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THE BOILING PACIFIC: SUPER EI NIÑO 2026 AND THE NEW CLIMATE REALITY

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The oceans are running a fever. What was once considered a distant environmental warning has now evolved into a global climate emergency. Scientific warnings issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) regarding the possible emergence of a Super El Niño in 2026 have further intensified concerns about the future of global environmental stability. The projected Super El Niño is not merely a temporary climatic disturbance. It reflects the broader ecological imbalance created by decades of industrialization, excessive greenhouse gas emissions, and unsustainable patterns of development. Although El Niño is a naturally occurring climatic phenomenon, scientific studies increasingly demonstrate that climate change has amplified its intensity and environmental consequences. Rising ocean temperatures have transformed climatic systems into highly unstable and unpredictable structures capable of producing severe ecological and humanitarian crises.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports that human activity has definitely caused an increase in the temperature of the atmosphere, oceans and land. The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report highlighted that climate change has made the impacts of heat waves, heavy rainfall, droughts, and tropical cyclones more frequently and intense in some parts of the world. Likewise, Cai et al. (2019) found in their study in Nature Climate Change that extreme El Niño events are expected to become more frequent in the future due to global warming. Such climatic instability has ramifications beyond just environmental issues. The constitutional right to life with dignity is under threat due to climate change. In India, the right to life and personal liberty is guaranteed by Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

Judicial interpretations have progressively extended the right to environment to a clean and healthy environment. Environmental destruction and climate inaction are thus not simply policy questions. These are also threats to constitutional government.

Super El Niño as an Indicator of Climate Instability

El Niño is a phenomenon of the unusual warming of the sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. It is a component of the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle that has a major impact on the global climate. A Super El Niño is a very strong event of an increase in sea surface temperatures well above the normal average. Record breaking ocean temperatures and the accumulation of heat in the subsurface have led to the warning by scientific agencies such as NOAA and WMO that a strong El Niño event may occur in the 2026-27 climatic cycle. A pioneering study by Cai et al. found that greenhouse warming could cause an increase in extreme El Niño events to double in the future. Likewise, Wang et al. found that the rise in ocean heat content induced by climate change is a major factor in the enhanced ENSO variability and instability of the atmosphere.

One of the most obvious signs of climate change is the warming of the oceans. The European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service has reported that the last few years have seen some of the hottest global sea surface temperatures ever observed. Nearly 90 per cent of the additional heat created from greenhouse gas emissions is taken up by the oceans. This ongoing warming trend can also affect marine ecosystems and amplify climatic disturbances globally. So, it is important not to refer to Super El Niño as just a seasonal weather event. It is a reflection of the larger impact of ecological imbalances and a sign of the global disruption of natural

climatic systems by climate change.

Climate Change and Ecological Degradation

Climate change has emerged as one of the most severe environmental challenges of the twenty-first century. Human activities have significantly increased greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide and methane emissions continue to trap excessive heat within the Earth's climate system and accelerate global warming. The environmental consequences of climate change are visible across terrestrial, marine, and atmospheric ecosystems. The IPCC reported that global surface temperature has increased approximately 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels. Even this relatively small increase has caused widespread ecological disturbances and environmental stress.

One of the most alarming consequences involves the degradation of marine ecosystems. Rising ocean temperatures contribute directly to coral bleaching and marine biodiversity decline. According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), prolonged marine heatwaves have severely damaged coral reef ecosystems across different regions of the world. Coral reefs are highly sensitive to thermal changes, and their destruction threatens marine biodiversity and ecological balance.

Climate change has also intensified wildfires, glacier melting, and desertification. A study published in *Science* observed that increasing global temperatures have significantly accelerated glacier retreat and sea-level rise. Similarly, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) warned that biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse are increasing rapidly because species are unable to adapt to changing climatic conditions. Environmental degradation therefore no longer remains limited to isolated ecological disturbances. It has evolved into a structural crisis threatening planetary stability and environmental sustainability.

Impact on Environmental and Human Security

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared climate change as one of the biggest challenges to world public health. Collapse in

the ecosystem has a negative impact on water, food, health, housing and clean air. Socio-economic and adaptive vulnerability are at a high level. In areas where hot weather and longer hot spells occur, there is likely an increased risk of deaths and respiratory illness. Flooding and storms are a source of water-borne diseases and a cause of displacement and destruction to public infrastructure.

The Lancet Countdown Report on Health and Climate Change (2023) noted that the mortality due to heat has dramatically risen in vulnerable communities in the past 20 years. The results of such a study show that climate change is a direct threat to the survival of human beings and public welfare. Forced migration/displacement is also caused by environmental disasters. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reports that climate-driven disasters like floods, storms and droughts displace millions of people every year. However, international legal frameworks are still not adequate to recognize and protect climate displaced persons. Furthermore, the warming oceans and declining pH are terrible threats to the security of marine ecosystems. The loss of coral reefs, fish stocks and biodiversity is a threat to the livelihoods of the coastal communities and the ecological resilience. The environmental crisis is thus not only affecting nature but also the social, economic and human issues of dignity and security.

Climate Change and Sustainable Development Goals

Climate change has proven to be one of the biggest challenges to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the United Nations Agenda 2030. The SDGs integrated vision of social welfare, economic development and ecological sustainability is undermined by environmental instability.

SDG 13 on Climate Action is at the heart of this, as the increasing climate disaster shows the gap between the level of mitigation and adaptation efforts being taken. No greenhouse gas emission control leads to reduction of global climate governance and environmental protection. SDG 3 - Good

Health and Well-Being is also negatively impacted by climate change. During heatwaves, public health systems are under a great strain. Likewise, SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation is at risk due to variations in rainfall, droughts and a lack of freshwater.

SDG 14 (Life Below Water) is threatened by the impacts of ocean warming and coral bleaching. The destruction of biodiversity and deforestation are also impacting SDG 15: Life on Land. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has on several occasions highlighted that climate change poses a risk to the progress made in decades of development and global inequalities. Environmental impacts of climate change are thus a significant constraint to sustainable development and environmental justice.

Article 21 and Environmental Constitutionalism

The constitutional dimension of climate change has become increasingly significant within Indian environmental jurisprudence. Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees the right to life and personal liberty. Through judicial interpretation, this provision has been expanded to include the right to live with dignity and the right to a clean and healthy environment.

In *Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar*, the Supreme Court held that the right to life includes the enjoyment of pollution-free water and air necessary for full human existence. Similarly, in *M.C. Mehta v. Union of India*, the Court recognized environmental protection as an essential component of constitutional governance. The Supreme Court in *Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum v. Union of India* incorporated the principles of sustainable development and precautionary action into Indian environmental law. These principles impose obligations upon the state to prevent environmental harm and protect ecological resources for future generations. Climate change directly threatens these constitutional guarantees. Rising temperatures, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate disasters undermine public health and human dignity. Failure to adopt effective climate-responsive policies may therefore amount to a violation

of Article 21.

Environmental constitutionalism requires governments to prioritize ecological preservation, climate resilience, and intergenerational equity. The state acts as a trustee of natural resources and carries a constitutional obligation to protect environmental security for present and future generations.

International Environmental Law and Climate Responsibility

Climate change is presented in international environmental law as a global problem, for which the responsibility and cooperation of all are required. States have obligations to emit less greenhouse gas and to increase climate adaptation efforts under the aegis of legal frameworks, most prominently the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. The principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities recognizes that developed countries have more historical responsibility for climate change due to the continuous emissions of industrial factories. Developing countries still bear the brunt of environmental effects while contributing relatively little to the problem of global warming. The current climate crisis is a reminder of the shortcomings of international climate governance. International treaties and climate pledges are inadequate to reduce global emissions. The latest UN Emissions Gap Report 2024 found that current national climate commitments are still not enough to cap global warming to internationally agreed limits. Hence, there is a need to improve accountability arrangements and financial instruments for climate protection efforts in order to achieve environmental justice.

Conclusion

The projected Super El Niño of 2026 represents more than a climatic anomaly. It represents the worsening global climate crisis and the hazardous effects of environmental degradation. The rise in ocean temperatures and climatic instability is a clear indicator of the impact of global warming on nature and the ecological balance, affecting the entire world. Climate change is a direct threat to today's biodiversity, environmental security,

sustainable development and constitutional rights. It compromises attainment of SDGs and poses a danger to the right to life with dignity as provided under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Environmental law needs to come to terms with the shift from pollution control to the need for more robust frameworks that are sensitised to climate change and based on ecological sustainability and environmental justice. The need for speed in the legal action, for robust climate governance, and for international collaboration are crucial for avoiding irreversible environmental damage and ensuring rights for now and the future.

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THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN THE WOMB VERSUS AN ATHLETE'S RIGHT TO PLAY SPORTS: AN INDIAN LEGAL AND ETHICAL ANALYSIS

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Introduction

The intersection of prenatal rights and the professional rights of pregnant athletes is one of the most under-examined tensions in Indian jurisprudence and sports governance. India celebrates its female athletes, MC Mary Kom, PT Usha, Sania Mirza, Deepika Kumari, as national icons. Yet the legal framework protecting the unborn child coexists with a sports ecosystem that offers those same celebrated athletes no formal maternity policy whatsoever. This write-up examines the rights of the child in the mother's womb under Indian law, the corresponding rights of pregnant athletes to continue competing, and how Indian case law, legislation, and lived experience reflect the often-painful choices women in Indian sport are forced to make.

The Legal Status of the Unborn Child in India

Indian law confers a layered, if incomplete, legal identity on the unborn child through several statutes and constitutional provisions. No single enactment defines the full legal personhood of the foetus, but across criminal law, civil law, and constitutional interpretation, the unborn child occupies a protected space.

The Constitution of India and Article 21: The Indian Constitution, under Article 21, guarantees to every "person" the fundamental right to life and personal liberty. Whether the unborn child qualifies as a "person" for this purpose has been the subject of significant judicial debate. A strictly literal reading suggests that Article 21 applies only from birth. However, the broader interpretation, that the constitutional right to life extends to nascent human life in the womb, has found favour in several judicial pronouncements. The legal maxim *nasciturus pro iam nato habetur* (the unborn is treated as already born for the protection of its interests) has been invoked by Indian courts

as a guiding principle when the welfare of the foetus is at stake.

Criminal Law Protections: The *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)* devotes Sections 88 to 94 to offences against children, including the unborn. Section 88 criminalises causing miscarriage. Sections 91 and 92 go even further. Section 91 penalises any act done with the intent to prevent a child from being born alive or to cause it to die after birth, carrying imprisonment of up to ten years and/or a fine. Section 92 addresses the graver offence of causing the death of a "quick" unborn child by an act amounting to culpable homicide, similarly punishable with up to ten years' imprisonment. These provisions make clear that once a foetus reaches a stage of perceptible movement (quickening), Indian criminal law treats harm to it as a serious offence.

Civil and Property Law: The Transfer of Property Act, 1882, and the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, both recognise the unborn child as a legal entity for the purpose of inheritance. A child in the womb may be a beneficiary of property transferred by will or gift, with the property held in trust until birth. This property-law recognition is an important acknowledgment that the unborn child is not legally invisible in India.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 (MTP Act), as amended in 2021: The MTP Act is the primary legislation governing termination of pregnancy in India. Originally setting an upper gestational limit of 20 weeks, the 2021 amendment extended this to 24 weeks in certain categories of women (including survivors of rape, minors, and those with foetal abnormalities), with no upper limit where a Medical Board certifies substantial foetal abnormalities. The Act's structure requires registered medical practitioner approval and, beyond 20 weeks, a Medical Board approval for termination of pregnancy.

This reflects the state's increasing interest in protecting foetal life as pregnancy advances. Crucially, the MTP Act requires a woman's consent before any termination, even in cases of mental disability.

Judicial Activism vis-a-vis Foetal and Maternal Rights

The Supreme Court in *Suchita Srivastava & Anr. v. Chandigarh Administration*, gave a very significant ruling concerning intersection of maternal autonomy and foetal rights in India. The case involved a young woman with intellectual disability, a resident of a government welfare institution in Chandigarh, who became pregnant as a result of rape. The Chandigarh Administration approached the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeking permission to terminate her pregnancy, arguing it was in her "best interests." The High Court ordered termination despite an expert body's finding that the woman had clearly expressed her wish to carry the pregnancy to term.

The Supreme Court reversed the High Court's order. Chief Justice *K.G. Balakrishnan* held that a woman's right to make reproductive choices is a dimension of "personal liberty" under Article 21 of the Constitution. The Court held that mental disability does not negate a woman's right to make such choices, and that the MTP Act specifically requires consent even from a woman who is mentally retarded. Crucially, the Court also recognised that there exists a "compelling State interest" in protecting the life of the prospective child, establishing that both the mother's reproductive autonomy and the foetus's right to life must be weighed, with neither automatically overriding the other.

Suchita Srivastava framework establishes that a pregnant woman's autonomous decision to continue a pregnancy including while pursuing an athletic career, must be respected by institutions, even when those institutions believe they know better what is in her "best interests."

In *Meera Santosh Pal v. Union of India*, a woman sought permission to terminate a pregnancy beyond the statutory limit owing to severe foetal abnormalities. The Supreme Court allowed the termination after a Medical

Board confirmed the abnormalities, holding that the mother's right to dignity and bodily integrity under Article 21 would be violated by compelling her to continue a non-viable pregnancy. The Court balanced the foetal interest in life against the mother's physical and mental health, demonstrating that Indian courts apply a contextual, case-by-case approach rather than a rigid hierarchy of rights.

In another landmark ruling in *Kavita Yadav case*, which is not a sports case, but this ruling has direct relevance to the contractual rights of pregnant working women, including athletes. The Supreme Court held that fixed-term employees are entitled to full maternity benefits under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, even after their contractual term expires. The Court refused to allow a contractual arrangement to defeat statutory maternity rights, setting an important precedent that has implications for athletes on fixed-term or performance-based contracts with sports bodies.

The Indian Sports Ecosystem: No Policy, No Protection

Despite the legal protections available to pregnant women in general employment, Indian sport operates in a peculiar and damaging vacuum. As of 2023, not one single sports federation in India had a standard maternity policy in place. Female athletes who become pregnant receive no contractual assurance about their stipend, no guaranteed return pathway, no clarity about selection eligibility on return, and no structural support for the period of pregnancy and recovery.

The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, which provides for paid maternity leave, medical bonus, nursing breaks, and protection from dismissal during pregnancy, does not apply straightforwardly to elite athletes who are not employees of a factory, mine, plantation, or registered establishment in the traditional sense. Athletes contracted to the Sports Authority of India (SAI) or to national federations occupy an ambiguous employment category, a gap that leaves them outside the Act's protective ambit in practice, even if the spirit of the law demands their inclusion.

Indian Women Athletes: Self-Driven in the face of Legislative and Institutional Apathy

India is witness to multiple stories of women athletes who faced lack of legislative framework and Sports Federation of India's apathy, but still with their determination and will made India proud. One such case is of *MC Mary Kom*. MC Mary Kom's career is India's most dramatic testament to an athlete's determination to compete through and after pregnancy in the absence of institutional support. India's most decorated boxer, a six-time World Amateur Boxing Champion and Olympic bronze medalist, became pregnant twice during her peak career years. After her first C-section delivery in 2006, experts publicly doubted whether she could return to form. She silenced her critics by winning gold at the 2008 World Championships. After her second C-section at age 31, she won gold at the 2014 Asian Games. After the birth of her third child, she continued to compete at the highest level, including at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Mary Kom achieved all this not because of any institutional framework, but despite the absence of one. At no point did any sports federation formally protect her contract, stipend, or selection eligibility during pregnancy. She trained through pregnancies often without medical guidance tailored to her athletic demands and had to individually negotiate her return to the national squad. Her story, celebrated as one of triumph, is equally one of systemic neglect.

The other examples are of PT Usha and Deepika Kumari. The career arc of PT Usha, India's legendary sprinter, offers an earlier illustration. When Usha married in 1991 and had a child in 1992, she was effectively lost to the sport for three years before mounting a remarkable comeback at the 1994 and 1998 Asian Games. There was no institutional support for her return — no SAI rehabilitation programme, no reinstated sponsorship, no technical assistance. Her comeback was entirely self-driven.

Archer Deepika Kumari, a former world No. 1, took a 14-month maternity break and returned to win a silver medal at the Archery World Cup in 2024. She began training at 4:00 a.m. to balance childcare and preparation.

Again, no specific sports federation policy underpinned her return; it was personal discipline and a supportive family, not institutional design, that enabled it.

Scientific Evidence and the Question of Safe Competition

At the heart of the legal tension is the factual question: does elite athletic competition during pregnancy harm the unborn child? Indian medical authorities broadly follow the guidelines of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), which recommend that women with uncomplicated pregnancies engage in aerobic and strength-conditioning exercises throughout pregnancy. A meta-analysis of over 2,000 women published in *StatPearls* found that moderate exercise performed three to four days per week during pregnancy did not increase the risk of pre-term birth or low birth weight. Research published in *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* in the year 2025 noted, however, that highly intense exercise may divert oxygen and nutrients away from the foetus, suggesting that elite competition as distinct from moderate exercise requires individualised medical assessment.

A qualitative study of 20 elite athletes published in *BMJ Open Sport and Exercise Medicine* in the year 2022 found that pregnant athletes experienced five major challenges: pregnancy planning and fertility, pregnancy disclosure and discrimination, training their pregnant bodies, safety concerns, and equitable funding. In the Indian context, these findings are amplified manifold: athletes in India must navigate all of these challenges without the support of any formal institutional policy.

The Ethical Conflict: Balancing Foetal Rights and Athlete Autonomy

The central ethical tension in the Indian context is not primarily about whether pregnant athletes should be prevented from competing. It is about two distinct but related failures: first, the failure of sports institutions to create enabling environments that honour both foetal welfare and athlete autonomy; and second, the failure of Indian law to close the gap between general maternity protection and the specific needs of elite female athletes.

The *Suchita Srivastava* framework provides the appropriate legal starting point: a pregnant woman's reproductive choices and bodily autonomy are constitutionally protected under Article 21, and institutions must support rather than override those choices. Simultaneously, the BNS's recognition of the foetus as a bearer of protectable interests from the point of quickening, and the MTP Act's increasingly protective framework as gestational age advances, establish that the foetus is not legally invisible.

Conclusion

Indian law, through the Constitution, the BNS, the MTP Act, and landmark Supreme Court decisions, has constructed a framework that acknowledges both the unborn child's protectable interests and the pregnant woman's fundamental right to autonomy and dignity. But this framework has not been translated into meaningful institutional policy in Indian sport. The stories of Mary Kom, PT Usha, and Deepika Kumari are inspiring precisely because they were achieved in the teeth of institutional indifference. Sports bodies in India must therefore develop policies that enable athletes to make informed, medically supported decisions about participation during pregnancy, rather than forcing them to choose between athletic careers and motherhood, a choice no male athlete has ever been asked to make. Therefore, a just and legally coherent sports ecosystem in India would honour the life and welfare of the child in the womb and protect the professional rights of the athlete carrying that child, not as competing propositions, but as complementary obligations of a State committed to equality under law.

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THE KERALA “RIGHT TO DISCONNECT BILL”: A STEP TOWARD BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

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In today's workplace, where technology has blended work and personal life, protecting employees' mental health is more crucial than ever. Kerala's Right to Connect Bill is the first step in tackling this issue. It is not only a legislative proposal but also the beginning of a discussion on how societies should rethink productivity, personal space, and human well-being in a time of constant digital connection. It is very important to discuss and understand Kerala's Right to Connect Bill in today's situation. As we all know, mental health issues are on the rise in India due to many factors. One of the most common causes, especially in the urban and corporate sectors, is work-related stress. Research shows that nearly 90% of corporate employees under the age of 25 suffer from stress-related issues, and this number is growing.

Mental health challenges have now become prevalent across all age groups—from young adults to middle-aged and even older individuals. A major contributing factor across most corporate sectors is the demanding schedule and time-bound nature of projects. While on paper, it may appear as a five-day work week with an eight to ten-hour workday, the reality is quite different.

International Labour Organization and Indian labour laws has fixed a 9-hour work limit, but employees in the private sector often work beyond that. After the official working hours, many of them including male and female are still required to attend virtual meetings, answer calls, or prepare documents from home. This “always-on” culture has blurred the line between personal and professional life, leading to exhaustion, stress, and burnout.

Academia is also not untouched from this corporate cultures. Work conditions in private universities can be even more challenging in compare to Government universities in terms of working hours and environment. Most of the private institutions in India do not even

provide summer or winter vacations to their staff, who are already burdened with both academic and administrative responsibilities. Many universities are understaffed also. Time to time UGC makes rules and regulations regarding the education and quality criteria of staffs but the regarding the work culture and environment of university everything is silent and unmonitored.

Faculty are constantly under pressure to meet the objectives of research output for NAAC or NIRF rankings, to ensure student admission and to meet other departmental requirements. Failure to meet these goals often results in denial of promotion or raise. As a result, employees often work long hours after official business hours. However, unlike in the corporate sector, this pressure in the academic sector can be both direct and indirect. It doesn't matter whether the work is done by free consent or under implicit pressure—what matters is the constant pressure that forces teachers to work beyond their allotted schedules, sometimes from the office and sometimes from home. This continuous extension blurs the boundaries between professional responsibilities and personal life, ultimately affecting their mental well-being.

This raises an important question: Are we humans or robots? Even machines need maintenance and rest periods after continuous use. Are we really progressing in society by glorifying overwork, or are we slowly deteriorating our quality of life?

The Kerala Right to Disconnect Bill is the first initiative by the state government of India to create a balance between work and personal life and protect the mental health of employees. The primary purpose of this Act is to establish a clear boundary between work and personal time, allowing private employees to separate work-related calls, emails, and texts after government hours—without fear of penalty or discrimination.

This is an important step towards protecting mental well-being and reducing work-related stress and burnout, which have now become major public health concerns. The law ensures a safer and healthier work environment outside of office hours.

Data from numerous studies show that, even during regular vacation or sick leave, many employers expect their employees to remain available for calls, online meetings, or other tasks. Such practices have a negative impact on employees' mental health and overall well-being.

While occasional post-employment communication may be acceptable in exceptional circumstances, doing it on a regular basis creates a toxic and exploitative work culture that needs to be addressed immediately.

The Kerala government's intention in introducing this bill is undoubtedly commendable. Its purpose is to promote a better work-life balance so that employees' mental health is not compromised. However, its implementation poses difficulties.

Most employment contracts contain a clause that states that employees are required to work overtime when necessary. Such provisions can be abused by employers, which can undermine the spirit of the bill. Therefore, the language of the law must be carefully crafted to ensure real benefits for both employers and employees.

This is where Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarian theory comes into play. Bentham argued that when a law creates "the greatest happiness for the greatest number," it creates a system of rules that are designed to maximize the benefits for the greatest number of employees. Applying this principle, the *Right to Disconnect Bill* should aim to increase organizational efficiency so that more employees benefit.

Therefore, the bill should be extended to all employees in the private sector, as many studies show that civil servants generally have better work-life balance and fewer mental health problems. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the burden of mental health problems in India is 2,443 disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) per

100,000 population, while the age-specific suicide rate is 21.1 per 100,000 population. India is expected to lose \$1.03 trillion due to mental health between 2012 and 2030.

Despite these alarming statistics, the situation continues to worsen, especially in private organizations where overwork and digital addiction have become normalized. This can only be improved by a systematic approach that includes government monitoring of workplace culture and setting clear guidelines that ensure work-life balance in private sectors. While Kerala has taken the first step, it is now time for the Central Government to consider implementing a similar law in all states of India. A national law on *The Right to Disconnect Act* can standardize workplace expectations, protect employee rights, and foster a culture of respect for personal time.

The *Right to Disconnect Bill* is not just about limiting working hours; it is about restoring the human element at work. When employees are mentally healthy, they are more creative, motivated and productive. A law that protects personal time will not only improve personal well-being but will also improve the overall quality and efficiency of work in the long run.

While the Bill may have certain limitations, with thoughtful implementation and regular review, it could be a transformative step towards a healthy, balanced and humane work culture in India. Kerala has lit the spark – now it is up to the entire nation to take it forward.

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PROTECTING THE ELDERLY IN INDIA: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE MAINTENANCE AND WELFARE OF PARENTS AND SENIOR CITIZENS ACT AND NATIONAL POLICIES

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Introduction

India is undergoing a rapid demographic change, with the population aged 60 and above projected to surpass 300 million by 2050. Increasing longevity, declining fertility, migration, and urbanization have weakened the traditional joint family system, leaving many senior citizens vulnerable to emotional neglect, exploitation, abandonment, and financial and social insecurity.

To address these concerns, the Indian government enacted the *Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (MWPSA), 2007*, mandating children and relatives to maintain elderly parents. Complementary policy initiatives, including the *National Policy for Older Persons 1999*, the *Integrated Programme for Older Persons*, and social assistance schemes, aim to provide financial support, healthcare, housing, and protective mechanisms.

Despite these legislative and policy measures, challenges persist in the form of weak implementation, lack of awareness, inadequate institutional care, and insufficient coordination across agencies. This paper critically analyses the MWPSA and key national policies affecting senior citizens, evaluating their strengths, limitations, and potential areas for reform.

Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007: An Analysis

The *Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPSA) Act, 2007*, was passed by the Parliament on 29-12-2007. The *Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act of 2007* was made necessary by the progressive collapse of the joint family system in society and horrifying cases of abuse, exploitation, and criminality, as well as the abandonment and theft of parental and senior citizen property. Rooted in Article 41 of the Constitution—which

directs the State to provide social assistance to the elderly—the Act seeks to ensure that parents and senior citizens live with dignity by securing their maintenance, welfare, healthcare, and protection. The 2019 Amendment Bill and 2023 Amendment Bill further expanded its scope, reflecting evolving socio-legal needs.

According to this Act, “children” in relation to a parent or a senior citizen, means his son or daughter, whether biological, adoptive or step-child and includes his son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandson, grand-daughter and the legal guardian of minor children, if any. “Maintenance” includes provision for food, clothing, housing, safety and security, medical attendance, healthcare and treatment necessary to lead a life of dignity. “Parent” means father or mother, whether biological, adoptive or step-parent and includes father-in-law, mother-in-law and grandparents, whether or not a senior citizen. Maintenance claims

A parent or senior citizen unable to sustain themselves from personal income or property may file a maintenance application:

- a. Directly,
- b. Through representatives, or
- c. Via suo motu cognizance by the Tribunal.

Tribunals are empowered to order monthly allowances and other resources required for dignified living. The Act removes the earlier cap on maintenance amounts, allowing tribunals to determine appropriate levels case-by-case.

Tribunal Mechanism

Tribunals are intended to provide speedy, inexpensive, and accessible justice, but in practice, they suffer from operational delays, a shortage of appointed officers, and administrative inefficiencies.

Enhancements proposed include:

- Online filing,

- Mandatory timelines,
- Periodic follow-ups on compliance.

Institutional Care: Old Age Homes and Day-Care Centres

The Act mandates:

- a. Senior Citizens' Care Homes offering residential care, and
- b. Multi-Service Day Care Centres providing healthcare, recreation, counselling, and social interaction.

States must maintain updated lists of registered institutions and ensure minimum standards of care. However, shortages of facilities and uneven regional development limit their effectiveness.

Multi-Service Day Care Centre means an institution registered under Section 19(2), established or maintained by the government or a local body or an organisation for providing day care facilities, including healthcare, peer interaction, recreation and entertainment to senior citizens. Senior Citizens' Care Homes means an institution registered as such under Section 19 (2), established or maintained by the government or a local body or an organisation for providing residential facilities to senior citizens for their care and welfare. The details of these institutions registered under Section 19(3), or, as the case may be, under Section 20A (3), shall be made available by the State Government by placing them on the website of the concerned department of that state.

Healthcare Provisions

The 2023 Bill proposes:

- Free medical care for senior citizens in public and private hospitals,
- Full reimbursement of medical expenses,
- Priority queues,
- More geriatric wards.

Courts have reinforced these rights. In *Dr. Ashwani Kumar's case*, the Supreme Court emphasised the importance of reasonable accommodation and state responsibility for ensuring public health and dignified living for senior citizens.

Social Security

Although the government has enacted the MWPSA Act, 2007, to provide for more effective provisions for the maintenance and welfare of parents and senior citizens

guaranteed and recognised under the Constitution. However, the government felt that there is a dire need to provide social security to the senior citizens, including financial security, healthcare and shelter and protection from abuse and exploitation. Therefore, Section 21A was added to the Act in 2023. According to this section-

- (1) The State Government shall provide social security to all senior citizens and ensure their protection from exploitation and ill-treatment to ensure a peaceful life and healthcare for them.
- (2) For the purpose of providing social security under sub-section (1), the State Government shall, inter alia, provide the following facilities:—
 - (i) monthly pension to each senior citizen who is unable to maintain himself and who does not have any children or relatives, in such manner and at such rate as may be prescribed;
 - (ii) subsidy to each senior citizen up to ninety percent for the amount spent on travel by road, air and railway;
 - (iii) providing free legal aid to all the senior citizens, including setting up of "fast track courts" for prompt disposal of cases wherein senior citizens are involved; and
 - (iv) determining criteria for accreditation and registration of voluntary organisations and trusts involved in the welfare of senior citizens."

Property Protection

Section 23 of the Act talks about the transfer of property being void in certain circumstances. According to this section:

1. Where any parent or senior citizen who, after the commencement of this Act, has, by way of gift or otherwise, his property, subject to the condition that the transferee shall provide the basic amenities and basic physical needs to the transferor, and such transferee refuses or fails to provide such amenities and physical needs, the said transfer of property shall be deemed to have been

made by fraud or coercion or under undue influence and shall, at the option of the transferor, be declared void by the Tribunal.

2. Where any parent or senior citizen has a right to receive maintenance out of an estate and such estate or part thereof is transferred, the right to receive maintenance may be enforced against the transferee if the transferee has notice of the right or if the transfer is gratuitous, but not against the transferee for consideration and without notice of the right.
3. If any parent or senior citizen is incapable of enforcing the rights under sub-sections (1) and (2), action may be taken on his behalf by any of the organisations referred to in the explanation to sub-section (1) of section 5.

Protection Against Abuse and Abandonment

Clause 26 of the Act recommends changes in Section 24 of the MWPSC Act, 2007. Under the new Section 24, *“whoever abandons or abuses a senior citizen or parent shall be liable to be punished with imprisonment, which may extend till six months, or with a fine up to Rupees ten thousand or with both.”*

The Delhi High Court indicated that senior citizens of India still have some remedy against their own children and/or relatives if they are physically abusive.

Moreover, the Uttarakhand High Court had observed that senior citizens have the fundamental right to live with dignity and that the state is obliged to create conditions and circumstances to ensure social protection and welfare of senior citizens.

National Policies Safeguarding Rights of Senior Citizens

The National Policy for Older Persons (NPOP) 1999

The formulation of the National Policy for Older Persons (NPOP) in India in 1999 was in response to the increasing number and proportion of older persons and their disadvantaged status in terms of general social, economic and physical well-being. The national policy is open-ended. It promises an array of state interventions – support for financial security, health care, shelter and

welfare, special focus on older women, protection against abuse and exploitation and special attention to rural areas. According to this policy, the healthcare needs of older persons will be given high priority, the primary health care system will be strengthened and orientated to meet the health care needs of older persons. Housing schemes for urban and rural lower-income segments will earmark 10% of the houses/house sites for allotment to older persons. Older persons will be given easy access to loans for the purchase of housing and for major repairs with an easy repayment schedule. A multi-purpose centre for older persons is a necessity for social interaction, and it will be necessary to earmark sites for such centres in all housing colonies. Preferences will be given to older persons in the allotment of flats on the ground floor. Discrimination against older persons for availing opportunities for education, training and orientation will be removed. Assistance for open universities will be sought to develop packages using distance learning techniques. Educational curriculum at all stages of formal education, as also non formal education programmes, will incorporate material to strengthen intergenerational bonds and mutually supporting relationships. The introduction of special provisions in the IPC to protect older persons from domestic violence will be considered, and machinery will be provided to attend to all such cases promptly. Tenancy legislation will be reviewed so that the rights of occupancy of older persons are restored speedily. The policy aims to involve mass media on ageing issues to provide opportunities for media personnel to have access to information apart from their own independent sources; their participation in orientation programmes on ageing will be facilitated.

This policy included the following major steps:

- (i) Setting up of a pension fund for ensuring security for those persons who have been serving in the unorganised sector,
- (ii) Construction of old age homes and day care centres for every 3-4 districts,

- (iii) Establishment of resource centres and re-employment bureaus for people above 60 years,
- (iv) Concessional rail/air fares for travel within and between cities, i.e., 30% discount on trains and 50% on Indian Airlines.
- (v) Enacting legislation for ensuring compulsory geriatric care in all the public hospitals.

Further, the NPOP envisages two autonomous bodies:

- (i) The National Council for Older Persons (NCOP) to promote the concerns of older persons and to oversee the policy implementation; and
- (ii) The National Association of Older Persons (NAOP) encourages participation of senior citizens in issues that concern them and lend an attentive ear to their voices. The policy also emphasises the role of Panchayats and other community-based agencies in effective implementation of policy intentions. Although the onus of implementing several facets of NPOP lies with different ministries, there are clear connections between them. This offers a scope for mainstreaming senior citizens' issues in sector-specific plans as well as enabling their convergence at the community level for more efficient and effective delivery of age care services.

The Integrated Program for Older Persons (IPOP)

The Integrated Program for Older Persons (IPOP) is a scheme implemented by the government since 1992. IPOP supports NGOs and institutions providing:

Basic needs (food, shelter, healthcare), Institutional and non-institutional care, Intergenerational bonding programmes, Active ageing initiatives, Advocacy and awareness, Day care and respite care services. However, fund delays and limited coverage constrain its reach.

The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

Established in 1995, NSAP includes:

- Old age pension,
- Family benefit scheme for death of breadwinner,
- Maternity benefits.

It is a direct social security mechanism for vulnerable households, particularly the elderly without family support.

National Programme for the Health Care of Senior citizens (NPHCE)

Introduced in 2010, the National Programme for Health Care of the Senior Citizens (NPHCE) is an articulation of the international and national commitments of the government as envisaged under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD), the National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) adopted by the Government of India in 1999 and Section 20 of "The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007", dealing with provisions for medical care of senior citizens. The main objective of the programme is to provide preventive, curative and rehabilitative services to the senior citizens at various levels of the health care delivery system of the country. Other objectives are to strengthen the referral system, to develop specialised manpower and to promote research in the field of diseases related to old age.

Senior Citizens Welfare Fund

A "Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund (SCWF)" has been established under the Finance Act, 2015, to be utilised for such schemes for the promotion of the welfare of senior citizens, in line with the National Policy on Older Persons. This welfare fund has been created to be utilised for such schemes, for promoting financial security of senior citizens, healthcare and nutrition of senior citizens, welfare of senior citizens widows, schemes relating to old age homes, short stay homes and day care of senior citizens, etc., for the promotion of the welfare of senior citizens.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

Ayushman Bharat, a flagship scheme of the Government of India, was launched as recommended by the National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health

Coverage (UHC). Ayushman Bharat adopts a continuum of care approach, comprising of two inter-related components, which are -

1. Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)
2. Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)

PM-JAY is the world's largest health insurance/ assurance scheme fully financed by the government. It provides a cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation across public and private empanelled hospitals in India. PM-JAY provides cashless access to health care services for the beneficiary at the point of service, that is, the hospital.

From September 2024, all citizens aged 70+ are covered under PM-JAY irrespective of income.

Benefits include:

- ₹5 lakh annual cashless coverage,
- Empanelled public and private hospitals,
- Coexistence with private insurance or CGHS/ECHS/other schemes.

This greatly expands access to affordable hospitalisation for older adults.

Tax Benefits for Senior Citizens in India

The basic income exemption limit for senior citizens (those who are 60 years of age or older but under 80 years of age) is Rs 3 lakh. The basic income exemption ceiling for extremely senior folks (those who are 80 years of age or above) is Rs 5 lakh. Regardless of age, the basic income exemption ceiling for non-resident individuals is Rs 2.5 lakh.

The tax implications for senior citizens after budget 2024 are that for family pensioners, the standard deduction ceiling has been raised from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000. Individual taxpayers who receive family pensions can now take advantage of this increased deduction.

Recommendations

Strengthening Legal Enforcement Mechanisms

Effective enforcement of the (MWPSA) 2007 requires greater investment in the establishment and functioning of tribunals. Senior citizens can receive speedy justice if judicial and administrative officers have proper training and maintenance claims are processed quickly.

Awareness and Outreach Programs

To educate the public, especially the elderly, about their legal rights under the MWPSA and national laws, nationwide awareness campaigns should be launched. Legal assistance clinics, community organisations, and local government agencies can all be important channels for sharing this knowledge.

Extending the Scope of Maintenance

In order to better meet the holistic requirements of the elderly, the MWPSA should define "maintenance" to encompass not only financial aid but also emotional and psychological care. Social Security income, medical care, and rehabilitation should all be included in the amendments.

More Severe Penalties for Non-Compliance

The MWPSA changes ought to implement more severe penalties for elderly parents who are abandoned or neglected. Elder abuse cases can be decreased with more accountability, which includes routine monitoring and follow-ups by local authorities.

Integration and Coordination of Policies

To create a more complete welfare system, national policies should be coordinated with other social security programmes, including healthcare initiatives and pension plans. It is imperative that health, legal, and social agencies collaborate across sectors to effectively handle the complex needs of older adults.

Increased Institutional Support

Both urban and rural areas should see an increase in the number of government-funded assisted living facilities and day-care facilities. These facilities ought to offer senior citizens recreational activities, medical treatment, and counselling in addition to housing.

Prioritise Healthcare and Longevity

As the population ages, national policies should place a high priority on easily available, reasonably priced, and age-appropriate healthcare services. Increasing the number of geriatric care facilities and mobile health clinics can guarantee that senior individuals, especially those living in remote and underdeveloped areas, receive the medical treatment they need.

Conclusion

India's demographic shift demands urgent and sustained attention to senior citizens' welfare. The MWPSA 2007, along with its amendments, represents a significant legal safeguard mandating maintenance and protection of elderly persons. However, its potential is undermined by weak implementation, procedural delays, and limited awareness.

National policies and welfare schemes ranging from healthcare initiatives to pension programmes have expanded the support network available to the elderly, yet issues of fragmentation, inadequate coverage, and insufficient interdepartmental coordination persist.

A comprehensive approach that strengthens legal enforcement, expands institutional care, improves healthcare access, and promotes awareness is essential for ensuring that India's senior citizens live with dignity, security, and respect. As societal structures evolve, it is imperative that legal and policy frameworks adapt proactively to meet the multi-dimensional needs of the ageing population. Protecting the elderly is not only a legal obligation but also a moral responsibility central to creating a compassionate and equitable society.

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UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING INFIDELITY IN MARRIAGE: CAUSES, CONCERNS, AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL REMEDIES

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Introduction

Infidelity, in its simplest sense, refers to a breach of trust and exclusivity within a marital or committed relationship. It represents the violation of emotional or sexual faithfulness that partners promise to one another. Historically, societies have treated infidelity as both a moral and legal wrong; however, in the modern era, it has increasingly been recognised as a complex social and psychological issue. Infidelity undermines not only marital stability but also emotional well-being, family cohesion, and societal harmony. The subject has gained renewed relevance in contemporary society due to changing social structures, shifting moral norms, and the pervasive influence of digital technology. Emotional detachment, unfulfilled intimacy, workplace interactions, and social media have redefined the nature of temptation and accessibility (Hertlein & Piercy, 2008). Moreover, globalisation and urban lifestyles have transformed marriage from a traditional social institution into a more individual-centred relationship, where emotional compatibility often takes precedence over social expectations (Gottman & Silver, 2012). The objectives of this research are threefold:

1. To explore the primary causes of infidelity among married couples.
2. To analyze its social, psychological, and emotional implications.
3. To suggest preventive and remedial measures for promoting healthy marital relationships.

Understanding infidelity, therefore, requires moving beyond moral condemnation to analysing it as a relational, emotional, and societal phenomenon shaped by human vulnerability and changing social dynamics.

Review of Literature

The study of infidelity has evolved from being viewed as a moral transgression to a multidimensional construct encompassing

psychological, social, and biological factors. Psychological theories emphasise unmet emotional needs, low self-control, and attachment insecurities as major predictors of infidelity (Glass, 2003). Emotional neglect and communication breakdown often precede extramarital involvement, suggesting that infidelity may arise more from emotional deprivation than from purely sexual dissatisfaction.

From a sociological perspective, infidelity reflects the tension between traditional marital expectations and contemporary notions of individual freedom (Singh, 2018). In patriarchal societies such as India, infidelity is often gendered, men's extramarital behaviour is normalised, whereas women's is stigmatised (Kapur, 2019). This asymmetry underscores the role of gender inequality in shaping marital dynamics and societal responses to infidelity.

Technological advancement has also redefined the nature of infidelity. Cyber infidelity, emotional or sexual involvement through digital platforms, has emerged as a growing concern (Clayton, Nagurney & Smith, 2013). Hertlein and Piercy (2008) note that online communication blurs the line between friendship and romantic involvement, creating emotional bonds that threaten marital intimacy.

Empirical studies by Mark et al. (2011) reveal that infidelity is often associated with personality traits such as narcissism, low conscientiousness, and high openness to experience. Similarly, socioeconomic factors like occupational mobility and urban anonymity contribute to increased opportunities for extramarital involvement.

Overall, the literature underscores that infidelity is a multifactorial phenomenon influenced by emotional, cultural, and situational variables rather than a single cause. It is an indicator of relational

breakdown, reflecting unmet psychological needs and the vulnerabilities inherent in intimate human relationships.

Causes of Infidelity Among Married Couples

Infidelity is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by individual, relational, and social factors. It rarely stems from a single cause but from the intersection of unmet emotional needs, personal vulnerabilities, social opportunities, and cultural permissiveness. Broadly, its causes can be grouped into psychological, emotional, socioeconomic, and technological domains.

1. Emotional Dissatisfaction and Unmet Needs

Emotional dissatisfaction is among the most frequently cited causes of marital infidelity. When emotional intimacy, affection, and communication decline within a marriage, individuals may seek validation, comfort, or excitement outside the relationship (Glass & Wright, 1992). Studies show that many extramarital affairs begin as emotional connections rather than physical ones, where partners feel emotionally neglected or misunderstood (Mark, Janssen & Milhausen, 2011).

According to Gottman (1999), emotional disconnection and lack of responsiveness are early warning signs of marital breakdown. When partners fail to meet each other's emotional needs, feelings of loneliness and resentment emerge, often driving one partner to seek appreciation or attention outside the relationship. Infidelity may thus serve as a maladaptive attempt to cope with emotional deprivation.

2. Decline in Communication and Marital Satisfaction

Effective communication is the cornerstone of a healthy marriage. When it breaks down, misunderstandings and unmet expectations grow, leading to emotional distance and reduced satisfaction (Gordon, Baucom & Snyder, 2004). Over time, such disconnect fosters vulnerability to extramarital involvement. Moreover, conflict avoidance or persistent criticism can cause emotional exhaustion, prompting individuals in chronically unhappy marriages to rationalise infidelity as an escape from frustration (Allen

& Atkins, 2012).

3. Personality and Psychological Factors

Personality traits play a significant role in predicting infidelity. Traits such as narcissism, impulsivity, low conscientiousness, and sensation-seeking tendencies are positively correlated with extramarital affairs (Whisman, Gordon & Chatav, 2007). Narcissistic individuals, in particular, may engage in infidelity to affirm their desirability and dominance (Campbell & Foster, 2002).

Attachment theory also provides insight: individuals with avoidant or anxious attachment styles often struggle with intimacy and commitment, making them more prone to seek alternative emotional connections (Allen et al., 2005). Additionally, psychological factors such as low self-esteem, depression, or midlife crises may contribute to infidelity as individuals attempt to reclaim lost identity or excitement (Fischer et al., 2014).

4. Socioeconomic Stress and Opportunity

Socioeconomic pressures, such as financial strain, unemployment, or occupational stress, can also affect marital harmony. When economic instability leads to frustration and diminished self-worth, individuals may resort to infidelity as an escape from daily tensions (Treas & Giesen, 2000). Conversely, higher socioeconomic status and professional mobility can increase opportunities for extramarital relationships, especially when individuals spend extended periods away from their spouses due to work commitments (Allen & Atkins, 2012).

Gendered social norms also influence infidelity patterns. Historically, male infidelity has been more socially tolerated, particularly in patriarchal societies where men's sexual autonomy is normalised (Singh, 2018). However, with women's growing participation in the workforce and increased financial independence, instances of female infidelity are also rising, reflecting changing gender dynamics and power relations within marriage (O'Connor, 2020).

5. Influence of Technology and Digital Communication

The digital age has blurred the boundaries of marital fidelity. Easy access to social media, dating apps, and private messaging creates

new spaces for emotional and sexual transgressions. Cyber infidelity, which includes online flirting, or intimate conversations, may begin innocently but can develop into emotionally charged relationships (Whitty, 2003).

Hertlein and Piercy (2008) argue that online environments facilitate “pseudo-intimacy,” where individuals experience emotional closeness without the perceived risks of physical affairs. This form of infidelity is especially concerning because it can occur in secrecy, leaving the betrayed partner unaware of the extent of emotional betrayal. Additionally, digital anonymity allows individuals to rationalise their behaviour as harmless, even when it undermines trust and commitment (Clayton, Nagurney & Smith, 2013).

6. Cultural and Societal Factors

Culture plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward infidelity. In societies where marriage is seen as a social contract, extramarital affairs are often tolerated or hidden, while cultures that idealise monogamy view infidelity with guilt and moral condemnation (Kapur, 2019). In India, marriage is closely tied to family honour and collective identity, making infidelity a source of stigma and ostracism, particularly for women (Singh, 2018). Yet modernisation, global media, and urban anonymity are gradually liberalising views on romantic and sexual autonomy.

7. Sexual Dissatisfaction and Desire for Novelty

Sexual dissatisfaction or incompatibility is a frequent cause of infidelity. Over time, routine, stress, or aging may reduce marital intimacy, prompting individuals to seek novelty outside marriage (Atkins, Baucom & Jacobson, 2001). The dual-control model explains that differing sexual excitation and inhibition levels can create mismatched desires (Bancroft & Janssen, 2000). For some, infidelity arises from a search for excitement or variety rather than emotional voids. Evolutionary theorists link this to innate drives for sexual diversity, though social and moral factors ultimately regulate such behaviour (Buss & Shackelford, 1997).

Concerns and Consequences of Infidelity Among Married Couples

Infidelity, beyond being a moral lapse, has deep psychological, social, cultural, and legal effects on individuals and families. It weakens the foundation of trust in marriage and often leads to emotional trauma, family breakdown, and social stigma. Its consequences extend to mental health, family dynamics, children's well-being, and the stability of the marital institution.

1. Psychological and Emotional Consequences

Infidelity often leaves deep psychological scars, marked by betrayal, humiliation, anxiety, depression, and trauma-like symptoms (Gordon, Baucom & Snyder, 2004). The betrayed partner may struggle with grief and a loss of self-worth, while the unfaithful partner may face guilt and moral conflict (Glass, 2003; Olson, Russell & Higgins-Kessler, 2002). Such distress lowers marital satisfaction and increases emotional distance, even when couples stay together (Atkins, Baucom & Jacobson, 2001). Rebuilding trust requires empathy, forgiveness, and open communication; without these, unresolved resentment continues to damage the relationship (Gottman & Silver, 2012).

2. Marital Breakdown and Divorce

Infidelity remains one of the leading causes of marital breakdown and divorce worldwide (Amato & Previti, 2003). Betrayal of trust erodes the emotional foundation upon which marriage rests, making reconciliation difficult. Research indicates that marriages affected by infidelity are less likely to survive compared to those facing other stressors such as financial issues or in-law conflicts (Allen et al., 2005). Even when couples decide to remain together for familial or social reasons, the relationship often suffers long-term instability and diminished intimacy (Gordon et al., 2004). In many cases, infidelity exposes pre-existing marital issues that were previously ignored or suppressed, acting as both a symptom and a cause of marital decline.

3. Impact on Children and Family Dynamics

Infidelity affects not only the couple but the entire family, especially children. Parental conflict, separation, or divorce resulting from

infidelity can lead to confusion, insecurity, and behavioural problems in children (Afifi, Falato & Weiner, 2001). Such experiences may foster trust issues, relationship anxiety, and low self-esteem as they internalise family tension. Family cohesion also weakens as loyalty conflicts arise among relatives. In patriarchal societies, women often face pressure to preserve family unity for their children, reinforcing cycles of emotional suppression (Singh, 2018).

4. Social and Cultural Stigma

The social implications of infidelity differ across cultures. In collectivist societies like India, it is viewed not only as a personal failure but as family dishonour. Women face harsher moral scrutiny and stigma than men for similar acts (Kapur, 2019), as female infidelity is often labeled immoral while male infidelity is rationalised through social privilege or biological drives (O'Connor, 2020). This double standard reinforces gender inequality and restricts open dialogue about marital dissatisfaction, compelling many women to stay in unfulfilling marriages (Singh, 2018). Yet, urbanisation, global media, and digital anonymity are gradually challenging traditional views of fidelity.

5. Legal and Institutional Concerns

From a legal standpoint, infidelity raises complex issues of marital rights, divorce, and gender justice. Before the Supreme Court's landmark judgment in *Joseph Shine v. Union of India* (2018), adultery was criminalised under Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code. The Court's decision to decriminalise it redefined adultery as a civil matter, emphasising autonomy, equality, and privacy within marriage (Kapur, 2019).

However, infidelity continues to be a valid ground for divorce under personal laws such as the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, and the Special Marriage Act, 1954. Legal battles involving allegations of adultery often become arenas of public humiliation and moral judgment, particularly for women. Moreover, the lack of institutional support for marital counselling or psychological intervention exacerbates the distress of couples facing infidelity (Tripathi, 2020).

6. Societal Consequences and Changing Morality

At the societal level, infidelity challenges the moral and cultural foundations of marriage. Its growing visibility, especially in urban and digital contexts, reflects shifting values toward personal autonomy and self-fulfilment (Treas & Giesen, 2000). While this signals greater individual freedom, it also raises concerns about emotional instability and the weakening of family values. The normalisation of infidelity in films, television, and social media blurs ethical boundaries, desensitising people to betrayal and contributing to fragile relationships (Clayton, Nagurney & Smith, 2013).

7. Coping and Recovery Concerns

Recovering from infidelity is emotionally challenging. Studies show that couples who seek counselling are more likely to rebuild trust and experience post-infidelity growth (Glass, 2003; Gordon et al., 2004). Therapeutic approaches emphasising forgiveness, empathy, and communication aid emotional healing. However, in countries like India, social stigma and limited access to counselling often discourage couples from seeking help (Kapur, 2019). Strengthening family therapy services, community counselling, and awareness programs is vital to reduce the long-term impact of infidelity.

Preventive Measures and Coping Strategies in Cases of Infidelity

Addressing infidelity requires both preventive and remedial measures that encompass emotional, relational, and institutional dimensions.

1. Strengthening Communication and Emotional Intimacy

Open and empathetic communication remains the cornerstone of marital fidelity. Gottman and Silver (2012) emphasise that emotional disconnection often precedes infidelity. Partners who express affection, engage in mutual listening, and validate each other's emotions are less likely to seek external emotional support.

2. Marital Counselling and Therapy

Therapeutic interventions such as Integrative Behavioural Couple Therapy (IBCT) and Emotionally Focused Therapy

(EFT) have shown positive outcomes in rebuilding trust after betrayal (Gordon, Baucom & Snyder, 2004). Counselling provides a safe environment for partners to explore unmet needs and rebuild emotional security. However, as Kapur (2019) notes, marital counselling remains underutilised in India due to cultural stigma, emphasising the need for institutionalised support systems.

3. Emotional Intelligence and Self-Regulation

High emotional intelligence (EI) correlates with lower rates of infidelity (Brackett, Warner & Bosco, 2006). Individuals with greater emotional awareness and empathy are better equipped to manage dissatisfaction constructively. Mindfulness and self-reflection can enhance emotional resilience and reduce impulsive behaviour.

4. Sexual Compatibility and Education

Sexual dissatisfaction frequently underlies extramarital involvement (Atkins, Baucom & Jacobson, 2001). Promoting open sexual communication and mutual understanding of desires strengthens marital intimacy. Comprehensive sex education should include discussions on marital fidelity, consent, and relational ethics.

5. Digital Boundaries and Cyber Awareness

In the digital era, couples must establish clear boundaries regarding online interactions. Hertlein and Piercy (2008) stress that awareness and agreement on acceptable digital behaviour can prevent misunderstandings and emotional betrayal.

6. Cultural and Gender Sensitisation

Infidelity prevention must also address gender bias. O'Connor (2020) notes that societal double standards perpetuate inequality and hinder emotional transparency. Educational programs promoting gender equality can foster mutual respect and reduce relational imbalance.

7. Policy and Institutional Support

Governments and family welfare institutions can introduce premarital counselling program, public awareness campaigns, and relationship education in curricula to strengthen emotional literacy and promote healthy marriages (Tripathi, 2020).

Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

Infidelity continues to challenge the stability of marriage and the moral fabric of modern society. This study examined infidelity as a multifactorial phenomenon arising from emotional dissatisfaction, communication breakdown, socio-cultural pressures, personality traits, and the growing influence of technology. It is both a symptom and a cause of relational distress, reflecting unmet emotional needs while eroding the trust that sustains marital bonds.

The reviewed literature shows that infidelity transcends culture, class, and gender, though its causes and consequences differ across contexts. In collectivist societies like India, marriage is seen as a social institution, and infidelity carries deep stigma, particularly for women (Singh, 2018; Kapur, 2019). In contrast, individualistic cultures often justify it through emotional or sexual dissatisfaction (Glass, 2003; Mark et al., 2011). Emotional and communicative disconnect remains a recurring cause, intensified by work stress and digital accessibility, which blur traditional boundaries of fidelity (Gottman & Silver, 2012; Hertlein & Piercy, 2008).

In the Indian context, the decriminalisation of adultery in *Joseph Shine v. Union of India* (2018) has reframed infidelity from a criminal wrong to a moral and civil concern. While this judgment promotes gender equality and personal autonomy, it also underscores the need for psychosocial and institutional interventions instead of punitive measures (Tripathi, 2020). The legal system, therefore, must work in tandem with counselling services, social welfare agencies, and educational programs to promote awareness, emotional literacy, and relational ethics.

Preventive approaches discussed in this paper, such as emotional intelligence development, marital counselling, gender sensitisation, and digital boundary-setting, emphasise that the most sustainable way to prevent infidelity is through emotional education and relational skill-building. Marital fidelity must not be perceived merely as an obligation but as a mutual commitment to emotional well-being, transparency, and

shared responsibility.

Suggestions for Future Research

1. Cross-Cultural Studies

Comparative research between collectivist and individualist societies can clarify how social norms and family structures shape attitudes toward infidelity.

2. Gender Perspectives

Future work should examine how gender inequality and double standards influence the moral judgment and outcomes of infidelity.

3. Digital Infidelity

Studies are needed on the psychological and relational effects of cyber infidelity in the era of social media and virtual intimacy.

4. Post-Infidelity Recovery

Longitudinal research on therapy, forgiveness, and emotional healing can provide insights into marital recovery processes.

5. Legal and Policy Dimensions

Interdisciplinary studies should assess the impact of decriminalisation and explore ethical frameworks for family mediation.

6. Emotional Intelligence and Education

Empirical studies can evaluate how emotional intelligence and relationship education reduce marital conflict and infidelity.

Concluding Remarks

Infidelity among married couples is not merely a moral lapse but a complex behavior rooted in emotional needs, relational gaps, and changing social values. Though it causes pain and disillusionment, it also invites reflection and growth at both personal and societal levels. Building resilient marriages requires empathy, emotional literacy, and mutual respect rather than moral judgment. Ultimately, fostering open dialogue, gender equality, and access to counselling offers the most constructive way to address infidelity.

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PRESIDENTIAL REFERENCE NO. 1 OF 2025: BALANCING JUDICIAL REVIEW, EXECUTIVE DISCRETION AND CONSTITUTIONAL DIALOGUE

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Introduction

The *Presidential Reference No. 1 of 2025*, heard by a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court (CJI B.R. Gavai, and Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, P.S. Narasimha, and A.S. Chandurkar), represents a landmark moment in the jurisprudence of legislative assent under the Indian Constitution. The reference, made by President Droupadi Murmu under Article 143, asks the Court to clarify 14 questions regarding the powers of Governors under Article 200 and of the President under Article 201. At its heart lies a tension: to what extent can the judiciary impose timelines on constitutional actors without eroding their discretion and upsetting the separation of powers?

This comment would critically examine the Court's advisory opinion, its constitutional reasoning, and its broader implications for federalism, separation of powers, and constitutional dialogue.

Factual & Procedural Background

Tamil Nadu Governor's Case (April 2025)

On April 8, 2025, a two-judge bench (Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan) delivered a judgment in *State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu*¹, holding that the Governor must act on Bills within set time limits, one month for certain actions, and three months for others. The time limits were set to prevent indefinite withholding ("pocket veto") and furthermore, this judgement even introduced the doctrine of "deemed assent."

Presidential Reference (May 2025)

President Murmu on May 13, 2025 invoked Article 143(1) and referred 14 specific legal questions to the Supreme Court, challenging whether timelines imposed on Governors and the President are constitutionally valid, and whether the judgment relating to "deemed assent" are permissible.

Objections upon the Reference's Maintainability

Several states including Kerala and Tamil Nadu objected to the reference: Kerala argued that 11 of the 14 issues had already been settled by the April judgment, and that the reference suppressed that judgment. Tamil Nadu contended that the reference was in effect an appeal against the prior decision and was legally impermissible under Article 143.

Supreme Court's Role

The Constitution Bench clarified that it was acting in an *advisory* capacity and not as an appellate bench over the earlier division-bench ruling. The Court limited itself to answering the 14 constitutional questions posed and avoided reopening the prior decision wholly.

Judgment / Opinion (November 20, 2025)

The Court held that 'fixed judicial timeline' for Governors and the President to act on Bills would be constitutionally inappropriate. It emphasised the need for 'constitutional dialogue' rather than coercive judicial mandates. The Court reasoned that rigid deadlines would compromise the elasticity that the Constitution deliberately builds into the system, and that the role of the Governor/President is not a mere formality to be hurried.

Further, the Court rejected the concept of "deemed assent" (as used in earlier judgment) as incompatible with the constitutional scheme: usurping the role of the Governor or President via judicially fabricated constructs was, in its view, "antithetical ... to the doctrine of separation of powers."

Anatomisation of the Reference

Constitutional Role of Article 143 Reference

The Court correctly underscores that Article 143³ is not a substitute for appeal or review. Its decision to frame its engagement strictly within the 14 questions preserves the delicate balance. The bench had provided

interpretative guidance without undermining the binding force of earlier judgements or usurping the finality of its own past decisions. This restraint upholds judicial modesty and respects the constitutional scheme. By refusing to “open a Pandora’s box”, the bench has avoided destabilising constitutional certainty. However, it has also left unresolved the tension that ‘if a previous judgment causes systemic impracticalities, what is the appropriate mechanism for correction?’ The Court’s opinion suggests that Article 143 may not be the correct route for overruling, but this raises normative questions about review or curative mechanisms.

Separation of Powers and Elasticity

The Court’s insistence on constitutional elasticity is persuasive. Executive discretion is an intentional feature of Articles 200 and 201; compressing that discretion via rigid deadlines risks reducing constitutional offices to administrative post boxes. The Court’s reasoning respects the functional autonomy of Governors and the President, especially in the context of political deliberation, advice, and discretionary judgement. By advocating a mode of “constitutional dialogue,” the Court anchors its decision in cooperative federalism. Rather than compelling action through judicial fiat, it encourages governors, ministers, and Presidents to engage in reasoned deliberation. This model is more consistent with democratic norms and preserves the dignity and role of constitutional actors. However, the critics might argue that without enforceable timelines, there is a risk of continuing delay, especially when political actors may exploit discretion for partisan ends. The Court’s solution seems to rely on good faith and normative constraints rather than enforceable legal compulsion but whether that is practically effective remains to be tested.

Implications for Federalism

State governments, like Telangana, have argued that unchecked withholding (or reservation) of Bills subverts the legislature’s will. The Court’s refusal to impose timelines could be seen as strengthening the role of Governors (and indirectly, the Centre) in influencing legislation. To this challenge, the Court has emphasised on discretionary but

accountable exercise of power. Despite this, without hard timelines, there would always be a risk that executive actors delay action on controversial or politically inconvenient Bills. The Court’s approach shifts the remedy from judicial enforcement (mandamus) to political and public accountability, requiring more active oversight by state governments, legislatures, and civil society.

Doctrine of Deemed Assent

The Court’s repudiation of “deemed assent” is constitutionally sound. While the previous solution had attempted to prevent executive inaction from stalling the legislative process, it did so by rendering the Governor’s or President’s role hollow. The Court rightly warns that such an approach erodes the very separation of powers it sought to protect.

Without deemed assent, the question remains: how can legislative inertia or executive lethargy be checked? The Court’s opinion implicitly asks for stronger conventions, transparency, and accountability mechanisms, but does not prescribe hard legal remedies. Whether these safeguards would be effective in practice is uncertain.

Critique: Too Much Faith in ‘Good Faith’

The Court’s reliance on constitutional dialogue and discretionary exercise presumes a level of institutional maturity and political goodwill but that may not always exist. In politically charged contexts, the ‘discretionary delay’ could remain a tool for subversion.

The Bench has failed to answer the pressing issue of enforcement, if no timelines are imposed, and no “deemed assent” is allowed, what concrete mechanism would prevent long-term inaction? The Court could have recommended enhanced reporting requirements, mandatory explanation for delay, or even legislative-executive protocols. Moreover, by refusing to re-examine the correctness of the April decision, the Court leaves a normative tension unresolved. Will future benches or litigants interpret its advisory opinion as weakening or reinforcing the earlier timelines? Its advising position may be characterised by a lack of binding force, which may result in legal uncertainty.

Significance & Broader Implications

The Court’s decision is a reaffirmation of

constitutional modesty and collaborative federalism. Rather than usurp power from the executive, it encourages dialogue, thereby reinforcing democratic legitimacy. The judgement has reflected a self-aware judiciary that recognises its limits. It declines to convert advisory jurisdiction into appellate review, preserving the integrity of its earlier decisions while offering normative guidance.

Hopefully, this opinion is likely to shape how Governors and Presidents handle Bill assent going forward. It may encourage more proactive communication, clearer articulation of reasons for delay, and perhaps internal reforms to prevent unnecessary stalling. Also, the Court's approach could serve as a model for other democracies grappling with executive delay, balancing the need for accountability with respect for discretionary constitutional offices.

Conclusion

Presidential Reference No. 1 of 2025 is a pivotal case in India's constitutional jurisprudence. The Supreme Court's advisory opinion strikes a delicate balance: it rejects judicial overreach while insisting on accountability, preserves the discretion of constitutional functionaries while urging timely action, and reframes executive inaction as a matter for democratic engagement rather than coercive remedy.

While the Court's reliance on "dialogue" over deadlines is ambitious, its success will ultimately depend on the political and institutional will of Governors, Presidents, and legislatures to internalise the norms that the Court has articulated. The true test will not be the text of the judgment but its implementation.

Endnotes

1. *State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu*; 2025 INSC 481.
2. *Presidential Reference No. 1 of 2025*, Pg-78 Para-118.
3. Constitution of India.

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

COLLEGIATE ACTIVITIES

Poster Making Competition

The Legal Aid Cell of the University of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, organised a Poster Making Competition to highlight the importance of international law in maintaining peace and global order. The competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and encouraged creative expression on the theme “Peace Has Rules: Why International Law Matters.”

The event was held under the patronage of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, and the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, PURC, Ludhiana. The programme was efficiently coordinated by the Faculty Coordinators Dr. Vaishali Thakur and Dr. Homa Bansal, along with the Student Coordinators Sidharth Sharma (B.A. LL.B., 4th Semester) and Ritika Mahajan (B.A. LL.B., 4th Semester). A total of 16 students actively participated in the event.

The competition was judged by Dr. Rajni Bagga. The First Prize was awarded to Manjot Kaur (B.A. LL.B., 2nd Semester), while the Second Prize was secured by Simrandeep Kaur (B.A. LL.B., 4th Semester). Through such initiatives, the University of Laws, PURC, Ludhiana, reaffirms its commitment to promoting legal awareness, peace, and respect for international law.

Session on “Safeguarding Human Rights in the Era of Digital Transformation”

The Legal Aid Cell and Placement Cell, in collaboration with the Sardar Udham Singh Study Circle, successfully organized an informative session on “Safeguarding Human Rights in the Era of Digital Transformation” at Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana. The session saw active participation from 60 students and was held under the aegis of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and the able guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, PURC, Ludhiana.

The keynote address was delivered by Shri Priyank Kanoongo, Member, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and Former Chairperson, National Commission for

Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). Shri Kanoongo shared valuable insights on the impact of digital technologies on fundamental human rights, including privacy, data protection, digital surveillance, and protection of vulnerable groups, especially children. He emphasized the need for strong legal frameworks, responsible use of technology, and greater awareness among citizens to ensure technological advancement does not compromise human dignity and constitutional values. He also encouraged students to actively contribute to promoting digital ethics and human rights through legal awareness and advocacy.

The programme was efficiently coordinated by Dr. Vaishali Thakur, Dr. Rajni Bagga, and Mr. Vishal, along with Student Coordinators Gurnoor Kaur and Ishleen Kaur (B.A. LL.B., 4th Year). Faculty members and students actively participated in the interactive session following the lecture. The event concluded with a vote of thanks and a felicitation ceremony, expressing gratitude to the esteemed speaker for his enlightening address and for inspiring young legal minds.

“Think Before You Click.” Guest Lecture on the Importance of Cyber Safety and Digital Law

The University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, organised an online guest lecture on 31st January 2026 on the paramount importance of cyber safety and digital law, aptly titled “Think Before You Click.” The session was delivered by Dr. Ayush Saran, a renowned authority in Cyber Law and a Certified Internet Crime Investigator.

The lecture explored critical aspects of responsible digital engagement, highlighting the legal implications of online actions and the importance of maintaining a safe and secure digital presence. Dr. Saran’s comprehensive insights covered four key areas:

This session explores social media safety on platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter, financial protection against net banking and UPI fraud, defense against cyber

predators, and a clear understanding of IT rules governing the digital world.

The guest lecture served as a timely reminder of the significance of cyber security awareness in today's digitally interconnected world. By equipping participants with the knowledge and skills required to navigate the complexities of the digital landscape, the event contributed meaningfully to promoting a culture of cyber safety and digital responsibility. A total of 35 students attended the lecture.

The event was organised under the patronage of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, and Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana. It was meticulously coordinated by Dr Nisha Jindal, Faculty Coordinator, and Palak Garg, Student Coordinator.

Movie Screening of 'The Social Dilemma'

With the objective of fostering awareness about technology, online privacy, and cyber security, an informative short documentary Screening was organised for the students on 3rd February, 2026. Under the patronage of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor of Panjab University, and Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, Panjab University Panjab University Regional Centre Ludhiana. A special screening of the critically acclaimed documentary "The Social Dilemma" was held. The screening session was aimed to empower students with knowledge about the realities of the virtual world and equip them with the tools needed to navigate the digital space safely and responsibly. The documentary offered a compelling insight into how social media platforms influence behaviour, decision-making, mental health and privacy, while also highlighting the ethical challenges posed by modern technology. Through expert interviews and real-life examples, the film encouraged viewers to critically reflect on their usage on digital platforms. The event was meticulously organised by Dr. Nisha Jindal, Faculty Coordinator, and Palak Garg and Nandini Taank, Student Coordinators.

Guest Lecture on "Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage: Impact on Indian Social Structure."

The University Institute of Laws (UIL) at the Panjab University Regional Centre (PURC),

Ludhiana, organised a thought-provoking guest lecture titled "Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage: Impact on Indian Social Structure." The event featured Prof. (Dr.) Shiv Kumar Dogra, Director, UILS, Himachal Pradesh University, as a speaker.

Prof. (Dr.) Shiv Kumar Dogra provided a comprehensive analysis of the legal complexities surrounding marriage equality in the Indian context. The session served as a vital platform for students to broaden their understanding of how law acts as an instrument of social change, particularly regarding the evolving rights of the LGBTQ+ community.

The event was held under the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig: Vice-Chancellor of Panjab University and Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director of PURC Ludhiana, who emphasized the importance of hosting experts to bridge the gap between classroom theory and real-world legal evolution. The program was successfully coordinated by faculty members Dr. Vaishali Thakur and Dr. Nisha Jindal, with active assistance from student coordinators Palak Garg and Abhey Sharma.

Movie Screening of 'Newton'

The Election Literacy Cell organised a screening of the critically acclaimed film Newton on 20th February 2026 at the Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana. The initiative was aimed at enhancing electoral awareness and encouraging students to reflect upon the practical realities of democratic processes in India. The screening witnessed the participation of 76 students, who attended the event with keen interest and enthusiasm. The event served as a meaningful platform for students to understand that elections are not merely procedural exercises, but complex operations that demand courage, integrity, and dedication.

Under the patronage of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor of Panjab University, Chandigarh, and Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director of Panjab University Panjab University Regional Centre Ludhiana, the event was meticulously organized by Prof. (Dr.) Arti Puri, Dr. Neelam Batra and Ms. Tamanna Kohli and student coordinators,

Divya and Nandini Gupta, whose efficient coordination ensured the smooth and successful conduct of the screening. The programme concluded on a thoughtful note, leaving participants with a deeper appreciation of the complexities involved in conducting elections and reinforcing the spirit of responsible citizenship.

Essay Writing Competition

The University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, organised an Essay Writing Competition on 19th February 2026 to commemorate International Mother Language Day. The event was centred on the theme "Revisiting the Role of Mother Tongue in Twenty-First Century Education, encouraging students to reflect on the vital link between language and cultural heritage.

The competition was held under the aegis of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, and the able guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, PURC, Ludhiana. The event was meticulously coordinated by Faculty Coordinators Mr. Baldev Singh, Mrs. Shalini Verma, and Mr. Deepak Kumar, alongside Student Coordinators Gunitinder Kaur, Devanshi, and Geetanshu Mittal.

A total of 46 students participated in the competition, demonstrating exceptional linguistic and analytical skills. Participants were given 45 minutes to draft their essays in their preferred language-English, Hindi, or Punjabi.

Following a thorough evaluation of the entries, the first and second prizes were awarded in each language category as follows:

English Category

First Prize: Khushi Kohli (B.A. LL.B 4th Semester) Second Prize: Nobel Arya (B.A. LL.B 4th Semester)

Hindi Category

First Prize: Nivedita (B.A. LL.B 4th Semester) Second Prize: Gurnoor Kaur (B.A. LL.B 4th Semester)

Punjabi Category

First Prize: Tanisha Mittal (B.A. LL.B 4th Semester) Second Prize: Anushka (B.A. LL.B 2nd Semester)

Guest Lecture on Artificial Intelligence and Intellectual Property

The University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, under the aegis of Panjab University, successfully organised an insightful online guest lecture on the topic "Artificial Intelligence and Intellectual Property: New Frontiers & Legal Challenges" on February 19, 2026. The lecture was delivered by Prof. (Dr.) Lisa P. Lukose, Professor at the University School of Law and Legal Studies, GGSIPU, who is a distinguished academician and expert in the field of Intellectual Property Rights and emerging technologies.

During her lecture, Prof. Lukose elaborated on the growing impact of Artificial Intelligence on intellectual property laws, highlighting key issues such as authorship of AI-generated works, ownership rights, patentability of AI innovations, and the legal and ethical challenges arising from rapid technological advancement. She also emphasised the need for legal reforms and adaptive regulatory frameworks to address the complexities posed by Artificial Intelligence.

The event was held under the patronage of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, and Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, PURC Ludhiana, whose continuous support encourages academic excellence and exposure to contemporary legal issues. This event was attended by 38 students from PURC, Ludhiana. The programme was coordinated by Dr. Nisha Jindal, Faculty Coordinator, along with the student coordinators Manya Prajapati, Saurav Jain, and Palak Garg, whose dedicated efforts ensured the smooth conduct of the event.

The lecture proved to be highly informative and engaging for the students and faculty members, enhancing their understanding of the intersection between Artificial Intelligence and Intellectual Property Law. Such initiatives reflect the institute's commitment to promoting academic discourse on emerging legal challenges in the modern technological era.

Visit to India International Disputes Week

The University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana

participated in India International Disputes Week (Day 3) held on 9 March 2026 at the Open Hand Monument, within the premises of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana, Chandigarh, under the theme “Judicial Future & Institutional Design.”

The programme was organised under the aegis of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh and the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, ULS, PURC Ludhiana. Around 80 students from Panjab University participated in the event along with faculty members and legal professionals.

The session featured a panel of fifteen distinguished members chaired by Justice Jasgurpreet Singh Puri, Judge, High Court of Punjab and Haryana. It included an International Court Justice reenactment of the case *Nicaragua v. Colombia* (Continental Shelf Delimitation Case), followed by Panel 11: “Judges – Present and Future,” where experts discussed emerging trends in international adjudication.

The event was coordinated by Dr. Sarita Paul and Dr. Homa Bansal, with support from student coordinators Khushwinder (L.L.B. 2nd Semester), Ishu Thakur (L.L.B. 4th Semester), and Karamjot Singh Kalra (L.L.B. 4th Semester). The programme concluded successfully, reflecting the institution’s commitment to promoting legal scholarship and engagement with international law.

Seminar on International Women’s Day

The Legal Aid Cell of the University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre (PURC), Ludhiana, in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority, organised a seminar on the occasion of International Women’s Day on March 9, 2025.

The seminar was organised with the objective of spreading awareness about women’s rights, gender equality, and the importance of legal empowerment of women in society. The event witnessed active participation from students and faculty members who engaged in discussions on various legal and social issues concerning women.

The seminar was graced by Adv. Hariom Jindal and Pradeep Kapoor as the Guest Speakers. They shared their valuable insights on the

importance of legal awareness among women and highlighted the role of young law students in promoting justice and equality. They also emphasized the need to strengthen legal literacy so that women are aware of their rights and remedies available under the law. 66 students attended the same.

The programme was organised under the esteemed patronage of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, PURC, Ludhiana, whose continuous encouragement supports such meaningful academic initiatives.

The event was coordinated by the Faculty Co-ordinators Dr. Vaishali Thakur and Dr. Nisha Jindal, along with the Student Co-ordinators Muskan Jindal and Gunitinder, who played an important role in successfully organising the seminar.

The seminar concluded with an interactive session where students discussed contemporary challenges faced by women and the importance of legal awareness in ensuring gender justice.

TEDx PURC Ludhiana 2026

The third edition of TEDx PURC Ludhiana was held successfully at the Sohan Lal Pahwa Auditorium, Guru Nanak Dev Bhawan, Ludhiana, on 12 March 2026. The event was organized under the able guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, by Prof. (Dr.) Aman Amrit Cheema. The event was co-organised by Ms. Alina (B.A. LL.B. 8th Semester).

The event centred on the theme- अंतः अस्ती प्रारंभः The End is the Beginning, exploring the thought that when we shift our perspective, endings reveal themselves not as losses but as dynamic new beginnings.

With 100 students in attendance, the program commenced with a Lamp Lighting Ceremony to invoke blessings of the almighty, followed by PU Anthem. After which new pathways of thought were illuminated by our worthy Director in her address. The event witnessed distinguished speakers from diverse fields, with names like Ambassador Dr. Deepak Vohra, Mr. Simranjot Singh Makkar, Ms. Navjot Kaur, Dr. Vaibhav Mittal, Ms.

Jasmine Pahwa, and Ms. Gurnoor Chadda gracing the stage.

The event was successfully conducted with the dedicated efforts of the organizing committee members: Alina (Student Coordinator), Karan Punia, Sourav Sharma, Kalash Sen, Varnika Sharma, Sargam Singh Chauhan, Siddharth Dhiman, Karanvir Singh Sidhu, Shradha Sehgal, Rabia Sidhu, Nipun Sharma, Khushman Kaur Virk, Garima Bhambri, Gia Dhingra. The program concluded with a Vote of Thanks, followed by the National Anthem and High Tea.

6th National Moot Court Competition

The Moot Court Society of the University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, was successfully conducted from 16th to 18th March, 2026, bringing together law students from across the country for three days of rigorous legal debate and advocacy.

The competition commenced on 16th March 2026 with an inaugural ceremony, following the registration of 28 participating teams representing various universities and institutions. The event was held under the aegis of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig and under the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, with coordination by the Moot Court Society under the supervision of Dr. Vaishali Thakur. The first day also featured the Researcher's Test, designed to evaluate participants' legal research skills, analytical ability, and understanding of the moot proposition, setting a strong academic tone for the competition.

The second day witnessed intense courtroom simulations during the Preliminary Rounds, where all 28 teams presented arguments as both Prosecution and Defence before panels of distinguished academicians and legal professionals. The rounds tested participants on advocacy skills, legal reasoning, interpretation, and responsiveness to judicial queries. Based on cumulative scores, the top eight teams advanced to the Quarter-Final Rounds, followed by the selection of the top four teams for the Semi-Finals, reflecting the high level of competition and preparation among participants.

The competition culminated on 18th March

2026 with the Semi-Final and Final Rounds. The Final Round was contested between Team TC 610 and Team TC 601 before an esteemed panel comprising Justice M. S. Chauhan as Chief Guest, along with Guests of Honour Prof. (Dr.) Deepak Kumar Chauhan and Prof. (Dr.) Runa Mehta Thakur. The finalists displayed exceptional clarity, composure, and command over legal principles, making the round highly engaging. The Valedictory Ceremony marked the conclusion of the event, where the winning team from National Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar—comprising Anagha TK, Nakuldev Singh Rathore, and Ujjwal—was felicitated, while the runner-up team from Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University, Andhra Pradesh, comprising S. Phanitawya Soumya Lakshmi, Adithya Raju Kurup, and Jahnavi Guttla, was also honoured. Individual awards were presented for Best Speaker (S. Phanitawya Soumya Lakshmi), Best Researcher (Aryaa Hoon), and Best Memorial (Srishti, Sarshaar Verma, and Himanshi).

The competition concluded on a celebratory note, providing participants with invaluable exposure to courtroom advocacy and enriching their legal acumen through a highly competitive and intellectually stimulating experience.

Trip to Darjeeling & Shillong

University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana organized an excursion trip to Darjeeling and Shillong from 20th March to 28th March, 2026. A total of 81 students participated in the trip. It turned out to be an amazing retreat for the students where they got to learn about the rich culture and history of the North East. It was organized under the patronship of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, the Vice-Chancellor of Panjab University, and under the able guidance of the Director of PURC Ludhiana, Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk.

Students kicked off their Himalayan expedition with a scenic drive from NJP to Darjeeling, where they witnessed a breathtaking sunrise over Mt. Kanchenjunga at Tiger Hill and explored cultural landmarks like Ghoom Monastery and the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute. The journey

transitioned through the landscapes of Mirik toward Shillong, featuring a stop at the tranquil Umiam Lake and an afternoon soaking in the dramatic views of Laitlum Canyon and the energy of Police Bazar. The trip concluded in Guwahati with a spiritual visit to the historic Kamakhya Temple before a final departure from the railway station, leaving the group with a lifetime of unforgettable memories.

The Student Coordinators Chetan Sharma (DR), Karandeep Singh Punia, Sourav Sharma, and Karanvir Singh Sidhu ensured a smooth relationship between the students and streamlining the process for a better experience. Faculty Members Dr. Sarita Paul, Dr. Homa Bansal, and Mr. Vishal Saklani accompanied the students on the trip.

NSS ACTIVITIES

Session on AI-Driven Legal Technologies

During National Youth Week, the NSS Unit of Panjab University Regional Centre (PURC), Ludhiana, successfully organised an informative session on “AI-Driven Legal Technologies” on 20th January 2026, with the objective of creating awareness among students about the growing role of artificial intelligence in the legal profession. A total of 60 students participated in the session. The event was conducted under the aegis of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and the able guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, PURC, Ludhiana.

The session highlighted the transformative role of AI in legal research, case management, contract analysis, compliance, and judicial processes. The lecture was delivered by Mr Ritesh Singhania, Assistant Information Technology Officer at the Punjab Bureau of Investigation, along with Mr Sumeet Singh, Mr Simranjeet Singh, and Ms Jaitey, who shared valuable insights into the practical application of artificial intelligence in the legal and investigative domains. The resource persons elaborated on various AI-based legal tools and platforms that assist lawyers and law students in enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and access to justice.

The programme was coordinated by Dr Meera Nagpal (Programme Coordinator) and Mrs

Sumanpreet Kaur, along with the Student Coordinators Gurnoor Kaur (B.A. LL.B., 8th Semester) and Dhruvak Garcha (B.A. LL.B., 6th Semester), ensuring the smooth and successful organisation of the event.

Students actively participated in the session and raised insightful questions regarding the impact of AI on traditional legal practices and employment opportunities. The interactive discussion enabled participants to gain a broader perspective on the increasing interconnection between technology and law.

Republic Day with Awareness on Fundamental Rights

To mark Republic Day, the NSS Unit of Panjab University Regional Centre (PURC), Ludhiana, organized a day-long event, themed “The Heart of the Republic: Fundamental Rights” The initiative aimed to sensitize students and the public about constitutional safeguards and the importance of individual liberties.

Held under the aegis of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, PURC, Ludhiana, the day began with a Poster Making Competition at the PURC campus. Students demonstrated creativity through watercolours, sketches, and digital concepts, depicting the struggles and triumphs of constitutional rights, each poster accompanied by a slogan or legal justification. The initiative continued at a nearby Community Park, where students conducted a public awareness drive, engaging walkers, families, and youth groups in discussions about the practical relevance of Fundamental Rights and the role of youth in upholding democratic values.

The programme was efficiently coordinated by Dr. Meera Nagpal (Programme Coordinator) and Mr. Baldev Singh, with Student Coordinators Sukrit Bassi (B.A. LL.B., 10th Semester) and Manmeet Kaur (B.A. LL.B., 6th Semester). Through this initiative, PURC students demonstrated that the Heart of the Republic beats strongest when citizens are aware, engaged, and legally empowered.

Day Camp for Improvement of the Status of Women

The NSS Unit of Panjab University Regional Centre (PURC), Ludhiana, organized a Day

Camp for the Improvement of the Status of Women at Village Sunet, District Ludhiana. The initiative aimed to promote respect, equality, and dignity for women through community outreach and awareness activities. The programme was conducted under the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, PURC, Ludhiana.

The day camp engaged NSS volunteers in meaningful interactions with local residents, including women and families, to understand social conditions and challenges faced by women. Various awareness-based activities were conducted to encourage positive attitudes toward gender equality. The central theme of the programme, *"When Women Rise, Society Rises,"* emphasized the importance of collective efforts in improving the status of women at the grassroots level. NSS volunteers also took a pledge to reaffirm their commitment to gender equality and the protection of women's rights.

The event was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Meera Nagpal, NSS Programme Coordinator, with the support of Faculty Coordinator Ms. Banveer Kaur Jhinger and NSS volunteers Mayank Gupta and Haritik Puri (B.A. LL.B., 4th Semester). The coordinated efforts of the NSS team ensured the smooth execution of the programme, including the distribution of refreshments. The day camp successfully reinforced the commitment of NSS volunteers and PURC, Ludhiana, to empowering women and promoting social awareness in the community.

Debate Competition to commemorate Martyrs Day

The NSS Unit of Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana organised a Debate Competition on 4th February, 2026 to observe Martyrs' Day and commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary under the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, and Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director. The theme, "Is Gandhian Advocacy: From Satyagraha to Social Service Still Relevant to the Responsibilities of Today's Youth?" encouraged reflection on non-

violence, ethics, and social responsibility. Sixteen NSS volunteers participated, presenting well-reasoned arguments, while 60 students attended as audience. Judges Adv. Vandana Bhanot and Mr. Deepak Kumar evaluated performances based on content, clarity, confidence, originality, and rules. Khushi Kohli secured first position, followed by Paarvi Verma and Gunitinder Kaur. The event was organised under Dr. Meera Nagpal and Mr. Deepak Kumar with student coordinators' support, the competition successfully promoted critical thinking, civic awareness, and appreciation of Gandhian values.

Tree Plantation Drive

The NSS Unit of Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, organised a Tree Plantation Drive on 10th February, 2026, serving as a meaningful step towards environmental conservation and reinforcing the importance of afforestation in combating climate change and in preserving biodiversity. The Tree Plantation Drive was conducted under the aegis of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and the able guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, whose continued support has been instrumental in promoting academic and value-based initiatives at the Centre.

Through the successful organization of the Tree Plantation Drive, NSS volunteers participated enthusiastically by planting a variety of saplings. A total of 60 volunteers actively participated in the drive, contributing wholeheartedly and organically to the cause of environmental sustainability.

The Tree Plantation Drive was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Meera Nagpal, NSS Programme Coordinator, and Faculty Coordinators Mr. Deepak Kumar and Mr. Baldev Singh, along with the active support of student coordinators Nandini Gupta, Mayank Gupta, and Paarvi Verma. Their coordinated efforts ensured the smooth organization and successful execution of the event. Refreshments were also provided as part of the programme arrangements.

Health Awareness Programme

The NSS Unit of University Institute of Laws,

Panjab University Regional Centre (PURC), Ludhiana, organized an Educational Programme on February 19, 2026. The event was conducted at Bal Bhawan, Sarabha Nagar, Ludhiana with the objective of empowering young minds through education, care, and meaningful interaction. The programme was conducted under the aegis of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and under the able guidance of the Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana.

The programme witnessed active participation of approximately 60 volunteers, who actively interacted with the children residing at Bal Bhawan. Various activities were conducted, including Moral storytelling, English and vocabulary exercises, Mathematics and Gk questions, Drawing and colouring activity, Public speaking and talent showcasing and Fun interactive games. Awareness sessions on personal hygiene and good habits were also conducted. The children participated enthusiastically and expressed immense joy throughout the programme.

The NSS volunteers voluntarily donated food items, clothes and other essentials which brought smiles and happiness to the children. The programme further included a visit to children with hearing and speech impairments, where volunteers engaged them in fun activities, interacted with them and learned about their daily lives.

The Educational programme was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Meera Nagpal, NSS Programme coordinator and Faculty coordinator, Mr. Deepak Kumar, along with the active support of Student coordinators Ishleen Kaur, Nandini Gupta, Haritik Puri. Their coordinated efforts ensured the smooth conduct and successful execution of the event. Refreshments were also provided as part of the programme arrangements.

Cleanliness Drive at P.U Extension Library

The NSS Unit of Panjab University Regional Centre (PURC), Ludhiana, organised a Cleanliness Drive at the Panjab University Extension Library on 2nd March, 2026 to promote cleanliness, discipline, and environmental awareness among students.

The programme was conducted under the esteemed aegis of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, and the Director, PURC, Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk. The initiative aimed at fostering a sense of civic responsibility and maintaining a clean and organised academic environment within the campus. During the drive, NSS volunteers actively participated in cleaning the library premises and systematically arranging books on the shelves to ensure proper organisation and accessibility. The volunteers worked with great enthusiasm and dedication, contributing towards the upkeep and better management of the Extension Library.

The programme was conducted under the guidance of NSS Programme Co-ordinator, Dr. Meera Nagpal, and Faculty Co-ordinator, Mrs. Banveer Kaur Jhinger. The Student Co-ordinators, Haritik Puri (4th Semester B.A. LL.B) Mayank Sharma (4th Semester B.A. LL.B) and Gourav Samra (4th Semester B.A. LL.B) efficiently supervised and coordinated the activities of the volunteers throughout the drive.

Cleanliness Drive at Haibowal Village

The NSS Unit of University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, organised a Cleanliness Drive at Village Haibowal slums near Budha Nala, Ludhiana, under the banner of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. The programme was organised under the patronage of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, PURC, Ludhiana, whose encouragement inspired students to actively participate in community service.

The initiative aimed to promote environmental awareness, civic responsibility, and the importance of cleanliness among students and the local community. During the drive, NSS volunteers enthusiastically participated in cleaning the surroundings of Budha Nala spreading awareness regarding hygiene, waste management, and environmental protection. The activity reflected the true spirit of the Swachh Bharat Mission and reinforced the message that "Cleanliness is the architecture of discipline."

The drive was coordinated by Dr. Meera

Nagpal, NSS Programme Coordinator, along with Faculty Coordinators Mrs. Banveer Kaur Jhinger and Mrs. Sumanpreet Kaur. The Student Co-ordinators, Shruti, Divroop Kaur, and Pamelpreet Kaur, effectively assisted in organising and managing the NSS volunteers. The event concluded successfully with active student participation, highlighting the commitment of the NSS Unit towards environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and community engagement.

Sanitary Pad Distribution Drive to Mark International Women's Day

To commemorate International Women's Day, the NSS Unit of Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana organised a Sanitary Pad Distribution Drive on 13th March 2026 at the slums around the bus stand, with the objective of promoting menstrual hygiene awareness and supporting women's health and dignity at the grassroots level.

The programme was organised under the esteemed guidance of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Prof. Renu Vig, and under the aegis of the Director, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk.

As part of the drive, 20 NSS volunteers distributed sanitary pads to women and adolescent girls residing in the slum areas near the bus stand and interacted with them to spread awareness about menstrual hygiene, safe health practices, and the importance of breaking the silence around menstruation. The volunteers sensitised the participants about the adverse health effects of unhygienic menstrual practices and encouraged them to adopt hygienic and dignified menstrual care.

The sanitary pad drive was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Meera Nagpal (NSS Programme Coordinator) and Ms. Banveer Kaur Jhinger (Faculty Coordinator), with the active support of Hritik Puri 4th Semester B.A. LL.B, Paarvi 4th Semester B.A. LL.B and Khushi Kohli 4th Semester B.A. LL.B (Student Co-coordinators) and dedicated NSS volunteers of the unit. The collective efforts of the NSS team ensured the smooth and successful execution of the programme.

Documentary Screening of "The Man Who Dwarfed the Mountains"

The NSS Unit of the University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana organized an NSS meeting and documentary screening on 11th March 2026 in the Seminar Hall. The programme was conducted under the aegis of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and under the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana.

The documentary "The Man Who Dwarfed the Mountains" highlighted the inspiring journey of environmentalist Chandi Prasad Bhatt and the Chipko Movement, emphasizing community participation in forest conservation. Around 50 students attended the programme and actively participated in an interactive session after the screening, sharing their reflections through poems, speeches, and short presentations on environmental protection and sustainable development.

The event was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Meera Nagpal, NSS Programme Coordinator, and Mr. Deepak Kumar, Faculty Coordinator, with the support of student coordinators Ishleen Kaur and Divroop. The programme proved to be an informative and inspiring session for the volunteers.

Visit to Martyr Sukhdev Thapar Memorial

A visit to the ancestral house of Sukhdev Thapar located in Sandeep Nagar, Ludhiana, was organized on 24th March, 2026 by the University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre (PURC), Ludhiana on the occasion of Shahid Diwas to commemorate the supreme sacrifices of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev. The visit aimed to instil a sense of patriotism, historical awareness, and respect for the sacrifices made by these freedom fighters. The programme was conducted under the esteemed guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, and Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, PURC Ludhiana. The event was coordinated by Faculty Coordinator Ms. Tamanna Kohli, whose efforts ensured the smooth organization and meaningful execution of the visit.

A total number of 33 students were taken as a part of this visit. The visit was further supported by the active involvement of student coordinators Khushi Kohli, Mayank Gupta, and Tanisha (B.A. LLB, 4th Semester). Their dedicated coordination facilitated effective participation and engagement of the students throughout the programme. A significant highlight of the visit was the interaction with Sandeep Thapar, a descendant of Sukhdev Thapar and Trustee Member of the Sukhdev Thapar Memorial, who shared valuable insights into the life, legacy, and sacrifices of the martyr. Additionally, Eshaan Thapar, another descendant currently pursuing a career in the field of law also enriched the session with his perspectives, making it more relatable and inspiring for the students.

To make the experience more engaging and impactful, an enactment depicting the life and sacrifice of Sukhdev Thapar was performed by Priya Dhingra and Anushka (B.A. LL.B., 1st Year). The performance was deeply moving and effectively conveyed the spirit of patriotism and courage. The visit proved to be highly fruitful and enlightening and encouraged the students to reflect upon the values of courage, sacrifice, and national pride. The programme concluded on a meaningful note, leaving a lasting impression on all participants and reinforcing the importance of remembering and honouring the nation's heroes.

ACHIEVEMENTS

UIL Student Excels at YAMS Disaster Management Training

Priya Dhingra of B.A. LL.B 2nd Semester, an NSS Volunteer of Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, successfully attended a seven-day Yuva Aapda Mitra Scheme (YAMS) Camp held at Guru Nanak Dev Bhawan from 28th January 2026 to 3rd February 2026. The camp witnessed enthusiastic participation from around 232 volunteers from across Punjab.

During the camp, she received comprehensive training in disaster management and emergency response skills, including First Aid, CPR, earthquake safety measures, fire safety, rescue techniques, and basic emergency

response procedures. The Programme aimed at equipping youth volunteers with practical knowledge and preparedness skills to effectively respond during natural and man-made disasters.

Out of 232 participants, Priya Dhingra was among the six selected candidates who were chosen to deliver a training lecture on 13th February 2026 to NYKS volunteers from Uttarakhand. Her selection for this responsibility is a matter of pride for the institution and highlights her dedication, leadership qualities, and commitment towards community service.

The Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, congratulates her on this remarkable achievement and wishes her continued success in her future endeavours.

N.J.Y Memorial International Moot Court Competition, 2026

The University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, proudly celebrates the outstanding achievement of its student. Ms. Khushbu Chadha, a B.A. LL.B. (4th Semester), secured the Best Speaker award at the moot court competition held at ICFAI Law School, The ICFAI University, Dehradun, on 7–8 February 2026.

Our brilliant students Ms. Khushbu Sharma (B.A. LL.B., 6th Semester), Ms. Khushbu Chadha (B.A. LL.B., 4th Semester), and Ms. Ritika Mahajan (B.A. LL.B., 4th Semester) demonstrated exceptional advocacy skills and remarkable legal acumen, distinguishing themselves among 64 competing teams in an international-level competition, including teams from National Law Universities and other reputed institutions.

Her commendable performance earned her the prestigious Best Speaker trophy and certificate, along with a cash prize of ₹5,000. This success is a testament not only to their tireless dedication and hard work but also to the valuable mentorship and guidance provided by our Director, Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk. The institute proudly applauds this achievement, which adds yet another feather to the cap of UIL, Ludhiana, and serves as an inspiration to all aspiring advocates. Heartiest congratulations to the team for bringing

laurels to the institution.

UIL Students Excel at Panjab University Inter-College Cycling Championship 2025–2026.

Under the distinguished leadership of Prof. (Dr.) Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor of Panjab University, and Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director of the Panjab University Regional Centre (PURC), Ludhiana, we are pleased to announce the outstanding achievements of our students at the Panjab University Inter-College Cycling Championship 2025–2026.

Danishveer Singh Heher, a 4th Semester LL.B. student at the University Institute of Laws, PURC Ludhiana, delivered a commendable performance by securing a Bronze Medal in the Individual Sprint event. His success highlights a high level of technical proficiency and competitive drive.

In the collective categories, the institution also achieved significant success:

- Team Sprint (1 km): Danishveer Singh Heher, Chaitanya Vashishiat, and Abhijai Singh Rana earned a Bronze Medal.
- Team Pursuit (4 km): The quartet of Danishveer Singh Heher, Chaitanya Vashishiat, Abhijai Singh Rana, and Karamjot Singh Kalra represented the college with distinction, exhibiting exceptional endurance and synergy.

These accolades serve as a testament to the discipline and athletic excellence fostered at our institution. We extend our heartiest congratulations to the athletes and wish them continued success in their future pursuits.

9th H.S. Mattewal National Moot Court Competition RBUSL Moot Court Competition 2026

A team representing the University Institute of Laws, Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, comprising Jessica (B.A. LL.B., 10th Semester), Khushi Aggarwal (B.A. LL.B., 10th Semester), and Abhijai Singh Rana (LL.B., 4th Semester), secured the Runner-Up position at the H.S. Mattewal National Moot Court Competition 2026 (9th RBUSL Moot Court).

The competition, held from 27–28 March 2026 and organized by Rayat Bahra University, Mohali, witnessed participation from 41 teams across the country. The team's remarkable performance reflects their strong advocacy skills, legal acumen, and dedication.

The achievement was accomplished under the guidance and support of Director Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk and MCS Faculty Coordinator Dr. Vaishali Thakur, whose mentorship played a significant role in the team's success.

The institute takes immense pride in this accomplishment and congratulates the team for bringing laurels to the university.

3rd IILM Moot Court Competition

The University Institute of Law (UIL), Panjab University Regional Centre, Ludhiana, is proud to announce the monumental victory of its student team at the 3rd IILM Moot Court Competition, recently concluded at IILM University, Greater Noida.

Outshining a massive field of 78 teams from across India including premier National Law Universities and elite private institutions the UIL team emerged as the Overall Winners of the prestigious competition.

The victorious team comprised:

Ms. Khushbu Sharma (B.A. LL.B., 6th Semester)

Ms. Ritika Mahajan (B.A. LL.B., 4th Semester)

Ms. Khushbu Chadha (B.A. LL.B., 4th Semester)

Their exceptional display of legal research, persuasive advocacy, and mastery over complex legal nuances earned them the top honors and a significant cash prize of ₹71,000. The team's performance throughout the various rounds was marked by a sophisticated understanding of the law and a sharp ability to tackle grueling queries from the bench.

This grand success is a testament to the students' unwavering dedication and the academic excellence fostered at UIL. The team credits this achievement to their tireless preparation and the constant mentorship provided by Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk, Director, UIL, whose guidance has been instrumental in shaping the competitive spirit of the students. The Institute celebrates this historic win, which further solidifies UIL Ludhiana's position as a powerhouse of legal education in the country. We extend our heartiest congratulations to Khushbu Sharma, Ritika Mahajan, and Khushbu Chadha for their stellar performance and for bringing such immense laurels to the institution.

My Bharat Budget Quest 2026 – Virtual Dialogue with the Hon'ble Prime Minister

Priya Dhingra, student of B.A. LL.B., 2nd

Semester student and NSS Volunteer from Panjab University Regional Centre Ludhiana, successfully participated in My Bharat Budget Quest 2026, a national-level virtual dialogue with the Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Out of over 12 lakh participants nationwide, she progressed through multiple stages to be among the 15,000 shortlisted candidates for the final round. Representing Punjab as an NSS volunteer, she attended the event held on 12th–13th April at University Institute of Engineering and Technology, Panjab University.

The programme featured an All-Women's Mock Parliament on the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, panel discussions on Women-led Development, Human Capital, and Education & Skill Training, along with cultural performances. Accommodation and logistics were efficiently managed at National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training and Research.

FACULTY INFORMATION

I. Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Virk

Guest Lectures:

- Address as Keynote Speaker at International Conference on “Environmental Laws and Sustainable Development: Social Consequences of Recent Legal Changes”, organized by Lala Hansraj College of Laws, Sirsa, Haryana, on March 19, 2026.
- Address as Chief Guest at International Conference on “Impact of Social Media on Mental Health of Students”, organized by Guru Nanak Khalsa College for Women, Ludhiana, on March 14, 2026.
- Invited Lecture as Resource Person on “Womanhood at the Crossroads: Emerging Vulnerabilities and Ethics of Wisdom”, on ‘Nari Shakti: A Stage for Empowerment’ organized by Vivekananda Global University, Jaipur, on March 9, 2026.
- Address as Chief Guest on Annual Athletic Meet organized by PU Constituent College, Karyal, Dharamkot, Moga on March 6, 2026.
- Address as Resource Person on National Seminar on Law and Social Transformation in India, organized by Shri N.S. Patel Law College, Modasa, Gujarat on February 28, 2026.

Publications:

- “Climate Change and Health Sector Vulnerability”, Lawyers Update (Law & Justice Publishing House), Vol XXXII, Part 2, February 2026.
- “The Invisible Impact of Photo-Tourism and the Urgent Need to Regulate Light Pollution: A Curious Case Study of Galaxy Frogs”, India Legal, Vol. XIX, Issue 13, February 2, 2026.
- “Deforestation as Climate Harm: Climate Change Litigation and the Road to Recognize Ecocide”, Lawyers Update (Law & Justice Publishing House), Vol XXXII, Part 1, January 2026.

II. Prof. (Dr.) Aman Amrit Cheema

Guest Lectures:

- Lecture as Resource Person: “Viksit Bharat @ 2047: Need for social and inclusive

progression via strengthening educational laws and policies”, National Seminar on Governance and Development: Looking Forward to 2047 Goal, organised by Saint Soldier Law College, Jalandhar, 28th March 2026.

- Lecture as Chief Guest: “Law as a Mechanism of Social Transformation: Role of Constitutional and Legislative Enactments”, National Conference On law and social transformation in India, organized by Shri NS Patel law college mudasa, Gujarat, 28th February 2026.

Publications:

- Resurrecting the Dead Through Algorithms: Erosion of Dignity and Consent, Lawyers Update, Vol. XXXII, Part 2, February 2026, pp. 36-38.

Paper Presentation:

- Digital Divide and the Failure of SDG 4: A Doctrinal Study of Educational Access Among Tribal Communities in India, National Conference on Revisiting Indigenous and Tribal Rights: State Policy, Vulnerability and Epistemic Justice, organized by the Department of Law, School of Legal Studies, Central University of Kerala, Kerala, April 24, 2026.

Presided over as Judge in Moot Courts:

- 3rd DBRNLU National Moot Court Competition, 2026, organized by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar National Law University, Sonapat and National Human Rights Commission on March 14, 2026.

III. Dr. Pooja Sikka

Guest lecture:

- Invited as the Resource Person to deliver the session on “Union Budget 2026: From Policy Intent to Ground Reality” organized by the Modren College of Education (for Girls) Shergarh Cheema on 11 February 2026.
- Invited as the Resource Person at the DCDC-sponsored One Day National Seminar on “Balancing Growth and Sustainability: Structural Shift in the Economy of Punjab” organized by the Department of Economics in collaboration

with IQAC at Guru Nanak College Killianwali on 20 February 2026.

- Delivered the prestigious Dr. Manmohan Singh Memorial Extension Lecture on the topic “Geo-Economic Crisis and Status of Indian Economic Policy” at Malwa Central College of Education for Women, Ludhiana on 24 March 2026.

Paper Presentation:

- Presented a research paper titled “Punjab as a Global Economic Shock Absorber: Migrant Labour, Remittance Networks and the Moral Economy of Sarbat Da Bhalla” at the National Conference on “Development Dynamics of Punjab and the World Economy” organized by the P.G. Department of Economics, A.S. College, Khanna, in association with the Dr. B.S. Minhas Memorial Forum and Society for Development Studies on 21 January 2026.
- Presented a research paper titled “Structure Transformation and Development Patterns in Punjab Economy” in the National Seminar on “Contemporary Trends in Multidisciplinary Research: Sustainability, Challenges and Strategies” organized by A.S. College Khanna on 31 January 2026.
- Presented a research paper titled “Promoting Economic Growth through Effective Drug Abuse Prevention” in One day National Seminar on “Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life” organized by Bhagwan Shri Krishan College of Education, Sirsa on 7 March 2026.

IV. Dr. Nisha Jindal

Paper Publication:

- Presented a paper titled “Punishment And Justice: Exploring Retribution in the Criminal Justice System” in TIJER - International Research Journal, published in Volume 13, Issue 1, January 2026, with Co-Author Ms Nandini.
- Presented a research paper titled “Tourism in a Warming World: Between Climate Vulnerability and Sustainable Development” at the 2nd International Conference on Multidisciplinary Approaches for Sustainable Development (ICMASD-2026), organized by the

Research & Development Cell, CT University, Ludhiana, held on 27th–28th February 2026.

Presided over as Judge in Moot Courts:

- 5th Dr. B.R. Ambedkar National Moot Court Competition, 2026, organized by the School of Law, CT University, as Judge, from April 2–4, 2026.



Editor

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