

## **Press Report: 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2021**

### **Focus Group Discussion: Curriculum Development on Climate Change Policy and Law**

Symbiosis Law School Pune, a constituent of Symbiosis International (Deemed University) organised a Focus Group Discussion on the topic 'Curriculum Development on Climate Change Policy and Law' on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 10:30 AM IST. The panelists participated in the discussion included academicians, experts, researchers and students of environmental law and climate change law. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was organised in furtherance of the deliverables under the Eurasia Climate Change, Law and Policy Project.

The session commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Shashikala Gurpur, *Fulbright Scholar*, Director, SLSP, Dean Faculty of Law, Jean Monnet Chair Professor in EU Climate Justice Law, Governance, Management and Policy. Dr. Gurpur before introducing the theme of the FGD, gave a brief background of the EU Project on Climate Change. She also discussed the findings of the desk research and the prospective deliverables under it. One of the chief deliverable of the project is to prepare a curriculum on climate change policy and law at the post-graduate level. Dr. Gurpur explained the purpose of the FGD is to seek expert views on the existing curriculum on climate change. Also it strives to identify probable components of prospective balanced educational programme on the climate change law and policy. After this brief overview of the FGD objectives, Dr. Gurpur opened the floor for discussion.

Prof. Anil Gupta, *Program Director & Team Leader, HEAD of Division, International Cooperation; DRR & Sustainability Strategist; Professor at NIDM*, briefly identified the core elements of prospective climate change law. Firstly, according to him, the course on climate change should address interdisciplinary overlapping of the climate change. Secondly, it should take note of the dynamic and emerging facets of climate change and the environmental law discourse. Lastly, it should be blended with the market needs. He was critical about the nomenclature and its practical feasibility.

Dr. T.R. Subramanya, Dean, School of Law, CMR University, discussed the shortcomings of the existing curriculum on the climate change. Firstly, he observed that the existing curriculum on environment law did not address the topic of climate change. Secondly, in the law making process the law makers and officials involved in it lack expertise. Thirdly, a

continuous evaluation and research on climate change curriculum to maintain its relevancy. Fourthly, the teaching methodology should be problem oriented and case study.

The next panelist, Mr. M.C. Mehta, an eminent environment lawyer, recalled that he filed petition before the Supreme Court to treat environment law as a compulsory subject in all the Universities. The Supreme Court responded positively. Environment and climate change are inseparable. Both subjects should be taught at the institutions. He also suggested formulation of specialized training programmes to provide a practical approach to the students. For instance, his initiative of 'Eco-Asharam' strives to make learning in tune with the ecosystem. Practical and experiential learning should form a part of the curriculum.

The discussion was carried forward by Ajay Deshpande, Former Expert Member, NGT, who suggested an increased synergy between the legal and scientific faculty in the country. He believed mitigation and adaptation should be given most importance in the curriculum with the addition of analytical modeling capacity and decision making. He suggested that Climate laws must be on the top of the pyramid and it must focus on data, policy of government. He further added that the subject should not be taught as an elective or on voluntary basis.

Mr. Ajay Deshpande also stated that people must be aware of its climate change and its importance and it should be taught in regulatory teaching framework. It must be operational in order to gain holistic understanding of the dynamic environment. He emphasized on collaborations between the legal academicians and the practitioners to have structured curriculum. He stated that there must be proper equilibrium between the explicit and tacit lecture methods.

Justice V.R. Kingaonkar, Former Member, NGT, Retd. Judge, Bombay High Court narrated that the course will open the new avenues for the future generation. He emphasised that curriculum must be designed in such a way that students can do internships, live cases and learning with the National Green Tribunal. It will help them to understand the practical pedagogy of the climate change and development aspect. These trainings must be imparted by both legal and the scientific professionals with international collaborations. He concurred with Mr. Ajay Deshpande and called for a 70:30 ratios wise division of law and science components in order to place the curriculum on the universal global platform. He further

stated that employability skills must be incorporated to make it as value based learning course.

Mr. Abhay Pimpalkar, Deputy Secretary of Environment, Govt of Maharashtra continued the discussion. He proposed the “Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change” nomenclature for the climate change programme. He added that content of the program must be designed in sync with the Maharashtra state which is the home to the biodiversity of the country. He narrated two folds screening rule for the selection of students namely, passion and understanding of scientific and technical issues. He further added that course must contain five elements drawn on the *Panchamahabut* principle namely, fundamental concepts, environmental ethics, science and technology, international laws, live projects and employability skills. He also projected that curriculum must be designed by keeping the vision of foresightedness of upcoming ten years down the lane.

Dr Prakash Rao, Deputy Director, SIIB, SIU opined that a distinction must be made between issues that were climate related and those that were not. He also underlined the dynamic nature of the subject and urged for continuous revision in the future. He suggested “Climate Change Impacts & Litigation” as the name of the subject with main focus on negative or zero carbon environment. He suggested to design a curriculum that establishes a link between climate change, energy, development, carbon markets and financing with growth in the economy. He focuses on the implementation of 3 pillars i.e. assessment, litigation and adaptation to increase the effectiveness of the course. He further added that experiential learning in the allied areas like energy conservation laws, transport and mobility laws, solid and electronic waste management, climate developmental cases must be incorporated to feel the value based rich experience and the essence of the course. He also stated that positive reinforcement is vital key for the green environment and the study of climate changes. FDPs on climate change, energy and growth must be conducted to train the new fleet at transformational level.

Mr. Aakarsh Banyal, an undergraduate student at SLS-P highlighted the lack of a global system for managing the crisis of climate change. He termed climate change as a ‘super wicked’ problem that has got no immediate solution. Mr. Aakarsh further spoke about the increasing scope for climate change and environmental law as a career in the job market while specifically mentioning the energy sector as one of the prospective areas. He suggested

the need for climate change theory and practice to be added to curricula to invoke the elements of social consciousness.

Mr. Abhinav Shrivastava, a Ph.D. scholar at SLS-P, suggested adding elements to introduce 'Climatology' to ensure a general understanding of climate science for the students of law. He further spoke about the convergence of internships with government departments specifically involved in climate change law and policy.

Prof. Manika Kamthan, Assistant Professor, SLS-P, added to the discussion by discussing the job opportunities and internship opportunities available to graduates and students. Mr. Vivek added his observation and spoke about the foundational aspects of regulatory jurisprudence of climate change.

Ms. Tanya, a student of SLS-P, pointed out that the present courses related to environmental law at the undergraduate and graduate levels do not cover climate change comprehensively. She urged to focus on adaptation rather than waiting for prevention. She further suggested involving project-based learning in the curriculum to provide a new dimension to the course.

Dr. Dhanaji Jadhav, Deputy Director (Administration) SLS-P, shared his experience as a practicing lawyer and suggested the addition of procedural aspects of dealing with environmental cases to improve the employability of the students in the area of environmental law.

The programme concluded with the vote of thanks delivered by Prof. Lasya Vyakranam, Asst. Professor, SLS-P.

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Recording

Justice VR Kingaonkar, Dr. T.R. Subramanya, Dr. Prakash Rao, Ajay Deshpande, manika, dhanaji Jadhav



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**Symbiosis International (Deemed University)**

*Curricula development on Climate Change Policy and Law*

**WP 1.3: Focus Group Discussion**

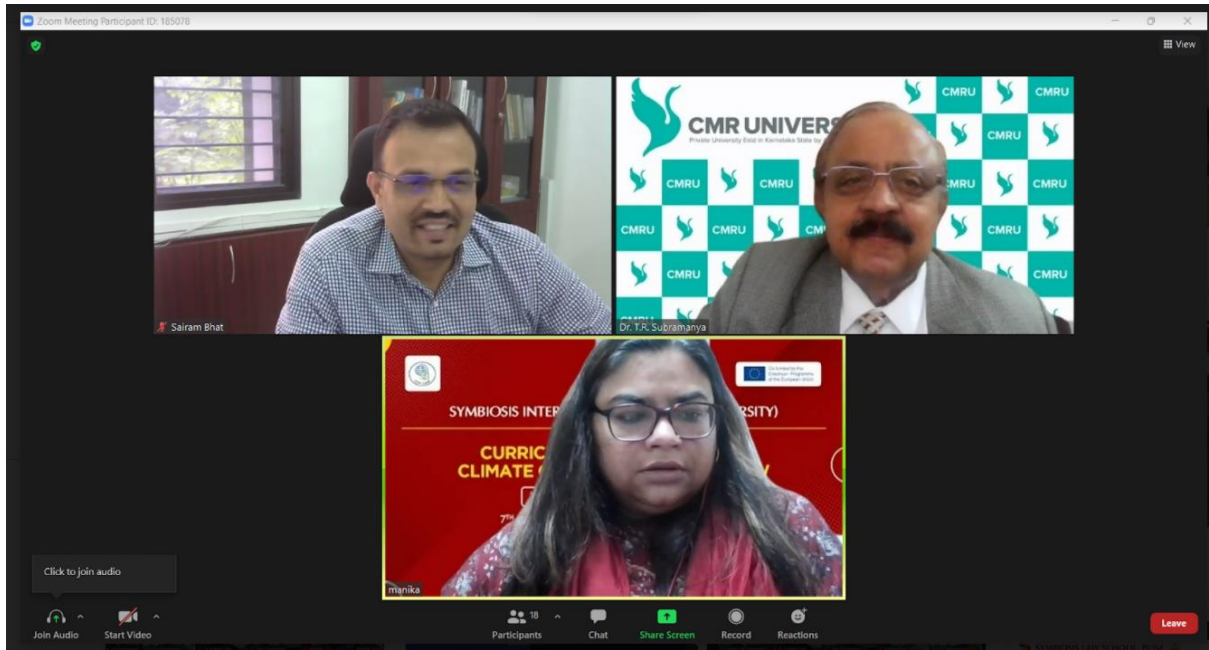
**7<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

introduced by:

**Prof. (Dr.) Shashikala Gurpur, Fulbright Scholar**  
Jean Monnet Chair Professor in EU Climate Justice Law, Governance, Management and Policy,  
Director, Symbiosis Law School Pune  
Dean, Faculty of Law, SIU and Project Manager for SIU & Team

2021

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**SYMBIOSIS LAW SCHOOL, PUNE**

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