

LEGAL AID CENTRE

CLEANILINESS DRIVE

ON THE OCCASION OF

NATIONAL POLLUTION CONTROL DAY

2nd DECEMBER, 2019

ABSTRACT: The event was conducted on the occasion of National Pollution Control Day. The cleanliness drive was aimed at inspiring the local residents to preserve our invaluable environment for our own healthy well-being. The LAC volunteers devoted their time and efforts towards cleaning a designated public park which was used by the residents as a garbage dump yard. The report entails the details of the drive conducted with respect to the overall enriching experience of this volunteering initiative.

REPORT BY

VOLUNTEER, RISHABH MUNJAL

LEGAL AID CENTRE, SLS-NOIDA

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF

MR. ANKUR SHARMA

(HEAD OF LEGAL AID CENTRE, SYMBIOSIS LAW SCHOOL, NOIDA)

"Environmental pollution is an incurable disease. It can only be prevented."

- *Barry Commoner*

1. Concept Note

The Legal Aid Centre of Symbiosis Law School, Noida aims to raise awareness about various social and legal issues by conducting awareness campaigns. One such campaign in the form of cleanliness drive was conducted by a group of LAC volunteers, of which I was a part, on the occasion of National Pollution Control Day, in Laxmi Nagar area of East Delhi district in Delhi. Environmental pollution is currently one of the biggest challenges the world is facing today. December 2 is observed as National Pollution Control Day every year. The day is observed in the memory of those who have lost their lives in the Bhopal Gas tragedy on December 2nd, 1984. The aim behind celebrating this day is to raise awareness about the problem caused by increasing pollution because everyone on the earth is entitled to clean air to breathe, water to drink, and to enjoy public lands. Pollution is just a problem whether it is air, water, soil and noise. Cleanliness is a habit not an act. However starting a campaign or drive highlights the issue, builds champions and brings focus on the task at hand. This also further leads to internalizing and inculcating cleanliness as a matter of habit and routine. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. We've heard this phrase many times. But do we follow this? A lot of people don't, even though we should. However, some of us don't even respect the people who clean the trash. Mahatma Gandhi said "Sanitation is more important than independence". He made cleanliness and sanitation an integral part of the Gandhian way of living. Cleanliness is most important for physical well-being and a healthy environment. It has bearing on public and personal hygiene. It is essential

for everyone to learn about cleanliness, hygiene, sanitation and the various diseases that are caused due to poor hygienic conditions. Even if we inculcate certain personal hygiene habits like washing hands before meals, regular brushing of teeth, and bathing from a young age, we are not bothered about cleanliness of public places.

2. Objective

The objective of the Cleanliness drive was to volunteer to clean a public place. The drive not only was an opportunity for us to come across the actual state of garbage disposal in regular households, but also to make the residents of a particular locality aware about the basic concepts of garbage disposal, cleanliness, environment pollution and ways to prevent it. The aim was to encourage people to take action towards ensuring clean and hygienic environmental surroundings by taking the task of cleaning a park which had become a garbage dump, in our own hands because actions speak louder than words. It is imperative to make people understand that we can ensure to provide the upcoming generations with a clean and healthy environment.

3. Preliminary Preparations

- a. Prior to conducting the cleanliness drive, a certain locality was decided upon wherein the drive was to happen.
- b. Several sacks were collected, which would be used to gather the garbage.
- c. The team members were asked to bring their own hand gloves so that their hands remain protected and clean while picking up trash and cleaning the surroundings.
- d. Since, the father of one of our team member is the sitting MLA of Laxmi Nagar constituency; support of the local administration was

available and tools like large brooms and services of EDMC garbage truck was availed with their help.

4. Conducting the Program

On the occasion of National Pollution Control Day, 2nd December, a group of LAC volunteers of SLS Noida had decided to assemble in Laxmi Nagar area of the East Delhi Constituency in Delhi in order to conduct a cleanliness drive. The members assembled on time and were very excited to be a part of this social initiative. Being a part of this group, the opportunity to contribute my bit towards environment protection was in front of me. The program was also a reality check and an eye opening experience, since the venture into this particular locality made me realise that a large population of the capital city continues to live in unhygienic and polluted surroundings. After assembling, our team moved towards a public park which was turned into a garbage dump yard by the local residents. The very sight of the park and the condition of the immediate surroundings was disappointing since garbage was lying in the open. Such an unattended garbage dump yard could lead to a number of health issues for the nearby residents, leading to spreading of diseases. The humongous task to clear that massive heap of garbage was in our hands, we hoped that while our team indulges in this task, our actions would inspire the bystanders and the residents to join us in this noble and necessary cause. The entire team divided itself in pairs of two and each pair appointed to itself a particular part of the park which it will be cleaning. The strategy was, that one person of each pair would start gathering the garbage with the help of the large brooms and the other person would put the trash into the sacks. As the team got involved with this task, we realized that people had dumped wet waste like cooked and uncooked food, vegetable peels etc. and had also thrown non-biodegradable waste like old and torn clothes. It took some while to be able to see the

ground beneath the trash. Over all this while, the soil and the ground of the park were immensely polluted and had a strong unbearable stench. After an hour or so of collecting and sweeping, we were able to create a noticeable difference in the condition of the park. All our sacks were now brimming with waste and trash. Workers of local administration had also joined us in this process and had organized for the services of the garbage truck which would take the gathered garbage to the nearest designated dump yard of the locality. After unloading our filled up sacks into the truck, we all began another round of cleaning the park which required picking up wastes with our hands and then sweeping the park and completing our resolve of cleaning the park.

5. Response of the target population

The aim of the cleanliness drive was also to inspire, the local residents so that they will hopefully come to terms with the gravity of the issue at hand and then help us in the process of resolving it. A number of onlookers were glad to see us volunteering for such a purpose. They were vocal about the issues they are facing because of dumping of garbage by people in this particular park. They complained about the unbearable stench and breeding of mosquitoes as a consequence. However, it was disappointing to not have them participate in the cleaning of the park. A lady, who was living nearby to this park suggested burning this garbage, instead of putting efforts towards collecting and then disposing it. This instance was a clear indication of how much people are unaware about the basics of garbage disposal and categorical segregation of waste into biodegradable and non- biodegradable. The local people wanted us to revisit the park after few days and again employ our efforts towards keeping the park clean and green.

6. Future Plan of Action

In order to achieve the results which were aimed for, a continuous and diligent effort has to be put. Therefore, a single instance of a cleanliness drive will not achieve the desired results of raising awareness and ensuring clean and safe local surroundings for people. The future prospects of this initiative depend heavily upon helping the residents towards safe disposal of the garbage in order to provide them with a long term and a sustainable solution. To go about this:

- a. There is a dire need to follow up with the local administrative body responsible for the cleanliness and sanitation of that particular area.
- b. Frequent visits to the locality will reassure people of our support and efforts towards completion of this cleanliness project.
- c. This time, we had hoped to inspire people with our efforts, it is crucial to realise that people need proper and structured education about issues related to environmental pollution. Hence, conducting workshops on a small scale involving the local people in order to disseminate correct information about environmental degradation and how they can devote their time towards preventing it, is a necessary and important part of the plan.

7. Suggestions

- a. The next step in this awareness and cleanliness drive is to be able to conduct more organized events with respect to proper cleaning and sweeping gear and tools.
- b. In order to make it a more successful event, it is imperative to have mass participation in such ventures. At the very least we have to ensure that the people who are most affected by these issues are the ones who devote their time. For achieving the same, efforts towards

visiting the nearby households, informing the residents of our drive and urging them to lend their hand can be made.

- c. To have the younger generations participate and learn a great deal about the environmental issues, lucrative rewards in the form of stationery can be distributed.
- d. Vibrant and self-explanatory posters and informative placards are to be displayed in order to attract people and gain their attention.

8. Conclusion

A takeaway from the entire process was that such initiatives are to be taken quite frequently. From a position of privilege it is my duty to devote my time towards causes that help eliminate social evils and encourages people to help themselves. It is not good to dwell in a world far away from reality, hence campaigns like these will keep us in terms with the ground reality and will furthermore help us in working towards the betterment of the society. The most crucial aspect of volunteer work is not the task one undertakes to complete, but how one inspires and encourages others to undertake the same task and create many such volunteers.

ANNEXURE I



ANNEXURE II

