

REPORT ON THE EVENT: “VICTIMIZATION IN DATING ABUSE: TALE OF THREE CONSENSUAL VICTIMS”

Summary:

The event 'Victimization in Dating Abuse: Tale of Three Consensual Victims' was conducted at four different places, (i) SLS-Noida – 4th Sep., 2015, (ii) Maitreyi College, D.U. – 7th Sep., 2015, (iii) Indraprastha College, D.U. – 11th Sep., 2015, & (iv) Jesus & Mary College, D.U. – 16th Sep., 2015. The event was conducted through 'street play' which was enacted by 'mashgool' (Dramatics Society, S.L.S.-N). The theme of the play dealt with the issue of 'consensual sexual victims in dating abuse' which was depicted through three different stories. The play included 'judgement scene' in which it was depicted that 'if there was consent of the prosecuterix in a physical relation, even the 'law' can't help the victim'. Through this play, the target population was made aware of the implications that may follow if they enter in to physical relations during their adulthood.

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PROGRAM REPORT

“Victimization in Dating Abuse: Tale of Three Consensual Victims”

1. Concept Note

The Legal Aid Centre at Symbiosis Law School, NOIDA has been showing success with its members committed to work for betterment of society. The aforesaid program was part of the endeavour of the Centre in furtherance of its ‘aim and objectives’. The areas and topics identified through this program is of vital importance and extremely necessary to be discussed and acknowledged. With this aim in mind no. of similar events were conducted and successfully culminated.

Dating Abuse has been a prevalent form of youth violence that has gained increasing attention. The consequences of being a victim of such abuse can be severe, with some acts also leading to physical injuries. Being the victim of ‘dating abuse’ can increase the risk of later substance use and mental health problems too. One of the issues related to the ‘dating abuse’ is ‘sexual exploitation’ of the participating women which was dealt with by the Center through series of street play that was enacted in no. of colleges in Delhi.

“Victimization in Dating Abuse: Tale of Three Consensual Victims”, a street play, was enacted to make young women aware about the consequences, social outcomes and most importantly legal remedies available for a victim of sexual exploitation in ‘dating abuse’. The L.A.C. at Symbiosis Law School, NOIDA has taken this initiative of spreading awareness amongst the young people regarding victimization in dating abuse. This is an endeavour of the L.A.C. at Symbiosis Law School, NOIDA to make people aware about different laws which protect the victims of dating abuse. This awareness was being spread through above named street play.

Street Play

Street plays are an interesting way to gather crowd’s attention, while giving out relevant information through scenes and characters. The most important part of a street play is the connection it forms with its audience, which is why it is important to ensure that the play performed remains in local language and with believable and relatable stories. Through this street play, the L.A.C. aimed to raise awareness about sexual exploitation of a victim in dating abuse.

2. Objectives

The foremost objective of this program was to familiarise the target population with the meaning of ‘sexual exploitation within dating abuse’, and to make her aware of the implications that may follow if she is a consensual victim. Other objectives were following:

- Making young women aware of the meaning of ‘dating abuse’;
- Making them aware about the ramifications of ‘dating abuse’;

- Informing them about the legal protection in case she becomes victim of 'dating abuse'.
- Making them aware about the legal recourses available.
- Informing them about appropriate authorities to be approached in case of 'dating abuse'.

3. Preliminary Preparations

- Asking the dramatics society to prepare a street play on the issue wherein, they are able to explain the target population about the steps that a dating abuse victim could initiate against the wrongdoer and what are the likely outcomes of such steps.
- Participating in script-writing of the play by the dramatics society; observing their practice of the play, and suggesting required changes in the enactment.
- Seeking permission from the college authorities for conducting the event in the college premises.
- Preparing posters and pasting them on the walls of the college a few days in advance, for promotion of the event.
- Preparing pamphlets for distribution at the time of event.

4. Conducting the Event

The team reached at scheduled places, Maitreyi College (7th Sep.), Indraprastha College (11th Sep.), and Jesus & Mary College (16th Sep.) an hour before the scheduled time for the street play. This gave them ample time to look around the campus of the college and for the Mashgool (Drama society) students to acquaint themselves with how to attract the students. Since, prior permission from all the colleges was taken, the authorities concerned helped the team in doing some preliminary work at the colleges.

The team started its job by distributing pamphlets to the students in & around the campus. It helped in attracting the crowd to come & watch the play. The enthusiasm of the 'mashgool', the dramatics society, helped the team in gathering quite a huge crowd even though the students were busy in their daily class-room activities. The dramatics societies of the colleges also helped the team in gathering the crowd; soon, a huge crowd gathered at all the three colleges that the team would find itself out of pamphlets to give to the students gathered!

The unique topic, the outstanding script and the amazing actors of the 'mashgool' had kept the crowd engaged throughout the street play. The theme of this play was 'sexual victimization in dating abuse' which was depicted through 'four' scenes in the play. It aimed to show different situations that are prevalent in today's society. The first three scenes of the play showed three different relationships that may be found in our contemporary world. The first scene depicts a couple in

which the boy and the girl enter into physical relations after the boy promises to marry her, a promise he has no intention of keeping. The second scene shows a couple where the girl becomes pregnant, and the couple is ready & excited to marry each other but is unable to fulfill their wishes because parents of the boy disagree. Parents of the boy disagree at marriage proposal at this stage because they are too young to enter into married relation. The third scene brings to light a couple, whose relationship breaks down because it has become dysfunctional. In the third relationship, the couple had entered into a consensual physical relation, but, due to incompatible nature of both, they broke-off. All the three scenes stop at a point where the woman has filed a complaint of 'rape' against the man; and the issue to be settled by the Court is: 'is it rape when it was all consensual?'

The fourth & the last scene is the courtroom scene, where lawyers argue for both the parties in all the three cases, and a judge delivers three judgements in three cases. It was only in the first case that the victim could earn relief, that too because of the reason that the boy had entered into physical relation with mala-fide intentions; in two other cases, the victim could not earn any relief because of the reason that they had entered into physical relation with their own free will.

The aim of the play was not to discourage 'dating' among youths, but to enlighten them on the types of situations that they possibly could end up in, and to prepare them mentally for such unforeseen situations. It aimed to educate them about the legal remedies in such situations and circumstances.

The portrayal of the three female victims, being abused by their partners, being maltreated by the society and the emotional upheaval that the victims go through depicted in the play touched the hearts of the audience, thereby, clearly conveying the message of the Legal Aid Center. The legal remedies that can be sought by these victims were also touched upon in the street play and it was an eye opener for the college students as most of them were unaware of their legal rights and remedies.

Overall, the street play was a great success as it effectively conveyed the message behind this initiative of the Legal Aid Center that a victim of dating abuse shouldn't be scared of the society to raise his/her voice for justice.

5. Response of the target population

The target population comprised of young college students, mainly girls as the place of programme was girl's colleges. They were all young and vibrant students ranging from age group of 18-21yrs. who may find themselves in similar situations unknowingly.

It was all due to great energy and enthusiasm of the 'mashgool', the spring heat did little to lower the energy of the performers. As the street play progressed, curious students gathered around the area to witness the performance. The crowd was soon engrossed in the performance and grew

exponentially in number. They all were extremely touched with many girls crying by the end of the street play. All of them could relate to the stories portrayed in the street play. The responses of the girls were much unexpected as they took the message to their hearts and expected more of such programme to be conducted in the college.

At the end of the play- the performers asked the students about who they thought was at fault. To initiate discussion one of the legal aid members came forward and stated that it was clearly the girl's fault because she crossed the line in the relationship, this instigated the audience to involve in the . Overall it was a very successful event.

6. Future plan of action

The targeted population i.e. the college girls, were touched by the message portrayed and they could easily relate with the stories shown in the street play. They did understand that what kind of recourse they have with respect to legal recourse for dating abuse by the partner but they connected more with the emotional part of the event, so in future we should speak to them on individual basis, and talk to them about their personal experiences, and make them understand the legal provisions available to them against dating abuse.

The session can be much more interactive and interesting if the students are first introduced with the whole concept of dating abuse at first hand and are told the reason as to why this issue has been taken up for awareness along with the relevance it will hold in their life. This will help them understand the whole street play better. Prior distribution of pamphlets and putting of posters should be done like it was done for the respective programs in JMC and I.P. College to have more participation.

For follow up, there should be a one to one conversation with them by conducting a discussion session in their college. Therein incidences of real life stories should be narrated along with some videos for sensitization among them. There should be more regular sessions like this across Delhi University.

7. Suggestion/ Feedback

This initiative of the Legal Aid Center should not be limited only to the college going students but should also be extended to the school going students. The college students are still relatively mature enough to be able to make out the difference between what is good and what is bad for them but the same may not be true for the school students. The school students need more guidance in this area as they concede to peer pressure easily and are not too comfortable sharing things like these with the people who can guide them like their parents, teachers etc. Extending this initiative to the

schools would help the victims know their rights; it would give them an opportunity to come out of their shells and raise voices for themselves against their abusers.

8. Conclusion/Remarks:

The event was overall had a success story with enriching experience to the participating members, and going with the positive response of the girls, it was an educational experience for them as well. What was most encouraging for the team was the fact that the girls were eager to know more about the issue and the legal framework present in our system which will help them protect their rights. The team is also very thankful to 'mashgool' for their participation in this cause and lifting it to the next level.

Details Participants in the Events

Sl. No.	Date of the Events	Place of the Events	Name of Participating Members of the LAC
1	7 th Sep., 2015	Maitreyi College, University of Delhi	Yash Kotak, Maithili Moondra, Jasveen Kaur, Antara Rastogi, & Srijata Majumdar
2	11 th Sep., 2015	Indraprastha College, University of Delhi	Shivani Dang, Aerika Singh, Sugandha Sharan, Aakash Gakhar, & Srishti Girdhar
3	16 th Sep., 2015	Jesus & Mary College, University of Delhi	Sohini Chaudhary, Nikhita Kansal, Saurabh Vamsi, Maithili Moondra, Nayanika Ruia, & Astha Garg

Photographs of the Events











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