

# **MASK DONATION AND COVID- 19 AWARENESS DRIVE**

(Report on the event conducted on 19 August, 2021)

Abstract: This activity was conducted by Anushka Singhal, volunteer at Symbiosis Law School, NOIDA. This event aimed at distributing masks to the people and creating awareness among them for COVID-19.

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## Concept Note

The Legal Aid Centre at Symbiosis Law School, Noida conducts various awareness and welfare programmes for the benefit of the society. As an extension of such initiatives, I conducted a mask donation and COVID-19 awareness drive in my city, Muzaffarnagar especially at the major crossroads and near the temples where we usually find a huge crowd.

COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as a big threat for the human pollution. Since, March 2020, this pandemic has been creating havoc throughout the country. When we were coping up with the first wave, the second wave came up. The second wave was more dangerous than the first wave and several people lost their near and dear ones. Scientists say that it was the carelessness and lack of awareness among the people that led to the second-wave causing so much loss. People forgot social-distancing as well as mask wearing when the first wave depleted. Now, the second wave has depleted and very less cases are coming in the country. Again, the people have stopped wearing masks and are rarely maintaining social distancing.

According to the scientists, wearing masks significantly reduces the chance of contracting COVID-19 virus. It is always advised by WHO and the scientists all over the world that one should wear a mask while stepping out of the house. Thus, to aware people to wear a mask at all times and to donate masks to the people who were not wearing a mask, this drive was conducted. From policemen to rickshaw pullers all kinds of people who were not wearing a mask were made to wear one and were made aware of the benefits of wearing it. The busy crossroads and the Sai Dham were the main targets. As, a significant crowd gathers at the Sai Dham on Thursday, it was chosen as a place to create awareness. Social distancing was taken care of and people accepted the masks wholeheartedly. To encourage slum children, biscuits were awarded if they wore the mask when given.

## **Objective**

- To distribute masks
- To create awareness on COVID-19

## **Preliminary Preparations**

Before conducting the drive, several preparations were made like-

- The target area was chosen by discussion with family.
- Masks and biscuits were purchased.
- A short awareness speech was prepared that was to be used to persuade people to wear masks.

## **Conducting the program**

The drive was conducted at the main crossroads as well as near the Sai Dham premises. Masks and biscuits were acquired and then the journey started. On the way to Sai Dham premises, there are two crossroads. Policemen were standing there without masks. First of all, masks were distributed to them. They were made aware of the fact that they are frontline workers. If they will be careless, then the society will also be careless automatically. They admitted that they were doing wrong and pledged to wear a mask. Nearby, there was an e-rickshaw stand. Several e-rickshaw drivers as well as their passengers were without mask. They were distributed mask and were made aware of the COVID-19 precautions like maintaining 1m distance and washing hands frequently. Then, I reached the Sai Dham premises, located in South Civil Lines, Muzaffarnagar. Several devotees and beggars were present there. Most of them were not wearing the masks. There were slum children too who had come there to take the 'prasad' and were not wearing masks. Masks were distributed to all of them and they were made to take a pledge that they will always wear masks. The children were rewarded with a packet of biscuit as a token of appreciation if they agreed to wear the mask. People who could not afford to buy a mask were additional masks for their family. The proper steps regarding mask disposal were told to all of the people present there.

## **Response of the beneficiaries**

The drive was appreciated by all the beneficiaries. The police personnel blessed me for doing such a good work and they promised that they will always wear a mask. Not only the beneficiaries but the onlookers too appreciated this noble step. The devotees at the Sai Dham and even the priest was happy with the 'mask distribution'. People usually distribute food at the temples but this was a unique distribution that happened in and around the temple premises. The beneficiaries like the beggars and the rickshaw drivers were happy upon receiving the mask. They wore it instantly. Even the children were enthusiastic when they learned that they will receive biscuits too. They heard all the precautions and promised that they will aware their family back home about COVID-19.

## **Future plan of action**

As COVID-19, is still not over, many more such drives can be conducted in the city. The city has several such places where people gather but do not wear masks. Such a drive can be conducted in those areas. Next time, I am thinking of calling upon my school friends (if they are in the city) or even collaborating with a local NGO so as to increase the beneficiary base. Even crowd-funding can be done by people in the city, especially of my locality so that I can purchase more resources like sanitizer and distribute them among the needy. This time, there were no posters made but the next time, they can be used as visual representation always appeals people rather than a mere speech.

## **Feedback**

- Overall, the event was conducted smoothly, people were satisfied as well as I was satisfied too.
- The only issue that I faced was the lack of posters. People could have understood better with a poster as some of them were not educated enough to understand me even though I was speaking in Hindi. But with the assistance of my father, I was able to make them understand.

## **Conclusion**

I was very apprehensive about the fact that whether I would be able to conduct such a drive as I had never done such events. But after the successful completion of the event, I felt happy that I was able to help the society in some way. Through this drive, I understood that most of the people know that it is important to wear masks but they feel lazy and thus do not wear them. Moreover, I understood that there are people who want to wear a mask but they do not have resources to make them or for that matter purchase them. Most of the people have a tendency to think that, if they are in their locality, they do not need to wear a mask. I cleared this notion of the people and made them aware about the importance of wearing masks in a public place.

COVID-19 has still not left our country and thus it is important to wear masks. Through this drive, I felt that I was able to contribute towards the society. Since, the pandemic arrived, I wanted to help people in some way or the other. I got this opportunity when LAC asked us to collaborate with 'WeAreYuvaa' but I did not grab this opportunity due to some constraints. The mask distribution drive acted as the perfect activity for me to aware people and also to make them wear a mask. The appreciation from the people has ignited the fire inside me to give back to do something for the society.





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