

**REPORT ON WEBINAR ON CLIMATE JUSTICE LAWS: WHAT
WE HAVE AND WHAT WE NEED**

**HUMAN RIGHTS LAW NETWORK, IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE
LEGAL AID COMMITTEE, GOVERNMENT LAW COLLEGE,
MUMBAI**

25th of June, 2020

Preamble

As a part of the Students for Human Rights Initiative and the Oak Project the Human Rights Law Network Mumbai collaborated with the Government LAW College for an online webinar to engage with the students on the issue of *climate justice* on 25th June 2020 via “Zoom”. Two learned experts invited as speakers for the webinar were:

- (i) Adv.MeenazKakalia
- (ii) Adv. Zaman Ali

Adv. Afreen Khan anchored the webinar.

Speaker Guest’s Profile:

Adv.MeenazKakalia primarily practices in Bombay High Court for causes ranging from accessibility for persons with disabilities, sexual and gender based violence and environmental justice.

Adv. Zaman Ali litigates at various levels of courts and tribunals on a broad spectrum of cases having worked to obtain several orders in his fight to protect Aarey forest, Sanjay Gandhi National Park & Ulhas River.

Report of the Webinar:

Shortly after brief introductions of the speakers by a Legal Aid Committee correspondent, the speakers commenced the webinar by explaining the term Climate Justice. The one-hour webinar was divided in two parts by the Speakers, with each Speaker taking 30 minutes for their material.

Adv.MeenazKakalia started off by emphasizing the need for awareness about Climate Justice at a larger level. She explained the basic statutes & structures of Climate protection legislation in India including a brief account of the Coastal Regulation Zone. She gave a detailed outline of the structures of all the coastal area zones, which are classified as CRZ-1, CRZ-2, CRZ-3, CRZ-4.

- CRZ-1: These are ecologically sensitive areas these are essential in maintaining the ecosystem of the coast. They lie between low and

high tide line. Exploration of natural gas and extraction of salt are permitted

- CRZ-2: These areas are urban areas located in the coastal areas. Under Coastal Zone Regulation (CRZ) Notification 2018, the floor space index norms has been de-freeze.^[2]
- CRZ-3: Rural and urban localities which fall outside the 1 and 2. Only certain activities related to agriculture even some public facilities are allowed in this zone
- CRZ-4: This lies in the aquatic area up to territorial limits. Fishing and allied activities are permitted in this zone. Solid waste should be let off in this zone. This zone has been changed from 1991 notification, which covered coastal stretches in islands of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep.

Adv.MeenazKakalia also explained why the current system of legislation and administration is inadequate due to inefficient cooperation between various government bodies to protect the environment and a better system of accountability is required for proper conservation of the environment.

Adv. Zaman Ali started off his talk by emphasizing the important role that local governance plays in fighting Climate Injustice for protecting the environment since environmental problems are sometimes specific to that particular territory and it's difficult for the centre to take cognisance of those issues. A more localised review will be more beneficial in that case with specific laid down guidelines for each government body. He explained how India is more vulnerable to climate change because of its tropical nature and there is a greater need to create awareness about it. This awareness has to be inculcated by changing the general perception among the people about climate change.

Advocate Zaman Ali also suggested that one important step to India's fight against climate change is to update and rectify the outdated legislation and further strengthen it so that violators are punished effectively thus proving a strong deterrence against Environmental offences.

With the webinar coming to a conclusion, the floor was open to the audience for their questions and comments. After the interaction with the audience, the speakers concluded the webinar by providing useful suggestions and guidelines as to how a common citizen can help in protecting the environment and the eco system.

The entire session was quite edifying and richly informational.

A vote of thanks was then presented by the Legal Aid Committee members to the Speakers and the audience for their participation & HRLN for their support in organising the webinar.