

“LEGAL AID EVENT: AWARENESS PROGRAMME ON GOOD TOUCH, BAD TOUCH”

*(Report on the event conducted in Kasna slums of
Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh on December 19,
2018)*

Abstract: This event was conducted by Volunteer, Legal Aid Centre, and S.L.S. Noida. Firstly, children mainly belonging to the age group of 5-12 were explained what kind of touches are good for them and which kind of touches they should be cautious of. This was followed by an interactive session on how to act when in a situation that involves ‘bad’ touch and how to stay safe at all times.

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1. Concept Note :

The Legal Aid Centre at Symbiosis Law School, NOIDA conducts various awareness programmes to sensitize the society towards a plethora of legal and social issues. As an extension of such initiatives I, student of the college and a Volunteer at Legal Aid Centre conducted a session on *Good Touch, Bad Touch* in various slums in Kasna area of Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh in collaboration with the reputed NGO, Robin Hood Army, Greater Noida Chapter on December 10, 2018.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, every day 92 women are raped in India. In 2012, of the 24,923 rapes reported nationwide, 3,035 occurred in the large cities. The number of reported rapes elsewhere in the country was more than seven times higher than the number of those reported in the main cities with an alarmingly large number of cases going unreported. Due to factors like taboos and stigma, people, especially those living in rural areas shy away from conversations about sexual offences and prevent such cases from coming out in the open.

Thus, making people aware about topics such as *Good Touch, Bad Touch* is the need of the hour today.

2. Objectives :

The main objective of the LAC of SLS-N was to create awareness and educate people about preventive measures pertaining to sexual assault. The urban populace is relatively more comfortable around conversation regarding

sexual abuse as compared to rural India where it continues to be a taboo topic even today. Thus, the target audience of this demonstrative and interactive session were children belonging to the age group of 5-12 years. Due to lack of constructive discussion about such topics, owing to stigmatized conditioning, it is imperative for growing kids to be well versed with which kind of touches are healthy/good for them and which kind of touches they should be cautious of. Therefore, the main objectives were :

- a) To destigmatize and break the silence surrounding sexual offences as a result of which countless perpetrators get away with their heinous act and victims are forced to live a life full of shame and suffering.
- b) To make them aware about how to act at times when they encounter a 'bad' touch or a stranger tries to lure them into an unsafe situation.
- c) To imbibe into them and their guardians the thought that suffering sexual abuse is not the fault of the victim but an extremely serious offence by the perpetrator.
- d) To encourage everyone to come out in the open about their experiences of sexual assault, if any so that the offender can be rightly punished and the victim be protected from further exploitation.

3. Preliminary Preparations :

Before conducting the event a few important preparations were made :

- a) Making posters (Annexure 1) that represented the body parts highlighted in red, where touching or being touched would be

considered 'bad' so that explaining this relatively sensitive topic would become easier and more descriptive.

- b) Researching effective strategies to make discussion revolving around such a taboo topic child-friendly, comfortable and well-received by the audience.
- c) Taking suggestions from other members of the Robin Hood Army and working on their inputs to make the session as fruitful as possible.

4. Conducting the programme :

The area was conducted in slums of Greater Noida, namely Aichchar village, Gautam Buddha University Cluster and several slums of Kasna area. These sites were chosen mainly because of a large chunk of their population belonging to the age group of 5-12 years.

December 10, 2018 being World Human Rights Day, members of the Robin Hood Army already had a massive food drive planned and were elated to have me onboard. Collaborating with the NGO ensured mass mobilization of people so that more and more people could be benefitted by my session on *Good Touch, Bad Touch*.

We began with our event at Aichchar village with an enthusiastic game of football followed by serving food to all people present. After eating to their hearts' content, the children were all ears for my demonstration. I explained to them the importance of always staying careful, neither touching nor allowing someone to touch the body parts marked in red as

'bad' on the posters, to always confide in their parents and to not get lured by strangers. This was followed by an interactive session about mode of action when faced by an unfavorable condition. I told them to not accept eatables, gifts or offers of gifts from strangers and how if being touched at a particular body part makes them feel uneasy and inappropriate, they should scream "NO", run to their trusted persons or to a crowded place and always inform their parents about their unpleasant experience. Similar events transpired at other slum sites during the course of the day

5. Response of the Target Audience :

The children present were greatly involved throughout the event. They enjoyed the game of football, relished the food and played close attention to my session. They were answering my questions loudly in unison and repeating points after me.

Some senior members of the audience were not really open to a discussion on the topic initially, but after a while I could see most of them nodding in agreement to whatever I was reiterating.

6. Key Personal Takeaway :

The feeling of making a difference in the lives of so many budding citizens of the nation and influencing them in a constructive way was indeed an amazing experience. Most of the children present there had never been

briefed about sexual abuse and staying safe and thus the feeling of being their 'first' was incredible.

One of the most memorable things that happened that day and will stay with me forever was my encounter with Annu. She's a little girl, about 7 years of age who lives in the slums behind Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida. I had met her while organizing a food drive on Independence Day in 2017. Not only did she remember me, but she was the most interactive and energetic throughout my session and gave me some biscuits from her own share and thanked me with a big smile on her face before we parted. This exemplary display of the spirit of giving coming from a child with no real possessions to give away warmed my heart and was a lesson for me to never stop giving back to the society.

7. Future Plan of Action :

Considering how deeply engrained the stigma surrounding sexual offences is in our society, one session talking about awareness and preventive measures is not enough to eradicate it and facilitate comfortable conversation and safety of all people. Thus, more such sessions need to be organized in the future.

Keeping in mind my inability to conduct such sessions frequently owing to academic and time constraints, I briefed other volunteers who had accompanied me that day as to how they should go about things in my absence, gave them the posters that I had prepared and shared with

them relevant articles and links so that the unavailability of one person does not hinder slow but necessary progress. I will be following up and will be kept in loop throughout and will conduct similar sessions in the future as and when possible.

8. Suggestions/Feedback :

Follow up action should be encouraged and more and more such topics to be taken up so that discussion based on them becomes commonplace and children learn the difference between right and wrong and how to keep themselves safe.

9. Conclusion/Remarks :

This was a great learning experience. I got the opportunity to take a progressive stand on a sensitive and important issue and also got the chance to educate people on it. Also, as a law student and a future legal professional, it was of tremendous help as I understood some techniques and strategies to be used while dealing with the rural populace, who are not often educated on such bold issues so as to create a comfortable space for discussion.

Annexure 1







Annexure 2



Explaining Good Touch, Bad Touch to slum kids today

RHA x LAC

#LACSLs

#SLSNOIDA





Spreading smiles this Human Rights Day 😊

#LACSLs

#LACSLs

