

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

*(Report on the event conducted in Gwalior - from 10th may- 10th June, 2016)*

**ABSTRACT:** This event was conducted by Aditi Singh Kushwah Para legal volunteers of Legal Aid Centre, S.L.S.-Noida. Firstly, I visited some of the areas where people can actually were aware of RTI so I thought they will let me file some RTI'S but the response was not as expected. Secondly I went to people around my neighborhood who were not aware of RTI and so I explained them concept of RTI and filing of RTI, later I explained what all issues can be answered.

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## **I. Concept Note**

The Legal Aid Centre at Symbiosis Law School, NOIDA is trying it's best to show keen interest and bring out the best of outcomes that can possibly come. The aforesaid program was a part towards initiative taken for welfare of society.

The Central Right to Information Act came into force on the 12th October, 2005. However, before that 9 state Governments had passed state Acts. These were J & K, Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Assam & Goa.

India is a democratic country where people are the masters. Therefore, the masters have a right to know how the governments, meant to serve them, are functioning, further, every citizen pays taxes. Even a beggar on the street pays taxes (in the form of sales tax, excise duty etc.) when he buys a piece of soap from market and till the time he dies hw do everything under the law and order for which he is made bound but at least that person should know all his rights and how their money was spent.

## **II. Objectives**

The RTI confers on all the citizens a right to information. The Act provides for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens to access to information held by public authorities to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every authority. The citizens get aware of their rights to access information. At least one or the other can know not the complete but the basic information.

## **III. Conducting the Event**

I conducted my programme in different places like-

- ✓ Banks,
- ✓ Offices,
- ✓ Ice cream parlor,
- ✓ Food vendors,
- ✓ cybercafé,
- ✓ Neighborhood etc.

My target was to at least make people aware of -

- What RTI is?
- How it can be used to gather basic day to day information?
- How to file application online and offline both?

- What can be done if no RTI reply comes back?

Firstly, I visited some of the areas like banks, offices where people can actually were aware of RTI so I thought they will let me file some RTI'S but the response was not as expected. Their major issue was always an answer to their RTI was that it is wrongly drafted or there were merely quarries or questions asked by the applicant without specifying or giving detail of the demand.

Secondly I went to people around my neighborhood and places like food vendors, mall, ice cream parlor, cybercafé who were not aware of RTI and so I explained them concept of RTI and filing of RTI, later I explained what all issues can be answered.

#### **IV. Response of the Target Population**

The First section I interacted and visited according to these people who were literate but the way they acted was worst then illiterate reason being they only had direct answer which was no to every information as per their experience no such information comes in by filing such application and even if questions were asked then they were totally numb. Few answered that Somehow the RTI application may have information. But putting pure questions about any matter without demand of paper, document, device, record etc. cannot be said within the purview of the Definition of Information given in the Act.

The second section of people in majority were those who were not aware of it so they heard me attentively and asked me few questions too like-

- What kind of information we can get?
- What all ways and sources?
- Who will give information?
- Is it free of cost or not?

But half of them did not have anything to do with legal issues and half of them started discussing their family issues where the question of law in context of LAC did not arose. Few were of the opinion not to file because either they thought their life is ok with whatever they will do and earn for themselves because according to them no one will come and help their families or the financial condition.

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

The initiative taken was good at least it made people aware who were blank and never heard anything about such facility given by our government. The entire range of common man in the nation has been empowered by such an initiative in which they have got the full rights to be informed about anything that affects their life directly or indirectly and the responsible bodies have to answer them positively. There is a big drawback that exists in our nation, which is a lot of population and which leads to unnecessary disturbance and chaos. The RTI has always been a very concrete and easy mode of spreading information of all kind in all form where apt information will be received by only the person concerned and this will in

turn result in easy accessibility to information on one hand and time conservation of all. But this initiative has not given any outstanding outcomes so that it can be planned any used in future.

In short I have found in my programme that RTI will soon disappear and will lose its originality as found in one of the surveys 2 million: Approximate number of RTIs filed in India annually. But no RTI application can give you the exact number because 33% Public authorities under Central govt. fail to report to the Central Information Commission (CIC) the no. of RTIs they handle in a year. This is despite the fact that filing of annual RTI returns is mandatory under Section 25 (2) of RTI Act.

## **VI. Suggestions**

My overall study till now comes to one suggestion only first there should be awareness towards RTI and people should be made aware in a manner that they should take the initiative to file RTI'S although I agree with the point that at times replies are not to the mark and correct but may be the questions and applications framed are also not correct. So let's make everyone know about RTI and those who know should know how to file application.