

ONE-DAY WORKSHOP

ON

“RIGHT TO LEGAL AID: ENSURING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL”

Particulars	Details
Organized by	Legal Aid Committee, School of Legal Studies, Swami Vivekananda University
In Collaboration With	Legis & Associates and the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Barasat
Date	15th October 2025
Time	12:30 PM onwards
Venue	Hall 4, Jagadish Chandra Bose Block, Swami Vivekananda University
Program Coordinator	Ms. Lamiya Sultana

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

The **School of Legal Studies**, Swami Vivekananda University, organized a **one-day workshop** on “*Right to Legal Aid: Ensuring Access to Justice for All*” to foster awareness among law students about the constitutional and practical aspects of legal aid in India. The program was an initiative of the **Legal Aid Committee** of the School of Legal Studies, SVU, in collaboration with **Legis & Associates** and the **District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Barasat**.

The workshop sought to sensitize students of **B.A. LL.B (Hons.)**, **LL.B (Hons.)**, and **B.B.A. LL.B (Hons.)** programs to the ideals of equality, social justice, and access to legal remedies, as enshrined in **Article 39A of the Constitution of India**. It also aimed to familiarize students with the **objectives and functioning of the SVU Legal Aid Clinic**, which serves as a practical extension of classroom learning and a bridge between legal education and community service.

The event was hosted by **Ms. Esita Das**, faculty member of the School of Legal Studies, and graced by eminent speakers — **Dr. Prem Kumar Agarwal**, Advocate **Tanmoy Chakraborty** of the Calcutta High Court, and **Mr. Mithun Chakraborty**, Nyaya Mitra (PLV) of DLSA Barasat. The workshop presentations were conducted by **Ms. Debangana Gupta**, **Ms. Trisha Sarkar**, and **Ms. Madhurima Dalui**, the faculty members of the School of Legal Studies, SVU.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

- To promote awareness about the **Constitutional mandate under Article 39A** ensuring justice irrespective of economic or social status.
- To educate students on the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**, and the structure of **NALSA, SALSA, DALSA** and **TALSA**.
- To emphasize the **importance of free legal aid** as a cornerstone of access to justice and social equality.
- To provide insights into the **practical implementation** of legal aid services through legal professionals, para-legal volunteers, and law students.
- To **introduce and raise awareness** about the **SVU Legal Aid Clinic**, encouraging active student participation in legal aid, outreach, and community engagement.
- To discuss **challenges and opportunities** in realizing access to justice for all, especially the marginalized.
- To inspire students to participate in **legal literacy programs, pro bono advocacy**, and **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)** mechanisms as instruments of justice.

INAUGURAL SESSION

The session commenced with a warm welcome and opening remarks by **Ms. Esita Das**, who expressed gratitude to the University leadership — **Hon'ble Chancellor Dr. Nandan Gupta, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Subrata Kumar Dey, Dean of the School of Legal Studies Dr. Paresh Kumar Acharya**, and **Chief Operating Officer Mr. Saurav Adhikary**, for their constant support and vision in advancing legal education at SVU.

She introduced the distinguished speakers, faculty members, and the purpose of the event, emphasizing that *“Right to Legal Aid forms the foundation of equality before law, ensuring that justice remains accessible to every individual.”*

FELICITATION CEREMONY

The following eminent speakers were felicitated as a gesture of gratitude and appreciation:

- **Dr. Prem Kumar Agarwal** was felicitated by **Dr. Paresh Kumar Acharya, Dean, School of Legal Studies**.
- **Advocate Tanmoy Chakraborty** was felicitated by **Program Coordinator Ms. Lamiya Sultana**.
- **Mr. Mithun Chakraborty** was felicitated by **Mrs. Antu Rani Majumdar**, faculty member, School of Legal Studies.

ADDRESSES AND SESSIONS

- **Opening Address: Dr. Paresh Kumar Acharya, Dean, School of Legal Studies**

Dr. Acharya highlighted the importance of workshops as integral to experiential legal learning. He praised the university's efforts in creating a student-friendly campus that promotes practical engagement. Referring to the Supreme Court's reforms through the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)**, **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)**, and **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA)**, he observed how India is evolving beyond colonial legal frameworks.

Citing **John Rawls**, he stated that “*without agency formation, justice cannot be served,*” and described the **Indian Constitution as the foremost agency of justice** ensuring liberty, equality, and fraternity. He underscored the moral and social duties of judges and advocates as custodians of justice.

➤ **Second Address: Dr. Prem Kumar Agarwal, Associate Professor of Law, GCCBA; Former Judge under WBJs**

Dr. Agarwal began by addressing the complexities of defining “justice” and “injustice,” emphasizing that true justice must be understood through the experiences of the aggrieved. Drawing on **Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation** and **Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar**, he explained how the judiciary has expanded the scope of *Right to Life* and *Right to Legal Aid* under Article 21.

He traced the origin of India’s **adversarial legal system**, explaining that legal aid ensures representation for marginalized individuals who would otherwise remain voiceless.

He remarked that “*in our Constitution, the Preamble embodies promises yet to be fully realized, but we are steadily striving towards them.*”

Dr. Agarwal elaborated on the institutional framework of **NALSA, SALSA, DALSA, and TALSA**, and urged students to participate in legal aid camps and uphold their professional duty as “officers of the court.”

➤ **Third Address: Advocate Tanmoy Chakraborty, Calcutta High Court and Senior Partner and Advocate of M/S. Legis and Associates**

Advocate Chakraborty inspired the students to see law as a living instrument for social change. Quoting the Latin maxims “**Ignorantia Juris Non Excusat**” (ignorance of law is no excuse) and “**Ubi Jus Ibi Remedium**” (where there is a right, there is a remedy), he emphasized the intellectual and moral responsibilities of advocates.

He passionately stated, “*Right to free legal aid is not an act of charity—it is a means to ensure that every person can exercise their rights.*”

He discussed the ethical dimensions of advocacy, the need for empathy, and the importance of timely justice, warning that “*justice delayed is justice denied, but justice denied to the poor is injustice multiplied.*”

➤ **Fourth Address: Mr. Mithun Chakraborty, Nyaya Mitra (PLV), DLSA Barasat**

Mr. Chakraborty elaborated on his role within DLSA, sharing his experiences of representing unrepresented prisoners and victims who lack access to legal support. He emphasized the DLSA’s responsibility to ensure that “*no individual remains unrepresented in the justice system.*”

He also highlighted **mediation** as an effective tool for reducing court burdens and promoting amicable dispute resolution. His practical insights offered students a glimpse into the ground realities of legal aid delivery.

PRESENTATIONS BY THE FACULTY MEMBERS

➤ **First Presentation: Ms. Debangana Gupta**

Ms. Gupta began with an overview of the **constitutional foundations of legal aid**, linking justice, equality, and social empowerment. She explained the creation and operation of **NALSA**, emphasizing its roles — providing free legal representation, organizing **Lok Adalats**, spreading legal awareness, and engaging in **social justice litigation**.

She detailed its **vision and mission**, which focus on inclusivity, effective representation, and strengthening ADR mechanisms for accessible justice.

➤ **Second Presentation: Ms. Trisha Sarkar**

Ms. Sarkar's presentation focused on **eligibility criteria** for availing legal aid services, the **network of legal aid clinics**, and **recent DLSA initiatives** in the Barasat and Barrackpore regions. She introduced the **NALSA Helpline (15100)**, guiding participants on how citizens can connect with legal aid authorities.

➤ **Third Presentation: Ms. Madhurima Dalui**

Ms. Dalui concluded the workshop with a presentation on the **SVU Legal Aid Clinic**, explaining its **structure, operation, and student involvement**. She described how faculty coordinators and student volunteers collaborate with DLSA to conduct **awareness camps, street plays, legal counseling sessions**, and **pro bono casework**, thereby providing experiential learning for law students while serving the local community.

CONCLUSION

The workshop concluded with a **vote of thanks** delivered by **Ms. Esita Das**, expressing heartfelt appreciation to the dignitaries, faculty members, and students for their enthusiastic participation. The session achieved its objectives by deepening students' understanding of **legal aid as a constitutional right and social responsibility**. It fostered awareness about the **SVU Legal Aid Clinic** and encouraged students to engage actively in community-based legal service initiatives. The workshop was both **academically enriching and socially inspiring**, instilling in students the spirit of service and justice envisioned by the Constitution of India.

Prepared by:

Rapporteur

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