



GNLU Legal Services Committee
Gujarat National Law University
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Activities Undertaken by Legal Services Committee

2020

LEGAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

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The Legal Services Committee set up under Section 4(k) of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, rides on the principles of empowering the society with legal awareness and legal aid.

Over the years, the LSC has strived to recognize the potential of law as an instrument of social change. The Legal Services Committee acts as a 'community legal clinic' and focuses on, inter alia, the deprivation of government benefits, eviction and issues of domestic violence.

The LSC has always been motivated to work for the betterment of the society and more so for the enhancement of living standards of the underprivileged. In this regard, activities such street plays, drama performances and community legal service programs which promote legal awareness in areas akin to environment, consumer rights, human rights, right to information and labour laws are often organized by the LSC.

GNLU'S PRO BONO MANDATE

With a view to encourage students to give back to the society and to promote access to justice, GNLU from the academic year 2015-16, made it mandatory for each student to undertake Pro Bono activities for a minimum of 100 hours in his/her entire tenure of undergraduate law programme. Activities by GNLU students to complete their mandate includes undertaking legal literacy programmes, conducting social awareness programmes, promoting government schemes, providing legal advice, assisting Legal Services Authority, undertaking cleanliness drives among others.

This Pro Bono mandate of the students is overseen by the Pro Bono wing, which is a part of the Legal Services Committee. As per the Pro Bono guidelines, a student can undertake Pro Bono work only under a gazetted officer. The students are required to complete at least 20 hours of Pro Bono work each academic year, thereby culminating into 100 hours of Pro Bono work in five years of their undergraduate law programme.

On completion of their Pro Bono work, students are required to submit a certificate signed and stamped by the gazetted officer under whom the Pro Bono work was undertaken and a report explaining the nature of work and the impact of such work in the community. These certificates and work completion report are then scrutinized by the faculty convenor of Legal Services Committee. Non-completion of Pro Bono mandate leads to punitive measures such as withholding of examination result and removal from membership of all centres, committees and clubs run by GNLU.

The Pro Bono wing also undertakes certain activities throughout the academic year where students are awarded Pro Bono hours for volunteering. Some of the activities undertaken by the Pro Bono wing include undertaking door-to-door awareness campaigns on domestic violence act, procedure to file FIRs; street plays; Swachh Bharat campaign; organising blood donation drive among others.

In order to motivate students to contribute to the society, GNLU has also introduced Annual Pro Bono Legal Aid Award. One student from each batch is felicitated with this award for the Pro Bono work undertaken by her in an academic year. A special panel is set up each year to evaluate the work undertaken by the nominees and the panel looks into indicators such as nature of the activity, socio-legal impact of the activity among others.

PRO BONO WORK UNDERTAKEN BY LEGAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

LSC, as a part of its mandate, undertakes a lot of Pro Bono work including both providing legal aid and creating legal awareness. These activities are in addition to the Pro Bono work undertaken by GNLU students as a part of their academic requirement. Some of the activities undertaken by LSC have been described in brief as follows:

Running a Legal Aid Clinic

Operating Legal Aid Clinic at the University has always been one of the major activity being performed by LSC. The office timings of the clinic are 3 pm to 5 pm on daily basis and on weekends we extended the office timings for additional 2 hours, i.e., from 10 am to 12 pm. For each session a group of 3 to 4 students are sent to the clinic and they are required to note down necessary details which includes personal details of the villagers, factual aspects of his legal issue, the genesis of his grievances and other necessary things as deemed fit. Further, another team of students comes up with a preliminary research on the issue to help us decide the legal position of the aggrieved person in the matter. Further, if required the committee also seeks assistance of pro bono lawyers which are in collaboration with LSC.

Know Your Rights Initiative

Know Your Rights' initiative is a flagship legal awareness program conducted by LSC targeting school students. The session is usually conducted in four parts designed to cover different topics of discussion. In the first part the students are familiarized with the concept of law and rules, this is often discussed by bringing in analogy from different sports that the students play. In the second part, students are given an introduction to the Constitution of India, ideas enshrined in the Preamble, fundamental rights and fundamental duties. Instances which show how enjoyment of rights are accompanied by responsibilities are also discussed. In the third segment, there is a discussion on the theme of three organs of government and separation of powers. The discussion involves topics like election, stages of law making in the parliament, hierarchy of courts and justice system, functions, roles and duties of police, concept of FIR and chargesheet, functions and duties of local authorities among others. A mock trial court is also conducted to familiarise students with court room setting and courtroom functioning. The fourth and final segment concludes the session with a quiz on the whole session. The objective of this initiative is to create more aware, responsible and confident citizens.

PIL on Solid Waste Management

LSC has assisted Adv. Aaditya Bhatt, a practicing advocate in Gujarat High Court, in filing a PIL on solid waste management in Ahmedabad. The team has identified specific failures on part of the responsible stakeholders in the implementation of the Plastic Waste Management Rules and prayed for addressing such problem. The PIL has been listed by the High Court and is in the stage of hearing.

Handbook Series

With the objective of simplifying laws and dissemination of legal knowledge, LSC has continuously been working on making handbooks. In the past, LSC has prepared handbooks on labour laws and Good Samaritan laws. Three handbooks have been prepared this academic year, viz.,

A. Complete Guide on Women's Right

The objective of this handbook is to give a brief overview of the various legal provisions for women in India. The handbook follows a life cycle approach – starting from the foetal stage to issues of

marriage, employment, sexual harassment and even inheritance. Various laws applicable to women and their rights under such laws along with the procedure to avail them are succinctly explained.

B. Complete Guide on Children's Right

The objective of this handbook is to give a brief overview of the various legal provisions for children in India. Various laws applicable to children and their rights under such laws along with the procedure to avail them are succinctly explained.

C. Complete Guide on Prisoner's Right

This handbook specifies various rights available to a prisoner at the time of detention, both at the undertrial stage and after being convicted. It also elucidates provisions for arrest, bail, parole and furlough. In addition to the above, it mentions when and how an inmate can approach Legal Services Authorities, State Human Rights Commission, High Court u/s 482 of CrPC and Women's Commission by women inmates.

Assistance to Migrant Labourers

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, migrant labourers have been one of the most affected segment of the society. GNLU Centre for Law & Society along with the Legal Services Committee in collaboration with Zenith Legal Aid Clinic, an NGO based in Shivpuri (Madhya Pradesh), has assisted more than **6,000 migrant workers** in connecting them with relevant authorities for making of their inter-state travel token, obtaining train tickets and making arrangements for other means of transport. LSC has also been in constant touch with various government authorities and NGOs in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh to ensure food and shelter for needy amongst these 6,000 workers.

Conducting Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGD's involve planned and organized discussions with a selected group of individuals to gather information about their problems, needs and aspirations. Legal Services Committee organized such a planned and structured discussions in 3 sessions- Valad and Raysan Aanganwadi. Volunteers identified problems related to roads, schools and construction of washrooms.

Following up on Juna Koba, where an FGD was organised in the previous semester, the Sarpanch has initiated work to build a washroom in Aanganwadi.

Street Plays by Abhivyakti

The plain meaning of Abhivyakti in Hindi stands for expression. Abhivyakti is the theatre wing of LSC and in the last academic year, LSC members wrote, directed and performed the following plays:

A. Trauma of Ragging

On 1 August, 2019, a six-minute monologue was presented at NIFT, Gandhinagar. This monologue unraveled the agony and pain faced by a student during ragging. The actor put on the cap of a fresher who narrated how jubilant he was in his school and how miserable his life became when he was subject to ragging and constant bullying in school.

B. Darpan | Hypocrisies Vs. Evils Of Society

This play depicted wide ranging problems in the society, like casteism, domestic violence, exploitation and inability to fulfil responsibilities. The play was titled Darpan, meaning Mirror in hindi. The purpose of this play was to show that there is a need to carve out a balance between the rights that a constitutional regime invests in one and the duties which a constitutional society expects from one. While one always craves for the protection of one's rights but when it comes to fulfilling the duty, there is no action. This Hypocrisy engrained in the mindset was being showcased through the satirical play.

C. Play Commemorating Gandhi

The Abhivyakti team tied up with the GNLU Legal History museum to present the Gandhi's Historical Sedition Trial and related it with his pious teachings of non-violence and brotherhood which are still relevant today.

NSS week

The National Service Scheme (NSS) is a Central Sector Scheme of Government of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. It provides opportunity to the student youth of 11th & 12th Class of schools at +2 Board level and student youth of Technical Institution, Graduate & Post Graduate at colleges and University level of India to take part in various government led community service activities & programmes. The sole aim of the NSS is to provide hands on experience to young students in delivering community service. In collaboration with NSS, LSC conducted NSS week from 29 August 2019 to 4 September 2019 in Koba village. Activities in the NSS week included celebrating National

Sports Day, conducting a cleaning drive, conducting a plantation drive, organising an Ayurveda camp, skit performance and conducting a blood donation drive.

Teaching Initiative

LSC believes that education plays an important role in creating more aware citizens and as its commitment to assist the Government of India in fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals on education, LSC has undertaken two teaching initiatives, viz.

A. Teaching primary school students

Members of LSC teach Mathematics, English and basic Social Science to primary school students of Sector 2 Government Primary School every day between 3-5 pm. The objective of this initiative is to supplement learning of these students in close collaboration with the staff of this school. With the objective of encouraging these students in undertaking higher education, LSC also organised a campus visit for these children.

B. Adult literacy initiative

On interacting with various support staff in GNLU such as cleaning workers, janitors, cook, guards it came to the students' notice that there are many amongst GNLU's support staff in need of adult literacy programme. Amongst the interested workers, LSC students differentiated students based on the level of education and an adult literacy class is run every Saturday between 3-5 pm.

Collaboration with District Legal Services Authority (DLSA)

In the past, LSC has collaborated with DLSA, Gandhinagar, for their initiatives such as:

- a) Assisting them in Lok Adalats;
- b) Creating awareness about plea bargaining amongst inmates of Sabarmati Central Jail;
- c) Setting up a North-East Access to Justice Cell, which is a special legal aid clinic set up for the people of North-East.