

“LEGAL AID CAMP: SENSITIZATION OF SOCIETY TOWARDS THIRD GENDER PERSONS”

*(Report on the event conducted in
Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh on 4th
June, 2015)*

Abstract: This event was conducted by a para-legal volunteer from Legal Aid Centre, S.L.S.-Noida. Firstly, the participants in Vishakhapatnam were informed about the pathetic life that the persons belonging to third gender are forced to live because of the restrictions imposed upon them by the society. Then, the participants were informed about the ‘rights’ that the ‘law’ in India provides to such persons. They were further informed about their moral duties towards such persons.

Conducted by:

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I. Concept Note

The Legal Aid Centre at SLS, Noida aims to create awareness among various sections and classes of the society on the issue of third-genders. The 'legal aid centre' desires to make our society, a non-gender sensitive one. It therefore stands aptly for the title "sensitization of Indian society towards third gender persons"

The idea is to make the people understand that third genders are a part and parcel of humanity and thereby our society. We have to accept them as individuals and support them in their struggle for their rights as all these years their rights and more importantly their existence has been neglected. Therefore, this awareness program wants to make sure that people don't look down upon third genders and start respecting them as our fellow beings.

II. Objectives

In our modern society, third gender seeks recognition of their existence. It is important for the society to sensitize itself towards their needs. The concept of male and female is no longer the case. Humanity has evolved and so have they. The presence of third genders need to be accepted. The society not only needs to be aware but also needs to accept the Third Gender as a part of their daily lives.

It is not about taking sides, it is not about gender, not about the sex, it is about the acceptance of the truth, the truth that there are third gender persons and the issue should be about the injustice they suffer these days, injustice by regressive laws, which should concern the society, and not that they belong to a third gender.

Third gender is not something which is indifferent. It is a choice, a choice of the person. It is their right to choose what they are. This thought has to be embedded in the minds of the people to sensitize the society on third genders.

- To remove any religious misconceptions and false notions about them and enlighten them that all religions only vouch for love for humanity and that third genders are also a part of humanity.
- To ensure that children, mainly adolescents, do not make fun or get scared by them. We need to talk through them and make sure that third genders are no more a social stigma in our society.
- To ensure people inculcate the spirit to fight for equal rights to the third genders.

III. Preliminary Preparations

- Reading articles from various websites on the topic at hand to have a considerable amount of information and forming a strong opinion.
- Mobilize a small group of volunteers who would help me in conducting the program.
- Printouts of banners, posters and pamphlets.
- Highlighting the statistics in the material provided and writing the important points in English and the regional language Telugu.

IV. Conducting the Event

First, I thought of conducting the event in a slum. But due to a local festival, I had to change the location. Then, I chose the walking club of the city as people of all age groups, of all classes and sections of the society will be present. I started showing the posters first which caught the attention of the surrounding people. Then, I started to explain individually to each person about the topic to which they listened with great interest. Some also asked questions regarding the topic.

V. Response of the Target Population

Some people listened with great interest. People of middle age were identifying more with our ideology whereas the older people, orthodox in nature, are guided by religious misconceptions. I explained about these false notions clearly. They accepted them to be good luck during family

celebrations but were not comfortable with the hypothetical situation of their son or daughter to belong to a transgender.

VI. Future Plan of Action

These programs should be conducted more often and the members of the LAC should be properly trained with the ideology and matter on the topic at hand so that it becomes easier for us to answer the queries of the people easily.

VII. Suggestions/Feedback

- The program should be conducted in groups. Handling the whole thing by one person is a bit difficult, especially while dealing with people.
- Explaining everything present on the posters and pamphlets was time consuming as this has to be done (translated) in addition to preaching our ideology.
- If the program is done in a group, prior permission of the local concerned authorities should be taken as they will often prove to be a thorn in the eye otherwise.
- Educate the members of the LAC first. These topics could be handled by a single person but if the topic is complicated then education of the members of the LAC on that topic is a must.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

This was a good learning experience for us. We got the opportunity to take a progressive stand on a sensitive and important issue and also got the chance to educate people on this. Also, as a para legal volunteer, it was of great help as we got to know some techniques in dealing with some arrogant people.













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