

Press Report: National Seminar on Safeguarding Child Rights

Symbiosis Law School, Pune, a constituent of Symbiosis International (Deemed University), successfully conducted a National Seminar on 'Safeguarding Child Rights' on March 28, 2025. Organized by the Centre for International & Comparative Child Rights, the seminar ran from 11:00 AM to 5:30 PM and was attended by over 100 students, paper presenters, and faculty members.

The seminar was graced by the presence of distinguished Chief Guest, Justice (Dr.) Shalini Phansalkar Joshi, Former Judge of the Bombay High Court and Judge Scholar-in-Residence at Symbiosis Law School, Pune. The Guests of Honour included Prof. (Dr.) Ved Kumari, Vice-Chancellor of National Law University, Odisha; Dr. Asha Bajpai, Founder Dean and Professor of Law at Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Distinguished Visiting Faculty at Symbiosis Law School, Pune; and Prof. Connor O' Mahony, Former Special Rapporteur for Child Protection, Government of Ireland, and Vice-Dean of Research at University College Cork, Ireland.

The event commenced with the symbolic watering of a Bilva sapling, representing a commitment to sustainability and growth. Prof. (Dr.) Shashikala Gurpur, Fulbright Scholar, Director of Symbiosis Law School, Pune, Dean of the Faculty of Law, SIU, and Jean Monnet Chair Professor (EUC-LAMP co-funded by the EU), delivered the welcome address. She introduced the institution and highlighted its achievement as the 5th Best Law School in India according to the 2024 NIRF Ranking.

The seminar featured an inspiring address by the Chief Guest, Justice (Dr.) Shalini Phansalkar Joshi, who emphasized the need for uniformity in the age of marriage, challenging patriarchal norms, strict implementation of legal provisions, and empowering girls through education and economic independence. She also highlighted the importance of gender sensitization, community empowerment, and the role of child rights commissions in line with the 'Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao' mission.

Prof. (Dr.) Ved Kumari spoke on the paradox of innocence and offense within juvenile justice, elaborating on the role of the Juvenile Justice Board in understanding childhood and juvenile offenses. Dr. Asha Bajpai addressed critical issues such as child labor, cybercrime, and the vulnerability of disabled children. She advocated for inclusive education, robust healthcare systems, and age-appropriate regulations for AI and digital platforms, emphasizing the motto 'Ensure that Every Child has Every Right.'

Prof. Connor O' Mahony discussed the challenges in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, stressing the importance of public consultation processes that actively include children and the need for child-friendly justice systems.

The seminar also included an engaging Q&A session, where students participated in intellectual discussions about safeguarding child rights. The first session concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Aprajita Mohanty, Associate Professor and Deputy Director of Academics.

The second session was dedicated to student and scholar presentations, covering diverse topics such as child displacement due to climate change, child trafficking, digital exploitation, and the impact of armed conflicts on children. Presenters explored legal frameworks, including comparisons between Indian laws

and international standards, and proposed innovative strategies for child protection. The session concluded with a Q&A segment, where experts provided valuable suggestions.

The seminar provided a platform to over 100 participants for meaningful dialogue on safeguarding child rights, addressing systemic barriers, and exploring innovative strategies for child protection. It emphasized the importance of equitable access to justice, protection from discrimination, and the realization of fundamental human rights for children. The outcomes of the seminar include plans for publishing research articles, forming a child rights conclave, and initiating further research endeavors.

The event was a resounding success, fostering collaboration among students, faculty, and experts to advance the cause of child rights on a global scale.



Prof. (Dr.) Ved Kumari, Retd. Justice (Dr.) Shalini Phansalkar Joshi, Dr. Asha Bajpai and Dr Gurpur watering the Bilwa sapling.



Retd. Justice (Dr.) Shalini Phansalkar Joshi, Prof. (Dr.) Ved Kumari, Dr. Asha Bajpai, Prof. Connor O' Mahony, and Dr. Gurpur during the seminar



Paper Presentations by a participant



Organizing team with Guests.