



## CALL FOR PAPERS

**National Law School of India University**  
and  
**Oxford Human Rights Hub**

jointly host the  
**11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024 of the**  
**Berkeley Center on Comparative Equality and Anti-Discrimination**  
at the  
**National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, India**  
**26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

The eleventh annual conference of the UC Berkeley Center on Comparative Equality and Anti-Discrimination Law (BCCE) will be jointly hosted by the National Law School of India University and the Oxford Human Rights Hub. The Conference will be held at the National Law School of India University Bengaluru (India) from 26 to 28 July 2024.

The conference in Bengaluru builds upon the past success of BCCE's annual conference which in the past has been held in:

- Paris (Sciences-Po 2012)
- California (Berkeley Law 2013)
- Brussels (Université Libre de Bruxelles 2014)
- Shanghai (Jiao Tong University 2016)
- Dublin (Trinity College 2017)
- Melbourne (Melbourne Law School 2018)
- Stockholm (University of Stockholm 2019)
- Cape Town (University of Cape Town 2021)
- Hong Kong (University of Hong Kong 2022)
- Netherlands (Utrecht University 2023).

### **Is There Hope for Equality Law?**

After ten successful iterations, as the conference travels to South Asia this year, we ask: is there hope for equality law? Inaugurating the global decolonial moment, the nations of the

subcontinent constituted themselves into new republics with a lot of optimism and creative energy expended in reimagining and setting up just and fair societies. Giving shape and form to the principle of equality in political, economic and social lives was foremost in their agenda. But today, in the twenty-first century, there are growing concerns in this region, as there are all over the world, about the rise of inequality.

In the recent past, we have witnessed the growing awareness of different conceptions of equality, including substantive and transformative equality, systemic and structural inequality, indirect and effects-based discrimination which have made it possible to respond not only to intentional harms but to institutional harms as well. There has also been an expansion in the canon of identity characteristics protected under equality law. Yet, despite these gains and the centrality of equality to the political and legal order of so many countries, stakeholders around the world are questioning whether the legal right to equality is capable of addressing current inequalities. There are concerns that equality law is not up to the challenges of the climate crisis; ever-increasing wealth and income inequality; with the ever-widening disparities in access to rights and justice on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex and disability; tax injustice; growing informal work, the demonization of migration, the decay of democratic institutions, the power of multi-nationals, or the rise of artificial intelligence. This conference asks the bold question: In light of the doubts on the relevance of equality, is there hope for equality law?

The aim of the conference is to explore whether and how equality law can take the next step forward and offer insights and remedies to contemporary global challenges. Scholars and activists have used equality law to diagnose how laws, policies and programmes have created or enhanced poverty, disadvantage, stereotypes, stigmas, prejudice, oppression, and social exclusion. These laws, policies and programmes have been challenged in domestic, regional, and international courts and decision-making bodies. Although equality law has at best had a mixed record of success and failure, does it still have any untapped promise and potential to ensure that the world is fairer and more just for all peoples? While recognising the severity of current challenges, this conference seeks to explore whether and how equality law can develop to tackle the problems of today and of the future. It aims to bring together leading scholars to consider not only how foundational concepts may be re-thought and reimagined but also how theory and doctrine may evolve in a dynamic and transformative manner to realize the hope of equality law.

We are seeking paper proposals that address the broad questions posed by the conference. We encourage proposals to explore the following concepts and questions:

- the tension between equality and other foundational values such as liberty or other ideologies such as neoliberalism or neocolonialism
- the debates on the aims of equality law, such as debates on redistribution and recognition
- the role of affirmative action in redressing equality harms
- the role of proactive powers and duties

- the role of intersectionality in addressing systemic exploitation and oppression
- the challenges of achieving equality in specific fields of life such as
  - race, religion, caste, class and age discrimination (as illustration)
  - informal employment and lack of social protection
  - land, water and material resources
  - Indigenous rights
  - language, cultural and ways of life
  - decolonization;
  - disability and ableism
  - wealth and tax inequality
  - family, public life and gender
  - AI and technology
  - citizenship, migration and statelessness
  - climate crisis
  - violence
- the impact of social justice movements on equality law
- the relationship of equality law with rising authoritarianism and democratic decay
- equality and international law

### **Instructions for submission**

We invite submissions for individual presentations as well as panel proposals on the theme of the conference. We also encourage authors of recent monographs and edited collections to submit proposals to have panel discussions of their recent scholarship on the hope of equality law.

We encourage submissions from scholars at all stages of their career. We also welcome a wide range of approaches and perspectives including normative, doctrinal, critical and interdisciplinary. Submissions are invited from scholars working in law and allied disciplines of social sciences and humanities.

Abstracts should not exceed **500 words** and clearly indicate how your paper fits the theme of the conference, the objectives of the paper and its methodology. Please include a brief biography of maximum **100 words** which is suitable for publication on the conference website, including affiliation, your email-address and a link to online bio, if available.

Panel submissions should include a title and an abstract for the entire panel as well as titles, abstracts, and author information for all papers. Each panel should contain between three and four papers. The panel can be submitted by any of the authors.

## Selection criteria

Abstracts will be assessed based on:

- Originality and innovative nature of the work
- Relevance to the conference themes and subthemes.

Abstracts should:

- comply with the 500-word count
- comply with the 100-word biography
- Include a title
- 5 keywords

The abstracts will be assessed by the Conference committee, which consists of:

- Meghan Campbell (University of Birmingham)
- Aparna Chandra (NLSIU)
- Salmoli Choudhuri (NLSIU)
- Sandra Fredman (Oxford University)
- David Oppenheimer (Berkeley)
- Kamala Sankaran (NLSIU)
- Arun K Thiruvengadam (NLSIU)
- Pranav Verma (NLSIU)

## Timeline

- Abstracts are due **1 December 2023**.
- The abstracts will be reviewed, and invitations will be sent in **February 2024**.
- Full papers or presentations will be due on **1 July 2024** from authors whose abstracts are selected. Full papers will be made available to the participants of the conference. Subject to prior approval from authors, their papers and presentations may be posted on the conference website.

## Finances

The conference organizers strive to keep the conference fee as low as possible. The fee will likely consist of 400 USD for participants outside India and INR 6000 for persons from India. The conference organizers can regrettably not cover travel and accommodation. Fee waiver may be considered subject to availability of funds. Those wishing to apply for it are required to submit a statement indicating why they require a full or partial waiver.

## Contact

Please send the abstract and any queries relating to the Conference to [oxfordhumanrightshub@law.ox.ac.uk](mailto:oxfordhumanrightshub@law.ox.ac.uk).