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BCI To Consider Holding CLAT & Other Entrance Exams in Regional Languages

Sanya Ambastha · 11 Feb 2022

On 16th December, 2021, the Union Minister for Law and Justice, Mr Kiren Rijiju, informed the Rajya Sabha, through a written reply, that the Bar Council of India (BCI) shall write to the Universities, asking them to explore the feasibility of conducting entrance exams in regional languages.

Thus, apart from English, these exams will be conducted in the local languages. This reply was in response to a question raised by BJP MP Harnath Singh Yadav. He had asked whether the Government had thought about the proposal to conduct entrance exams in regional languages, for admission into high ranking educational institutes.

Mr. Rijiju mentioned that under the Advocates Act, 1961, the BCI is the regulatory body for legal education in India. In its rules of legal education, it is 'envisaged that the medium of instruction etc, apart from the English language can also be other regional languages as per the convenience of the universities.'

In response to questions about CLAT being held in regional languages, the minister informed that the BCI shall issue an advisory to the National Law Universities in this regard. The same shall be done for other universities too.

It is interesting to note that in 2020, the BCI had constituted a seven-member committee to look into the viability of conducting CLAT in regional languages. This had been done following the direction of the Delhi High Court, after a petition had been filed regarding it.

According to the BCI Secretary, the council had been of the view that, prima facie, no deserving candidate should be deprived from giving CLAT on account of his/her inability to be proficient in English. In a press statement, the BCI acknowledged the fact that the All India Bar Examination is conducted in 11 languages. Thus, there exists a possibility of conducting CLAT in regional languages.

Legal Education and access to it, is the right of the citizens of this country. As rightly acknowledged by many officials, English cannot be the only measure of someone's intellect and intelligence. Such barriers to accessibility should be removed, through proper planning and procedure.

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