

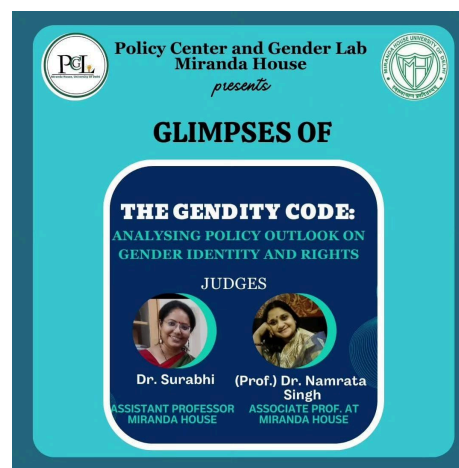


**POLICY CENTRE & GENDER LAB**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24**



The Policy Centre & Gender Lab, Miranda House presents its Annual Report 2023-24, which includes a range of events and initiatives aimed at encouraging discourse, research and action on gender-related issues. From research competitions focused on gender to research methodology courses training budding scholars, PCGL through its events started important engagement and learning . The annual paper presentation competition facilitated the development of innovative solutions for an inclusive future through the help of research analysis. Policies were brought to mainstream discourse with the help of weekly discussions. On the eve of International Women’s Day, the collaborative effort continued through the event "Shakti" celebrating women empowerment through experiences of the esteemed panel. These efforts underscore the PCGL’s commitment to providing a platform for policy discourse while addressing important challenges of gender equity and social justice.

**The GenDity Code**



The Policy Centre & Gender Lab, Miranda House organised a policy analysis competition themed, “The GenDity Code: Analysing Policy Outlook on Gender Identity and Rights” on 28th November, 2023. The event aimed at a critical assessment of gender specific policies in India.

The key objective was to bring out discourse on gender rights by analysing the current policies in our countries. To promote careful and empirical study of an intersectional realm of gender specific policies. Participants presented on a variety of themes like gender equality, empowerment, safety and protection, health and hygiene, maternal welfare and financial support schemes. Multiple dimensions, including economic, financial, technological, educational, and social aspects like gender norms, socio-cultural expectations, and traditional customs were used for examining schemes and policies.

The competition was conducted in two rounds. Participants were allotted different gender related policies a few days before Round 1. Participants were asked to present their analysis in teams or individually for 8 minutes. The preliminary round was held online followed by the final offline round. Top 6 presentations were selected for the final round. The final presentations were adjudicated by Dr Namrata Singh, Associate Professor, and Dr. Surabhi, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Miranda House along with Ms. Pavani Bansal, Documentation Head, PCGL.

Schemes and policies allotted to the participants broadly consisted of social welfare and gender equality policies like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Women's reservation bill, Scheme for Adolescent Girls, empowerment schemes including Mahila e-Haat, Skill upgradation and Mahila Coir Yojana, financial support and upliftment schemes like Sukanya Smariddhi Yojana, Bhagyalakshmi Yojana, safety and protection schemes, POSH Act (Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act), Garima Greh scheme etc.

Participants identified the problems faced at primary levels like female infanticides or sex-selective abortion, non-preference of bearing a girl child, patriarchal outlook and gender norms, lack of support. Also shedding light on the challenges in education and healthcare of girl children. In families facing financial constraints, parents usually perceive investing in sons as a better economic choice, because they expect sons to provide financial support in the future.

The participants used both qualitative and quantitative methodology and data while evaluating the policy. For financial schemes like SSY, cost-benefit analysis, by comparing interest rates of other schemes and economic conditions of families. Many potential policies like paid menstrual

leaves were discussed and debated. The participants also provided a comparative analysis with schemes within the country as well as drawing international comparisons.

The outreach, implementation and penetration of schemes were also discussed in the presentations. The key limitations which participants encountered to these policies were poor utilisation of funds, limited accessibility, financial illiteracy, gender bias, lack of research in identifying the number of beneficiaries. Creative solutions through amendments in the policies were also proposed by the participants.

1st Position was bagged by team Kaushiki Ishwar and Karizma Ahmed for Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme. Their research on the scheme was through journals and surveys conducted in college, presenting an insight of its performance analysis based on parameters like health, attitudinal changes, secondary education followed by international comparison. 2nd Position went to Zoya & Suhani for the Scheme for Adolescent Girls highlighting important healthcare issues like nutrition and menstrual hygiene.

## Research Methodology Course



**Policy Center and Gender Lab**  
Miranda House  
In collaboration with ETI Services  
Presents

**Certificate course  
on  
"Research Methodology"**

**Dr. Sukriti Chauhan**  
Senior consultant ETI

**Mr. Hardik Dua**  
Senior Research Analyst at ETI

**Ms. Maumil Mehraj**  
Research Analyst

**Starts -14th February**  
**Venue - 321 RoomNumber**

**REGISTER HERE!**

For enquiry mail us at [pgl@mirandahouse.ac.in](mailto:pgl@mirandahouse.ac.in)

Policy Centre & Gender Lab, Miranda House in collaboration with ETI Services conducted a Research Methodology Course. The course aimed to lay the foundation for understanding

research framework at undergraduate level. Session 1 was conducted by Mr. Hardik Dua, Senior Research Analyst at ETI on 14th February. The topic for this session was Research Question and Design.

During the session, Mr. Hardik discussed the essential components of a research question, including observation, pool of knowledge, interest, and opinions. He also explained the classification of research work into primary and secondary, where the former is based on direct data collection from the field, and the latter is based on the compilation of available data or an armchair approach. Participants were guided through the process of formulating hypothesis, highlighting the importance of asking nuanced questions that are currently relevant.

The research output could take the form of an essay like blogs, articles, opinion pieces, or longer texts like research papers. Mr. Hardik also emphasised the importance of pre-reading abstracts, headings, and conclusions while researching. Writing a brief of whatever is read helps in gaining the key ideas of the work. The speaker also discussed a guide to plagiarism and citations at the end. The session concluded with an interactive question and answer round between the speaker and participants.

The second session was conducted on 28th February by Mr. Hardik on 'Research Ethics: Ethical and Sensitive Approaches to Research'. Essential components of ethics were outlined in the discussion, such as respecting research participants' autonomy and informed consent, taking beneficence and non-maleficence into account when designing and carrying out research, and advancing justice and fairness in research methods and results.

A notable aspect of the discussion was the exploration of ethical considerations within contexts of violence, drawing upon theories by Scarry and Galtung, particularly within sensitive environments. Engaging examples such as Sudhir Venkatesh's work recounted in 'Gang Leader for a Day', laid the ethical importance within such frameworks, adding depth to the discourse.

Throughout the session, various topics were discussed, including the dichotomy between Cultural Relativism and Ethnocentrism in research, the involvement of participants in model

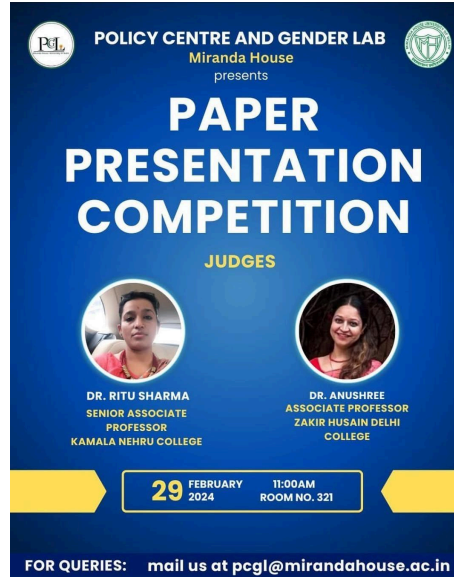
development, and the critical aspects of statistical validity and data integrity. Furthermore, ethical considerations regarding compensation in research, confidentiality protocols, and the necessity of ethical review and protocols in research were thoroughly examined, providing attendees with comprehensive insights into ethical dilemmas in their research.

The third and the concluding session of the Research Methodology Course was conducted on 13th March. The speaker for this session was again, Mr Hardik Dua and it delved into the idea of methodology and analysis of conducting research projects. Mr. Hardik began with discussing the importance of having a method within the course of a research and how it differs from a broader concept of methodology. After this, in order to make the session more engaging and fun filled, he asked the participants to design their own characters in order to explain the method of selection and sampling in an innovative manner - which he referred to as the “Game of Selection”.

This was followed by a discussion over the different tools of data collection i.e. qualitative and quantitative, which also involved a comparative analysis of the two. Lastly, he emphasised upon how one should present their research while highlighting the importance of identifying the theme one wants to operate upon, producing in sections while writing at a stretch and ensuring to supplement one’s study with figures and summaries.

Overall, the sessions were a resounding success, contributing to the ongoing professional development of participants and reinforcing the commitment of PCGL and ETI to excellence in research education.

### **PCGL Paper Presentation Competition**



Policy Centre & Gender Lab, Miranda House organised its Annual Paper Presentation Competition on the theme ‘Navigating Global Challenges: Innovative Policy Solutions for an Inclusive Future’ on 29th February, 2024. The competition served as an intersection of academia and policy towards a people-centric and solution oriented research. Participants were asked to submit abstracts on various sub-themes like health, gender, education, cultural conflicts, sustainability etc. The aim was to bring out a discourse about social and global justice amidst prevailing issues of developing nations to foster inclusivity. At the same time providing a platform to students at graduate and postgraduate level for innovative research and ideation.

The competition was conducted in two rounds. The first round was a call for abstracts. The top 10 best abstracts were selected for the final presentation round. The competition was in hybrid mode and participants presented their paper both offline and virtually. Participants were asked to present their analysis in teams or individually for 10 minutes followed by feedback by the judges. The final presentations were adjudicated by Dr. Ritu Sharma, Senior Associate Professor, Department of Sociology at Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi along with Dr. Anushree, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Zakir Husain Delhi College.

The participants presented on a variety of themes, from gendered experiences in the field of academia to minority representation. Highlighting the gap of representation and glass ceiling

which the marginalised group has to bear in fields like STEM. The epistemological ideas behind the western notion of agency specifically in the case of Islam and women were discussed in one of the presentations. This was followed by the study of leadership in the context of Panchayats and women led organisations in rural India. Paper was also presented on global issues like impact of cultural diplomacy with a case study of Indian states was also presented in the light of cultural expansion shaping social divides.

Creative solutions and ideas were highlighted by the participants through their in depth research on the given themes. The winning presentation was by Kratika Choubey on 'Role of Indigenous practices in Promoting Sustainability'. Prapti Das who presented on 'Cultural Diplomacy determining Global Harmony' bagged the second position. Kanuparthi received special mention for a paper on 'Impact of Women-led organisations in Rural India'.

### **Weekly Discussion - Menstrual Health Hygiene Policies**

The Policy Centre & Gender Lab Miranda House recently organized a weekly discussion on the theme of 'Stree's stain to Stree's right: Evolution of MHH policies with special emphasis on India's Menstrual Health Hygiene Draft, 2023'. The session was held on the 6th of March, 2024.

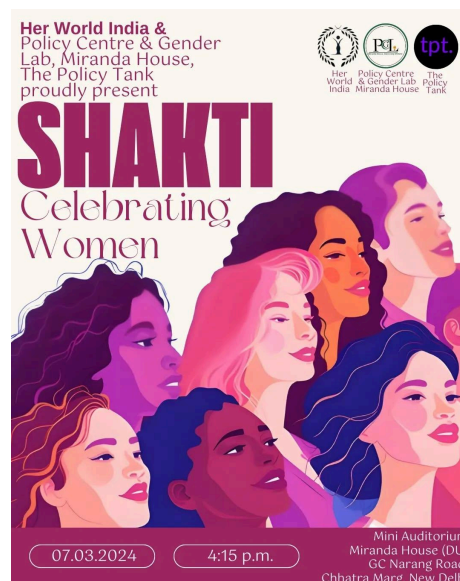
The discussion began with a fundamental question that aimed to define who menstruators are and the challenges they face. The participants shared their views and personal experiences of stigma and shame attached to menstruation. The discussion revealed that millions of girls, women, transgender men, and non-binary persons are unable to access dignified healthcare and hygiene while menstruating. The most common problem that surfaced was the misinformation, both scientific and social, surrounding menstruators.

To analyse policies related to menstrual hygiene, an international comparison was drawn, covering countries around the world. India's Draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy, 2023 was created after the Supreme Court's advocacy for a 'uniform national policy'. The primary problems in India are the limited access to sanitary products, hygienic washrooms, and lack of

awareness. The major highlights of the policy were discussed, including its shortcomings and suggestions for improvement.

The discussion also included related issues such as sex education, menstrual leave, period poverty, and the rural divide in access to menstrual hygiene. The roles of stakeholders such as schools, institutions, NGOs, and families were reviewed, along with their expectations from the government. The session concluded with opinions, ideas, and suggestions for an inclusive menstrual policy in our country, with an emphasis on the need for awareness and education on the issue.

### **SHAKTI: Celebrating Women**



On the 7th of March 2024, Policy Centre & Gender Lab, Miranda House in collaboration with Her World India and the Policy Tank, orchestrated a remarkable event titled "SHAKTI" to commemorate the power of women. This session hosted on the eve of International Women's Day was a testament to the collaborative efforts of organizations committed to fostering women's empowerment.



“*SHAKTI*” brought together diverse personalities from the field of medicine, science and technology, social service, administration, and academia- with an underlying aim and purpose to glorify 'nari shakti' - the inherent strength in every woman.

After felicitating the guest speakers, Rakhee Bakshee, Founder and Editor-in Chief of Her World India, expressed her excitement about the event, emphasizing its role in showcasing a common platform where women from diverse backgrounds could share inspiring insights, stories, and knowledge. The floor was then opened for the wide array of accomplished women and men who talked about an era where women-led development is steering the growth narrative of our nation. *SHAKTI* therefore served as a platform that united influential women leaders and their narrative for success.

Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda, Principal of Miranda House, emphasized the significance of the event, stating, “The strength, resilience, and skill of women and their talent are getting an enabling ecosystem right now, and that is what we are celebrating.” This quote encapsulated the essence of the celebration, recognizing the enabling environment for women's growth and development which she herself has fostered for over thirty years as an academician and author. The release of her book, “*Thirty One Pandemic Letters of Loss and Love*”, was the highlight of the evening through which, Prof. Nanda, captured the essence of power in womanhood and stressed the significance of women sustaining each other and creating a chain of empowerment. This sentiment resonated with the overarching theme of the event – the celebration of “*nari shakti*”.

The distinguished panel then shared their take on the theme and related it to their own life stories and enlightened the young audience who had enthusiastically gathered in large numbers. The program was also attended by eminent citizens, faculty and staff of Miranda House, Delhi University which fostered a supportive environment for women or *SHAKTI* to thrive.

### **Weekly Discussion - Pradhan Mantri Matru Vanda Yojana**

Policy Center & Gender Lab, Miranda House, conducted its weekly policy discussion on Pradhan Mantri Matru Vanda Yojana (PMMVY) on 18th April, 2024. The scheme provides cash

incentives directly in the bank accounts of pregnant women for maternity and childcare.

The discussion began by considering the need for a separate policy on maternal and postpartum health care, despite already existing anganwadi schemes and public health centers. The discussants analysed how the scheme provides an extension of integrated child development services and anganwadi. The problems of undernourishment, anemia, poor nutrition in mothers, and low birth weight in infants were brought to the table. especially in rural regions where economic and social distress does not allow women to access adequate medical care.

Basic procedures for obtaining monetary benefits, like proof of pregnancy and bank account details of pregnant women, were discussed. Key challenges faced by women in receiving these benefits were not having a bank account or adhaar card, dependency on male counterparts, and a lack of awareness. The proof of pregnancy for availing of the benefits also aligns with and promotes the two-child policy of the government.

Another challenge faced was the unequal penetration and implementation of the scheme regionally. Even in the regions where it had a success rate of 90%, no reporting has been done since the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds were even curtailed in the 2024 budget for this scheme. Other issues, like its applicability only to the firstborn child of the woman and ambiguity regarding the birth of twins or triplets, etc., were reviewed.

In conclusion, the policy provides good incentives to the beneficiaries, given the condition and taboo surrounding women's healthcare in the country. It at least attempts to address the financial cost of childbearing, which is generally overlooked in our society. Still, there is scope for improvement through better reach and funding to overcome the regional disparities.

### **Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)**

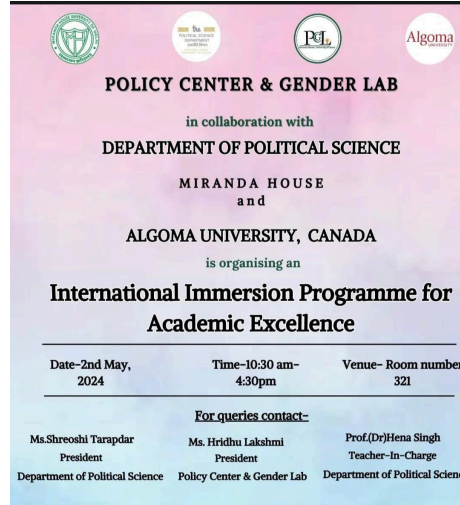
Policy Center & Gender Lab, Miranda House, organised its weekly policy discussion on Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) on 28th April, 2024. The session comprised a study of public-private partnerships integrated with digitisation in the welfare policy sector.

Launched by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, it provides health insurance coverage for BPL families working in the unorganised sector. Various aspects of policy, like eligibility, beneficiaries, and procedures, were reviewed. The target beneficiaries, i.e., people employed in the informal sector, are most vulnerable to accidents and ailments. Given the economic deprivation of the group, the policy provides access to insurance at minimal fees.

Given the nation's digital divide, concerns were raised about the accessibility of the proposed "digital healthcare policy for all". The digital aspects of the policy have opened avenues for the private sector, given their effective services. A critical assessment led to the discussion of the capitalisation of healthcare, taking the example of private hospitals aimed solely at profit-maximisation. This shift in the nature of welfarism in the public health sector to a market-driven system has been an issue of contemplation.

Other major problems, like excess charges demanded by private hospitals, were much higher than the allowances provided in insurance. Financial distress and structural inequality in rural regions, along with monopolistic and exploitative practices, were reported by the beneficiaries. Issuing smart cards for the purpose of identification and biometrics has also undermined privacy concerns and the safety of personal information. Solutions were suggested by the members to make the digital healthcare insurance system more secure and decentralized rather than profit-driven and exploitative. The discussion provided a comprehensive analysis of the policy by reviewing its pros and cons, towards a solution oriented approach.

### **Immersion Programme**



Department of Political Science, Miranda House and Policy Centre & Gender Lab, Miranda House in collaboration with Algoma University, Canada organised an Immersion Programme on 2nd May, 2024 for students of both the institutions. The programme started with the welcome address delivered by Dr. Hena Singh, Teacher-in-Charge, Department of Political Science, Miranda House. Thereafter, videos pertaining to Political Activism in India and the rise of India as a global power were shown to the audience members. The audience members of both the institutions engaged in informal dialogues with each other. A prominent part of this informal discussion was the introduction of each person in the room. The Canadian students were also familiarised with some local Hindi phrases.

This was followed by a keynote lecture delivered by Dr. Chandrachur Singh, Associate Professor, Hindu College on 'The Rise of India'. Dr. Chandrachur, in his lecture, emphasised on how India is rising as a global power in both tangible (critical mass of population and territory, economic prowess and military preparedness) and intangible (Strategic Purpose and Will of the Leadership) terms. The floor was then opened to questions. Questions pertaining to neoliberalism, exceptionalism, United Nations and democracy were enthusiastically asked by both students and Professors.

Another significant lecture was delivered by Professor Ujjwal Kumar Singh, Senior Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi on 'Political Activism'. He shed light on activism in general as both consciousness and conscience. Gandhi's Constructive Programme

about social construction was a major point of discussion. Students and professors then raised intriguing questions about non-violence, digital activism, student activism and the binaries of revolutionaries and pacifists.

After the two speaker sessions, the visiting students were shown around the campus by Mirandians. The students engaged in cultural and frolic activities thereafter. Ruchika Choudhary and Prapti Das conducted the activity ‘Kalakriti’, pertaining to various Indian art forms such as Warli Art, Madhubani Art, Kalamkari, Pattachitra, etc. After briefing the students about these art forms, volunteers from Miranda House helped their Canadian counterparts to draw these Indian

paintings step-by-step. The students then showed their artistic creations and explained the meaning it held for them. This activity helped in hands-on-learning and creating an amicable atmosphere of interaction and collaboration.

Anjali Singh and Yashika Singh conducted the activity ‘Shabdon ka Udbhav’ which required the students to guess the English translation of Hindi words which were phonetically similar. Ishika Khatri and Suhani Vats conducted the activity ‘Guess the Beat’ in which students had to guess the popular Bollywood song whose clipping they heard. The students not only enjoyed these activities but learnt a lot about each other’s culture throughout these activities.

The activities were followed by a culture programme showcasing the rich Indian cultural heritage. As a part of the Cultural Programme, various Indian dance forms were performed by students. Sriya Patnaik performed Kathak, Rupal Sankhla showcased Bhavayi (a folk dance form of Rajasthan), Ananya and Pratishtha performed Lavani (a folk dance form of Maharashtra) and a group dance performance of Keralite tradition was performed as well. Keeping up with the showcasing of Indian culture and traditions, henna was also applied on the hands of the visiting students.

Nearing the culmination of the Immersion Programme, reflections of students and Professors from both the institutions on the programme and their experience were shared. They shared how the Immersion Programme was a great learning experience and how they forged bonds transcending borders and distance. The Vote of Thanks was delivered by Hridhu Laskhmi, the

President of PCGL. The programme culminated with a group photo.

The Immersion Programme stood as a testament to the value of "अतिथि देवो भवः " as Mirandians planned a host of events and activities to not only enrich academic learning of the visiting students but also engage with them in cultural and interactive activities. The visiting students from Algoma University enjoyed their time at Miranda House and bid a bittersweet goodbye, hoping to come back again soon.

### **‘Vote Bhavishya Ka’**



ABP Network in association with Policy Center & Gender Lab, Miranda House, organised a talk show: ‘Vote Bhavishya Ka’ themed ‘Women Empowerment’ on 8th May, 2024. The session was moderated by Mr. Chetan Bhagat, Author and columnist, consisting of a panel of Mr. Alok Sharma, Spokesperson INC, and Mr. Sudhanshu Trivedi, Spokesperson BJP. The expert panels consisted of Vijai Trivedi, Senior Journalist and Chandrachud Singh, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Hindu College. The aim was to analyse the views of young voters about important issues concerning women especially in the context of General Elections 2024.

The event unfolded with questions about the current status of women in society along with issues related to their development. Both the parties’ spokesperson presented their counterpart’s criticism. Listed important policies catering women during respective parties’ tenures and highlighted the future policies and plans to bring if elected. The key issues revolved around Women Reservation Act 2023, safety and crime against women and economic conditions of women. The debate sparked between the panelists on the related issues and instances of violence against women across the were highlighted. Both the spokesperson highlighted the women representation within their parties and the women candidates who emerged victorious in the

elections. This underscored the need of parties to come up with more women representation at ground level in the local constituencies.

The show aimed to interact with young female voters of the country to ponder upon the narratives set for the upcoming elections. The students counter-questioned the speakers about ongoing conflict in Manipur citing the unsafe conditions of women. Even the on-campus safety of the female students was questioned from the parliamentarians. Some pointed out the loopholes of the current policies, and inaccessibility to the most needy ones. Moreover, intersectionality of women exacerbating their conditions was also brought to the table.

Events like these help the political leaders to be subjected to public scrutiny, especially students. The debate led to a two-sided discussion on the issues of women leading to a discourse among the students of the institution. Moreover, the debate helped the students to smartly use their right of vote by choosing wisely among the parties. It provided a platform for political dialogue among two parties' representatives which propelled young voters to go through the parties' agendas regarding an issue of women empowerment.