



PRATIGYA



"Am I an Active Citizen" Seminar

12th November, 2008, JAMSHEDPUR

Organized by PRATIGYA in association with Liberal Youth Forum- India, with the support of FNF

Pratigya in collaboration with Liberal Youth Forum of India organized a seminar on active citizenship, on 12th November, 2008 at Karim City College, Jamshedpur. 86 young men and women from different colleges participated in it.

It started at 10 in the morning with a workshop on RTI conducted by Rajan Kumar Singh, Program Manager of LYF –India's partner organization, Pratigya. The origin of the Right To Information (RTI) law and its mechanics were discussed in detail. A documentary on the impact of RTI was also screened to sensitize the participants about the importance of the act. This was followed by a Q and A session where the participants asked relevant questions pertaining to the session.

A Panel Discussion involving Dr. Bhaskar Rao, noted litterateur, Sri Rajesh Rao , All India Radio, Prof. Dr Neha Tiwari, HOD English & Mass Communication Department Karim City College & Mr Syed Khalid Lecturer, MBA Department, Women's College, Jamshedpur started at 11:30.

Sri Rajesh Rao in his address to the students cautioned that the condition of nation is deteriorating day by day with much faster speed and it's high time that the youths come forward. He expressed that in the absence of any genuine platform, they will have to create their own platform. They can start by saving this country from the cancer of corruption, especially in their own state of Jharkhand which in spite of being the richest in mineral wealth is on the lowest rung of development and notorious for corruption. He also appealed to the organisers to take-up the challenge to create a platform for Youth in Jharkhand and Bihar.

Dr Bhaskar Rao said the success of such seminars lies in the action taken by the participants after the event. He urged the students to take some steps to bring the change they want. In an answer to a question of a participant he suggested that we should start now. He gave the idea of starting with filing 25 RTI's by the students of Mass Communication in any Govt. department of their interest and Pratigya to facilitate them. His suggestion was warmly accepted by both the college administration and Pratigya. In an answer to another question "What is the benefit of voting when none of the candidates seem good?" He said not that not exercising the vote is worst than choosing a wrong a candidate.

Dr Neha Tiwari appealed the students to become more sensitive towards the condition of the society & nation and become partners for change. She said "The youth is ready to work today but many don't find the direction and support." She asked the students to spare few hours per week for social work and contribute to the society directly. She also encouraged them to lead and initiate actively the RTI campaign which has to be started soon by them with support of Pratigya.

Syed Khalid cautioned the audience to be aware of the divisive elements who want to divide India on the basis of caste, region and religion. He further said youths will have to play a vital role in preventing our society from the regional and religious politics. As an active citizen they should vow that they will never support those people or political parties who bring hatred in the society.

Group activity consisting of the presentation by the 3 groups of 8 participants each formed from larger group started at 1:45 pm. Groups presented their views on "Censorship" (For, against and probable solution). In very impressive manner each group presented their views with all the relevant and important arguments. The purpose of the exercise to make them think rationally and analyze the issue with scientific bent of mind seemed to be fulfilled as almost all the arguments were raised by either of the group. After presentation a heated but healthy discussion was facilitated by Rageshree Das Gupta, Project Coordinator, Pratigya.

Session on Individual as an active citizen and constituents of Active Citizenship conducted by Mr Syed Khalid continued till 3:15pm. He discussed the components like writing for newspapers, filing RTI's to make the system transparent and accountable, to keep eyes and ears open on the happenings around us and to debate the discuss the issues. He shared some tips to start or run campaign at the individual level. His sharing also comprised of techniques to prevent frustration and relieve tension when the things don't work according to the plan.

Rageshree gave a presentation on "Education Voucher" at 3:15 which injected new vibes in the seminar. Everybody got excited about this new idea with of course apprehensive questions and heated arguments. Rageshree however very well convinced one and all in the hall.

At 4 :00 Documentary on active citizenship "Country First" by Shiv Khera was screened. After that, Rajan Kumar Singh gave Presentation on Liberal Youth Forum of India followed by presentation on Pratigya by Rageshree Das Gupta and distribution of participation certificate and 3 prizes for most "Active participation" to Siddarth, Olivia and Amandeep. Seminar got concluded at 5:15 in the evening with the group song "Hum Honge Kamyab ek din"