

The Law and Policy Hub Projects 2018-19

1. Early Access to Justice

Lack of state-funded initiative for legal representation in the first stage when the arrestee comes into contact with the criminal justice system impedes justice to the arrestee. Students examine whether a link is possible between Police Stations and Legal Services Authorities to assure representation at first production and the feasibility of a supplementary technological intervention to enable an effective link.



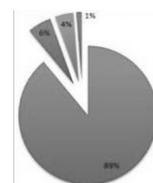
2. Narratives of Felt Injustice

Through a collection of narratives of felt injustice, of about 30 Dalit women in Bengaluru, students examine issues they face, pertaining to access to basic facilities, domestic violence, and financial inclusion. They examine the effectiveness of related current laws and policies and the awareness of the same among the Dalit women.



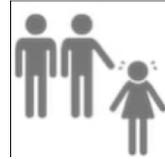
3. Rethinking Reservation: Sub Categorisation in Karnataka

Students examine the demand for sub-categorisation among the Scheduled Caste community in Karnataka. They have analysed contradictory demands, from two communities, and have traced its trajectory and relevance in contemporary politics.



4. Gender Stereotyping and Workplace Discrimination

Workplace discrimination has its roots in prescriptive and descriptive gender stereotyping. The group interviewed thirty individuals from the IT sector, both men and women, employees and Human Resource teams. Keeping in mind the two-fold discriminatory practice, often ignored largely in literature as well as practice, the group strives to develop an Anti-discrimination statute, that specifically deals with them. The group believes that the Constitutional value of non-discrimination can be protected by a law that deals with discrimination which goes beyond sexual harassment, and rely on examples from other countries, that already have established and implemented such anti-discrimination laws.



5. Rights of Persons with Disability Act (RPWD): Limits and Possibilities - A Study of IT sector in Bengaluru

RPWD Act is a landmark legislation that makes it mandatory for the private sector to meet certain guidelines as far as the employment of PWDs is concerned. Students interviewed select firms in the IT Sector of Bengaluru. The group has examined whether the Act will indeed help break new ground for Persons with Disability and their employment. In doing so, they have zeroed in on some of the limitations of the Act and make some suggestions for improvement.



6. Open Data and Sticky Institutions- Unpacking the Problem of Bengaluru's Congestion

The paradox of transportation, as it is known, is that it is the only development sector that worsens as income rises. Bengaluru's congestion problem looks more wicked than ever as the city loses approximately Rs. 38,000 crore every year, as the social cost of traffic congestion. Through this study, students are trying to investigate why despite the magnitude of the problem, the City's public and private actors have not converged yet to evolve solutions. They share their insights on gaps in institutional arrangements and explore policy interventions to disrupt sticky institutions.



7. Aggregator Cab Solutions and their Impact on Labor and Transport Policy

The regulation of platform service providers confronts policy makers across several sectors. Students investigate pain points of all the stakeholders under the umbrella of on-demand taxi aggregators with a focus on Ola and Uber. Through structured and semi-structured interviews with drivers, customers and other stakeholders, the group tried to understand areas of agreement and disagreement of the drivers with their platform providers. In particular, they examine the premise of denial of drivers status as workers, by Ola/Uber management and their lack of accountability. Discussions with customers and policy experts provide them a deeper understanding of foundational issues and what makes this on-demand business model so evasive to regulation.



8. Reducing the Pendency of Legal Disputes (Income Tax Appellate Tribunal)

Students unpack the various strategies through which ITAT has tried to reduce the pendency of legal disputes. In doing so, students penetrate the system to test the validity of claims stating that there has been a tremendous decrease in the pendency of cases in the ITAT. An empirical study carried out with aggregate data of all ITATs across India and Bengaluru, Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata, in particular, coupled with qualitative field work, reveals actual practices employed in disposal, and pendency of cases.



9. Gender Sensitive Urban Planning in Bengaluru - Exploring the Role of the State

Are our public spaces gender sensitive? This study examines perceptions of multiple actors on the importance of gender responsive planning. To start, the team mapped women's spatial experience in three types of urban spaces in Bengaluru: Indiranagar, Shivajinagar, and Electronic City. This method is complemented by primary surveys with users of public spaces across different parts of the city and other cities in India. These explorations of the student's group themselves formed the first step to policy intervention for gender sensitive planning, as they discover a range of prejudices among interviewees. The group hopes to create an effective tool that urban planners and policymakers can use to convey the importance of considering gender while planning urban spaces, with the goal of making gender sensitive spaces a reality.



10. An Ethnographic Study of the Dynamics Involved in the Recognition of Madivala Market, Bengaluru

The Madivala market, having been in existence for over a period of 40 years isn't merely restricted to performing the role of a wholesaler or a retailer in fresh produce but has become etched into the memory of inhabitants of Bengaluru as a pivotal cultural hub, without which one would reckon a reimagining of not just the festive splendor but of the daily excursions to the market place. Yet, the legal status of these "service providers" around whose lives we navigate our intimate rituals and social customs remains at large. Through the course of exploration, the group has come to observe the tenuous grounds on which the daily wages of close to 2000 vendors and an ecosystem of their families are acutely dependent upon. Rife with illegal evictions, recent times have attested to the instability inherent with vending in the Madivala market. Caught in the quagmire of ongoing litigation, pending legislation and an unidentified informal economy, the group anticipates the duration for which an informal community must persevere on feeble terrain before a crisis, narrow enough to cut the wire might emerge.



11. Tracing Citizen's Movements in Bengaluru

Some citizen's movements are electric while others tepid. Students have mapped out a framework which encompasses various political, social and institutional aspects of social movements. Through the study of two cases in the city, they examine elements which lead to different outcomes depending on the way a citizen's movement is imagined, conceived, planned, carried out.



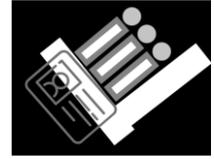
12. Perceptions of Street Vendors Towards State Institutions

How do street vendors develop trust in state institutions (Police and Municipal Corporation)? The team has tried to capture perceptions of street vendors towards state institutions based on their regular interaction/experience with representatives of state institutions like Police, officials and staff from Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (the Municipal Corporation), and Ward Counselors. They have tried to connect this perception to the larger concept of building trust/ distrust in state institutions. The team has captured responses of street vendors from four markets in Bengaluru through unstructured interviews and conversations.



13. Paper Citizenship of Slum Dwellers in Urban Bengaluru

The group seeks to explore living condition of slum dwellers in Urban Bengaluru, within the premise of basic rights guaranteed to each citizen under the Indian Constitution. In doing so, they highlight their experiences and interactions with the state machinery, as a means to evaluate the role state support plays in migrant slum dweller's lives. Students share their evaluation of a survey of basic facilities, like food, water, sanitation and education, conducted in select slum locations throughout Bengaluru, so as to make a comprehensive evaluation.



14. Captive Elephants

The Schedule I of The Wildlife (Protection) Act of India, 1972, restricts the captivity of any elephant. Captivity is allowed only after a due registration process is followed, with the state forest department. Despite stringent conditions, many elephants are illegally acquired. Students study how sacramental cultural values form instruments to captive elephants in Temples and Mutts, in Karnataka. Do devotees, varied in age and education, share the same sentiments about captive elephants? The group unpacks these nuances against provisions of prevailing laws pertaining to animal rights.



15. The Silent Period, Are they Really Silent? The Nation Wants to Know

The 48 hours silent period before every election is envisaged to give the voters a space to introspect in silence on who to cast their vote for. Students have focused on understanding the use of social media during the 48 hours - "silent period", at the recent Rajasthan elections, for influencing voter behaviour. They interviewed various politicians, journalists, professors, NGOs, and voters, to understand the legitimacy of this rule, in the face of ubiquity of social media. In doing so, students focus on how the time and space of the 'silent period', is infiltrated by social media, which has become an integral part of one's everyday life.



16. Impact of Financial Inclusion on Gender Bias: A Quantitative Study to Measure the Correlates of Self-Help Group (SHG) Membership and Gender Bias

Has financial inclusion and empowerment of women beneficiaries through micro-credit altered socially deep-rooted gender biases? Students motivated to learn conducted this research in co-operation with Integrated Village Development Programme (IVDP), a not for profit organization founded by Mr. Kulandai Francis, a Magsaysay award recipient. Beneficiaries of the SHGs formed by IVDP were the subjects of the study. Students assess implicit and explicit gender biases, namely, prejudice against any gender in the domain of professional and household works. Implicit Association Test (IAT) and questionnaires were used to measure the implicit and explicit gender biases respectively. A regression-based approach was adopted to examine the impact.



17. Indira Canteens: Political Tool, Economic Burden or Game Changer

Are government subsidized canteens for addressing urban food insecurity effective or have they merely remained fleeting political instruments? To find responses to this question, students conducted more than 400 surveys to examine the success of Indira Canteens in Bengaluru. Additionally, they have interviewed around 25 women (both staff and customer), to understand whether they frequent this facility. Students present their findings from processing primary surveys and inferences from case studies.



18. Tracing Changes of Food Consumption and Waste Generation Patterns of Migrants in Bengaluru

Behavioral change in food habits and waste generation has not excluded migrant workers to Bengaluru. Students explore day to day practices of workers who have migrated within the last decade to Bengaluru through a qualitative exploratory study. They focused on looking at the 'process' through which a migrant worker's household as a unit of analysis, responds to questions pertaining to 'how' and 'why' of food consumption, generation of waste, disposal and segregation practices.



19. Menstruation and Schooling

“Menstruation adversely affects school attendance”. Students commenced their study with this hypothesis at government schools in Surpur and Yadgir Districts in Karnataka. They conducted primary surveys and engaged in discussions with female students, their female elders, and teachers to gauge their dispositions on the hypothesis. Through these interviews students made an inquiry into cultural prejudices of the family and constraints faced by schools, to evaluate the effectiveness of government’s support in addressing the problem. Students test their initial hypothesis to be faced with many new insights.



20. In-service Teacher Trainings delivered through DIETs in Karnataka: An Exemplar of Innovation, Creativity and Effectiveness

Ministry of Human Resource Development guidelines (2012) envisioned DIETs as the nodal point between various stages of teacher training, with a core institutional focus on “continuous teacher professional development, which would directly/indirectly impact on school improvement programmes.” Despite the falling rates of admission in the Pre-service Teacher Training -D.Ed course, the DIETs in Karnataka have not become dysfunctional. On the contrary, DIETs have been able to redirect their attention on revitalizing the In-service teacher training by ushering in a significant shift from the Cascade model to the Split model of training, with the aid of Teacher Training Management System (TTMS). In the Cascade model, every cohort of trainees trains the next successive cohort which often results in the dilution of content at various levels, as it is only the first cohort of trainers who get trained directly by experts. The reformed training process employs multiple strategies, such as the Split training model and application of technology in education, to name a few. In what ways do these new models disrupt older rigid paradigms of teacher training? Students show how the revitalization of In-Service Teacher Trainings has been critical in reviving the importance of the DIETs in the hierarchy of Teacher Training Institutes with the help of case studies of two DIETs (Davanagere and Bengaluru Rural), in Karnataka.

