



**Commonwealth Legal Education
Association (CLEA)**

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON “CONVERGENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND SUBSISTENCE : ESPOUSING THE CAUSE OF INDIGENOUS TRIBALS AND FISHERMEN ”

 **30th & 31st August 2025**

 **Mascot Hotel, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**

**Organised by
Commonwealth Legal Education Association
(CLEA)**

**Jointly Organised by
The Kerala Law Academy Law College**



**In Association with
School of Legal Studies, CUSAT
St. Dominic's College of Law, Kanjirappally
Kochi Metro Rail Limited (KMRL)
Centre for Advanced Legal Studies and
Research (CALSAR)**



Conference Highlights

- International Conference with sessions on coastal, transport, and community – based sustainability models
- Deliberations on legal status and protection of indigenous and near-indigenous communities
- Integration of sustainability and subsistence discourse in legal education
- Participation from academics, legal professionals, and researchers across Commonwealth nations



ABOUT PARTICIPATION

- Registration: **Required for all participants**
- Registration Fee: **No registration fee**
- Participation: **Participation is by invitation only**
- Speaking Opportunity: **Only for invitees**
- Publication: **Selected papers will be published**
- Email: cleakeralaconference2025@gmail.com

CLEA INITIATIVE

This conference is part of CLEA's continued efforts to promote inclusive and interdisciplinary legal education. The 2024 Kumarakom Declaration emphasized the role of law and education in sustainable transport and tourism. The present endeavour extends this vision to community centered ecological justice.



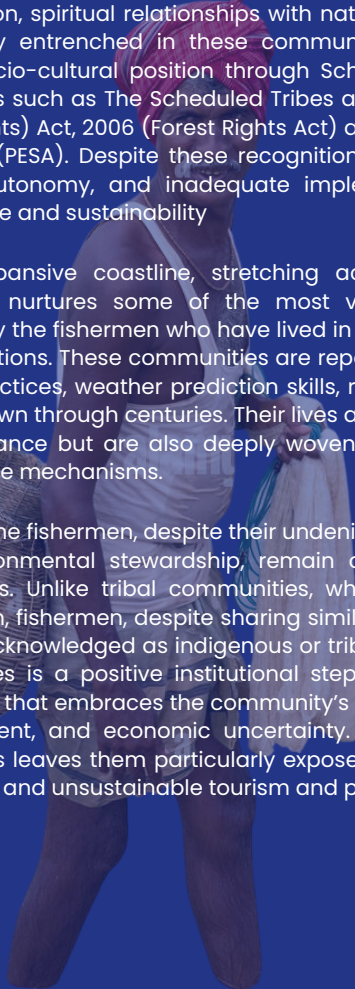
CONVERGENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND SUBSISTENCE: ESPOUSING THE CAUSE OF INDIGENOUS TRIBALS AND FISHERMEN

The convergence of sustainability and subsistence is not just a theoretical construct, it is an urgent practical necessity. While sustainability focuses on long-term ecological balance and intergenerational equity, subsistence emphasizes the immediate survival needs and daily realities of vulnerable communities. When seen through the lens of tribal and fishermen communities, these two concepts must not be viewed as oppositional, but rather as mutually reinforcing. Achieving this balance, however, requires reimagining legal education, policy-making, and governance from a community-embedded perspective.

The indigenous tribal communities in India are scattered across forested, hilly, and remote terrains and have historically sustained themselves through subsistence practices rooted in deep ecological consciousness. The characteristic features of indigeneity, kinship-based social organization, spiritual relationships with nature, oral traditions, and traditional self-governance are deeply entrenched in these communities. The Indian Constitution acknowledges their unique socio-cultural position through Scheduled Tribe status, complemented by protective legislations such as The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (Forest Rights Act) and The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, (PESA). Despite these recognitions, the ground realities of displacement, erosion of cultural autonomy, and inadequate implementation of rights continue to challenge their subsistence and sustainability

India's expansive coastline, stretching across more than two-thirds of its geographical boundary, nurtures some of the most vibrant and ecologically integrated communities, particularly the fishermen who have lived in harmony with marine and inland water ecosystems for generations. These communities are repositories of traditional ecological knowledge, unique fishing practices, weather prediction skills, resource management customs, and oral traditions passed down through centuries. Their lives are not only dependent on the sea and inland waters for sustenance but are also deeply woven into cultural rituals, spiritual beliefs, and localized governance mechanisms.

However, the fishermen, despite their undeniable contribution to food security, coastal economy, and environmental stewardship, remain on the periphery of legal and policy recognition frameworks. Unlike tribal communities, who enjoy a degree of constitutional and statutory recognition, fishermen, despite sharing similar cultural, social, and ecological attributes, are not formally acknowledged as indigenous or tribal groups. While the creation of a separate Ministry for Fisheries is a positive institutional step, it has yet to get translated into a rights-based framework that embraces the community's near-indigenous status and vulnerability to climate, displacement, and economic uncertainty. Their exclusion from the umbrella of indigenous protections leaves them particularly exposed to the externalities of globalization, infrastructure expansion, and unsustainable tourism and port-based development.



The discourse on sustainability and subsistence would be incomplete without addressing the realities of transport infrastructure and its intersection with coastal livelihoods. With the expansion of port networks, inland water transport corridors, and maritime connectivity under national development agendas, coastal and inland communities, particularly the fishermen and indigenous populations, face increasing pressures of displacement, ecological degradation, and regulatory marginalization. The legal innovations required to reconcile infrastructure growth with social and environmental justice are thus a critical part of this conversation. It is the need of the hour that we need to examine the legal, policy, and governance frameworks that can support equitable and ecologically sensitive transport development. This includes evaluating environmental clearances, coastal zone regulations, community consultation mechanisms, and compensation models, while also exploring best practices for harmonizing transport modernization with the rights and resilience of coastal and riverine communities.

This conference on **“Convergence of Sustainability and Subsistence: Espousing the Cause of Indigenous Tribals And Fishermen”** takes forward the momentum generated by the CLEA International Conference 2024 held in Kumarakom, Kerala, which culminated in the Kumarakom Declaration. That declaration emphasized the need to integrate law, technology, and ecological justice into legal education, with a particular focus on transport and tourism. This second edition of the conference adds a community-centered dimension to that discourse, revisiting the sustainability framework through the lens of subsistence, particularly for those whose lives are deeply embedded in fragile ecosystems.

By focusing on the intersectionality of ecological vulnerability, cultural continuity, legal invisibility, and development-induced displacement, this conference seeks to foster academic dialogue and legal policy deliberation that bridges the widening gap between sustainability and subsistence. It explores the legal recognition of indigenous attributes beyond rigid classifications, advocates for the protection of customary knowledge systems, and pushes for inclusive frameworks that respect traditional livelihoods while aligning with national and global sustainability goals.

In doing so, it invites scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to think beyond standard categories and to co-create pathways that affirm the dignity, resilience, and rights of these often-overlooked communities, paving the way for a just, inclusive, and sustainable future. Just as the first edition of the CLEA Conference in Kerala culminated in the Kumarakom Declaration, the second edition aspires to produce impactful outcomes in the domains of community justice and legal education. The key outcome of this conference will be the establishment of focused research platforms dedicated to the rights, recognition, and legal frameworks surrounding fishermen and indigenous tribals. In addition, the conference aims to strengthen legal education on both formal and informal levels by developing curriculum, and expanding outreach through legal aid clinics and community-based legal literacy initiatives. These efforts will help integrate sustainability and subsistence into the core of legal academia and public legal education.



SUB-THEMES

- Sustainability and Subsistence: Points of Convergence
- Indigenous and Near-Indigenous Rights: Legal Recognition and Reform
- Coastal and Inland Fishermen: Community Resilience and Law
- Sustainable Port, Inland, and Sea Transport
- Climate Change, Displacement, and Legal Safeguards
- Ecosystem-Centric Development and Justice
- Customary Law and Sustainable Livelihood Models
- Legal Education, Technology, and Community Engagement
- Developmental Externalities and Vulnerability

EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS

- Judges
- Academicians and Legal Scholars
- Policy Experts
- Researchers and Law Students
- Coastal and Community Development Practitioners
- Government Representatives and Indigenous Advocates

SCHEDULE

30th August
2025
Saturday

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM : Inaugural Ceremony

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM : Plenary Session I
Theme: Sustainable Transport: Port, Inland and Sea: Coastal Challenges and Legal Innovations

7:30 PM – 9:00 PM : Conference Dinner

31st August
2025
Sunday

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM : Session II
Theme: Indigenous Tribals and Fishermen: Identity, Law, and Recognition

11:00 AM – 11:30 AM : Tea Break

11:30 AM – 01:00 PM : Session III
Theme: Custom, Law, and Sustainable Ecosystems: Legal Models for the Future

01:00 PM – 02:00 PM : Lunch

02:30 PM – 04:00 PM : Valedictory Session



ABOUT ORGANISERS

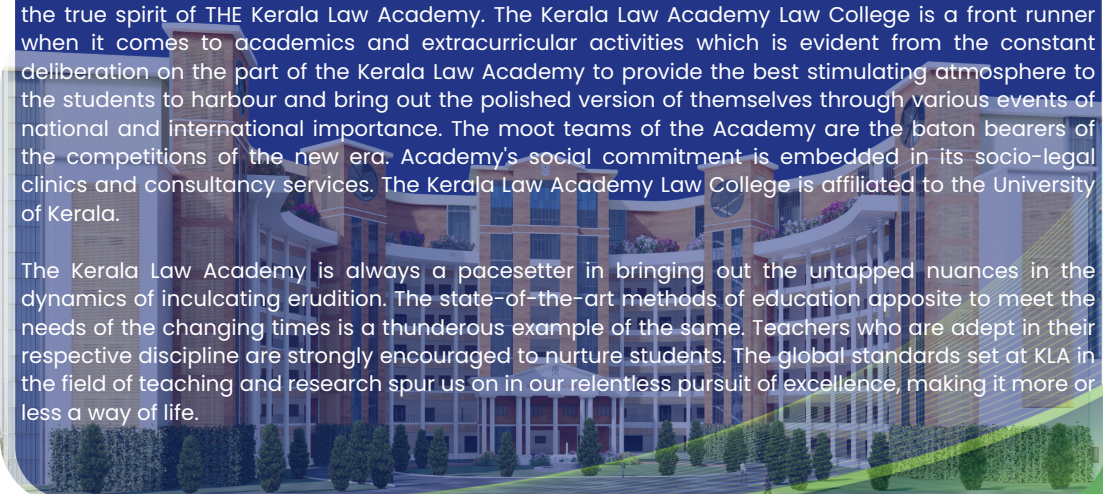
The Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) was formed in December 1971 as a Commonwealth-wide body with an aim to foster and promote high standards of legal education in the Commonwealth. The Association has regional Chapters and Committees in Asia, Southern Africa, West Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe. The Association's goals are: i) to make legal education socially relevant and professionally useful by developing law curriculum and teaching methodologies, ii) to support continuing legal education and distance learning programmes and iii) to assist law schools and equipping them to meet the demands of the profession by further enabling information revolution and tackling other global challenges.

The Constitution of CLEA envisages the establishment and functioning of country-based Chapters to carry out the activities in conformity with its objectives through conferences, moots, newsletters, lecture series, curriculum development and activities for students. To meet the growing demands of legal education and research, the Association is committed to developing new curricula that reflect new and upcoming trends in the legal sphere. To promote in-depth dialogues on legal subjects and education, CLEA has also undertaken, "The Commonwealth Comparative Constitutional and Public Law Project", which was initiated in 2019. The initiative aims to cover comparative law study of Constitutional and Public Law aspects in the world. The CLEA established "The Commonwealth Institute for Justice Education and Research" (CIJER) in 2017 to serve as a dedicated research wing to contribute to legal reformations including international, regional and national policy formulations.

The CLEA aims to promote standards of legal education through academic and professional exchanges, research publications, organization of conferences, workshops, and study tours. It works with the objective of strengthening literature concerning legal education and developing innovative research pedagogy. Prof. (Dr.) S. Sivakumar is the President of CLEA and can be reached at president@clea.ac. For more info visit www.clea.ac

The Kerala Law Academy Law College, established in 1966 by the legal luminary Late Dr. N. Naryanan Nair, who is the founder head of the institution, is a seat of excellence in legal education, consultancy, research and in pioneering law reforms. The prestigious institute of Kerala Law Academy is situated in Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, India, on a hill in the midst of sylvan splendour silhouetting the blue sky. The liberal ambience of the research wing "Center for Advanced Legal Studies and Research" (CALSAR), is facilitative to kindle novel thoughts and ideals. The 'Academy Law Review' which has won international acclaim ever since its appearance in print in 1977 is evocative of the true spirit of THE Kerala Law Academy. The Kerala Law Academy Law College is a front runner when it comes to academics and extracurricular activities which is evident from the constant deliberation on the part of the Kerala Law Academy to provide the best stimulating atmosphere to the students to harbour and bring out the polished version of themselves through various events of national and international importance. The moot teams of the Academy are the baton bearers of the competitions of the new era. Academy's social commitment is embedded in its socio-legal clinics and consultancy services. The Kerala Law Academy Law College is affiliated to the University of Kerala.

The Kerala Law Academy is always a pacesetter in bringing out the untapped nuances in the dynamics of inculcating erudition. The state-of-the-art methods of education apposite to meet the needs of the changing times is a thunderous example of the same. Teachers who are adept in their respective discipline are strongly encouraged to nurture students. The global standards set at KLA in the field of teaching and research spur us on in our relentless pursuit of excellence, making it more or less a way of life.



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PATRON

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Learned Attorney General for India & Patron, CLEA

CHIEF ADVISOR

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Judge, High Court of Kerala & Executive Chairman, Kerala State Legal Service Authority

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President, CLEA/Senior Professor, Indian Law Institute/ Former Member, Law Commission of India



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