



Gujarat National Law University

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THE 2ND LSC ANNUAL NATIONAL INTERLINKING FORUM

APRIL 08-APRIL 09, 2017



The GNLU Legal Services Committee (LSC) was set up by way of *Section 4(k) of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987* and has achieved great laurels ever since its establishment in 2007. The Committee rides on the principles of empowering the society with legal awareness, pro-bono legal aid, socio-legal advocacy and grassroots change. The LSC's motto - "*Awareness, Assertion, Action*" is instilled in every member of this student run committee.

The LSC is under the aegis of the GNLU Centre for Law and Society (GCLS), which is the focal point for socio-legal research at Gujarat National Law University that facilitates interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research, study and teaching of law and society, and law and legal institutions. The Centre encourages multidisciplinary perspectives to inform analysis and debate on socio-legal issues, thereby providing the richest and most comprehensive approach to research and policy-making.

Over the years, the GNLU LSC has strived to recognize the potential of law as an instrument of social change. The LSC acts as a 'community legal clinic' and focuses on, inter alia, the deprivation of government benefits, domestic disputes ranging from land and property disputes to domestic affairs relating to marriage, maintenance and child development. The LSC has been striving continuously in the field of education, free and competent legal aid and women rights.

The 2nd LSC Annual National Interlinking Forum "Access to Legal Services"

The LSC Annual Forum is an annual event which brings together LSCs/Legal Aid Clinics (LACs) from across the nation to a common platform. This is a result of the objective as laid down in the National Legal Services Act, 1987 – *to provide free and competent legal aid to all citizens irrespective of social, political, cultural or economic disabilities*. The idea of free and competent legal services has remained a distant reality in India because of limitations of geography, technical and financial resources and relevant ideas. It is with this vision that the LSC at GNLU is organizing the 2nd Edition of the Forum after the overwhelming success of the 1st edition.

The 2nd Annual Forum is a two-day event scheduled to be held from **April 08, 2017 – April 09, 2017**. The forum is stated to see participation from social experts, advocates and noted academicians and from LSCs across the nation. The focus of the 1st edition was to initiate a process of creating an interlinking platform for LSCs across the country. With the success of the 1st edition, the 2nd edition is taking the process back to the basics. The focus of the second edition is a *sound interlinking of local LSCs, state wise*. The LSC at GNLU is looking at creating an interlinking platform for LSCs across the state so as to address *Gujarat centric issues effectively*.

DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Themes

RURAL SANITATION: 'CLEANLINESS IN GODLINESS'

The government of the day has launched the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan (SBA) on October 02, 2014 in a move that was aimed towards a cleaner and more hygienic India. The Father of the Nation, Mahatama Gandhi, had said that "India lives in her villages" and this holds relevance to this date. It is with this motivation that the theme of rural sanitation has been selected.

Rural Sanitation is a step towards development of the community in the sense that it adds to their good health and hygiene. The LSC at GNLU believes that LSCs across the country can work for rural sanitation. This assistance can be in the form of building toilets, waste management, sensitization about the ill effects of open defecation (which is a rural reality) and much more.

Mental Health in India, both in academic theory and in practice, is at an extremely premature stage. To add to this dismay, the legal structure to deal with this is utterly ill equipped and dysfunctional. From the policy perspective, the mental health regime in India is faced with two problems, namely – conflict in legislations like the Mental Health Act, 1987 as against the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and the Indian Contract Act, 1872; and the lack of sensitization of social, legal and political institutions responsible for the facilitation and upkeep of the mental health regime in India.

We at the LSC believe that it is the duty of every social, legal and socio-legal organization to strive for the betterment of persons with mental disabilities.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Indian juvenile justice system suffers, not just from apathy of the government but also of the public in general. The system is plagued with police insensitivity, lack of social reform and integration, lack of proper and adequate counselling and a severe lack of infrastructure to cater to the demand of these juveniles.

The LSC aims to look at working with juveniles for their social integration, increasing police sensitivity towards juveniles, maintenance of juvenile homes and provision of counselling for juveniles and has therefore, selected this theme for the forum.

RIGHTS OF PRISONERS

Access to Justice for All is slowly but steadily being realized for mainstream society. In the Indian context, prisoners and detainees remain aloof from mainstream society. The rights and freedoms of prisoners is given little importance in a country which is otherwise burdened with court cases.

The LSC at GNLU believes that the rights of prisoners should be given due importance so that they can be brought back into the mainstream and reformed. The LSC is working towards the setting up of pro-bono community clinics for prisoners in Gujarat. To further this objective and to make sure that LSCs across the country work in this direction, this theme has been selected.

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