Workshop on Colonization, Capitalism & Law

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A workshop for law students was held at the Conference Room of Sir Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate House, University of Dhaka (DU) on 19-20 March 2009. Organized by Empowerment through Law of the Common People (ELCOP) and supported by Odhikar and Chinta Prokashana, the theme of the workshop was "Colonization, Capitalism & Law". A total of 55 law students from 11 universities took part in the two-day workshop.

The workshop was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Professor AAMS Arefin Siddique, Vice-Chancellor, DU. Presided over by Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Professor of Department of Law, DU and Executive Director of ELCOP; other notables present were Guests of Honour Farhad Mazhar, Editor, fortnightly Chinta and Managing Director, UBINIG; Dr. Piash Karim, Professor, Department of Economics and Social Science, BRAC University and Rezaur Rahman Lenin, Convener and Coordinator of the workshop. The VC said that in our society the rule of law has yet to be established in its true sense. "Still in our country the perpetrators most of the time escapes punishment because of the loopholes of law while the sufferings of the general people tells the need of young, dedicated law community to ensure peoples' right", he said. Moreover he added that the law students must know how they can work in future to ensure people's equal right.

Dr. Karim mentioned the initiative as a very commendable one and said that one can definitely increase her/his knowledge through this type of interactive workshop. Another guest of honour Farhad Mazhar said that today's students must know about what is happening around besides going through the texts.

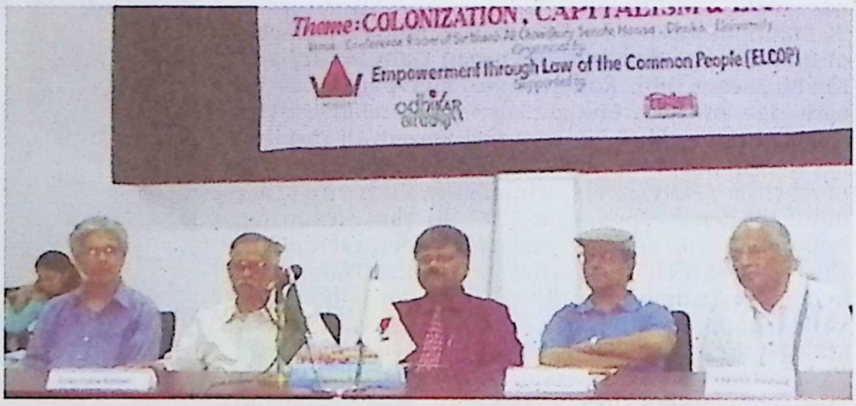
Citing the importance of this type of workshop and applauding Lenin's brilliant effort Dr. Mizan said that the existing law syllabus in Bangladesh cannot be said as a comprehensive one so this type of workshop is needed to make the students realize the realities. "Do we really talk about the laws and its problems and applications? Though students read law in the class and the teachers teach them but that's far from enough as students need to discuss more that is why this type of workshop is needed", he said.

After the inauguration the working session of the workshop kicked off where interesting issues like Biodiversity, Myth of Oriental Despotism, State of Emergency, Corporatism, Judicial Independence in Bangladesh etc. were discussed in the span of two days where the participants came to know about the law and order history of the sub-continent, laws related to environment and intellectual property, impact of capitalism on the third world countries etc. as well as how they can work to ensure equal rights of people of different walks of life. Resource persons of the workshop were Dr. Mizan; Dr. Karim; Farhad Mazhar; Farida Akhter, Executive Director of UBINIG; Pavel Partha, Ethnobotany and Biodiversity Conservation Researcher of BARCIK; Dr. Salimullah Khan, Professor of Department of Law, Stamford University Bangladesh and Advocate Adilur Rahman Khan, Secretary, Odhikar.

The event also included a thought provoking problems solving session where the participants had to find out possible legal aids for a *Santal* (indigenous community) person after going through a real life story.

In the Valedictory session Justice Ghulam Rabbani, Chairman of ELCOP was the Chief Guest while Professor M. M. Akash of Department of Economics, DU; Advocate Adilur Rahman Khan, Secretary, Odhikar and Farhad Mazhar were present as the guests of honour. The closing session was also presided over by Dr. Mizanur Rahman while Rumana Islam, Assistant Professor of Department of Law, DU gave the vote of thanks. The two-day workshop was anchored by Sushmita Chowdhury and Sarwat Sharmin Trisha.

Justice Rabbani appreciated the programme and said this type of workshop will certainly encourage the law students to think about Bangladesh's legal systems as well as the challenges ahead. Advocate Adil said this workshop definitely encouraged the students to think how they can contribute to the society while Farhad Mazhar mentioned that dialogue is a very essential tool to explore different issues and this workshop created a platform among the students for such dialogues.



Announcing "Law, Culture and Politics" as the theme of the next workshop which will take place on June 19-20, the programme Convener Lenin said that he strongly believes, departmentalization of knowledge is itself a barrier in having basic and integrated education and that interaction of knowledge is the root of all development.