

**DR AMBEDKAR COLLEGE DEEKSHABHOOMI,
NAGPUR, DEPARTMENT OF LAW**

**STUDENTS' MOOT COURT ASSOCIATION
AN INTERACTIVE SESSION ON "GENDER SENSITIZATION WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO SEXUAL MINORITIES"**

DATE: 1ST APRIL 2019

RESOURCE PERSONS:

**Mr Anand Chandrani, Founder Trustee, Sarathi Trust
Mr Nikunj Joshi, CEO, Sarathi Trust**

DETAILED REPORT:

The Students' Moot Court Association of the Department of Law of the College organized an interactive session on the topic "Gender sensitization with special Reference to Sexual Minorities". Hitherto all programmes on gender sensitization have focussed on women and the need for women empowerment. However in the wake of the recent judgments of the Supreme Court of India that have officially recognized the third gender, decriminalized homosexuality etc., it has become important to also focus on the problems of sexual minorities. It is realized that despite these bold judgments from the Apex court, the society is still not prepared to include the LGBT community in the mainstream of social life. Hence the lived experiences of this community have not altered much and they are still marginalized and looked down upon. Hence there is an urgent need to sensitize the society towards respecting the individuality and dignity of these sexual minorities by accepting them as another form of human diversity. With this aim in mind the Students' Moot Court Association of the Department of Law organized this very unique interaction focussing on sexual minorities in order to appraise the young generation of the humiliation and indignity suffered by these group of people. This programme was held in the Department on Monday, the **1st of April 2019** at 10:30 am.

The Department collaborated with a Community Based Organized (CBO) called 'Sarathi Trust' that is working in the field of LGBT rights and for combating the problem of HIV/AIDS. Mr Anand Chandrani, the Founder Trustee of Sarathi and Mr Nikunj Joshi, CEO of Sarathi Trust were the Resource persons. The programme began with a brief welcome address by Dr Varsha Deshpande, Co-ordinator of SMCA and the guest speakers were accorded an eco-friendly welcome by presenting them with saplings. Mr Anand Chandrani began the session by first appraising the audience about their NGO and the kind of work they do. He briefed the students about the problems encountered by the LGBT community.

Mr Nikunj Joshi delivered a very forceful and impressive address. He began by first educating the audience about the distinction between the oft mis-construed terminologies like sex, gender, sexuality and sexual identity & orientation. He said that while sex is a purely biological concept, gender is a social construct and sexuality is a purely individual attribute. He said that it has been a very unfortunate reality of the Indian society that the British public

morality of considering same sex associations as unnatural and immoral has reigned in India for so long. It is on account of the criminality associated to this and the unacceptance of the society that has resulted into multiple relationships of a person and this makes our society vulnerable to the spread of HIV/AIDS. He also narrated soul-shattering episodes of the lived experiences of transgenders, that depicts the deplorable attitude of the society toward them. These examples were indeed thought provoking for the students and gave them an opportunity to ponder over issues which they had hitherto never thought about. He also spoke at length about how transgenders have progressed phenomenally in other Western countries owing to societal acceptance. He thus passionately appealed to the students of law, in whom he said, lies enormous 'transformative potential' to become agents of change and reach out to the society to sensitize them on these issues. He also specifically spoke about the need to bring about a change in the mind-set of the police officials from whom they have faced the greatest amount of torture. A co-operative police machinery, he lamented, could bring about a sea change in this spectrum of the societal landscape

Mr Nikunj Joshi also floated into discussion the two most important verdicts of the Supreme Court, namely in NALSA vs Union of India (which recognized the third gender for the first time in India) and Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India (which de-criminalized homosexuality) and said that these judgments have brought in a ray of hope for altering the quality of life of the LGBT community. The road ahead is still a long one he said, but the judgments have atleast brought these subjects into public discussion. He said, with greater awareness there will certainly be a positive change in the future society.

The presentation by Mr Nikunj Joshi was followed by an hour – long open house discussion in which the students and teachers of the Department asked several questions to the resource persons. It was a very engaging session in which a vivid light was thrown by the guest speakers on several doubts that have loomed large in the minds of the audience till date.

This programme was conducted by Dr Varsha Deshpande who also proposed a vote of thanks. The entire students' team of SMCA worked hard for the success of the programme.



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FEEDBACK

INTERACTIVE SESSION ON THE TOPIC

GENDER SENSITISATION
(with special reference to sexual minorities)

S.M.C.A., Department of law, Ambedkar College, Nagpur.

The session was truly an eye-opener. 'Sex and sexuality' being tabooed topics in Indian society, we neither find its mention in educational system nor can we talk or discuss about it with our parents. Hence we nurture a lot of misconceptions in our minds. Nikunj Sir and Anand Sir, the guest speakers, freely explained us the concepts of sex, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, which most of us were unaware about.

The session also gave us the opportunity to listen first hand experiences of people belonging to LGBTQ community. I really appreciate efforts of our law department and SAARTHII foundation to organise this sensitisation program. It is the need of the hour.

Renika

Renika Ashtikar, BA.LLB. 5YRS. VIII SEM.

STUDENT'S MOOT COURT ASSOCIATION, LAW DEPARTMENT
INTERACTIVE SESSION ON THE TOPIC

GENDER SENSITIZATION
(With Special Reference to Sexual Minorities)

Gender Sensitization, scientifically refers to the modification of one's behaviour by raising awareness of Gender equality. Mostly, when it comes to Gender Sensitization, we limit our scope & thinking to women and their rights. But, in the present times, it makes sense to broaden our thinking horizons and start being inclusive and receptive to the needs of the Sexual Minorities (LGBTQ, etc.) as well. To brief us about the same, we had with us Mr. Anand Chandmani (Founder, Sarathi Trust) and Mr. Nikunj Joshi (Project Manager + CEO) of the Samathi Trust, Vidarbha's first CBO (Community based Organisation) with a prime focus on creating awareness about HIV AIDS and its spread amongst sexual minorities. India is the second largest country in the world in terms of HIV diagnosed patients. The primary reason for this, as explained to us being - lack of safe sex in practise amongst people and multiple partners amongst sexual minorities. An in-depth discussion on common terms like Gender, Sex, Sexuality followed. What came as added knowledge to the audience was the fact that the 'Sexual Minorities' is an umbrella term not only including the Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual, Transgenders, Queers; but also pansexuals, asexuals, pedophiles, questioning, etc. Then followed the most interesting part of the session - how the various stigmas associated with this section of people, esp. the lesbians and transgenders need to be done away with, for the growth of the society. Then, the two landmark judgements given by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in this field of interest were discussed - the NALSA Judgement (2014) and the Navtej Singh Johar / Sec. 377 judgement (2018). An