**Democratic Awareness Through Legal Literacy[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**BA Prog 5thsemester(Unique Paper Code: 62323501)**

Taught by: Dr. Khushboo

**Objective:** The Proposed course aims to acquaint student with the structure and manner of functioning of the legal system in India.

**Expected Learning Outcome**: The student should be aware of the institutions that comprise the legal system ‐ the courts, police, jails and the system of criminal justice administration. Have a brief knowledge of the Constitution and laws of India, an understanding of the formal and alternate dispute redressal (ADR) mechanisms that exist in India, public interest litigation. Have some working knowledge of how to affirm one's rights and be aware of one's duties within the legal framework; and the opportunities and challenges posed by the legal system for different sections of persons.

**Course Content**:

 **Unit I**

• Outline of the Legal system in India

• System of courts/tribunals and their jurisdiction in India ‐ criminal and civil courts, writ jurisdiction, specialized courts such as juvenile courts, Mahila courts and tribunals.

• Role of the police and executive in criminal law administration.

• Alternate disputes mechanisms such as lok adalats, non ‐ formal mechanisms.

**Unit II**

• Brief understanding of the laws applicable in India

• Constitution ‐ fundamental rights, fundamental duties, other constitutional rights and their manner of enforcement, with emphasis on public interest litigation and the expansion of certain rights under Article 21 of the Constitution.

• Laws relating to criminal jurisdiction ‐ provision relating to filing an FIR, arrest, bail search and seizure and some understanding of the questions of evidence and procedure in Cr. P.C. and related laws, important offences under the Indian Penal Code, offences against women, juvenile justice, prevention of atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

• Concepts like Burden of Proof, Presumption of Innocence, Principles of Natural Justice, Fair comment under Contempt laws.

• Personal laws in India: Pluralism and Democracy

• Laws relating to contract, property; tenancy laws, labour laws, and environmental laws.

• Laws relating to dowry, sexual harassment and violence against women

• Laws relating to consumer rights

• Labour laws in the context of globalisation

• Laws relating to cyber crimes

• Anti‐terrorist laws: implications for security and human rights

• Practical application: Visit to either a (I) court or (ii) a legal aid centre set up by the • Legal Services Authority in Delhi or an NGO or (iii) a Lok Adalat, and to interview a litigant or person being counselled. Preparation of a case history.

**Unit III**

 Access to courts and enforcement of rights

• Critical Understanding of the Functioning of the Legal System

• Legal Services Authorities Act and right to legal aid, ADR systems

• What to do if you are arrested; if you are a consumer with a grievance; if you are a victim of sexual harassment; domestic violence, child abuse, caste, ethnic and religious discrimination; filing a public interest litigation. How can you challenge administrative orders that violate rights, judicial and administrative remedies?

• Human Rights ‐ emerging trends; Role of legal aid agencies, Human Rights Commissions, NGOs and civil liberties groups.

• Practical application ‐ Using a hypothetical case of (for example) child abuse or sexual harassment or any other violation of a right, preparation of an FIR or writing a complaint addressed to the appropriate authority.

The paper dealt with creating awareness amongst students about the basic rights and laws which are essential in everyday life so that they grow up as an empowered citizens in a democratic society. For example, how to file FIR and the basic information about the criminal proceedings had been discussed in the class in an interactive manner, in which few students shared their own personal experiences and also of those of their kins and relatives and problems which they faced related to filing of the FIR.They also presented their curiosity on certain hypothetical cases in which FIR could be filed. The interactive discussion entailed a step-by-step process of filing the same. They were also apprised about the contents of the FIR and other provisions related to it. The students were also asked to prepare an assignment on the subsequent steps of the criminal proceedings after filing of the FIR, i.e., on provision related to arrest, search and seize mentioned in the CrPC. The section on Women and Cyber-laws also generated considerable eagerness amongst the students in which students showed personal interest in the discussion and they presented some of their everyday experiences in the class which they co-related with the legal provisions and rights in a problem-solving manner.

 Verified.

 

1. **From the current session, this paper has been replaced by “Your Laws, Your Rights”** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)