



MARATHWADA MITRA MANDAL'S

SHANKARRAO CHAVAN LAW COLLEGE

Accredited with 'A' Grade by NAAC

202/A, DECCAN GYMKHANA, PUNE - 411 004.

Affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University & Approved by Bar Council of India, New Delhi
(Permanent Reg. No. - Id No. : PU / PN / Law / 179 - 2002)



Late. Shri. Shankarrao Chavan
Founder President

Shri. Shivajirao D. Ganage
President

Prin. Bhausaheb Jadhav
Exe - President

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CELL

Organizes

2nd Edition of the 3 months Certificate Course on "Law and Alternative Sexualities"

July, 2022- October, 2022

Marathwada Miramandal's Shankarrao Chavan Law College has consistently strived to be a beacon of legal education, fostering an inclusive and diverse academic environment. With a rich history and a reputation for academic excellence, our institution has been dedicated to equipping students and professionals with the skills, knowledge, and empathy necessary to navigate the complex legal landscape.

Aim and Objective of the Course:

The Certificate Course on **Law and Alternative Sexualities** holds immense importance in today's rapidly evolving society. As attitudes towards gender and sexual orientation progress, so too must our legal understanding and advocacy. This course serves as a platform to delve into the legal, social, and ethical dimensions surrounding alternative sexualities. By addressing these topics, we aim to promote a deeper understanding of the rights, challenges, and experiences of individuals belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community. Also, such courses help not only in building awareness among our college students but also help in fostering the free exchange of ideas which would further help in building a college campus that welcomes diversity of opinion and people of all backgrounds.

To introduce and acquaint students with the concept of alternative sexual identities, and the history, law, politics, and literature of alternative sexualities in ancient, medieval and contemporary India.

Need and Importance of the Course:

The course sensitizes students towards gender and sexual identities other than the universal male/female heterosexual and heteronormative identities prevalent in the world. It also enhances their employability, with an increasing number of NGOs and support groups now involved with lesbian, gay and transgender rights, and even government organizations acknowledging the need for this recognition.



How it will help the Law students:

India happens to be only the 27th country in the world to legalize homosexuality. Law students need to know the history of Section 377 of the IPC since its inception in 1860, to its first reading down by the Delhi High Court in 2009, its subsequent reinstatement by the Supreme Court in 2013, and its final reading down by a constitutional bench of the Supreme Court in 2018. The changed law has ramifications for future legal issues such as same-sex marriage, adoption etc. The course will also include discussions on the NALSA judgement and various transgender rights bills. Several cases concerning the above are being fought in Indian courts at the present time by practising lawyers. A knowledge of these laws and the social, political and cultural issues surrounding them is imperative for law students who are desirous of having a holistic knowledge of the law.

Curriculum of the Course:

Module I

- A. Introduction and Terminology: LGBTQIA+
- B. Sexual Preferences Vs Identity: Politicizing Sexuality
- C. Heteronormativity, Heterosexism and Homosociality
- D. Homosexuality and Medicine, the Law, the Police.

Module II

- A. Homosexuality in Ancient Greece, Rome, France, Germany, England and America: The Stonewall Riot.
- B. The History and Reading down of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code: 2009, 2013 and 2018.
- C. Gay Marriage and Civil Unions
- D. Coalition, Intersection and Inclusiveness.

Module III

- A. The Representation of Alternative Sexuality in Ancient - Medieval India and in Modern Indian Literature.
- B. Yogyakarta Principles are additional principles and state obligations on the application of international Human Rights Law in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.
(http://yogyakartaprinciples.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/11/A5_yogyakartaWEB-2.pdf)
- C. The Representation of Alternative Sexuality in Indian Cinema.
- D. The Practice of Alternative Sexuality in India: Gay pride parades, internet dating apps, gay bars, public parks and washrooms as networking spaces, hijras, rent boys and support groups.



Course Description:

- This Certificate Course is spread over three modules in 3 months. Each session will be for 2 hrs and it will be for 3 days in a week i.e Thursday, Friday and Saturday..
- Special guest lectures, interactive session based workshop, videos, group discussion and films will be arranged/ organized as a part of this certificate course.
- For each Module participants will be graded on the basis of internal and external evaluation through written assignments, participation in quiz programs and multiple choice question format.
- Also, there will be street plays so as to build awareness in the campus or among other groups of the society.

Fees-

- Law Student from MMSCLC, Pune- Rs. 2500/-
- Students from outside MMSCLC, Pune- Rs. 3000/-

Duration of the Certificate Course –

3 months (21st July, 2022 to 20th October, 2022)

Mode of Teaching – Hybrid mode (Online + Offline) through Google meet.

Link for joining sessions:

<https://meet.google.com/mce-wpep-ove>

Or dial: (US) +1 260-327-1937 PIN: 769 516 320#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/mce-wpep-ove?pin=6036498841635>

Sessions - 37 (Each session will be for 2hrs)

Days – Thursday, Friday and Saturday (2:00pm to 4:00pm)

Details of the Course:

- Special guest lectures, interactive session-based workshop, videos, group discussion and films will be arranged/organized as a part of this certificate course.
- For each module students were graded on the basis of internal and external evaluation through written assignments, participation in quiz programs and multiple choice question format and group presentation.
- Graduates or Undergraduates above 18 years of age
- 3 months consisting of 39 sessions of 2 hours each on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- The course was conducted in online mode.

- Interested students were requested to drop an email at courses@sclc.edu.in enquiring for seat availability. On receiving the email, the coordinators interviewed the applicants to know about the applicant, their basic understanding of the topic and relevance of this issue in their professional career.

Principal Resource person of the Course:

About Dr. R. Raj Rao who is former Professor and Head of the Department of English at the SPPU, Pune University, India, where he taught Creative Writing and Queer Studies for over a decade, and Indian Writing in English for nearly 30 years. Dr. Rao obtained his PhD in English from the

University of Bombay in 1986, and received the Nehru Centenary British Fellowship for postdoctoral research at the Centre for Caribbean Studies, University of Warwick, UK, in 1990. Also he has written several books, poetry, plays, articles and research papers in various journals at National and International Level. Rao has given readings from his work in London, New York, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, Milan, Barcelona, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Montreal and Toronto, Dhaka and Colombo among other world cities, as well as all over India. He has been a visiting professor at Dresden University, Germany, Tübingen University, Germany and Concordia University, Canada. Dr. Rao has been a panelist at the Jaipur Literature Festival and at literature festivals in Bombay, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, Goa, Lucknow and Shillong.

Resource Persons:

1. **Prof. (Dr.) R. Raj Rao** (Principal Resource Person)
Former HOD English Literature Dept, SPPU, Academician, Activist, Author, Poet and Playwright
2. **Zainab Patel**
Inclusion Catalyst, Development Professional, Story Teller, Inspirational Speaker, Human Rights Practitioner and Change Agent
3. **Parmesh Shahani**
Author of Queeristan (2020); Gay Bombay (2008). Public speaker; Culture Curator, LGBTQIA+ inclusion advocate; Former Head - Godrej India Culture Lab + D&I; TED Senior Fellow; Yale World Fellow; World Economic Forum YGL
4. **Sagar Barve**
Activist and LGBTQIA+ Network Moderator, Pune
5. **Ashok Row Kavi**
Chairperson Humsafar Trust, Mumbai, Academician and visiting faculty at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Technical Resource Person WHO, Journalist and LGBTQIA+ rights Activist.
6. **Dr. Kaustubh Joag**
Psychiatrist and Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy, Indian Law Society, Pune Maharashtra



5. Martin Dubberman, Stonewall.
6. Ruth Vanita, Love's Rite: Same-Sex Marriage in India and the West.
7. Parmesh Shahani, Queeristan: LGBTQ Inclusion in the Indian Workplace.

MODULE 3

1. Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai Eds., Same Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History.
2. Hoshang Merchant Ed., Yaraana: Gay Writing from India.
3. Ashwini Sukthankar Ed., Facing the Mirror: Lesbian Writing from India.
4. Minal Hajratwala Ed., Out: Stories from the New Queer India.
5. R. Raj Rao, The Boyfriend.
6. Laxminarayan Tripathi, Me Hijra, Me Laxmi, Translated by R. Raj Rao and P. G. Joshi.
7. A. Revathi, The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story, Translated by V. Geetha Shohini Ghosh, Fire.
8. Ojas Kolvankar and Shubham Ladha, "Hidden City" in Verve, January-February 2019.

FILMS/ MOVIES

1. Fire Dir. Deepa Mehta.
2. Aligarh Dir. Hansal Mehta.
3. BomGay Dir. Riyad Wadia.
4. Quest Dir. Amol Palekar.
5. Brokeback Mountain Dir. Ang Lee.
6. No Easy Walk to Freedom Dir. Nancy Nicol.
7. The Pink Mirror Dir. Sridhar Rangayan.
8. The Bath House Dir. Sachin Kundalkar.
9. I Am Dir. Onir Ban.
10. Ajceeb Dastaan Hai Yeh Dir. Karan Johar, in Bombay Talkies.

VIDEOS

1. Project Bolo Dir. Sridhar Rangayan.
2. Discussion on Aligarh in Talking Films Online, You Tube.
3. Memories Pierce the Heart: Homoeroticism Bollywood Style, You Tube.

Weblinks for online study materials:

1. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/sex-and-relationships/new-and-expanding-hues-of-the-rainbow/story-7ac2JxmKhYJhQKnE8FTqHN.html>
2. <https://www.google.com/search?kgmid=/g/12bnkvfcb&hl=en-IN&q=Whistling+in+the+Dark:+Twenty-One+Queer+Interviews&kgs=174886a6294ae145&shnd=17&source=sh/x/kp/osrp/4&entrypoint=sh/x/kp/osrp>
3. <https://literariness.org/2016/10/10/judith-butlers-concept-of-performativity/>
4. <https://cla.purdue.edu/academic/english/theory/genderandsex/modules/butlergendersex.html>
5. <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2016/11/14/judith-butlers-performativity/>



6. https://www.amazon.in/dp/9386446499/ref=cm_sw_r_wa_apa_glt_j_FH4Y20MBW69_NAIJG7TKX
7. The Color Purple <https://g.co/kgs/2irwN3>
8. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1000072.A_Married_Woman
9. My Own Country: A Doctor's Story of a Town and Its People in the Age of Aids
<https://g.co/kgs/Ng8egi>
10. Sexual dissidence <https://g.co/kgs/72kejF>
11. Madam, Give Me My Sex <https://g.co/kgs/uwP8Rz>
12. Out of Time: The Queer Politics of Postcoloniality <https://g.co/kgs/UjXPMo>
13. Link for list of references made during lectures:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bGpqiQzy40ST7FbVmlqtwOJIZMtiQk_FAuS_DbKZjYJk/edit?usp=sharing
14. https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ1z3rFPjMf?utm_medium=copy_link
15. Link for document containing references made during lecture:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bGpqiQzy40ST7FbVmlqtwOJIZMtiQk_FAuS_DbKZjYJk/edit?usp=sharing
16. Playlist for Certificate Course on Law and Alternative Sexualities:
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7Dqioy5szPdFECutzZR1oLmvI7eTohK>
17. Here's a show for you... LGBT Kyun?
<https://open.spotify.com/show/6hUjExYeqxokvRjXF8OD9Y?si=0bYOscH9RqS-hvg6x9PHPQ>
18. Details about ATHI : <https://www.athionline.com/resources>
19. <https://www.athionline.com/gfej>
20. Transgender Persons Protection of rights Act
https://www.athionline.com/files/ugd/5cceb3_0235b81bca71403ea61421e9ba97c0e3.pdf
21. Transgender persons protection of rights rules 2020:
https://www.athionline.com/files/ugd/5cceb3_ddfdd93fb9244d4a8a7656c2e49dd69c.pdf
- 22.

Number of Participants:

27 participants from all over India from different professional background enrolled for this course. (Law students, Lawyers, Psychologists, IIT Engineer, PhD scholars, School teachers, Professors and Social Activists)

II Course Fees and Admission Process

Interested participants are requested to pay the fees and submit this application form at courses@sclc.edu.in

1. Course Fees: Rs. 2,500/- MM's SCLC students and Rs. 3000/- for non-MM's SCLC students

Lectures details:

Dr. Renu Naidu and Prof. Dr. R. Raj Rao came up with the novel idea, while Ms. Shivani Jadhav coordinated its execution. The certificate program's comprehensive design kept greater

sociocultural shifts in understandings of sexual orientation and gender identity in mind. The three-month course was specifically created to deal with the fundamental issue of lack of understanding and acceptance, anxiety, ignorance, guilt, perplexity, hesitation to ask inquiries about gender identity, and many other related issues. In addition to raising awareness among college students, the initiative promoted free thought and debate, which would further contribute to the development of a campus that values diversity of thought and individuals from all backgrounds. Additionally, judicial and policy victories have paved the way for improvements in policies and procedures that will unquestionably improve the mental health of young LGBTQIA+ people.

The course comprised lectures from renowned speakers, a majority of whom were part of the community themselves

Dr. R. Raj Rao took many sessions over the period of three months. Firstly, he briefed on the LGBT+ community before defining the terms used in connection with it. He explained the distinction between sexual preferences and identity. He defined what it meant to politicise one's sexuality. He addressed heterosexism, heteronormativity, and homosociality. He also spoke about the Stonewall Riot and homosexuality in the ancient world, including Greece and Rome. He also gave an insight for coalition, intersection, and inclusivity. In his final section, he discussed the representation of alternative sexualities in contemporary Indian literature and film.

Kanav Sahgal spoke how the queer people's spaces of inhabitancy, covering legal, digital and social institutions. Psychiatrist Dr. Anagha Karve Jog's session consisted of developmental perspectives of sexuality where she drew the distinction between sex and gender and then went on to explain how the society affects the gender related behaviour of a person. Dr. Kaustubh Joag covered the mental health issues that affect the LGBTQ like depression and anxiety as well the wellbeing of the community, referring to various case studies and exploring their causes. Dr. Kanchan Pawar's informative session covered the health concerns of the LGBTQIA+ community, the HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections and about the gender affirming surgeries while also shedding light on the homophobia and transphobia present in healthcare. Adv. Anand Grover and Adv. Manuraj's session explored their experiences with Indian and International law and law enforcements dealing with LGBT issues as well as how much his NGO has accomplished working with the police and the medical professionals. Manvendra Singh Gohil, the gay prince of India, shared with the participants his experience of coming out to not just his family but also to the world, and how much he has used his prerogative to foster a safe environment for the LGBT youth. Sagar Barve explained the distinctions between gender and sex to the students before delving into the many pronouns for various sexual and gender orientations and their significance. He also discussed how the LGBT+ group is welcomed in the corporate world. Zainab Patel's three lectures focused on how LGBT is not a Western notion and introduced the students to sculptures found in ancient Indian temples, Vedic scriptures, and stories from the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata that showed awareness and acceptance of the "Tritiya prakriti" (the third sex). She explained how the Mughals welcomed the hijra community and were given established roles in society with genuine respect in the second session, which focused on mediaeval India. In the third session, she went into great detail on the current situation of the transgender community and came to the conclusion that while India has come a long way from marginalizing them to enacting laws for them, we still have a long way to go. Parmesh Shahani explained the current status and conditions of LGBT+ community in the corporate world in addition to sharing his past experiences of working with the Godrej



company. Dr. Sanjay Sharma, Aruna Desai explained how to come out to Indian parents and why it might take some time for ethnic parents to accept a queer child while sharing her experience accepting her son's sexual orientation. Dr. Sanjay Sharma then explained how everyone has both masculine and feminine sides before assigning the students the task of learning LGBT terms in vernacular Indian languages.

Assignment:

The assignment required to be submitted on or before 30th December 2022 for successful completion of Certificate Course on Law and Alternative Sexualities (subject to adequate attendance) Participants were asked to write a Research Paper on any topic covered in Modules 1, 2 and 3. The word limit was 5000 words. The submission was accompanied by relevant footnotes, references and bibliography. The assignment was of 100 marks.

Research Paper topics from 2nd Edition of the Certificate Course on "Law and Alternative Sexualities"

1. Transcending the Binary of Heteronormativity: A Study of Texts Based on Alternate Sexuality
2. A walk through Queer India across time
3. Participation Right Of Transgender People In Sports: A Touchstone For Equality.
4. Queer Failure: The Promise of Failure as a Way of Life.
5. The representation of Alternative Sexuality in Ancient India
6. In search of "roving restlessness": Negotiating queer in Jerry Pinto's murder in Mahim.
7. Decentering heteronormativity: A study of homosexual desire and gay subculture in Vasudhendra's 'Mohanswamy'
8. Gay marriage and civil unions.
9. The lack of adoption rights for Queer people in India: An analytical and comparative perspective.
10. Legality of same sex marriage in India: Problems and perspective
11. LGBTQ- Section 377, intersectionality and inclusion
12. Violation of human rights in LGBTQ+ community
13. Aggravated mental health issues in transgenders due to gender dysphoria and other social pressures in India
14. The representation of alternative sexualities in historic and modern India
15. To study the awareness of alternative sexualities in young adults of Pune city
16. Heteronormativity and coming out of the closet: Study
17. Alternative sexuality: A study of hindi cinema
18. An analysis of misrepresentation of queer in hindi films "Shubh Mangal Zyaada Saavdhan" and "Badhai Do"
19. Defining and identifying the rights of the LGBTQ+ community
20. Bromance in Bollywood: A journey from "Sholay" to "Sonu ke Titu ki Sweety"
21. Current status of transgender persons in India
22. Representation of alternative sexuality in Indian cinema
23. Queerness as an intrinsic part of Hinduism
24. Homosexuality in Ancient Greece, Rome, France, Germany, England and America: The Stone Wall Riot.



Link created to submit the assignment:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScSqTUGBpMpT5gRyzKR06g7Mcl2-dMk4jWv6efXTdrkhMf_yw/closedform)

Feedback Form links for individual sessions:

1. Feedback form for Pallavi Pareek: <https://forms.gle/XzAX5vYeWiASMMa37>
2. Feedback Form for Dhanashree Ghare: <https://forms.gle/DvDGxjoohta5Q84x5>
3. Feedback Form for Parmesh Shahani: <https://forms.gle/VIVWwzFjRuyNsBSh7>
4. Feedback (Sagar Barve): <https://forms.gle/H5pb6SwP6JBg3X4R9>
5. Feedback form for Manvendra Singh Gohil:
<https://forms.gle/RVR97SH6MsjYcMXU>
6. Feedback form for Bindumadhav Khire:
<https://forms.gle/TJpatcMJmvHMzvxS9>
7. Feedback Form for Dr. Seema Sahay: <https://forms.gle/xyqvoP4TwAL2d2Ne8>
8. Feedback form for Zainab Patel: <https://forms.gle/cQiBqtomZAsbgGrs5>
9. Feedback form for Sylvester Merchant:
<https://forms.gle/x3QY4Hh9bHucHhsM7>
10. Feedback Form for Prof. (Dr.) R Raj Rao:
<https://forms.gle/dBB8mNZX1GA2DodB6>
11. Feedback Form for Dr. Kaustubh Joag: <https://forms.gle/fja9zmP4yrLUR3dE8>
12. Feedback Form for Dr. Anagha Jog: <https://forms.gle/9sPJCiU4Jzr9eAQQ6>
13. Feedback Form for Kanav N Sehgal: <https://forms.gle/5vNvcLbEHEk6kebhA>
14. Feedback Form for sessions conducted by Prof. (Dr.) R Raj Rao:
<https://forms.gle/dBB8mNZX1GA2DodB6>
15. Feedback form for Dr. Kanchan Pawar: <https://forms.gle/cQiBqtomZAsbgGrs5>

Overall Feedback:

- According to many participants this course/ similar course should be a part of Gender Studies in the current curriculum offered by the various Universities.
- Learned about usage and employment of the term queer as both negative and positive through works and perspectives of different authors; and also perspectives on transgender identity through works of Revathi and Tripathi.
- Our education system needs to make knowledge and information about queer theories more accessible and easier to understand. "When we talk about queer theory, a lot it is prescribed to the English language. The vocabulary and language that we use are inaccessible at times. When such inaccessible information mixes with rigid ideas like religion and morality, it makes it difficult for the larger population to understand



different ways of life that are not heteronormative or normative in the sense that we think of them to be. I feel this gap needs to be bridged, the gap regarding language and understanding. Colleges and education institutions should design courses and programs that will present all the information around queer studies in an accessible format so that it boosts awareness about the community."

- They got to learn about each of these terms in different meanings, like sexual, social, political and their relation with different movements within and outside the broader feminist movement and not only this such academic courses help in building awareness towards day to day problems that people from LGBTQIA+ community members face.
- Some of the participants learned about sexuality as a desire, with its minoritizing view and its universal view; i.e. fluid view versus binary view. They learned in detail about Judith Butler's concept of performativity and the 'obscuring of historicity.' Also, they have mentioned in the feedback forms that they get to learn how sex assigned at birth leads to gender (social) which leads to masculine-feminine (cultural or male-female), which leads to preference which can be biological or psychological but is universally thought of as heterosexual and understood the concepts of intersectionality and inclusion and how it has become a buzzword today.
- The session ended with more discussion around literature which crosses the boundary between religion, sexuality, and morality and trying to delink them, through different schools of thought and different scholars. We particularly looked at the example of Oscar Wilde's life and the concept of sexual deviance.
- "The biggest concern is the anxiety about being rejected. Acceptance is what they seek and they look out for people who may be accepting. Even though colleges should be treated equally, students from the LGBTQIA+ community get discriminated against due to a lack of awareness," Sharing about one of her students, she says, "That students pleaded for help and said that change my orientation because people outside won't accept me like this. As a counsellor, she felt that the more she knows the better she will be able to do for the community by providing them with the right kind of support and resources which will help them with their mental health and their life in general."

Media coverage :

- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/professionals-and-students-extend-their-hands-in-alliance/articleshow/91095708.cms>
- <https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=11251466674&imageview=0>
- https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ1z3rFPjMf/?utm_medium=copy_link
- Professionals and students extend their hands in alliance [Sushmita Jha TNN/ Updated:](#) Professionals and students want to go to the grass-roots level to study queer theories and alternative sexualities in connection to the law so that they can help the

community to grow with pride Leo Buscaglia says, 'Change is the end result of true learning,' and we believe true learning only happens when an individual is aware of all relevant aspects of a subject. This is where awareness and education come to play, if you are well-read about a particular subject, bringing a change is easier. Believing strongly about bringing a change and creating a diverse, inclusive, and LGBTQIA+ friendly society, professionals and students are taking up special courses that will make them stronger as an ally.



Connecting law to gender studies makes it a unique program: Dr Renu Naidu
The course has been introduced to honour the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community and aims to introduce students to the concept of alternative sexual identities; the history, law, politics and literature of alternative sexualities in ancient, medieval and contemporary India. "Such programs help not only in building awareness among our college students but also in fostering the free exchange of ideas which would further help in building a campus that welcomes diversity of opinion and people of all backgrounds. Also, legal and policy successes have set the stage for advances in programs and practices that will foster LGBTQIA+ youth mental health," says Dr Renu Naidu, the program officer. She extends her gratitude to Principal B G Jadhav, Executive President, Marathwada Mitra Mandal, Pune and Dr. Kranti Deshmukh, Principal, Shankarrao Chavan Law College for encouraging and extending support for the implementation of the certificate course. The three-month certificate course is about to conclude whereas the next roll out of this course is going to start from July, 2022.

Third gender studies should be given equal importance

A total number of 47 colleges across India offer courses in gender studies or women studies. Teaching about feminism, gender, sexuality, femininity is very important but third gender studies too should be given the right value and priority. "The core of gender studies is women studies. The topic of women studies is looked at through the lens of femininity associated with women only. I believe including teachings specific to the third gender could make gender studies more effective for the masses which will result in alliance," says

Shivani Jadhav, Coordinator for the Certificate Course on Law and Alternative Sexualities which has been recently introduced by Marathwada Mitra Mandal's Shankarrao Chavan Law, Pune. The course is an initiative designed by Dr. Renu Naidu and Prof. Dr. R. Raj Rao and coordinated by Shivani Jadhav. It is designed with a holistic approach keeping in mind awareness to larger socio-cultural shifts in understandings of sexual and gender identities. Eminent speakers from the community like Prof Dr R Raj Rao, Zainab Patel, Ashok Row Kavi, Shobhna Kumar, Bindumadhav Khire, Parmesh Shahni, Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil and Sylvester Merchant will hold special lectures for the students.

Accessible knowledge will spread better

Rajeev Anand Kushwa, a research scholar and a participant of this course, says that our education system needs to make knowledge and information about queer theories more accessible and easy to understand. "When we talk about queer theory, a lot of it is prescribed to the English language. The vocabulary and language that we use are inaccessible at times. When such inaccessible information mixes with rigid ideas like religion and morality, it makes it difficult for the larger population to understand different ways of life that are not heteronormative or normative in the sense that we think of them to be. I feel this gap needs to be bridged, the gap regarding language and understanding. Colleges and education institutions should design courses and programs that will present all the information around queer studies in an accessible format so that it boosts awareness about the community," says Rajeev.



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Late. Shri. Shankarrao Chavan
Founder President

Shri. Shivajirao D. Ganage
President

Prin. Bhausaheb Jadhav
Exe - President

Alliance is a positive move towards acceptance

Dhanashree Ghare is the college counsellor at Marathwada Mitra Mandal's Shankarrao Chavan Law and she shares that students from the community have a common concern. "The biggest concern is the anxiety about being rejected. Acceptance is what they seek and they look out for people who may be accepting. Even though colleges should be treated equally, students from the LGBTQIA+ community get discriminated against due to a lack of awareness," says Dhanashree who has also taken up the course to be able to provide the right resources for the students from the community. Sharing about one of her students, she says, "That student pleaded for help and said that change my orientation because people outside won't accept me like this. As a counsellor, I felt that the more I know the better I will be able to do for the community by providing them with the right kind of support and resources which will help them with their mental health and their life in general." *Studying with a diverse crowd brings in different narratives from various parts of the country. I wanted to know what kind of discourse goes on about my community and the identity that I have. How do other people study queer people, how do they talk about the rights of my community and how they want to extend their hand in alliance with us- Rajveer Anand Kushwa, research scholar and a member of the queer community*

In-person interaction with community members helps open up your mind
No matter how many theories you read, your education and awareness about anything are incomplete if you haven't practically experienced it. The same applies to the queer community, a lot of people are ignorant about community because they have never been up close with a queer person. *Saloni Kasegaonkar* a student of law never really interacted with a queer person. It was only during the course that she came across activists, writers, teachers from the community and she believes that those interactions made her realise that being an ally is the least one can do. "As a law student, it is my responsibility that I should understand and know every perspective of the society. Moreover, I am also writing a research paper on uniform civil code, so to have inclusivity and detailed knowledge, I attempt to understand the perspective of the community. We are a product of a homophobic society, so taking up such courses and inching towards becoming an ally, is the smallest thing that we can do to support the community, accept them as any other individual and fight for their rights," shares *Saloni*.

Dr. Branti Deshmukh
Principal
SCLC, Pune

Dr. Renu Naidu
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Chairperson Equal Opportunity Cell
SCLC, Pune

Dated: 30/11/2022

