



Equal Opportunity Cell, Institute of Law,
Nirma University.



ECHOES OF EQUALITY

ISSUE 1



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Institute of Law,
Nirma University

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From the Pioneers



It gives me great pleasure to present this compilation of reflections, developed as an outcome of the insightful panel discussion organised by the Equal Opportunity Cell. The Cell continues to foster dialogue on inclusion, diversity, and equal opportunity, values that form the foundation of our institutional vision. This initiative encouraged students to pen down their thoughts, engage deeply with the themes discussed and reflect on the broader meaning of equality in contemporary society. The reflections compiled herein stand as a meaningful product of that dialogue, capturing the depth, sincerity, and critical engagement of our student community. I extend my appreciation to all contributors for their thoughtful writings and to the Equal Opportunity Cell for its continued dedication to nurturing spaces that promote awareness, empathy, and understanding. It is my hope that this publication will inspire ongoing reflection and action toward a more inclusive campus environment.

Prof. (Dr.) Madhuri Parikh
Patron-in-Chief

The Equal Opportunity Cell aims to create spaces where dialogue leads to awareness and understanding. The recent panel discussion was one such initiative that encouraged students to listen, question, and reflect on issues that often go unspoken. This magazine is more than a compilation; it is a collection of honest thoughts and realisations that emerged from that dialogue. As students penned down their reflections, they engaged deeply with the themes discussed, allowing the conversation to continue beyond the event itself. It is heartening to see how these reflections capture growth, empathy, and a shared commitment to inclusivity. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all contributors and to the editorial team for bringing this magazine to life. I hope this spirit of reflection continues to inspire meaningful change within our community.

Dr. Shriya Bhojwani
Faculty Coordinator

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Introduction



In a world where voices often fade before they are heard, Echoes of Equality emerged as a collective resonance, of thoughts, emotions, and the courage to question.

Envisioned as an evolving symphony of dialogue and reflection, it brings together the voices that shape our understanding of Equality, Justice and Inclusion. Each discussion with its unique perspectives and experiences, will continue to add new echoes, to this growing dialogue on equality.

The session was graced by two distinguished experts: Advocate Sonal Joshi, a leading gender rights advocate and lawyer renowned for her pioneering work in women's empowerment and community legal support, and Mr. Mahesh Pandya, Director of 'Paryavaran Mitra' and a visionary in environmental policy and climate governance.

Unlike a conventional lecture, the event unfolded in a dialogic format creating an open space where every voice mattered.

This compilation brings together reflections that are not mere words on paper, but ripples of awareness flowing from dialogue to introspection.

The conversation was not confined to walls or podiums; it moved through minds, questioning inequities, reimagining justice, and reaffirming faith in change.

Through themes as intertwined as climate vulnerability and equity, sustainable urban growth, gendered rights to property and inheritance, and the biases that still linger in our legal corridors, the discussion became a mirror; reflecting both the fractures in our systems and the hope of healing them.

These reflections, written with sincerity, sensitivity, and spirit, echo the belief that equality is not a distant dream but a journey nurtured through awareness and action. They capture the rhythm of participation, the harmony of collective thought, and the strength of every voice that dared to speak, listen, and evolve.

May this remind us that true progress begins not in unanimity, but in every question asked, every silence broken, and every echo that calls for a fairer world.



The Unequal Costs of Caution and Courage

(23BBL021: *Deshna Agrawal*)

The panel discussion was insightful in many ways, but two ideas stuck with me strongly and lingered in my mind. The first was a question on whether criminal liability should develop more strictly for environmental violations. Discussions on deterrence in environmental law are not new, yet this one moved to an entirely different tangent when Mahesh Sir drew a stark comparison: in a murder, the victim is already dead, but in the case of environmental harm, many people are about to die. That shift in framing was jarring, and an unsettling idea hit me suddenly: whether law can or should punish based on harms that are certain to occur but not yet realized. Criminal liability, in principle, looks backward, punishing acts that have already taken place. But here, the logic seemed to stretch forward in time, raising uncomfortable questions about fairness. Additionally, if all of this reasoning was to be accepted, it could have far-reaching consequences in implicating maybe every one of us for our daily negligence or ignorance, like careless waste disposal or indifference toward pollution. After all, negligence is itself a form of culpability. This reflection immediately connected in my mind to the film *Minority Report*, where punishing future crimes felt justified until the protagonist himself was predicted to commit one. The sense of fairness suddenly shifted; what seemed abstractly right began to feel unjust when applied personally. This tension between collective safety and individual liberty, interwoven with the idea of fairness, still remains unsolved. The second idea came from Sonal Ma'am, whose words on women in litigation and the subtle biases woven into the legal system were deeply inspiring. She spoke with conviction about the need to fight harder with discipline, dedication, and perseverance to carve out space in a system that often resists women's presence. In the moment, her words felt like a motivation booster, urging us to respond to bias with greater resilience. Yet later, I found myself reflecting on how differently such a call might resonate with others. For me, with the resources and relative privilege I carry, it felt encouraging. But what about someone who does not have the same safety nets or opportunities? Would the expectation of tireless sacrifice still inspire them, or would it sound like a demand that overlooks their constraints? This reflection made me question how easily we can idealize struggle and martyrdom in the name of progress, sometimes forgetting that not everyone is equally positioned to take on that fight. The thought cautions me against turning struggle into a moral yardstick for worth. It just made me realize that drawing the line between celebrating resilience and romanticizing sacrifice is more complicated than it first appears. That drawing the line between necessary struggle and unfair demands of sacrifice is more complicated than it appears. And at the same time, it is more urgent than it appears. Both these thoughts have raised questions that are deeply unsettling, and perhaps that very discomfort is what makes them valuable.





The Air I Breathe

(23BAL102: *Katyayini Rana*)

As I summon my thoughts to travel through the ink and leave a mark on this paper, I wonder what it means for something to stay etched in your heart. I write this reflection while looking at the trees in front of me, conscious of the air I am breathing. I wonder if the air ever asks for your identity to decide if it wants to enter your body or not, if the trees discriminate between whom they would provide shade to and to whom they won't, or if the clouds conduct a screening of whether you are worthy of the raindrops they pour. They don't ask. They allow you to breathe and exist. And yet, when I snap out of my wonder of the clouds and the trees and the air, and bring myself back to the illusory yet pervasive construct that is society, I realise, very reluctantly so, that the gender dictates the society, which dictates those who are a part of it. Within the confines of the classroom, the four walls where words are supreme, I live in the illusion that my gender will not define my choices, or perhaps a better articulation would be- that the society will not dictate my choices based on my gender- and yet when I want to visit the India Gate at night to admire its lighting, I "decide" (as if it is my choice) that it is better for me to stay in my room and that India Gate would be a better sight during the light of the day. Between the truth and lies of choices, I strive to imbibe the air I breathe and to live with a consciousness that transcends what seems like a vicious cycle of entrapment in social constructs.

Empowering Insights

(24BAL177: *Nandini Zunder*)

The panel discussion held on environmental sustainability and women empowerment/justice, featuring Advocate Sonal Joshi and Mr. Mahesh Pandya, was truly enlightening. The way they broke down such complex topics into intricate yet elegant insights made it possible for everyone in the room to grasp and relate to the themes. What resonated with me was Advocate Sonal Joshi's emphasis on accountability - she kept reiterating that it's all in our minds, and it's our responsibility to ensure we uphold these principles. As a privileged woman studying law, I'm reminded of the importance of acknowledging my role in society and taking action. Mr. Mahesh Pandya's words on environmental law also stuck with me - the law exists, but it's our responsibility to ensure its enforced and applied in a way that's accessible. He highlighted the gaps in policy-making and implementation, and how crucial it is to bridge these gaps for a more sustainable future. The discussion underscored the interconnectedness of these themes and the need for collective action to drive meaningful change. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have learned from Advocate Sonal Joshi and Mr. Mahesh Pandya, and I look forward to applying these insights in my work with the Equal Opportunity Cell as well as my professional and personal endeavours.



From Indifference to Creating a Difference

(24BAL152: *Dhruv Bhartia*)

“In a free society every lawyer has a fourth responsibility, that of acting as an intelligent, unselfish leader of public opinion-I accent the qualities ‘intelligent’ and ‘unselfish’-within his own particular sphere of influence. In our complicated age sound public opinion is more indispensable than it ever was; without it even courageous leadership may fail.” – Arthur T. Vanderbilt. The Equal Opportunity Cell, gave us a brilliant opportunity to have a discussion on unequal impacts of climate change on subaltern communities and the lack of gender inclusivity in Indian legal system. The esteemed panellists Advocate Sonal Joshi and Mr. Mahesh Pandya shed light on various hindrances faced by lawyers and activists while tackling issues of discrimination and exploitation of the marginalized communities across India and the world. The most compelling point made, was the power of the legal education. As law students hold immense power and privilege of having legal education yet what we have witnessed is the decline in initiatives taken by students in recent years. The legal education is a crucial weapon in our hands, to be able to question the government and authorities for poor implementation of legislative policies, poor utilization of welfare funds, lack of training given to government employees, corruption, etc. Through this discussion, I learnt that we as law students cannot be passive citizens rather realize that we are the ones who are supposed to raise the voice for the voiceless and be an active citizen by being actively involved in the affairs of the state and ensure justice reaches even the most marginalized. The panellists also emphasized on the need of perseverance in legal profession especially when it comes to fight the injustices faced by women and marginalized in the Court of law. Without perseverance and willingness to question the authorities, the lawyers cannot bring any change in the society. The justice can however, become truly accessible when the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion are realized. We can thus, conclude that true justice and equality can only be achieved if we use our privilege as law students, be courageous enough to call out injustices, and be dedicated to our cause.



Reframing Environmental Justice: From Civil Penalties to Criminal Accountability

(24BALo18: *Harshpreet Kaur*)

One thing that really stayed with me from today's panel discussion was Mahesh Sir's statement that environmental issues should be treated as criminal, not just civil matters. At first, it seemed like a simple idea, but the more I thought about it, the more it made sense. We often see pollution, deforestation, and climate disasters as administrative or regulatory problems, things to be fined or corrected later. But these harms are not minor mistakes; they destroy lives, livelihoods, and communities, especially those already vulnerable. The idea that environmental harm should carry serious legal consequences made me pause and reflect on how often we underestimate the scale and impact of these actions. Framing environmental harm as criminal forces us to take it seriously. It makes those who are responsible, accountable in a way that civil penalties often do not. I found myself thinking about informal workers, women, and marginalized communities who face the worst consequences of environmental neglect, such as unsafe water, extreme heat, floods, and loss of livelihood. Civil remedies rarely protect them adequately, but criminal accountability could create a real deterrent and ensure that justice is not just theoretical but practical. It also reminded me that the environment and social justice are deeply connected; ignoring one directly harms the other. Mahesh Sir's observation made me realize that protecting the environment isn't just about policy or fines, but it's about fairness, responsibility, and ensuring that people and communities are truly safeguarded from harm.

The Human Side of a Changing Climate

(24BBLo35: *Purva Patel*)

Today, during the panel discussion, I had a very meaningful experience. One point that stayed with me was about how climate change forces people into vulnerable situations. In rural areas, many families once lived a stable life as farmers. However, because of climate change, agriculture is no longer sustainable. Frequent droughts, unpredictable rainfall, and poor crop yields leave farmers with no option but to migrate to cities in search of work. Once they move, they often end up in low-paying and hazardous jobs such as rag picking or working in plastic-related industries. These jobs are usually unsafe and lack proper protective equipment's, putting workers health at serious risk. Cases of illness and even death are not uncommon. The impact does not stop with the workers themselves. Their families suffer too. Children grow up in poor living conditions, with limited access to health care and basic facilities. Education is another major concern. Because of poverty and lack of opportunities, many children are unable to continue schooling. Gender inequality further deepens this problem. In such families, boys are often prioritized for education while girls are kept at home, either to help with household work or because of limited resources. As a result, young girls are deprived of learning and opportunities that could have changed their futures. This cycle climate change leading to displacement, unsafe labour, and educational deprivation shows how interconnected environmental issues are with social justice. It highlights the urgent need for sustainable practices and stronger protections for marginalized communities.



An introspection long overdue

(24BALo83: Bhuvi Gupta)

One key insight from the panel discussion that profoundly impacted me was when sir pointed out that in criminal cases like murder, trials and punishments occur only after the victim's death. In contrast, environmental issues, if left unaddressed, inevitably lead to harm, sometimes even loss of life, that could have been prevented. This reality is undeniable and demands immediate attention. We must take decisive action now and hold individuals accountable from this moment onwards, not only for their responsibility toward the environment but also for their obligations to the global community, "We are the people, we are the government". Another point that resonated with me about the session was how people-centric it was. Often, discussions about social issues revolve around how existing laws are well-crafted, with the blame for shortcomings placed solely on poor implementation. This perspective overlooks the essential fact that it is the common person who plays a vital role in transforming these laws into meaningful change. Today's discussion powerfully emphasized this collective responsibility. As ma'am rightly said, "Social work is not a shauk (hobby) but a responsibility".

From the Ground Up: How Community Action is Building a More Equitable Society.

(25BBLoo6: *Ananya Belsare*)

The panel discussion by activists Sonal Joshi and Mahesh Pandya was a powerful and moving experience. Their talk on the plight of rag pickers and marginalized women provided a stark reminder of the social inequalities that exist just beneath the surface of our everyday lives. It was particularly impactful to hear their firsthand accounts, which gave a human face to issues often discussed in abstract terms. Their message about the need for social change was a call to action, but what truly resonated was the emphasis on change beginning at the grassroots level. The discussion highlighted that significant societal transformation isn't always driven by grand policies or top-down initiatives. Instead, it often starts with small, focused efforts within communities, initiated by individuals who are committed to making a difference. This perspective is incredibly empowering, as it shows that each of us has the potential to contribute meaningfully to a more just world. Overall, it was a humbling and inspiring experience. It not only brought awareness to critical issues but also instilled a sense of responsibility, proving that our collective efforts can indeed build a more equitable society.





In the space between 'Silence' and 'Action'

(23BAL172: *Manasvi Mittal*)

The panel discussion was deeply thought-provoking, but what impacted me the most was the continuous emphasis on the power of public participation. Both panellists reminded us that laws, policies, and institutions, however well-framed, lose their strength if citizens remain passive. It was repeatedly highlighted that silence and indifference can be as harmful as direct injustice, because being a mute spectator allows exploitation and inequality to continue unchecked. What stayed with me was the call to question things, not just for our own benefit, but for the larger good of society. Often, people hesitate to raise their voice, either out of fear, apathy, or the belief that one person cannot make a difference. But the session made me realize that real change has always been driven by individuals who chose to challenge the status quo. Vigilance about our rights and concern for our community should be seen as a responsibility rather than a choice.

The Cycle of Inequality

(25BAL105: *Simran Singh*)

The panel discussion offered critical, challenging takeaways regarding the state of gender equality and its impact on inclusive growth. A crucial distinction highlighted was the difference between equality, which is treating everyone the same and equity, which is providing necessary support to reach the same outcome. This is a crucial stage that must necessarily be reached in the Indian scenario. Societal pressures start early in the lives of young Indian girls, who are denied the right to education, forced into marriages and also unfairly burdened with household chores, while boys are often excused and are let to live their childhood freely. This is the primary stage that needs equality to be followed and practised by the family first. These important insights about the state of gender equality and its impact on inclusive growth were provided by the panel discussion. The discussion also addressed the deeply ingrained societal ills like the acceptance of marriages between older males and younger females and the vulnerability of individuals, such as even PhD students who are adults themselves being harassed by their research guides. These examples underscore a fundamental need for autonomy for all children and adults. This also demonstrates the need for us to develop a safe working place for women and to make sure they can work efficiently with all the calibre they have. The most profound lesson was the necessity of self-empowerment: "Communication is power". Individuals must speak up against injustice, prioritising self-respect, to avoid being suppressed. While laws like POSH grant power, awareness is the first step. It addresses the reality that without physical and psychological safety in their profession, a woman's right to work and grow is effectively curtailed. It is important for every company and workplace to have this, as it sends a non-negotiable message that to fight against harassment, you don't have to stand alone; it is not a private matter and must be dealt with accountability. The path to inclusive growth and sustainability demands that we first empower ourselves and then drive societal change.





Empowerment begins with awareness

(25BALo46: *Tripatjot Saini*)

The panel discussion on women's empowerment, social justice, and environmental sustainability touched my heart profoundly. Hearing Ms. Sonal Joshi and Mr. Mahesh Pandya shed light on the inequalities of marginalized women made me understand the need for change that starts at the grassroots level. These women, especially those who are employed as casual labourers or rag pickers, suffer the most from social injustice, are usually denied their basic rights such as education, health, and decent employment. The laws themselves cannot bring about justice; they require dedicated people to implement them and combat discriminatory systems. The conversation today captured the distinction between equality and equity—emphasizing that in order for women to flourish, they need support to fight against historical and structural inequalities. I was struck by the stories of teenage girls being refused an education, being married off early, with never-ending domestic responsibilities, all of which contribute to poverty and the low standing of gender subordination. That made me realize how it is necessary to create safe and respectful environments in which women and girls can be in a position to assert full control over their lives. Empowerment starts with awareness and self-respect; communication is power. Women should be encouraged to assert themselves against injustice confidently, knowing that they will not be alone. It is our duty together, as privileged law students and as women, to speak out aggressively and work hard to create a just, equitable society where all women can realize their full potential.

Change Begins with Us

(24BBLo29: *Navya Shreyanshi*)

Today's session was truly enriching. I was moved by both the panellists; both had so much experience and knowledge and the issues which were discussed were so insightful. I was personally very moved by Adv. Sonal Joshi Madam, who seemed so courageous and her idea that change starts from us, young law students, and her encouragement to us, to devote some of our years and knowledge to do something valuable to society in a way that it pressurizes the authorities who have power to change laws and rules and bring guidelines to build a just and equitable society for all. I am also highly inspired by Mr. Mahesh Sir's idea of working for the climate and not just talking on these matters, but also implementing it through legal processes like filing PIL, and writing letters to judges and authorities so that they could handle the matter. I am grateful to sir for offering ideas and ways to implement the laws, and encouraging that students can also bring change by reaching out to the concerned authority.



When the Law isn't Enough: Rethinking What Really Matters

(24BAL011: *Astha Singh*)

Listening to the panel discussion really opened my eyes to how things work in the real world, especially when it comes to the environment. It made me think about the state of our surroundings and how much change is still needed not just in how we treat the environment, but in the laws that are supposed to protect it. I hadn't fully realized before how closely environmental issues and legal systems need to work together. It made me reflect on how important it is to push for reforms that actually make a difference on the ground. Another part of the discussion that really stayed with me was about gender equality in the legal profession. Hearing the speakers talk about the current situation made me realize that, even in such a respected field, women still face a lot of challenges. It was a reminder that true equality isn't just about having laws in place, it's about changing mindsets and systems. Overall, the session left me with a lot to think about, especially on how law can and should be a tool for both social and environmental progress.

New Avenues for Thought

(24BAL183: *Riya Purohit*)

The whole panel discussion was really insightful and gave me a lot of food for thought, but what stayed with me the most was the conversation about the need to bring criminal law and environmental law together. It struck me deeply that neglecting the environment is not just a matter of damaged nature but something that is causing many deaths. The point that corporations are often knowingly responsible for this harm was shocking. Mr. Mahesh, one of the panel members mentioned how important it is to take criminal action against such negligence, and this really stayed with me. I realized that while the National Green Tribunal has powers similar to a High Court, it still deals only sees these cases as civil in nature and cannot impose harsh punishments for those who deliberately harm the environment. This gap in the law feels like a big obstacle to protecting our planet and people. It makes me think about how I can follow this issue more closely and maybe even spread awareness about why stronger legal measures are needed to hold polluters accountable. I feel that this knowledge could help me contribute to conversations on environmental justice in my community and beyond. Another point that caught my attention was about the government setting aside 35,000 crore rupees for the welfare of construction workers, but so far, nothing has really been spent or implemented. It made me reflect on how frequently important funds remain unused, leaving vulnerable workers without the support they deserve. Overall, the panel left me thinking about the urgent need to bridge legal gaps, ensure accountability, and also pay attention to the welfare of those affected by these policies. It was a valuable experience that has definitely shaped how I view these issues.



Action over Apathy

(23BAL107: *Kritika Kumar*)

The panellists came off as incredibly knowledgeable and articulate, each bringing a unique depth of understanding to their respective fields. Sonal Ma'am shared remarkably inspiring insights for young female advocates, emphasizing the importance of solidarity, resilience, and empathy in the legal profession. Her reflections on the evolving role of women in law and the need for more inclusive and progressive practices struck a strong chord with the audience. She spoke not just of challenges but of the power of persistence and community within the profession. Mahesh Sir was an equally captivating speaker who held the audience's full attention throughout. He spoke passionately about the importance of awareness and prompt action by the general public in ensuring the effective implementation of environmental policies. His point about the power of citizens' voices in shaping democratic accountability was especially impactful. Perhaps most thought-provoking was his idea of recognizing environmental wrongs as crimes, a perspective that reframes environmental responsibility as a matter of justice, not mere policy compliance. Overall, it was a deeply engaging and enriching discussion, one that encouraged reflection, dialogue, and a stronger sense of individual and collective responsibility toward a more just and sustainable future.

Collusion of Gender and Environment Justice

(24BAL093: *KumarShubham*)

The session touched upon the intersection of law, gender and environment. It was great to see two distinguished people speaking about gender. The judgement of MK Ranjithsinh v. UOI, extended the right to life to include right to live free from adverse effect of climate change. When we see this collusion of climate rights and gender justice, we realise that the changing jurisprudence of environment litigation has to include the question of gender somewhere. To that effect, it's necessary that we ponder upon the question of whether policy design pertaining to our public space architecture require to think to that end.



When survival becomes a privilege

(24BAL160: *Hansi Thakur*)

The panel discussion on Gender Equality, Sustainability, and Inclusive Growth gave an eye-opening perspective on climate change and its effects on migration. I always associated migration with economic necessity and never viewed it through the lens of climate change. It was discussed by Mr. Mahesh Pandya on how there were migrants in the Thaltej area of Ahmedabad who had left their “Pakka houses” in their villages in hopes of a better life. However, the ironic thing was that they are not even treated like the citizens of the country. Where are the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution in action? Where is the application of Article 21 of the Constitution? There exists no space for them to even live. Additionally, the children do not even have access to education and are fighting to get water from outside for their families. On the other hand, we are privileged enough to waste water, whereas they don't even get enough water to drink. There exists a difference between the privileged and the burdened kids. The displacement of families from ancestral houses in search of basic survival reflects the deep vulnerabilities created by inadequate facilities, poor infrastructure, and unequal distribution of resources. Additionally, the discussion of the Panchmal tribes, who are the construction workers, gave more insight into the same. They had the land in their villages, but migrated for a better life. But in the name of this “better life”, they don't even get basic water to drink. There are devastating effects that the vulnerable groups have to face due to exploitation by the developed countries. There was a statement made by a 70-year-old woman from the Philippines in a conference where she was crying, begging for help, as she believed that everyone was going to die and be victimised due to these developments by the developed countries and the effects of climate change. The session left me with a strong sense of responsibility. I realized that tackling climate change is not just about environmental policies or disaster management, but also about justice, equity, and human rights. Legal frameworks must evolve to recognize environmental displacement, ensure fair access to resources, and protect the dignity of vulnerable communities. Ultimately, climate change is not only an ecological issue but a pressing humanitarian and legal challenge. We have to learn to question these inequalities that exist and raise our awareness by filling PIL's or even writing a letter or emailing the authorities to take action. Action won't be done unless we start to question.





From Awareness to Action: The Role of Law in Driving Social Transformation

(24BAL101: *Nivya Lohiya*)

The panel discussion conducted by Advocate Sonal Joshi and Mr. Mahesh Pandya offered valuable insights into how legal awareness and social responsibility go hand in hand. The conversation emphasized that law is not only a tool for justice but also a means to drive societal change. I was particularly inspired by Advocate Sonal Joshi's belief that transformation begins when individuals take initiative rather than waiting for authorities to act. Her passion for women's empowerment and inclusivity was truly motivating. Mr. Mahesh Pandya's perspective on environmental accountability also made me realize how essential it is to strengthen legal measures against environmental neglect. The discussion highlighted that gender justice and environmental justice are deeply connected and must progress together for a sustainable future. It was a session that not only broadened my understanding but also encouraged me to think of how I can contribute to this change through my actions as a law student.

Learning What Justice Truly Means

(25BLLo08: *Deshnaa Kanthed*)

The panel discussion led by Advocate Sonal Joshi and Mr. Mahesh Pandya was a profound and eye-opening experience. They brought attention to how environmental degradation and social injustice disproportionately impact marginalized communities, particularly rag pickers and women. Hearing their firsthand accounts made these issues feel real and urgent, highlighting the human faces behind statistics and policies. One of the most striking messages was Mahesh Pandya's perspective that environmental harm should be treated as a criminal offense, not just a civil issue. This idea challenged me to rethink the severity of environmental crimes, especially as such damages often have devastating effects on vulnerable populations. Another important takeaway was the emphasis on grassroots activism; change doesn't always come from big government policies but begins with small, committed actions within communities. This gave me hope and motivation as a law student, reminding me that legal knowledge is a tool for advocacy and change, but only if actively used. The discussion also highlighted gender inequality in education and livelihood, pointing out how climate change exacerbates existing social disparities, pushing many rural families into unsafe urban labour markets and limiting girls' access to education. The session underscored how social justice, environmental protection, and gender equality are inseparable, pushing me to remain committed to working for a fairer and more sustainable world. This conversation was truly inspiring and deeply educational.



Echoes of Awareness

(25BAL128: *Moksha Pahadia*)

The panel discussion with Sonal Joshi Ma'am and Mahesh Sir was a deeply enlightening and thought-provoking experience, shedding light on the pressing intersections of environmental justice, gender equality, and social responsibility. The discussion stressed that change is sparked by people who are ready to push back against the status quo, challenge systemic inequities, and utilize their knowledge and privilege to fight for change. The discussion also highlighted that even though frameworks exist to protect communities and the environment, the absence of enforcement and implementation sometimes counteracts action, which makes community awareness and action most important. Overall, the session underscored that meaningful social and environmental transformation begins with awareness, perseverance, and committed individual and collective action.