

THIS book by Professor Menon is a welcome addition to the field of Clinical Legal Education. While this book was written from the perspective of Indian legal education, the contributors to the various chapters come not only from India but from the United States and Australia and include the Hon Justice MD Kirby who currently sits as a judge on the Federal Court of Australia.

The book is divided into two parts consisting of a total of seventeen chapters and two appendices. Part 1 is titled “Overview of Clinical Legal Education” and provides the “big picture” to clinical legal education. The chapters in Part 1 explore concepts and issues relating to clinical legal education like the role of clinical education in the law curriculum, implementation of the clinical methodology and the process of skills training and learning.

Part 2 is titled “Tasks in Clinical Legal Education”. The thirteen chapters in this part focus specifically on various skills taught in clinical legal education as well as issues relating to, *inter alia*, assessment and design of clinical education programmes. In relation to the specific skills taught in clinical education, part 2 covers a wide spectrum ranging from generic skills like interviewing, counseling and negotiation to law-specific skills like appellate advocacy, case planning and mediation.

In its preface, Professor Menon states that this book is intended to be

“a clinical handbook to inform the legal community and to provide some basic materials for those so inclined to mount a clinical programme in their respective law schools.”

To this end, the book has served its purpose. It provides a reasonably comprehensive coverage of clinical legal education. Both the theoretical issues and practical considerations of teaching and implementation are covered and this will certainly provide a valuable starting point and resource for the teacher intending to delve into clinical legal education.

Of particular value and deserving of specific mention is the inclusion of excerpts drawn from an American Bar Association report on “Legal Education and Professional Development – An Educational Continuum.” These excerpts set out what is considered to be fundamental lawyering skills and provides an analysis of each skill set. This is invaluable in the design of training courses to teach and install these skills in students. Further, they also provide a useful benchmark in assessing the effectiveness of the training given.

Of course, the book does fall short in some areas. For example, the book is meant to be a systematic organization of relevant material. However, it would appear that Part 2 of the book only deals with specific skill sets and does not comprehensively address all the skills considered to be fundamental to lawyering. To be fair to the contributors, to achieve this would have required a monumental effort and could not be contained within the covers of just one book.

Another shortfall relates to Chapter 3 titled “How to Learn Skills – Some Reflections”. While this chapter starts off well by focusing on the process of learning skills, it unfortunately meanders into the area of the content of the actual skills themselves. The writer would have expected more discussion on how specifically skills should be taught so that they can be integrated into student’s behaviour and capabilities. Perhaps this is implicitly addressed when discussing the implementation of clinical legal education but it would have been useful to have an explicit discussion of this important issue.

Despite these short-comings, the book is a valuable addition to the area and the writer would recommend it to anyone interested in clinical legal education. While the notion of clinical legal education is firmly in place in many American law schools, it has yet to be accepted in Asian and indeed, as Professor Menon acknowledges, Indian law schools. Perhaps the publication of this book will herald the way for clinical legal education to be accepted in Asian and Indian law schools.