



PRATIGYA



"Am I an Active Citizen" Seminar

8th November, 2008 Ranchi, Venue- C I E T Hall, Ranchi

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 the theme active citizenship named "Am I an Active Citizen?" seminar for College and Senior Secondary School Youths at Claret Institute of Employment Training, Loyola Centre, Purulia Road, Ranchi. 68 young people across different colleges and schools of Ranchi participated in it.

Seminar started with a workshop on Right to Information conducted by Rajan Kumar Singh. The session discussed the process of filing an RTI application and the nitty-gritty's of the RTI Act. A sample application form was provided to the participants for future reference. A documentary on RTI campaigning was screened which helped in sensitizing the participants about the topic and generated interest and curiosity about RTI. Various success stories of RTI and their impact was also shared with them.

In the subsequent session, a group activity which comprised of analysis on Censorship and Reservation was conducted. This session was designed to make them think on different and practical issues of life and society & develop a scientific bent of mind. 4 groups were formed by random selection from larger group. These groups discussed the issues in totality.

A Panel Discussion was spearheaded by Mrs. Lakshmi Singh (Chairperson, Women Commission, Jharkhand and Ex Chief Secretary of Jharkhand), Deputy Mayor Ranchi Municipal Corporation Mr. Ajay Nath Shahdeo and Noted Educationist Fr C De Brower from St. Xavier's College and Director of Career Training Institute Anglo Mania.

Mrs Lakshmi Singh said *"Youth is the strength of nation, in today's situation when our national integrity and unity is being challenged now and often on the basis of caste , region and religion , it is the duty of youth to think over these issues and open their mouth , mute spectator can never be active citizen. They should be aware and fight for the genuine rights of the citizen & become*

responsible citizens". In her speech she supported the Education voucher idea and also appealed the participants to volunteer for support.

The young and dynamic Deputy Mayor Ajay Nath Shahdeo stressed upon the need of youth to join active politics. Citing the example of Barak Obama, he questioned those, who think change is impossible. In an answer to the question of a participant he said *"history is the proof that whenever the question of sacrifice for the sake of nation arises, those who lay their lives are none other than youth but when it comes to their share in decision making, the nation is usually reluctant."*

Fr C De Brower who has dedicated his whole life to the cause of Education of youth, appealed them to introspect and question themselves *"Am I an Active and responsible Citizen? Do I feel pain on seeing the condition of my motherland and my people? If yes it's the high time, start taking action for change along with studies"*. He reminded of the Indian cultural principle of selflessness and sacrifice. He expressed his desire to address a gathering of 1,000 young citizens.

Mr. Leo, who has shaped the lives of thousands of students in his long career of working with the youth, asked the young citizens to adhere by the duties mentioned in the constitution and also discussed about the restrictions on the youth.

One Documentary on active citizenship "Country First" by Shiv Khara and another documentary 'Maine tumko Chun Liya' by Freedom Gate, Pakistan on importance of voting (as Student Union Election in Ranchi will be held in December) were screened, followed by the discussion facilitated by Rageshree Das Gupta.

In his session on 'Individual as an Active Citizen', Mr. Leo, highlighted the avenues of youth participation: continuous writing for newspapers, recording and reporting the evils around, filing as many RTI as possible and be a part of movement against corruption , joining or forming a debating club or discussion forum and discussing contemporary socio-economic & political issues. He stressed upon contributing directly in terms of volunteering for at least for 4-6 hrs per week with some voluntary organization like Pratigya and become a part of change. He also raised the slogan "Each one Teach one".

A presentation on Liberal Youth Forum of India was explained by Rajan Kumar Singh and on Pratigya by Rageshree Das Gupta followed by participation certificate distribution and 3 prizes for most "Active participation" to Auroshish, Aman and Durgesh Nandan.

The event was concluded at 4:45 with 2 songs of Freedom and "Hum Honge Kamyab ek din".