



**Annual Impact
Report 2025-2026**

Independence | Excellence | Impact

Better Laws, Better Governance

Year at a Glance |

By the Numbers | FY 2025–26

70

Reform wins – laws, rules or regulations shaped directly by Vidhi
11 Bills / Rules drafted and tabled
59 Reform blueprints (gap-analyses, model provisions) readied for next-stage action

Policy and Legislative Impact

Government Partnerships

50

Government departments, ministries, municipal bodies, and statutory authorities engaged

26%

of all engagements were repeat collaborations

18.57%

of Vidhi's formal recommendations already adopted (fully or partially) by Union or State governments within the year

33

New ministries & departments engaged for the first time

8

States impacted, with deep, on ground reform support in each

Shaping the Public Narrative

601

Agenda-setting outputs

307 Media citations & op-eds amplifying evidence-based reform

258 Convenings & publications (round-tables, white papers, policy briefs)

3 Expert testimonies / committee briefings requested by legislatures, courts and regulators

18

Court judgments and peer-reviewed articles cited Vidhi's research

Scholarly and Judicial Recognition



The Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy ('Vidhi')
is an independent think-tank doing legal
research to make better laws and improve
governance for the public good.

How Ideas | Become Law

Laws do not change in a day. Behind every statute amended, regulation revised, and policy brought closer to constitutional ideals lies a long, often invisible, arc of work.

Vidhi's Annual Impact Report 2025-2026 traces this journey of ideas that endured.

Over the last decade, Vidhi has invested in original legal research on some of the most persistent and overlooked challenges in India's legal system from outdated laws that burden everyday life to institutional gaps that weaken governance. Vidhi's work is guided by the conviction that rigorous, independent research can help draft good laws, strengthen public institutions, and realise fundamental rights.

But legal reform rarely follows a straight path. Research must withstand scrutiny, gain credibility, find its way into public debate, and, eventually, reach the institutions empowered to act on it. Progress is measured often in years, sometimes decades.

This year, many of these long-running efforts reached important milestones. Ideas first developed through research began to shape legislative amendments, inform committee deliberations, and guide judicial reasoning.

None of this work happens in isolation. It is made possible by Vidhi's fellows, our partners, responsive governments, and long standing supporters, all of whom understand that meaningful change takes time.

**The work continues.
And it begins,
always,
with *trust*.**



Ashok Lahiri

Vice Chairman,
NITI Aayog

“The rule of law is only as good as the laws themselves. A badly drafted statute, an outdated criminal provision, a rule that no one can comply with honestly, each of these quietly erodes trust in the system. Vidhi’s premise, that better laws make for better governance, is the right one, and this report shows what it looks like in practice.”

Table of Contents

Original
Research

pg
15

pg
31

Deep
Engagement

pg
53

Partnering
for Change

pg
63

Nyaaya

pg
71

People
of Vidhi

Original Research



Vidhi's commitment to original research has been instrumental in channelling new ideas into law-making and policy. Our work provides evidence-based insights that are the foundation for effective legal reform.

Original Research Initiatives Undertaken by Vidhi

The Future of the Indian Law Firm: Structure, Market, and Reform

Opening a conversation on what responsible liberalisation of India's legal services sector could look like

Submission to the UN Rapporteur on Educational Spaces

Recommending measures to protect queer persons from discrimination in India's educational institutions, submitted to the UN

Court Design Handbook

A first-of-its-kind blueprint for district courts that are accessible, safe, sustainable, and built around the people who use them

Women in the Judiciary

Tracking gender diversity across India's Supreme Court, High Courts, and District Courts, building on Vidhi's landmark 2017 study

Constitution Bench Time Tracker and Pendency Portal

Data-driven tools that open up the Supreme Court's Constitution Benches, tracking hearing time and pendency of the country's most significant cases

Judicial Transparency Index

A new metric to measure how transparent courts really are across India

Building Better Cities

A practical roadmap for turning national accessibility mandates into accessible public buildings across Delhi

Bridges of Inclusion

Sensitisation, training, and institutional reform across 5 law schools to bring the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 to life

Disabled Friendly Consumer Protection

Making India's consumer protection system work for persons with disabilities

Invasive Flora and Fauna

Evidence-based legal reforms to prevent and manage invasive species, a \$127.3 billion threat to India's environment and economy

Legal Barriers for Researchers Near Protected Areas

Clearing the legal and administrative hurdles that stall science-led wildlife conservation outside protected areas

Fair Compensation in Human-Wildlife Conflicts

A model law for fair and timely compensation to victims of human-wildlife conflict, which claimed 2,727 lives to elephant attacks and 349 to tiger attacks between 2019 and 2024

Decision-Making Capacity

Healthcare laws that respect every person's right to make their own end-of-life care decisions

Strengthening the Tamil Nadu Transgender Policy, 2025

Queering the Law with real protections across identity, healthcare, education, employment, and justice

Transgender Rights Enforcement

Research support to the Jane Kaushik Committee closing the gaps in how transgender rights are recognised and enforced across India

MSJE Submissions on the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026

Legal analysis opposing amendments that erode self-identification and expand criminalisation of transgender persons

A Park for All

Identifying the legal and design barriers that keep Karnataka's parks inaccessible, and reforming them through universal design

Digital Safety of Children

A roadmap for a digital India that is safer and more empowering for children

Re-Startup India Project

Evidence-based reforms for a faster, more predictable, and globally competitive ecosystem for India's tech startups

SARAL

Practical tools that make laws and legal documents simpler for citizens, businesses, and government to understand

Simplifying Access to Government Documents

Tearing down the paper wall by simplifying how citizens obtain 16 key government documents in Maharashtra

The Constitution Catalogues

India's first multilingual repository of constitutional literature, tracing the Constitution through art, cinema, and poetry across 6 languages and fieldwork with 300+ voices

Towards a Constitutionally Sound Framework for Ministerial Disqualification

Report on the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025. Identifying the legal flaws in the Bill and charting a constitutionally sound path forward

White Paper on Gig Workers

Evidence-driven reforms that balance worker welfare with flexibility for Tamil Nadu's platform gig workers

The Right to Die with Dignity

Redefining End-of-Life Care in India

Withdrawing Life-Supporting Care: The Procedure And The Hurdles



13 Years In Vegetative State: Case Lawyers Explain SC's Landmark Passive Euthanasia Order



End-Of-Life Care In India: What The Harish Rana Case Means For Families | Dhvani Mehta | Faye D'souza



‘The Intention Underlying Withholding Or Withdrawing Life-Sustaining Treatment Is Only To Ease Suffering And Protect Dignity’: Dhvani Mehta



Harish Rana & Meaning Of Compassion



‘Passive Euthanasia’? This Term Captures Why Media Coverage Of End-Of-Life Care Calls For Special Guidelines



From Blueprint | to Action

Vidhi Establishes Constitutional Recognition for the Right to Die with Dignity

Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)

Vidhi filed an intervention application before the Supreme Court to support the legal recognition of Advance Medical Directives (AMDs), providing information on constitutional principles and international best practices.

The Court recognised the **right to die with dignity** as a fundamental right under Article 21 and gave legal recognition to Advance Medical Directives, allowing individuals to record their treatment preferences and appoint a surrogate decision-maker to make decisions on their behalf should they lose the capacity to decide for themselves. It also laid down the guidelines for withholding and withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment (WLST).

The judgment established an important constitutional principle. For the first time, citizens could set down in advance how they wished to be treated at the end of life and expect those wishes to be honoured.

However, the guidelines laid down by the Court were so elaborate that their implementation was nearly impossible. A right that cannot be exercised offers little comfort at a bedside.

Removing Practical Hurdles

Common Cause v. Union of India (2023)

Vidhi returned to the Supreme Court to seek simplification of the implementation of the guidelines on withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment. The intervention contributed to streamlining the procedural framework, making the Court's earlier recognition of the right significantly more accessible for patients, families, and healthcare professionals.

Even with clearer procedures, hospitals and families continued to face uncertainty in applying the law. Legal recognition needed practical guidance.

Building Legal Awareness on Rights Around End-of-Life Care

End-of-Life Care Toolkit (2024)

To bridge the gap between the law and reality, Vidhi developed one of India's first comprehensive public resources on end-of-life care. The toolkit included a Ready Reckoner explaining the legal framework, Frequently Asked Questions for healthcare professionals and families, a model Advance Medical Directive which can be customised, and a tracker documenting the status of implementation of the Supreme Court's directions.

By translating complex legal procedures into accessible and practical resources, the toolkit helped ensure that the Supreme Court's recognition of the right to die with dignity could be understood and exercised in real life. As implementation gathered momentum, governments began looking for institutional guidance to translate judicial principles into healthcare practice.

Piloting New Guidelines in Karnataka (2025)

To implement the guidelines, states are required to create pathways for appointment of persons to the secondary medical board, and appointment of custodians. Vidhi, with its expertise in legal policy, supported the Government of Karnataka to develop state-wide orders governing the execution, registration, and revocation of Advance Medical Directives, and the constitution of medical boards. These helped thousands of families in the state navigate complex decision-making around end-of-life care and allowed persons to register their Advance Medical Directives.

Research transformed an ethical dilemma into a coherent legal and policy framework.

But legal frameworks are ultimately tested in real lives.

Legal Reform Meets | Real Life

Years of legal research, constitutional litigation, and policy engagement were ultimately tested in the life of one family.

In 2013, Harish Rana, an engineering student, accidentally fell from the fourth-floor balcony at his accommodation. The accident left him in a persistent vegetative state with quadriplegia. For more than a decade, he remained dependent on **Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration (CANH)** delivered through a feeding tube, with no hope for recovery.

His parents faced an impossible question: **Could treatment that no longer offered hope of recovery be lawfully withdrawn?**

The law offered no clear answer.

Although the Supreme Court had recognised the right to die with dignity in Common Cause, it had not clarified whether CANH constituted life-sustaining treatment that could be withdrawn. When Harish’s family approached the Delhi High Court, their request was rejected on the ground that it amounted to “active euthanasia.” An appeal before the Supreme Court met the same fate.

Vidhi joined the legal team representing Harish and his parents. Drawing on years of research, best practices from comparative jurisprudence, and medical evidence, Vidhi helped file a miscellaneous application and written submissions before the Supreme Court of India in the matter.

In March 2026, the Supreme Court delivered a landmark judgment.

For the first time, the judiciary applied the guidelines of withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment as held in **Common Cause**. The judgment did more than resolve one family’s case, it provided long-awaited clarity for doctors, hospitals, and families across India who face some of life’s most difficult decisions.

The Supreme Court held the following:

-  Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration is a medical treatment that can be withheld or withdrawn, even when administered in a home setting by an informed layperson.
-  Withholding and withdrawal of medical treatment means respecting the dignity of the patient and letting the natural course of death occur.
-  Passive euthanasia is an obsolete and incorrect term, and should not be used either in common usage or legal writing and discussions. It unnecessarily confuses the legal position on the issue as the debate cannot be neatly divided into ‘acts’ and ‘omissions’.
-  One is not abandoning the patient by withdrawing or withholding medical treatment. Palliative and end-of-life care must continue for these patients.
-  The process is only applicable for persons in a persistent vegetative state or terminal illness or like conditions. It is operationalised when (i) the patient loses decision-making capacity and (ii) further treatment is futile.
-  The Parliament is urged to enact a law guiding the process in India.

Looking Ahead

India’s legal recognition of the right to die with dignity marks an important milestone, but the journey towards compassionate end-of-life care is only beginning.

The next challenge lies in ensuring that constitutional rights become everyday practice. This requires stronger implementation by states, greater awareness among healthcare professionals and families, clearer institutional processes, and comprehensive legislation to support end-of-life decision-making across the country.

To sustain this work, Vidhi has established the **Advance Care Planning Collective – India**, bringing together experts, practitioners, and institutions to build evidence, strengthen implementation, and advance a shared vision of dignified end-of-life care. Together, we hope to demonstrate that sustained research, strategic litigation, policy engagement and public dialogue can redefine how India understands the right to die with dignity.



Event Spotlight

The B.N. Rau Memorial Lecture

Taking the Constitution to the people in their own language

On 25 February 2026, at Sunder Nursery in New Delhi, Charkha, Vidhi's Centre for Constitutional Law, hosted the inaugural B.N. Rau Memorial Lecture. The lecture was delivered by Saurabh Dwivedi, Editor of Indian Express (Hindi) and founding editor of The Lallantop, who drew on stories from the ground to show how the Constitution shapes everyday life.

The Idea

The Constitution is the foundation of India's democracy, yet many citizens remain distant from its values and principles. Charkha instituted the Memorial Lecture to close that distance, realising the promise in the Constitution's opening words, "We, the People," by carrying constitutional ideas to the people for whom they were written, in the languages they actually speak. Language accessibility is central to civic and constitutional participation, and by translating complex ideas into accessible terms, the lecture aims to bridge the gap between constitutional ideals and lived reality.

What makes the series distinctive is its commitment to Indian languages; each year's lecture is delivered in a different one, beginning with Hindi. Every edition brings a distinguished voice from law, governance, or social justice to speak on a contemporary constitutional question, fostering a culture of inquiry and responsible citizenship.



Who was Sir Benegal Narsing Rau?



Event Spotlight

The B.N. Rau Memorial Lecture

Taking the Constitution to the people, in their own language

On 25 February 2026, at Sunder Nursery in New Delhi, Charkha, Vidhi's Centre for Constitutional Law, hosted the inaugural B.N. Rau Memorial Lecture. The lecture was delivered by Saurabh Dwivedi, Editor of Indian Express (Hindi) and founding editor of The Lallantop, who drew on stories from the ground to show how the Constitution shapes everyday life.

Who was| Sir Benegal Narsing Rau ?



Sir Benegal Narsing Rau was one of the principal architects of independent India's legal foundations.

His defining contribution was as Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly, where he prepared the first draft of the Indian Constitution, a task that required navigating complex deliberations among the Assembly's diverse members.

Beyond the Constituent Assembly, he appeared in the trials of the Indian National Army, defending officers court-martialled by the British, and carried questions of national importance, including Hyderabad and Kashmir, to the United Nations. In 1952, he was appointed a judge of the International Court of Justice at The Hague, where he served until his death the following year.

By naming the lecture in his honour, Charkha remembers a figure whose life's work was to translate constitutional ideals into institutions, and continues that work by making those ideals accessible to every citizen.

Deep| Engagement

Vidhi recognises the importance of engaging with stakeholders to bridge the gap between ideas and implementation. By actively listening and facilitating meaningful discussions, Vidhi engages with policymakers and lawmakers ensuring that research findings shape laws.

Union Government | Engagements

Economy, Finance and Corporate Law

Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance
Analysing insurance laws and supporting amendments to multiple regulations; submitting comments on the Indian Insurance Companies (Inquiry, Adjudication and Appeal) Rules, 2026

Ministry of Corporate Affairs
Drafting amendments to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016

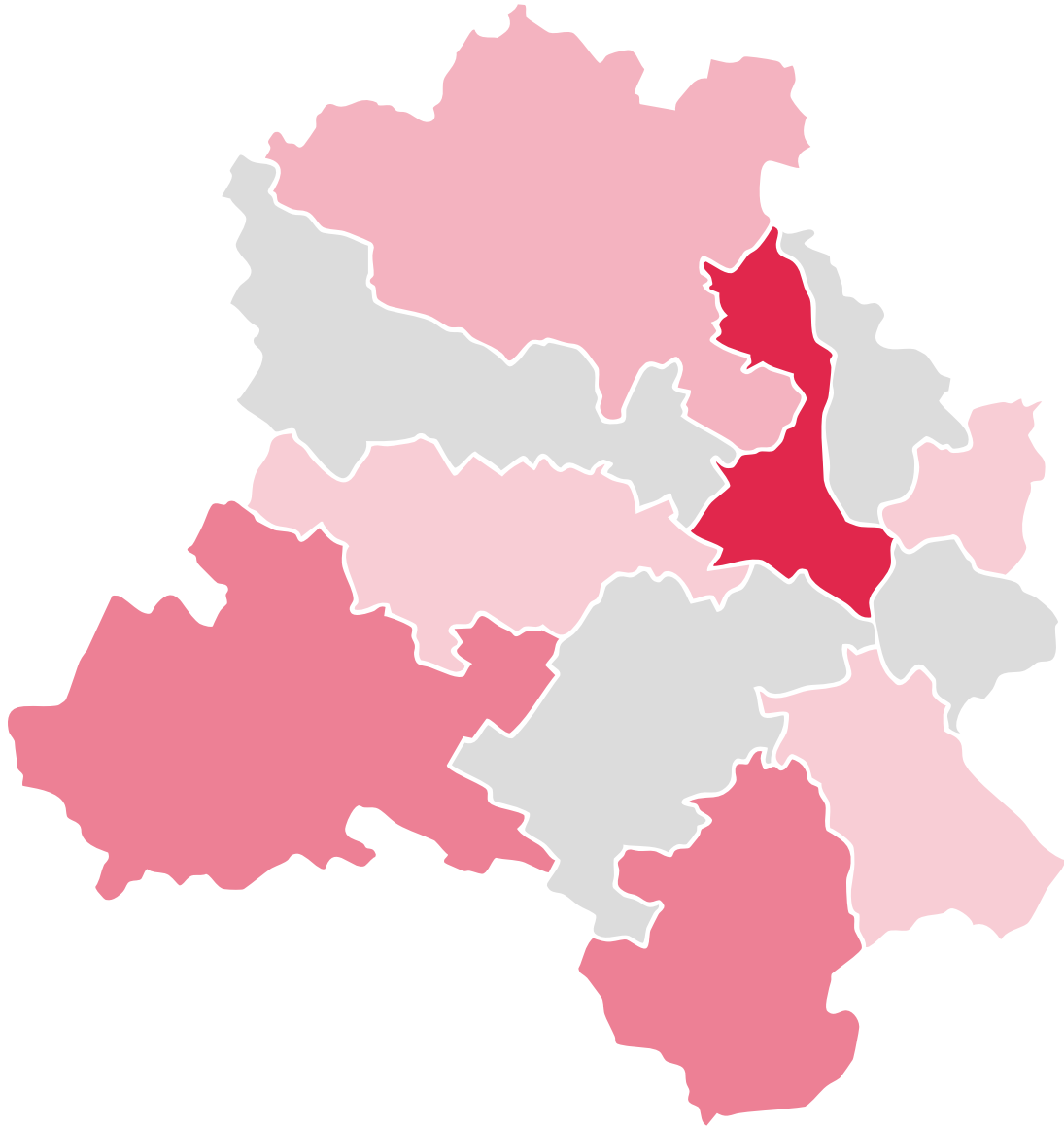
Regulatory Reform and Ease of Doing Business

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Supporting the decriminalisation of minor offences and rationalisation of punishments across Union laws, including drafting the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026.

NITI Aayog
Analysing the scope and extent of criminalisation in tax laws, supporting reimagining direct and indirect tax enforcement; Supporting deregulation across priority sectors with the High Level Committee on Non Financial Regulatory Reforms

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority
Reviewing and drafting rules under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Act, 1985

Central Silk Board
Drafting amendments to the Central Silk Board Act, 1948



Health and Bioethics

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Drafting amendments to the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994 and the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Rules, 2014

Supreme Court of India (judicial)
Intervening in Harish Rana v. Union of India

Supreme Court of India (judicial)
Intervening in the leprosy petition

Special Olympics Bharat (non-government)
Advancing inclusive healthcare systems in India through the Rosemary Collaboratory, an initiative of Special Olympics Inc.

Rights, Equality and Inclusion

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
Recommending amendments to the Transgender Persons (Amendment) Bill, 2026

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
Publishing the Building Better Cities series and the Consumer Guide for Persons with Disabilities on the Department's website and the Sugamya Bharat App.

Ministry of External Affairs
Preparing submissions on India's obligations under Draft General Recommendation 41 to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Constitutional and Electoral Reform

Joint Parliamentary Committee
Preparing submissions on the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill; serving as expert witnesses on the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill

Supreme Court of India (judicial)
Filing a writ petition concerning the Representation of the People Act, 1951

Land, Water and Energy

Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development
Drafting the Registration Bill, 2025 and the accompanying Model Rules

Ministry of Jal Shakti
Reviewing the draft Integrated Water Resources Management Bill

NITI Aayog
Developing the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025

Digital Public Infrastructure

Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications
Designing a digital public infrastructure for standardising and sharing address information

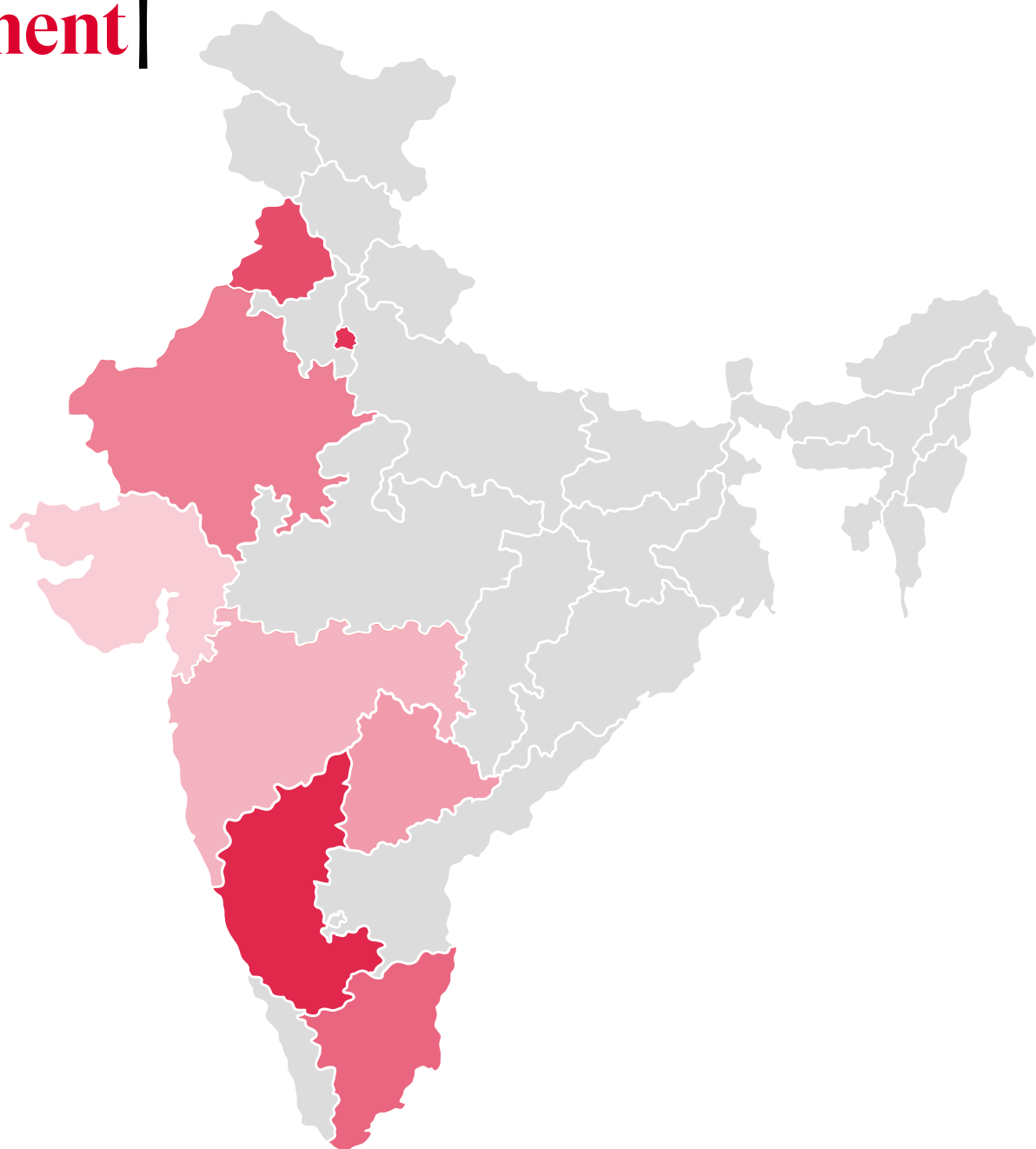
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (multilateral)
Drafting digital public infrastructure frameworks

Public Institutions and Administrative Reform

Indian Statistical Institute
Drafting a bill to strengthen governance at the Indian Statistical Institute

Indian Institute of Foreign Trade
Providing legal research assistance for the restructuring of the Centre for Research in International Trade (CRIT), the government's think tank on international trade

State Government Engagements



Karnataka

- Department of Labour**
Preparing submissions on the draft Karnataka Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Employment and Education Bill, 2025
- Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment**
 - Drafting amendments to the Karnataka Forest Act and sandalwood reforms;
 - Mitigating human-elephant conflict
- Department of Revenue**
 - Drafting the digital e-stamping and e-registration rules;
 - Drafting rules for the cancellation of registration deeds
- Karnataka Government Insurance Department**
Drafting the Government Servants Compulsory Life Insurance and Motor Vehicle Insurance Rules, 2025
- Department of Animal Husbandry**
Drafting the Traditional Nomadic Communities Act, 2025
- Department of Education**
 - Drafting the Karnataka Government Educational Institutions' Land (Protection and Regularisation) Act and Rules, 2026;
 - Drafting the Karnataka Protection of Teachers from Non-Educational Deployment Bill, 2026;
 - Drafting amendments to the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board Act, 2016;
 - Drafting laws to regulate pre-school and open school education
- Karnataka Board of Homoeopathic System of Medicine**
Drafting The Karnataka State Homoeopathy Medical Council Bill, 2025

Maharashtra

- Government of Maharashtra**
 - Decriminalising and rationalising punishments across State laws;
 - Training State officials on end-of-life care;
 - Drafting the Maharashtra Repealing Act
- Chief Minister's Office**
Simplifying processes for obtaining 8 essential documents such as ration card, birth and death certificates, marriage certificate, caste certificate, validity certificate, and domicile certificate

- Department of General Administration**
Supporting the identification of obsolete and colonial state laws, including the drafting of the Maharashtra Repealing Act, 2026
- Department of Law and Judiciary**
Drafting the Maharashtra Jan Vishwas Act
- Department of Animal Husbandry**
Drafting a law to prevent milk adulteration
- Department of Agriculture**
Drafting the Maharashtra Women Farmers Empowerment Act, 2026
- Department of Law & Judiciary**
Supporting the decriminalisation of minor offences and rationalisation of punishments, including drafting the Maharashtra Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2025.
- Thane Municipal Corporation**
Drafting the Maharashtra Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority Bill
- Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation**
Assisting on setting up a Section 8 company for CSR activities

Tamil Nadu

- Department of Industries, Investment Promotion and Commerce**
Supporting the decriminalisation of minor offences and rationalisation of punishments by analysing the scope and extent of criminalisation and providing recommendations to promote ease of doing business
- Department of Health and Family Welfare**
Drafting amendments to the Tamil Nadu Public Health Act
- Department of Labour Welfare and Skill Development (Tamil Nadu Manual Workers Social Security and Welfare Board)**
Addressing challenges faced by platform-based gig workers

Punjab

- Department of NRI Affairs**
Addressing legal issues arising from NRI marriages
- Department of Finance**
Conducting legal research to strengthen the State's revenue framework

Rajasthan

- Department of Finance (with the World Bank Group)**
Drafting ease of doing business policies

Delhi

- Department of Industries and Law**
Supporting the decriminalisation of minor offences and rationalisation of punishments, including drafting the Delhi Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026.
- Delhi High Court**
Conducting an accessibility audit of the Court

Telangana

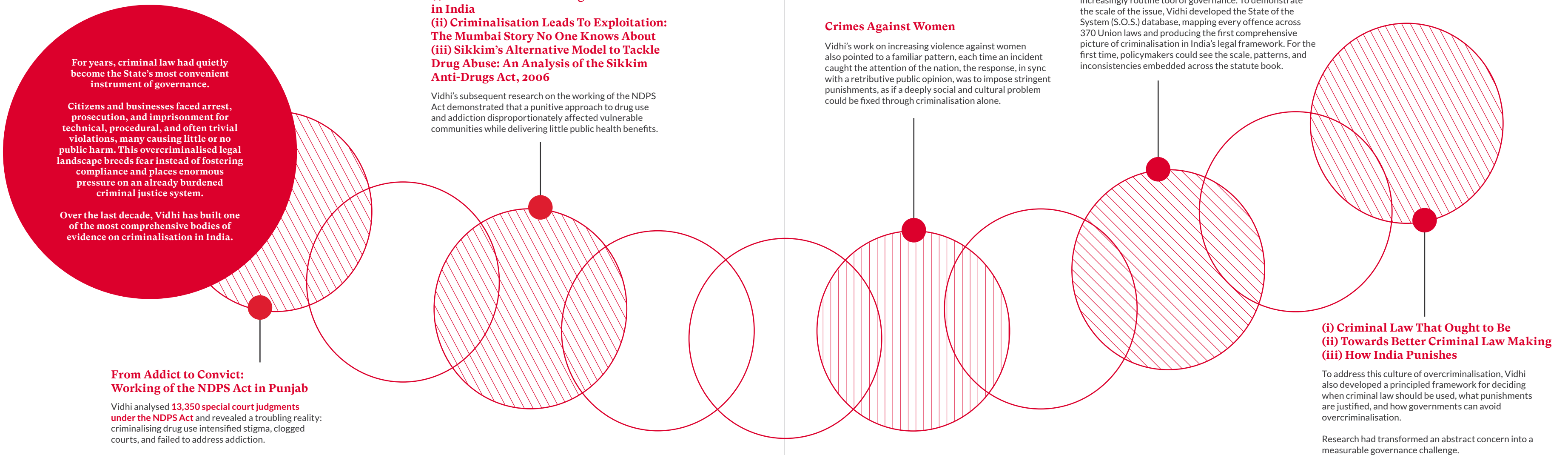
- Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation**
Drafting the Core Urban Region Integrated Governance Bill, 2026

Gujarat

- UNICEF Gujarat**
Developing training content for capacity building of government officials on rights of children with disabilities

A Decade | in the Making

Reimagining the Role of Criminal Law in India



A Decade of Research | Began Translating into Reform

Working closely with governments at both the Union and State levels, we began redesigning the system. The objective was clear:

- Reduce reliance on criminal law for minor violations
- Ensure punishments are proportionate and fair
- Promote governance models that rely on trust, compliance, and administrative regulation rather than criminal sanctions.

At the Union level, Vidhi contributed to the **Jan Vishwas 2.0 exercise**, the largest decriminalisation effort ever undertaken in India, supporting reforms across **79 laws** and more than **1,000 offences**.

At the State level, Vidhi partnered with governments in Delhi, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra to review criminal provisions across a wide range of legislation. These engagements contributed to the enactment of decriminalisation laws in Delhi and Maharashtra and helped embed principle-based approaches to criminal law reform within ongoing governance processes.

The significance of these reforms extends beyond the number of offences amended:

Before Jan Vishwas 2.0

4437

small vendors were arrested for hawking in a railway carriage in 2025.

Before Jan Vishwas 2.0

The 2011 Census recorded more than

4 lakh

as beggars and vagrants across India, a group whose destitution alone rendered them liable to criminal sanction.

Before Jan Vishwas 2.0

Roughly

18%

of Delhi's households lacked piped water supply in 2018, leaving them dependent on sources that expose them to penal action for unauthorised use.

After Jan Vishwas 2.0

Decriminalisation of The New Delhi Municipal Council Act, 1994, Section 331 (operating a tea shop without a licence) reduces exposure of lakhs of small, informal vendors to arrest and criminal prosecution, shifting enforcement from coercive policing to administrative regulation.

After Jan Vishwas 2.0

Decriminalisation of The Cantonments Act, 2006 | Section 289(1)(a)(iv) (Loitering or begging for alms) removes criminal liability for issues stemming from poverty and vulnerability and helps prevent unnecessary arrests and police action against marginalised citizens in cantonment areas.

After Jan Vishwas 2.0

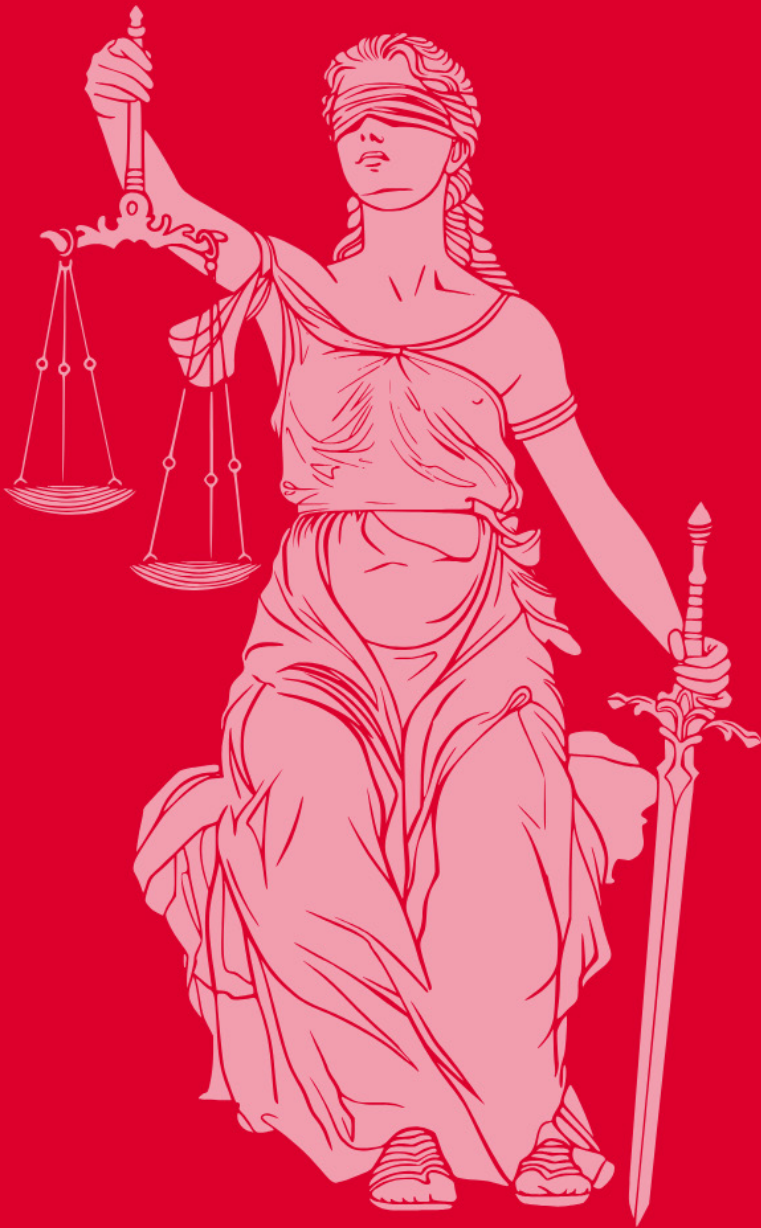
Decriminalisation of The Delhi Jal Board Act, 1998, Section 91(a) r/w Section 13(1) (occupying premises without arrangement for water supply in accordance with regulations) prevents criminal prosecution for lack of access to piped water and shifts enforcement towards enabling public health rather than penalising residents for infrastructure gaps.

Changing the Conversation

Criminal law in India had become the public’s instinctive response to social problems and the legal system’s answer to institutional bottlenecks.

To bridge the gap between legal reform and public understanding, Vidhi initiated a criminal justice journalism project in collaboration with 101 Reporters to document how criminalisation operates in everyday life.

The initiative supported the publication of **over 50 stories across 12 states**, with grassroots journalists reporting on policing, incarceration, trials, and regulatory enforcement. These stories highlighted the human consequences hidden behind legal provisions, giving voice to those who experience the criminal justice system most directly.

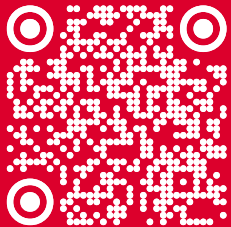


22 Years Without a Trial

Jai Parkash spent 22 years in prison without trial after being declared to be of “unsound mind.” While his case lay forgotten, his family had no idea where he was. When he finally returned home in 2022, he found that his mother, brother and sister had passed away.

His story is one of many that reveal the human cost of systemic failures in India’s criminal justice system.

Read more stories



Looking Ahead

From 2022 to 2025, Vidhi worked alongside the Union and State governments to translate diagnosis into legislative design. Reform at this scale required challenging assumptions, building evidence, developing frameworks, engaging governments, and reshaping public conversations.

The pathway from original research to legal reform is now visible, proving that rigorous evidence, sustained engagement, and focused advocacy can change not only laws, but the way a country thinks about crime, punishment, and governance itself.

Coming of Age |

India’s Insolvency Regime Reformed IBC (Amendment) Act,2026

The Legislative Backdrop

When India enacted the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code in 2016**, it answered a question the country had struggled with for decades: what happens when a company fails. The IBC was, by most measures, India’s most successful economic reform of its generation. However, a decade of real-world implementation had surfaced *multiple challenges*.

Cases stalled at the admission stage. Resolutions meant to be swift dragged on, and every month of delay quietly eroded the value left in a dying company. The treatment of government dues remained unsettled. Meanwhile, as Indian businesses increasingly borrowed, lent, and operated across borders, the Code had no answer for insolvencies that spilled beyond India’s boundaries.

Having helped build the Code from its foundations, Vidhi saw that the real test lay ahead: ensuring the law could keep pace with the economy it now governed, and understanding what it would take to get it right for the next decade.

From Diagnosis To Design

As the insolvency regime matured, implementation experience revealed several operational and structural bottlenecks.

In **2021**, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs initiated a fresh round of public consultations on reforms to the insolvency resolution and liquidation framework, as well as the introduction of a cross-border insolvency regime.

Building on the **2021** consultations, the Ministry released a comprehensive discussion paper in January 2023 that mapped reforms across the entire insolvency lifecycle: faster admission of cases, a stronger resolution process, greater use of technology, better outcomes for creditors, and new mechanisms for complex corporate distress. Vidhi was involved from the outset, contributing the research, policy analysis, and drafting support at every stage, including the discussion paper that first put these reforms on the table.

From **2023 to 2025**, Vidhi worked alongside the Ministry to translate diagnosis into legislative design through three years of close collaboration. When the amendment bill reached Parliament, Vidhi stayed with it through to enactment.

On **April 6, 2026**, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Act, 2026 was passed by Parliament and notified in the Gazette, the **seventh and most comprehensive** set of amendments since the Code’s enactment in 2016.

The Scale of Impact

The IBC amendments introduced a comprehensive set of reforms across the insolvency framework, aimed at strengthening the efficiency, transparency, and fairness of insolvency and liquidation proceedings in India.

The IBC:

- **Reshaped** the corporate insolvency resolution process; it extended the Committee of Creditors' role into the liquidation stage;
- **Clarified** the long-unsettled status of government dues;
- **Streamlined** the realisation of security interest;
- **Carried** India across a threshold it had never crossed: for the first time, the Code introduced provisions for **cross-border insolvency**, opening the door to foreign creditors and to investment in India's distressed-asset market.

For workers and the companies that employ them, faster, better resolution is the difference between a business rescued and a business stripped for parts. CRISIL estimates the amendments could cut resolution timelines by

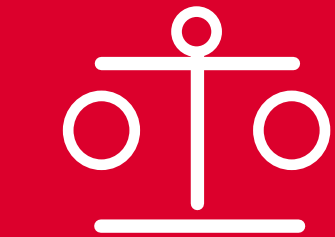
1 to 1.5 years

For India's financial system, clearer rules on government dues, a stronger creditor role, and faster recovery feed directly back into the availability of credit. Since the Code's inception, creditors have realised over

₹4.32 lakh crore

through approved resolution plans.

For India's place in the world, the new cross-border framework signals that the country is ready to engage the global insolvency ecosystem on its own terms, drawing foreign capital into its growth story while balancing international best practice against India's legal and economic realities.



IBC Amendment 2026



Role of Committee of Creditors (COC) extended to different stages



Provisions for insolvency of groups as a whole



Phased approvals of plans, license continuity and clarity on past claims



Creditors allowed to initiate Insolvency without court approval



Clearer timelines and stronger supervision make exit faster

Essential to Agriculture Invisible in Law



“For the first time, women farmers from landless households will be formally recognised as ‘farmers’. The expanded access to government schemes and programmes will act as an employment guarantee for the women farmers. The law is pivotal, as women engaged in a diverse set of activities like livestock rearing, fishery, and dairy farming will be recognised as farmers for the first time.”

**~ Manisha Tokle
Woman Farmer in Maharashtra**

Manisha is part of the core team of the Mahila Kisaan Adhikar Manch (MAKAAM), a nationwide network advocating for the recognition, land rights and livelihoods of women farmers. She also chairs the Shetkari, Ustod va Itar Asangathit Mahila Kamgar Manch in Maharashtra, a union representing women in the informal sector, including women farmers.

In Maharashtra, Giving Women Farmers The Recognition They Deserve



One Who Does The Work, Gets The Benefit



82% Of Maharashtra's Rural Female Workforce Is Employed In Agriculture



A Landmark Reform For Indian Women's Economic Empowerment: Maharashtra's Women Farmers Empowerment Bill, 2026



People Behind The Women Farmers' Bill



Essential to Agriculture | Invisible in Law

Building a Legal Identity for Lakhs of Women Farmers in Maharashtra

The Maharashtra Women Farmers Empowerment Act 2026 is a landmark legislation that gives lakhs of women in agriculture the recognition they have always deserved.

Vidhi and MSSRF (M S Swaminathan Research Foundation) were key partners of the Government of Maharashtra in shaping this Bill.

82%
of Maharashtra's rural female workforce is employed in agriculture.

Yet, less than one-fifth of operational landholdings are held by women.

This invisibility has consequences.

Government schemes, agricultural credit, crop insurance and extension services have traditionally been linked to land ownership. Without legal recognition, women farmers face barriers to credit, markets, technology and government support. As climate change intensifies and migration increasingly leaves women to shoulder the responsibility of managing farms on their own, these inequalities become even more pronounced.

Building Recognition Into Law

Recognising women as farmers meant more than acknowledging their contribution, it meant building a law that reflected their realities and translated recognition into rights. To achieve this, Vidhi and MSSRF consulted key stakeholders across Maharashtra, ensuring that the legislation was informed by the voices of those it sought to serve.

Regional consultations in Pune, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar and Nagpur brought together women farmers, self-help groups, elected representatives, bankers, agricultural experts, civil society organisations and government officials, representing most of the state's agro-climatic zones.

Despite extreme summer temperatures, some women travelled **more than 200 kilometres** to participate. Dedicated discussions on land rights, access to water and other everyday challenges ensured that the lived experiences of women farmers were embedded in the legislation before it reached the Assembly.

In 2026, Maharashtra became the first state in India to enact a dedicated law for the empowerment of women farmers. The Maharashtra Women Farmers Empowerment Act, 2026 changes the legal relationship between women and agriculture in four important ways:

Recognising women as farmers. The Act adopts an inclusive definition of agriculture, recognising women engaged in activities across the sector, whether or not they own land.

Delinking farming from land ownership. Through the Woman Farmer Certificate, women can now obtain formal recognition as farmers without needing land in their own name.

Improving access to government support. Formal recognition creates pathways to government schemes, extension services, institutional credit, markets and targeted support programmes, including initiatives for single women farmers.

Building institutions for implementation. A digital registry of women farmers, dedicated implementation officers, a state-level empowerment cell and monitoring mechanisms seek to ensure that recognition translates into meaningful access to rights.

The Act marks an important beginning, setting the legal foundation to ensure that women across the state can obtain legal recognition, access entitlements and participate more fully in agricultural decision-making.

As the first law of its kind in India, this act should serve as a model for other states to rethink how their legal frameworks recognise women in agriculture.

Recognising women as farmers is about far more than legal identity. It is a step towards inclusive agriculture, greater economic equality and a more resilient rural economy.

IMPLEMENT INDIA

ENVISION | EMPOWER | ENABLE

The potential of Open Government Data

ing the Ecosystem

mate-re...ties

Event Spotlight

Implement India 2025 :
Envision | Empower | Enable

The gap between designing ambitious laws and policies and translating them into meaningful outcomes remains one of India's greatest governance challenges.

India has no shortage of innovative policies or ambitious public commitments. Yet too often, implementation falls short. Climate action plans remain under-executed, public data remains underutilised, and legal entitlements do not always translate into better outcomes for citizens.

Recognising this challenge, Vidhi dedicated the 2025 edition of its flagship **Briefing Book**, Implement India, to a simple but urgent question: **How can India make existing laws and institutions work better?**

To launch the publication, Vidhi convened **Implement India 2025**, bringing together senior leaders from government, academia, industry, finance, and civil society to explore practical pathways for strengthening implementation across sectors.

The event opened with a keynote address by **Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia**, former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of India, who highlighted that sustained development depends not only on sound policy design but equally on capable institutions and effective implementation.

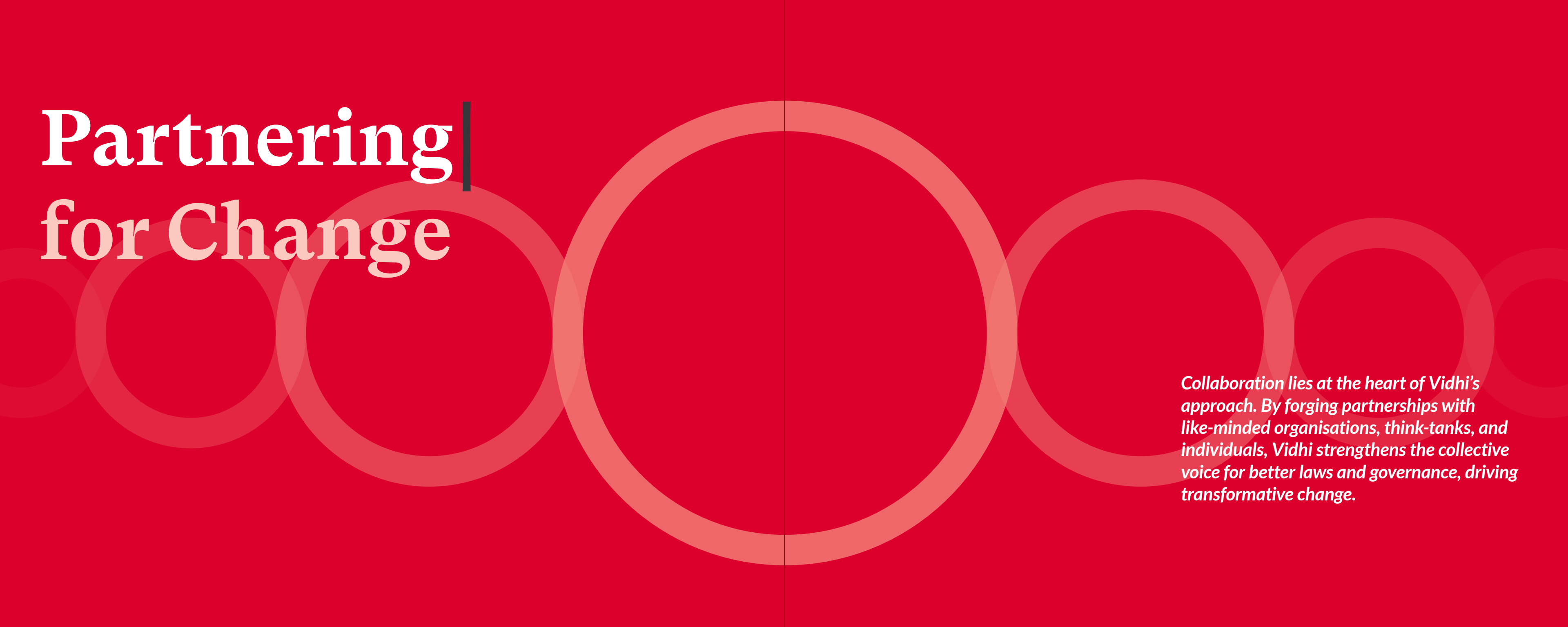
The panel discussions examined some of India's most pressing implementation challenges, including:

- Unlocking the value of open government data for better governance and public service delivery.
- Building stronger public-private partnerships to accelerate research and development.
- Embedding climate resilience into urban governance and city planning.
- Expanding sustainable finance and exploring new regulatory models, including green banking, to mobilise climate investment.

Together, these conversations reflected the core message of *Implement India*: lasting reform depends not only on creating new laws but on strengthening the institutions, systems, and incentives that enable existing frameworks to deliver results.



Partnering for Change

The background features a series of overlapping circles in various shades of red and pink, creating a sense of depth and movement. A thin, dark vertical line runs down the center of the image, bisecting the composition.

Collaboration lies at the heart of Vidhi's approach. By forging partnerships with like-minded organisations, think-tanks, and individuals, Vidhi strengthens the collective voice for better laws and governance, driving transformative change.

Collaborative Projects with
Ecosystem Partners
to Drive Change

Provision of Reasonable
Accommodations in Indian
Schools (with Sol's Arc)

Scalable guidelines to standardise
reasonable accommodations in schools,
so children with disabilities learn on
equal terms

Supriyo 2.0 (with
150+ stakeholders)

Turning strategic litigation into
queer-rights policy through 4 briefs,
150+ stakeholder consultations,
and advocacy across Union and
State governments

Primer on Federalism
(with FLAME University)

Evidence-based research on delimitation,
state formation, and district evolution to
strengthen democratic representation

White Paper on Rajasthan
(with the World Bank Group)

Drafting Ease of Doing Business
policies for the State

The Maharashtra Women
Farmers Empowerment Act,
2026 (with MSSRF and the
Government of Maharashtra)

Landmark legislation that gives lakhs of
women in agriculture the recognition they
have always deserved, shaped by Vidhi and
MSSRF as key partners to the State

Rosemary Collaboratory
(with Special Olympics Bharat)

Advancing inclusive healthcare systems
in India through an initiative of Special
Olympics Inc

Digital Public Infrastructure
Frameworks (with the
Asian Infrastructure
Investment Bank)

Drafting frameworks to guide the
design and governance of digital
public infrastructure

Bridges of Inclusion
(with 5 law schools)

Sensitisation, training, and institutional
reform to bring the Rights of Persons
with Disabilities Act, 2016 to life

Disability Rights
Capacity Building
(with UNICEF Gujarat)

Training materials and capacity building
to translate disability rights into everyday
institutional practice

Transgender Rights
Enforcement (with the Jane
Kaushik Committee)

Making India's consumer protection
system work for persons with disabilities

Submission on Draft General
Recommendation 41 to
CEDAW (with the Ministry
of External Affairs)

Preparing India's submissions on its
obligations under the Convention on the
Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women

Submission to the UN Special
Rapporteur on Educational
Spaces (with the UN)

Recommending measures to protect
queer persons from discrimination in
India's educational institutions

When the City Overheats | Can the Law Keep it Cool?

The story of partnership that is looking at India’s **heat crisis**.

Heat, Beyond the Weather Forecast

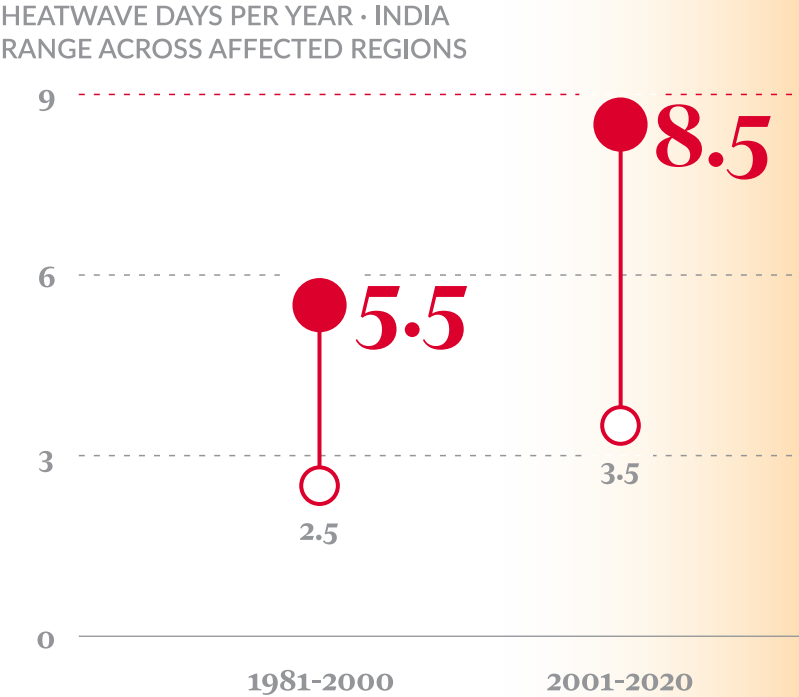
For years, extreme heat was treated as an inevitable feature of summer — a forecast to endure, a summer to survive. Even as temperatures rose and heatwaves became more frequent, the response remained focused on managing their immediate impacts rather than addressing the governance gaps that made people vulnerable in the first place. What had not yet been named was the deeper failure underneath: **India has no enforceable legal framework that treats heat as the emergency it has become.** Heat Action Plans existed, but most were reactive, fragmented, and disconnected from the statutory frameworks that shape how cities are planned, built, and governed.

Vidhi’s insight was to see heat as **structural**. Vulnerability is layered — shaped by housing quality, informal labour, caste, gender, disability and access to infrastructure — so it can never be solved by a single heat-day advisory. The danger was also quietly changing shape: night-time temperatures are now rising faster than daytime highs, stealing the overnight recovery the body depends on.

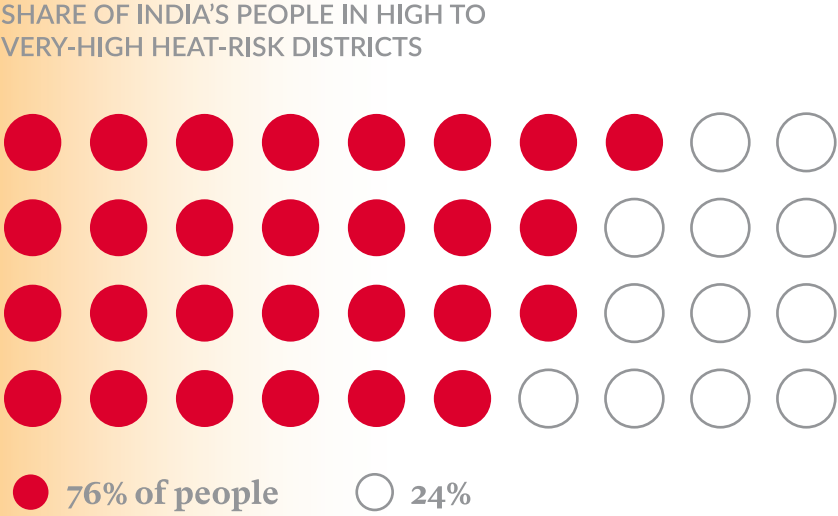
Maharashtra made the case concrete. Between 1991 and 2018, Mumbai’s average temperature rose **2.2°C** while its built-up area grew **66%**. Heat wasn’t only falling on the city, the city was manufacturing it.

The problem was now in focus: cities were being built to overheat, and the law had no answer.

The Line The World Read As Weather



And The Scale No One Had Mapped



57% of India’s districts now fall in the high-risk band, and Maharashtra ranks among the ten most heat-exposed states, with 15 districts flagged in its Heat Action Plan.

A Long Term Bet

In December 2025, the **HT Parekh Foundation** backed work whose returns would take time to show: not a single intervention, but an inquiry into how municipal, planning and climate laws across Union, State and local levels could equip Maharashtra’s cities against extreme heat.

It was a leap of faith, and a rights-based one: those who bear the heaviest burden of heat — informal and outdoor workers, low-income communities, residents of informal settlements — deserve protections that are enforceable, not aspirational.

The research spanned three contrasting cities: coastal Mumbai, Nagpur in dry Vidarbha, and Bhusawal in Jalgaon. In each, the team sat with those who meet heat first — domestic and construction workers, waste pickers, street vendors, fishermen, dabbawalas — and heard a governance problem, not a weather one. Because heat ignores jurisdictions, the work moved up and down the system at once, learning from municipal frontrunners and making the case for a state law to bind them together.

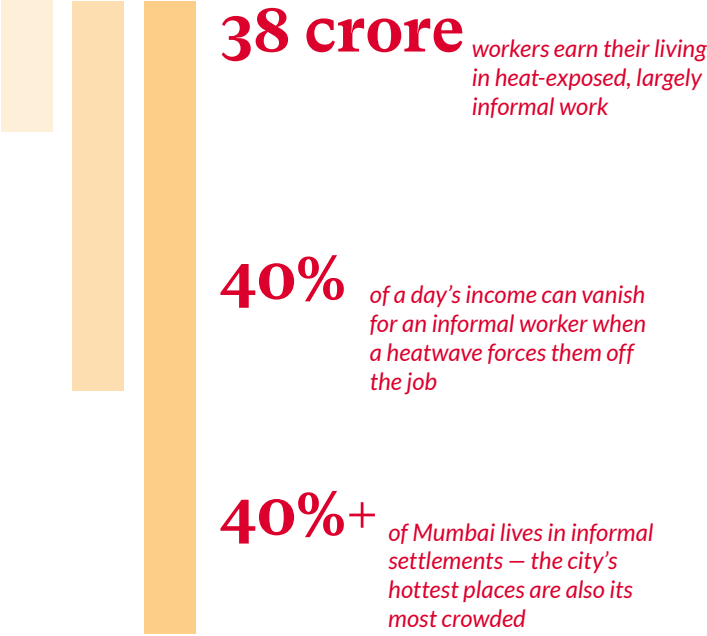
THE OPENING IN TELANGANA

Draft clauses based on our research were placed on the table of a live legislative exercise.

Working with officials conceptualising Telangana’s upcoming integrated governance law, Vidhi drafted provisions to embed heat-sensitive urban planning, climate-responsive development mandates, and a statutory climate-action cell, which now feature in the draft legislation. This exercise translated heat resilience from a policy aspiration to an enforceable framework.

Getting the law right decides who survives the summer.

A climate-action cell or a planning clause can sound abstract. It is not. Behind every provision is a delivery rider on the road at noon, a construction worker with no mandated break, a family in a tin-roofed home with no ventilation and no green cover nearby. Heat lands hardest on those least able to escape it — and the law is what decides whether they are protected or left to absorb the cost alone.



That’s the whole point of this partnership. Heat isn’t something you predict and hope for the best. It’s something you plan for in law.

The journey now continues, and it widens, always pointed back at the people it is for.

CLOSER TO THE GROUND

Communities consultation

A Mumbai session built around the lived experience of urban heat

NEXT STOP

Bengaluru

Widening the coalition to a city fast becoming a hub for climate, urbanisation and sustainability

THE DESTINATION

Enforceable law

A full legal and policy audit, moving heat resilience from plans on paper into statutory urban governance

Together, HTPF and Vidhi are writing heat resilience into the architecture of the law — one city, one clause, one summer at a time



Event Spotlight

The Life of the Law Dialogues, and a Voice at the UN

From personal stories in Delhi to India's jurisprudence in a UN report

On 22 November 2025, Vidhi and the Keshav Suri Foundation hosted the second edition of The Life of the Law Dialogues, a series that explores how the lived experiences and legal battles of queer individuals illuminate the relationship between law, justice, and equality in India. The conversation turned to the people behind *Supriyo v. Union of India*: their lives, families, and the ordinary business of building a life around, beyond, and sometimes despite the law.

A voice at the United Nations

In 2025, the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity issued a call for inputs for a thematic report on the right to education for LGBTIA+ persons. Vidhi submitted evidence drawn from its **Queering the Law** project and its earlier submissions to India's High Level Committee on queer rights, constituted following the Supreme Court's directions in *Supriyo*.

Vidhi's submission documented the structural gaps in India's legal framework and proposed concrete reforms across five areas: affirmative action in school admissions, inclusive infrastructure including gender-neutral facilities, queer-inclusive curricula, reformed anti-ragging and grievance mechanisms in universities, and queer-affirmative mental healthcare.

Vidhi is one of the very few civil society organisations from South Asia referenced directly in the document. Our research informs the report's findings on gaps in anti-discrimination frameworks, the absence of anti-bullying protections for LGBTIA+ students, the exclusion of transgender students from gendered facilities, and the lack of teacher training on LGBTIA+ issues.

In the report's comparative global survey of promising practices, Vidhi's India-specific legal research stands as the exclusive voice representing Indian jurisprudence.



Access | to Justice



India's Laws Explained

Nyaaya is an open-access, digital resource that provides simple, actionable, reliable and accessible legal information in multiple formats. It helps solve day-to-day legal problems and ensures that citizens are aware of their rights and feel empowered to seek justice.

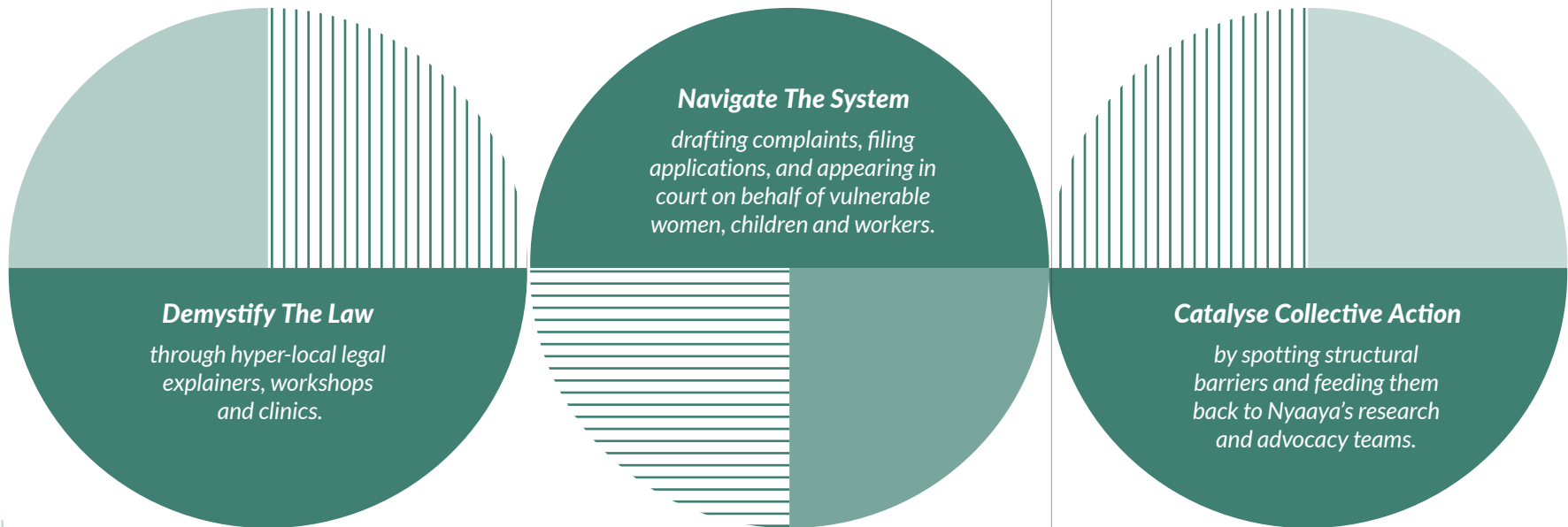
Justice, One District at a Time | The Story of Nyaaya's Samvidhaan Fellowship

Why a Fellowship?

India's Constitution guarantees equal justice, and 80 per cent of Indians qualify for free legal aid - yet barely 1 per cent ever use it. Among under-trials, the uptake is an alarming 7.9 per cent, and 70 per cent of those forced to hire private counsel come from economically weaker families. The gap is not only about money; it is about distance - geographical, linguistic, cultural - between the system and the citizen.

Nyaaya, founded in 2016 to translate complex laws into plain language, realised that lasting change required trusted local intermediaries who can extend the narrative from "I have a right" to "I have a remedy."

In 2022, Nyaaya launched the Samvidhaan Fellowship: a one-year district-based programme that equips frontline lawyers to:



Every Fellow is mentored by senior advocates and embedded with community-based organisations and state actors, creating a three-way alliance of grass-roots trust, professional expertise and public authority.

Karnataka | Building Bridges

Operating across 10 districts of Karnataka, fellows from the last three cohorts have:

- Supported 1,000+ construction workers in Kalaburagi in accessing long-pending welfare payments.
- Conducted 400+ legal awareness sessions on gender, child, labour and housing rights.
- Counselling 1,100+ women and children on their legal issues.

Bihar | Lighting New Pathways

Now in its second cohort in Bihar, fellows across 10 districts have:

- Reached 10,000+ women and children through 190+ legal awareness sessions across the state.
- Represented 80 women and children pro bono before courts and forums.
- Held regular sittings at legal aid clinics, Didi Adhikaar Kendras and Permanent Lok Adalats, so people know where to find legal help.

Legal Support at Every Stage in Chikkaballapura

Samvidhaan Fellow Deepika has represented a sexual assault survivor through every legal stage of her case. From securing a timely medical termination of pregnancy through court process, and filing strong objections alongside the Public Prosecutor when the accused sought bail, which the Sessions Court rejected. As the matter moves to trial, we continue to represent the survivor and support her family, keeping them informed and safe at every step.

Landless No More

In Dhuparchak village, Patna, Bihar, Phulwari Sharif, 19 Musahar families held land allotment letters but had never been able to occupy their land. **Samvidhaan Fellow Cynthia Matthew**, working with partner organisation Manthan, compiled their documents and petitioned the Circle Officer persisting through strikes and repeated changes of officials. The land was finally measured and demarcated, and each family now has possession of 3 decimals of land, securing homes for all families.

Standing With a Survivor in Muzaffarpur

When a 16-year-old sexual abuse survivor's family didn't know where to turn, **Samvidhaan Fellow Mukesh** drafted letters, pursued authorities and secured ₹1,00,000 under the Witness Protection Scheme. He then challenged a flawed bone ossification report that declared the child an adult. The court has since framed POCSO charges, and protection measures are in place as the trial proceeds.

A Child's Courage, A Fellow's Commitment

In a Chapra courtroom, a four-year-old told her story and never wavered, from the first account to her mother to cross-examination before the judge. Behind that steadiness stood **Samvidhaan Fellow Sunita**, who prepared the child for testimony in an age-appropriate way, insisted on child-friendly procedures, and made sure she was never left alone to face an intimidating system.

Within the statutory one year, the trial concluded: the accused was convicted under Section 65(2) of the BNS, 2023 and Section 4 of the POCSO Act, sentenced to 20 years' rigorous imprisonment, with ₹5,00,000 compensation recommended for the child's rehabilitation.



Event Spotlight

The Kautilya Conclave

*Youth for better laws,
youth for better governance*

Kautilya Societies are student-led initiatives in universities across India, conceptualised by Vidhi to expand access to legislative drafting and analysis and encourage young people to explore public policy careers.

The Kautilya Conclave, held in Delhi on 4-5 April, brought together 18 chapter conveners for two days of dialogue, reflection, and shared learning. The programme combined a heritage walk exploring the links between conservation, urban development, and public policy; a "Constitution for Mars" exercise on governance and institutional design; and a Chapter Showcase where conveners presented their year's research, policy engagement, events, and collaborations for evaluation by Vidhi Senior Fellows.

From Kautilya Society to Vidhi

Mandar Prakhar

"I served as the Co-Convenor of Kautilya Society NLUO. I joined KSoc in my first year because I developed an early propensity to understand how laws are drafted, what goes on behind the text, and between the lines. Within KSoc, I initiated the podcast series Vistaar, where we engaged with students, academicians and policy practitioners who have driven meaningful change through their initiatives. I was also an active part of the Society's monthly newsletter, online workshops, and webinars.

It was through this engagement that I came to know about Vidhi, and the impact of Vidhi's work fascinated me, and I was inspired by the possibility of being part of this organisation."



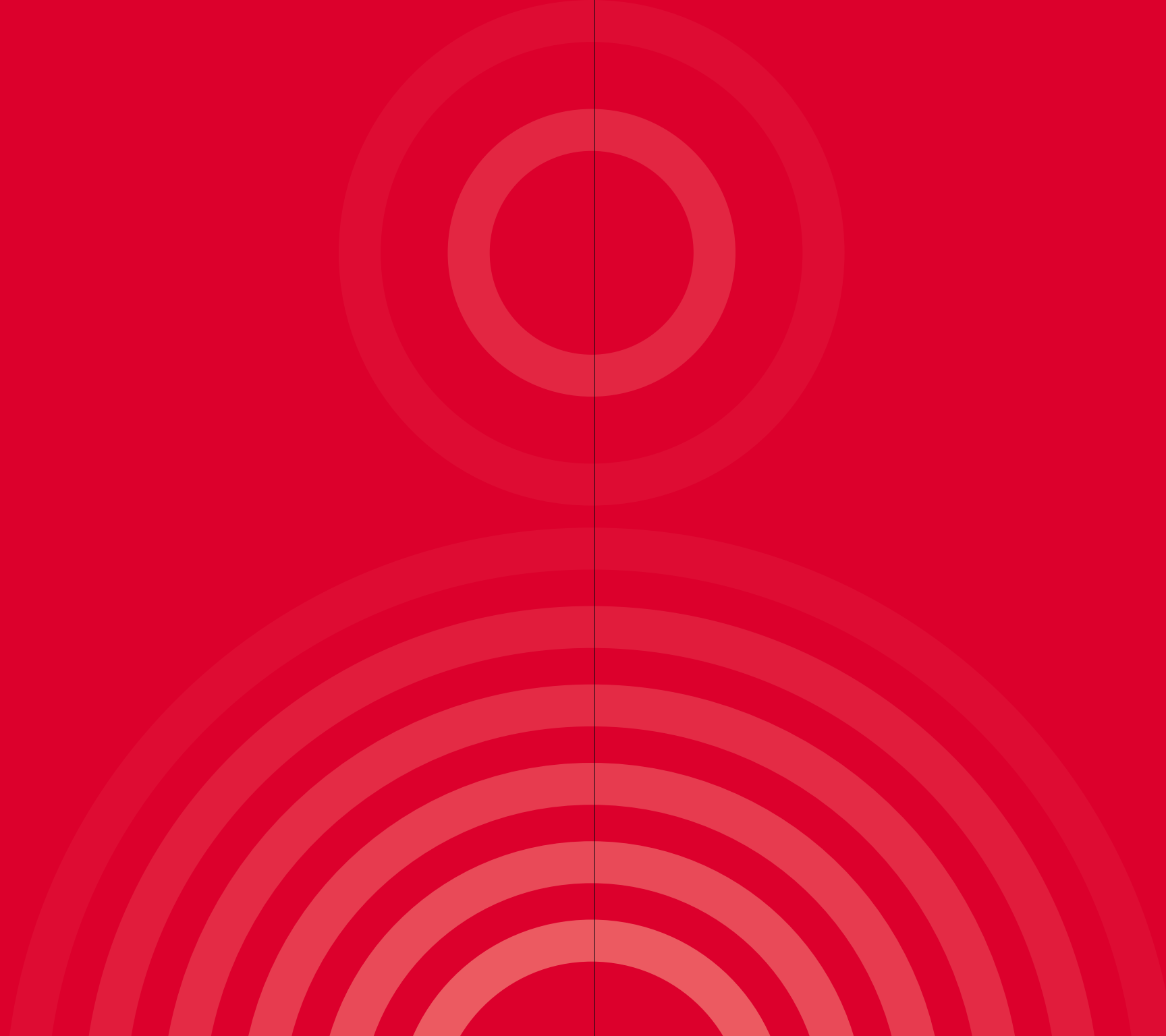
Debjyoti Samaddar

"During my time at Kautilya Society, RMLNLU, I worked on policy research spanning urban planning, climate change, digital inclusion, and major legislative reforms, while also contributing to editorial initiatives, podcasts, and high-profile policy events. The experience gave me first-hand exposure to how rigorous research, stakeholder engagement, and public dialogue can shape better policymaking.

It was this experience that inspired me to join the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy. I wanted to move beyond studying policy to understanding how it is developed in practice, learning from experts, collaborating with governments and institutions, and being in the rooms where ideas are translated into meaningful legal and regulatory change."



People at |
VIDHI



Fellows who have worked at Vidhi between
1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026

Admin Team

Amit Kumar	Executive
Ankita Kumari	Librarian
Archana Khanduri	Senior Officer
Kailash Chandra Pant	Executive
Saradindu Baidya	Officer
Shyamal Mukherjee	Chief Administrative Officer

Centre for Applied Law and
Technology and Regulation

Shehnaz Ahmed	Lead
Kahaan Mehta	Senior Resident Fellow
Karishma Shrivastava	Senior Resident Fellow
Nirmalya Chaudhuri	Research Fellow
Pinki Chaudhuri	Consultant
Rudraksh Lakra	Research Fellow
Supriya Shekhar	Research Fellow
Vrinda Pareek	Senior Resident Fellow

Charkha

Swapnil Tripathi	Lead
Anshul Dalmia	Research Fellow
Mayuri Gupta	Research Fellow
Nivedhitha K	Project Fellow
Vasudev Devadasan	Senior Associate Fellow

Climate & Ecosystems

Debadityo Sinha	Lead
Aditya Ramakrishnan	Research Fellow
Anmol Gupta	Senior Resident Fellow
Esha Rana	Senior Resident Fellow
Shashank Pandey	Research Fellow
Srijani Datta	Advocacy Officer
Stuti Rastogi	Project Fellow
Uttara Mendiratta	Senior Project Fellow

Corporate Law & Financial Regulation

Akash C Jauhari	Co-Lead
Arhat Chhabra	Senior Resident Fellow
Daksh Aggarwal	Associate Fellow
Gauri Kundalia	Research Fellow
Ketaki Dandiya	Senior Resident Fellow
Neha Lodha	Senior Resident Fellow
Nidhi Yadav	Senior Project Fellow

Nimisha Kashyap	Research Fellow
Nipuna Varman	Research Fellow
Riddhi Singh	Research Fellow
Shuchi Agarwal	Research Fellow
Thridhara Pathipati	Research Fellow
Urvi Pathak	Research Fellow
Vallari Dronamraju	Research Fellow
Varsha S Banta	Senior Resident Fellow
Vasundhara Sharan	Research Fellow
Vivek Kumar	Research Fellow

Criminal Justice

Naveed Mehmood Ahmad	Lead
Aashna Mansata	Research Fellow
Acharaj Kaur Tuteja	Project Fellow
Ayushi Sharma	Senior Resident Fellow
Ishaan Bamba	Senior Resident Fellow
Neha Singhal	Senior Associate Fellow
Sanat Narayan	Project Fellow
Shailee Basu	Research Fellow
Sriyanshi Bhatt	Research Fellow

Disability (Inclusion and Access)

Anchal Bhateja	Research Fellow
Manmayi Sharma	Senior Resident Fellow
Rahul Bajaj	Senior Associate Fellow
Sagarika Parab	Senior Resident Fellow
Somya Jain	Research Fellow

Finance

Alakto Majumder	Chief Financial Officer
Gaurav Kaushik	Senior Officer
Jagannath Pati	Senior Officer
Ranajoy Saha	Officer
Yashaswini Sharma	Officer

Fundraising

Himanshi Talwar	Associate
Kshiti Shobha Vikas	Associate
Risika Das	Senior Associate

Health

Hardik Dua	Advocacy Officer
Rakshita Goyal	Senior Resident Fellow
Rituparna Padhy	Research Fellow
Shireen Yachu	Research Fellow
Shivani Mody	Research Fellow
Shreyashi Ray	Senior Resident Fellow

Impact Collective

Alabanza Syngkon	Associate
Jeeya Racheal Stephen	Associate
Malaika Colaso	Senior Associate

JALDI

Shruthi Naik	Lead
Abhishek Rath	Research Fellow
Jyotika Randhawa	Senior Resident Fellow
Navami Krishnamurthy	Research Fellow
Priyamvadha Shivaji	Senior Resident Fellow
Shreya Suman Tripathy	Senior Resident Fellow

Legal Design and Regulation

Aniruddh Nigam	Lead
Lalit Panda	Specialist
Namrata Mukherjee	Specialist
Aliya Nazreen Anas	Research Fellow
Kartavi Satyarthi	Senior Resident Fellow
Lakshita Handa	Senior Resident Fellow
Pragya Singh	Senior Resident Fellow

Nyaaya

Aashi Saxena	Content Creator
Akansha K. Shahi	Bihar Fellowship Manager
Alka Manral	Hindi Content Manager
Deeksha Singh	Senior Content Advisor
Kanav Narayan Sahgal	Programme Manager
Kanika Arora	Consultant
Manisha Shikhare	Consultant, S.F (Maharashtra)
Naveen Tejaswi	Kannada Video Editor
Pranali Wankar	F.M Maharashtra
Roma Mehta	Graphic Designer
Sakshi Bhatnagar	Bihar Samvidhaan F.M.
Shirisha B Reddy	Karnataka Samvidhaan F.M.
Shrutika Pandey	Lead, Access to Justice Network
Yashaswini Basu	Outreach Lead

People & Culture

Sankar Ramamurthy	Chief People Officer
Kadambari Agarwal	Senior Officer

Research Director’s Office

Aditya P. Bhattacharya	Senior Resident Fellow
Debargha Roy	Research Fellow
Jay Vinayak Ojha	Senior Resident Fellow
Jwalika Balaji	Research Fellow
Mahvish Kazmi	P.M. - Kautilya Society
Palomi Chaturvedi	Research Fellow
Sneharshi Dasgupta	Project Fellow
Surbhi Sachdeva	Research Fellow

Vidhi Karnataka

Sneha Yanappa	Co-Lead
Sunetra Ravindran	Co-Lead
Deepa Padmar	Senior Resident Fellow
Fudhail Jhethru Amaan	Project Fellow
Prathiksha Ullal	Senior Resident Fellow
Shubham Kale	Project Fellow
Sourabh Roy	Research Fellow
Varini G	Research Fellow

Vidhi Maharashtra

Jinaly Dani	Lead
Abhishek Patil	Project Fellow
Aditya Gujarathi	Senior Resident Fellow
Isha Prakash	Research Fellow
Manthan Deepak Palsande	Research Fellow
Prerana Keshav	Research Fellow
Reha Mitra	Senior Project Fellow
Uttkarsh S. Meshram	Project Fellow

Vidhi Tamil Nadu

Manjushree R.M	Lead
Nihal Sahu	Research Fellow
Raagini Ramachandran	Research Fellow
Sruthakeerthy Sriram	Senior Resident Fellow

Strategy Team

Anisha Gopi	Lead, Nyaaya
Arghya Sengupta	Founder and Research Director
Damini Ghosh	Lead, Disability (Inclusion & Access)
Debanshu Mukherjee	Co-Founder
Dhvani Mehta	Co-Founder

Milestones That Moved Us |

Personal Highlights

A glimpse at a few standout milestones, from just some of the many Vidhi Fellows whose individual excellence powered our mission this year.



Mayuri Gupta

Mayuri Gupta is a Milon K. Banerji Senior Resident Fellow at Charkha, Vidhi's Centre for Constitutional Law, where her research spans federalism, local governance, electoral reform, and public health governance. She has shaped Vidhi's work on Centrally Sponsored Schemes, the Anti-defection Law, Delimitation of Electoral Constituencies, and the Constitution Catalogues. **This year she completed her doctorate at Gujarat National Law University**, examining how Gram Panchayats managed public health emergencies during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bihar.

Outside work, she is a trained Kathak dancer with a keen interest in Indian classical music.



Naveed Mehmood Ahmad

Naveed Mehmood Ahmad is the Lead of the Crime and Punishment team at Vidhi, where his work focuses on decriminalising India's legislative landscape and reimagining the country's approach to crime and punishment. **His drive to rationalise petty offences helped shape India's largest decriminalisation effort to date, the Jan Vishwas Act.**

Outside work, he has had a keen interest in photography since his college days.



Lalit Panda

Lalit Panda has worked in law and public policy since 2016, beginning at the Law Commission before joining Vidhi's erstwhile Public Law team. He helped draft the first version of India's data protection law, co-authored a book-length study of State Governors, and was cited in the Supreme Court's electoral bonds judgment, alongside research interests in equality, non-discrimination, and privacy. **In 2024, he completed an LLM at Harvard, deepening his work on how law can evaluate lawmaking, and returned to Vidhi in 2025 to work on regulatory reform.**

Outside work, he resists fragmentation between disciplines and identities, drawn equally to literary and fantasy fiction, poetry and philosophy, the lyrical and the electronic.



Swapnil Tripathi

Swapnil Tripathi leads Charkha, Vidhi's Centre for Constitutional Law, where he specialises in judicial review and constitutional interpretation, with a particular focus on Public Interest Litigation. **He completed his DPhil at the University of Oxford in 2025 and returned to India to join Vidhi, drawn by the chance to make Charkha the country's leading voice on constitutional reform.**

Before returning to India, a chance meeting with actor Gabriel Macht once inspired a Netflix campaign promoting the series Suits.

Featured | Conversations

Each year, this feature turns the spotlight on the people who have helped shape Vidhi's journey. This year, we reflect on the trust that is built over decades and the long-term commitment required to support legal and institutional reforms whose impact unfolds over time.

Voices from the | Vidhi Board

In conversation with Mr Bahram N. Vakil

Founder and Senior Partner, AZB & Partners | Board Member, Vidhi

A new Vidhi board member on why a commercial lawyer's path led him to the quieter, upstream work of shaping the law itself.



Bahram N. Vakil

Board Member,
VIDHI

1 You have spent a career at the very centre of commercial law, restructuring, project finance, and some of the largest transactions in the country. What drew you to a legal policy think tank like Vidhi, whose work is in the design of the laws themselves?

To be honest, so much of life comes down to personal relationships. I have been very, very fortunate to work closely with Vidhi for a long time now, since around 2014, and I have known and worked with Debanshu for far longer than that. Debanshu was a junior of mine at AZB, someone I worked with closely and am very proud of, and he then followed his own path to Vidhi. So I was always in touch, and then it got fully cemented because the two of us worked so closely together for two years, virtually on a daily basis if not that, then certainly every week. It was a very concentrated, focused work stream, and ever since then I have stayed in close touch with Vidhi.

2 You played a central role in shaping the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, one of the fastest and most consequential reforms India has seen. Having carried an idea all the way from a committee room into law, what did that experience teach you about how good law is actually made?

I can objectively call it good law, though of course I am biased, because I was so closely involved. Good law in the sense that it was attacked from every side. It was deeply unpopular at first and faced any number of constitutional challenges, and it withstood every one of them, argued by some of the finest legal minds in the country, including before Justice Nariman. And good law, too, in the sense that it achieved what it set out to do. At the time we were in the middle of a financial crisis, on both bank and corporate balance sheets. Non-performing assets, as reported by the RBI, were in double digits, a historic high of around 12%. Today they are at a historic low of around 2%. On both counts, the Code has clearly served its purpose.

To this day I do not fully know how I was given the honour and privilege of being on the Viswanathan Committee, and in the early days I had no sense of what a game changer it would become. It was only once we were deep into it that everyone began to describe it as one of the most critical reforms of that period. At the time, I had no idea.

I say this because I was later placed on two other committees, one to amend our Arbitration Act and another connected to setting up an international arbitration centre at GIFT City, and neither went anywhere. What that taught me is that with the Code we were simply in the right place at the right time. Yes, the reform was critical, but we are not usually known for speed, and this was one of the fastest I have seen: a brand-new law in 13 months, and, just as remarkably, implemented within a year, with a brand-new regulator and an entirely new body of professionals. Singapore, which is the very model of efficiency, took over three years. We did it in 13 months.

Why? Because every arm of government moved together. The Ministry of Finance was leading it, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs was implementing it, and they put genuinely good people on it. The RBI was fully behind it the whole way. Even the law ministry, which is one of the harder ministries to move, came through, in large part because Dr Viswanathan was himself a former secretary there and made the whole process remarkably smooth.

And the committee itself was very well balanced. We had first-rate economists, strong lawyers, and very good people from the government and the RBI, all led by an exceptionally able Chairman. It showed me that even within India's democracy and bureaucracy, you can cut through all of it if you have the right alignment.

3

Over the years you have also stayed closely involved with work that serves communities far from the corporate world, including many years supporting the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya in Mumbai. How do those two worlds speak to each other in your mind, and what does each one teach the other?

Living in a country like ours, you have to remain acutely aware of how blessed you are, and to support and assist as many people as you can. I absorbed that from my parents, and even more so from my wife. She was a lawyer, and after our second son she gave up law entirely to work with NGOs, at least five or six of them, mostly in the space of street children, education, and then helping place those children in jobs or vocations once they finished school. She now runs two NGOs of her own in that same space. Our home practically looks like a warehouse for it. It is far more than a full-time job for her. If I mention the weekend, she reminds me that philanthropy does not stop on weekends. Our children grew up with it too, volunteering extensively with a blind school and many others. So it becomes part of your DNA.

Two experiences, besides IBC, have been real turning points for me. One I have already described. The other began when I read Professor Yunus's book Banker to the Poor. He is a controversial figure now, but he is the father of microfinance, and that book genuinely moved me. In the early 2000s, one of my partners mentioned that Grameen's US arm wanted to set up in India, and asked whether I would help, given my interest. Through that work I became involved with a not-for-profit microfinance company called Cashpor, headquartered in Varanasi, and eventually joined its board. It was founded by Professor David Gibbons, who came to India and said he wanted to go where no one else was willing to go. He set up in Varanasi, and I helped with the legal side, the RBI approvals, and the investment from Grameen.

That experience taught me something I have never forgotten. When corporate India was carrying non-performing assets of around 12%, what do you imagine the default rate was among the poorest of the poor in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar? It was 0.35%. I saw first-hand where the real integrity lies. It is why microfinance the world over is focused on women, for two reasons: their integrity, and the fact that when you reach the mother, the whole family can climb out of the poverty trap. Even in times of real disruption, whether demonetisation or Covid, when the RBI allowed borrowers to defer repayment, these women still wanted to pay. They understood how important their credit history was, and their own integrity made them want to honour it. Cashpor has had an enormous effect on my life.

The same passion for art runs through my family, again through my parents and my wife, and that is where the Museum comes in. The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya is recognised not only as one of our finest museums but, in several international assessments, among the very best in Asia. I learn so much from being involved with it. Honestly, I think I learn more from these institutions than I give. All of this has been a huge part of my life and I am equally grateful to all the non-profits I serve as to AZB for the opportunity and the privilege.

4

Board members are usually asked what they hope to give. We would love to hear the other side: what do you personally hope to gain, to learn, or to be challenged by, through your association with Vidhi?

I should say honestly that I have attended just one board meeting so far, but it was remarkable. I had come in with quite a siloed impression of Vidhi. I knew it as a kind of go-to for the government, for two reasons: the sheer caliber of the work, and its neutrality. If you can get the same quality as a top law firm from an institution with no axe to grind, then naturally Vidhi becomes the gold standard. But I had no real sense of the breadth of what Vidhi does. That one board meeting was a genuine eye-opener.

On a personal level, one of the most exciting things about being a lawyer is how much you learn about different fields and different aspects of life. Sadly, today, in law as in most disciplines, everyone is expected to be highly specialised. So when I saw the full range of Vidhi's work in that single meeting, I found it fantastic. I had not engaged with that kind of breadth in 25 years. When I started out, we were all genuine generalists. The biggest firm had perhaps 30 lawyers, and you did a bit of everything: intellectual property, property, constitutional law. The last time I discussed the range of issues that came up in that board meeting, whether on health, the constitution, or gender, I was probably a young lawyer 36 years ago. So I can honestly say I am getting far more from Vidhi than Vidhi is getting from me, and I very much look forward to it.

5

If you could give every young lawyer who wants to shape public policy, and not only practise law, one quality that practice alone rarely teaches, what would it be? And how do you hope Vidhi can help build it?

I would point to two things, and I have hinted at one of them already. The first is a far broader mindset. As a corporate or commercial lawyer, you are trained to think only about the client, to wear the client's hat. When you draft a document, you first ask who you are representing. In public policy, I believe you must do the exact opposite. You need a much wider lens, because you are really thinking about the national interest. An MCA secretary once told me, only half in jest, that they did not call me in because they thought I was better than anyone else, but because they trusted that when I gave advice I was not asking what JP Morgan or the State Bank of India would want. I was thinking about what was in the national interest. That broader perspective is essential.

So the first quality is curiosity, which in this work is a real talent, along with the breadth of mind that goes with it. The second, which I think holds true in most jurisdictions but certainly in India, is patience and stamina. You need both.

Vidhi | Board



Sumit Bose
Chairman of the Board of
Directors at Vidhi



Arvind P. Datar
Director



Bahram N. Vakil
Director



Govindraj Hegde
Director



Indu Bhushan
Director



Ireena Vittal
Director



Uday Shankar
Director

Founding | Team



Arghya Sengupta
Founder and Research Director



Debanshu Mukherjee
Co-Founder



Alok Prasanna Kumar
Co-Founder



Dhvani Mehta
Co-Founder

Our | Patrons

Philanthropic Foundations



A.T.E Chandra Foundation



Ajit Isaac Foundation



Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives



Godrej Foundation



HT Parekh Foundation



JM Financial Foundation



Keshav Suri Foundation



MS Swaminathan Research Foundation



Pirojsha Godrej Foundation



Rainmatter Foundation



Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies

GVI Associates LLP

Lal Family Foundation

Tree of Life Foundation



Tata Trusts

Vinay Toshniwal Memorial Trust

Corporate Social Responsibility



APAR Industries Ltd



Minosha Pvt Ltd



Unifi Foundation

Godrej Seeds and Genetics Ltd.

Shree Renuka Institute for Rural Development and Research

Individuals

Anand Deshpande

Ashish Kacholia

Bright Star Investments Pvt Ltd

Gourab Banerji

Kiran Mazumder Shaw

KK Venugopal

Nandini Ajay Piramal

Rahul Matthan

Ramakrishna Ramamurthy

Snehal & Savita Parikh

Sudhir Shenoy

Concept and content developed by Malaika Colaso and Risika Das, with support from Alabanza Syngkon and Himanshi Talwar.

Design Concept

The visual language is inspired by the idea of Connecting (and collecting) the Dots. This is a narrative metaphor for VIDHI's process and methodology, which connects people and systems in different journeys, bringing them all together as legal reform.

The dots also recall the idea of a perpetual motion machine - where things seem to be in stasis but through internal, invisible movement are continuing the ‘work’.

Through subtle connectors such as lines, grids, or pathways, the design attempts to guide the reader from one stage to another, mirroring the logical flow of VIDHI’s work.

Visualisation, Design & Layout by **Studio Code**

Design Team:

Amrita Dasgupta
Shreya Chaturvedi
Muskan Somani

Printed by **Naveen Printers**

F-11/B, Pocket F, Okhla Phase I,
Okhla Industrial Estate, New Delhi, Delhi 110020

© Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy 2025

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

Thank you for your support to Vidhi. We welcome your feedback and thoughts on our work. Please write to your point of contact at Vidhi or to our institutional contact details provided below.

By the **Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy**,
www.vidhilegalpolicy.in

011-43102767/43831699
vclp@vidhilegalpolicy.in

LinkedIn: Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy
X : @Vidhi_India
Instagram: @Vidhi_India

Delhi: A-232, Defence Colony, New Delhi -110024
Karnataka: IndiQube Grandeur, 2nd Floor, 14, Walton Rd, Shanthala Nagar, Ashok Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka – 560001.
Maharashtra: 1st Floor, Piramal Ananta, Agastya Corporate Park, LBS Marg, Kurla West, Mumbai – 400070
Tamil Nadu: Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, 5th floor, ‘Awfis’ Rajkamal Pinnacle, Nungambakkam, Chennai - 600006

V | D H | Centre for
Legal Policy