

1. Title of the practice:

Every year, Brihan Maharashtra College of Commerce, Pune conducts a Memorial Lecture and National Moot Court Competition in the memory of Late Shri. Vijay A. Chavan, Assistant Professor of our prestigious college.

2. Objectives of the Practice

Moot court is an imitation of an actual courtroom. It mirrors real- life courtroom proceedings with the purpose of creating an understanding of the operation and functioning of courts for law students. Professor Vijay A.Chavan initiated this practice in our college as a classroom activity intending to lay foundation for commerce students to gain knowledge, understanding and skills of mooting. Late Shri Vijay A Chavan national moot court requires students to draft memorials, argue and defend their respective hypothetical cases by undertaking research and engage with the opposite team. This helps students to hone their drafting, research and argumentation skills as well as experience the adjudicatory process of a court/tribunal. The competition aims at enhancing critical thinking, problem-solving ability, cultivate advocacy and communication skills along with exposing students to the nuances of court.

3. The Context

Our moot court society starts the groundwork and planning for the competition few months in advance. First and foremost work is started on the preparation of a well designed and articulated moot proposition by a well experienced and practicing lawyer. The moot proposition is designed

keeping in mind the interesting current occurrences happening around us so as to gain maximum attention and interest for the competition. In the meantime a group of volunteers tasked with various responsibilities is assembled. Once the moot proposition and rules are formulated a date is set and invitations to law and commerce colleges are sent out. With the advent of the pandemic, the challenges have increased tenfold. Organization and clear communication of dates, rules and details are of utmost importance. Since the commerce students are completely new to such a practice various training and doubt clearing orientations are conducted to guide and train them. As the date of competition approaches the team is on their feet collecting memorials, coordinating with teams, drawing lots, assisting teams with their doubts, handling technical problems, documenting and perfecting details, preparing for courtrooms and most importantly keeping calm and enjoying the process. On the main day of the competition the challenge faced is to make sure to manage time efficiently, handle any mishaps coming the way, maintaining accuracy and leaving no room for error.

4. The Practice

In a moot court competition, there are two sides namely appellant and respondent represented by two speakers and a researcher. A hypothetical case is to be argued in front of a panel of judges following the decorum and regulations of a court. The teams are required to prepare well researched written memorials submitted before the panel. Each team gets an opportunity to argue from both sides and are subjected to questioning by the judges. The appellant teams are given the opportunity to rebut the defendants. Every court master keeps a note of the timings and intervenes to keep the court proceedings time bound. Participants are required to research thoroughly and

present their arguments based on adequately applicable laws. This practice strengthens confidence, communication, team work, networking, research and written skills and most importantly gives a practical experience as compared to theoretical knowledge. With context to Indian education, mooting is an excellent practice for students of commerce and law. The skills and abilities polished by this activity helps students in all walks of lives and puts them among the best in the world. Mooting is such an essential asset to the educational system that will help not only law students but students of any background. Students will be well equipped to the basic understanding of legal technicalities and motivate them to take up roles of significance in our legal system. India needs not only efficient advocates, judges and practitioners but also individuals willing to work relentlessly and selflessly in upholding the legal force of our nation. However, mooting is easier said than done. It can look more fun on the surface but can be extremely daunting for some students. There have been experiences where students get disheartened and discouraged after been grilled by judges. Also several times fear of failing or not being able to fulfil expectations don't allow many to even try. The key is to not lose courage and faith. Students need to take every failure as an opportunity and every obstacle as a learning lesson. With proper guidance, support and help students will be more encouraged to try and excel especially students of non-law background. Our competition is an endeavour to motivate and interest as many possible commerce students to be young budding lawyers and individuals well aware of the Indian legal system.

5. Evidence of Success

2021-22 marked the 6th edition of the competition. As against our target of getting at least 25 teams, 32 participating teams came from law colleges across states like West Bengal, Karnataka, Chattisgarh, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Punjab, Delhi and 10 teams were from Commerce Colleges. Our Competition gave a wide exposure to the participants since every team came from a different state and even from the prestigious National Law Universities, to showcase their unique set of legal skills. We received feedbacks from some of the law college teams who were in awe of the way the competition was conducted so seamlessly, something unusual for a commerce college. Our main objective is to encourage students from commerce colleges to learn the art of mootng and their teams make full utilisation of the opportunity they get to understand to nuances of court system in India and by the end of the competition they are able to think and analyse like an advocate. Our Competition was adjudged by reputable advocates, High Court and Supreme Court judges who praised the critical and analytical reasoning skills of the speakers. Overall, the competition was a successful endeavour. Our team rigorously worked for a period of 3.5 months. On the competition day, from Court room sessions to food arrangements to computation of marks to declaration of results, everything was managed duly and nobody was left dissatisfied. Recently, we have also formed a Moot Court Society exclusively for Commerce Colleges. This is a platform to collaborate and conduct various activities like discussion on case laws, interactions, seminars, etc. We are set to become a pioneer in this adventure.

6. Problems encountered and resources required:

Since the entire competition was conducted through an online mode, there were some minor technical challenges like mails were not reaching on time so we had to use WhatsApp as another mode of communication. Draw of Lots had to be revised because three teams from law colleges backed out a day before the competition due to their lack of preparation, we had already arranged for a dummy team so we did not face any trouble. Every year, we are assisted by the students of Shri Navalmal Firodia Law College. They conduct training workshops for our participants and guide us about the conduct of the competition. Even though the competition is online, our team has to work physically from the campus where we divide the various labs into court rooms and perform the role of Court Masters. Headsets, Desktops, Log in IDs are provided by the technical team from our college. This year, our team consisted of 50 volunteers led by our faculty- incharge, Dr. Varsha Deshpande and Dr. Pratap Salunke who worked closely with us and provided continual guidance and encouragement.