

## Orientation on Gender Studies and Law

The Gender Studies Committee, School of Law, CHRIST Deemed to be University, Bengaluru organised an introductory session on 14<sup>th</sup> of July, 2018. The session aimed to throw light on legal, sociological, psychological and cultural aspects of gender through lectures and interactions. The targeted audience for the event were majorly first year law students. However, several students of the senior years too attended the session after undergoing due online registration processes.

The lecture was delivered by Ms. Sunita, faculty of Christ (Deemed to be) University, Bengaluru who took great delight in enlightening the students for an hour and a half about the differences between sex and gender and the problem of binary gender ideals. In the due course of her speech she quoted thought provoking ideas of renowned personalities like Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler and Micheal Foucault among others. “*Rewriting gender politics: From the Dialectic to Dialogue*”, was a highly emphasized part of her presentation which contained a spectrum of perspectives regarding feminism, queer identities, inclusive gender activism and intersectionality.

Five student speakers addressing a varied range of topics followed Dr. Sushma’s informative speech. Ms. Ishika Chaudhary, a second year student of School of Law, Christ (deemed to be) University, introduced Gender Dysphoria by providing a live example of the life of Caitlyn Marie Jenner. She expounded the meaning of gender identity and expression and vocalised Gender Activism.

Mr. Ronak Chhabria, student convenor of Gender Studies Committee dealt with a question and answer session on the difference between sex and gender. The meaning of the term ‘transgender’ was also a vital part of this activity. This was succeeded by Mr. Nikunj Mehta of 3<sup>rd</sup> year who delved into the Constitutional

provisions on gender. He advocated that the aim of the Constitution is to establish gender equality and this is found in Articles 14-18.

Mr. Nikunj also vocalised the need for Affirmative action for the youth whereby, equal protection of persons is possible without discrimination. He also emphasised on the importance of the judgment delivered in the case of NALSA v Union of India.

Mr. Mukund Mohapatra, also a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Law student spoke on the idea of “Gender Non Conformity in Indian Culture”. He gave an insight into the transgender community in India. He emphasised on the mythological characters of Shiva, Vishnu and Mohini in the Hindu Mythology. Mr. Mukund also spoke on *Hijras* and their role in the society. He also looked into emasculation of oneself, the choice to give up formal gender. Mr. Mukund concluded by comparing the traditional path and the normative struggle in the modern society.

Ms. Shilpi Roy Chowdhury, faculty Coordinator, Gender Studies Committee, dealt with the controlling of sexuality. She spoke about gender non conformity and Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and its incidents. There was yet another question-answer session that followed.

The final session had convenors Mr. Ronak Chhabria and Ms. Ananyaa Jagirdar conclude the session with discussions on gender non-conforming individuals, sexual minorities that was followed by discussions on the Nirbhaya rape case and policies to bridge the gender gap. An introduction to Justice Verma Committee was also given. The session was wrapped up with a final question and answer round.

The student Convenors then delivered the vote of thanks to all speakers. A memento was presented to Dr. Sushma Murthy as a token of the committee’s thankfulness.