India's law school inks deal with Cornell Law School

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New Delhi: Haryana-based O P Jindal Law school has signed an agreement with Cornell Law School of New York for cooperation to promote international perspectives in legal education and research in India and the United States.

“In their agreement, the two schools have committed to promoting a range of collaborative initiatives including faculty and student exchange programmes and joint teaching and research initiatives,” said an official statement of the O P Jindal Global University to which the school is affiliated.

“As the first joint effort of this relationship, the Avon Global Centre for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School and the Centre for Women, Law and Social Change and Centre for Human Rights Studies at Jindal Global Law School will be organising a joint conference on gender-based violence and justice in South Asia in October 2011,” the statement said.

After inking the deal at Cornell Law School on June 9, O P Jindal Global University Vice Chancellor Professor C Raj Kumar said, “The signing of the agreement and establishment of a deep and pervasive collaboration with Cornell Law School marks a significant step in our effort to promote global legal education in India.

“This relationship with Cornell provides for substantial areas of collaboration that will benefit both faculty and students and will foster collaborative research projects on issues relating to law and justice,” he said.
Jindal Law School to start student exchanges with New York’s Cornell

Written by Jay Sayta | Friday, 10 June 2011 18:37 | Law schools

Jindal Global Law School (JGLS) has arranged a reciprocal student exchange programme with New York’s Cornell Law School starting in 2012, also agreeing on other joint initiatives.

JGLS dean Prof Raj Kumar told Legally India that student exchange programmes would start from January 2012, in which two to three students from Sonipat would study at Cornell for one term and New York students too would come to India.

A host of joint initiatives would be undertaken by both universities, added a JGLS press release, including organising a conference on gender based violence and justice in South Asia, to be held in October 2011.

Dean and professor of law at the US law school, Allan R. Tessler Stewart J. Schwab, said in a statement that he looked forward to creating a long-standing relationship with JGLS: “We believe that this alliance will greatly benefit faculty and students from both schools and further enhance Cornell’s international programs.”

Cornell is the 13th university that JGLS has collaborated with according to its website, having also signed memoranda of understanding (MoU) with Yale in November 2010 and Canadian Queen’s University in Ontario.

Tags: Cornell Law School  Jindal Global Law School Jgls  Legal Education
New Delhi

Indian, US law schools join hands

J. Venkatesan

New Delhi: The US-based Cornell Law School has signed an agreement of cooperation and a memorandum of understanding with Jindal Global Law School of O. P. Jindal Global University to promote international perspectives on legal education and research in the world's two largest democracies.

Range of initiatives

Cornell and Jindal have committed to promote a range of collaborative initiatives, including faculty and student exchange programmes, and joint teaching and research initiatives. As the first offshoot of this relationship, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School, and the Centre for Women, Law and Social Change, and Centre for Human Rights Studies at Jindal Global Law School are organising a joint conference on “Gender-based violence and justice in South Asia” this coming October.

Signing the MoU at Cornell, Prof. C. Raj Kumar, Vice-Chancellor of O. P. Jindal Global University and Dean, Jindal Global Law School, said: “This marks a significant step in our efforts to promote global legal education in India.” Prof. Stewart J. Schwab of Cornell Law School said: “We believe this alliance will greatly benefit the faculty and students from both schools.... We look forward to building a longstanding relationship with Jindal.”

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Delhi to host second annual "Women and Justice" conference

New Delhi, Oct 20 (PTI) Legal luminaries and judges from 15 countries would participate in a two-day-long second annual "Women and Justice" conference here to voice their concern on gender-based violence in South Asia.

The conference, which would begin on October 22, would be attended by over 200 delegates across South Asia to speak against gender-based violence and access to "justice" to survivors of such violence.

"The conference is being organised by Cornell Law School and its Avon Global Center for Women and Justice in partnership with Jindal Global Law School," C Raj Kumar, Vice Chancellor, O P Jindal Global University, said.

"Scholars, health and legal professionals, judges from international and national courts, human rights advocates and policymakers would share knowledge and strategies to eradicate violence against women," he said.

Delegates from 15 nations, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the United States, are likely to participate, he said.

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‘Make legal system combat violence against women’

23 October 2011

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT: Mrs Justice Ranjana Desai, Judge, Supreme Court of India, has stressed the need to stimulate our legal system to combat violence against women and secure justice for them.
Delivering her Presidential address at the two-day international conference on "gender-based violence and justice in South Asia" organised by the Cornell Law School, Jindal Global Law School, and UN Women here over the weekend,
Mrs Justice Desai expressed serious concern over the fact that cases of rape and bride-burning are not dealt with adequate seriousness by the police and law enforcement agencies and added that it leads to poor conviction in such cases. She also lamented the deep and pervasive cultural attitudes that prevail in many societies including India which have undermined the effort to create a safe and secure environment for women.
Mrs Justice Desai emphasised the need to evolve methodologies for making gender-sensitive judges, imculcation of equality doctrine in the minds of judges and giving effect to principles contained in the Constitution of India and the international human rights conventions. Over 200 people from nearly 15 nations, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the USA participated in the conference. sns
Second Annual Women and Justice Conference:
Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School convenes scholars, judges, and advocates in New Delhi

On October 22 and 23, in New Delhi, India, the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School hosted its Second Annual Women and Justice Conference, "Gender-Based Violence and Justice in South Asia." Co-hosted by Jindal Global Law School, the conference was presented with the support of Avon Foundation for Women and in collaboration with UN Women; Virtue Foundation; Kriti Team; the International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life at Brandeis University; and Acid Survivors Trust International (ASTI).

The Second Annual Women and Justice Conference convened more than two hundred people from over fifteen countries. Participants included senior and distinguished judges from national and international courts, including judges from the highest courts of Bangladesh, Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka, eminent scholars, and human rights activists.

In addition to creating a dialogue across national boundaries, the Women and Justice Conference was organized to foster interactions between people who, though working toward common goals, often operate in isolation from each other. Speakers and participants included economists, women's studies scholars, legal professionals and scholars, and health professionals.

"By bringing together stakeholders across sectors, we created opportunities for cross-fertilization of ideas and best practices," says Sital Kalantry, Faculty Director of the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice and Associate Clinical Professor of law at Cornell Law School. "Professors were able to present their scholarly works to policymakers and activists who could put those theories into practice. Judges heard from victims of violence outside of the formal setting of a court room and learned first-hand of the difficulties they face within the criminal justice system."
Adds Sara Lulo '02, Executive Director of the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice and Adjunct Professor of Law at Cornell Law School, "One of the highlights for probably all in attendance was the compelling presentation by an acid attack survivor who recounted her experience not only as a survivor of a heinous form of violence, but also as someone who has felt frustrated and betrayed by her home country’s court system. Sadly, such frustrations are all too common amongst women survivors of violence around the world. Her deeply personal presentation and courage—and the palpable reactions and emotions evoked amongst participants—were important grounding elements for this conversation about 'access to justice.'"

Looking forward, Lulo says, "We are pleased to have received a lot of positive feedback on the import and impact of the conference. We hope that this convening not only reinforced important existing networks, but likewise sparked new connections that will advance further results-oriented collaborations."

Established in 2009 with a generous five-year grant from the Avon Foundation for Women, the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice works with judges, legal professionals, governmental and non-governmental organizations to improve access to justice in an effort to eliminate violence against women and girls.

The Avon Global Center and its partner organizations will publish a report that summarizes and highlights key proceedings from the Women and Justice Conference. This report, along with recordings of the proceedings, will be made available at www.womenandjustice.org.
Guest Viewpoint: Seeking justice for India's women

Halway around the world, the legal fight against domestic violence shares many similarities to our own

2:00 AM, Jan 8, 2012

A woman places a candle along with other members of various women's organizations at a candlelight vigil organized on the eve of the International Fortnight Protesting Violence Against Women in Mumbai, India. Associated Press / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Traveling the eight-lane highway from Delhi's ultra-modern airport to the capital reveals much about India of the 21st century. The road is jam-packed, a reflection of India's growing population that will exceed China's by 2020. The travel is chaotic, with the roofs of buses packed with people, motorcycles carrying three or more passengers, and with no adherence to the painted lanes we Americans rigidly observe. Modes of transportation include hand-pushed carts, battered three-wheeled motorized rickshaws (tuk-tuks), countless motorcycles, cars, trucks, buses and camels. This is the world's biggest democracy — a noisy, messy, colorful mixture of diverse histories, religions and cultures.

I was traveling this road at the invitation of Cornell University Law School's Avon Global Center for Women and Justice. Its second annual conference — titled "Gender-Based Violence and Justice in South Asia" — was held in India to examine some of the ways women and girls in South Asia are paying a price for the clash between traditional cultures/rigid gender roles and change.
Judges, attorneys, legal scholars, human rights activists and survivors of domestic violence gathered in October for the two-day event. Because of my work as the presiding judge in an innovative domestic violence court in Nijmegen, I was asked to present in a session addressing comparative approaches to advancing access to justice for women and girls. Known as "integrated domestic violence court," this model was developed in New York to address significant barriers to justice that have long existed here.

In brief, this new approach is based on the concept of one family/one judge. Following an allegation of violence between family members, all subsequent cases connected to that family are heard in one court. This routinely involves the transfer of criminal cases from local courts, custody cases from Family Court, matrimonial actions from Supreme Court and more. As a result, victims appear in one court instead of many, are offered an array of supportive services and experience consistent outcomes.

In presenting my work in India, I related some of the challenges I faced in understanding the dynamics of violent relationships. Like my colleagues in South Asia, I struggle to understand how a woman who had sworn one day that she needed protection from her partner wanted to withdraw her claims the next. We discussed pressures that hold women in these relationships and the reasons men give for battering. For example, in India and its neighboring countries, men often justify their use of violence against their partners as punishment for failing to conform to their traditional gender roles. Given that reality, guaranteeing ready access to courts able to grant effective relief may be a priority in the short term. Although research from the United States has found that most victims of domestic violence make multiple attempts to leave their abusive partners before they are successful, their experience when they seek help may significantly affect their decision about trying again.

Amidst a variety of powerful presentations, one stood out. Shirin Juwal related her experience as a victim of acid violence at the hands of her husband. Twelve years ago, following the expression of her desire to separate from her husband, he sprayed from behind some bushes and threw acid on her face. Although she has experienced many corrective surgeries, she remains marked by horrible physical scarring.

As traumatizing as the attack was, Juwal seemed equally traumatized by the refusal of the police to prosecute the crime and of her family and friends to stand behind her. She was rejected and abandoned. Now, 12 years later, Juwal speaks about her experience as part of her duties as the founder of the Palash Foundation, which "seeks to encourage social rehabilitation of disfigured people." I was moved to tears by the horror of the attack and the rejection she suffered. Her courage and resolve were palpable.

Following the two-day conference, a "Judges' Colloquium" was convened, during which judges from at least six countries discussed some of the themes of the conference sessions as they related to the judicial role. As we warmed to the interaction, common frustrations emerged, particularly around gender stereotyping. For example, despite its legal irrelevance, all of us acknowledged that the manner of dress for a rape victim often leads to blaming the victim, whether in the United States or Sri Lanka. Delays in getting to the merits of cases was another theme. I found this very rare cross-cultural judicial communication stimulating and energizing, as it felt like we had far more in common than standing between us. In a sense, we are all in this together.

The Avon Global Center co-sponsored the conference with Jindal Global Law School. Additional collaborators included U.N. Women; the Virtue Foundation; Kriti Team; the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life at Brandeis University, and Acid Survivors Trust International. In addition to speakers from the United States, the conference attracted speakers and participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Established in 2009 at the Cornell Law School, the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice has launched a series of initiatives focused on key issues facing women and girls nationally and internationally, including this annual conference. Faculty director Sital Kalantry, associate clinical professor at the law school, provides leadership to the Avon Center based upon her work on international human rights, particularly women's rights and the right to education. Avon Global Center Executive Director Sara Lulo, an adjunct professor at the law school, brings her experience developing rule of law initiatives focused on gender-based violence to this work. Together, they have guided the Avon Global Center in establishing clinical projects involving women sentenced to prison in the United States, a trial advocacy training program on trafficking in persons in Liberia, and a comparative analysis on acid attacks. The center also provides pro bono legal research assistance on related topics to judges across the world.

Rowley is a judge who presides over the Integrated Domestic Violence Court in Tompkins County.