Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry (TOJQI) Volume 12, Issue 8, July 2021: 4464-4474

Future of Legal Services Entrepreneurship in India: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship has emerged as the engine of growth in the Indian economy, with entrepreneurs being the soul. Entrepreneurs contribute towards value creation, social impact and development in the society as a whole, which is now a widely acceptable truth.

Legal Services Entrepreneurship in India is one such area, which is gaining a rapid momentum. Earlier, the dimensions of Law were seldom associated with entrepreneurs in the form of lawyers, who were considered to be a cautious bunch focused on precedent, risk containment and tended to be reactive-not innovative. However, in the last two decades, rafts of legal entrepreneurs have emerged in the entrepreneurial space. They have tapped into the latent demand of access to legal services leading to differentiated, efficient, cost-effective, accessible, digitized and scalable legal products and services for corporate consumers. The Legal Services Entrepreneurs have blended legal, technological and process expertise in addition to capital to re-engineer legal delivery and provide easy, agile and affordable access to legal services. In contrast to a general entrepreneur, a legal entrepreneur is someone innovating the delivery of legal services or legal processes by starting their own business inserting concepts into actions, particularly witnessed in India.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the niche area of the challenges and opportunities of Legal Services Entrepreneurship in India. This paper with an attempt through qualitative research, panel discussions, interviews and review of literature will therefore attempt to study the future of Legal Services Entrepreneurship in India keeping in perspective the opportunities available and challenges faced by them.

Keywords: Legal services; Entrepreneurship; India; Artificial Intelligence; opportunities; challenges

1. Introduction

India has gained huge financial ground since its Independence. Through the many decades, by adopting progressive policy and financial reforms, India has emerged as one of the fastest developing business economies in the world. The Government has initiated much needed legislative reforms in the emerging economic environment involving rapid innovation changes, globalization of the economy, advancement in trade and industry, emphasis on international competitiveness and encouraging social development and research in tune with the future market needs.

India earlier had a command and control economy wherein the economy was mainly controlled by

the State. As the economy started opening up, there was immense business growth and development as new companies flourished. Entrepreneurship was seen as a new engine of growth.

The legal services industry too which was earlier bound by tradition, precedent and a high regard for hierchy in the profession started witnessing a change. Patience and persistence which were the hallmark of practising law in India gave rise to more entrepreneural ventures by lawyers. With the advent of globalisation and end of the license raj, the economy was no more a caged tiger. The Indian economy was set to change and along with it the rise of Legal Services Entrepreneurship was witnessed. In the last fifteen to twenty years there has been a sea change in the profession. Young lawyers are venturing into new seas and exploring areas and businesses in law which were unimaginable a few years ago. Legal entrepreneurs have set up companies, Online services, Mobile Apps, Education platforms, Legal and Knowledge outsourcing companies and many more such entities.

This paper has consciously been titled "Future of Legal Services Entrepreneurship in India: Opportunities and Challenges". This title indicates the separate parts of this research paper. The authors have carefully curated the literature review, posed the research questions and stated the methodology adopted. The findings and discussions along with implications have then been affirmed.

2. Review of Literature

There is a plethora of legal literature available in India. Legal literature is available in all spheres of law. Statutory rules and regulations have been studied and recorded in numerous literatures available in India. Access to Justice and issues related with it are also widely covered. An Access to Justice – Daksh survey lists out the litigants insights of the Indian judicial system. However, legal services entrepreneurship in India is an emerging phenomenon. This is because law was rarely associated with entrepreneurs. There is a gap in the analysis of impact of legal entrepreneurs who have started entrepreneurial ventures and forayed into cost effective, efficient and accessible services. There is dearth of a study of the opportunities and challenges of legal services entrepreneurs in India and future implication of their work.

Immense studies have been conducted on general entrepreneurs but legal services entrepreneurships have not been probed. There is no concrete research on the entrepreneurs, which have been set up by lawyers and what are there challenges and opportunities. This is even when, lawyers are most capable and compliant to start new ventures. Lawyers are aware of the legal compliances regarding start-ups and new ventures. Legal services entrepreneurs who are now emerging have started businesses, which are contributing in ways of economy boost, employment, and digitized solutions. The opportunities available to such entrepreneurs in the form of artificial intelligence, data analysis, cyber securities and online dispute resolutions have been culled out from the review of literature from journals, reports and articles. The unique challenges faced by the lawyer community in the form of restrictions in advertising, number of partnerships and foreign direct investments have also been analysed via statutory laws and regulations present in India. This research article aims to bridge the gap in these areas of legal entrepreneurship.

For this literature has been reviewed in the form of articles, which have been written in journals like Sage and Taylor and Francis. Numerous current articles from social media and newspapers have also been examined. Government policies and reports have also been scrutinized. Lawyers incorporating new business companies in legal services and other business ventures have been presented in a tabular form for greater understanding.

The questions therefore which have been explored are that how is legal services entrepreneurship different from general entrepreneurship. The numerous business areas that have remained untapped, especially those legal services which are based on artificial intelligence, digitization and cloud services leading to agile business solutions.

Lastly, the value creation, sustainability and future of the legal services entrepreneurhsip has been examined in the form of implications which has been presented at the end of this paper.

3. Research Questions

The following are the research questions that have been analysed emerging from the literature review:

- How is a general enterpreneur different from legal entrepreneur?
- What and how does a legal entrepreneur start his Entrepreneurship?
- What are the opportunities legal entrepreneurs have and what challenges so they face?
- What are the areas in the Legal Services in India in which to start the Entrepreneurship?
- What is the value creation and how are legal entrepreneurs giving back to society?

4. Methodology

The Methodology adopted for this study is conference proceedings, surveys and books, journals and articles. The data for this study is both with primary and secondary sources. After the gathering of data from different sources including primary and secondary sources, it has been categorized to sub serve the purpose of research. One set of data has been used to corroborate with other for arriving at certainty. The obsolete or redundant data has been excluded being irrelevant and/or not addressing the research topic.

To come up with relevant findings and to provide credible recommendations, primary and secondary sources were utilized. The primary study included the analysis of present atmosphere of legal entrepreneurs and after collecting all relevant information, a comparative study helped in anticipating the future of legal entrepreneurship. The method of research involved series of interviews of legal entrepreneurs and some industrialists in order to find out the roots of their innovative idea.

The primary data has been the conference proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Leadership (ICEIL 2020) in virtual mode from 17-19 December 2020 at Amity University, Noida. The esteemed panelists were Mr. Rudra Srivastava, Partner-Singhania and Partners LLP; Ms. Juhi Arora, Founder-Juhi Arora and Associate; Mr. Sagar Aggarwal, Founder and Managing Partner-Areness Attorneys; Mr. Sachin Mittal, Founder-SMA Lawyers; Ms. Prerna Arora, Managing Partner-Kosha Legal LLP.

An extensive cross-sectional questionnaire based survey has also been conducted. The results from 25 responses working in various legal organisations have been incorporated in this paper.

The secondary sources of data comprises of written material in the form of books, articles, journals, and digests.

5. Findings and discussions

In contrast to a general entrepreneur, a legal entrepreneur is someone innovating the delivery of legal services or legal processes by starting their own business to put in action their concepts.

The findings and discussions on the future of the Legal Services Entrepreneurship in India can be understood by understanding the subject in two parts- Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities:

• The new areas of Legal Services Entrepreneurship which have emerged as opportunities is as follows:

Litigation Lawyer: Many Lawyers today are Litigation Lawyers working independently in their offices and providing high quality legal services to all. This profession is many years old, however, now young qualified lawyers are also venturing into this area of legal services.

Law Firm or Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): Law firms or LLPs are entrepreneurship spheres for a number of talented lawyers. Lawyers who are Founding Partners provide services in all aspects to corporates and individuals. Law firms or LLPs have Corporate, Competition, Intellectual Property Rights, Arbitration and Litigation departments headed by area specific lawyers.

Company Start-up: Lawyers having good financial and product knowledge have set up Companies in India and abroad leading to vibrant entrepreneurship in this area. Having sound legal and financial knowledge is a boon for entrepreneurs who have set up companies dealing in various products.

Compliance, E Discovery and Contracts Management: Technology has helped many legal entrepreneurs venture into this area. This is because in these areas the matrices are fixed. The work is this space is scalable and defined. Many new age companies have tapped into this sector and built million dollar companies. Example- Quislex etc.

Legal Process Outsourcing Companies (LPOs): Indian and Foreign lawyers are collaborating to set up LPOs which are services helping lawyers of all nationalities. The legal services in LPOs set up by lawyers are a niche area and only highly capable and efficient lawyers are able to set up such companies. These companies are one of the most highly employable organisations employing a large number of qualified lawyers. Examples:- Unitedlex, Pangea 3

Online Services: Lawyers are also setting up many online and e commerce platforms in India. These platforms provide advisory, research and employment services.

Mobile Legal Apps: Lawyers are not left behind in the technological race. Technology and law is a combination that has worked wonders for legal services with many lawyers starting customer specific mobile applications in India and abroad.

Legal Researchers and Education Platforms: Lawyers who have understood that case laws and research-based activities are vital to a lawyer's growth have set up companies in this area of law. These companies provide specialized legal digital content with content categorization being the main driving force.

Cases and Library Services Online: Lawyers and books are synonomous. However, the disadvantage with hard copy is that it occupies a lot of space. Companies like Manupatra and Supreme Court Cases online have therefore started online services which provide access to books and case laws. They also provide cost effective solutions for example a single labour law module can be subscrobed to by a company or law firm and can be used by all resources in the company or law firm. Space constraints are taken care of and accessability to all is ensured.

Intellectual property Rights (IPR): Lawyers have set up organisations providing patent drafting, trademark and copyright services to pharmaceutical companies and other business organisations. These boutique services have been very useful for new organisations and those involved in innovation and research.

Case Management, Third Party Funding, Crowd Funding, Litigation Finance and Legal Insurance: Lawyers have also set up mobile apps and organisations dealing with case management and litigation finance and insurance companies as they would be issues where customers would require service and assistance.

- Artificial Intelliegence which is now being used widely by lawyers and law firms paves the way
 for tedious work to be completed in a matter of few hours. Due diligence which used to take a
 few weeks, now with the use Artificial Intelligence can be completed in a few hours. This gives
 impetus to many lawyers to start their legal services entrepreneurship as labour and employement
 issues become cost effective.
- Digitization in the legal services has also helped for Legal Services Entrepreneurs. Important legal information relating to organisations is now available on Ministry of Home Affairs, Reserve Bank of India and other organisations including governmental organisations, online, with a click of a button. This has led to transperancy and cost effectiveness encouraging starups and helper smaller organisations survive.
- Automization is also an important component. Routine agreements like rent, wills and deeds, simple contracts are now completed online. This is a blessing in disguise as those consumers who could not afford expensive litigation can now afford these services online with the help of well drafted agreements by lawyers. Example Vakilno1, Trust and Deed.
- Niti Aayog Draft Online Dispute Resolution Report, has encouraged the combination of law and technology and encouraged resolution of disputes through online methods. This has also encouraged legal services entrepreneurs who have started providing online dispute resolution services. This types of legal services platforms leads to convenient and quick dispute resolution, effective and cost effective distributive justice system, increased access to justice, removing unintentional bias, improved legal well being of society, removing gender bias and a complete transformation of the legal set up in India. The virtual hearing initiated by the Indian Courts have

infact led the way to such technological transformation. The pandemic due to COVID-19 have pushed lawyers into embracing technology further accelarating greater use of technology in the legal field.

- Lawyers are prefering entreprenership as this allows them freedom, gives them confidence and
 allows them to work in teams and processes, something that they may not be able to achive
 sitting in confined law firms or legal organisations. Lawyers can assist in developing agile,
 compliant and technological driven organisations leveraging their knowledge and social
 networking skills.
- Legal Entrepreneurs must however have the attributes of being able to identify opportunities, garner resources and initiate services. They must accelerate their skills towards building a global vision, enhancing leadership and be powered with passion. David Perla at Pangea3 and Dan Reed at Unitedlex, two pioneers of legal serives entrepreneurship have amply demonstated these opportunities. The companies that they had set up now have subsidiaries in India training and employing a large number of lawyers in India.
- The law firms which were family run organisations with partnership being limited to family members is not the only option available to lawyers now. Lawyers have set up entreprneurship in different areas. Many Lawyers have left their high paying jobs in best Law firms/consulting companies to start their own Startups in non-legal fields too. Following is the list of some of these Startups and their area of Business, which varies from opening Food Chains, Travel, Quizzing platform, Babby care to Fashion Discovery Platform.

Table. 1. – LAWYERS HAVING NON LEGAL START UPS

Startups	Founders	Area of Business		
	(Lawyers)			
Bhukkad	Aruj Garg	Founded in 2011, nutrition-based fast-		
		food venture.		
		Bhukkad now has three stores and two		
		delivery centres through which it		
		services customers across Bengaluru		
		city		
Walnut	Raghav	Founded in 2014 and going strong,		
Knowledge	Chakravarthy	Startup that organises quiz competitions		
Solution	and Sachin	for colleges and corporates.		
	Ravi	Conducted so far 1000+ quizzes on all		
		7 continents.		
Baby Chakra	Naiyya Saggi	Founded in 2015, Startup that helps		
		expecting women and parents to find		
		out everything that moms and infants		
		would want, from nannies,		
		paediatricians and gifting solutions, in		
		their neighbourhood.		

Helium.Travels	Harshvardhan Singh and Leeneshwari Makhijani	Helium was created as a platform to help travellers discover new experiences and to earn from their travel experiences. Platform connects users with the experiences to other travellers which enable them plan their own journeys. The website was launched in Jan 2015.
Akosha	Ankur Singla	Akosha was founded in 2010 as a platform to help consumers getting their customer service issues resolved. It has so far has raised about \$21.6 million.
Dekkoh	Varun Mathew	Dekkoh is a mobile shopping platform that was designed as a fashion discovery platform that allows users to chat with a stylist and buy clothing and accessories that suit them. Dekkoh was founded in 2015. It was acquired by Voonik on September 2, 2016

• Women Legal Services Entrepreneurshipas as an emerging class, have also successfully eliminated gender bias in the filed of law by starting new and innovative legal ventures. Nehan Sethi, a lawyer started "Her Forum" a virtual networking platform wherein women can receive professional mentorship and assistance. Archana Khosla Burman was named Entrepreneur of the year in 2019 and founded "Vertices Partner", a compliance and software management firm, which has tapped into the \$1.3 legal services arena in 2017. Diksha Lal, a lawyer has started the "Uber" of legal services in India, which is helping all sections of society to get legal assistance in India.

Challenges

- Legal Service Enterpreneurs face unique challenges which they have to overcome. According to the India Bar Council rules, lawyers are prohibited from advertising or soliciting for any work including stating their area of specialization. There is also restriction on the number of partners of a law firm in India. Foreign lawyers cannot also practise or set up an establishment in India.
- Lawyer have a duty of utmost good faith towards their clients. A lawyer-cleient relationship is based on trust. This is applicable to any lawyer setting up a new venture too. Complex issues in law would always require the analysis of knowlegeble lawyers. These kinds of maters requiring legal and analytical skills are not scalable.
- Law will always be a service and a noble profession. Lawyers, like medical practitioners cannot always work for profit. Pro bono services are a duty of any lawyer. The Indian Advocates Act

- emphasises on ethical and unbiased work by lawyers in India. There is a lack of mentoring services and effective networking associations available to lawyers.
- The survey has revealed that it is generally the young lawyers aged between twenty five to thirty five who are first generational lawyers are entering into legal services entrepreneurship. The intial funding is there personal savings as finances and fundings are limited in this area.
- Lack of digital infrasturcture and technology impediments which are largely inadequate are
 other set of challenges faced by Legal Services Enterpreneurship in India is the. However, the
 COVID 19 pandemic in 2020-2021 has revolutioned the technology use by lawyers. Lawyers and
 law firms have now become technologically adept and are keenly using technology to enhance
 their practices.
- Due to the pandenic, there would be many disruptions in the economy. Many businesses would be forced to close down due to insufficiant demand of services. Investments would be difficult to achieve and insolvency would be on the rise.

6. Implications

The case studies in the table below shows the immense growth and scale of legal service entrepreneurs in India:

Table. 2. - NEW AGE CORPORATIONS PROVIDING LEGAL SERVICES

COMPANY	YEAR OF INCORPORATION (India)	FIELD OF WORK	NO. OF EMPLOYEES	REVENUE	REMARKS
UNITEDLEX	2006	Committed to Digital Transformation of Legal Services using AI	3000	\$500 million (2020)	Spread across 18 countries, 25+ legal jurisdictions, offer digital solutions to law firms.
QUISLEX	2004	Managed document review, Contract lifecycle management, Risk and compliance programs, and Legal spend management.	More than 1000	\$5-\$10 million dollars(over 5 years)	Certified by the New York & New Jersey Minority Supplier Development Council as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE).
MANUPATRA	2000	Legal Research Tool	100	\$19 Million	Online legal research solutions provider
SCC ONLINE	2009	Legal Research Tool	500	\$30 Million (approx.)	Online legal research solutions provider

PANGEA 3(Now Thomson Reuters Legal Managed Services)	2004	Legal Process Outsourcing, Legal Advisory, Managed Services, Financial Trade Documentation, etc.	More than 1,000 professionals across 8 global delivery centers working with more than 2,400 EY legal advisory attorneys in more than 80 jurisdictions	3720 Crores (2020)	Acquired by Ernst & Young. Helping corporate legal departments around the world looking for ways to transform their practice and deliver meaningful value to their business.
COGNEESOL	2008	Reducing back- office workload, Litigation support, Contract management, Legal research, Paralegal support, and Secretarial services	More than 500	\$2-\$5 Billion(over 15 years)	20 years of working with more than 500 clients from around the globe, working in 25+ countries.
LEGAL SUPPORT WORLD	2008	Legal outsourcing services and legal support solutions, Litigation Support, Document Review, Contract Management, Legal Research	200(approx.)	\$30 Million (approx.)	Clients include Fortune 500 companies, major U.S. and global law firms, and large corporations.
SUN LEXIS	2010	Contract & Lease Abstraction, Drafting and Research	900(approx.)	Rs. 167 Crores (Suntec India)	Subsidiary of SunTec India, over 10 years of experience.
LEXIS NEXIS	1973	Global provider of legal, regulatory and business information and analytics	More than 10,000	\$400 million	Vision- To Advance the Rule of Law, working across 130 countries.

- Analysing opportunities and challenges and corroborative case studies, the future of legal services entrepreneurship can be deduced. There is a huge market for the tertiary scalable legal market which has been effectively tapped by the new age legal entrepreneurs. However, core area legal work involving complex legal issues and high legal knowledge and analytical skills will remain in the traditional legal work area.
- The largest and most respected law firms in India have realised that legal services entrepreneurship in the new areas aided by technology and artificial intelligence cannot be ignored. Realising the potential of the new techology and artificial intelligence based legal

solutions for the industry, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, one of Indians biggest and reputed law firms in India has set up an incubation centre which aims to build an ecology of startups in legal areas such an online dispute resolution, access to justice, transactional operations, legal research, compliance and contrate management.

- The Government of India also, under the Atal Innovation Mission has also encouraged Legal Services Entrepreneurship. Under this mission, Universities have set up Legal Entrepreneurship Incubation centres to encourage start-ups in India.
- Globalisation has created a market wherein Technology, Artificial Intelligence and Data are valued. These technologies give various assistance to legal entrepreneurs wherein they can create new services making law more distributive and consumer friendly.
- The revenue generated from such company set-ups is significant. It involves cross border transactions and knowledge transfer which are important aspects of economic growth and entrepreneurship in India.
- Lawyers and the legal department were seen as cost centres in organisations or to consumer clients. However, with the emergence of legal service entrepreneurs, lawyers are now job creaters and innovaters also contributing to the economic growth in the country. This is an encouraging trend in a country where so many lawyers are passing out each year. Law firms and organisations create few jobs opportunities. In contrast legal service entreprenerus are job creators and owners creating value in society and providing employbility to more people. It is imperative that Government schemes should aim towards providing better incentives and tax benefits to these entrepreneurs. The Indian legal market has been valued at \$1.3 billion. Government initiative to open the legal sector to foreign direct investmest will encourage international competition and co-operation.
- The challenges for this sector should be known to the entrepreneurs. Only 1% of all such entrepreneurships survive. The main reason deduced is that this area of entreprneship is based on "trust" and "sustainability". Taking a case study, Manupatra online judments have taken fifteen years to be accepted by the Supreme Court of India.
- Legal Services Entrepreneurship will flourish in those areas in law using technology, artificial intelligence, data analytics and modern tools judiciously to provide greater customer satisfaction, compliance and solution based results to clients. The use of technology in the legal domain was highlighted after the outbreak of Covid-19 with the traditional model of functioning of courts being replaced with e-based videoconferences. Indian judicial system is a lengthy process. The future of legal entrepreneurship lies in the amalgamation of technology and law.
- Clients look for economical legal solutions. Therefore, it is expected from legal entrepreneurs to develop performance-based pricing strategy delivering maximum customer satisfaction. Law firms should also focus on their brand building business in order to sustain in the near future.
- Most entrepreneurs have graduated from IIT and IIMs which are premeir engineering and management institutes. This is because these institutes celebrate Entrepreneurship and Innovation. For lawyers to become successful entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship should be introduced in law school curriclum in India. Alongwith moot courts and client counselling, law students should also have adequate knowledge of Entrepreneurship in India and all over the globe.

Traditionaly, entrepreneurship has not been associated lawyers. The new class of lawyers have actively engaged in legal services entrepreneurship. Lawyers in India are leading the way for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. They are the best equipped to do so as they are legally knowledgeable and highly compliant providing a competitive edge. Lawyers are aware of the concept of value creation and giving back to society. This new wave of Legal Entrepreneurs is proving the statement "Lawyers turn out to be immensely successful entrepreneurs" true to a great extent. This is truly the golden era for Legal Services Entrepreneurs in India. In conclusion, there is a need for the recognition of the contribution of Legal Services Entrepreneurship in India to the society and the economy. Their opportunities and challenges presented should encourage more solution driven entrepreneurial endeavor by lawyers, entrepreneurs and the Government in this area.

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