

Women and Legal Education: Unearthing the Gender Experiences of Female Students in Law Schools

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the gendered experiences of female students in Indian law schools, highlighting the influence of societal norms and patriarchal expectations on their education and career choices. Despite the growing presence of national universities offering legal education, women continue to face significant challenges rooted in traditional gender roles. These societal pressures often dictate the professions deemed appropriate for women, reinforcing male-dominated norms and limiting their professional autonomy. Through an analysis of the experiences of female law students, this study sheds light on the structural barriers they encounter both within educational institutions and in broader society. The findings emphasize the need for systemic changes at the home, workplace, and societal levels to create a more equitable environment for women pursuing careers in law.

Keywords – Gender bias, India, legal education, legal profession, patriarchy, urban spaces.

INTRODUCTION

‘Law’ as a field of study has been, traditionally, perceived across many cultures as a predominantly male domain. Researchers and scholars have often tried to study the lack of women in law schools and the consequent barriers that prevent their entry into the legal profession. Works of scholars such as Dinerman (1969), Barnes (1970), Michelson (2013), and Weisberg (1977) have often looked at law

even in Western developed countries as essentially a male preserve. These works have been trying to unearth the reasons for the lack of women and the nature of gender gap in legal education and profession. These studies have led us to critically analyze the barriers and discrimination that women often encounter in pursuing legal education and the societal and institutional hindrances to selecting law as a profession.

The public-private dichotomy within feminist theorization refers to the phenomenon of public and private aspects being divided between genders. Accordingly, while the public sphere, and its natural corollary — participation in public/outside spaces such as work and politics — is essentially seen as a male domain, the private sphere, with its relationship to the family and home, is associated with women. This division is more multifaceted, as it goes beyond the modest division of two forms of social activity that takes place distinctly. This dichotomy has served to entrench the patriarchal system and often reflects women's inability to participate in, and practice as, what are seemingly public spaces or male spaces; it has led women to be associated with private, domestic or women spaces. While public (male) spaces are characterized by power and leadership, private (women) spaces emphasize values of care and nurturing.

This dichotomy is evident not only in the realms of looking at women's position within private spaces of domesticity but in the values associated with private spaces, which are also associated with the professions that women choose, or can choose, according to gender appropriateness. As a natural corollary, the public sphere domains of business, economy, politics, and law are often open to men, whereas professions that are more appropriate for the private sphere, such as teaching, nursing, tailoring, and cooking, are seen as fitting for women.

It is not difficult to fathom that law, with its androcentric realm and conditions, has not been a very viable career option for women. The present paper, therefore, attempts to analyze the narratives of female students of law schools of metropolitan city of New Delhi in order to unearth the masculine culture of legal studies through their day-to-day gender experiences and the way they shape women perspectives and future career prospects.

In the past few decades (at least since the 1970s), western countries have witnessed a steady rise in women's enrollment in law schools. Women's entrance and expanding membership in the legal profession has been one of the most noteworthy milestones in recent times and can be termed "revolutionary" (Abel, 1988).

In India too, the enrollment of women in law schools has experienced a firm increase in recent years. Wadhawan (2023), in an article in *The Times of India*, noted that "The CLAT 2023 exam, conducted in 2022, witnessed 56 percent females appearing for the exam, and similar trend also persisted in 2024

with 67 percent women appearing in the exam”¹. Additionally, the emergence of National Law Universities in many Federal States of India and the emergence of law colleges in metropolitan cities with convenient transportation systems have encouraged women to study law.

In the past few years, there has been a surge in the number of girls admitted to law schools in India with an almost 50% admission ratio for girl students. Academic scholars in India have also reported that the ratio of girls to boys was 50:50 after the emergence of National Law Universities (Hemant, 2022).

The increasing number of females in legal educational institutions strongly suggests that sticky floors and glass ceilings have started becoming distant memories. It is expected that this development has also led to vociferous claims of gender equality in the legal profession. However, while women’s enrollment has steadily increased, the same cannot be said or asserted about their participation in the legal profession. Any attempt to close the issue of gender equality in the legal profession with the debate of an equal ratio of girls enrolling today in legal studies has, now, been overshadowed by the missing number of women in the legal profession, leading us to ponder over reasons for the same.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the *India Higher Education Report (2023)*, Varghese and Sabharwal (eds.) argue that despite the expansion and increase of women enrollment numbers in higher education, gender inequality poses immense hurdles in realizing the transformative role that the higher education can have for women wellbeing and leadership roles. Works like Krauskopf (1994), Purvis (2012) have been hinting to uncover gender issues persisting in law schools in order to understand how they shape gender worldviews that reflects gender bias in legal profession. Scholarly works like Katz et al. (2023) have also highlighted how increased women enrollment in law schools continues to be inconclusive on debates about women progress in legal education and legal profession.

The upward surge has, undoubtedly, been seen in women’s enrollment in legal studies in India too. Sadly, however, the same cannot be said about women taking up law as a profession subsequent to the study of law, where numbers actually show “huge gender disparities”. (HC judge laments, 2023). Michelson’s study of women in the legal profession from the 1970s to 2010 noted a huge gap in women’s participation in the legal profession globally. Analyzing data on lawyer populations and gender compositions assembled from national censuses and lawyer data from approximately 86 countries, the research offers a

¹ Common Law Admission Test: A common, country-level entrance examination for admission into Law programs in India.

compelling and convincing analysis of the relationship between bar expansion and lawyers' feminization. Addressing numeral representation of women as 'lawyers' feminization', the study noted that, in most of the countries of the world, feminization has hardly begun. Citing his study on the most populous countries like China and India, he confirms that "despite dramatic growth in the production of lawyers, China and India, the two most populous countries in the world, have failed to exhibit noticeable lawyer feminization and remain far below the global average" (Michelson, 2013, p.1075).

The reason for the lack of women in legal profession has been explored from the angle of gender disadvantage that women encounter in practice (Harrington 2013; Hagan & Kay, 1995). A very recent study, *Quiet Rebels: Researching Gender Patterns in the History of Ontario Women Lawyers* (Mossman, 2024), has tried to record and analyze the narratives of 187 women lawyers of Ontario enrolled between 1897-1957. The work tried to uncover the gender experiences in 'little stories' that reveal an important 'bigger story' of gendered patterns of exclusion in legal profession.

Scholars often tried to study the lack of women in legal space and the barriers that prevent their entry into the legal profession. However, very few studies have examined the exclusion shaping out of the gendered experiences of girl students in law schools. The present research, thereby, intends to fill this gap and uncover the gendered experiences of women in law schools. Towards this end, delving into the voices of female students enrolled in graduate-level law degree courses was imperative to understand the consequent exclusion.

The objectives of this research are to collate the gendered narratives of female students in law schools, unearth the existing institutional and structural challenges that women face in translating legal education into legal professions, and examine the role of gender disparity in altering career paths.

METHOD

The present article attempts to unearth and analyze the voices of 50 girl students from across semesters of three law schools in the metropolitan city of New Delhi pursuing a-year course of law graduation. It attempts to uncover their gendered experiences and unearth how their gender identity shapes their life choices and prospects.

It qualitatively assesses the narratives and comments of female students to assess their experiences of law school and also quantifies the data for assessing majority women preferences around questions of future prospects in legal profession. Predominantly, the work adopts the methodology to interpret the narratives of female students as the methodology of analyzing narratives with endeavor to enhance the "potential of combining qualitative and quantitative techniques for reaching a better understanding of causal processes and for allowing a prominent place for the role of human agency in sociological explanations" (Elliott, 2005, p. 171 cited in Doran et al., 2022).

The current work is based on structured and unstructured interviews, since during interviewing, it was found that girls were often more forthcoming regarding their experiences either when they were interviewed one-to-one or when they could collaborate with other girls. Therefore, the present study is a combination of personal interviews and focused group discussions on the stated issue. It was deemed important to recollect women's experiences individually to explore the multiplicity of barriers arising in life paths, while collectively, women's voices resonated with one another in finding common issues arising due to their gender identity. Consequently, the questionnaire used in the study differed across the different women interviewed. While certain general questions were asked to alike (questions attached)², the unstructured part of the interview went with the flow of conversation, which was not necessarily preplanned or systematized with previously related questioning.

PARTICIPANTS

This paper focuses exclusively on women's voices to understand the role of women's concerns emanating from their personal spaces. It studies the voices of 50 female students in one-to-one and group settings and tries to draw analysis from the female narratives. The work assumes that women's voices can portray a rather undistorted picture of social reality than the voices of men, akin to the conclusion by Alison Jaggar (2004) that women's voices are "more capable of producing an accurate, comprehensive, and interpretation of social reality than men" (cited in Brooks, 2007, p. 66).

During study, young girls often refrained from speaking out loudly and assertively when group membership was predominant in presence of boy students. However, since the girls' voices sometimes came from spaces occupied by boys, it was important to register the boy' views on some concerning issues. In addition, for the purpose of comparatively analyzing gendered experiences, the narratives of boys studying law were also assessed. Towards this purpose, 40 such boys were asked structured interview questions (referred to above) in focused group discussions.

The paper, however, does not depend on the presentation of statistical data for analyses of the questions asked, as the primary goal was to delve deeper into personal insights gathered during the course to determine the structural inequalities perceived by the respondents. Collectively, these methods were adopted to gather narratives or experiences and use the content analysis method to unearth and find the meaning of gendered experiences and to illuminate the

² General Questionnaire – 1. Name of the student
2. Father's/Mother's profession
3. Reasons for enrolling in law school program
4. Future prospects
5. Gender Discrimination in law school faced, if any

complexity of women's experiences in law schools and interpret them from a feministic perspective.

INTERPRETING & ANALYZING THE VOICES OF WOMEN

While analyzing the personal interviews, it was found that the themes majorly touched upon few predominant issues. Accordingly, the narratives have been categorized into three broad categories

- i) Gender appropriateness and law
- ii) Limited participation in litigation
- iii) Masculinity at the core of the legal profession.

Gender Appropriateness and Law

In the course of interviews, invariably, the initial discussions centered around the barriers faced by girl students while entering the legal field. It was seen that, while females were motivated to be in an active legal profession in the initial years of legal studies, in later years, they exhibited disenchantment and distanced themselves from their initial plan and tried to change their inclination towards more 'gender appropriate' profession. The gender appropriateness of the legal profession was the underlying discussion towards which the interviews of girl students invariably veered.

While narrating their experiences of entering a law school, girls often reflected upon the societal perceptions of attributing law as an inappropriate profession for girls. One of the female respondents of the eighth semester spoke about the hardships of selecting the course. She highlighted how her parents, who were in government jobs, suffered backlash from relatives and friends to let their daughter opt for a 'gender inappropriate' field of law. She described the remarks of her relative etched in her memory as "*acchhi ladkiya law nahi karti*" (good girls do not pursue law education and "*kaun shaadi karega?*" (who will marry you?) (K. Gupta, personal communication, January 10, 2024). However, while her firm determination to opt for this career could not deter her initially, after the initial few months of her internship at district law courts, she found herself exposed to the grim realities of the gender gap in the legal profession. She felt disappointed that the law courts of Delhi were unambiguously and unabashedly male dominant. Established lawyers treated young girls as secretaries rather than actual law interns, capable of learning. The girl recalled her experience of internship under a Delhi High Court lawyer in her seventh semester and said "there was no learning; we just used to roam behind the lawyer, picking up his files". (K. Gupta, personal communication, January 10, 2024). Awakened to the harsh reality by her teachers in the initial years of law school — about law being a discipline exhibiting masculinity — she also talked about her barrier to being a part of liaison work with police officers, especially in cases of criminal law, as police personnel often refrain from engaging in communication with women

advocates, resulting in difficulties in executing the work. Her experience echoed Lani Guinier's three decades old study of girls in law schools which revealed that many female law students felt that "learning to think like a lawyer means learning to think and act like a man" (Guinier et al., 1994, p.5). Looking at the issues around her, the student, disappointingly, recalled and was forced to acknowledge the initial hostile reactions from her relatives and friends as honest concerns.

Institutions often subordinate few groups by creating overt or covert rules that can legitimize monopolistic practices and, thereby, close off opportunities to other groups. (Murphy, 1988, p.88). One participant in her last semester poured her heart out:

My parents were not very supportive of my taking up law as, in my family, nobody belonged to the stream. My father is a businessman and mother is a house wife. But I was determined to take up the profession as law always felt empowering to me. Over the past few years, I have been doing my internships under lawyers of the High Court, Delhi and, sometimes, I am doubtful if I'll be able to survive in this atmosphere. The court system exhibits a strong sense of masculinity, sometimes I felt sidelined from matters related to crime and matters where a visit to the police station is required. Most of the times, my work is only confined to undertaking background research for cases and briefings... this is disappointing and disheartening (S. Kapoor, personal communication, Jan 20, 2024).

In his theory of social closure, Weber, similarly, highlights that closure is the way by which power is derived from the process of exclusion (cited in Murphy, 1988, p.101). We can see that social closure in instances of characteristic features of the legal profession work to disadvantage the entry of women into the field. This form of exclusion works with the creation of masculine work culture, a lack of soft skills, etc., that create barriers for women.

Limited Participation in Litigation

During interviews with students (both boys and girls), it was noted that the preferred career prospects of girls after graduating from law differed largely from the choices given by boys. Invariably, girls wanted to appear either for Judicial Services, work in academics or go for corporate jobs. A career in Litigation was conspicuous in the exhibition of reluctance by girl students of law, whereas boys showed enthusiasm for their career in litigation. Justice Pratibha M. Singh (2023) highlighted that there is a problem of "the "enormous disparity" present in the legal profession in India, where women constitute only 15 percent of practicing lawyers. She added that while more than half of the students in law schools are today women, their representation among practicing lawyers was very low".

Mishra's work, *'Women in Indian Courts of Law: A Study of Women Legal Professionals'* (2015), which was based on the study of the District Court of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, explored the statistics of women in the legal profession and noted that certain characteristics can be highlighted to see women's participation being affected according to their marital status, age, experiences of gender discrimination, familial obligation and so forth. The barriers that restrict women's entry into the profession are multiple and complex.

The present study found that first-year and second-year female students of law were enthusiastic about entering litigation. An exposure to the prevalent masculinity and machismo in the working of the courts, however, finds them 'suitably' molding or adjusting their career choices in the later years. Out of 50 female students, 10 out of 15 girl participants in their first and second years of law were excited about the upcoming opportunities in litigation after their completion of the law. However, 25 out of 28 female students in the final year of law did not want to join litigation and chose to look at academic, judicial or office jobs as a more viable option. On the other hand, out of 40 boys across semesters, 33 showed inclinations to join litigation and recalled their internships as exciting experiences. Additionally, out of the 13 female students whose parents belonged to legal background (either judges, advocates or partners in law firms), only 4 girls were looking at litigation as a viable carrier option. While in the case of boys, out of 40 students, only 15 had their parents working in legal profession and 13 of them were aiming for litigation after completion of law education.

Masculinity at the Core of the Legal Profession

In an interview, one of the girls highlighted how options to pursue law would end for her if she did not find a foothold in either judicial services or academics. She was candid in her admission that she initially wanted to enter into litigation, however, now, she feels that survival in law courts requires very masculine traits and norms.

Masculinity is deeply entrenched within the legal profession. Many scholars have discussed masculinity in the context of the legal profession. Collier (2013, p.15), in *Rethinking Men and Masculinities in the Contemporary Legal Profession: The Example of Fatherhood, Transnational Business Masculinities, and Work-Life Balance in Large Law Firms*, has discussed how the role that masculinities play in constructing opportunities in large law firms is often unsuited or incompatible with the values attached to nurturing and caregiving responsibilities.

A girl student of final year recalled that placement opportunities in big law firms were often unequal and girls were not a preferred choice. She highlighted that during an interview, she was asked "if she was comfortable to work till midnight?" (A. Jain, personal communication, Feb 8, 2024) and that she would have to arrange her own transportation thereafter. Problems like these

force women to opt out of such opportunities and, thereby, look at time-bound jobs like academics or office jobs as more appropriate and female-friendly.

During the initial phases of my study, I remember my criminology teacher in law school reminding me of how this stream is a difficult one for girls to survive in. I think, over the past few years in law school, I have started realizing my limitations on account of belonging to the female gender. My main focus right now is to target Delhi Judicial Services examinations; I am also preparing for LL.M. (Masters in Law) and, over the course, will undertake NET (National Eligibility Test for postgraduates to pursue career as teachers in India). (G. Bansal, personal communication, Jan 20, 2024).

Ann McGinley (2013) also argues that masculinity is often an embedded feature in law firms and is one of the causes that females, as underrepresented groups, have not been as successful in law firms in comparison to their numerical composition among law school graduates. Even the current Chief Justice of India Mr. D.Y Chandrachud lamented the lack of proper working conditions for women in judiciary. He questioned the existing culture of subordination and urged the judges to create a culture of equality and openness in the profession (Ojha, 2024).

The analyses of the narratives of interviewees brought to fore the challenges for female students of law in translating legal education into the entire gamut of legal profession. Notably, the cumulative experiences that they gathered since their enrollment in legal studies, exposed the structural and institutional barriers preventing them from pursuing all facets of the profession. It is imperative to study and analyze the same in order to fathom the implications of the narratives and offer meaningful recommendations for course correction.

THE CHALLENGES

There is no doubt that the entry of women into the legal profession is a representation of remarkable social change (Abel, 1985). This social change, however, was, and continues to be beset with many challenges and resistance from both, within and outside the profession. The increasing number of women in the legal profession is only quantitative and not qualitative, with many women not choosing litigation to begin with. Many more, having chosen litigation, end upon not receiving enough cases, consequently, finding themselves constrained to leave the profession.

The narratives built around the gender experiences of women in law schools suggests that they face, and anticipate facing in future, multiple challenges in pursuit of legal profession: (i) at home, (ii) at the workplace, and (iii) in society.

Challenges at Home

Upon entering legal education, most girls choose litigation as a career of first choice. During the course of the interview, a fifth-year female respondent commented that "I had never been surer about any decision than joining a law college". She admitted that she had to fight odds at home for a long time to prove that she could make independent life choices, including choosing a career, and would be happy to live with them. While coming to the later part of the law degree program, however, she found that, as she reaches near a marriageable age, her parents are bothered about finding a suitable match for her who does not mind her being a law graduate, as many boys do not prefer women from the legal profession.

After a few years into the profession, or even during the course of study (as we have seen above), many girls chose to opt out of pursuing litigation, primarily, because of lack of support structures at home (and outside). Working mothers are faced with a double bind. They must often live up to the double burden of home and office. Those who sacrifice family needs for workplace commitments are judged as uncommitted mothers, and those who take extended leave or opt for flexible schedules are thought of as lawyers with less ambition. This puts them in a fix and leaves them with a vague sense of ambivalence that, whatever they may choose to do, would never be sufficient.

Challenges at the Workplace

One daunting deterrent that women students find prevalent during the tenure of studies, especially, during internships is that women professionals at workplaces face a cumulative result of gender stereotypes, patriarchal social structures and a lack of hand-holding at crucial junctures of their careers. A deeply ingrained problem at workplaces is not having access to any formal or informal support structures for mentoring. Few organizations have systems in place to provide mentoring and handholding to women who join the ranks of corporate practice. The result is that many female attorneys remain out of the career development loop. Women, who do not have support at work, are more likely to leave. This lack of support starts a vicious cycle by re-affirming that legal profession is essentially a male domain, thereby, further perpetuating the problem.

A female student lamented that, during her internship, she found that more challenging assignments were given to male students leading her to deduce that only her male counterparts will be offered a job since they have the opportunity to prove their mettle during internship itself. The lack of challenging assignments for female interns, thus, aggravates the problem since it leaves them out of learning the essential skills required to navigate the profession.

Another major challenge to the presence of women at workplaces is the existence of structures that fail to support a balanced life. A lack of work-life

balance and work and family conflicts pose a roadblock to women's advancement. Very few places offer opportunities to balance the two. Demanding work schedules and a lack of flexibility in office hours have drastically increased the workload of women. Consequently, women often find themselves in a hard position with regard to prioritizing work over family or otherwise. Female students often formulate assumptions around their future as working mothers in the working environment, and how such a scenario would influence their evaluations and promotions.

A lack of female-friendly policies is hardly just a 'women's issue', however, the burden of this is disproportionately borne by them. Only a handful of law firms offer equal paid paternity and maternity leave, which means that women are, naturally, expected to look after the child. (Rhode, 2001).

Sexual harassment is another sad but harsh and true disproportionate price paid by women at any workplace. Additionally, the narratives of women lawyers routinely facing sexist behavior at the Bar, Law offices, especially, canteens are a dampener for any female law student. Misogyny and sexist attitudes run like an epidemic in almost all the courts in the country. Senior Advocate Rebecca John has no hesitation in calling the existing system hopeless and laments the ineffectiveness of Internal Complaints Committees in the courts to ensure safety and prevent harassment at the workplace for female lawyers (Chakrabarti, 2022). There is a constant pressure on female lawyers to be on cordial terms with male lawyers since they receive most of their work from them. Thus, they continue to suffer in silence and do not report discrimination or harassment. As a result, in most courts, few victims make a formal complaint fearing retaliation and ridicule choosing, rather, to either give up or find alternative use for their knowledge.

Challenges in the Society

Mishra (2015) noted that while some barriers are attributed to discrimination by their male counterparts, others are socially created impediments. As highlighted in the poignant narratives mentioned earlier, the legal profession is not only deeply masculine but is also perceived to be so. One of the challenges faced by women who study law is that they are labeled less feminine, more masculine and, thus, not worthy to be considered good spouse material. At home, they are often faced with statements such as, "If you pursue law, you will not be able to get a good match" or "it is not worth it because you only have to take care of your family in the end." This is reflective of the deeply entrenched toxic masculinity that sees empowered women as a threat to the status quo (Omnia, 2023).

The social ostracization of women lawyers or castigating of women in law as 'unsuitable' marriage partners is a reflection of deep-rooted patriarchal biases. 'Law', as a profession, demands vocal proponents. All typical patriarchal societies (India being no exception) would rather have women 'who are seen but

not heard'. As a result, law, in general, and litigation, in particular, are considered unsuitable and well-nigh unacceptable as a profession for women.

Gender stereotyping is quite rampant in our society, in general, and more pronounced in the field of law. Gender stereotypes are “a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by members of a particular social group” (OHCHR, 2014). A longstanding impediment to access to equal opportunity for women in legal education is the mismatch of attributes attached to women and those deemed necessary for professional success in the legal field (Rhode, 2001). Women lawyers are judged for being either too soft or too abiding by their male counterparts; to add to this, the prevailing socio-cultural milieu also reinforces these gender stereotypes (Tannvi & Narayana, 2022). This is evident from the kind of cases entrusted to women. They are more likely to work around child protection and family matters since this kind of work is seen as drawing on their motherly instincts. This is reflective of deep-rooted biases and gender stereotypes (Sanders, 2023). In fact, ‘Family law’ is often considered the legal equivalent of ‘gynecology’ in physiology.³

IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

The legal profession will only attain true equality if women are given the same opportunities as men. This will require extensive training for law students so that they can counter age-old prejudices, cultural norms and practices. Women in law should be given leadership positions, and their strengths must be showcased to the world at large in order to encourage female students of law to follow suit.

The workplace structures must adapt to support women’s progression. This can be accomplished through flexible working hours and equal parental leaves for mothers and fathers. Policies that support new mothers and make it easier for them to join work must be put in place in all legal firms including, for example, creche facilities and child care leaves. Flexible schedules should be made part of the work culture of law firms. This helps attract and retain the talent pool of women. Bar associations must work actively to counter gender stereotypes by undertaking awareness generation exercises through round table discussions and setting up women’s forums within the bar.

It is crucial for stakeholders, including the government, the private sector, the bar and the bench, to recognize the lack of women’s representation in the legal profession as a systemic issue that requires a multidimensional approach. The solutions must come from the constituency that is impacted the most.

Legal education can play a transformative role by introducing and reinforcing principles of equality and non-discrimination to students. They must

³ Family law is considered to be women’s stream since it essentially involves matters related to private sphere i.e. family, marriage, divorce and adoption.

be motivated to question the existing status quo, challenge it, and recognize the built-in barriers to the entry and progression of women in law. This will lead a long way in opening new avenues of change and lead to the development of a progressive and egalitarian society in the true sense of the term.

The need of the hour is to address structural barriers that exist in society. Towards this benign goal, interventions must address the androcentric nature of law and the sexist attitudes of their male counterparts and eliminate sexual harassment and discrimination in the world of legal education and practice.

Combating patriarchy is, without a doubt, a work in progress, but small, incremental steps can lead to positive changes and hope for a better society for all. The release of the *Handbook on Combating Gender Stereotypes* by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in August 2023 to combat gender stereotypes in the courts is an appropriate step in that direction. There is a need to be candid and bold to accept and acknowledge the existence of the stereotypical challenges faced by women at home, at workplaces and in society, which may then be confronted and attacked to bring about kaleidoscopic change to realize Sustainable Development Goal 5, which is to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2023).

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