

Equality and Inclusion

The Research and FDP Committee of the School of Law at NMIMS Navi Mumbai is a spirited association with a proclivity for the process of finding sustainable solutions to rights issues. The Committee organises periodic open forums for discussion in pursuance of this goal, however, the need for expert inputs was felt come time to discuss Queer Rights. It was hence that the Committee instituted “**Equality and Inclusion 2021**” in collaboration with SAATHII (Solidarity and Action Against The HIV Infection in India) to discuss two issues in relation to Queer Rights: Inclusion of Queer Persons in Educational Spaces and Legalising Queer Marriage in India. The event was held on June 19 and 20, 2021 in honour of the ongoing Pride Month.

The esteemed guests- Dr. Sai Subasree Raghavan, Dr. L. Ramakrishnan, Adv. Suraj Sanap, Ms. Rachel Yassky, and Mr. Leo Ganguly are national and international thought leaders and trailblazers in the LGBTQIA+ movement. These individuals have worked with the queer community at the grassroots level, contributed gainfully to the decriminalisation of homosexuality in India, and continue to be an active part of the Gender, Sexual, and Romantic Minorities’ socio-legal journey towards Equality & Inclusion. Dr. L. Ramakrishnan and Adv. Suraj Sanap have been deeply involved in the queer community’s fight for legal rights and are known for their contributions to the 2021 S.Sushma Judgment from the Madras High Court and the 2018 Navtej Singh Johar Judgment from the Supreme Court of India respectively.

The speakers from SAATHII, some having extensive experience in the educational aspects of queer inclusion and rights, discussed their observations and impart wisdom on LGBTQIA+ inclusion in educational spaces on the first day, June 19, 2021. They also delivered a primer on LGBTQIA+ jargon to sensitise students and ponder over measures that could be taken to make campuses and e-campuses more inclusive. While one of the speakers shared a personal account of facing bullying in college times, students from School of Law, NMIMS shared anonymous accounts of their experiences being queer individuals in educational spaces.

On June 20, the speakers engaged in a robust discussion on legalising queer marriage in India, and put forth their thoughts on constitutional developments, personal law conflicts, and other emerging issues relevant to the socio-legal discourse on queer marriage in India. An aim of this discussion was to discover whether queer marriage must be prioritised over a comprehensive anti-discrimination law in India at this time, or whether such a law shall, *ipso facto*, include non-discrimination in terms of marriage equality.