

BEST PRACTISE 1: FREE LEGAL AID CLINIC: BUILDING ACCESS TO LEGAL ASSISTANCE

THE CONTEXT:

Narayanrao Chavan Law College Nanded boasts a recognized free legal aid clinic endorsed by the Bombay High Court. Renowned for its innovative outreach practices, the Free Legal Aid Clinic extends its services to the masses, facilitating access to legal assistance. Serving as a vital link between the justice delivery system and everyday litigants, the legal aid centre at Narayanrao Chavan Law College is instrumental in bridging the gap. Additionally, it endeavours to disseminate information regarding various government schemes to the public, thereby enhancing legal awareness and empowerment.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTISE: -

The institute upholds the mission statement 'Fiat justitia, ruat coelum,' translating to 'Let Justice Be Done Though Heaven Falls.' This ethos permeates its prospectus, website, citizens charter, and college magazine, embodying a commitment to justice. In line with this mission, the college stands resolute in its support of students from marginalized communities. Additionally, as part of its societal engagement efforts, the college operates an active Free Legal Aid Clinic, offering assistance to disadvantaged litigants in alignment with its core objectives. Narayanrao Chavan Law College remains dedicated to advancing legal literacy within the broader community.

THE PRACTISE: -

During the academic year 2022-23, Narayanrao Chavan Law College, Nanded conducted a total of 9 activities under its Free Legal Aid Clinic program, encompassing various initiatives aimed at legal literacy, awareness, and community engagement. The College undertook several impactful legal awareness and community engagement initiatives through its Free Legal Aid Clinic. Here's a concise summary of the activities:

1. **Consumer Rights Awareness Session (12th August 2022):** The college hosted a session focused on enhancing awareness about consumer rights, featuring insights from Smt. Anuradha Satpute Lokhande, President of the District Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission, Nanded.
2. **POCSO Awareness Camp (27th September 2022):** In collaboration with DLSA, Nanded, the college organized a camp to educate students about the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Key topics included legal provisions, government financial aids, and the importance of legal aid for the underprivileged.
3. **Legal Literacy Camps (10th and 11th November 2022):** Under the "Hakk hamara bhi to hai @ 75" campaign by NALSA, New Delhi, two camps were conducted.

- They focused on providing insights into free legal aid provisions, Fundamental Duties outlined in the Indian Constitution, and the importance of legal literacy.
4. **Para Legal Volunteering:** Recognized Para Legal Volunteers from the college engaged with prisoners and a child in conflict with the law, demonstrating the commitment to community service.
 5. **Door-to-Door Legal Awareness Campaign (31st October to 13th November 2022):** Approximately 300 students participated in this campaign, reaching out to over 40,000 individuals. The initiative received appreciation from Principal District Judge Shri. N. B. Nhavkar.
 6. **Street Play Performance (13th November 2022):** Students staged a street play during a legal literacy camp, adding an engaging dimension to legal awareness efforts.
 7. **Participation in National Lokadalat:** Twenty students volunteered in the National Lokadalat, contributing to the resolution of legal disputes.
 8. **Free Legal Aid Camp (16th December 2022):** Organized on the topic "UDHR @ 75," this camp emphasized the role of free legal aid in promoting human rights, receiving guidance from key legal authorities.
 9. **Legal Aid and Legal Literacy Camp (7th February 2023):** Conducted at Rajiv Gandhi College, Mudkhed, this camp highlighted the significance of free legal aid for unrepresented litigants, featuring insights from legal experts.

These activities exemplify the college's dedication to legal education, awareness, and community service through its Free Legal Aid Clinic.

OBSTACLES FACED/ PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED: -

Budgetary constraints often hinder the implementation of these activities. Additionally, limited student motivation poses a challenge to their active participation. Moreover, securing suitable locations for conducting the camps proves to be difficult.

IMPACT OF PRACTISE/ EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS: -

As a result of this practice, the college received an appreciation certificate presented by the Principal District Judge. The Honorable PDJ expressed appreciation during a public event attended by the District Collector, Superintendent of Police, and all judges. Witnessing the enthusiasm of the students engaged in the door-to-door campaign, many other students who were not initially involved also joined as volunteers.

RESOURCES REQUIRED: -

Organizing these legal aid camps necessitates strong willpower and commitment from students, coordinators, and the institute alike. Additionally, obtaining permission from the venues where the camps are to be conducted is imperative.