ORIENTATION ON LEGAL AID SERVICES TO ENSURE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR THIRD GENDER COMMUNITY WITH DISTRICT LEGAL AID OFFICERS

DHAKA, SEPTEMBER 2017

Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu) organized an orientation and sensitizing meeting on 25 September, 2017, an orientation meeting titled “Orientation on Legal Aid Services to ensure access to justice for Third Gender community” with District Legal Officers (Senior Assistant Judge). With suggestion and cooperation National Legal Aid Services Organization (NLASO), the event was organized under GFATM MSA grant. In this orientation program total number of participants was 36 including District Legal Aid Officer, high official of National Legal Aid Services Organization, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and Officials from Bandhu attended the program.

The purposes of this orientation were-

- To provide information about Bandhu and Sexual Minority community.
- To build a strong rapport between Ain-Alap helpline service of Bandhu and District Legal Aid Officers.
- To orient about Ain-Alap activities, conceptual knowledge on Sexual Minority issues and ranges of violations and harassment.
- To develop referral mechanism for ensuring access to justice by the District Legal Aid Officer.

The meeting was ornamented with the presence of following distinguished guests-
- Md. Zafrul Hasan, (Sr. District Judge) Director, National Legal Aid Services Organization,
- Mohammad Tareq Moinul Islam Bhuiyan, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs,
- Dr. Md. Mizanur Rahman, Deputy Director, Sir Salimullah Medical College and Hospital, Dhaka.
"A slight amendment can be useful to provide legal support to the Third Gender community"

- Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Professor, Department of Law, University of Dhaka

In the welcome & inauguration speech Md. Al-Amin Matabbar (Joint District Judge) Deputy Director, National Legal Aid Services Organization, thanked Bandhu for organizing such an orientation program for the District Legal Aid Officer.

Md. Akhtaruzzaman (Sr. Assistant Judge), Assistant Director of National Legal Aid Services Organization shared the objectives and briefed on the National Legal helpline services.

Mr. Md. Fosiul Ahsan, Director-Program of Bandhu briefed the forum on Bandhu and its activities and also underlined described how Hijra’s can get support from National Legal Aid Services Organization through Bandhu.

Dr. Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, Deputy Director, Sir Salimullah Medical College and Hospital, Dhaka expressed his sincere thanks and gratitude to Bandhu for this initiative. He said if the lifestyle of the Hijras could bring on the mainstream, the disease would have been easy to release. He highly expects that today’s workshop will be the milestone to achieve the goal.

Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Professor, Department of Law, University of Dhaka facilitated the orientation meeting about how to ensure the rights to receive the justice. He recommended that a slight amendment can be useful to provide legal support to the Third Gender community. An open discussion was held between District Legal Aid Officers and representatives of Bandhu focusing on the challenges and specific recommendations so that a productive discussion can take place and practical steps can be taken as soon as possible.

Agreed action items for follow up:

- Hijra should stand for themselves first to make social changes by creating positive example in the society. In that case offensive behavior by the Hijra community should stop immediately.
- Some social activities can be done for developing acceptance of Hijra community in the society.
- Some websites can be launched for Third Gender community where they can easily find out the legal aid office address, officers’ time schedule and helpline numbers to get legal support frequently.
- A slight amendment can be useful to provide legal support to the Third Gender community.
- Organize Social media campaign about Hijra community for awareness.