

PANEL DISCUSSION

LET'S TALK ABOUT

# BAR DANCE AS LABOUR: MULTIDIMENSIONAL DISCOURSE

How do we understand bar dance? Where is it placed in the complex socioeconomic web of caste—class—gender? What about erotic labour? Socially reproductive labour? Can we think of affording the dancers protection under the labour—law regime? Does labour law have an answer to the idea of "shame" and other exclusion practices?

We welcome you to join us in searching for answers to these questions.

Open  
For  
All

## OUR SPEAKERS :

**Adv. Veena Gowda**

Advocate, High Court & Family Courts at Mumbai

**Dr. Sameena Dalwai**

Professor, Jindal Global Law School.

**Dr. Brahma Prakash**

Assistant Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

## EVENT DETAILS:

Date: Monday, 31 st October 2022.  
Time: 3 PM to 4.30 PM  
Venue: Room No. 406,  
National Law University, Delhi.

## MODERATOR:

**Dr. Sophy K.J.**

Associate Professor and Director,  
Centre for Labour Law  
Research and Advocacy (CLLRA),  
National Law University, Delhi.

Register Here :



Coordinator:  
SAUMYA

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**PANEL DISCUSSION**  
**ON**  
**BAR DANCE AS LABOUR: MULTIDIMENSIONAL DISCOURSE**

**Organised by:**  
**CENTRE FOR LABOUR LAW RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY**

**At:**  
**NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, DELHI**

**On:**  
**MONDAY, 31<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER, 2021**

### **About the Centre:**

Centre for Labour Law Research and Advocacy (CLLRA), at National Law University, Delhi, is established to reinvigorate the constitutional philosophy of 'decent work for all' by ensuring dignity at work and enjoyment of equal social, cultural and economic opportunities for workers. We focus on understanding the labour policy paradigm from an interdisciplinary perspective and converse with social realities to undertake meaningful advocacy and outreach initiatives.

With the objective of bringing forth interdisciplinary areas in labour before the students and other interested participants, we organise discussions and debates on various aspects of labour. Under our *Labour Law Discussion Series*, we are organising a **panel discussion on bar dancing**, with a special focus on the form of labour and working conditions of women.

### **About the Panel Discussion:**

Erotic labour is often sought to be disciplined through arbitrary and fluid notions of public morality, decency, and dignity. The social and policy discourses on bar dancing reduce the cultural and socially reproductive labour into merely a means of leisure and catering to prurient interests. The erotic labour by bar dancers to earn livelihood and climb the social and economic ladder threatened the State of Maharashtra that claimed it was obscene and impinged on women's dignity. It reacted with repeated attempts to strictly regulate the business of bars and dancing therein. Law was used as a tool for the patriarchal circumscription of female labour based on morality, obscenity and women's dignity. It seemed to resist the possible repositioning of the caste-class-gender nexus facilitated by renewed forms of erotic labour in the globalised society. Though, in January 2019, the Supreme Court read this as a fundamental rights issue under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution, the time limit on bar dance and prohibition on note/coin showering were upheld. Hence, the populist cultural notions continue to cast a shadow over the issue of bar dance as a form of labor. Another form of resistance comes from few activists who view bar dance as an entrenchment of gender-cum-caste-based exploitation and commodification of the female body. Yet, other feminist critiques have also questioned the exclusion of socially reproductive labour forms, such as bar dance, from the State policy discourses on protection of labour rights.

A number of questions deserve our attention. For instance, what are the salient socioeconomic features of bar dancing as a form of labour? How do we understand the social dynamics (e.g., the caste-class-gender nexus) of bar dancing as a form of work? Is there a need for separate regulatory framework to recognise and protect socially reproductive labour? What are employment practices involved in bar dancing? Moving away from the morality-decency-dignity framework, is there a need to regulate the working conditions of bar dancers through the labour rights paradigm? Is labour law an answer to deconstruct 'shame' and other exclusion practices against the bar dancers? Have the non-regulation of their working conditions invisibilised the bar dancers as workers? How do the voices of bar dancers get mobilised and what do they say about their work?

The Panel Discussion seeks your intellectual engagement with such questions.

**Eminent Panelists:**

1. Adv. Veena Gowda, Advocate, High Court & Family Courts at Mumbai
2. Dr. Sameena Dalwai, Professor, Jindal Global Law School.
3. Dr. Brahma Prakash, Assistant Professor at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

**Moderator:** Dr. Sophy K.J., Associate Professor and Director, Centre for Labour Law Research and Advocacy (CLLRA), National Law University, Delhi.

**Other details:**

**Date:** Monday, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2022.

**Time:** 3 PM to 4.30 PM

**Venue:** Room No. 406, National Law University, Delhi, Sector 14, Dwarka, New Delhi

**Registration Link:** <https://forms.gle/Jp3riUhVqV27if9e8>

**The Panel Discussion is open for all. There is no participation fee.**