

# EVENT ON - NATIONAL VOTERS' DAY 2020

**Abstract:** The Legal Aid Cell of Symbiosis Law School, Noida under the guidance of Ms. Charvi Kumar and Mr. Anil Dhani conducted an event on the occasion of National Voters' Day, 2020 in Delhi. The event was conducted on 25th January 2020 in Laxmi Nagar Area of East Delhi ahead of the Legislative Assembly Elections of Delhi. The event involved the volunteers performing a Nukkad Natak on the importance of voting on merit of candidate without any prejudices. The volunteers had also set up a pop-up FAQ station to answer any queries of the people be it the name of the constituency they belong to or how to vote.

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## CONCEPT NOTE

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The Legal Aid Centre of Symbiosis Law School, NOIDA conducted an event based on voting rights and the significance of the same on 25th of January, 2020. In order to encourage the voters of the country to take part in the political process, the Government of India decided to celebrate 25th of January as National Voters' Day.

As Ambedkar once said, "Democracy is not merely a form of government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellow men."

Voting is the true essence of Democracy. The Legal Aid cell decided to directly reach out to the common man, as today religion seems to divide the country and its citizens votes. Moreover, the event was conducted to enable citizens to understand the concept of the option available "None of the Above" i.e. NOTA. The volunteers aimed to attract the attention of the passer-by's and the people surrounding the area and tried to inculcate the ideology voting for the deserving candidate rather than the party or the religious ideology that it supports.

Right to vote is neither a fundamental right nor a Constitutional right; it is a legal right which means the right originates from the constitutional mandate enshrined under section Article 326 which specifies the age for the adult suffrage as eighteen years and it is important to discuss to create the awareness among the students.

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## OBJECTIVES

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- The main objective of the Legal Aid Centre of SLS- NOIDA was to make the society aware about the right to vote.
- To throw light on the power that the citizens have i.e. through voting.
- To showcase the importance of merit of a candidate for criteria while deciding for whom to vote and the power of NOTA.

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## PRELIMINARY PREPARATIONS

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To fulfill the objectives of the event, the volunteers of the Legal Aid Centre:

- Made posters that would attract the attention of the onlookers.
- Made pamphlets containing essential information regarding Voter-id and N.O.T.A.
- Had set up a FAQ station to answer people's questions regarding Voter-id and recently conducted Delhi elections.
- Prepared a short Nukad Natak on importance of election and voting to attract the attention of onlookers and also to spread awareness on these issues.

The topics were divided between the members and list and duties of the volunteer are as follows:

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Duties assigned</b>	<b>PRN</b>	<b>Batch</b>
1	Aprajita Tyagi	Event head, planning, coordination, found the venue and set it up, arranged charts and table, edited pamphlets, assigned work to everyone, supervised Nukad-Natak rehearsals etc.	18010223013	2018-23
2	Harshvardhan Jha	FAQ Station Duty and made pamphlet on how to apply for voter ID.	18010223023	2018-23

3	Kanika Sharma	Nukad-Natak actor	18010224024	2018-23
4	Mannat Marwah	Nukad-Natak actor and scriptwriter	18010224084	2018-23
5	Pranay Bhardwaj	Nukad-Natak actor	18010224036	2018-23
6	Rishabh Munjal	FAQ Station duty and made pamphlet on NOTA	18010223039	2018-23
7	Rishi Uttam	Nukad-Natak actor	18010223040	2018-23
8	Saniya Khanna	Made a chart and helped in crowd gathering	18010224043	2018-23
9	Vinnaik Mohan	Helped in management, setting up the venue and made a pamphlet on constituency change process.	18010223059	2018-23
10	Yash Jain	Got the phamphlets printed, photographed and filmed the event	18010224059	2018-23
11	Aaditya Saraf	Photography and Videography	19010224049	2019-24
12	Anushka Praveen	In-charge of fixing last year's posters and made 1 new poster as well. Got interviewed by the press.	19010223011	2019-24
13	Aurin Chakraborty	Nukad-Natak actor	19010223076	2019-24
14	Divyansh Dwivedi	Nukad-natak actor	19010224059	2019-24
15	Karan Teotia	Nukad-Natak actor	19010224185	2019-24
16	Lisa Sankrit	Nukad-natak actor	19010223035	2019-24
17	Mridula Trivedi	Made a chart and worked at the FAQ station	19010223093	2019-24
18	Rishi Raj	Made a pamphlet on special provisions to aid disabled people vote and was interviewed by the press	19010223048	2019-24
19	Sankalp Dwivedi	Legal research, checking the Hindi pamphlets and crowd control	19010223051	2019-24
20	Vanshika Rana	FAQ Station duty and made a pamphlet on capacity of NRIs to vote.	19010224140	2019-24

21	Pratyush Kumar (MoCaSo)	Photographed and filmed the event	18010224207	2018-23
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### **CONDUCTING THE EVENT**

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The event was organised in Laxminagar constituency, East Delhi, the event was conducted near a bus stop and this helped the team to interact with people from various constituencies. A Nukad Natak was performed to represent how people elected representatives on the basis of caste, religion and gender, the main aim of the Nukad Natak was to bring out the importance of voting, election and why people should rise above caste and religion politics and vote for the deserving candidate. The target population really enjoyed the Natak and many of them were filming the Natak through their mobile phone, the volunteers were flashing poster at all time to gather a crowd. The volunteers had also set up a FAQ station where they were taking queries of the audience regarding application and updating of the Voter Id and on request, the volunteers also helped them to locate election commission's office in their respective constituency. The FAQ team took initiative to talk to people who due to some reason were not able to approach the station, by this the team was able to connect to a lot more people and it was really encouraging to see that people were enthusiastic about the election and were eager to vote.

When the team was about to conclude the event, team of a media group was interviewing people at the same venue on request of PLV Rishi Sharma they covered LAC's event as well and this helped us in spreading our message to a much larger target population than desired.

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### **RESPONSE OF THE TARGET AUDIENCE**

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The LAC contingent was successful in drawing attention of bystanders and the local shop owners present in proximity of the venue of the awareness campaign. The street play was heedfully watched by a good number of people whose attention was drawn to the stirring and spirited theatrics of the play. The aim of

the play was to raise awareness regarding voter's rights and sensitize the local population about the significance of their participation in electoral process in light of the upcoming state assembly elections in Delhi. The street play touched upon a number of issues debunking myths and misconceptions about elections. LAC volunteers were actively interacting with the audience which was watching the play. Involving themselves in dialogues with the audience presented the volunteers with an opportunity to have one to one interaction with them in an unhurried manner. The street play was successful in discouraging electoral sins of casting votes on the basis of caste, race, ethnicity and religion, gender which surprisingly caught people's eyes and compelled them to halt and watch the play. The play was recurringly performed at regular intervals for a new audience. The audience was seen actively engaging with the volunteers, stationed all around the place who simultaneously explained the message delivered by the play. Innovative and relatable Bollywood and popular cultural references incorporated in the script were instrumental in gathering a crowd. The quirky posters held up by the volunteers made people bear a beaming smile on their faces. Some people showed enthusiasm by holding up the posters and getting clicked. Vivid posters and the vibrant sight of the play had onlookers gather around the venue, fixated to the informative and interesting exercise carried out by LAC volunteers. The FAQ station set up by the team was an indispensable part of this thoughtful exercise. The efforts of the team bore fruit when people around the venue voluntarily walked up to the FAQ station in order to seek answers and guidance regarding the problems they were facing with respect to making of new voter ID cards, change in address/ constituency. The volunteers emphatically assisted these people, handing out pamphlets which contained all the necessary instructions resolving the various issues faced by people. The team was glad to help people who were encouraged by this entire exercise and enquired about voter's rights in great depth. A few senior citizens in the audience were bothered about their family members not being able to cast their vote due to their inability to walk. Such queries were answered by the team by making them aware about the services offered by the election commission to senior citizens and disabled persons who're unable to go to the election booths. People exhibited curiosity when they came across the pamphlet of NOTA, since a majority of audience was unaware of this provision; they actively deliberated over the concept and effects of this option. As a whole, the event enjoyed good support and was able to fulfill its objective of raising awareness about voter's right, throwing light upon the power and significance of the citizens in a democracy.

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## **FUTURE ACTIONS**

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LAC team intends to carry out similar awareness campaigns in near future. The objective behind this entire exercise was to enlighten people about their rights and duties in our electoral system. LAC envisions itself working towards the cause of raising awareness about such crucial and essential aspects of our democracy in near future. The team is encouraged and looks forward to reaching out to its target population in different parts of the city. With an aim of engaging with people and enabling their participation, the volunteers aspire to come up with even more innovative and well executed events for Voter's Rights on a regular basis. In order to assist people, LAC proposes to combine their efforts with the Election Commission for this social cause. Realising that electoral politics is just one aspect of a functional democracy, the team finds it incumbent on itself to sensitise people about their duties and the power bestowed on them by our constitution through informative workshops. With the help of its volunteers, LAC plans to set up FAQ and Assistance Stations, in localities where majority of population is not registered as voters even though they are eligible. For instance, efforts will be made towards getting people registered as voters by helping them acquire the required documents needed for a Voter ID

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## **SUGGESTIONS**

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The event conducted on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 on the occasion of National Voter's Day was a success; however the following suggestive measures are to be kept in mind while conducting any such event in future to make it more effective towards achieving the goals aspired:

- **Appropriate Venue:** In order to cater to the target population, venue of the event plays a crucial part. Since on 25<sup>th</sup> January, the venue was a busy street, people were initially reluctant to stand on the road. The noise of the ongoing traffic made it difficult for the hardworking cast of our street play to be able to convey their message since they were inaudible. An appropriate venue can enable us to perform our play in a more eloquent manner thus helping us to fulfill the objective behind the entire exercise.
- **Target Population:** To be able to address our concerns and direct our efforts towards an apt audience is imperative. The event can be conducted

to target specific sections of our demography like housewives, working class, illiterate people etc. In order to make our efforts fruitful, such sections can be addressed in isolation so that we can cater and resolve their issues particularly. Appropriate venues again come into play, for carrying out this measure. For instance, if we were to address housewives, we should have residential complexes as our venue and offices for working class and so on and so forth.

- An event of such a nature can be made empowering if we carry out exercises of aiding people in getting registered as eligible voters instead of just handing them instructions and educating them. Acquiring required documents for registration and for change in constituency/address often poses as an obstacle for the poor and illiterate. On a regular basis, LAC team can carry out the campaign of helping people out in such respect, throughout the year and not only around elections.
- Mere handing of informative pamphlets will not encourage people to understand their roles and responsibilities of electing leaders. A set up should be made where in addition to the street play, FAQ station, an interactive and informative dialogue can be established with the audience presenting the LAC team with an opportunity to raise awareness in the truest sense. So workshops should be a key part of such events.







