SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Ethical governance · Accountable institutions · Safe and inclusive campus

INTRODUCTION

Peaceful, just and accountable institutions

Sustainable Development Goal 16 calls for peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and effective, accountable and transparent institutions at every level. Its targets address the reduction of violence, the rule of law, the prevention of corruption and bribery, responsive and participatory decision-making, the protection of fundamental freedoms, and non-discriminatory laws and policies.

Universities contribute to this goal through the way they are governed and through what they teach, convene and promote. Ethical governance, clear and fair procedures, accessible grievance-redressal mechanisms, codes of responsible conduct and inclusive participation build trust within a campus community, while awareness programmes, civic engagement and scholarship on governance, rights and justice extend that contribution to the wider society. The sections that follow show how the policies, practices, events and research of SRM University-AP relate to these principles.

HOW UNIVERSITIES CONTRIBUTE TO SDG 16



SDG 16-RELATED POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Policies that set the framework

SRM University-AP has documented policies governing student conduct, staff conduct, prevention of ragging and sexual harassment, workplace non-discrimination and ethical practice. Each entry below explains what the document provides and how that provision connects to SDG 16. The programmes conducted under this framework are described under Events and Community Outreach.

Anti-Ragging Policy

WHAT THE DOCUMENT PROVIDES

- Defines ragging broadly, covering conduct that teases, humiliates, exploits or harms any student physically or psychologically, and prohibits it across the campus, hostels and student transport.
- Requires a public declaration against ragging at admission, publication of helpline and functionary contact details to students, and signed undertakings from students and their parents or guardians.

- Establishes an Anti-Ragging Committee that includes student representatives, an Anti-Ragging Squad, a Mentoring Cell and a Monitoring Cell, with hostel wardens to be accessible at all hours.
- Protects the identity of those who report incidents, requires enquiries to follow fair procedure and natural justice, provides for appeal to the Vice-Chancellor, and makes lapses by faculty or staff subject to departmental enquiry.

SDG 16 CONNECTION
Supports Target 16.1 by seeking to prevent violence and psychological harm among students, and Targets 16.3 and 16.6 through defined, appealable and accountable procedures.

Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment

WHAT THE DOCUMENT PROVIDES

- Covers allegations of sexual harassment involving employees or students and is framed in line with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and its Rules.
- Provides for an Internal Complaints Committee led by a presiding officer, with at least half of its members women and with one male and one female faculty member nominated.
- Treats retaliation against an aggrieved person as an offence, requires members to keep complaints confidential, and preserves the complainant's right to seek legal recourse.
- Lays down time-bound steps from complaint to appeal, and states the institution's responsibility to build a culture in which students and employees can progress on talent and effort regardless of gender.

SDG 16 CONNECTION
Supports Targets 16.1, 16.3 and 16.b by offering a confidential, structured route to redressal and by committing the institution to equal, non-discriminatory treatment.

Student Code of Conduct Policy

Reference: SRMAP/Reg.Off/Policies/21/2023-24 · **Dated:** 03 January 2024 · **Effective:** Academic year 2023–24 ·

WHAT THE DOCUMENT PROVIDES

- Applies to all registered students on and off campus and in online settings, and asks for conduct that is respectful, accountable and law-abiding.
- Affirms resident rights, including the right to be treated as equal without fear of harassment, intimidation or bullying, and sets out a request route for disability-related hostel accommodations through the Directorate of Student Affairs.
- Sets a graded framework of misconduct and consequences, a stated reporting process through the Directorate of Student Affairs and the Disciplinary Committee, and a staged appeal route that ends with a mercy appeal to the Vice-Chancellor.
- Declares the campus smoke-, alcohol- and drug-free and treats ragging and sexual harassment as serious offences under the relevant university policies.

SDG 16 CONNECTION
Gives students published standards and proportionate, appealable procedures (Targets 16.3 and 16.6), and affirms equal treatment and safety (Targets 16.1 and 16.b).

General Code of Conduct and Ethics

Reference: SRMAP/Reg.Off/Policies/14/2023-24 · **Dated:** 30 October 2023 ·

WHAT THE DOCUMENT PROVIDES

- Applies to teaching and non-teaching staff, vendors, contractors and others dealing with the University, who are held accountable for their individual and collective actions.

- Identifies as misconduct the taking or giving of bribes, theft, fraud and dishonesty, falsification of university records, giving marks or leeway to students for monetary benefit, and sexual harassment.
- Prescribes a disciplinary procedure based on natural justice: a written charge memorandum, an Enquiry Officer, cross-examination of witnesses, a copy of the enquiry report to the employee, a decision by the Registrar and appeal to the Vice-Chancellor.

SDG 16 CONNECTION

Contributes to Targets 16.5 and 16.6 by naming bribery and dishonesty as misconduct and by setting out a fair, accountable process for dealing with it.

Workplace Code & Guidelines Policy

WHAT THE DOCUMENT PROVIDES

- Applies to permanent, temporary and contractual employees and sets baseline expectations for professional standards, ethics and conduct.
- States that the University is an equal opportunity employer with zero tolerance for sexual harassment and for discrimination on the basis of caste, creed or religion, and that complaints in breach will be investigated and resolved appropriately.
- Treats physical violence or assault between employees as serious misconduct, requires employees to report suspicious movement to Security or Admin, and obliges them to protect confidential university information.

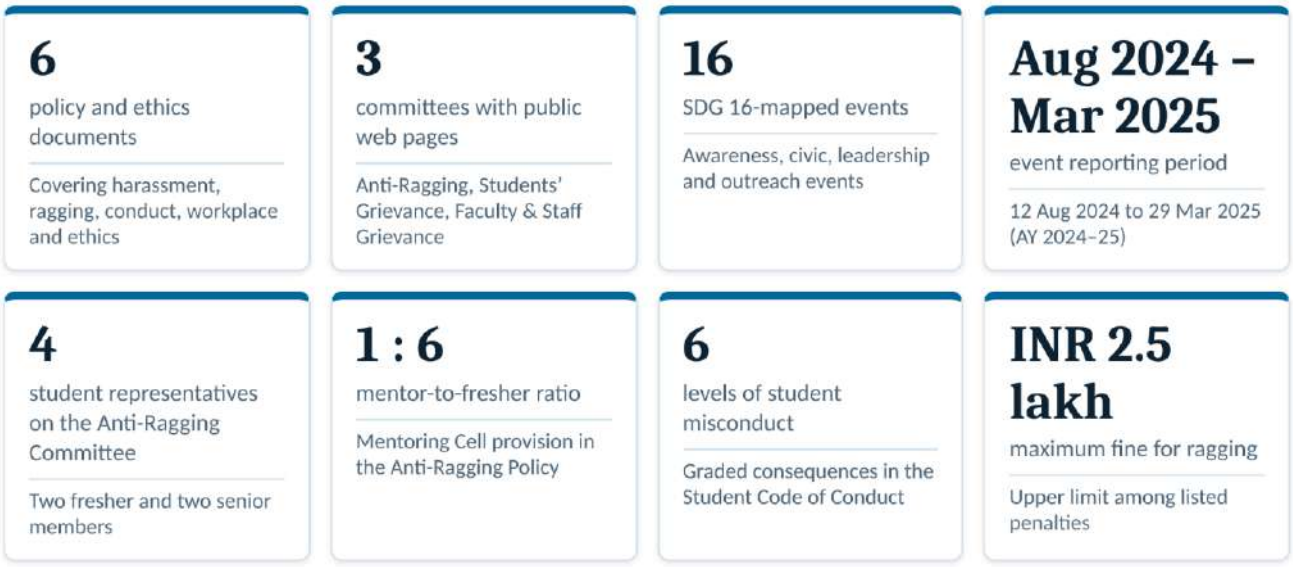
SDG 16 CONNECTION

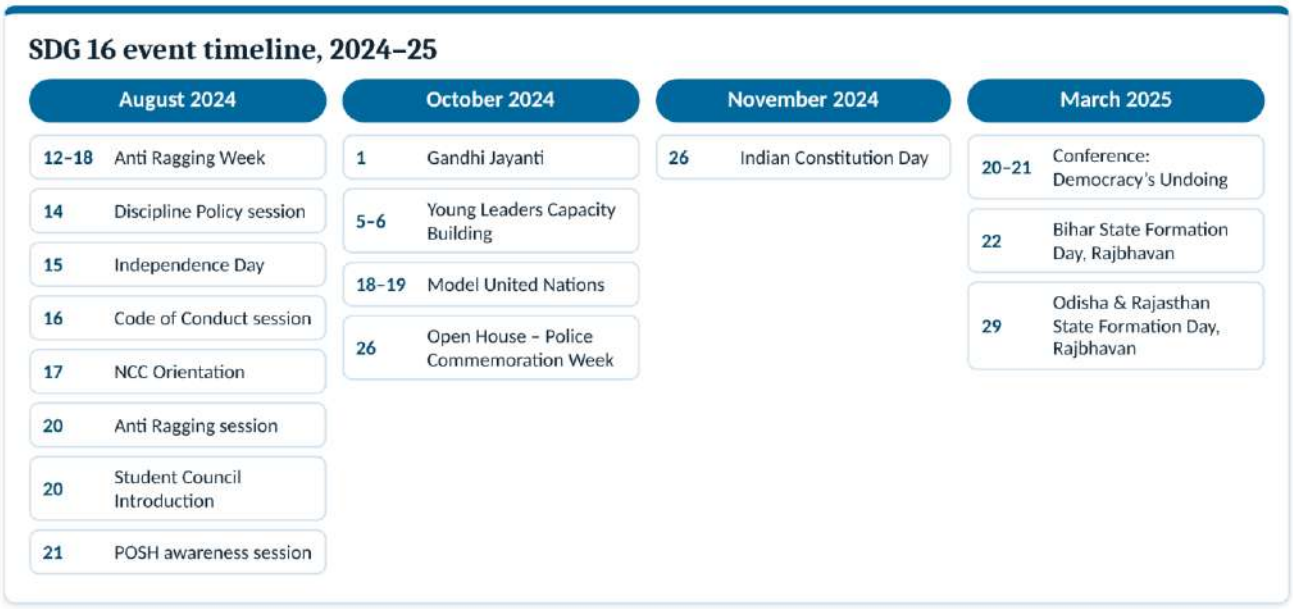
Supports Targets 16.1 and 16.b by committing the University to a respectful, safe and non-discriminatory workplace.

SDG 16 DATA AND KEY HIGHLIGHTS

SDG 16 at a glance

Event data relate to Academic Year 2024–25, with events held between 12 August 2024 and 29 March 2025.





KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Rights, conduct and anti-ragging awareness sessions were held during August 2024, covering the discipline policy, code of conduct, anti-ragging and prevention of sexual harassment.
- Students engaged with constitutional values and non-violence through Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti, Indian Constitution Day and a conference on democracy and politics in South Asia.
- Student representation and leadership were supported through the Student Council introduction for freshers and a two-day leadership workshop for council members.
- A Model United Nations simulated the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council, and students visited an open house exhibition during Police Commemoration Week.

GOVERNANCE, TRANSPARENCY AND INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Governance in practice

Governance principles are put into practice through visible committees, published procedures, student participation and ethical safeguards in academic work.

Public disclosure of committee information

The university website carries dedicated pages for three bodies that handle conduct and grievances: the Anti-Ragging Committee, the Students' Grievance Redressal Committee and the Faculty and Staff Grievance Redressal Committee. Making these bodies visible to students and staff supports Target 16.6 on transparent institutions and Target 16.10 on access to information. At the anti-ragging awareness session for freshers, the contact numbers and email IDs of the Anti-Ragging Committee were also displayed.

Ethical conduct and academic integrity

- **Institutional Ethics Committee.** Apex body that reviews research proposals involving human and animal subjects, monitors ongoing projects and addresses concerns of research misconduct.
- **Research ethics in the curriculum.** Ethical research design, responsible authorship, data integrity and the societal implications of research are embedded in coursework across disciplines.
- **Plagiarism screening.** Theses, dissertations and research manuscripts are screened with plagiarism-detection software such as Turnitin before submission or publication.
- **Codes of conduct.** Separate codes for students, faculty and staff set expectations for integrity, respect and responsibility.
- **Code of Conduct training.** Training for students, faculty and administrative staff covers academic integrity, harassment prevention, workplace ethics and conflict of interest.

How the framework connects to SDG 16 targets

16.1 Reducing violence and harm
Anti-Ragging Policy; Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment; Workplace Code on violence as misconduct

16.3 Justice and due process
Staged appeal routes and natural-justice enquiries in the student, staff and anti-ragging procedures

16.5 Countering corruption
General Code of Conduct and Ethics names bribery, fraud and dishonesty as misconduct

16.6 Accountable, transparent institutions
Published committee pages; codes of conduct and training; Institutional Ethics Committee; plagiarism screening

16.7 Participatory decision-making
Student representatives on the Anti-Ragging Committee; Student Council; leadership workshop

16.b Non-discriminatory policies
Equal-opportunity and zero-tolerance provisions; equal treatment regardless of gender; resident rights; disability accommodation route

Documented procedures: complaints, enquiry and appeal

Each policy places a defined authority at every stage and provides a route for review.

Student discipline and appeal route · Student Code of Conduct Policy

1 Report	2 Levels 1–2	3 Levels 3–6	4 Appeal	5 Mercy appeal
Misconduct is reported to the Directorate of Student Affairs (DSA)	DSA meets the student with the faculty mentor and/or Director of Campus Life; parents informed	DSA convenes the Disciplinary Committee with parents before sanctions are decided	Written appeal to the Registrar (Levels 5 and 6), who may refer back or convene an Appellate Committee	Further mercy appeal to the Vice-Chancellor; the final decision is communicated by the Registrar

Prevention and response route · Anti-Ragging Policy

1 Report	2 Squad enquiry	3 Committee	4 Remedial action	5 Appeal
Incident reported to the Squad, Warden, Director–Student Affairs, Vice-Chancellor or Helpline	On-the-spot enquiry under fair procedure and principles of natural justice	Anti-Ragging Committee decides the punishment from the listed measures	University action initiated and completed within seven days of the report	Appeal against the Committee's order lies with the Vice-Chancellor

Complaint and redressal route · Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy

1 Complaint	2 Notice	3 Inquiry	4 Report	5 Decision	6 Appeal
Written complaint to the Internal Complaints Committee within three months of the incident	Parties questioned separately; show-cause notice sent; respondent replies within seven working days	Inquiry by the ICC (conciliation possible only at the complainant's request, without monetary settlement)	ICC submits a detailed report within 10 days	University administration decides within 15 days; both parties informed	Appeal to the university administration within 60 days

Staff disciplinary procedure · General Code of Conduct and Ethics

1 Charge memo	2 Enquiry	3 Report	4 Decision	5 Appeal
Issued by the Registrar, a Dean or an authorised officer, stating the alleged misconduct	Enquiry Officer appointed; principles of natural justice apply; witnesses can be cross-examined	Enquiry report and findings submitted; show-cause notice issued with a copy of the report	Registrar, as disciplinary authority, decides on the penalty	Vice-Chancellor is the appellate authority

Student voice in the framework

- The Anti-Ragging Policy places representatives of both fresher and senior students on the Anti-Ragging Committee and sets up a student Mentoring Cell.
- The Student Council was introduced to the incoming batch, and it ran the Anti Ragging Week competitions and joined the Directorate of Student Affairs for Indian Constitution Day.
- Council core members and heads of the extended council took part in a dedicated leadership workshop.

EVENTS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Rights, conduct and anti-ragging awareness

Celebration of Anti Ragging Week

Date: 12–18 August 2024 · Organiser: Directorate of Student Affairs and Student Council · Mode: Online · Participants: 50

A week-long campaign to sensitise students to the harm caused by ragging and to its legal consequences. Students took part in slogan-writing, essay-writing, reel-making and digital poster competitions, and winners were declared in the video, essay and poster categories.

Participants also pledged not to indulge in ragging and to report any incident they observe or come across.

SDG 16 link: Target 16.1, preventing violence and psychological harm among students and encouraging reporting.



Anti Ragging Week photobooth



Anti Ragging Week banner

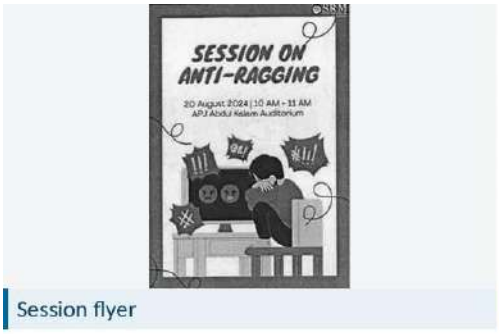
Awareness Session on Anti Ragging

Date: 20 August 2024 · Host: Directorate of Student Affairs · Venue: APJ Abdul Kalam Auditorium · Participants: 1,002

Delivered by the Director of Student Affairs for the incoming batch of freshers, the session explained the legal and personal consequences of ragging and the university's stance against it.

Students were introduced to the Anti-Ragging Committee and Squad, with contact numbers and email IDs displayed, and watched videos on the effects of ragging on individuals and the community.

SDG 16 link: Targets 16.1 and 16.6, making complaint channels known and visible to new students.



Session flyer



Anti Ragging Session



Anti Ragging Session

Awareness Session on Discipline Policy

14 August 2024 · Directorate of Student Affairs · 248 participants

An orientation session on the university's discipline policy for students.

NCC Orientation

17 August 2024 · Directorate of Student Affairs · 1,510 participants

An orientation session in the NCC category for students.

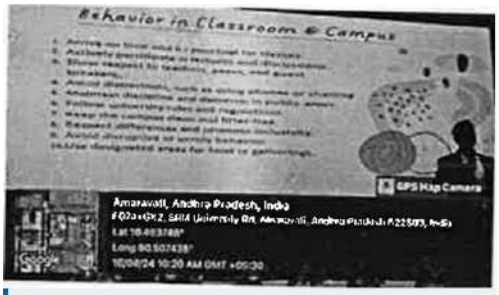
Awareness Session on the Code of Conduct

Date: 16 August 2024 · Host: Directorate of Student Affairs · Venue: APJ Abdul Kalam Auditorium · Participants: 1,000

Held as part of the 2024 student orientation, the session explained the university's expectations on behaviour and academic integrity.

The Director of Student Affairs outlined the policies governing student conduct, the disciplinary clauses and the penalties for infractions, and answered student questions in an interactive Q&A.

SDG 16 link: Targets 16.3 and 16.6, ensuring rules and their consequences are known to the people they apply to.



Policies presented



Audience



Speaker



Penalty clause slide

Student Council Introductory Session

Date: 20 August 2024 · Host: Directorate of Student Affairs · Venue: APJ Abdul Kalam Auditorium · Participants: 1,210

Freshers were introduced to the members of the Student Council, the roles and responsibilities of student representatives, and the ways in which they can join the council.

The proceedings included a Student Council oath taking and an announcement of the year's upcoming events.

SDG 16 link: Target 16.7, inclusive and participatory decision-making through student representation.



Student Council introduction



Student Council banner



Student Council oath taking



Audience

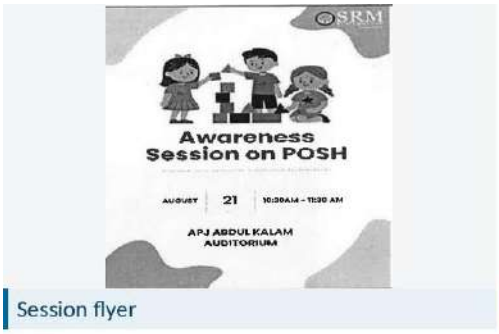
Awareness Session on POSH

Date: 21 August 2024 · Host: Directorate of Student Affairs · Venue: APJ Abdul Kalam Auditorium · Participants: 1,205

Led by Ms. Suez Ravuri, formerly Regional Joint Director in the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare, Andhra Pradesh, the session explained how complaints of sexual harassment are filed and escalated.

It stressed that people of any gender can seek redress and described the role of an Internal Complaints Committee in handling complaints fairly. Students and faculty took part and a memento was presented to the resource person.

SDG 16 link: Targets 16.1, 16.3 and 16.b, awareness of rights, redress mechanisms and non-discrimination.



Session flyer



Talk session



Welcome banner



Audience

Democratic values, non-violence and civic participation

Celebration of the 78th Independence Day

Date: 15 August 2024 · Host: Directorate of Student Affairs · Venue: Flag Pole and Atrium · Participants: 625

The campus marked the 78th Independence Day with flag hoisting, a parade and cultural performances by students, including dance, music and yoga.

The Vice-Chancellor's address reflected on India's journey since independence and called on the community to dedicate itself to the service of the university, the nation and the world.

SDG 16 link: Reaffirms commitment to democracy, unity and national institutions.



Flag hoisting



Parade



Cultural performance



Cultural programme

Floral Tribute on Gandhi Jayanti

Date: 1 October 2024 · Host: Directorate of Student Affairs · Participants: 56

A floral tribute remembered Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and truth. The Vice-Chancellor paid tribute and spoke about Gandhi's life, and participants joined in a tribute song and a peaceful close to the ceremony.

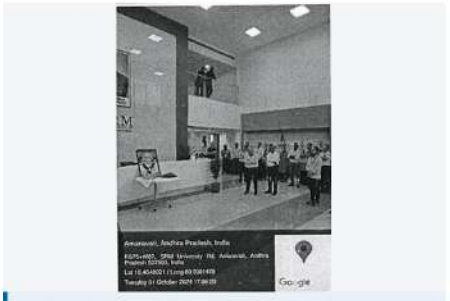
SDG 16 link: Target 16.1, promoting a culture of peace and non-violence.



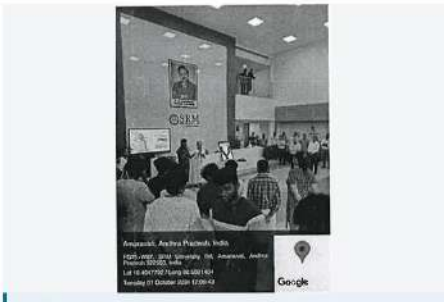
Floral tribute



Tribute song



Audience



Audience

Conference: Democracy's Undoing: South Asia and its Politics

20–21 March 2025 · Department of Arts · Two-day conference

A conference organised by the Department of Arts on democracy and politics in South Asia, held without external funding.

Bihar State Formation Day at Rajbhavan

22 March 2025 · Governor's Office · 16 students

Students took part in the Bihar State Formation Day programme at Rajbhavan.

Odisha and Rajasthan State Formation Day at Rajbhavan

29 March 2025 · Governor's Office · 14 students

Students took part in the Odisha and Rajasthan State Formation Day programme at Rajbhavan.

Indian Constitution Day

Date: 26 November 2024 · Host: Directorate of Student Affairs with the Student Council · Participants: 13

Participants took a pledge to uphold the Preamble of the Constitution.

The Student Council also ran a drawing competition on "Fundamental Rights of the citizens" and an essay competition on "The Role of Youth in Upholding the Indian Constitution".

SDG 16 link: Targets 16.3 and 16.7, awareness of fundamental rights and democratic principles among students.



Pledge taking ceremony



Pledge taking ceremony



Art competition



Essay writing competition

Leadership, diplomacy and public institutions

Young Leaders Capacity Building Program

Date: 5–6 October 2024 · Host: Directorate of Student Affairs · Venue: ALC 3rd Floor · Participants: 33 (5 Oct), 32 (6 Oct)

A two-day leadership workshop for the Student Council's core committee and the heads of the extended council, facilitated by trainers from HUM Consultancy. The Vice-Chancellor opened the programme with an address on leading by example.

Sessions combined team-building challenges with listening and communication, mindset, group efficiency and conflict-handling styles, using the Thomas-Kilmann instrument. Participants responded very positively.

SDG 16 link: Target 16.7, strengthening the capacity of student representatives for responsive and inclusive decision-making.



Day 1 workshop session



Day 1 workshop session



Address by the Vice-Chancellor



Group photograph



Day 2 workshop session



Day 2 workshop session

Open House on Weapons, Police Commemoration Week 2024

Date: 26 October 2024 · Organiser: 6th Bn. ASAP, Mangalagiri · Participants: 700

In view of Police Commemoration Week 2024, the 6th Battalion ASAP at Mangalagiri organised an open house exhibition on weapons and equipment for school and college students.

SRM University-AP was invited, and students attended along with the University Counsellor.

SDG 16 link: Public engagement between students and security institutions.



Open House exhibition



Open House exhibition



Open House exhibition



Open House exhibition

SRMUAP Model United Nations

Date: 18–19 October 2024 · Host: Directorate of Student Affairs · Venue: C402 · Participants: 100

Delegates simulated the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council. The Assembly agenda addressed transnational organised crime, including the acquisition of smuggled weapons by terrorist organisations, while the Council discussed safeguarding the rights of war-affected civilians in conflict zones.

Over two days, delegates took part in 12 moderated caucuses in the Council and 7 in the Assembly, and winners were declared in both committees.

SDG 16 link: Targets 16.1 and 16.3, building understanding of diplomacy, international law and human rights.



Event activity



Event activity



Event activity



Event activity

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Research on governance, rights and justice

Faculty research at SRM University-AP engages with SDG 16 themes such as corruption, democratic institutions, representation, rights and violence. Eight featured publications from 2024–2025 are listed below.

8
featured publications
SDG 16-relevant research output

2024–2025
publication years

CORRUPTION AND INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

Institutional corruption: Some issues

Patibandla, M. · 2025 · Article · CiteScore 14.1 · CiteScore percentile 4 · FWCI 0.78

Examines institutional corruption, relevant to Target 16.5 on reducing corruption and bribery.

DOI 10.1111/joes.12670

DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATION

The Intersection of Culture and Politics: Understanding Women's Underrepresentation in Indian Democracy

Thomas, V. and Kaunain, S. · 2025 · Article · CiteScore 2.9 · CiteScore percentile 41 · FWCI 0.83

Analyses women's underrepresentation in Indian democracy, relevant to inclusive and representative decision-making (Target 16.7).

DOI 10.1177/00219096231176738

LEGISLATIVE INSTITUTIONS

Role of Nominated Members of Rajya Sabha in Indian Legislative Processes

Thomas, V. and Bagh, S.K. · 2025 · Article · CiteScore 2.9 · CiteScore percentile 41 · FWCI 0

Studies the role of nominated members in legislative processes, relevant to effective and accountable institutions (Target 16.6).

DOI 10.1177/00219096231225952

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Climate commitments and democratic contradictions: India's Panchamrit policy in comparative south Asian perspective

Thomas, V. and Antony, R. · 2025 · Article · CiteScore 12.6 · CiteScore percentile 3 · FWCI 0

Compares India's climate policy with South Asian democratic contexts, relevant to democratic governance and accountability.

DOI 10.1080/14693062.2025.2596754

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Why Modi's Third Term as India's Prime Minister Will Be Tough

Thomas, V. et al. · 2024 · Note · CiteScore 1.9 · CiteScore percentile 29 · FWCI 0

Commentary on the political context of governing a third consecutive term, relevant to democratic governance.

DOI 10.1080/03068374.2024.2388258

RIGHTS AND INCLUSION

Advocacy and movement building for health rights and services for LGBTIQ communities: Insights and lessons learned from EQUAL GROUND, Sri Lanka

Chowdhury, S.A. et al. · 2025 · Chapter · FWCI 3.07

Documents rights-based advocacy for health services for LGBTIQ communities, relevant to non-discrimination and inclusion (Target 16.b).

DOI 10.1007/978-981-97-2098-9_55

VIOLENCE AND ITS IMPACT

Insights into Gun-Related Deaths: A Comprehensive Machine Learning Analysis

Panchumarthi, L.Y. et al. · 2024 · Conference Paper · FWCI 0.37

Applies machine learning to gun-related deaths, relevant to reducing violence-related deaths (Target 16.1).

DOI 10.1109/ICCCNT61001.2024.10724884

VIOLENCE AND ITS IMPACT

Trauma reflections: an interpretive phenomenological analysis of pellet-gun victims' experiences in Kashmir

Nazam, F. and Munawar, I. · 2025 · Article · CiteScore 1.9 · CiteScore percentile 54 · FWCI 0

Explores the lived experience of victims of violence, relevant to understanding its human impact (Target 16.1).

DOI 10.1080/28324765.2025.2561668

CONCLUSION

Progress towards peace, justice and strong institutions

SRM University-AP's contribution to SDG 16 appears in three connected ways. First, the institution has documented policies on ragging, sexual harassment, student and staff conduct, workplace non-discrimination and research ethics, each with defined authorities, procedures for enquiry and routes for appeal, and it publishes information on its conduct and grievance committees on its website.

Second, the Directorate of Student Affairs and academic departments conducted a programme of awareness, civic and leadership events during Academic Year 2024–25. These events took the policy framework to students through orientation sessions, strengthened student representation and leadership, and engaged the campus with constitutional values, non-violence, diplomacy and public institutions.

Third, faculty research addresses corruption, democratic institutions, representation, rights and violence. Together, the framework, the programmes and the scholarship show an institution that builds ethical, accountable and inclusive practice into governance, student life and knowledge creation.