

Free Legal Aid Services Camp organized by Heritage Law College (a unit of the Heritage Group of Institutions), in association with the West Bengal State Legal Services Authority (WBSLSA), to commemorate National Youth Day and the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, conducted at Bagdoba Primary School Building, Bagdoba Village (Near Kolkata Leather Complex) on 12th January, 2026.

INTRODUCTION

The legal aid programme was undertaken with the aim of providing legal aid services to local residents. The programme focused on offering free legal assistance, basic legal counselling, and meaningful interaction with the local community to identify and address prevalent legal issues at the grassroots level.



In furtherance of its mandate to promote legal awareness and access to justice, Heritage Law College, in association with the West Bengal State Legal Services Authority (WBSLSA), organized a Free Legal Aid Services Camp at Bagdoba Primary School Building, Bagdoba Village (Near Kolkata Leather Complex) on 12th January, 2026. The programme was conducted to commemorate National Youth Day and the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. The primary objective of the initiative was to reach out to villagers to create awareness about their legal rights, the availability of free legal aid, and the mechanisms through which legal assistance can be accessed.

PROGRAM PROCEEDINGS

The programme commenced with a felicitation ceremony to honor the dignitaries and legal professionals present. The felicitation began with Shri Shyamal Gupta, former District Judge. This was followed by the felicitation of Smt. Poonam Singhi, Deputy Secretary, West Bengal State Legal Services Authority. Thereafter, Learned Advocate Ms. Sucheta Mitra, Ms. Indumouli Banerjee and Learned Advocate Ms. Sibangi Chattopadhyay were felicitated. The felicitation ceremony was conducted to acknowledge the role of the dignitaries and learned advocates in strengthening access to justice and promoting legal awareness among the masses.



Following the felicitation ceremony, Shri Shyamal Gupta, former District Judge, addressed the gathering. He stated that the programme had been organized to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda and expressed his gratitude to the Head of the Department of Heritage Law College

for initiating such an effort aimed at assisting villagers and addressing their legal concerns. He elaborated on the history, objectives, and functioning of the State Legal Services Authority and explained the roles of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), State Legal Services Authority (SLSA), and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA). He emphasized the concept of free legal aid and highlighted that access to justice is a right available to eligible citizens.

He outlined the categories of persons entitled to free legal aid, including women and children, members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, industrial workmen, victims of trafficking, physically and mentally challenged persons, victims of mass disasters, and persons in custody, as well as individuals meeting the prescribed income criteria. Special emphasis was placed on extending legal assistance to less educated and marginalized sections of society.



He also referred to thoughts inspired by the ideals of Swami Vivekananda, he highlighted principles of harmony, cooperation, and collective responsibility, and concluded by encouraging villagers to approach Heritage Law College or the State Legal Services Authority for any legal assistance, assuring them of necessary support and guidance.

COUNSELLING AND LEGAL INTERACTION SESSION



A counselling and legal interaction session was conducted for the villagers, attended by Shri Shyamal Gupta, former District Judge, Smt. Poonam Singhi, Deputy Secretary, West Bengal State Legal Services Authority and the Learned Advocates Ms. Indumouli Banerjee, Ms. Sibangi Chattopadhyay, and Ms. Sucheta Mitra.

Along with them around 20 law interns were present from various law colleges interning at WBSLSA and law students from Heritage Law college, who assisted the officials and took notes of the session.

During this session, villagers approached the dignitaries and Learned Advocates with their individual legal problems. Free legal consultation was provided, wherein their issues were

carefully heard and appropriate guidance was offered. The problems raised included matters relating to divorce, property disputes, domestic violence, dowry-related issues, and local governance issues such as problems concerning Panchayat roads. Necessary solutions were provided to the villagers and they were explained the procedural aspects of filing cases before courts, including the documents required to be shown at the court, the appropriate judicial magistrate to be approached, and the general functioning of the court system. The counselling session enabled direct engagement with the community and provided practical legal guidance at the grassroots level.



CONCLUSION

The Free Legal Aid Services Camp organized by Heritage Law College, in association with the West Bengal State Legal Services Authority, successfully achieved its primary objective of reaching out to villagers and common people and providing them with legal assistance and guidance. The programme facilitated direct interaction between legal professionals and the grassroots community, thereby enhancing access to justice.

Through expert addresses and a counselling and legal interaction session, the initiative addressed practical legal concerns by offering free consultations, explaining legal procedures, and guiding individuals towards appropriate legal remedies. Overall, the camp contributed meaningfully to

empowering the rural community, promoting legal literacy, and advancing the ideals of service and social responsibility associated with National Youth Day and inspired by the teachings of Swami Vivekananda.

