

# **“LEGAL AID EVENT: AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ON WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY”**

*(Report on the event conducted in Kasna slums of  
Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh on June 05, 2019)*

**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 the importance of planting trees and their benefits, the inspiring story of the Chipko movement, the ill effects of plastic, the usage of Blue and green dustbins and the mantra of 'Reduce, reuse, recycle'. This was followed by a poster making activity on Environmental Conservation.

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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 *World Environment Day* in various slums in Kasma area of Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh in collaboration with the reputed NGO, Robin Hood Army, Greater Noida Chapter on December 05, 2019.

The statistics pertaining to the environment today are anything but alarming. Unprecedented economic growth, which has lifted millions out of poverty in Asia and the Pacific, is putting heavy pressure on ecosystems. Increasing unsustainable consumption patterns have led to worsening air pollution, water scarcity and waste generation, threatening human and environmental health. Increased demand for fossil fuels and natural resources – extensive agriculture, palm oil and rubber plantations, aquaculture and the illegal trade in wildlife – are causing environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, in Southeast Asia, the average area deforested annually is more than 1 million hectares, resulting in the release of hundreds of millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide every year between 2005 and 2015. The contamination of water sources by human and industrial waste, including pharmaceutical and personal care products, is a major problem in the region, the GEO-6 reports state.

Water-related diseases and unsafe water contribute to 1.8 million deaths annually and 24.8 million disability-adjusted life years in the region.

Thus, making people aware about topics such as *Environmental Conservation* is the need of the hour today.

## **2. Objectives :**

The main objective of the Legal Aid Centre of SLS-N was to create awareness and educate people about preventive measures pertaining to environmental degradation. The urban populace is relatively more educated about such topics and thus, the target audience of this demonstrative and interactive session were children belonging to the age group of 5-12 years. With the next generation being the torchbearers of tomorrow, it is imperative for growing kids to be well versed with ways to prevent the pollution and degradation of the environment. Therefore, the main objectives were :

- a) To make young children realize the gigantic responsibility that they have on their shoulders to utilize resources responsibly and preserve the environment for themselves and their future generations.
- b) To make them aware about possible steps that need to be undertaken to prevent environmental degradation.
- c) To imbibe into them the mantra of 'Reduce, reuse, recycle' and how it can be incorporated in day to day life.

d) To inspire them to take a stand for themselves and the environment by taking small steps by interactive storytelling of inspiring stories such as that of the *Bishnoi community* and the *Chipko movement*.

### **3. Preliminary Preparations :**

Before conducting the event a few important preparations were made :

- a) Collecting plastic bags, cloth bags and other similar material for effective demonstration of the mantra 'Reuse, reduce, recycle'.
- b) Arranging for paper and colors for the children to make posters with.
- c) Arranging for a small sapling to be planted in an ashram that the slum kids frequent.
- d) Researching effective strategies to make discussion revolving around environmental pollution and preservation child-friendly and well-received by the audience.
- e) 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 awareness programme 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. Collaborating with the NGO ensured mass mobilization of people so that more and more people could be benefitted by my session on *Environmental*

*Conservation.* I went to the members of the Robin Hood Army, Greater Noida chapter with a detailed proposal of the event and they were elated to have me on board.

We began with our event at Aichchar village. I visited the slums along with members of the Robin Hood Army and invited all children and young adults to come out and attend the event. Firstly, I explained the importance of planting trees and their benefits. I made them repeat after me how trees attract rainfall, provide animals with homes, give us wood, paper, rubber and other useful resources, protect us from soil erosion and floods and are an amazing food resource. I followed it up with demonstrating by using paper bags, cloth bags, plastic bags etc. which article of daily use is eco-friendly and which is not. We discussed and thought out loud which articles can be reused or recycled and what would be the best disposal mechanisms for single use articles. Later, I narrated the inspiring story of the Chipko movement and reiterated the extremely positive collective change that individual action and citizen participation can bring and to motivate them to always stand up for themselves and do their bit. I further explained the correct way to dispose waste in green and blue dustbins. This interactive session culminated with a poster making activity. The kids drew their hearts out and painted their best interpretation of environmental conservation on paper.

Similar events transpired at other slum sited during the course of the day.

## **5. Response of the Target Audience :**

With World Environment Day falling in the month of June, most Indian schools in North India observe a summer break and most children are thus, travelling or visiting their relatives in their hometowns. Therefore, I could not gather a crowd as big as the one I would have liked to, with most children visiting their native villages. But the children who were present were greatly involved throughout the event. They played close attention to my session. They were answering my questions loudly in unison and repeating points after me. They had their own unique suggestions for all topics and issues and were not afraid to voice them.

They enjoyed and appreciated the child-friendly way in which a seemingly boring topic like this was conducted. They enthusiastically participated in the poster making activity.

## **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 the environment and thus the feeling of being their 'first' was incredible. Secondly, it made me realize the importance of education and its power to change lives and the world.

## **7. Future Plan of Action :**

Considering how the resources are getting depleted and the environment is getting degraded at an alarming rate, one session talking about awareness and preventive measures is not enough to ensure that people make environmental conservation methods a part of their lifestyles. 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 not just with children but with people of all ages so that these preventive measures that we talk about become habits and a way of life.

#### **9. Conclusion/Remarks :**

This was a great learning experience. I got the opportunity to take a progressive stand on an 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 issues so as to create a comfortable space for discussion.



## Annexure 1











## Annexure 2





19:51



5 June 18:44

**World environment day**

**#LACSLs**



POCO F1



Seen by 514



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Highlight



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19:51



5 June 21:29



**Anytime spent with kids is the best time.**



#CSLS

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