

ILS GENDER STUDIES CELL

(Year of Inception : 2005)

- **Introduction :**

ILS Gender Studies Cell strives at making academic spaces at ILS accessible to people of diverse genders and sexual orientation by conducting activities such as sessions, open discussions, blogs and other activities.

- **Faculty Coordinators :** Dr. Deepa Paturkar and Ms. Varsha Khandagale
- **Student Coordinators :** Nauman Beig, Shalanki Prasad, Purna Murakha (all V BA. LLB), Samruddhi Patil, Sania Vinayan, Ritika Kantharia (all III BA. LLB), Vaishnavi Pakhare, Prutha Kamble, Khanak Sharma, Mrudula Karnik (all II BA. LLB)

- **Details of the activities:**

- **Weekly/Monthly sessions:**

- **Title of Session: Effecting Change through Participation in College Cells and Societies**

Date: 31 September 2021

Mode : Online

Resource Person: Nauman Beig

No. of Participants: 20

Report : The session was held to discuss the experiences of barriers faced by students while participating in various college activities and the systematic reasons that may be noticed in society at large. 12 student volunteers were engaged in preparation of the session and they were then asked to research on theories of participation in political discourse and in academia to understand barriers to participation in detail. Along with analyzing the literature on feminist theories of participation, students also put forth their views on what kind of changes are seen or are expected when participation increases.

The session aimed to discuss the importance of defying some barriers and to encourage community building.

- **Title of Session: Open Discussion on Women in 2022 UP Assembly Elections**

Date: 3 February 2022

Mode : Online

Resource Person: Nauman Beig

No. of Participants: 15

Report : The session was held on the topic of women in the 2022 UP Assembly Elections. The speaker, Nauman Beig, spoke about women's role in the recent UP elections. The questions raised centered around women's increasing participation in UP elections in the past few years and how a greater percentage of women tend to vote for the Bhartiya Janta Party (despite there being very few women in positions of power within the party itself) and their schemes which were directed towards women.

The effect of Congress' realization of the power of the largely ignored woman voter-base which could help them in turning the tide in the elections, and their political strategy of trying to tap into this voter-base by directing their campaign towards women too by increasing the number of female representatives in the elections was deliberated upon. The speaker also talked about how women tend to identify less with caste or religion-based political agenda and more with the agenda that would directly benefit them as women. The importance of this representation, with the future effect of it being a greater emphasis placed on women's issues in policy-making was further discussed. The floor was open throughout for a fruitful dialogue and healthy discussion, with the attendees gaining a good insight into the importance of female representation in the context of these elections further.

- **Title of Session: Insights into ethical and legal aspects of surrogacy.**

Date: 13 March 2022

Mode : Online

Resource Person: Vaishnavi Pakhare (II BA LL.B)

No. of Participants: 30

Report : This session aimed to understand and analyze various social, legal, psychological, medical and commercial aspects of surrogacy. An attempt was made to look into surrogacy through the perimeters of reproductive justice, poverty and marginalization. Further the speaker looked into the psychological factors concerning surrogacy and the various psychological disorders associated with it. Further, we tried to understand laws and legislations governing surrogacy related practices and certain important case laws. The commercialization of natural reproductive abilities of impoverished women has sparked a debate regarding commercialization of wombs, reproductive choice, bodily autonomy and the exploitation of poor women in underdeveloped countries who rent their wombs for money. The aim of this session was to explore the factors that caused the emergence of the extensive surrogacy industry in India and the laws that led to a ban on commercial surrogacy. We also tried to understand why people choose surrogacy over adoption with the help of some statistical data. Further speaker briefly covered what International Laws have to say about surrogacy i.e, commercial use of wombs and children being treated as a commodity in such transactions. It was an interactive session where the participants were able to ask the questions and queries they had and were able to understand the concept better by the end of the session.

- **Title of Session: Queer Discrimination and Minority Stress**

Date: 9 May 2022

Mode : Offline

Resource Person: Nauman Beig

No. of Participants: 30

Report : The session was held on the topic of queer discrimination and minority stress. The speaker, the Gender Cell's very own Nauman Beig, spoke about queer identity. Several valuable questions were put on the table during the session – what does it mean to be queer? Are there various ways of being queer? What does a queer relationship look like in contemporary society today? What are the challenges faced by queer folk today in terms

of looking for a partner, adjusting with family systems, fitting into societal norms, fitting into the society appropriate label of 'queer'?

The issue of minority stress was also taken up by the speaker. Minority stress alludes to intersectionality and in particular, the struggles of individuals who deal with multiple layers of minority stress. Several minority stresses, such as socioeconomic background, interpersonal prejudice, discrimination, poor social support were discussed in the session. The floor was open for dialogue, questions, and healthy discussion. The session was fruitful in terms of broadening the horizons of the attendees, familiarizing the audience with queer lingo, politically correct usages of certain words, contextualizing terms, sensitization towards the issues faced by the queer committee and additionally, how to do allyship right.

- **Other Activities:**

- **Title of the Activity:** Guest Lecture

Topic : Marching beyond blue and pink

Date: 27 October 2021

Resource Person: Ms. Bhavna Wanre, Assistant Professor, Presidency University, Bangalore

Report : The session was held on gender stereotyping and how it has resulted in limiting opportunities. The session mainly discussed and analyzed the various issues faced by the transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming community. As gender binary is still too often seen as a default, emphasis was on questioning societal expectations and norms. Professor Bhavna Ware gave insight into inclusion spaces and solidarity across various gender dimensions.

Various narratives on how gender roles, norms, and expectations vary over the life cycle of every individual were discussed. The social and economic consequences of negative gender stereotyping were critically analyzed. Questions on the development of adoption rights for minority genders and sexualities were raised. The session was moderated by Samruddhi Patil.

No. of participants: 20

- **Title of the Activity:** Panel Discussion

Topic : Social and Legal Aspects of Hijab Ban

Date: 20 March 2022

Resource Person: Zeb Hassan and Thulasi K Raj

Report : Panel Discussion on the recent Karnataka High Court Judgement on Banning of Hijab was held by the Cell. The Gender Studies Cell invited Thulasi K. Raj (Advocate, Kerala HC and SC) Zeb Hasan (Lawyer and Reporter, Bar and Bench). The session discussed the judgment in brief and mainly focused on questions such as: whether the essentiality of hijab as a religious practice is relevant in establishing an instance of discrimination; the intersection of different identities and how it impacts Muslim women in cases of discrimination; what constitutes as public disorder; and more socio-legal aspects of the judgment. The session concluded with interactive questions and answers.

No of participants: 30