



Report on

PANEL DISCUSSION ON “REPRODUCTION RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN INDIA”

Organized by

Centre of Human Rights (SOLS)

Date: Friday, 6th October, 2023

Venue: Moot Court, K.R.Mangalam University

Event Type: Panel Discussion

Mode of Activity: Offline

Target Group: Faculty and Students of K.R.Mangalam University

Coordinators: Ms. Shazia Siddiqui, Ms. Gargi Singh, Ms. Deepali Bansal, Ms.. Kritika Kakkar, Ms. Sadhana Nirban, Mr. Thomas Monteiro and Mr. Chetan Mohan

Organised by: Centre of Human Rights, School of Legal Studies

Number of Participants: 120

Introduction:

On 6th October'23, Centre of Human Rights, School of Legal Studies at K. R. Mangalam University organised a panel discussion on “Reproductive Rights of Women in India”. The expert panelists for the discussion were Dr. Virendra Yadav (CMO Gurgaon), Prof (Dr.) Mehraj Uddin Mir (Chair Motilal Nehru Chair), Dr. Anuj Garg (Dy. Civil Surgeon, Gurugram), Dr. Puneet Arora (Gynaecologist and Fertility specialist), Ms. Ritu Sindhwani (National Director: Mahila Wing WHRO) and Dr. Megha Garg (Assistant Professor, K. R. Mangalam University).

Objective:

The objective of the panel discussion was to create awareness about women's reproductive rights in India, emphasizing the intersection of law, health, and ethics. The event aimed to educate students and faculty about key legal provisions, challenges faced by women in exercising their reproductive rights, and the importance of ensuring informed consent, healthcare accessibility, and social sensitivity. It also sought to encourage open dialogue and



critical thinking on sensitive issues like abortion, surrogacy, and the medical termination of pregnancy within the constitutional and human rights framework.

Content:

The panel discussion commenced with the ceremonial Lighting of the Lamp followed by felicitation of the guests. The event was hosted by Nischay Nath Tiwari (Student, SOLS), who adeptly introduced the event and welcomed the attendees. The Welcome address was given by Ms. Shazia Siddiqui, Convenor, Centre of Human Rights (CHR) setting the tone for the discourse.

The inaugural address was given by Prof (Dr.) Mehraj udin Mir, he delve into the realm of women's rights, shedding light on the harsh realities that often belied the notion of 'equality' for women. His comprehensive talk touched on critical subjects, including case laws pertaining to women's reproductive rights, the challenges faced by rape victims, issues involving minors, and the fundamental rights of women, such as the right to choose and access healthcare. He further underscored the reluctance of both medical professionals and victims to engage with the legal system.

Chair of the panel discussion, Dr. Virendra Singh, shared real-life scenarios that underscored the progress, or lack thereof, in the legal framework surrounding reproductive rights. He emphasised the paramount importance of transparency and readily accessible information. Dr. Virendra cited social media and medical sources as vital channels for disseminating knowledge.

Next, Dr. Puneet Arora explored the nuanced concept of choice within the context of reproductive rights. She addressed the delicate balance between preventing female foeticide and facilitating normal medical termination of pregnancy (MTP). Consent and the moral complexities surrounding various issues, such as unintended pregnancies, were thoroughly discussed. The discussion between the two also touched upon the contentious issue of MTP availability over the counter where Dr. Virendra elaborated on the potential pitfalls associated with over-the-counter MTP access, drawing from his extensive experiences. Here, it was stressed that education and awareness remained the cornerstone for addressing these concerns.



Moving forward, Ms. Ritu underscored the significance of awareness and open dialogue within the confines of one's home. She emphasised the need for increased discussions on these vital topics.

The next panelist, Dr. Megha Garg brought attention to the domain of surrogacy, focusing on the rights and eligibility criteria for surrogate mothers and intended parents. Monetary compensation for surrogacy was discussed in detail, as were the reproductive rights of surrogate mothers, encompassing the right to privacy, access to information, medical facilities, and the right to make choices. It was highlighted that these rights did not extend to any claims over the child. Dr. Megha touched upon The Surrogacy Regulation Act of 2021, highlighting the areas where unmarried and transgender individuals still face restrictions in accessing surrogacy rights.

Conclusion

The session concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Dr. Inderpreet Kaur, Associate Dean, School of Legal Studies. The discussion proved to be highly informative and engaging, offering valuable insights into the complexities surrounding women's reproductive rights in India. It helped participants develop a better understanding of legal frameworks, ethical considerations, and the role of education in promoting gender equality.

Event Outcome

The panel discussion successfully enhanced awareness and understanding of the reproductive rights of women among students and faculty members. Participants gained insights into legal provisions, ethical dilemmas, and healthcare challenges affecting women's reproductive autonomy. The event fostered critical dialogue and sensitivity toward women's health and human rights issues, encouraging attendees to advocate for informed choices and equitable access to reproductive healthcare. The session effectively bridged academic knowledge and practical awareness, reinforcing K.R. Mangalam University's commitment to promoting gender justice and human rights education.



Felicitations of Dr. Virendra Yadav (CMO Gurgaon) by Prof (Dr.) Mehraj Uddin Mir
(Chair Motilal Nehru Chair)



Welcome Address by Ms. Shazia Siddiqui (Convener, Centre Human Rights, SOLS)



Panelist engrossed in discussion on the topic of “Reproductive Rights of Women in India”