



2022-2023

Annual Report



Partners for Law in Development

Annual Report (April 2022-March 2023)

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Partners for Law in Development (PLD)

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Partners for Law in Development LD 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).

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CONTENTS

PART A: PROGRAMME UPDATES

- I. Adolescent Sexuality and Early Marriage
- II. Preventing Workplace Sexual Harassment
- III. Sexual and Gender Based Violence
- IV. Feminist Law Archiving

PART B: IMPACT

- I. References to PLD's work
- II. PLD in the news
- III. Digital Engagement and Outreach

PART C: ORGANISATIONAL UPDATES

PART A: PROGRAMME UPDATES

This section draws out thematic sequence of initiatives, collaborative efforts and participation in events undertaken in relation to four focus areas, being: Adolescent Sexuality and Early Marriage, Preventing Sexual Harassment, Sexual and Gender-based Violence and Feminist Law Archiving.

The thematic updates are followed by a section on 'Impact' which offers a glimpse of the acknowledgement, influence, and recognition of PLD's work within academic, social policy and media in the period between April 2022 and March 2023.

I. Adolescent Sexuality and Early Marriage

1) Research and Publications



1. 'Child Marriage and the Law: Critical look at consequences and fresh proposals for empowering approaches': A webinar organised by the American Jewish World Service (AJWS) and Partners for Law in Development (PLD) to learn about evidence from India, Malawi, and Mexico on ways in which laws can push CEFMU underground, causing more harm than good, and to learn of transformative legal approaches that have the potential to advance the rights of girls on June 23, 2022. The webinar shared learnings from the policy brief, [A case for differentiated legal responses to child, early and forced marriage and unions: Lessons from India for a global audience](#), co-developed by PLD and the AJWS.

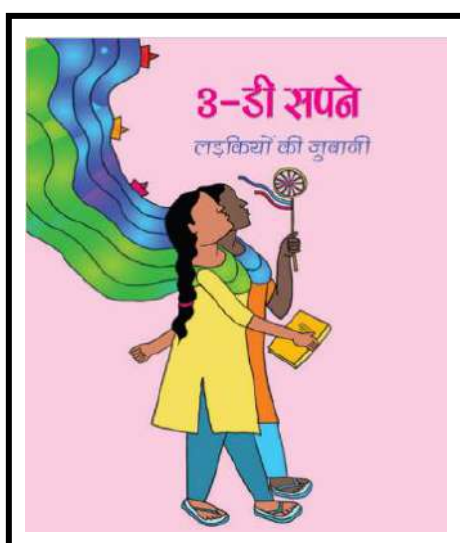
2. Amplifying voices of adolescent girls: Essay contest



As National Coalition Advocating for Adolescent Concerns' convenor, PLD rolled out an essay contest for girls from rural and urban poor contexts in Junior category (15-18 years of age) and Senior Category (19-25 years) in May 2022. The topic was - 'My dreams.'

Nearly 500 essays were received, from which 40 winning essays were selected by the jury members - Anita Bharti, Ghazala Jameel, Kavita Bundelkhandi, Kabir Maan – representing diversity and experience of marginalisation, having worked on Dalit, minorities, trans, and queer issues. Twenty winners in first prize category received Rs. 1000 each, and the 20 in second prize category received Rs 750 each; while all participants received commendation certificates.

3. A digest of essays by girls: *3D Sapne: Ladkiyon Ki Zubaani*



A wonderfully illustrated digest, featuring 40 most unique essays by 15–25-year-old girls from the NCAAC contest, was published and released online by PLD on 20th December 2022. Digital version can be read here. To order physical copies, write to resources@pldindia.org.

2) Outreach and engagement with the girls

1. Webinar to platform voices of girls



An online commemoration event was organised by PLD and conducted collaboratively by the National Coalition Advocating for Adolescent Concerns members, to felicitate the winners of the essay contest and have a panel discussion with girls, all who were non-winners, to acknowledge the value of participation, on 24th September 2022. More than 100 people, mostly girls participated – and in many locations, groups of girls were gathered in a room making the participation much more than what zoom can capture.

2. “Mera Chashme: Mere Rules” – podcast with adolescents



'Mera Chashma, Mere Rules,' a three-episode series, featuring four girls in the ages of 18-20, from different religions, states (Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and UP), social and familial setups, opened up about their struggles with mental health, patriarchal norms and structural inequalities. The podcast helps foreground concerns and aspirations of adolescent girls from marginalised contexts within the public domain as a way of helping go beyond policy debates to acknowledge lived realities and challenges that these girls grapple with. *'Mera Chashma, Mere Rules,'* developed by PLD in collaboration with The Third Eye, was released online on 27th February 2023. Watch all episodes [here](#):

3) Panel Presentations

Madhu Mehra presented as a panellist at the following events:

1. OHCHR Expert Workshop: 'Adverse impact of forced marriage on the full and effective enjoyment of all human rights by all women and girls' on 1-2nd September 2022.
2. 'Child Marriage in an International Frame: A Feminist Review from India': Discussion around Mary E. John's eponymous book, organised by Critical Childhoods and Youth Studies Collective (CCYSC) and Dept of History, Shiv Nadar University on 11th November 2022.
3. 'Media, Gender, and Social Justice: Towards an Equitable Society': A three-day national conference organised by the UNFPA and Network of Women in Media, India in Patna on January 26, 2023. She presented on how the law on child marriage is used, focussing on findings of PLD's studies.
4. 'Gender and Sexuality: Stigma, Discrimination and Exclusions': Conference organised by the Advanced Centre on Women's Studies (TISS) and the NHRC on March 11, 2023. She presented on how punitive approaches to adolescent sexuality and child marriage impacts adolescents from marginalized populations.

II. PREVENTING WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1) Capacity Development

We conducted training with a diverse range of stakeholders, from government departments, to higher education institutes, to IC members of private bodies and rural community-based organisations. These trainings are classified into two sub-headings below. The 20 institutional trainings covered more than 1900 participants, and were anchored by Barsha Mishra, the training coordinator.

The community-level trainings were organised in collaboration with Vanangana, a women's right collective, located in rural Uttar Pradesh. Over the course of three days, around 150 women received training.

1. Trainings with government, non-government institutions and higher educational institutions (HEI)



The details of the sessions are as follows:

Non-Profit				
S. No	Organisation	Pax	Nature of Training/ target group	Dates
1	Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST)	25	Gender Sensitisation at workplace and SHW Gender Sensitisation at workplace for staff members (<i>in-person</i>)	Jan 20, 2023
2	Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Foundation (RLS)	8	Training for IC on Sexual Harassment at Wokplace (SHW) (<i>in-person</i>)	Jan 18, 2023
		14	Orientation on SHW Law for staff members (<i>in-person</i>)	Oct 14, 2022
Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)				
3	IIT Delhi	389	Gender Sensitisation at workplace for students (<i>in-person</i>)	Jun 18-21, 2022, March 2, 2023
4	Indian School of Development Management	130	Gender Sensitisation and SHW at workplace for staff members (<i>in-person</i>)	Oct 8, 2022 Mar 15 & 17, 2023

	(ISDM)			
6	IIT Guwahati	107	Gender Sensitisation and SHW at workplace for students (<i>online</i>)	Nov 25, 2022, Feb 6 & 7, 2023
7	Wholsum Foods	36	Orientation on SHW Law for staff members (<i>in-person</i>)	Jul 21, 2022
		8	Training session on POSH with IC staff members (<i>in-person</i>)	Apr 8, 2022
Government Bodies				
8	Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)	470	Orientation on SHW Law for staff members (<i>in-person</i>)	June 16, 2022
9	Central Health Education Bureau (CHEB), Dte.GHS, MoHFW, GOI	70	Orientation on SHW Law for staff members (<i>in-person</i>)	Oct 11, 2022
10	Odisha One Stop Crisis (OSC) centre staff	60	a) Understanding the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) b) Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) c) Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence: Definitions and medical procedure to be followed in dealing with survivors d) Role of OSCs. (<i>in-person</i>)	Sep 2 & 3, 2022
11	Bhopal (One Stop Crisis (OSC) staff	102	Laws of SHW, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence, Act, 2005 (PWDVA) and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) (<i>in-person</i>)	Sep 14, 2022
12	Indian Nursing Council, New Delhi	36	National workshop for principals and tutors of nursing colleges on legal mandate of health facilities under POCSO; and Sexual Harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and redressal) (<i>in-person</i>)	Sep 6, 2022

13	Rajasthan Government	350	A webinar to strengthen the gender perspective and client's rights in family planning was successfully held with more than 350 health care personnels	May 13, 2022
14	WCDC, Bihar	40	Virtual POSH session was conducted for police officials	Jun 7, 2022
15	One Stop Centre staff and CSO members, Guwahati, Assam	44	Capacity building session on gender-based violence, mental health and psycho-social support and legal remedies (<i>in-person</i>)	Nov 29- Dec 1, 2022
16	WCD Department, Bhubaneswar, Odisha	67	training for IC members on SHW (<i>in-person</i>)	Dec, 8th-9th 2022

2. Community-level trainings

PLD partnered with Vanangana a rural community based womens' right collective, located in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh, to conduct three training sessions on leadership development, legal empowerment and awareness building on sexual and gender-based violence. The sessions were conducted by Pushpa from the Vanangana team, with its women collectives. Survivors of SGBV who joined the collective, shared their experiences and journeys, with other women, to create a network of solidarity.



Details of the trainings are as follows:

S.No	Nature of Training/ target group	Pax	Date
1.	Leadership building and fundamentals of law	65	March 1, 2023
2.	Two-day training on gender-based violence and basics of law with survivors of violence	44	March 4 & 5, 2023

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



Conceptualised in January 2022 as a community for peer exchange, SHARP comprises of 25 practitioners working in the field of sexual harassment law compliance from different disciplines and sectors. After hosting three successful sessions online, the highlight of this year's program was the three-day in-person residential workshop organised by PLD in Delhi, which brought rigour, dynamism, and renewed energy to our discussions, and marked a glorious closing to SHARP's inaugural year of work. First three sessions of SHARP were held in the first quarter of 2022. Details of the two events held this year are as follows:

1) Confidentiality and its discontents in relation to workplace sexual harassment- a discussion on different facets of confidentiality, non-disclosure agreements and disclosure of relationships within workplaces and an overview of Strategic Litigation Against Public (SLAPP) suits in relation to sexual harassment cases, was held on 23rd April 2022. The panellists – S.K. Priya, Advocate, Chennai; Kanti Joshi, SASHA (Support Against

Sexual Harassment at Workplace); Jhuma Sen, Jindal Global Law School- discussed cases and scenarios of maintaining confidentiality in each stage of a SHW proceeding and on SLAPP suits.

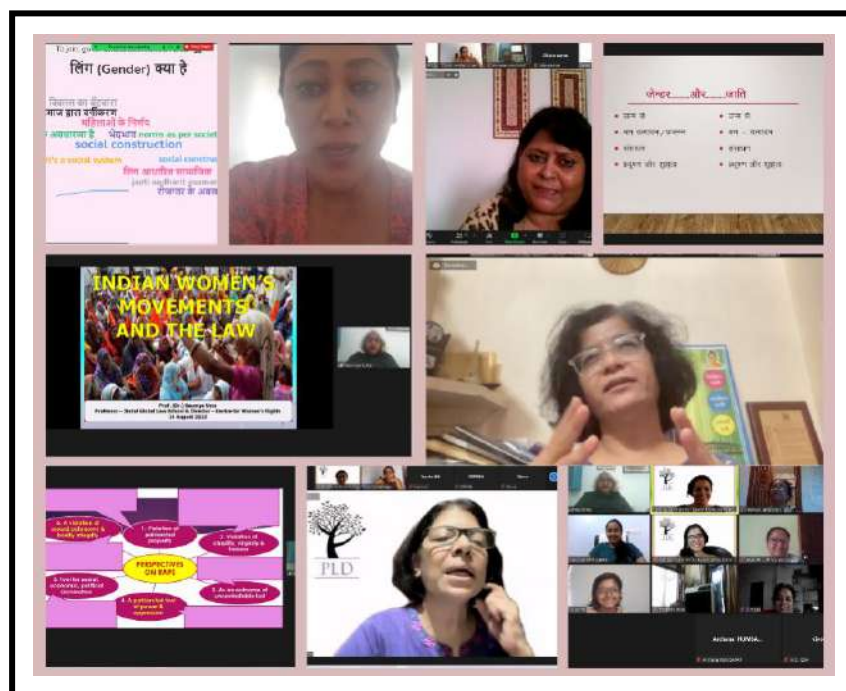
2) In-person meeting of SHARP– this meeting of 23 practitioners was held in Delhi to collectively chart an identity for SHARP, its goals, membership rules and nature of activities in a residential workshop held between 29th September – 1st October 2022. A commitment to come together for two years was agreed on, with the first year focusing on gaining clarity and providing mutual support, so as to move towards creating resources to support a wider group of practitioners.

3) Planning meeting for 2023: members met to discuss target setting and plan the activities for the next year of SHARP on 25th February 2023.

III. SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

1) Capacity Building

1. Training of Trainers (TOT) on violence against women and the law



We organised a virtual TOT on Violence Against Women (VAW) and the Law (in Hindi) which, brought together 21 participants from diverse backgrounds across 10 states – Bihar, Rajasthan, Odisha, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Kolkata between 23rd-25th August 2022. Sessions were conceptualised to deepen our understanding of laws as they would apply to caste and gendered atrocities, relating to transgender persons, sexual harassment at the workplace, domestic and intimate partner violence and civil and criminal remedies relating to these.

Participants concurred that sessions had widened their understanding of intersectionality. The rich and comprehensive resource material had introduced them to new concepts and applications which will be helpful references in their work.

2) Research and Publications

1. [The Possibilities Of Legal Redress Against Witch Hunting](#): written by Madhu Mehra and published in Outlook magazine dated 1st March, 2023, in its special issue on 'Witch Hunting'. It can be read [here](#). A form of gender-based violence, PLD has carried out research studies on the subject in Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Assam.

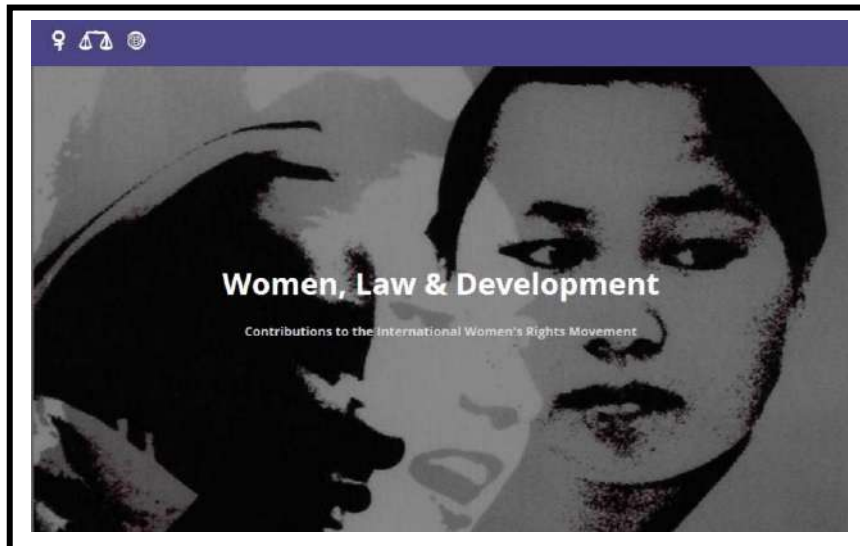
3) Panel Presentations

PLD presented as a panellist at the following events:

1. OHCHR Expert Workshop: The violations and abuse of human rights rooted in harmful practices related to accusations of witchcraft and ritual attacks on 18-19th July 2022.
2. "Negotiating Spaces: Looking back. Looking Forward. Rape Law Reform in India': Two-day conference on a decade of rape reform in POCSO Act 2012, and Criminal Amendment Act (CLA) 2012, 2018, organised by Majlis Law on 12th and 13th November 2022.
3. 'Changing Social Realities of Gender Based Violence': Webinar organised by Nirantar - Centre for Gender and Education with The Third Eye on 10th December 2022.
4. 'The Public and Digital: Examining the Spatial Dimensions of Increasing Gender-based Violence in India': organised by Krea University, on 19th – 21st Dec 2022.

IV. FEMINIST LAW ARCHIVING

The Feminist Law Archives, is our digital repository of women's movements engagement with the law. As part of ongoing research, the development and maintenance of the archives, we have adopted the history of the Women, Law, and Development (1985) to sustain and make available historical resources on feminist journeys with law and justice.



PART B: IMPACT

This section tracks ways in which PLD's work is viewed as relevant in the sector, and has contributed to shaping feminist legal and social policy discourses, through three elements – papers where PLD's work is cited; news coverage of PLD's work, and digital insights on our resource outreach. 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.

I. References to PLD's work

- 1) AJWS workshop for SWG members to present PLD's studies: 'Child Early Forced Marriage Unions (CEFMU) and the Law': A workshop and dialogue to present insights from PLD's Child Marriage series, was organised for members of the Sexuality Working Group (SWG) by AJWS 16th November 2022.
- 2) *Child Marriage in an International Frame* (2021) - PLD's work and reports have been referenced and its work acknowledged in this book by Mary E. John published by Routledge India.
- 3) [Implication of the POCSO Act in India on Adolescent Sexuality: A Policy Brief](#) (2022) and "'Romantic' Cases under the POCSO Act: An Analysis of Judgments of Special Courts in Assam, Maharashtra & West Bengal': Madhu Mehra was acknowledged as expert contributor and external reviewer for these two reports by Enfold India on the impact of POCSO Act on adolescent romantic relationships. The reports also acknowledge PLD's Child Marriage Series, which

brought the concept of self-arranged marriages to the child and early marriage debate.

II. PLD in the news



- 1) [Assam government's drive against child marriage a ham-handed attempt](#), Frontline, 23rd February 2023.
- 2) [Interview: 'Child marriage law has been weaponised by parents of girls who marry men they choose'](#), Your Weekly Fix, Scroll, 28th December 2022.
- 3) [THE BIG STORY: The two-finger test is banned, again. Why we need to do more for rape survivors](#), Mind the Gap, Hindustan Times, 6th November 2022.
- 4) [What's love got to do with kidnapping cases?](#), LiveMint, 21st September 2022.

III. Digital Engagement and Outreach

- 1) Over 1200 digital downloads of PLD's publications annually, with 2000-2500 pages read monthly at PLD's Academia page.
- 2) Visitors from over 25 countries and 100 cities engage with PLD's publications monthly.
- 3) PLD publications catered to over 1200 searched research fields, namely gender and sexuality, gender-based violence, jurisprudence among others, in the quarter of January-March 2023. And PLD's papers were recommended as top papers 87 times in March 2023 by Academia.
- 4) Over 1000 new users engage annually with our Feminist Law Archives portal, a digital repository of women's movement's engagement with the law.

PART C: ORGANISATIONAL UPDATES

PLD shifted our premise from Ground Floor, 1/11, Pant Nagar, PO Jangpura Extension, to P-9A, Ground Floor, Jangpura Extension, New Delhi- 110014.

Head (Research and Trainings)	Madhu Mehra
Head (Operations and Finance)	Vipin Kumar
Administration and Finance	Ankur Kashyap
Training	Barsha Mishra Monika (Consultant)
Research	Purwa Bharadwaj (short term) Ekta Rathore Saumya Maheshwari (short term)
Interns	Barkha Batra Darsana Varrier Palak Khanna Rhea Dangwal Medha Shukla Tanaya Das Vishakha Sharma Aprajita Upadhyay Anirudh Ramanathan
Knowledge Management and Communications	Kanika Katyal
Programme Support	Kishore Tirkey