

“1ST NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTERLINKING OF LEGAL AID CENTRES & LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITIES”

*(Report on the Conference, Organized at SLS-
Noida on April 19th, 2016)*

Abstract: The Legal Aid Centre, SLS-N, in pursuance of its mission to realize the ‘vision statement’ of the Symbiosis International University in its activities had organized the ‘conference’ on 19th April, 2016 at campus of SLS-Noida. It was chaired by Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel, Director – NALSA; and, it was attended by various law colleges and Human Rights Law Network, an NGO. The participant legal aid centers/cells of various law colleges shared their work experiences. During IIIrd & IVth session of the ‘conference’, discussion was made on ‘how to work upon National Project on the Issue of Under-trial Prisoners’. Finally, the project was launched and it was decided that participating law colleges will work upon the project in association & guidance of NALSA.

*Organized by,
Legal Aid
Centre,
Symbiosis
Law School,
NOIDA
(Constituent
of Symbiosis
International
University,
Pune) in
Association
with National
Legal Services
Authority,
New Delhi*

“1st National Conference on Interlinking of Legal Aid Centres and Legal Services Authorities”

The Legal Aid Centre, Symbiosis Law School, Noida had organized the conference in association with National Legal Services Authority, New Delhi. The conference was divided into two halves with both the halves having different themes and different objectives. The pre-lunch session was dedicated to the theme of 'learning from experience of each other by the Legal Aid Centres/Cells' with the objective to establish the need of inter-linking of various legal aid centres so that they could learn from methodologies & techniques used by them. The post-lunch session was dedicated to 'launching of National Project on the Issue of Under-trial Prisoners' by participating legal aid centres with the declaration that the said project work will be completed in association & guidance of the NALSA.

SESSION – I

The conference was inaugurated by Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel (Director, NALSA) who was earlier welcomed and felicitated by Dr. C.J. Rawandale (Director, SLS-Noida). In his inaugural note, Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel welcomed all the delegates, and then presented the idea & objective of the conference. He threw brief light on the idea of legal aid also. He further spoke about how NALSA works for providing legal services; rather he proposed that term 'legal services' should be used instead of 'legal aid'. He shared few of his experiences & observations while working for NALSA. One of such observation was inhumane conditions at 'anda-cell' in Jodhpur prison where inmates were forced to relieve & bath in the 'anda-cell' only due to which the place was stinking beyond limit. Further, Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel laid emphasis that law colleges should work with District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), State Legal Services Authority (SLSA), & National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). He said that NALSA is always open for working with law colleges provided work area is beyond one state. He pointed out that NALSA will not enter into domain of DLSA & SLSA. He invited the participants to write to NALSA if ever they face any problem in their working and assured that the NALSA will definitely help them out. He even assured that NALSA will help the legal aid centre/cell of law colleges in seeking assistance from DLSA/SLSA. Then, he invited Dr. Madhuker S., Convener (Conference), for discussing theme and objective of the conference.

With expression of thanks to the Chief Guest and to the participants, Dr. Madhuker S. started with sharing experience of his team that led them to conceptualizing and organizing the conference. He pointed out that how legal aid centres remain unaware of activities of each other; he pointed out that how legal aid centres have no connect or contact with each other though they all are working with one objective. He shared experience of his team that while organizing an event in July, 2015, at district level they

did not find any contact of legal aid centres of law colleges from neighbouring districts in virtual world. They had to contact the other law colleges only through postal/courier services which otherwise could have saved time & money, both, only if information related to them had been made available on internet. It so happened again in October, 2015 when the team was preparing for participation at a conference in Gujarat National Law University, it was found that information of activities of legal aid centres of very few colleges were made available on website of respective law colleges. During conference at GNLU, it was taken notice of by the team that legal aid centres of many law colleges are doing great things but the world beyond such law colleges is unaware of such activities. These two incidences brought this idea in mind of the team that legal aid centres of all the law colleges should come at one platform in virtual world wherein they can share their workings and can learn lot of things from such sharing. It was realized that if such activities are brought into public domain which is easily accessible for all, no. of law colleges could learn and adopt the issues working/working methodologies.

With above background, Dr. Madhuker S. further discussed about theme & objective of the conference. He pointed out that how almost every college/university is able to conduct Legal Aid Centre/Cell in the most effective manner; and they adopt certain methodology for doing this. He further pointed out it has been recognized of late that the law colleges have also played an important role in mitigating the prevailing injustices, official apathy and raising the competence bar of the budding professionals, and also upgrading the general level of legal awareness of the community. In view of this, he said that the L.A.C., S.L.S.-Noida aims to connect all the L.A.C's across India with the NALSA/SLSA/DLSA so that the services could be rendered in the real sense under the authority & guidance of such authorities.

Dr. Madhuker S. further spoke about aim & object of the conference which is to bring all the participating legal aid centres to interlink with each other and to make one big platform in order to learn and grow with each other together. He pointed out that it will open up various horizons of different ideas and work plans for all the L.A.Cs.; and, the perspective shared will make all the students work in unity towards the unheard voices of the society.

Dr. C.J. Rawandale, Patron-in-chief of the Conference, was the last speaker in first session. He started his words with background of constitutional mandate. He pointed out that how the Govt. of India, apropos to the spirit of Article 39-A of the Constitution of India which was introduced in the Directive Principles of State Policy by 42nd Amendment, and, with the object of providing free legal aid, had by a resolution dated 26th September, 1980 appointed a Committee known as "Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes" (CILAS) under the chairmanship of the then Hon'ble Chief Justice P.N. Bhagwati to monitor and implement legal aid programs on a uniform basis in all the

States and Union Territories. He further pointed out that 'CILAS' evolved a model scheme for legal aid programs applicable throughout the country by which several legal aid and advice boards were set up in the States and Union Territories.

Dr. C.J. Rawandale pointed out that how the spirit behind Article 39-A of the Constitution of India had enforced the government to enact Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 through which the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) as apex body was established. He further pointed that it was constituted to lay down policies and principles for making legal services available to the weaker sections of the society and also to frame most effective & economical schemes for legal services.

Dr. C.J. Rawandale further gave mention of various rules, like, Legal Education Rules, 2008, through which role of law colleges in providing legal aid to the needy ones came into the picture. He pointed out that due to these rules that bind every law college to establish Legal Aid Center (L.A.C.), now-a-days the law colleges recognize the growing importance of young legal professionals in facilitating access to justice to marginalized communities and it has become the prominent importance for every L.A.C. set up in different law colleges.

With above words of Dr. C.J. Rawandale, Dr. Madhuker S., and Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel, the first session came to an end with tea break before second session was due to start. While concluding the session, Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel pointed out that it is important that information collected by para-legal volunteers must be cross-verified; he further emphasized that working programs of the legal aid centres must have some impact factor.

SESSION – II

The second session of the conference started after tea-break of fifteen minutes. During the tea-break, all the participants were introducing each other which show their keenness to get to know each other. An introduction to this session was made by the anchors Srishti Girdhar & Aditi Singh Kushwah. It was emphasized upon by the anchors with request to all the presenting teams to share their 'work experience' & 'working methodology' so that the other teams could learn something new. The same is stated in brief herein below.

1. National University of Juridical Science, Kolkatta

The first team to make presentation was NUJS from West Bengal. Maathangi Hariharan and Mihika Poddar started their presentation by establishing that they are a research based group which strives to provide core legal aid. They mention the research activities they conduct which provide solutions in the field of legal aid.

They also highlight their TRANS-Policy, publications, guest talks and other such programs which play a crucial part in taking the legal aid movement ahead.

2. Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai

The second team, MNLU – Mumbai was presented by Ms. Saumya Uma, Assistant Professor. She pointed out that the MNLU, having recently come into existence, is taking positive strides in establishing a fully functional Legal Aid cell in their college. Her presentation started with a brief insight into their college and the activities it does. She further explained the need for a legal aid cell in their college. Further, she also shared an outline of the proposed work they wish to carry in the coming year. She concluded with a brief discussion on the possible roadblocks to carry out the proposed work.

3. Amity Law School, Amity University, Noida

Ms. Sheetal Singh, Assistant Professor, had presented the Amity Law School. Her presentation started with showing a new dimension to the conference by talking about the history of legal aid. She pointed that how they how the legal aid movement started and eventually grow to become a necessity in the present social conditions. She eloquently progressed to discuss the objectives of their ALSA and the hurdles one faces while carrying legal aid work. Then she highlighted the thrust area, explaining each work they have executed in the field of legal aid.

4. Institute of Law, NIRMA University

Dr. K.P. Malik, Assistant Professor, started his presentation with providing an insight into the commendable running of a legal aid cell in the Sabarmati Jail. He enunciated the work their legal aid cell does and how it provides legal aid to some of the inmates. He further discussed the kind of services their legal aid cell provides, like in the field of; community services, consultancy services, legal aid and literacy and para legal services.

5. Symbiosis Law School, Pune

The presentation from SLS-Pune was made by Mr. S. Kulkarni (Assistant Professor) and Ms. Chitralay Deshmukh (Assistant Professor). Their presentation started with an introduction of their Community Legal Care Centre. They explained numerous activities their Centre conducts in the field of legal aid and assistance. It was pointed out that some of their activities include community outreach programs, alternate dispute resolution techniques, activities in the Yerwada jail, providing legal aid to certain under trials. They concluded by showing us the team and the guiding force behind their Centre which make the legal aid work a reality.

6. Symbiosis Law School, NOIDA

A team of four members from Legal Aid Centre had presented the Symbiosis Law School; it consisted of Yash Kotak, Srijata Majumdar, Maithili Moondra, and Nikhita Kansal. Their presentation started with explaining the working models we adopt to carry on legal aid work in various fields like LGBT issues, women issues such as marital rape and dating abuse.

The team gave all the details planning that go behind the successful execution of their legal aid work. It was pointed out by the team that use of different names, like, legal aid centre, legal aid committee, legal aid clinic, community legal aid, etc., by various law colleges create confusion, hence, it is important that one common name is adopted by legal aid centres of all the law colleges. Their presentation concluded with reminding the educated audience, about their responsibility to support activities in the field of legal aid. With this presentation, second session came to end in which participating law colleges got to know about activities of each other; they further got to know new issues upon which they can work in future; sharing of working methodology would have bettered their level of understanding on intricacies behind working of legal aid centres.

SESSION – III & IV

Since second session continued beyond allotted time, due to which paucity of time was felt by the organizers, it was proposed at start of third session that both the remaining sessions be merged which was readily accepted by the participants as well as by Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel, Chair of the conference.

At start of the merged third & fourth session, the anchors introduced the theme and objective of second half of the conference which was 'launch of national project on issue of rights of under-trial prisoners'. A brief background to the topic of project was given by the Chair, Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel. He pointed out that how working conditions at prisons in India are so pathetic that it is difficult to live even sub-standard life of a prisoner. He further pointed out that how most of the prisons in India have inmates beyond their capacity. He further pointed out that how still, despite of regular visits of judicial officers in prisons, incidences of violation of 'rights' of prisoner do take place in prisons. He welcomed the initiative taken by organizers of the conference to call upon the law colleges along-with the NALSA to discuss upon the issue at this platform. Then, he invited the 'research proposal' that was prepared by the team from SLS-Noida to be introduced & discussed in the conference.

In concluding remarks, the Chair, Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel, lauded efforts of SLS-Noida for taking such wonderful initiative of bringing various law colleges on board with an authority like NALSA. He assured his full support for seeking necessary permissions from competent authority at NALSA so that both the initiatives turn into reality. Further,

he extended full cooperation & support of NALSA in making various activities of the legal aid centres a success.

The vote of thanks was presented by Dr. C.J. Rawandale, Director, SLS-Noida; he expressed sincere thanks of the organizers for all the participating teams. He further thanked the organizing committee, including members of 'one-click' who were taking pictures of the event, for organizing such a wonderful event so successfully.

At-last, certificates were distributed by the Chair, Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel, to participating teams. A document 'conference proceedings' was also signed by all the participating law colleges as well as by Dr. Madhuker S. (Convener – Conference), Dr. C.J. Rawandale (Patron-in-chief – Conference), and Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel (Director – NALSA).

(List of the participants & photographs of the conference are attached in the following pages.)

LIST OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE

| Sl. No. | Name of the Participant | Designation | Name of the Institute |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Mathangi Hariharan | Student | NUJS, West Bengal |
| 2 | Mihika poddar | Student | NUJS, West Bengal |
| 3 | Sidharth Agarwal | Student | UPES, Dehradun |
| 4 | Kartik Joshi | Student | UPES, Dehradun |
| 5 | Dr. Rumi Ahmed | Faculty | JEMTEC, Gr. Noida |
| 6 | Anmol Sah | Student | JEMTEC, Gr. Noida |
| 7 | Kashav Gaur | Student | JEMTEC, Gr. Noida |
| 8 | Ugain Rao | Student | G.D. Goenka Univ. |
| 9 | Arvind Bali | Student | G.D. Goenka Univ. |
| 10 | Ms. Shikha Dahiya | Faculty | G.D. Goenka Univ. |
| 11 | Prof. Chaitralay Deshmukh | Faculty | S.L.S., Pune |
| 12 | Prof. Yogesh Dharangutti | Faculty | S.L.S., Pune |
| 13 | Prof. S. Kulkarni | Faculty | S.L.S., Pune |
| 14 | Ms. Sheetal Singh | Faculty | Amity Law School, Noida |
| 15 | Shantanu Narain | Student | Amity Law School, Noida |
| 16 | Hari Haran Sudan | Student | Amity Law School, Noida |
| 17 | Shivangini Mishra | Student | Amity Law School, Noida |
| 18 | Aditya Upadhyay | Student | G.D. Goenka Univ. |
| 19 | Shalini Bahuguna | Faculty | Amity Law School, Noida |
| 20 | Aitham Tarunram | Student | Sharda University |
| 21 | Rishi Rathi | Student | Sharda University |
| 22 | Tanmay Mittal | Student | Sharda University |
| 23 | Rattan | Student | Sharda University |
| 24 | Shashank Gupta | Student | S.L.S., Pune |
| 25 | Kaavya Peddibhotla | Student | S.L.S., Pune |
| 26 | Tarunya Rao | Student | S.L.S., Pune |
| 27 | Rishabh Prasad | Student | S.L.S., Pune |
| 28 | Archit Ennamithu | Student | S.L.S., Pune |
| 29 | Sankaya Rajpurohit | Student | S.L.S., Pune |
| 30 | Dr. Krishna Pal Malik | Faculty | NIRMA University |
| 31 | Ashish Raj Tripathi | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 32 | Prof. Saumya Uma | Faculty | M.N.L.U., Mumbai |
| 33 | Abhinav K. Mishra | Faculty | Sharda University |

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 34 | Ritu Kumar | Advocate | H.R.L.N., New Delhi |
| 35 | Srijata Majumdar | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 36 | Anu Mittal | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 37 | Srishti Girdhar | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 38 | Aditi Singh Kushwah | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 39 | Yash Kotak | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 40 | Maithili Moondra | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 41 | Nikhita Kansal | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 42 | Saurabh Vamsi | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 43 | Kshitij Jharkharia | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 44 | Megha Dugar | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 45 | Dhirendra Singh | Student | S.L.S., Noida |
| 46 | Dr. Madhuker S. | Faculty | S.L.S., Noida |

**Innauguration of the Conference with Lightening of Lamp by Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel, Director -
NALSA**



Lightening of Lamp by Dr. C.J. Rawandale, Director – SLS, Noida



Felicitation of the Chief Guest Mr. Rajesh Kumar Goel (Director, NALSA) by Dr. C.J. Rawandale (Patron-in Chief, Conference)



Felicitation of Dr. Madhuker S. (Convener – Conference) by Dr. C.J. Rawandale (Patron-in Chief, Conference)



Introduction of Theme, Objectives, & Significance Of The Conference By The Chief Guest



The Participants in the Conference



Dr. K.P. Malik (NIRMA Institute of Law)



Ms. Sheetal Singh (Amity Law School, Noida)



Ms. Saumya Uma (Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai)



Team from N.U.J.S., West Bengal



Mr. S. Kulkarni (Symbiosis Law School, Pune)



Team from Symbiosis Law School, Noida



Vote of Thanks by Dr. C.J. Rawandale (Patron-in Chief, Conference)



Certificate Distribution





 **DHIRENDRA SINGH**



 **DHIRENDRA SINGH**



 **DHIRENDRA SINGH**



 **M MEGHA DUGAR**

The Organizing Team



(from left to right – Aditi Singh Kushwah, Srishti Girdhar, Kshitiz Jharkaria, Maithili Moondra, Srijata Majumdar, Yash Kotak, Anu Mittal, Nikhita Kansal, & Saurabh Vamsi)