

Research and FDP Committee's First Discussion Forum

Date: January 13, 2021

Time: 6:00-7:00 pm

Platform: Microsoft Teams

Topic: Biomedical Waste

Organiser: Research and FDP Committee

Moderator: Siddhi Sahoo, BBA LLB 2018-23

Time-Keeper: Deepak Surana, BA LLB 2018-23

The Research and FDP Committee of School of Law, NMIMS, Navi Mumbai successfully organised its first “intellectual salon” discussion forum on January 13, 2021. The forum was held on Microsoft Teams in lieu of the pandemic and saw the attendance and participation of students from all three batches at School of Law. About 15 students participated and Prof. Megha



Ojha was in attendance along with Prof. Preethi Kavilikatta.

An introductory welcome note was delivered by Committee Member Niharika Ravi from the second year who spoke about the Committee's vision of the discussion forum and welcomed the young moderator to take the stage.

The panel was moderated by first year student Siddhi Sahoo and the event was organised under Faculty In-Charge Prof. Preethi Kavilikatta. The topic for discussion was “Biomedical Waste” and the health impacts of the unethical disposal of the same and the laws and legislations regarding it were discussed.



Nivruthi Pasupunuri from the second year raised points on contagious waste, laws and loopholes, equality and safai karmacharis' access to COVID protection and vaccines, sustainable alternatives to reduce biomedical waste, and implementation of international



conventions. On similar lines, Gul Zehra from the third year spoke in great detail about the BASEL convention, WHO guidelines, Supreme Court guidelines for collection, and also put forth the fact that biomedical waste is not fertiliser and that

animals like cows may eat the garbage, causing circular transmission of disease back to humans.

Meera Shah and Rajveer Sharma from the first year spoke in great detail of the likelihood of contracting AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis, and other such diseases due to irresponsible disposal of medical waste. Meera Shah pointed out that incineration may be as dangerous as filling landfills as it releases harmful toxins and carcinogens among other chemicals. Rajveer Sharma particularly pointed out that large hospitals in cities like Mumbai make it a rule to dispose waste responsibly, and it may be the smaller hospitals that are the root of these problems.

Shivani Singh, Apoorva Sharma, and Rajshri Shrivastava contributed substantially to the discussion with well-researched statistics. Shivani cited a case study from the Philippines to further the discussion on incineration of hazardous materials and Rajshri immediately countered by shedding light on the good impact of incineration, stressing on responsibility to be taken up by all stakeholders. Apoorva added that 66% of rag pickers reported harmful cuts and injuries due to their work which they continued during the pandemic with minimal gear and scope for affordable treatment upon infection.

Anushka Singh from the first year highlighted that the material being used presently to fight the "invisible enemy" was designed as use-and-throw and spoke of 'Plaxtil', a startup that invests itself in recycling used masks in a hygienic and sustainable manner.

The conversation came to a close with Prof. Preethi Kavilikatta stressing on the fact that the State must be held responsible for sponsoring masks, PPE kits, and treatment to those who cannot afford it, and especially to the safai karmacharis and frontline workers who have worked tirelessly on the ground throughout the pandemic.

A vote of thanks was delivered by Committee Member Poushali Chakraborty of the third year. She acknowledged the contributions of various committee members and thanked the participants for attending.