

Diploma Course on Women & Law – Draft Syllabus

Paper I : SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER

The course will explore the difference in the lifestyles of women and the perpetuation of these differences by social-conditioning imposed by cultural constructs, moral values and religious customs. This exploration includes investigation of the effects of gender, caste, class, sexual orientation and religion on women's lives. This course focusses on central issues about gender relations – Why is there gender inequality? and What are women's experiences of that inequality? How to de-construct, and re-construct the intersection of the four factors – the State- Work- Family- and Body/Sexuality -- for enabling the attainment of gender equality? How do religion, caste, class, and sexuality interact with gender? The course does not merely provide analyses of women's oppression, however, but suggests strategies for ending that oppression.

Paper II : WOMEN AND THE LAW

Women and the Law covers not only the Indian constitutional and statutory law that affects women's lives but also the various international conventions treaties and protocols to which India is a signatory. The course focuses on the idea of "equality" and how this concept has been incorporated into Indian jurisprudence, and how the personal laws differentiate women's rights and obligations on the basis of their religious affiliation. The course also emphasises the role of the judiciary in importing international conventions into domestic legal sphere for filling the lacunae in the Indian legislative framework besides analysing the sentencing policy of the judiciary –especially the subordinate judiciary, in matters related to gender –related crimes. Topics include constitutional guarantees of gender equality and protective discrimination, child marriage and custody, marriage and divorce laws, live-in agreements, maintenance, guardianship, adoption, inheritance and succession, rape, domestic violence, reproductive rights, hazards of marriage to potential HIV+ persons, employment discrimination including harassment, maternity benefits and prostitution.

Paper – III : THEORIES OF FEMINISM

This course explores important trends and debates on the body as a site of gendered and sexualized practices. The course uses the body as a point of entry to examine the constructions and meanings of gender, health and reproduction. By using various cross-cultural examples, the course will discuss how power, gender, caste class, sexuality and religious differences are created and manifested in their lives and in bodily conduct, function, and enjoyment. The histories of the Indian patriarchal family, caste heirarchy, colonialism, and postcolonialism, and in Indian women's discrimination at work, in domestic spheres, around development strategies and state policies, and the sexual, caste

and class oppression are to be seen through the lens of this feminist thought..Critiques of mainstream feminist theories from alternative feminist perspectives and a comparison of the Western theories with those of Indian theories will be studied. And the course will explore the relationship of particular theories to political practice and changing historical circumstances. For example, while India has some of the most radical feminist movements in the world and successful female political leaders, it is also the place of severe crimes against women such as dowry deaths and widow-burning that have been culturally entrenched and socially sanctioned?

Readings will focus on theoretical works; seminar discussion and writing assignments will encourage exploration of how feminist theories might enrich and illuminate participant's own research and scholarship

Paper IV : FUTURE TRENDS & ISSUES FOR GLOBAL FEMINISM: GENDER, CULTURE & DEVELOPMENT

This course explores the historical politics of 'global feminism' though not necessarily a chronological narrative. The course syllabus aims to unpack and interrogate the contentious issues and draws parallels: What are the issues for global feminism and how far these have been influenced by political considerations? Who speaks for whom? Do the assumptions about market economy and distribution of wealth affect the role and importance of 'global feminism'? The course also deals with body politics (fgm, sexuality and sex work), labour (organised and unorganised, skilled and unskilled) and civil/cultural/human rights. Drawing upon the examples of feminist internationalisms and 'local' feminisms the course identifies strategies for forming a more collaborative and concerted effort at framing the vision for global and transnational feminism for the betterment of women in the world..