

Special Issue: Observation of National Legal Aid Day on 28 April 2016

Theme of the year “Garib Dukhbir Bichar Paoar Adhikar, Bartaman Sarkerer Angikar”. In Bangladesh the formal justice system is under tremendous pressure, it creates a negative impact for the rural poor and vulnerable group of people who cannot afford the expenses of cases & do not have clear understanding of how to get access to justice in the upper courts. Therefore Government, development partners, Light House and other legal aid NGOs have taken initiative for strengthening legal aid services for poor.

This year Ministry of Law and NLSO organized different program across the country for the observance of National Legal Aid Day on April 28, 2016. Along with NLSO, Community Legal Services (CLS) programme of UKAID, USAID Justice for All (JFA), UNDP, GIZ and other development partners join their hand to observe this day successfully.

Light House took part in national level event where Honorable Prime Minister was attended at Engineering Institution in Dhaka. Rally, Seminar, Fair and discussion meeting were organized under the leadership of Law Minister and Secretary of Law, Justice and Parliamentary affairs. In the program Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, “There’re many poor and helpless prisoners in jails and they’ve been languishing there for years in various cases though they don’t exactly know what their offences are, or don’t have the financial capacity to have legal aid,” she said asking the Law Minister to look into the matter. She said more than the National Legal Aid Service Organization could extend their support to those staying in jails without any specific charges. Quoting section 27 and section 19 of the Constitution, she mentioned that the Constitution makes it clear to ensure the civic rights of every citizen which her government has been working tirelessly to ensure that. Then she inaugurated the national helpline call centre of the national legal aid service through talking to a female official over phone. The legal aid seekers could avail themselves of free services from the helpline round the clock dialing 16430 or sending SMS.



At the district level Light House observes this day with DLAC of Bogra, Sirajgonj, Pabna, Rajshahi, Chapai Nowabgonj, Noagoan and Joypurhat for increasing the awareness on free govt. legal aid services.



Light House-JFA program observed this day at all Upazilas of Bogra district along with the concerned government stakeholders including administration, judiciaries, LEB and LEA and community people. For this purpose Light house took initiative for different programs to make it more effective and successful.

These programs were inaugurated by the District Judge at district level and at Upazila level by the Upazila Chairmen/ Upazila Nirbahi Officers. Some of them played a vital role as chief guest in this event. At District and Upazila level the departmental head of the different Government Offices and members of district, Upazila and Union legal aid committee, NGO official, press club / media representatives and civil society members, community people, teachers and students took part in the different program (colorful rally, discussion session and cultural event and legal aid clinic, courtyard meeting, micking campaign, public hearing, quiz competition) of National Legal Aid Day observation of Upazila and district level.



Discussion Session: In association with upazila legal aid committees, Light House organized discussion session on the theme of NLAD-2016 in a total 28 upazila of seven districts in Rajshahi division under CLS & JFA programs of UKAID and USAID respectively. All the discussion programs were attended by the respective UzLAC chairman, secretary and other committee members, community people, students, govt. officials, NGO representatives, panel lawyers and other stakeholders attended in the discussion session. The local staff members and beneficiaries of Light House also took part in the different programs at upazila and district level including discussion session.



Organize Public Hearing: Public hearing is a unique opportunity at the Upazila level to conduct faces of the public representatives through initiating local-local dialogue. One Public Hearing was arranged by Light House in the respective venue of concerned Upazilas and unions where panel lawyers were present and consult with the participants to give advice for the requirements of the participants. In this event where women, children ethnic minority groups, vulnerable people, civil society representatives, UP members and other professionals such as service holder, businessman, farmer, housewives, teachers, religious leaders etc. were present. Light House, JFA team members e.g. Upazila Coordinator facilitated the session in presence of different distinguished officials, civil society members, teachers and community people.



CLS-IJLAS Project: Light House observed the national legal aid day-2016 with elaborate programs both in upazila and district level under its project titled Improved Justice and Legal Aid Services (IJLAS) supported by UKAID. It organized colorful rally, discussion session and micking campaign in its 11 Upazila that includes Dhunat of Bogra, Mohadevpur and Badalgachi of Naogaon, Poba and Godagari of Rajshahi, Kazipur and Belkuchi of Sirajgonj, Sadar and Bera of Pabna, Nachole of Chapainawabgonj and Panchbibi of Joypurhat. The respective UzLAC chairman, secretary, other members, community people, students, govt. officials, NGO representatives, panel lawyers, media representatives and other stakeholders joined in the rally and discussion session in their respective upazila. A total 1974 people attended in those programs in the mentioned upazila. Theme of the year "Garib Dukhir Bichar Paoar Adhikar, Bartaman Sarkerer Angikar" was discussed in session with high importance in each working upazila.



Cultural event and Quiz Competition: After ending the discussion session, the cultural team performed different song on selective issues like legal aid and human rights related issues to provide the message for the victims and women. After creating an interesting situation and gathering the different people, the cultural team performed a street theater on these issues. They interacted with people/audience to receive the real message. After watching the above said show the audiences were very pleased.



Colorful Rally: On April 28, 2016 a colorful rally moved out through the main road, bazaar and town of respective Bogra district and in its all Upazilas where district legal aid committee including govt. officials, lawyers, NGO official, press club/ media representatives and civil society members, community people, teachers and students participated. These rallies were decorated with different festoons, rally caps, band party and micking. Mr. Md. Ashraf Uddin, Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Asaduzzaman, Superintendent of Police and some other resource persons were also present in the district level Rally.

A part of JFA program, quiz competitions were held for the students of two schools of Bogra district. The purpose of this competition was to inform the participants about JFA project goal, objectives, activities, and to make aware the school students, teachers, and their families about government legal aid by the NLSAO.

Signature Campaign: The Light House used the PVC for signature campaign of 10 Upazilas of Bogra district. The citizen signed the PVC with a view to make them as knowing the main theme of national legal aid day and its activity.

Posturing: Some posters were used/ pasted in the different public places to show the message of national legal aid day observation and providing the message of free legal aid services for the victims.

Legal Aid Clinic and Case Referral: Legal aid clinic arranged by Light House in the respective venue of Sherpur Upazila Chatter/Parishad on April 28, 2016 where a Panel Lawyer was present and consulted with the citizens/participants to give the advice as per requirement of them (audience/citizen). Case referral forms are issued as per demand of situation and referred it to DLAC for their assistance and ensure the legal aid support of them. In this legal aid clinic where women, children ethnic minority groups, vulnerable people, civil society representatives, UP members and other professionals such as service holder, businessman, farmer, housewives, teachers and religious leaders were present. Light House, JFA team members e.g. Upazila Coordinator facilitated the session in presence of different distinguished officials, civil society members, teachers and community people.

Information Dissemination through Light House information centre: Light House set up an information Centre/booth in the district judge court chatter for observation of national legal aid day. Where Light House worker, Upazila coordinator and panel lawyer were present to disseminate the message of free legal aid services, case referral etc. to ensure the support for the victims.

Prize Distribution: In the prize distribution ceremony the best panel lawyers and participants of the quiz competition were awarded. Then the best performers of rally were awarded for their participation in the rally especially for the Light House, Blast and Panel Lawyer.

Handbill/Leaflet and Brochure distribution: Handbill/Leaflet and Brochure were distributed by Light House among the audience/community people and citizen. These were provided by NCSC containing on the concept note of national legal aid day and 5 messages of NCSC.

Micking Campaign: Light House, Union and Upazila Legal Aid Committee organized a total of 9 sound systems for miking through Van/ Rickshaw to disseminate the legal aid message in their respective communities for NLAD day observation. It was organized so that the citizen could receive the message and go to the respective venue for taking the legal advice and support from panel lawyer, court and respective places, information Centre of respective Upazila. They consulted with the citizens/participants to give them advice according to their requirements (audience/citizen). This effort was taken in a total of 28 Upazilas in Rajshahi division.

JFA-Pabna Project: On April 28, 2016 Light House Pabna observed the NLAD-2016 as a part of the national program. JFA-Pabna project took part in different programs in district and upazila level. On the day, the following events (colorful rally, discussion meeting, legal aid fair, miking campaign, posturing, blood donation campaign, best panel lawyer award ceremony, cultural activity, courtyard meeting) were held in Pabna district. The chairman of district legal aid committee and senior district and sessions judge Mr. Md. Abdul Quddus Mia led the rally. After the rally, there were a discussion meeting about government legal aid program chaired by Chief Judicial Magistrate Md. Nazimuddaloh and Md. Abdul Quddus Mia, senior district and sessions Judge as the chief guest. DC and SP of Pabna District were also in the program as a special guest.

In association with district legal aid committee (DLAC), Light House also took part and jointly organized different programs (colorful rally, discussion session, legal aid clinic, legal information stall, cultural event and blood donation programs) in Sirajgonj, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Chapainawabgonj and Joypurhat district. All the programs were successfully completed and mass people received legal aid information and became aware.



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