



FACULTY OF LAW
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI



International CONFERENCE ON GENDER DISCOURSES

CONNECTING THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE
THROUGH THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

— In Collaboration with —

**PRAJNA PRAVAH, DELHI &
CENTRAL SANSKRIT UNIVERSITY**



NOVEMBER 17-18, 2026



FACULTY OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

UNIVERSITY OF DELHI



The University of Delhi is a premier university in the country with a venerable legacy and international acclaim for its high academic standards, diverse educational programs, distinguished faculty, illustrious alumni, varied co-curricular activities and modern infrastructure. It was established in 1922 as a unitary, teaching and residential University by the Act of the then Central Legislative Assembly. Over the many years of its existence, the University has sustained the highest global standards and best practices in higher education. Its long-term commitment to nation building and unflinching adherence to universal human values are reflected in its motto: 'Nishtha Dhriti Satyam' 'निष्ठाधृतिः सत्यम्' (Dedication, Steadfastness and Truth). A strong commitment to excellence in teaching, research and social outreach has made the University a role model and trendsetter for other universities. The President of India is the Visitor, the Vice-President of India is the Chancellor, and the Chief Justice of India is the Pro-Chancellor of the University.

FACULTY OF LAW

Established in 1924, the Faculty of Law is a premier department of the University of Delhi, an institution of national importance under Entry 63 of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. As a national centre for legal education, it has produced generations of eminent jurists, Supreme Court and High Court judges, leading senior advocates, political leaders, policymakers, and public intellectuals. Despite its illustrious alumni, the Faculty remains committed to egalitarian ideals, offering high-quality legal education at nominal cost. Strategically located in the heart of Delhi, it attracts a diverse student body from across India and abroad. With over 10,000 students enrolled in B.A. LL.B. (Hons.), B.B.A. LL.B. (Hons.), LL.B., LL.M., and Ph.D. programs, it is among the largest law schools in the world. The Faculty fosters academic excellence through its distinguished teaching staff, multicultural learning environment, and a robust calendar of seminars, conferences, moot courts, and workshops. It regularly hosts scholars from renowned national and international institutions under various fellowships and has signed MoUs for global academic exchange. A pioneer in areas like Intellectual Property Rights, Human Rights, Environmental Law, and Gender Justice, the Faculty has significantly influenced legal reforms in India. Faculty members have contributed to laws against dowry deaths, media accountability, women's and children's rights, and the promotion of secularism. With growing emphasis on corporate, financial, and technology law, the Faculty remains aligned with India's evolving legal and economic landscape. Its faculty are deeply involved in mentoring, accessible beyond the classroom, and dedicated to socially relevant legal education. The Faculty of Law is dedicated to nurturing future legal professionals and public leaders. It instills in its students a strong sense of purpose and a deep commitment to social justice. Guided by a rich tradition of excellence in teaching, research, and public service, the Faculty continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the country's legal landscape.



PRAJNA PRAVAH



An intellectual movement of nationalist thinkers, Prajna Pravah is an organization working to promote Bharatiya traditions, culture, and intellectual heritage. It serves as a national platform for engaging scholars, researchers, and academicians on diverse subjects and educational initiatives. The discourses are mainly centred on significant topics of current national importance. The objective has been to work towards deepening the understanding of India's cultural and intellectual heritage. The organization has been instrumental in hosting discussions, seminars, and workshops on topics spanning Indian philosophy, law, history, social sciences, and literature.

CENTRAL SANSKRIT UNIVERSITY



The Central Sanskrit University has the unique distinction of being the largest and the only multi-campus language university in the world. The Central Sanskrit University also has the privilege of serving as the nodal agency for implementing Sanskrit-related policies & schemes of the Government of India. In that capacity, the university works in close coordination with the Ministry of Education, Government of India. The President of India is the Visitor of the University. The Union Minister of Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India, is the Chancellor of the University



ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

As India moves toward the goals of Viksit Bharat, its ancient intellectual tradition serves as a meaningful guide. It reminds us that building an inclusive and progressive society does not require a break from India's civilizational heritage; rather, it calls for a renewed engagement with its most considered understandings of gender, human capability, and social harmony. In this context, the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) offer a rich and layered understanding of gender, dignity, autonomy, education, family, justice and social order. Ancient Indian texts do not present a single uniform view of women and gender relations; rather, they reflect a dynamic intellectual tradition in which ideas of equality, capability, and harmony inform the norms. A close reading of primary texts reveals that women were envisioned not merely within domestic confines, but as participants in knowledge production, daily and ritual life, and legal frameworks.

The *Ṛig Veda* (c. 1500–1200 BCE) articulates a vision of marriage grounded in dignity and shared authority. The celebrated marriage hymn proclaims:

सम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव सम्राज्ञी श्वश्र्वां भव । ननान्दरि सम्राज्ञी भव सम्राज्ञी अधि देवृषु ॥
सम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव सम्राज्ञी श्वश्र्वां भव । ननान्दरि सम्राज्ञी भव सम्राज्ञी अधि देवृषु ॥ (*Ṛig Veda* 10.85.46.)

samrājñī śvaśure bhava samrājñī śvaśrvām bhava | nanāndari samrājñī
bhava samrājñī adhi devṛṣu ||

("Be a sovereign over your father-in-law, a sovereign over your mother-in-law;
Be a sovereign over your sisters-in-law, and a sovereign over the household.")
This verse symbolically elevates the bride to the status of a samrājñī (sovereign),
reflecting an ideal of dignity and authority within the familial structure.



ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (c. 700–500 BCE) further affirms women's intellectual agency. In a profound philosophical exchange, Maitreyī declares:

स होवाच मैत्रेयी, येनाहं नामृता स्यां किमहं तेन कुर्याम्? यदेव भगवान्वेद तदेव मे ब्रूहीति ॥
(*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.4.3)

sa hovāca maitreyī, yenāhaṃ nāmṛtā syāṃ kimahaṃ tena kuryām? yadeva bhagavānveda tadeva me brūhīti ॥

("What shall I do with that which will not make me immortal? Tell me, of that alone which you know (to be the only means of immortality)").

This inquiry reflects women's participation in metaphysical discourse and the pursuit of ultimate knowledge.

Manu Smṛiti– Manava-Dharmashastra (c. 200 BCE – 200 CE), in its Verse on *Strīdhana* (property of the wife) affirms the inalienability of women's property.

अध्यग्न्यध्यावाहनिकंदत्तं च प्रीतिकर्मणि । भ्रातृमातृपितृप्राप्तं षड् विधं स्त्रीधनं स्मृतम् ॥
(*Manu Smṛiti*–9.194)

adhyagnyadhyāvāhanikaṃ dattaṃ ca prītikarmaṇi |bhrāṭṛmāṭṛpitṛprāptaṃṣaḍ
vidhaṃ strīdhanam smṛtam ॥

[(1)What is given before the fire, (2) what is given at the time of departure, (3) what is given in token of love, and what is received from (4) the brother, (5) the mother and (6) the father,—has been declared to be 'Strīdhana' (the exclusive property of the woman)].



ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Nārada Smṛiti (c. 400–600 CE), in its chapter on recovery of debts, affirms the inalienability of women's property:

स्त्रीधनं च नरेन्द्राणां न कदाचन जीर्यते । अनागमं भुज्यमानं वत्सराणां शतैरपि ॥

(*Nārada Smṛiti* – *Vyavahāra-Mātrkā* 1.76)

**Stree-dhanam cha narendraanam na kadachana jeeryate |Anaagamam
bhujiyamaanam vatsaraanaam shatairapi ||**

("Women's property and the wealth of kings do not perish (are not lost/do not get old) [by enjoyment/possession], even if enjoyed (possessed) without a title (ownership, document/source) for hundreds of years.")

This verse establishes *strīdhana* – gifts from parents, husband, or kin at marriage – as exclusively the woman's domain. It cannot be seized for debts, alienated without consent, or diminished by use, except in dire necessity.



OBJECTIVES

The foregoing discussion demonstrates that Indian Knowledge Systems offered a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of women's status, recognizing them as equal partners to men across social, intellectual, political, spiritual, and economic spheres of life in ancient India. This conference seeks to critically engage with the gender discourses and Indian Knowledge Systems and its relevance in contemporary knowledge systems through the following few indicative questions:

- 1 How do foundational concepts such as *dharma*, complementarity, and moral agency inform the idea of gender justice in ancient Indian thought, and can these frameworks sustain contemporary notions of women's decisional autonomy?
- 2 In what ways do classical texts reflect women's access to education and intellectual participation, and how might these insights be applied as tools to empower women in present times?
- 3 How can the institution of marriage be revisited towards the one grounded in consent, companionship, and evolving gender roles?
- 4 How do Indian Knowledge Systems conceptualize health, bodily autonomy, and dignity, particularly in relation to women's agency across the life cycle and in both private and public spheres?

The conference aims to foster interdisciplinary dialogue that revisits classical Indian philosophical, legal, and cultural traditions, while assessing their potential contributions to contemporary discourses on gender equality, rights, obligations and justice.

Participants are encouraged to engage with foundational concepts, classical sources, and indigenous epistemologies while exploring their interpretive possibilities and normative implications for present-day discourse. The conference particularly aims to focus on submissions that draw upon authentic classical texts and theoretical frameworks, and critically evaluate their contemporary applicability within evolving modern knowledge paradigms.



THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

The following themes and sub-themes are indicative only. Contributors are welcome to choose any topic that meaningfully engages with gender, Indian Knowledge Systems, and their contemporary relevance.

THEME I

Philosophical Underpinnings: Gender Discourses and IKS

- Concept of *dharma* and gender discourses
- Concept of gender and power in ancient India
- Equality and complementarity in ancient Indian thought
- Women's agency, autonomy and power in Vedic traditions
- Decisional Autonomy of Women

THEME II

Women Education and IKS

- Education of women in ancient India
- Education as empowerment (autonomy, equality, etc.)
- Epistemic authority of women– as composers, debaters, and transmitters of knowledge(e.g., Gargi, Maitreyi, Lopamudra)
- Institutional and social structures supporting women education (i.e., gurukul, oral traditions, and domestic pedagogy)
- *Brahmavadinis* and *Sadyodvahas* in ancient India
- *Guru-shishya parampara* as a gender-neutral pedagogical ideal



THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

THEME III

Concept of Marriage and IKS

- Concept of marriage in ancient Indian texts
- Essentiality of Marriage in IKS
- Consent and companionship in IKS
- Success of Marriage as an Institution: Negotiating Failures, and Evolving Realities
- Evolving concept of Marriage: Obligation or choice
- Marriage and property rights
- Sanctity of Live-in relationships
- Transgenders and their status

THEME IV

Women Health and IKS

- Definition of Health (IKS: Ayurveda, Shusruta, etc. and Aayush)
- Women Health and Agency
- Women Health (reproductive health, life cycle diseases, end-of-life decisions, etc.)
- Selfhood and dignity



THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

THEME V

Women Participation in Public Life

- Status of Women in Ancient tradition and philosophy
- Women in governance and statecraft
- Participation of women in assemblies, debates, and intellectual discourses
- Women's role in dispute resolution and adjudication
- Women's Employment, Economic participation in public spheres
- Reimagining women's public roles through the lens of IKS

Kindly note that all authors are required to relate the theme of their research to authentic classical theories and texts, and demonstrate the relevance and enduring value of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in contemporary times. Each paper should aim to identify interlinkages between the past, present, and future by exploring entry points for an IKS-based, progressive understanding of gender within the contemporary legal framework.



ELIGIBILITY & SUBMISSION

ELIGIBILITY

The conference welcomes submissions from scholars, academicians, professionals, experts and students from diverse fields, including law, political science, sociology, economics and other social sciences.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Mode of Conference: Hybrid

Abstract and Keywords: Authors are requested to submit an extended Abstract and Keywords.

Word Limit: Abstracts should be between 300 and 400 words.

Language: English/Hindi

Content Requirements: The abstract must clearly outline:

- 1.The research problem/question(s)
- 2.Objectives of the study
- 3.Methodology/approach (theoretical, doctrinal, empirical, interdisciplinary, etc.)
- 4.Key arguments
- 5.Expected findings/Outcomes
- 6.Keywords: 4-5 keywords



ELIGIBILITY & SUBMISSION

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Originality: Submissions must be original and unpublished, and should not be under consideration elsewhere.

Thematic Alignment: Abstracts should align with the indicative themes of the conference.

Submission Format:

1. File format: .doc/.docx
2. Font: Times New Roman, Font Size: Text 12, Footnotes 10
3. Line spacing: 1.5
4. Citation Style: The extended abstract must include appropriate references and citations in accordance with the 21st Edition Bluebook citation format.

Full Paper: The full paper should typically be between 6000 and 8000 words, inclusive of references, tables, and figures. Manuscripts must be prepared in MS Word format and follow the same citation style.

REVIEW PROCESS

All abstracts will undergo a blind peer review process. Papers that critically engage with primary ancient texts (such as *Vedas*, *Smritis*, *Arthashastra*, or other classical sources) and offer original interpretative insights will be given preference during the review and selection process.



ELIGIBILITY & SUBMISSION

SUBMISSION LINK

The participants shall submit the abstract ONLY via the given **Google Form**: <https://forms.gle/qAzQg9QzbenUB8Cd6>

Kindly do not send the abstract through mail. After acceptance of the abstract and payment of registration fees, participants will receive a separate link to submit the full working paper.

Kindly note that the details provided during the registration process must be correct and the same will be used for all purposes, including the issuance of certificates.

PUBLICATION

Final papers may be submitted after the conference, following incorporation of feedback from the panel during the presentation, and may be considered for potential publication in an edited book/special issue of Delhi Law Review published by Faculty of Law, University of Delhi



IMPORTANT DATES

AUGUST 03, 2026

Commencement of Registrations

OCTOBER 25, 2026

Last date for abstract submission

OCTOBER 30, 2026

Last date for communication of selected abstracts

NOVEMBER 03, 2026

Last date to fill the Registration form

NOVEMBER 10, 2026

Last date for submission of working paper

NOVEMBER 17-18, 2026

Date of Conference



REGISTRATION

REGISTRATION FEE

₹1500/- inclusive of GST (for each Author and Co-author)

₹500/- (for UG/PG students & research scholars from organizing and collaborating institutions and members of the organizing committee)

Please Note

- No TA/DA shall be provided to the participants.
- Participants are requested to make their own arrangements regarding travel and accomodation.

Registration link will be sent to those participants whose abstract will be selected

FOR FURTHER QUERIES

Email: gdiks2026@gmail.com



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Conference Convenor

CONFERENCE CONVENER

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