

## **REPORT**

HRDC, V. M. Salgaocar College of Law in association with Jindal Global Law School organized a talk on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022 in the Conference Hall of VMSCSL on the topic “The Rapidly Changing Role of Women (And Men) in US Family and Divorce Cases: What do these Changes Portend for India?” The resource person for this talk was Hon’ble Justice Matthew Cooper, who enlightened the audience on the various aspects of Family Law in United States.

Hon’ble Justice Matthew Cooper stated that since 2010, US Courts have started with No Fault Divorce which did not exist before that. He also highlighted that Courts in US did not ask for evidence when any person filed a divorce case that was filed with irretrievable breakdown of marriage as a ground. The Judge also emphasized that when domestic violence cases are filed they are heard together with divorce cases and not separately. Justice Copper then explained the system of maintenance in US. He emphasized that when it came to alimony and child support, there are percentages that have to be calculated as, in his opinion, a child is an innocent victim of the divorce.

Hon’ble Justice Matthew Cooper also stated that on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2011, New York adopted same sex marriage. This has given rise to same sex divorces. Here too, the Courts in US are children friendly and see to that both the parents share the custody of the children. Child support is taken care of and best interest of the child is kept in mind by the courts when it comes to deciding the custody and other important matters.

Before concluding his session, Hon’ble Justice Matthew Cooper answered some questions raised by the audience. Dr. Patil and Prof. Ramrai inquired about Pre-Nuptial Agreement. Justice Cooper harped that Pre- Nuptial agreements are very much valid in US and many couples resort to it in order to safeguard their property from getting split at the time of divorce. Justice Cooper also answered Ms. Zainab’s query that there is no concept of Natural Guardian in US unlike India.

The session ended by concluding remarks from Prof. Dr. MRK Prasad.

