

Guest lecture
**“Civil Society Organisations and Their Role in Promoting Socio-
Economic Justice”**
In Collaboration with Youngistaan Foundation

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ICFAI
LAW SCHOOL
HYDERABAD

ICFAI Law School, IFHE, Hyderabad
Guest Lecture
on

**CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR ROLE
IN PROMOTING SOCIO ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

26th March 2026 | 12:00 Noon

Introductory Remarks



Prof. (Dr.) P. Ravisekhararaju
Director,
ICFAI Law School, IFHE, Hyderabad

Speaker



Mr. Arun Daniel Yellamaty Kumar
Founder and Director of
Youngistaan Foundation



The Centre for Excellence in Gender Studies, ICFAI Law School, IFHE Hyderabad, organised a guest lecture titled “Civil Society Organisations and Their Role in Promoting Socio-Economic Justice” with Mr. Arun Daniel Yellamaty Kumar, Founder and Director of Youngistaan Foundation, as the distinguished resource person. The programme was organised with the objective of creating awareness among students about the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in addressing social inequalities, strengthening community participation, and promoting inclusive and equitable development.

The session provided students with an opportunity to understand the important role played by civil society organisations alongside the State, market institutions, and communities in responding to socio-economic challenges. The speaker discussed how CSOs can act as important intermediaries between communities and institutions by

identifying grassroots concerns, facilitating access to rights and entitlements, creating awareness, and advocating for responsive public policies.

A significant focus of the lecture was on **grassroots activism and community engagement**. Mr. Arun Daniel Yellamaty Kumar shared insights into the experiences of working with communities and highlighted the importance of understanding social problems from the perspective of those directly affected by them. The discussion emphasised that sustainable social change requires meaningful participation of communities rather than approaches that treat beneficiaries merely as passive recipients of welfare or development programmes.

The speaker elaborated upon various forms of **community engagement initiatives** undertaken by civil society organisations. Such initiatives may include awareness programmes, capacity building, educational interventions, livelihood support, legal and social awareness, and mobilisation of community members around issues affecting their rights and welfare. The lecture highlighted the importance of building trust with communities and developing interventions that are responsive to local needs and circumstances.

Another important dimension of the lecture was **policy advocacy**. Participants were introduced to the ways in which civil society organisations can bring grassroots experiences into policy discussions. By documenting social concerns, generating evidence, engaging with public institutions, creating awareness, and advocating for institutional reforms, CSOs can contribute to improving the responsiveness of governance mechanisms.

The lecture also explored the relationship between civil society and **socio-economic justice**. The speaker highlighted the persistence of inequalities relating to access to education, employment, livelihood opportunities, social security, healthcare, and other essential services. Civil society organisations can contribute to addressing these inequalities by facilitating access to information and entitlements, empowering communities, and drawing institutional attention to gaps in implementation. The discussion was particularly relevant from the perspective of **constitutional values and human rights**. Students were encouraged to understand socio-economic justice in the context of principles such as equality, dignity, non-discrimination, participation, and social justice. The role of CSOs in enabling individuals and

communities to claim and exercise their rights was discussed as an important component of a participatory democratic society.

The programme also highlighted the relationship between **civil society organisations and democratic participation**. CSOs can provide platforms through which citizens articulate concerns, participate in public discourse, engage with governance institutions, and contribute to discussions on public policy. The lecture therefore enabled students to appreciate democracy not merely as a system of periodic elections but also as a continuing process involving participation, accountability, dialogue, and community engagement. The session had particular significance for law students. It demonstrated that the effective realisation of legal and constitutional rights often depends upon **public awareness, institutional accessibility, community participation, and implementation at the grassroots level**. Students were encouraged to appreciate the complementary roles of legal institutions, civil society organisations, public authorities, and communities in advancing social justice.

From the perspective of the **Centre for Excellence in Gender Studies**, the programme also contributed to understanding the intersection between socio-economic inequality and gender. Women and other marginalised groups may experience structural barriers in accessing education, employment, resources, public services, and decision-making spaces. Civil society interventions can therefore play an important role in promoting inclusive participation and addressing inequalities experienced by vulnerable sections of society.

Key Learning Outcomes

The guest lecture enabled participants to:

- Understand the **concept and significance of civil society organisations** in a democratic society.
- Appreciate the role of CSOs in promoting **socio-economic justice and social inclusion**.
- Develop an understanding of **grassroots activism and community-based interventions**.
- Recognise the importance of **community participation and engagement** in achieving sustainable social change.

- Understand the role of CSOs in **policy advocacy and institutional reform.**
- Appreciate the relationship between **civil society, human rights, constitutional values, and social justice.**
- Understand the importance of collaboration between **communities, civil society organisations, educational institutions, and public authorities.**
- Develop greater awareness of contemporary socio-economic inequalities and possible approaches towards addressing them.

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals

The lecture was also relevant to several **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly:

- **SDG 1 – No Poverty:** through discussion on social and economic vulnerabilities.
- **SDG 5 – Gender Equality:** through emphasis on inclusion and participation of women and marginalised groups.
- **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities:** through the focus on addressing structural and socio-economic inequalities.
- **SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions:** through discussion of democratic participation, accountability, and access to justice.
- **SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals:** by highlighting collaboration between civil society, communities, institutions, and other stakeholders.