

# **VISITING BEHIND BARS: LEGAL AID AWARENESS**

**Report on Visit Conducted in  
District Jail, Gautam Buddha Nagar,  
on November 08, 2022.**

**ABSTRACT: The event was conducted on the issue of lack of legal aid awareness. The beneficiaries of the event were the inmates of Gautam Buddha Nagar jail. The resource person was Jaihind Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate of the District Legal Services Authority in Gautam Buddha Nagar.**

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## **I. Concept Note**

A concurrent survey was already in progress, focusing on assessing the awareness and accessibility of free legal aid for inmates. This survey involved conducting interviews with the incarcerated individuals, inquiring about their medical needs, and providing information about the availability of free legal assistance. The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) extended their permission, allowing our project to actively participate in this ongoing survey. Consequently, we had the privilege of engaging directly with the inmates, conducting interviews, and establishing personal connections with them.

## **II. Objectives**

The main objectives of this event were threefold:

1. **Promoting Awareness of Free Legal Services:** The primary aim of our endeavour was to raise awareness among the inmates regarding the availability of legal assistance without any financial burden. We aimed to ensure that every individual within the correctional facility was informed about their rights and the legal resources accessible to them.
2. **Identifying and Addressing Medical and Legal Needs:** Another crucial objective was to identify any medical or legal issues that the inmates might be confronting during their incarceration. By conducting interviews and engaging in meaningful conversations, we sought to determine if any inmates required immediate medical attention or legal support. This objective aimed at bridging the gap between their needs and the resources available to them.
3. **Promoting Menstrual Hygiene Knowledge:** Beyond legal and medical concerns, we recognized the significance of

menstrual hygiene education. Our third objective was to provide basic yet essential knowledge about menstrual hygiene practices.

### **III. Preliminary Preparations**

Before conducting the event, the organisers made the following preparations:

1. Researched on the rights of prisoners in the country and went through the Jail Manual of Uttar Pradesh.
2. Contacted and finalised Mr. Jaihind Kumar, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate and Secretary, DLSA, Gautam Buddha Nagar, as resource person.
3. Obtained permission to visit the District Jail.

### **IV. Conducting the Event**

As we commenced our survey, we were furnished with pre-prepared questionnaires containing a series of inquiries. These questions encompassed a range of crucial aspects, starting with an examination of any concerns inmates might have regarding the facilities within the correctional facility. Subsequently, we delved into their medical well-being, specifically focusing on identifying any health issues that were not receiving adequate attention and required assistance. Additionally, we sought to ascertain if the inmates possessed any legal documentation for identification purposes and whether they had family members who visited them during their incarceration.

The core inquiries revolved around the inmates' satisfaction with the legal services they might have been receiving, if they had legal representation, and their awareness of the availability of

free legal assistance. These questions were pivotal in understanding the inmates' legal needs and ensuring that they were well-informed about their rights and available resources.

Our approach involved conducting one-on-one interviews with each inmate, providing them with an opportunity to voice their concerns, grievances, and queries. This personalized interaction allowed us to not only gather valuable information but also to empathetically listen to their issues and offer potential solutions or guidance.

Our approach allowed us to not only gather quantitative data but also to offer empathetic and practical solutions to the unique problems faced by each inmate. This personalized engagement aimed to bridge gaps, provide clarity, and offer support where needed, ultimately enhancing their overall well-being and ensuring that their rights and needs were being addressed comprehensively.

## **V. Response of the Target Population**

The response of the target audience, consisting of inmates surveyed on behalf of the District Legal Service Authority of Gautam Buddh Nagar, provided crucial insights into their experiences within the prison system. The data collected, including age, legal status, and information about them having any kind of identity proof offered a comprehensive snapshot of the inmate population. Notably, a significant number of inmates voiced concerns regarding the inadequacy of access to medical services when asked about the access to medical aid provided to them. Many reported receiving medical assistance only when their conditions reached a severe stage, highlighting a pressing need for improved healthcare provisions within the prison environment.

This finding underscores the urgency of addressing health-related issues to enhance the overall well-being of inmates. Additionally, the survey revealed that only a minority of inmates expressed interest in receiving free legal aid. This emphasizes the importance of awareness campaigns and educational programs aimed at informing inmates about the advantages and availability of such legal assistance. Furthermore, varying levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their lawyer among inmates suggest the importance for ongoing evaluation and enhancement of legal services within the prison system.

## **VI. Outcomes and Future Plan of Action**

The outcomes of the survey conducted by the District Legal Service Authority of Gautam Buddh Nagar have far-reaching implications for the prison system and the well-being of inmates. Firstly, the data underscores the immediate need for healthcare improvements within the prison environment. Addressing the concerns raised by inmates regarding access to medical services, including the provision of medicines, is paramount to ensure their health and well-being. Secondly, the survey results point to the importance of legal aid awareness initiatives. With only a minority of inmates showing interest in receiving free legal aid, efforts should be made to increase awareness of the benefits and availability of such services. Lastly, the varying levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with current legal representation highlight the necessity of continuous evaluation and improvement of legal services within the prison system.

By addressing these findings, policymakers and authorities can work towards creating a more equitable and just environment for inmates in Gautam Buddh Nagar, ultimately improving their

quality of life and access to essential services. The Legal Aid Centre hopes to continue work in this realm.

## **VII. Conclusion**

This event proved to be an excellent learning opportunity for both the students as well as the inmates, who got to interact with each other. The inmates were able to air their issues and learn more about their rights, and the students gained practical experience of how the justice system works in the country.

## GLIMPSES OF THE EVENT



