REPORT

3rd International Conference on "Higher Education Institute Challenges Solutions for Sustainable Development Goals 2024"

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16- "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions":

Organized by SRM School of Law.

SRMIST (SRM Institute of Science and Technology) is conducting its 3rd International Conference on "Higher Education Institute Challenges Solutions for Sustainable Development Goals 2024". The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the 193 Member States of the United Nations at the General Assembly in September 2015 includes 17 Goals and 169 targets, sets out as an ambitious vision integrates its economic, social and environmental dimensions. This new Agenda enshrines the expectations, aspirations and priorities of the international community for the next 15 years. The 17 SDGs help countries to gauge the starting point from which they set out towards new, collective vision of sustainable development agenda set forth in the 2030 to analyse and implement. The 2030 civilizing agenda is far-sighted, ambitious, that places dignity and equality at the centre and its implementation require the involvement of all sectors of society and of the State. The 17 interlinked global goals are designed to be a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all with global Mission statement as "the 17 SDGs are the blueprint to achieve a more sustainable future for all people and the world by 2030". The stakeholders of SRM IST are committed to each Sustainable Development Goal on its own interconnecting social, economic and environmental sustainability a global blueprint for dignity, peace and prosperity for people and the planet now and in the future.

In connection with it, SRM School of Law is organizing a series of events pertaining to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #16 - "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions". SDG-16

is about promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. People everywhere should be free of fear from all forms of violence and feel safe as they go about their lives whatever their ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation. Strengthening the rule of law and promoting human rights is key to this process, as is reducing the flow of illicit arms, combating corruption, and ensuring inclusive participation at all times.

Report on Rally Promoting Inclusive Societies and Inclusion in Support of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) conducted on 04-11-2024

SRM School of Law organized a Rally pertaining to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #16 - "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" on 04-11-2024 for Promoting LGBTQ+ Rights and Inclusion in Support of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)

The LGBTQ+ Rights Rally organized by the School of Law (SOL) at SRMIST aimed to raise awareness on the importance of equality, inclusivity, and human rights for LGBTQ+ individuals. In alignment with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 16, the rally focused on promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions by supporting LGBTQ+ rights, emphasizing that inclusivity and equal rights are fundamental pillars for a just society- one of the key themes of the upcoming conference. The event also sought to foster empathy and solidarity within the student and faculty communities, underscoring SRMIST's commitment to creating a campus that embraces diversity and advocates for social justice.

The rally commenced at the SOL building lobby, marked by an inaugural ribbon-cutting ceremony. The event was officiated by the Pro Vice-Chancellor of SRMIST, Dr. Vinay Kumar, who cut the ribbon, symbolizing the institution's support for LGBTQ+ rights and its dedication to promoting social equity and inclusivity.

In his opening remarks, the Pro Vice-Chancellor emphasized the importance of recognizing and supporting diverse identities, including sexual orientations and gender identities, reaffirming the institution's commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment for everyone. Following this, Mr. V Mahalingam, co-convenor of the event, addressed the challenges faced by the transgender community, focusing on the societal obstacles and discrimination they encounter due their biological differences and societal attitudes. This gesture from SRMIST's leadership reinforced the university's stand on promoting inclusivity in both academic and social spheres.

The rally began with students marching from the SOL building lobby to the SRM Tech Park, carrying colourful pride flags and posters with messages supporting equality and LGBTQ+ rights, passing the Medical College building along the way. They paused at the Clock Tower, where students encircled the clock tower island, joining hands in a powerful gesture of unity and support and raised their voices in unison, chanting powerful slogans for equality, justice, and acceptance. It symbolized their commitment to standing together in the pursuit of justice and inclusivity, and the symbolic ring of unity inspired a sense of togetherness and hope. The march then continued to the Raja Raja Cholan statue before concluding at the Tech Park building. The procession of around 100 spirited students and faculty members was not only visually striking but also vibrantly symbolic, representing the colours of the LGBTQ+ flag and the strength of their commitment to the cause.

The rally drew approximately 100 students from various batches, participants brought an inspiring energy, carrying banners, posters, and pride flags that symbolized LGBTQ+ identities and rights. The rainbow flags, and handmade posters added a visually dynamic aspect to the march, making it an attention-grabbing event for spectators and creating an atmosphere of pride and celebration.

The students chanted empowering slogans, such as "Equality for All," "Love is Love," and "Stand Up for LGBTQ+ Rights," their enthusiasm reflecting a genuine passion for human rights and equality. Their collective voice, echoing through the SRMIST campus, conveyed the importance of fostering inclusivity and promoting equal rights for all individuals, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. The rally concluded at the Tech Park building, where students gathered for a final round of slogans, marking the event's successful completion with vote of thanks by co-ordinator and Assistant Professor Priyanka T Gopal.

Several faculty members actively participated in the rally, standing alongside students as both advocates and allies. Their presence underscored the School of Law's commitment to social justice, as well as the importance of faculty members acting as role models in championing human rights causes.

Report on the Flash Mob: Conflict and Resolution – Understanding the Impact of War on Peacebuilding

As part of the initiatives conducted alongside the ICSDG-24, the School of Law organized a dynamic flash mob on 04-11-2024 after noon at around 2 pm before Tech park building. This event aligned with one of the key sub-themes of the main conference, promoting awareness about the importance of resolving conflicts and fostering peace in the aftermath of war.

The flash mob featured a group of 10 talented dancers of SOL who captivated the audience with an 8-minute performance. Through expressive movements the performers depicted the devastating consequences of war.

The event drew a sizable crowd of students and faculty members, who applauded the performers for their impactful representation of such a critical issue. By blending art and advocacy, the flash mob served as a powerful medium to convey the importance of resolving conflicts and building stronger, more peaceful societies.

This creative initiative further demonstrated the School of Law's commitment to promoting Sustainable Development Goal 16, encouraging dialogue and awareness about peace and justice through innovative approaches.

Report on International Conference on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #16 - "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" conducted from 3rd Dec. to 5th Dec.

Organized by: School of Law, SRM Institute of Science and Technology
In Association with: Centre for Research in Environment, Sustainability Advocacy, and Climate Change (REACH)
Dates: 03 – 05 December 2024
Conference Title: *SDG 16: Access to Justice and Human Rights for All*

The **3rd International Conference on Higher Education Institutes' Challenges & Solutions for Sustainable Development Goals 2024**, organized by the School of Law in collaboration with REACH, focused on the theme of **SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**. The event brought together academics, researchers, and students to discuss pressing issues surrounding justice and human rights in the context of sustainable development.

Highlights of the Conference

Participants: The conference witnessed active participation with **45 registered participants** and **20 paper presentations** spread across four thematic tracks.

Tracks and Presentations:
The conference included four distinct tracks addressing critical aspects of SDG 16:

1. **Climate Justice: Ensuring Equity in a Changing World**
2. **Conflict and Resolution: Understanding the Impact of War on Peace building**
3. **Inclusivity of LGBTQ+ in Building Stronger Societies**
4. **Corporate Responsibility in Environmental Sustainability: A Legal Perspective**

Prominent scholars and experts shared their insights across various sessions, enriching the discussions.

Program Details

The three-day event began with an inaugural address by the Dean, School of Law inspiring the participants in her address emphasizing on the significance of SDG-16 in attaining a just and peaceful society, followed by presentations and discussions spread across the tracks. Each session was marked by active engagement and thought-provoking dialogue among the participants   and   panellists.
The schedule covered diverse issues such as environmental equity, post-conflict peace building, legal reforms for LGBTQ+ inclusivity, and the role of corporations in sustainability, reflecting the multi-dimensional nature of SDG 16.

Day 1 - 3rd December 2024

The conference commenced on 3rd December 2024 with an inaugural session held from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM at T P Ganeshan Auditorium. The event was attended by a distinguished gathering of legal scholars, practitioners, and students, marking the beginning of a three-day academic discourse on critical issues related to legal frameworks, human rights, and social justice. The inauguration included welcome addresses by key dignitaries, who underscored the importance of the conference in contributing to global conversations on equity, justice, and sustainability in legal contexts.


The first session after the inauguration, the **Common Session**, was held from 2:15 PM to 3:45 PM. The session set the tone for the conference, providing an overview of the themes to be explored in the subsequent technical sessions. It provided a platform for participants to reflect on pressing global issues related to social justice and human rights law.

The technical sessions *SDG 16: Peace, Justice and strong institutions* began in earnest with **Technical Session I**, held from 4:15 PM to 5:15 PM, focusing on the theme **"Climate Justice: Ensuring Equity in a Changing World."** Dr. Rhea Roy Mammen, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Van Vollenhoven Institute, University of Leiden, delivered an insightful presentation on the challenges posed by climate change, particularly in relation to marginalized communities. She emphasized the need for climate justice frameworks that prioritize equity and support vulnerable populations in adapting to environmental changes.
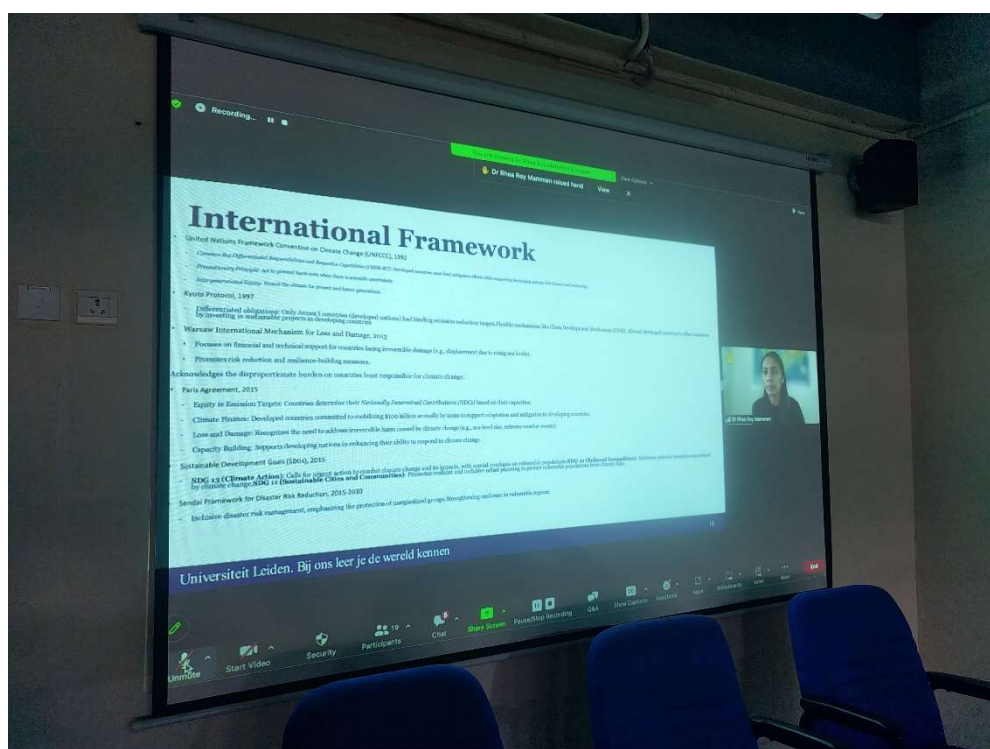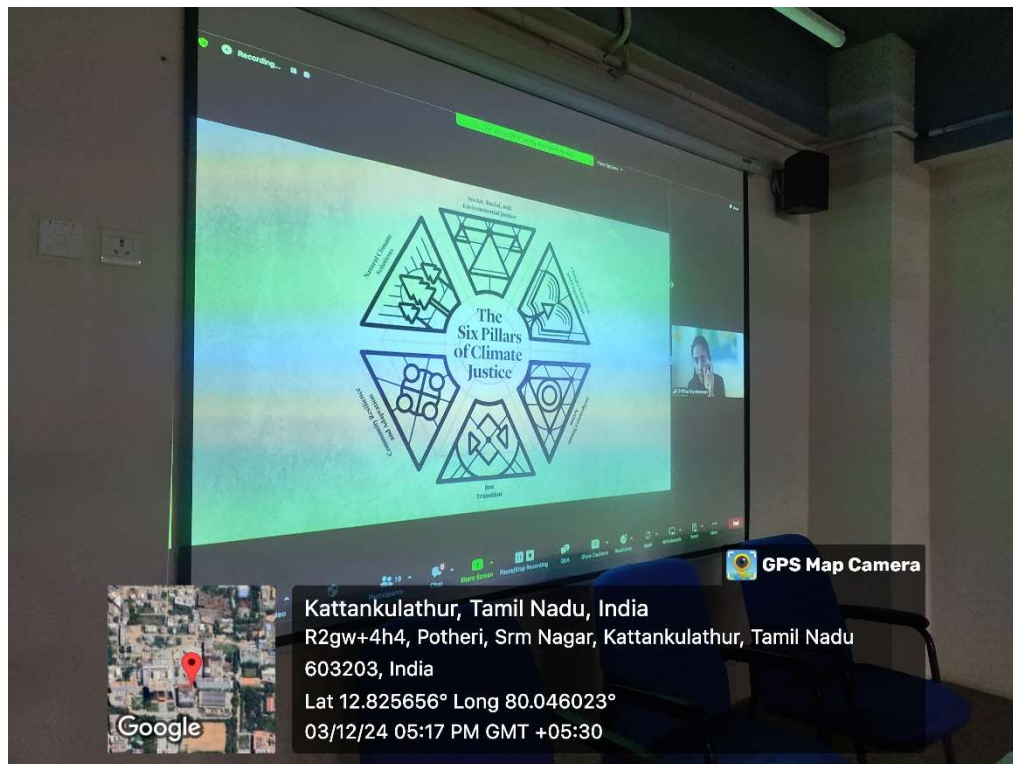
Following this, **Technical Session II** was held from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM, featuring paper presentations on various topics related to climate justice. The session was chaired by Dr. Sailaja P, Associate Professor at Saveetha School of Law, who moderated the discussions and ensured a productive exchange of ideas between the presenters and attendees.

Day 2 - 4th December 2024

On the second day of the conference, the first session began with **Technical Session I** from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM. The theme of the session was **"Inclusivity of LGBTQ+ in Building Stronger Societies."** Dr. Shyamantak Misra, Assistant Professor at KIIT School of Law, delivered a thought-provoking lecture on the legal and societal challenges faced by LGBTQ+ communities across the globe. Dr. Misra emphasized the role of inclusive legal frameworks in fostering stronger, more resilient societies by promoting equality and acceptance.

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Technical Session II, held from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM, focused on **"Conflict and Resolution: Understanding the Impact of War on Peacebuilding."** Dr. Aswathy Gopala Krishnan, Lecturer in Law and Criminology at The Sheffield College, UK, led the session. Dr. Gopala Krishnan provided an in-depth analysis of the ways in which war affects post-conflict societies and the legal mechanisms that can be used for peacebuilding and reconciliation.
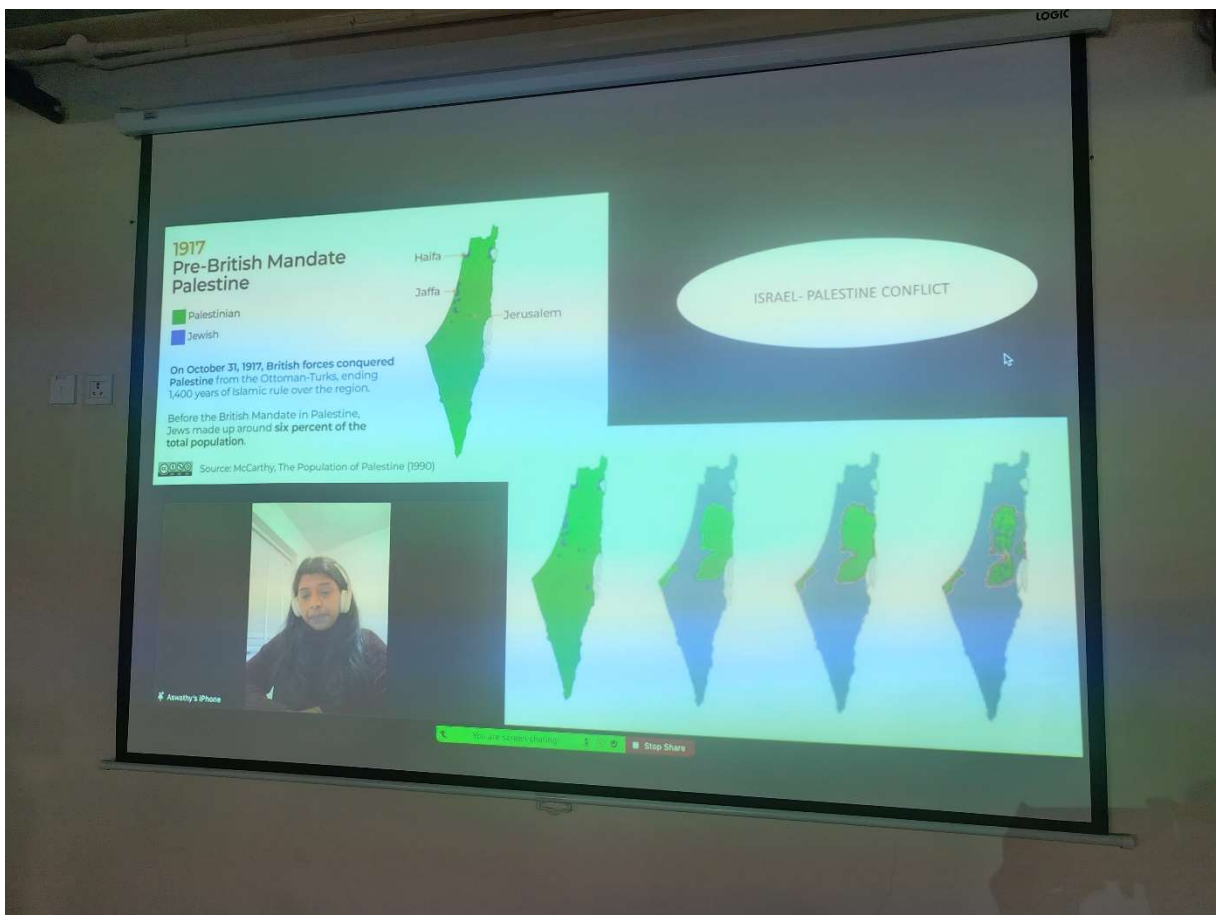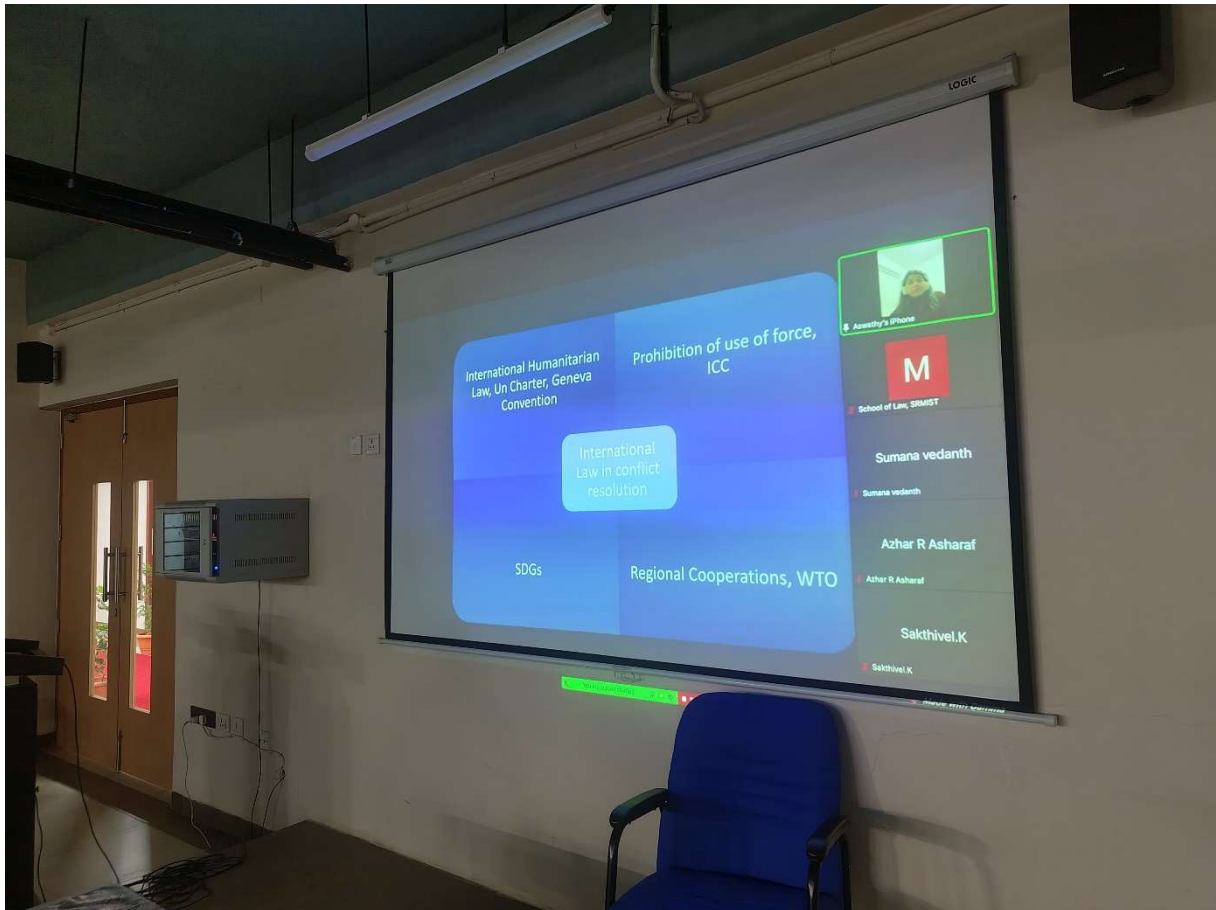
In the afternoon, **Session II** commenced with **Technical Session I, II** and from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, featured paper presentations on **"Inclusivity of LGBTQ+ in Building Stronger Societies."** and **"Conflict and Resolution: Understanding the Impact of War on Peacebuilding."** The sessions were chaired by Mr. Nirun R. N., Assistant Professor at Christ Academy Institute of Law, Bangalore. The presentations explored the intersection of law, society, and the LGBTQ+ community and fostered a dynamic discussion on complexities of war and peace building in post-conflict regions.
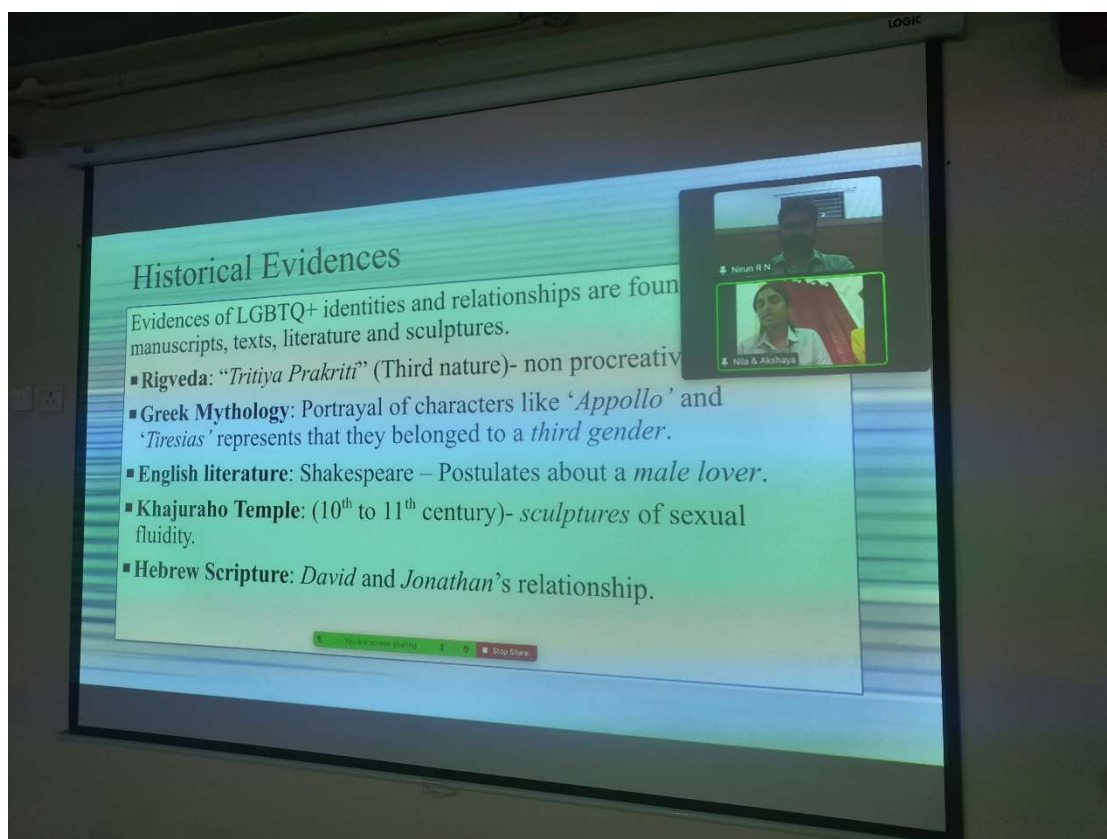
Day 3 - 5th December 2024

The final day of the conference began with **Technical Session I** from 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM, which focused on the theme **"Corporate Responsibility in Environmental Sustainability: A Legal Perspective."** Dr. Ayyappan Palanissamy, Lecturer and Academic Programs Coordinator at Modern College of Business and Science, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, led the session. Dr. Palanissamy presented on the role of corporations in addressing environmental issues, particularly from a legal standpoint, discussing emerging legal frameworks that hold corporations accountable for environmental sustainability.
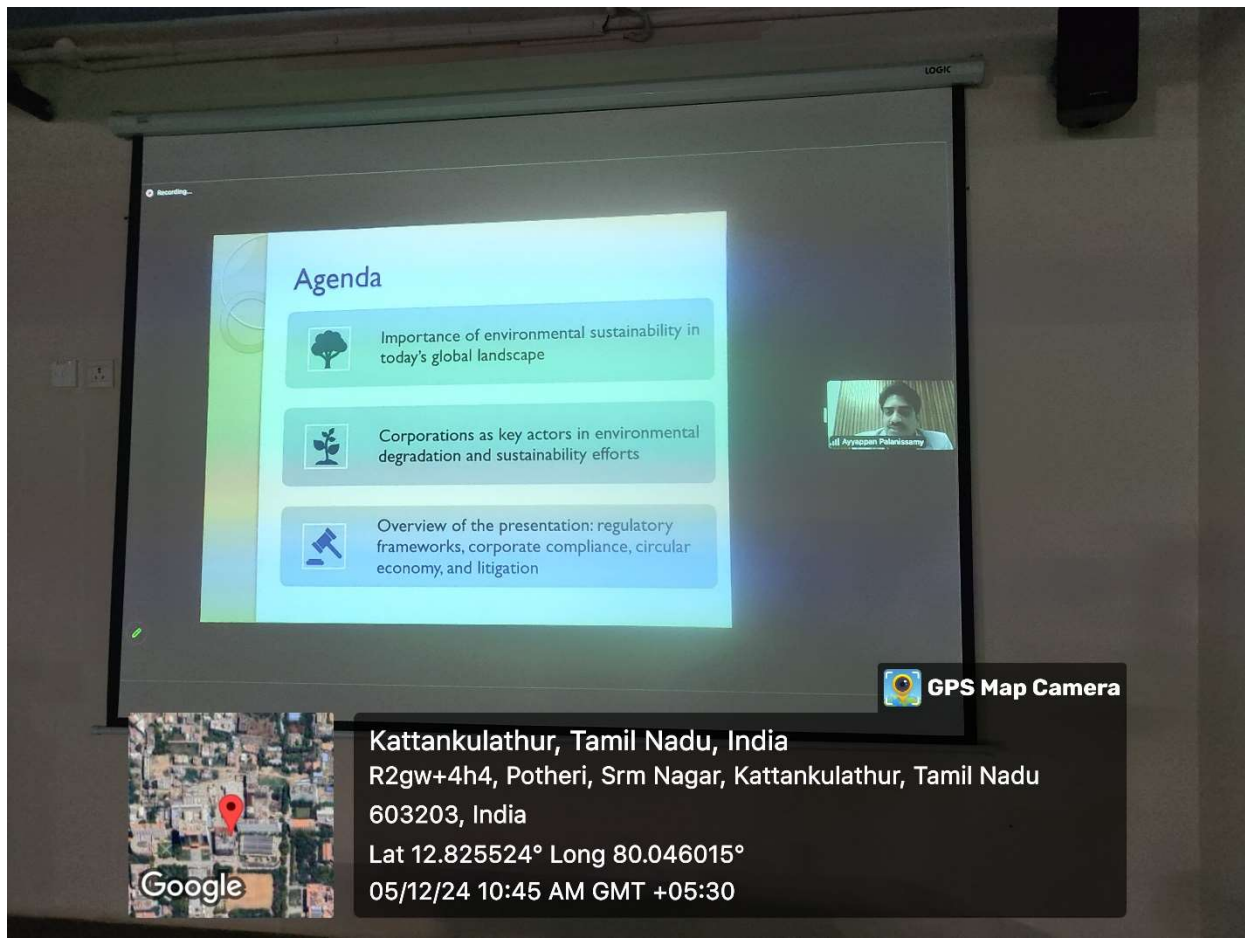
The final session of the conference, **Technical Session II**, was held from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM, featuring paper presentations on topics related to corporate responsibility and environmental law. The session was chaired by Mr. Adarsh S, Superintendent of Legal & HR at the Government of Kerala. He moderated the presentations, ensuring that participants had ample opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions regarding the intersection of law, corporate practices, and environmental sustainability.

Drivers of Increased Scrutiny

Several factors contribute to this heightened focus. First, escalating environmental crises have intensified the demand for businesses to act responsibly. The devastating consequences of climate change, including extreme weather events, resource scarcity, and ecosystem degradation, have prompted governments and global organizations to introduce stricter regulations and guidelines.

Second, investors are playing a pivotal role in driving this shift. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing has gained prominence, with shareholders demanding robust disclosures on sustainability practices and measurable progress toward environmental goals. Major investment firms are incorporating ESG criteria into decision-making, pressuring companies to align operations with sustainability benchmarks to attract and retain capital.

Consumer awareness and activism have also grown, fuelled by greater access to information and heightened concern over ethical consumption. Customers increasingly favour brands that demonstrate environmental responsibility, pushing corporations to adopt more transparent and sustainable practices.

Finally, regulatory bodies worldwide are introducing and enforcing stringent environmental and corporate governance laws. For instance, initiatives like the European Union's corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and carbon pricing mechanisms impose mandatory disclosures and financial incentives for compliance with environmental standards.

GPS Map Camera

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EVOLUTION OF POLICIES & INITIATIVES SUPPORTING TRIBAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

GPS Map Camera

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The conference concluded with a **Valedictory Session** from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM, which included closing remarks by Priyanka T Gopal, Assistant Professor and member of Organizing committee, reflecting on the success of the conference and emphasized the need for continued collaboration between legal professionals, academics, and activists to address the pressing challenges discussed over the past three days.

Awards and Recognitions

To encourage research and academic excellence, the following awards were presented:

- ➢ **Best Presenter**: **Ms. Gayathri Jiji**, Research Scholar, Cochin University of Science and Technology
- ➢ **Second Best Presenter**: **Ms. Annie Wilson**, Research Scholar, Hindustan institute of technology and science

Outcome and Key Takeaways

The conference successfully highlighted the challenges and solutions for promoting peace, justice, and sustainable institutions. It provided a platform for young researchers to present their ideas and engage with seasoned academicians, fostering a collaborative environment for addressing global challenges.

The event reinforced the commitment of the School of Law toward the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 16, and set the stage for future research and action in this critical area.

Feedback and Reflections

The event organizers received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, who expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage in meaningful activism and contribute to important social causes. The **LGBTQ+ Rights Rally**, **Flash Mob**, and the **International Conference on SDG-16** collectively garnered significant support, with attendees commending the efforts to raise awareness, foster inclusivity, and promote peace.

Key Outcomes:

1. **Promotion of the Main Conference**: The rally and flash mob served as promotional efforts for the **International Conference on Legal and Social Justice**, scheduled for **December 3-5, 2024**. These activities sparked interest and excitement within the SRMIST campus community, generating anticipation for the upcoming conference. They effectively highlighted the significance of **SDG 16** in the broader context of the conference themes, particularly in promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions, and emphasized the importance of addressing human rights and inclusivity within legal and social frameworks.
2. **Increased Awareness**: The rally, flash mob, and the three-day conference successfully raised awareness on critical issues related to **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #16 - "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions"**, including human rights, inclusivity, and the importance of conflict resolution for peace building. These events delivered powerful messages of equality, acceptance, and social justice, while also addressing the impact of war and the need for peaceful resolutions. The conference sessions further enriched the discussions initiated by the rally and flash mob, offering in-depth insights into how inclusivity and justice can be promoted in legal and social contexts.
3. **Enhanced Community Solidarity**: Both the rally and flash mob, in conjunction with the conference, fostered a sense of unity and pride within the SRMIST community. These events brought together diverse groups of students, faculty, and external experts as advocates and allies, strengthening the bond between participants and reinforcing the university's commitment to building a more empathetic and inclusive campus environment. The events also encouraged dialogue across various disciplines, allowing for greater understanding and collaboration in support of social justice.
4. **Encouragement for Future Initiatives**: The success of the rally, flash mob, and conference laid a solid foundation for future advocacy and activism at SRMIST. The enthusiasm generated by these events inspired students and faculty to continue advocating for human rights, inclusivity, and peacebuilding through new initiatives

and impactful activities. The momentum created will likely lead to further projects addressing pressing global challenges, both within and outside the academic sphere.

Conclusion

The **LGBTQ+ Rights Rally**, **Flash Mob**, and **International Conference on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #16 - "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions"** organized by the **School of Law (SOL)** at SRMIST were powerful demonstrations of solidarity, social justice, and commitment to **SDG 16**. These events embodied SRMIST's dedication to promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions, with a focus on inclusivity, conflict resolution, and human rights.

Together, the rally, flash mob, and conference created a lasting impact on participants and the broader SRMIST community, inspiring important discussions and actions toward building more just and inclusive societies. These initiatives highlighted the role that educational institutions can play in fostering awareness, empathy, and sustainable change, while also contributing to the global dialogue on social justice and human rights.

The events were organized under the guidance of **Dr. P. Sreeshudha**, Dean and Convenor, and **Assistant Professor Mahalingam**, Co-convenor, whose leadership and vision ensured their successful execution. The organizing team, including **Mr. Mangalacharan Patra**, **Ms. Priyanka T. Gopal**, **Mr. Azhar R. Asharaf**, **Mr. Mohammed Shahzad**, **Dr. Tapasi Mohanty** (Assistant Professors, SOL), along with student coordinators **Ms. Yazhni** and **Mr. A. R. Muhammed Raquib**, played key roles in ensuring the seamless execution of these events. Their collective efforts, together with the support of faculty and students, made the rally, flash mob, and conference impactful and memorable experiences for all involved.

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Additional images and videos of the events can be accessed through the links provided below.

https://photos.app.goo.gl/yEV1Xb4ZZuaDmxEz7

https://photos.app.goo.gl/QAiQ5EhNzXLT7xex8