

“LEGAL LITERACY CAMP: HOW TO FILE AN APPLICATION UNDER THE R.T.I. ACT”

*(Report on the event conducted in
Chandigarh on 6th June, 2015)*

Abstract: This event was conducted by two para-legal volunteers from Legal Aid Centre, S.L.S.-Noida. Firstly, the participants from a slum-village in Kolkotta were informed about their ‘right to file an application under the Act’; later on, they were taught: ‘how they can file such application’, ‘issues about which such applications can be needful for them’, ‘how an appeal can be filed if they don’t receive information’.

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I. Concept Note

The Legal Aid Center of Symbiosis Law School Noida conducted a one day 'legal literacy camp' on '***how to file an application under the Right to information Act, 2005***' in villages around Chandigarh, namely *Khuda Ali Sher, Kansal* and *Naya Gaon*. It gave an opportunity to its members to reach out to people, spread awareness and contribute their bit towards the society, and at the same time gain practical experience.

One of the objectives behind enactment of RTI was to curb the evil of corruption and bring transparency in the society. Therefore, the para legal volunteers thought of introducing the Act as a means to fight corruption to the village population. The concept was firstly to know about the day to day problems of the people, and to ask them about the changes they want in their village and its administration. Once the problems were known, the second step was to introduce the act as a solution to those problems; and, to make them understand the procedure to file an application under the RTI Act. The idea was to make the program interactive and informative. Our main focus was to reach out to as many people as possible.

The places that were chosen were three villages in and around Chandigarh and Mohali. The three villages are very near to each other. The main program was held in *Khuda Ali Sher* and in rest of the villages pamphlets were pasted on the walls and put up on the notice board at the community centers. The pamphlets and posters were in Hindi for easy understanding of the locals. The pamphlets contained detailed information about the filing of RTI application.

II. Objectives

The main objective was to reach out to people, to get to know the problems faced by them in their day to day life, and to introduce Right to Information Act as a solution to their problems.

- To know various problems faced by the village population.
- To introduce Right to Information as a solution to these problems.
- To create awareness among people about the benefits of their Right to Information.
- To educate people on how to fill up the RTI form.

- To make people aware on other related matter such as where to file application, how to draft application, how to file application, what information can be sought, etc.

III. Preliminary Preparations

- Made a list of the nearby villages and choose the appropriate place to conduct the programme.
- Got the pamphlets and posters printed.
- Prepared a list of Public Information Officers of various departments in Chandigarh, like, municipal authorities, police districts, public work department, etc.; got photocopies of the same to distribute among the participants.
- Asked friends to volunteer for the event.

IV. Conducting the Event

We went to the village and asked the locals for any community center or gathering area in the village where we can conduct the program. We were directed towards a community hall which was near to a Gurudwara. A few people were already sitting in the hall, while we asked other people sitting in and around the Gurudwara to come there. We pasted a few posters and introduced ourselves. We started with asking them the problems in the village. People complained about the roads, the sanitary system, the cleanliness, dustbins etc. A few children complained about the street dogs.

We told them that these problems could be easily tackled with if they used their 'right to information'. While one of the volunteer started distributing the pamphlet, the other volunteer started explaining them what basically this 'right' was. The 'four' simple steps were really helpful in explaining the same. Later on, we answered their queries related to the act.

V. Response of the Target Population

All of us were surprised to see the curiosity of the people. The session was very interactive. In fact, one of the ladies offered to get the list of departments that we have prepared

photocopied and pin it on the notice board of the community room. She called for two young boys and asked them to take a few pamphlets and posters from us and get them pasted on walls of the nearby village and on the notice board of their community center.

VI. Future Plan of Action

We had written our phone numbers behind the pamphlets. We told them that in case they require any help they can call us and we will help them finding a solution to the same. We also asked them to inform us in case they ever want to file an application under the Act. This would help us to survey the success rate of this camp.

VII. Suggestions/Feedback

If the number of volunteers were increased more population could have been targeted. It was very difficult to gather people.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

Overall it was a great experience. It was good to know that even people at the village were curious about their 'rights'. It was good to see them actively participate. The fact that they offered to send the posters to the nearby villages and get them pasted on the walls as well as the community notice board was worth appreciation.

लोगों को आरटीआई के प्रति जागरूक किया

नयागांव। नोयडा के सिम्बायोसिस लॉ स्कूल की छात्राओं ने नयागांव, कांसल व खुडा अलीशेर में जगह-जगह कैंप आयोजित किए। जिसमें लोगों को जागृत किया कि वह आरटीआई से सूचना कैसे प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। सूचना का अधिकार अधिनियम 2005 के द्वारा हम किसी भी सरकारी विभाग के जन सूचना अधिकारी से किसी भी प्रकार की जानकारी प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। जैसे पानी बिजली की जानकारी, पेंशन क्यों नहीं मिली और राशन डिपो में कितना राशन आया। ऐसी सभी तरह की जानकारी कोई भी देश का नागरिक ले सकता है। उसे ये सरल चरणों का उपयोग करना होगा। विभाग की पहचान करके कि जानकारी कौन से विभाग से लेनी है। दूसरा आवेदन लिख कर या आन लाईन तिसरा 10 रुपए की फीस भरे मनी आर्डर, बैंक ड्राफ्ट या स्टाम्प शुल्क द्वारा चौथा आवेदन खुद या डाक से भेजे इसकी सारी जानकारी एक महीने में मिल जाती है। इस कैंप का आयोजन देहली से आई



नयागांव। गांव वासियों को आरटीआई की जानकारी देते स्टूडेंट्स।

एरिका सिंह, निकिता कांसल तथा लोकल तन्या गांव वासियों ने इन छात्राओं का आरटीआई संबंधी वालिया और अमनजोत बाठ ने किया था। इस पर जानकारी देने पर धन्यवाद किया।

News clip: Danik Bhasker (Mohali Bhasker; June 7, 2015; Page 3)

Link to the e-newspaper: <http://epaper.bhaskar.com/mohali-bhaskar/319/08062015/cph/1/>















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