

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

*(Report on the event conducted in Noida on
November 29, 2015)*

Abstract: This event was conducted by two para-legal volunteers from Legal Aid Centre, in Sec. 62 - Noida. Firstly, the inhabitants of nearby slum 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.

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1. Concept Note:

The Legal Aid Cell at Symbiosis Law School, NOIDA had conducted an awareness programme. The purpose behind the programme was to sensitize the society towards third gender. We, students of the college and para-legal volunteers conducted this programme in an urban village in NOIDA on 29th November, 2015. Third gender and third sex is the concept that individuals are categorized as neither man nor woman; it is also a social category present in those societies which recognize three or more genders. In a landmark judgment, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India created the "third gender" status for hijras or transgenders. The apex court had also said that the transgender would be allowed admission in educational institutions and given employment under third gender category. The law has definitely taken a progressive step, recognizing the hijras and transgenders as the third gender. But the society is yet to give recognition to these people. When the world fights for power and position these people fight for recognition. It is high time that we let their fight rest in peace and give them the social acceptance that they deserve.

2. Objective:

- The primary objective of the programme should be to provide the audience with the knowledge of what is the exact meaning of third gender and who are the people who fall under this category. Most of the people are not aware of the exact meaning though this knowledge is very important.
- The audience must be made aware of the unjust behavior that the Third Gender people face. They should be made aware of the rights of these people and how they are being violated and neglected.
- They must be made aware of the fact that these people have achieved legal acceptance.
- The most important aim is to make the audience see through the narrow mindedness of the society and this will influence them to change their perspective and see the issue from a new angle.

3. Preliminary Preparations:

Before conducting the event, we had made a few preliminary preparations like collecting the banners, posters and pamphlets from the Legal Aid Centre.

- We also located an appropriate urban village (slum) where we could find villagers who would be interested in listening to us.
- We conducted the event in the terrace of a house in the slum.
- We had divided the topics amongst us and prepared accordingly so that we could do our best to spread the word of awareness among the slum dwellers.

4. Conducting the Program:

We organized the event in an urban village (slum). The slum dwellers provided us with a terrace to conduct the programme. First we had to gather the crowd. We went from door to door for this purpose. Once the crowd was seated we started with our first topic which was 'Sensitization of Society towards Third Gender Persons'. We explained the meaning of third gender and the people who fall under this category. Then we went on to explain how the legal system of the country has recognized the third gender persons but the society is yet to accept them. We talked about their rights that are being violated and neglected. The next topic was 'how to file an application under the R.T.I. Act'. Again here we had to start from scratch as they were not aware of the R.T.I. Act. We explained the basic concept of R.T.I., the 4 simple steps that should be followed to file an application under the Act. We informed them about the advantages and encouraged them to file such applications whenever it's necessary. Though initially they were hesitant to ask questions but when we explained that the society has not yet given recognition to the third gender people, to this they agreed and confessed that at some point in their lives even they have made the mistake of mistreating and humiliating the hijras. More or less it was an interactive session.

5. Response of the Target Population

Though initially they were hesitant to ask questions but when we explained that the society has not yet given recognition to the third gender people, to this they agreed and confessed that at some point in their lives even they have made the mistake of mistreating and humiliating the hijras. Though some of them had a hostile attitude towards the topic of discussion, most of the people admitted that the topic was very relevant and needs to be discussed. More or less it was an interactive session. One of the females from the audience supported our view and helped us propagate our thoughts and opinion. In addition to their queries regarding the concerned topic, they also asked some other questions. They

discussed the problems being faced by them and if the Legal Aid Centre could help them tackling them.

6. Future Plan of Action

One session is not enough to make the target population aware of topics chosen, in great details. We could only provide them with a basic structure. I think more programmes like these should be organized in future so that the people can have a clearer idea and have a greater understanding of the topics.

7. Suggestions/Feedback:

Various ways in which the program could be better conducted in future are as follows:-

- No. of Volunteers- The number of volunteers for the program should be definitely more than 3, because if there are more helping hands, then the objective could be better served and achieved.
- Association with NGOs- A prior association with NGO functioning in the particular area would help in a great way to execute the program successfully because they could help to accumulate groups and they could also improve the techniques of the execution of the program.
- Information to the Police Department- An association with lot more volunteers and a large target audience and a proper street display of banners and posters requires a prior information to police department so that operation and program could be conducted without any hindrance to the society.

8. Conclusion/Remarks:

Overall this was the great learning experience as a para-legal volunteer. It provided u with an opportunity for students to go out and explore the ground realities which are very needed and useful for every law student. It helped in acclimatizing us to the problems faced by the masses ignorant about their rights and remedies under the law.

ANNEXURES





