absent	Absent	Absent	Direct	Absent
Alternative Dispute Resolution (23)	Partial / implicit	Direct	Absent	Absent	Absent
Moot Court & Internship (24)	Direct	Partial / implicit	Absent	Absent	Absent
Optional papers (6 of ~90 electives)	Partial / implicit	Absent	Partial / implicit	Partial / implicit	Absent

Note: Coverage coded by the authors from Schedule II course outlines. "Direct" = cluster is an explicit object of instruction or assessment; "Partial/implicit" = cluster is exercised incidentally but not taught or assessed as such. Entrepreneurial content is reachable only through optional groups that universities may restrict; digital/AI literacy appears in the Rules only as library and computer infrastructure.

Figure 4. Coverage of QS future-skills clusters and digital/AI literacy in the BCI-mandated LL.B. curriculum. Source: Author's own work, based on [Bar Council of India \(2008, Schedule II\)](#)

but the Rules expressly permit universities to restrict optional groups on the basis of faculty availability, so this coverage is contingent rather than guaranteed. The discipline-level gap thus coincides exactly with the capability QS identifies as India's largest national skills gap.

Second, digital and AI literacy is absent from the curriculum in its entirety. The 2008 Rules mention computers only as infrastructure: Schedule III requires computer facilities in the library and makes "computer education" compulsory as a facility standard, but no mandated paper treats digital tools, legal technology, data or artificial intelligence as an object of instruction or assessment. A curriculum drafted the year after the first iPhone was released, and still in force in 2026, guarantees Indian law graduates no instruction whatsoever in the technologies that are absorbing the junior layer of their profession.

Third, the clusters that are present are present in a particular, limited way. The sustainable and ethical cluster is nominally the best served: Professional Ethics and Professional Accounting System (paper 22) is a compulsory clinical paper. Its prescribed content, however, is enrolment-oriented professional conduct, built on a standard advocacy text, the law of contempt, the Bar Council's Code of Ethics and fifty selected disciplinary opinions: bar discipline, not the broader ethical and sustainability capability the QS cluster describes. Human-centred leadership hangs on a single paper, Alternative Dispute Resolution (paper 23), which prescribes negotiation and conciliation skills through simulation. Human-cognitive skill receives direct treatment in Drafting, Pleading and Conveyance (paper 21) and in the moot court component of paper 24, and is otherwise exercised implicitly across the doctrinal core without ever being taught or assessed as such. The cluster most valuable in an augmentation economy is, in the mandated curriculum, largely an assumption. The concentration of skills instruction in four clinical papers also detaches capability from context. Because drafting, negotiation and advocacy are taught as free-standing clinical papers rather than developed across the doctrinal core, students rehearse these skills in the abstract rather than in the setting of a particular field, even though the application of law in, for instance, family, criminal and commercial matters differs markedly. Distributing skills development through the doctrinal papers, rather than confining it to four, would align supply more closely with how legal work is actually performed.

5.4 Institutional constraints (RQ3)

Four features of the governance regime explain why the pattern persists. The first is the pace of regulatory revision. The Rules of Legal Education were adopted in 2008 and have not been comprehensively revised since; their internal texture shows their age. The Schedule's arithmetic inconsistency between "eighteen" stated and twenty enumerated compulsory papers has survived eighteen years of operation, and Schedule III still prescribes a minimum annual library investment of INR 50,000 rupees for a single-stream institution, a figure fixed in 2008 money. Whatever view one takes of individual prescriptions, an instrument of this vintage cannot track a labour market in which, on NCAER's account, the appropriate reform standard for training systems is alignment with industry demand through regular market assessments (NCAER, 2025). State universities compound this problem of slow revision: syllabus revision cycles of two to three years are common, so even the optional layer, where responsive content could enter, adapts more slowly than demand moves.

The second feature is that the regime regulates inputs rather than outcomes. The Rules specify semester lengths, weekly class-hours, attendance thresholds, library holdings, faculty numbers and internship weeks with considerable precision, and specify no employability, placement or capability outcome at all. Schedule III's internship standard illustrates the input orientation: a floor of 12 or 20 weeks across the degree, capped at four continuous weeks, with at least one placement with trial and appellate advocates, is a schedule of exposure, not a specification of what the intern should become able to do.

The third feature is the separation of teaching from practice. Under the Bar Council of India Rules governing advocates, a full-time salaried employee may not practise at the Bar (Bar

[Council of India, 1975](#), Part VI, Chapter II, Section VII, Rule 49), so the full-time core faculty whom the Rules of Legal Education require in every institution are structurally severed from current legal practice. The 2008 Rules attempt to compensate at the margins, permitting clinical instruction by retired judicial officers and practitioners of ten years' standing and encouraging association with practising lawyers in the clinical papers, but the compensation is itself revealing: the regime treats current practice experience as a visiting input rather than a property of the permanent teaching body. Employer complaints that graduates arrive unskilled across corporate, litigation and compliance roles follow almost mechanically from a system in which those who teach cannot practise and those who practise teach only occasionally.

The fourth feature is the measurement invisibility documented in [Section 5.2](#). Legal education faces no discipline-level employability signal, national or global, and the Rules create no outcome measurement of their own. The governance system is therefore blind at precisely the point where the alignment literature expects correction to begin. Nor does the regime provide any formal channel through which employer or alumni experience could enter curriculum design. The Rules establish no standing employer advisory board, tracer study or periodic consultation by which the concerns that firms and chambers express informally could reach the body that sets the mandated curriculum. The feedback loop is therefore missing not only in measurement but in institutional design.

6. Discussion

6.1 *The hollowed apprenticeship ladder*

The findings acquire their force when read against the task-level account of automation. The traditional answer to every gap documented in [Section 5](#) has been the apprenticeship: the curriculum teaches doctrine, and judgement, client skill, commercial sense and technological fluency are learned in practice, junior work being the tuition. That answer is dissolving. The layer of legal work through which juniors have historically learned – retrieval-level research, document review, first drafts, procedural support – is the layer that large language models and legal technology now perform, and it is being industrialised fastest in exactly the globally mobile compliance and contract work that the India Skills Report identifies as growth territory ([Wheebox, 2024](#); [Susskind, 2023](#)). NCAER's finding that high-skill employment contracted as a share of services employment from 38 to 29% between 2018 and 2024 indicates that the high-skill layer is not expanding to absorb juniors displaced from routine work ([NCAER, 2025](#)).

The consequence is a professional-formation problem, not merely an employability problem. If the bottom rungs of the ladder are gone, the profession's future decision-makers cannot be assumed to emerge from years of routine work, because there will be fewer years of routine work to emerge from. The practitioners who reach positions of judgement will increasingly be those who acquired the full capability stack, cognitive, interpersonal, entrepreneurial, ethical and technological, during formal education and early structured training. A mandated curriculum in which that stack is one-third guaranteed, as [Figure 4](#) shows, is therefore not a lagging indicator that the market will quietly correct; it is the binding constraint on where the profession's next generation of judgement comes from.

6.2 *A convergent entrepreneurial gap*

The single most robust finding is the convergence of two independently produced results. At the country level, QS identifies entrepreneurial and innovative mindset as India's largest skills gap ([QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2026b](#)). At the discipline level, the mapping in this study finds entrepreneurial capability to be the one cluster with no guaranteed presence anywhere in the mandated law curriculum, compulsory or clinical, and only contingent presence in electives that universities may lawfully decline to offer. Discipline-level curricular structure and country-level skills measurement, produced by different methods from different data, point at

the same gap. For a profession in which a large share of practitioners are, in effect, small entrepreneurs building independent practices, and in which legal innovation is an explicit international demand signal, the gap is consequential; and for the employability literature, the convergence illustrates how country-level alignment indices can be given micro-foundations through curriculum-level audits.

6.3 Presence without substance: the ritualised clusters

The mapping also cautions against reading formal presence as supply. The sustainable and ethical cluster is the only one served by a dedicated compulsory paper, yet the paper's prescribed content is disciplinary conduct for enrolment at the Bar. This is presence in the register of compliance rather than capability: a graduate can complete the paper having studied fifty disciplinary opinions without ever engaging the questions of sustainability, technology ethics or client-centred ethical judgement that the QS cluster and the employer data foreground. Human-cognitive capability shows the mirror-image pathology: it is everywhere in the curriculum implicitly, because legal doctrine cannot be examined without reasoning, and almost nowhere explicitly, because reasoning is never itself the object of instruction or assessment outside the drafting and mooting components. In an augmentation economy, in which precisely this cluster differentiates the human lawyer from the machine, assuming it is a curriculum-design decision with a rising price.

6.4 Invisibility and the missing feedback loop

Finally, the measurement finding reframes the well-known gap between Indian academia and legal employers. Universities have multiplied conferences, workshops, internships and placement initiatives, yet employers continue to report that graduates arrive unskilled across corporate, litigation and compliance work. The findings here suggest a structural reading: the discipline operates without an employability signal ([Section 5.2](#)), under a regulator that measures inputs rather than outcomes ([Section 5.4](#)), with a permanent faculty severed from practice ([Section 5.4](#)), on a curriculum revised on a generational rather than market cycle ([Section 5.4](#)). Each institutional feature individually weakens the correction mechanism that the employability literature assumes; jointly they remove it. The observed gap is then not an implementation failure by individual institutions but the equilibrium output of the governance design.

7. Implications for policy and practice

Four implications follow for the regulator. First, the mandated curriculum needs a revision cycle, not merely a revision. NCAER's prescription for the vocational system, alignment with industry demand through regular market assessments, applies with equal force to professional legal education: a published cycle of Schedule II review at fixed intervals, informed by employer and alumni evidence, would convert the Rules from a monument into an instrument ([NCAER, 2025](#)). A standing employer and alumni advisory input to that review would give the concerns of firms and chambers a formal route into curriculum design, and outcome-referenced comparators already exist, such as the English solicitor occupational standard and the competence-based Solicitors Qualifying Examination, which specify what a qualifying solicitor must be able to do ([Solicitors Regulation Authority, 2021](#)). Second, digital and AI capability belongs in the compulsory clinical layer. A fifth clinical paper on legal technology and artificial intelligence, teaching supervised use, verification and the ethics and limits of machine outputs in legal work, would place the mandated curriculum on the terrain where junior legal work is actually being reorganised. Third, entrepreneurial capability should migrate from the optional layer to the guaranteed core, whether as a clinical paper on legal practice management and innovation or as mandated content within existing clinical papers; a capability that QS identifies as the country's largest gap should not be one that a law school

may lawfully decline to offer. Fourth, the separation of teaching from practice deserves structured relaxation: designated professor-of-practice pathways, clinical faculty appointments carrying limited rights of practice, or supervised-practice sabbaticals would let the permanent faculty renew the practice knowledge on which skills teaching depends, an issue on which reform debate has been engaged since the Law Commission's 184th Report (Law Commission of India, 2002). Short of structural change, the separation can be eased at once within the existing rules: practising advocates can be engaged as guest lecturers and can supply simulation-based briefs drawn from real matters, giving students supervised exposure to current practice.

A fifth implication concerns the teachers themselves, since capability cannot be taught by faculty who lack it. Each reform above assumes law teachers who are current in legal technology, artificial intelligence and applied ethics, which implies structured faculty upskilling in these areas, without which a mandated technology paper cannot be staffed. The same competencies belong in the continuing professional development required of practising advocates, so that the profession's existing members, and not only its graduates, keep pace with the tools now reshaping legal work.

For universities and law schools, the mapping identifies the free margins that exist now. The optional groups already contain the entrepreneurial and technological content the core lacks; institutions can guarantee internally what the regulator leaves contingent, by committing to offer the relevant groups and by using honours specialisations to build coherent capability tracks. Clinical papers can be taught to their outer limits: the ADR and drafting outlines accommodate far richer simulation, client-interaction and technology-mediated exercise than their minimum readings require. For the measurement ecosystem, the case for including law as a tested domain in employability instruments of the Global Employability Test type is straightforward: a profession cannot align with signals it never receives, and instrument owners gain a large, nationally distributed discipline currently absent from their coverage.

8. Limitations and future research

Three limitations bound the claims. First, the study maps the regulatory minimum, not institutional practice. Leading institutions exceed the floor, and the findings say nothing about the best Indian legal education, only about what every recognised law degree is guaranteed to contain; a natural extension is a multi-institution audit of actual curricula against the same framework. Second, the demand side is inferred from economy-wide instruments, since no dedicated Indian legal-employer skills survey was available for analysis; primary research with law firms, corporate legal departments and litigation chambers, eliciting the capabilities they seek in graduates against the cluster framework, is the priority next study. Third, the coding, though rule-governed and fully displayed for audit, was performed by a single author from documentary sources; inter-coder replication and validation of the coverage construct would strengthen the method for comparative use. The method itself, however, travels: any jurisdiction with a mandated professional curriculum, in law or in other regulated professions, can be audited in the same way, and comparative application, including to jurisdictions currently reforming legal education, is a promising research programme.

9. Conclusion

India's legal profession is entering the augmentation economy governed by a curriculum drafted before that economy existed. Mapping the Bar Council of India's mandated LL.B. curriculum against the QS future-skills clusters shows entrepreneurial capability and digital/AI literacy to be structural gaps, ethical instruction to be present but ritualised and the human-cognitive capability on which the future value of lawyers rests to be assumed rather than taught, while the discipline operates outside the instruments through which India measures graduate employability. These gaps were tolerable so long as the profession's apprenticeship

ladder converted graduates into practitioners; as artificial intelligence absorbs the routine work that formed the ladder's lower rungs, they cease to be tolerable, because the capabilities the curriculum does not build will no longer be reliably built anywhere else. The alignment of legal education with the skills economy is therefore no longer only a question of graduate employment outcomes. It is the question of where the judgement of the profession's next generation will come from, and it now sits, more squarely than at any time since 2008, with the design of the mandated curriculum itself. Findings of this kind matter only if they reach the body able to act on them. The audit and its recommendations are intended to be placed before the Bar Council of India and university curriculum committees through the established channels for representation on legal-education reform, and the replicable method is offered to the regulator itself, and to reviewers in other regulated professions, as a tool that can be reapplied on a recurring basis.

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Corresponding author

S. Harikrishnan can be contacted at: harikrishnan.s@chanakyauniversity.edu.in