



**2024 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
FAMILY LAWS IN SOUTH ASIA: EXAMINING STRATEGIES FOR GENDER-JUST  
REFORMS AND EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST  
LEARNINGS**

**Call for Abstracts**

*Organisers:*

- *Centre for Women's Rights, Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU)*
- *Faculty of Legal Studies, South Asian University (SAU)*
- *School of Law, BML Munjal University (BMU)*

The organisers are pleased to announce the 2024 International Conference on Family Laws in South Asia: Examining strategies for gender-just reforms and exploring the potential for transnational feminist learnings. South Asian countries have distinct family laws that govern the members of each religious community. At the same time, such laws coexist with optional secular family laws. The contents of religion-specific family laws are often shaped by an amalgamation of interpretations of religious texts, customary practices and cultural beliefs, which may or may not be codified by the state. Needless to say, such practices are often archaic and patriarchal in nature, couched in gender binaries and reinforce caste and gender hierarchies. Such laws coexist, albeit incongruently, with guarantees of gender equality and non-discrimination on grounds of gender, religion and caste in national constitutions and the ratification of the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by most South Asian countries.

The conference aims to provide an impetus to South Asian family law reform and discourse by organising a discussion around efforts of minority communities in seeking gender-just family law reforms in South Asian countries. Through this discussion, the conference aims at examining the intersections of colonialism and law reform processes, impact of politics and the work of social movements in shaping gender-just family law reforms in South Asia. Within this theme, abstracts are invited along the following questions, which are indicative:

- How has colonialism impacted the traditional family law systems of both colonial and non-colonial South Asian States, and what role has it played in shaping subsequent family law reforms in the region?
- Do provisions in the family laws of religious communities in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka discriminate against women and other sexual and gender minorities? If so, in what manner?



- What are the strategies employed in these countries for family law reforms governing religious minorities?
- Who are the driving forces behind initiatives pertaining to legal reforms? What has been the specific role of social movements, activists, law professionals, feminist scholars and institutions?
- What are the challenges posed in effecting legal reforms governing family laws of minorities in the South Asian countries?
- Is there a scope for cross-border exchange of feminist strategies and learning on family law reform in South Asia and how can this be undertaken?

**Eligibility:** Abstracts are invited from academics, practitioners, social activists, policymakers and researchers on South Asian family laws. We especially encourage submissions from those working closely with grassroots and activist movements on minority family law reform in South Asian countries. Abstracts of a non-doctrinal nature carrying on-ground research are especially welcome.

**Mode:** The Conference will be in online mode only. It will be followed by an in-person workshop in January 2025 where selected papers will receive extensive feedback on their work through panel discussions and involvement of experts. The in-person workshop will be held in Delhi NCR. The details of the workshop and the criteria for writing the full paper will be shared with the shortlisted authors. Post the workshop, the final papers will be published in a reputed SCOPUS-indexed journal or as part of an edited book volume.

**Dates:**

- Last date for submission of abstract: 15 April 2024
- Communication of accepted abstracts: 30 April 2024
- Submission of first draft of paper: 31 July 2024
- Online conference: 30 and 31 August 2024
- Submission of final papers: 30 September 2024
- In-person workshop: January 2025

**Submission:** Please share your abstract of no longer than 350 words by filling [this form](#) by the due date (15th April 2024). The abstract must contain a suitable title and address the theme(s) of the conference. Co-authorship of up to two authors is permitted. One person may only submit one abstract. There is no registration fees for the Conference.

**Co-Chairs**

Prof. Dr. Saumya Uma, Professor & Director - Centre for Women's Rights Studies, Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University, India.

Dr. Stellina Jolly, Associate Professor, Faculty of Legal Studies, South Asian University, New Delhi, India.



Ms. Saumya Maheshwari, Assistant Professor - School of Law, BML Munjal University, India.

Ms. Surabhi Singh, Assistant Professor - School of Law, BML Munjal University, India.

### **Coordinators**

Prakriti Malla, Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Legal Studies, South Asian University, India

Ms. Shama B.H. Abbasi, Research Fellow, Centre for Women's Rights Studies, Assistant Professor - Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Law, Basel University, Switzerland.

For any queries, please contact the organisers at: [southasianfamlawconf@gmail.com](mailto:southasianfamlawconf@gmail.com).

**Note:** Selection of abstract is not a guarantee of publication since the paper will go through a rigorous process of peer-review and editing.