

**A REPORT ON  
INTERACTIVE SESSION ON CLIENT COUNSELING AND LEGAL  
ADVOCACY AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL**

Organized by

**THE CENTRE FOR CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION AND LEGAL AID  
CELL, NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY AND JUDICIAL ACADEMY,  
ASSAM**

The Centre for Clinical Legal Education and Legal Aid Cell (CCLELAC) organized an Interactive Session on Client Counseling and Legal Advocacy at Grassroots Level on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 at Seminar Hall, Administrative block, National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam from 12 PM to 1:30 PM. The aim of this programme was to impart knowledge to the students in the areas of Clinical Legal Education.

The guest speaker for the program was Ms. Harshita Singhal, a Gender Rights Advocate and the Founder of NyaayDarshak (a social enterprise dedicated to making legal rights accessible and affordable for victims of domestic violence). The event was attended by Dr. Kailash Jeenger, Dr. Monmi Gohain, and the student-volunteers of the Legal Aid Cell.

The session commenced with Dr. Kailash Jeenger's introduction of the guest speaker, where he emphasized that the event had been organized to highlight that CCLELAC goes beyond being merely a Legal Aid Cell or Clinic. It extends to the comprehensive training of students in the field of Clinical Legal Education. Following this introduction, Ms. Harshita Singhal was invited to share her experiences. She began by recounting her journey of working with the Legal Aid Society during her graduation. As a Para-legal volunteer, she came to realize the profound impact and privilege of understanding the law and how it can empower someone when shared. She stressed the importance of joining a legal aid center not for the sake of enhancing one's CV but to genuinely assist those in need.

She shared her experience of working with Neev Foundation, narrating the full story of how she and other members of the organization provided legal assistance to a victim of the Delhi riots (2019-20), who had lost her husband, in helping her obtain compensation from the government. This narrative deeply resonated with the students, making them realize the vital need and significance of such assistance, as well as the potential challenges they might encounter in the process. The session also provided valuable insights into how to effectively interact with those in need and offer them counsel.

The speaker shared her heartfelt journey of establishing 'Nyaay Darshak,' a remarkable NGO committed to assisting women enduring the agonizing plight of domestic violence. Nyaay Darshak stands as a beacon of hope for countless women seeking refuge from abusive

relationships. The speaker underscored the significance of empowering these women to determine their own course of action rather than dictating decisions to them. She observed that, more often than not, what these women crave is the simple yet profound desire for respect from their husbands and a life free from violence. What sets NyaayDarshak apart is their compassionate approach, offering their services at minimal fees on a 'pay as you can' basis, ensuring that no one is turned away due to financial constraints. This philosophy of accessible and empathetic support resonates deeply with those in dire need.

With unwavering conviction, she emphasized that one should embark on this noble journey only if they possess an unwavering commitment to the cause. Furthermore, the speaker underscored the vital importance of honesty and authenticity in this line of work, counseling that false hope should never be given to clients. She stressed that volunteers must realise that they may provide counsel and aid on legal issues only. It is this combination of wholehearted commitment and unwavering truthfulness that stands as the bedrock of meaningful and effective assistance to those in dire need of legal support.

After a session of questions and answers, the program concluded with a memorable group photograph, capturing the essence of our collective experience.