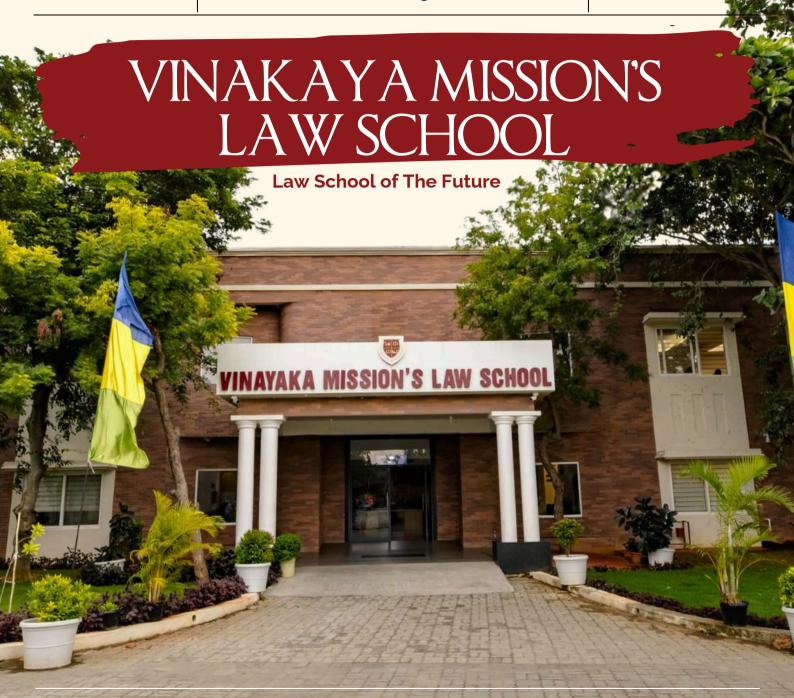




FUNDAMENTUM

Law. Learning. Leadership.

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Monthly Newsletter

VMLS
June & August - 2025 +



Here is this month's lowdown

Vinayaka Mission's Law School (VMLS) continued its forward-thinking journey through June and August, marked by expert insights on technology, arbitration, and legal research. As India celebrates Independence Day this month, these initiatives remind us that academic freedom and the pursuit of knowledge are among the most enduring gifts of our nation's liberty.

June began with an insightful guest lecture on June 4th by Mr. Jamal Siddique, Partner at Shook Lin & Bok LLP, Singapore, on Third Party Funding in Arbitration. From its origins maintenance and champerty regulations in England, Singapore. Australia, and India, he showed how funding is reshaping access to justiceechoing the ideal that justice must be accessible to all.

On June 18th, Dean Dr. Ananth Padmanabhan addressed over 70 Assistant Professors at a Faculty Development Programme hosted by Chennai Dr. Ambedkar Government Law College. talk. "Emerging Technologies and the Law," urged law educators to integrate data regulation, and Online Dispute Resolution into curricula, equipping future lawyers to protect freedoms in the digital era.

A landmark moment arrived on July 12th with the inauguration of the VMLS Legal Aid Clinic, Graced by Hon'ble Justice (Retd.) Thiru. D. Murugesan, former Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, and attended by distinguished guests, the event underscored our commitment to embedding legal education within the framework of social justice. announcement that VMLS has adopted 42 Irular tribal families in Manamai Village reaffirmed that our mission extends beyond classrooms into the heart of marginalized communities. The day also featured a thought-provoking panel discussion on "India's Justice Delivery: Challenges and Solutions", together leading voices in law, mediation, and policy to explore systemic reforms.

The emphasis on technology, access to justice, and community service at VMLS reflects the vision of a modern, self-reliant India—innovative and rooted in the rule of law. As we mark August with national pride, VMLS remains committed to not only imparting knowledge but also instilling values of integrity, equality, and the courage to question. Every lecture, research initiative, and outreach effort is a step toward preserving and strengthening the liberties secured through our freedom struggle for generations to come.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Clinical Justice

Funding Justice Globally

Mediation Milestone at VMLS

Tech-Ready Legal Education

IP Meets Arbitration

Celebrating Gold Medalists

Mastering Legal Research

Funding Justice Globally

Article : Evidence Law in Action

Beyond the Law Classroom; Know your rights

Legal Aid Clinic Inauguration, Panel on Justice Delivery, and VMLS Open Day



July 12, 2025 | VMCC Campus

Vinayaka Mission's Law School (VMLS) marked a special day on July 12, 2025, with three events highlighting its commitment to social justice and community engagement.

The morning saw the inauguration of the VMLS Legal Aid Clinic, aimed at linking legal education with service. Hon'ble Justice (Retd.) Thiru. D. Murugesan, former Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, spoke on access to justice as a pillar of democracy. Guests including Dr. Anuradha Ganesan, Mr. J. Suresh Samuel, Dr. A. Francis Julian, and Dr. A.S. Ganesan expressed support. A key moment was the adoption of 42 Irular tribal families from Manamai Village.



The day ended with a vibrant Open Day for aspiring law students and their families, featuring campus tours, interactive faculty sessions, and an overview of VMLS's academic and extracurricular life. Dr. Fowmina C., Assistant Dean, led the Legal Aid Clinic initiative, while Ms. Merlin Stephen, Deputy Director – Admissions, coordinated the Open Day. Together, these events reflected VMLS's vision of law as a bridge between scholarship and service.



The afternoon featured a thought-provoking panel discussion on "India's Justice Delivery: Challenges and Solutions", moderated by Dean Dr. Ananth Padmanabhan. Panelists Ms. Ambili Menon, Mr. Inbavijayan Veeraraghavan, Mr. Antony R Julian, and Mr. C.K. Girish offered diverse perspectives on systemic gaps in justice delivery, as well as the role of legal innovation and mediation in addressing them.

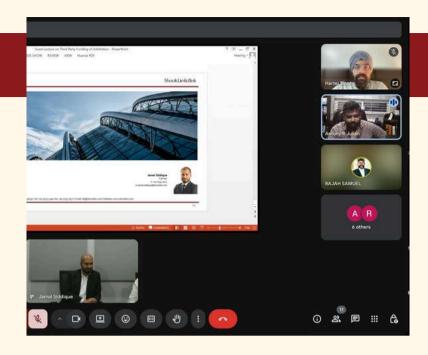
The day concluded with a vibrant Open Day for prospective law students and their families, featuring campus tours, interactive sessions with faculty, and insights into the dynamic academic and extracurricular life at VMLS. Dr. Fowmina. C, Assistant Dean, led the Legal Aid Clinic initiative, while Ms. Merlin Stephen, Deputy Director – Admissions, oversaw the Open Day programming.



Third Party Funding in Arbitration: Comparative Perspectives

June 4, 2025 | Online

Vinayaka Mission's Law School (VMLS) hosted an online guest lecture by Mr. Jamal Siddique, Partner at Shook Lin & Bok LLP, Singapore. The session traced the origins of third-party funding in arbitration through doctrines like maintenance and champerty and examined regulatory frameworks in England, Singapore, Australia, and India. Mr. Siddique emphasized how funding mechanisms can improve access to justice and discussed key ethical implications. The event offered LLM students a comparative and forward-looking perspective on international arbitration finance.





Global Mediation Pathways: MoU with IMO & ADR Insights

June 13, 2025 | VMLS Campus

VMLS signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding with the International Mediations Organisation (IMO), cementing its commitment to the global mediation ecosystem. The event included a lively Faculty & Student Interaction Session titled "Alternate Dispute Resolution – A Perspective," where expert speakers shared insights on mediation as a career, its application in community and corporate contexts, and international trends. As part of this collaboration, VMLS will establish an IMO-guided Mediation Chapter, providing immersive opportunities like simulations, mentorship, and live exposure to the mediation process. This partnership paves the way for students to explore pathways such as cross-border mediation, community conflict resolution, and LL.M. programs in ADR

Emerging Technologies and Legal Education: A Blueprint for Reform

June 18, 2025 | Chennai Dr. Ambedkar Government Law College

Dean Dr. Ananth Padmanabhan addressed over 70 Assistant Professors from Government Law Colleges across Tamil Nadu. His lecture stressed the need to incorporate technological themes —like AI, blockchain, data protection, and Online Dispute Resolution—into traditional legal curricula. He encouraged faculty to create tech-driven electives and familiarize students with interdisciplinary concepts, citing influential legal research and thinkers. The event helped reposition legal education to meet future societal challenges.





Honoring Excellence: LL.B. (Hons) Gold Medalists Recognized

July 2025 | VMLS Campus

Vinayaka Mission's Law School (VMLS) proudly celebrated the academic achievements of its top-performing students in the LL.B. (Hons) program. After three years of unwavering commitment, Srinithi Murugan (Rank 1), Pavithra V (Rank 2), and SD MD Haris (Rank 3) were recognized as Gold Medalists. Their journey was marked by academic excellence, late nights, courtroom simulations, and a deep passion for justice.

This milestone serves not only as a personal triumph for the students but as an inspiration for the entire VMLS community. As they step into the next phase of their legal careers, we celebrate their success and the values they represent.

Guest Lecture on the Challenges in Enforcing Foreign Awards in India

June 21, 2025 | Online

Vinayaka Mission's Law School (VMLS) hosted a compelling online guest lecture by Mr. Vivek Dhokalia, a senior legal expert with decades of experience in intellectual property and commercial litigation. Addressing LL.M. students and external participants, Mr. Dhokalia offered a practice-driven exploration of how arbitration is emerging as a strategic alternative to traditional IP litigation, especially in light of the delays in civil adjudication. He delved into the evolving jurisprudence around the arbitrability of IP disputes, arguing that intellectual property should increasingly be viewed not just as a sovereign right but as a commercial asset. Drawing from his own litigation experience in courts such as the Delhi and Kerala High Courts, he illustrated the procedural and legal dimensions of navigating IP disputes through both arbitration and traditional forums, providing attendees with a real-world understanding of the shifting landscape of IP dispute resolution.



Legal Research in the Digital Age

August 5, 2025 | VMLS Campus

VMLS welcomed Mr. Sumeet Malik, Director at EBC Group, for an in-depth session on legal research. He covered both doctrinal and empirical methods, research ethics, and effective use of tools like SCC Online and EBC Reader. Mr. Malik also discussed the impact of AI and digital transformation on legal scholarship, equipping students with skills to thrive in tech-enabled legal environments.



Theory and Practice: Clinical Legal Education and Evidence Law Training in India Author: Nishant Sheokand | Associate Dean (Academic Affairs)

"It is one thing to know that the law and quite another to practice it."

This remark by N.R. Madhava Menon definitely highlights the fundamental gap between legal theory today, and practice that continues to trouble the Indian legal education. Clinical Legal Education (hereinafter CLE) is basically an experiential method of teaching law and it addresses this divide by allowing the students to engage with real or experienced legal processes under supervision. CLE has a particular relevance in the context of understanding and practising Evidence Law, which is in itself procedural, technical, and central to any criminal or civil practice of law.

In India, the Evidence Law is often taught as a classroom subject focused on the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 or now the new version of the laws i.e. Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (BSA). However the real-world application especially in courts, various investigations, and legal proceedings definitely demands more than the rote and classroom theoretical understanding of the laws. CLE gives you a path way for exposing students to tasks such as evidence collection, cross-examination question drafting. formulation, simulations, and document authentication, which helps in transforming the theoretical knowledge into practical legal skills for the real world.

1. What is Clinical Legal Education?

It has the origins in early 20th century law schools, specifically from America and then it gained traction in India from the 1970s, particularly with the legal aid movement and pedagogical reforms led by legal academics like Madhav Menon. Eventually the Bar Council of India formalized CLE's role by including it in its Rules on Legal Education (as we know they love to have a control over what law schools are teaching or not teaching), which made clinical courses such as moot courts, internships, drafting and legal aid mandatory in the LLB curriculum.

CLE in India encompasses various formats:

- Legal aid clinics in which students assist real clients under expert faculty member supervision.
- Various simulations and mock trials, which replicate courtroom dynamics.
- Moot court competitions, a formal way of honing argumentative and evidentiary skills.
- Live-client clinics, which engage students in ongoing legal matters.
- Internships with courts, NGOs, and legal services authorities.



The objectives of the Clinical Education in Law are threefold: skill-building, ethical development (if that is possible for lawyers), and social justice.² It teaches practical lawyering competencies, client interviewing, drafting, litigation strategy, while embedding professional responsibility and empathy for marginalized groups.³

2. Evidence Law and Challenges in India Evidence Law is both foundational, substantive and to an extent procedural in its working, which makes it complex. Provisions related to electronic evidences or certain presumptions in sexual offences, and the exceptions of the hearsay rule usually require contextual understanding. Yet in most Indian law schools (majority), teaching such a law remains predominantly lecture based, and students never or seldom encounter the procedural realities and skill behind these rules.⁴

This disconnect between theory and the courtroom procedure is often exacerbated by lack of faculty training in clinical methods (at both the masters and the professional level) and restrictions on students participating in actual court proceedings.⁵ A study in 2015, the UNDP India report found that while 82% of surveyed law colleges had legal aid clinics, most of them did not offer course credit or even the formal integration into the pedagogy related to that of Evidence Laws.⁶ As a result, in abstract, the students may learn evidentiary provisions but they fail to understand how to apply them effectively in practice (internships and jobs).

3. Can CLE be a Bridge to the understanding Evidence Laws?

CLE provides a robust pedagogical strategy to address tsuch limitations. For example:

- Mock trial simulations give students hands-on experience in admitting or objecting to evidence, examining witnesses, and managing documentary exhibits.⁷
- Live-client clinics expose students to real affidavits, evidence submission, and procedural nuances under laws like the Domestic Violence Act or IPC offences.⁸

 Legal aid programs allow students to prepare documents, authenticate records, and advise clients—skills that directly involve application of Evidence Law principles.⁹

Read This Also:

Why Clinical Legal Education in India Is Struggling — And What We Can Do About It A good example comes from my alma mater, Good Governance and the Participation Clinic at Jindal Global Law School (JGLS) where students assisted in legal research and community litigation involving evidentiary issues such as land rights, drafting and public documents.¹⁰ These experiences definitely enhances student understanding of the technical rules while cultivating critical thinking and legal reasoning, few of the skills which CLE focuses on. Also, these type of Clinics strengthens the student familiarity with one of the most essential skills from Evidence Law i.e. cross examination techniques. question framing and evidentiary burdens (For example Shift of burden of proof), which are seldom grasped through textbooks alone.11

4. CLE in Indian Universities - Current Landscape

Many of India's top law schools (NLUs and Private Law Schools) have embraced clinical education as part of their pedagogical models. All National Law Universities have operational legal aid clinics (how effective? Deeper research is required) and offer the courses which have the CLE integration. Several of such colleges also collaborate with District Legal Services Authorities, NGOs, activists, adopt nearby villages as well to provide the community legal services and the practical legal training.¹²

Key initiatives:

- The Access to Justice Project funded by UNDP and implemented by NLUs in Odisha, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh.¹³
- The establishment of theme-based clinics (environmental, consumer, family law) at universities such as NLU Delhi and NALSAR Hyderabad.
- Training workshops organized by the Menon Institute of Legal Advocacy and Training (MILAT), aimed at equipping faculty to implement CLE effectively.¹⁴

As usual, despite these gains, a lot of significant structural challenges still persist. Many law colleges outside the NLU network lack infrastructure, trained faculty, or the administrative support to implement CLE. Moreover, BCI rules currently bar students and teachers from appearing in court, limiting real-client exposure.¹⁵



A 2013 survey concluded that clinics were "underutilized" due to absence of academic credit and poor integration with core subjects like Evidence Law.

Conclusion

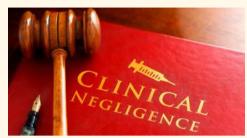
Clinical Legal Education offers transformative approach to teaching Evidence Law not just in India but internationally . By integrating the experiential learning techniques into legal instruction, it ensures that students not only understand the abstract Evidence Laws but are also equipped to apply it ethically and effectively in realworld scenarios. As Menon argued, CLE is essential not just for professional readiness, but also for promoting access to justice.

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Beyond the Classroom: Is Clinical Legal Education Fulfilling Its Promise?

Author: Sinjini Sen | Assistant Professor of Law



Clinical legal education has been described as "a learning environment where students identify, research, and apply knowledge in a setting that replicates, at least in part, the world where it is practised.... It almost inevitably means that the student takes on some aspect of a case and conducts this as it would be conducted in the real world." It refers to an educational model where students engage in practical, real-world cases. This hands-on learning can take place through a variety of simulation activities that are conducted in law schools. For instance, moot court activity helps students to instil the intricacies of advocacy skills. Similarly, negotiation exercises, client handling exercises, and drafting and pleading exercises can expose students to the complexities of real legal scenarios.

In India, legal education was introduced during British rule, primarily aimed at familiarizing the population with the laws and enactments of the British Empire. Clinical education component in the legal curriculum was presented even before the Advocates Act came into action. At that time, students pursuing law had to complete certain mandatory procedural courses required by the respective State Bar Council and simultaneously undergo training under a senior advocate. But this set-up was problematic because of the absence of coordination between the university-taught subjects and the practical experience in the senior advocate chamber.

To integrate and to uniform the entire legal education, the Bar Council of India developed a fresh curriculum. In this regard, in its recommended curriculum, the Bar Council of India has time to time, highlighted the importance of how a professional degree is different from other forms of education. During this time, after lots of debate, which began during a 1977 National Seminar on Legal Education at Bombay, the Bar Council of India (BCI) finalised the introduction of the new 5-year course from July 1982, open to students after 10+2.

The rules introduced by the Council in June 1982 under the Advocates Act. 1962. emphasised the importance of dissemination of legal knowledge for the promotion of democracy. The Council also exhorted universities to develop ways to incorporate clinical education. Under the BCI Rules of Legal Education, 2008, greater emphasis has been placed on clinical education within law school curricula. According to Schedule II of the Rules, under Academic Standards and Courses to be Studied, Papers 21 to 24 are designated as compulsory clinical courses:

- Drafting, Pleading, and Conveyancing: This course covers principles of drafting, civil plaints, criminal complaints, PIL and writ petition drafting, and conveyancing.
- Professional Ethics and Professional Accounting System: This includes Professional Ethics, Accountancy for Lawyers, and Bar-Bench Relations. The course should be delivered through simulation exercises and with the assistance of practising lawyers or retired judges.
- Alternate Dispute Resolution: The curriculum includes negotiation skills taught through simulation, conciliation skills, arbitration law and practice, international arbitration, and arbitration rules. Senior legal practitioners are expected to conduct the course using simulations and case studies.
- Moot Court and Internship: This paper comprises three components—moot court exercises, observation of trials in two cases (one civil and one criminal), and interviewing techniques and pre-trial preparations followed by a viva. Interviewing and pre-trial components require each student to observe two client interview sessions at a lawyer's office or legal aid clinic and document them in a diary.

Further, according to the Schedule III each institution shall establish and run a Legal Aid Clinic under the supervision of a senior faculty member who may administer the clinic run by the final-year students of the institution in cooperation with the legal aid authorities, with a list of voluntary lawyers and other non-government organizations.



In 2020, The Bar Council of India introduced the Legal Education (Post Graduate, Doctoral, Executive, Vocational, Clinical and other Continuing Education) Rules, aimed at strengthening legal education across all levels—undergraduate, postgraduate, legal research, technology and court management, continuing legal education, and professional and clinical skill development (both offline and online). The Rules define clinical legal education as:

"a course on skill learning used in actual court practice and in any judicial proceedings, in reality, virtual or through simulations including any course on alternative dispute resolution skills and technique concerning negotiation, conciliation, mediation and arbitration, run by the Bar Council of India and/or any State Bar Council, and/or University Law School/Faculty/Department with the assistance Senior legal professionals from Bar and the Bench."

With the introduction of the Legal Education Rules, 2020, the Bar Council of India (BCI) has extended its role into postgraduate legal education and research. This move has sparked concern among legal scholars across the country, many of whom view it as an overreach and a display of unwarranted authority by the BCI. The Rules have been challenged in the Supreme Court of India by students, along with a consortium of National Law Universities.

More recently Bar Council of India passed a circular on the implementation of Legal Education Reforms, mandatory guidelines, norms and rules of legal education It emphasizes the requirement of integrating the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 with legal education. To enhance the quality and effectiveness of legal education, implement steps to provide bilingual education, using both English and the Regional/Bilingual Language as per NEP and Compulsory Integration of Mediation into law school curriculum.

Interestingly, although the BCI Rules provide detailed provisions for clinical education with support from faculty, practising advocates, retired judges, and legal aid clinics, the question remains: how effective are these measures in practice of law to prepare the lawyers? Do these courses truly help bridge the gap between theory and practice?

Legal Aid Clinics are envisioned as vital links between legal education and access to justice, working alongside state legal service authorities. However, the reality often falls short. A study conducted by UNDP India on school-based legal services clinics found that law schools make little drive into informing the surrounding community about the clinic's existence and availability of legal services. When it comes to legal representation, the results are particularly poor—primarily because neither students nor faculty members are permitted to appear in court on behalf of clients. This wide gap has indeed substantially reduced the impact of free legal service offered by the law colleges.



To truly make clinical legal education effective and to prepare students as future legal professionals, the law school should not just deliberate to implement these courses limited to a theoretical approach. Experiential learning should be central to the curriculum. Legal Aid Clinics, in particular, must evolve beyond simple awareness programs or symbolic activities like cleanliness drives. Instead, they should provide students with opportunities to engage with real-life cases and assist marginalized individuals in accessing justice.

Only then can the true purpose and benefit of clinical legal education be realized—through "learning by doing."

LEGAL MAXIM

"Nemo tenetur seipsum accusare"

Meaning: No one is legally bound to make a statement that would prove their own guilt.

Article Reference (India): Article 20(3) of the Constitution of India: "No person accused of any offence shall be compelled to be a witness against himself."

Example: A person is arrested for suspected theft in his workplace.

Police ask: "Did you take the money?"

The man says, "I won't answer without a lawver."

The police cannot force him to confess or answer.

Because under Article 20(3), he has the right to remain silent — and no one can force him to help prove his own guilt.

In Simple Words:

You have the right to stay silent if your words might make you look guilty.

No one can force you to confess or speak against yourself.

Why It Matters:

- It protects you from torture, threats, and pressure during police questioning.
- Makes sure that only voluntary, fair confessions are used in court.
- Keeps the justice system fair and respectful of human rights.

பொருள்: ஒருவர் தன்னைத் தானே குற்றவாளியாக சாட்டும் வகையில் வாக்குமூலம் அளிக்க கட்டாயப்படுத்த முடியாது.

இந்திய அரசியல் சட்டக் குறிப்பு: அரசியல் சட்டம் பிரிவு 20(3): "ஒரு குற்றத்தில் குற்றஞ்சாட்டப்பட்ட நபர், தன்னை எதிராக சாட்சியாக இருக்க வற்புறுத்தப்பட முடியாது."

உதாரணம்: ஒரு நபர் அலுவலகத்தில் திருட்டு குற்றச்சாட்டில் கைது செய்யப்படுகிறார். **போலீசார்**: "நீ தான் பணம் எடுத்தாயா?" என்று வற்புறுத்துகிறார்கள்.

அவர் பதிலளிக்கிறார்: "வழக்கறிஞருடன் பேசும் வரை எதுவும் சொல்ல மாட்டேன்."

போலீசார் அவரை வற்புறுத்த முடியாது. அவர் மௌனமாக இருக்கக்கூடிய உரிமை பெற்றவர்.

எளிய விளக்கம்: நீங்கள் பேசுவதால் உங்களைத் தான் குற்றவாளி என காட்ட வேண்டிய நிலை ஏற்பட்டால், பேச வேண்டியதில்லை. உங்களை எதிராக சாட்சியளிக்க யாரும் கட்டாயப்படுத்த முடியாது.

ஏன் இது முக்கியம்?

- மனித உரிமைகளை பாதுகாக்கிறது
- அதிகார துஷ்பிரயோகத்தை தடுக்கும்
- நீதிமுறையில் நியாயமும் நேர்மையும் நிலைத்திருக்க உதவுகிறது

VMLS is imparting education to the marginalized students. The institution provides support to their students who can serve at the grassroot level and protect the national interest.

Honorable Justice (Retd.) Dr. B.S. Chauhan,

I'm delighted that the Vinayaka Mission's Law School has placed special emphasis on inclusive education, which is much needed in times of deprived opportunities. This will open a new window for a large number of young Indians.

Honorable Justice (Retd.) S. Muralidhar

Guided by the finest legal minds in the country, VMLS is delivering world-class education to the rural regions of Tamil Nadu, sparking a transformative movement.

Honorable Justice (Retd.) Fakkir Mohamed Ibrahim Kalifulla



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