



2021-2022

Annual Report



Partners For Law in Development

Annual Report (April 2021- March 2022)

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Partners for Law in Development (PLD)

Cover Photo: Launch of PLD's study on Child Marriage Prosecution in India (July 2021)

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PLD is a non-profit legal resource group founded in 1998 that facilitates assertion of social justice and women's rights. Our work focuses on contexts of marginalization shaped by gender, sexuality, caste, culture and poverty, to take into account the intersecting systems of oppression that diminish recognition and access to rights. We pursue our mission through three mutually complementary strategies – of building capacities, creating evidence-based knowledge, and information resources, alongside engaging with social policy at domestic and global levels. PLD is registered as a public charitable trust under the Indian Trusts Act, 1882 (registration no: 10514/ IV of 16-12-1998). The annual report covers work carried out in the financial year, between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1: Programme Updates

- 1) ADOLESCENT AND EARLY MARRIAGE
- 2) PREVENTING WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT
- 3) FEMINIST LAW ARCHIVING
- 4) IMPACT
- 5) PLD IN THE NEWS

PART 2: Organisational Updates

- 1) COVID-19: RESPONSES TO THE SECOND WAVE
- 2) TEAM

PART 1: PROGRAMME UPDATES

This section draws out thematic sequence of initiatives, collaborative efforts and participation in events undertaken in relation to two focus areas, being: Adolescent Sexuality and Early Marriage, and Preventing Sexual Harassment.

The thematic updates are followed by a section on Feminist Law Archives, as well as news coverage on references to Partners for Law in Development (PLD)'s work, or opinions/quotes from us, reflecting the bearing PLD's work has on public discourses and recognition of its contribution to the sector. We have introduced a section on impact of PLD's work in this annual report, that offers a glimpse of the acknowledgement, influence and recognition of our work within the social policy space.

1) ADOLESCENT SEXUALITY AND EARLY MARRIAGE

I. National Coalition Advocating for Adolescent Concerns (NCAAC): Meetings and Submissions

This year we helmed activities as convenor of the NCAAC with regional initiatives (in UP, and Rajasthan); collaboration in West Bengal and put together civil society submissions, along with recommendations, to the PCMA Amendment Bill 2021.

1) Submissions in relation to the UP State-Draft Rules for the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) 2006

The Uttar Pradesh government invited stakeholder inputs to the Draft State Rules for the PCMA on 10th December 2021. A meeting was organised by NCAAC to discuss the comments to the draft rules. Based on the discussions, NCAAC put together civil society submissions, along with recommendations, to the UP-Draft Rules. Read it [here](#).

2) Meeting on the Rajasthan Amendment to Marriage Registration Act

PLD held a NCAAC meeting to discuss the amendment to the Rajasthan Compulsory Registration of Marriage Act 2009 that allowed girls on attaining 18 years to register child marriage contracted during minority, on 27th September 2021. Subsequently, we participated in the meeting organized by Rajasthan women rights organisations on this matter, and at both these meetings different viewpoints and perspectives emerged.

3) NCAAC Statement and Submissions on Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill (PCMA) 2021

In line with the governments' proposal to review the age of motherhood and marriage, for which a Task Force was appointed in 2020, the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill (PCMA) 2021, raising minimum marriage age for women from 18 to 21, was presented in the Parliament in December 2021. In response to the proposed Bill, PLD convened for a cross-sectoral convergence within its national coalition (NCAAC) and published a statement that can be read [here](#).

Almost immediately, the bill was referred to the Standing Committee for Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports to invite stakeholder inputs on the Prohibition of Child Marriage Amendment Bill 2021. PLD put together civil society submissions, along with recommendations, endorsed by just over a 100 individuals and organisations, and submitted it to the Parliamentary Standing Committee in February 2022. Read it [here](#).

4) Submissions to NCW

PLD made a submission to and presented at the consultation on "Reforms in Criminal law" organised by the National Commission for Women on 18th January 2022. PLD's submissions can be accessed [here](#).

II. Research and Publications

1) PLD's study, 'Child Marriage Prosecutions in India: Case law Analysis of Actors, Motives and Outcomes (2008-2017)' was published in July 2021. It was launched online by Rtd. Justice M. Lokur on 13th August 2021, followed by a vibrant discussion between the panellists.

The panel comprised of Rebecca John, Senior Advocate; Indira Pancholi, activist and founder, Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS); Nina Nayak, former Chairperson of Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights; and Madhu Mehra, Head, Trainings and Research, PLD. Dr. Aparna Chandra, Associate Professor, NLSIU, Bangalore, moderated the session.



The study offers evidence on the selective use of child marriage law with graver criminal offences against self-arranged marriages involving adolescents from marginalised populations. It can be accessed [here](#). The study was covered by [The Hindu](#), [The Print](#) and [The New Indian Express](#).

PLD's Madhu Mehra's articles on the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 were featured in the following publications:

- 1) 'Empowering Women or Curbing Rights?', the [Economic and Political Weekly](#) Vol. 57, Issue No. 2, 8th January 2022.
- 2) 'Raising the marriage age is not the solution', [Hindustan Times](#), 23rd December 2021.

III. Panel Presentations

Madhu Mehra, Head of Training and Research at PLD, was a panellist at the following events:

- 1) 'The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill 2021: Why We Oppose It', a civil society webinar organised by NIFW on 25th January 2022.

2) [Reframing the Contemporary Child Marriage Debate – Lessons from India](#), a seminar

organised by the King's College, London and IWWAGE Delhi, as part of the Laws of Social Reproduction project studying the regulation of women's reproductive labour in India, on 4th March 2022.

3) 'My Body is My Own', organised by the UNFPA, to highlight how bodily autonomy is critical to achieving gender equality & universal access to SRHR, on 15th April 2021.

4) Regional workshops in Asia and Africa organised by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), on Child Early and Forced Marriage, to map progress, gaps and challenges and take stock of measures to ensure accountability, from 16th-18th June 2021.

5) 'Runaway Desires, Guavas and Crimes: What Happens When You Don't Include Pleasure in Interventions' at the 'Love, Sex and Data (LSD)' Conference, organised by the YP Foundation and Agents of Ishq on 9th October 2021. Our presentation was about the importance of recognising girls' agency and consent in early marriage interventions.

6) '18 or 21 Legal Age of Marriage: Understanding the Implementation and Impact', a State-level webinar organised by Bhabna Network in West Bengal working to prevent and raise awareness around child marriage, on 27th November 2021.



2) PREVENTING WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

I. Capacity Development

This year we conducted 10 trainings, reaching out to more than 700 participants, and drafted policies for online and offline code of conduct for students that would reach around 11,000 students per year.



The list of organisations/ higher education institutions for whom training sessions were conducted is as follows:

Non-Profit Organisation (NGOs)			
S. No	Name of Organisation	No. of Pax	Nature of Training/ target group
1	WISH Foundation/LEHS	8	Internal Committee (IC) training for LEHS IC members
2	Pankh NGO & TRAAIN (Trust for Retailers and Retail Associates of India)	20	Orientation on SHW Law for Trainees
3	Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST)	30	Orientation on SHW Law for staff members
4	UNFPA & UNDP for CSOs	56	Orientation on SHW Law for CSO members
5	Sahjeevan	25	Orientation on SHW Law for staffs
Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)			

6	IIT Delhi-	236	Gender Sensitisation at workplace for hostel staff
7	IIPS (International Institute for Population Sciences)	130	UGC (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redress of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Education) Regulations, 2013 and the legal Safeguards against GBV” for students and staffs
8	Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, Delhi (IIITD)	36	Gender sensitisation and SHW law for staff
9	Centre for Policy Research (CPR)	110	Orientation on SHW Law for faculty, staff and Research Assistants
10	Indian School of Development Management (ISDM)	41	Gender sensitisation and SHW law for students
11	IIT Madras	11,000	Drafted policies for online and offline code of conduct for students that would reach around 11,000 students per year.

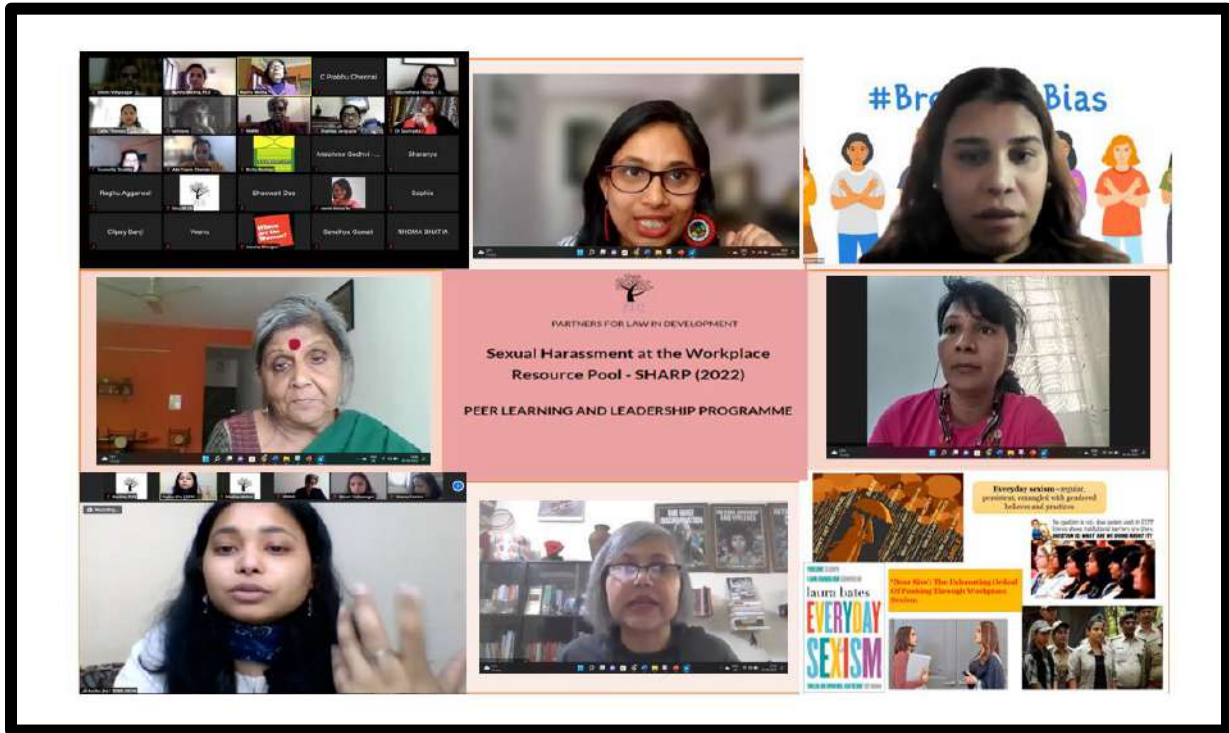


II. Peer learning platform: Sexual Harassment at Workplace Resource Pool (SHARP)

This year we launched SHARP, a Resource Pool of 35 practitioners from 11 states, working as trainers, external and internal members of Committees on Workplace Sexual Harassment law, in January 2022.

Conceptualised as a community for peer exchange, SHARP has been borne out of our years of collaborations with partners and cross sectoral alliances. Sessions comprise of senior leaders, and resource persons from different fields sharing knowledge, promoting learning activities and building leadership of younger practitioners within their respective fields of outreach.

Since its constitution in January 2022, two events were organised for SHARP, to dive deeper into sensitive and important aspects of implementing the law on sexual harassment at the workplace.



Stills from our SHARP sessions this year

The following two events were organised, besides the sessions to allow for exchange and introduction of the group with each other:

1) 'The Unorganised Sector and Devising an Outreach Plan' – a discussion was held on 19th February 2022 to understand a much-neglected area of legal compliance, to learn from experienced resource persons, and get SHARP members in supporting women from the unorganised sector. The panellists – Geetha Menon, co-founder, Stree Jagruti Samiti; Anshu Jha, SEWA; and Rakhi Sehgal, from Action Research Associates (ARA) – work with domestic workers, homebased and construction workers in factories and trade union, respectively.

2) 'PoSH – Policies, Possibilities of Inclusion and Expanded Scope' – a discussion was held on 26th March 2022 to exchange experiences and discuss how discrimination along the lines of caste, sexuality, gender could be integrated into organisational policies addressing sexual harassment. The panellists – Prof. Rukmini Sen, Dr B R Ambedkar University; Dr. Shewli Kumar, TISS; Zainab Patel, Inclusion officer, Pernod Ricard India; and S.K. Priya, Advocate from Chennai –

shared their experiences of framing policies and devising approaches to address intersectional forms of harassment and hostility at workplace, especially in relation to caste, gender neutral policies, transgender inclusion. The session helped understand enabling aspects and precedents in administrative law.

III. Presentations and Panel Discussions

Madhu Mehra, Head of Training and Research at PLD, presented as a panellist at the following events:

- 1) 'Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Redressal Measures for Women in the Informal Sector' organised by South Asia Women Foundation India and Solidarity Foundation, on 11th March 2021.
 - 2) 'New Urbanism, Gender and Violence in Gurgaon', webinar co-organised by the Sociology Department of the University of Cambridge, Madhu Mehra touched upon the many urban transformations and changing gender relations in Gurgaon, in 28th October 2021.
 - 3) 'Building a Consent Culture: What is Involved?', organized by the Forum for Internal Committees of Higher Education Institutions (FICHEI) and TISS Hyderabad. Madhu Mehra drew on the work done by PLD, particularly their video series 'Unboxing Consent' (2018), to explore the possibilities of learning and unlearning consent cultures among the youth, on 18th December 2021.
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3) FEMINIST LAW ARCHIVING

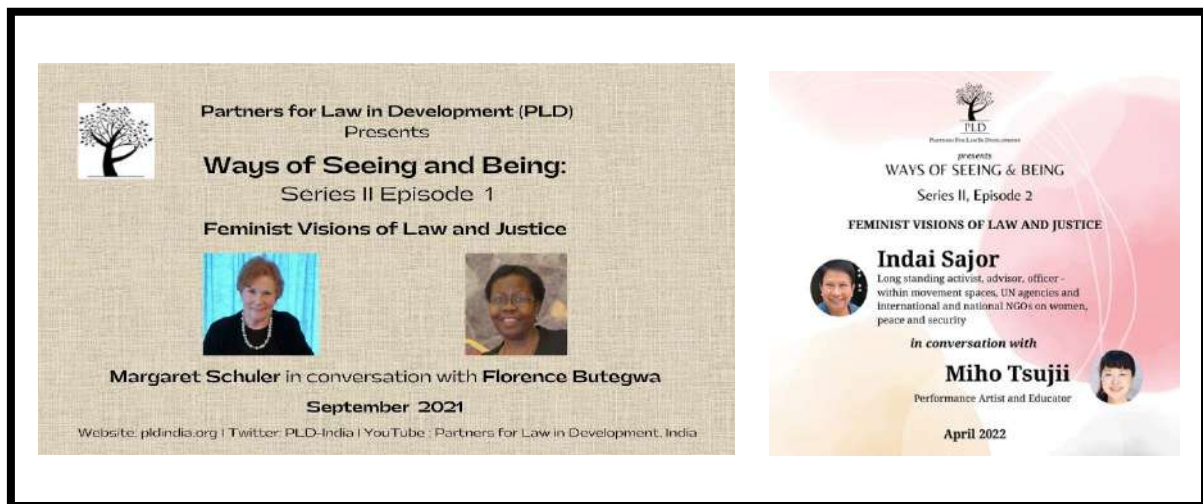
The Feminist Law Archives, our digital repository of women's movements engagement with the law, was expanded to include the theme on Unorganised/Informal Sector. All the resources in the folder can be accessed [here](#).

Ways of Seeing and Being

In 2021, 'Ways of Seeing and Being: Series II', the second edition of our video conversations series (started in 2020) to document the journeys of women whose pathbreaking work in art, culture and visions of justice, embody diverse feminist practices, continued under the theme of 'Documenting Trajectories of Pioneering Movements that Shaped and Transformed Feminist Visions of Law and Justice'. We held

conversations with women whose pioneering work shaped women's rights agendas, across the world, in the 1980s/90s. Two episodes produced this year are:

1. [‘The Women, Law and Development \(WLD\) Movement’](#): Beginnings and journeys, which catalyzed the formation of regional, national and global feminist networks, with the founder, Margaret Schuler, as our guest speaker, in conversation with feminist lawyer, Florence Butegwa, who was the first regional coordinator of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF).



2. [‘Building the Comfort Women Movement’](#): Feminist mobilising and cross-national solidarities on the comfort women issue through the 1990s across East and South-East Asia to hold Japan accountable for sexual slavery and rape during World War II, with guest speaker Indai Sajor, an expert on gender, peace and security in war and conflict, in conversation with Miho Tsujii, a performance artist and educator working on cross-generational impacts of war.

4) IMPACT

We have introduced a section on impact in the annual report, to begin tracking ways in which PLD's work is viewed as relevant in the sector, and has contributed to shaping feminist legal and social policy discourses. Far from being exhaustive, this is a glimpse of the most tangible evidence of the recognition, acknowledgment of PLD's work, and its

imprint in the sector, on the thematic concerns we work on. Below are few among several examples where PLD's studies have been mentioned.

1. SIMAVI - an international organisation that is part of the Making the Most of What We Know programme, a learning arm of the More Than Brides Alliance (MTBA), drew upon PLD's research studies in its report (linked [here](#)) and as a follow up, Simavi invited PLD to co-present at a Girls Not Brides global meeting on related issues of CEMFU on 23rd November 2021.

2. AJWS Policy Brief - Based on research publications from PLD on child and early marriages in India, a global policy brief titled, 'A case for differentiated legal responses to child, early and forced marriage and unions - Lessons from India for a global audience' was published by The American Jewish World Service (AJWS). The brief can be read [here](#).



3. FRHS - PLD's report 'Is POCSO failing Adolescent Sexuality?' (Sept 2020) was referenced in a policy brief titled 'Securing Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Adolescents in India: The Way Forward' published by the Foundation for Reproductive Health Services (FRHS) India. The brief can be read [here](#).

4. Laadli Award Mention - PLD was the proud co-recipients, along with Feminism In India, of the Jury Appreciation Citation by the Laadli Media & Advertising Awards for Gender Sensitivity for our collaborative Adolescent Sexuality Campaign.



5. ***Love, Labour and Law: Early and Child Marriage in India*** - PLD's research conclave held jointly with AJWS was acknowledged by the editors in this book edited by Samita Sen and Anindita Ghosh, published by SAGE Publications Pvt. Ltd; 1st edition (15th January 2021).

6. ***Child Marriage in an International Frame*** - PLD's work and reports have been referenced and its work acknowledged in this book by Mary E. John. Routledge India; 1st edition (12th April 2021).

5) PLD IN THE NEWS

1. [We need to create safe spaces for adolescents](#), Hindustan Times, 25th December 2021.
2. [Can a Law to Raise Marriage Age for Women Work?](#), Hindustan Times, 24th December 2021.
3. [Why Govt Move Of Raising Legal Age of Marriage For Women May Harm Instead of Benefiting Them](#), Article 14, 23rd December 2021.
4. [Raising the Marriage Age is Not the Solution](#), Hindustan Times, 23rd December 2021.

5. [Increasing Marriage Age for Girls May Only Strengthen Patriarchy](#), Times of India, 19th December 2021.
 6. [Increasing Women's Minimum Age for Marriage: Will it Prevent Child Marriage? Can raising the minimum legal age of marriage benefit women and girls?](#), The Quint, 17th December 2021.
 7. [Redefining The Early And Child Marriage And Reconsidering Its Elimination In Nepal Through Absolute Criminalization](#), WOREC, 16 March 2021.
 8. [3rd Annual Lecture on Child Marriage Debate by The Laws of Social Reproduction Project](#), Aljazeera, 4th March 2022.
 9. [Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Justice and Ending Harmful Practices](#), MenEngage Alliance, 21st January, 2021.
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PART 2: ORGANISATIONAL UPDATES


1) COVID-19: RESPONSES TO THE SECOND WAVE

In response to the devastating impact of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, PLD created legal explainers on how to apply for Covid death compensation and succession formalities. Legal Information were published in English and Hindi, detailing the different post-death legal procedures to help families navigate succession and compensation matters.

Partners For Law In Development (PLD) is conducting training sessions for organisations working with communities to discuss the different legal and administrative procedures for deaths due to COVID-19. Interested organisations may contact us: trainings@pldindia.org

Some of the important areas covered in the session are:

- How to obtain a death certificate?
- How to get access to the bank account of the deceased person for disposal of the money?
- How to get the govt. declared compensation?
- How does inheritance work? What are the procedures?



We also have resource materials in both Hindi and English. To know more please visit- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-vGpass44M>

We also held capacity building workshops with frontline workers and community organisations to equip them with knowledge and skills to extend support to affected families.

The various issues discussed were:

- the procedure to obtain a death certificate,
- process of getting access to the bank account of the deceased person for disposal of the money,
- obtaining the govt. declared compensation etc.

The following training sessions with 4 CSOs were conducted:

Type of Organisation	Name of Organisation	No. of Pax	Nature of Training
Non-Profit Organisation (NGOs)			
a.	Action India	32	Awareness training on process on COVID compensation
b.	Nirantar	104	Awareness training on process on COVID compensation
c.	Navshristi	45	Awareness training on process on COVID compensation
d.	HIV Alliance India	15	Awareness training on process on COVID compensation

1. TEAM

Head (Research and Trainings)	Madhu Mehra
Head (Operations and Finance)	Vipin Kumar
Administration and Finance	Ankur Kashyap
Training	Barsha Mishra Monika (Consultant)
Research	Mrinalini Ravindranath Surbhi Karwa Ekta Rathore Saumya Maheshwari (Consultant)
Interns	Anirudh Ramanathan Sankari B Raghu Aggarwal
Curation of Feminist Practices	Udita Chakrabarti Poulomi Pal (Consultant) Yashodara Udupa (Consultant)
Programme Support	Kishore Tirkey