

“LEGAL AID EVENT- AWARENESS CAMPAIGN xaxaxON  
RIGHTS OF LABOUR”

*(Report on the Event Conducted on- Human Rights  
Day 10 December, 2018)*

**Abstract:** This event was conducted by a legal aid volunteer, Legal Aid Centre, Symbiosis Law School, Noida. The initiative was aimed at making the workers at a construction site aware about their labour rights guaranteed by law. Firstly, the construction site workers were asked whether they were aware about their basic rights and some additional questions were asked related to their basic conditions of living and working. And, then based on the answers of the construction workers, they were informed about their rights.

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## 1. Concept Note

The Legal Aid Centre of Symbiosis Law School, Noida conducts various awareness programmes and campaigns with the objective of sensitizing and creating awareness among various sects of the society towards different legal and social issues. As an extension of the above initiative and in furtherance of the same objective, on the day of Human Rights, I, as a member of a Legal Aid Centre, conducted the event on Rights of Labour on 10 December, 2018 at Shakti Nagar, Delhi.

The construction workers at most sites in our country are being denied minimum wages, equal remuneration, overtime, drinking water, toilet, creche, first aid, and temporary living accommodations. It is ironic that the employers do not comply with minimum standards of working conditions and provision of facilities (prescribed under law) at the sites, which are broadly governed by the government. Innumerable labour laws are violated in almost all the construction sites: Minimum Wages Act, 1948; Equal Remuneration Act, 1946; the Inter-state Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Condition of Services) Act, 1979; Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976; Contract Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1970; and The Buildings and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996.

Majority of the workers are not aware of the provisions under various labour laws. Since most of the workers are not aware about their rights, a lot of the times their dissent and work-related concerns are not represented to the principal employer/ contractor. So, in order to sensitize and make them aware about their rights, I took this initiative.

## 2. Objective

The main objective of this awareness campaign as a part of Legal Aid Centre of Symbiosis Law School, Noida is to spread awareness to construction site about their rights. In order to achieve the ultimate goal, interlocutory measures were undertaken the most important of which were educating the labourers about their rights.

1. To educate the labourers about their rights so that they can have better standards of living and better conditions at work place.
2. To prevent them from exploitation by their employer, and this can happen only if they know what they are entitled to, by the law.
3. To try to make them understand the importance of education, so that they could send their children to school which will lead to their betterment and also of the entire society.

## 3. Preliminary preparations

In order to conduct the event successfully, following preparations were made:

1. Visiting the construction site, prior to the actual day of conduction of event in order to check the number of workers, and to evaluate the composition of the workers as to how many men, women and children were working there.
2. Gathering information on a personal level about rights of labour especially those of construction workers.
3. Scanning the information that was necessary to be told to the workers and systematically converting the information and breaking down it into simple form so that the workers could understand.
4. Carefully, finding innovative ways like cartoons and illustrations to catch the attention of not only the adults but also the children.
5. Preparing a list of questions to be asked to the workers.
6. Arranging for tea and snacks for the workers and sweets for the children.

#### 4. Conducting the Programme

I organised the event at a construction site in Shakti Nagar area, Delhi. This site was chosen specifically because it had sufficient number of both male and female workers and children also. The next step taken was to gather all the construction site workers and trying to convince them to stop their work for sometime and be seated for an awareness event.

Once, everybody had gathered, I tried to initially build a rapport with them in order to make them feel comfortable so that they could talk. When I felt that they were comfortable and ready to talk I explained them why I was there and how I would like to talk to them and inform them about their rights which are guaranteed by law. I, then started by asking them very basic questions like what are their work timings, where do they live, do they send their kids to school, how is the behaviour of their employer towards them, where do they cook food, where do they get their drinking water from, how much are they able to earn monthly, does the employer provide for basic amenities like food, water and shelter or they have to manage that on their own.

Then all the workers were told about their basic rights and how they were entitled to basic amenities like food and water which their employer was to take care of and also, they could enrol their kids in a nearby government school which provides free elementary education and also mid-day meals, they were also sensitised about how educating their children could turn out to be beneficial by them.

They were also informed about ways to seek redressal if they were being exploited by their employer and who all they could approach and how in case of exploitation. They were made aware about the minimum wage act and how they were entitled to the same. All this was done with the help of pamphlets also. They were also told that they were entitled to compensation in case of injury, since

injuries are common at construction sites, which is guaranteed under The Employees Compensation Act, 1923. They were also informed about the provisions under The Contract Labour Act, 1970.

After this was done, I took a feedback from them about the event whether they found it useful and whether they were able to gain something out of it or not. Once, all this was done, all if them were served with tea and snacks and the children were served with sweets.

## 5. Response of the target population

The construction workers knew of the fact that they were entitled to certain rights as under the law, but what rights exactly were they entitled to and the what was the content of the rights, they were majorly unaware about that. Hence, it was crucial to educate them about their entitlements. They were taken by surprise when they got to know about what all rights, they had which are duly guaranteed to them by the law.

In the beginning, they were unwilling to stop their work and sit down to talk about something which they had vaguely any idea about. But once, I explained to them the importance of them being aware about their rights, and once I built a rapport with them, all of them were more than interested in the event and keenly participated in the discussion also. In the end they also gave me a good feedback and pledged with me to exercise their rights in the complete sense.

## 6. Future plan of action

All the information about the rights of the labourers cannot be given to them just in one session, and even they cannot process and remember all the information at once and also change is a gradual process. So, in order to bring about a change in the conditions of these workers, it is practical to conduct more sessions and events like these so that the workers can have a better understanding and be sensitive towards their own rights.

## 7. Suggestions/ Feedback

I personally feel that the entire experience of spreading awareness and trying to talk to the workers and trying to understand their lives was a very fulfilling and satisfying experience all together and I really look forward to conducting such events more often.

Also, I would like to suggest that if such events are held on a regular basis, then it would give me, as an individual better opportunity to explore and research and myself be aware about all the rights of the workers in depth, because engaging in such a campaign for only once is not enough and there is no limit to the knowledge that can be gained and spread around.

## 8. Conclusion/ Remarks

To sum up, this entire experience was enthralling and very enlightening. As a law student and as a member of legal aid centre, it is important to know and be sensitive about the issues and problems that different sections in our society face and overall, I can guarantee that the understanding I have gained from this will help me build myself into a better individual and a better law student, who can serve the society. This event has given me the confidence to initiate change and that even I can bring about a change in the society.



Annexure-A







**#LACSLs**

