

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

The Social Work Forum of the Department of Social Work (Aided) organized a session titled, 'Know Your Rights' in collaboration with Arappor Iyakkam on the 21st of August 2018. The session took place from 1:30 PM to 4:00 PM. The session was inaugurated by Dr. S. Raja Samuel, Principal of Madras School of Social Work, in the presence of Dr. J. S. Gunavathy, HOD in charge and Dr. K. Sathyamurthi, Forum Coordinator. The welcome address was delivered by Ms. Poorani.C, General Secretary of the Social Work Forum. The guest speakers for the session from Arappor Iyakkam were Mr. Ather Ahamed, Mr. Sam Ponraj, Mr. Jayaram Venkatesan and Ms. Subathra. The speakers were felicitated by Dr. S. Raja Samuel, Principal - Madras School of Social Work.

The session started off by Mr. Ather Ahamed giving an overview about 'Know Your Rights' who had also pointed out the difference between rights and laws. Mr. Sam Ponraj shared his own experiences on how he had voiced out for his rights. He spoke about the two online mechanisms to file complaints with the Chennai Corporation i.e., Chennai Corporation website and Namma Chennai application. He also informed about the Corporation Call Centre number, 1913. Throughout the session he emphasised on being responsive to a problem rather than ignoring it. He said that it is our responsibility to ask for our needs to be met and the simplest way of doing it is filing a complaint. Not just filing a complaint but following it up and ensuring if the work is done is also our responsibility.

The second session was led by Mr. Jayaram Venkatesan, who gave information on the procedure to file an RTI. He briefed on how the RTI Act was brought into force. Article 19 of the Constitution of India focuses on 'freedom of information' which is the reason for the amendment of RTI Act, 2005, as mentioned by him. He said that an RTI can be filed for either an individual problem or community problem. An RTI can be used as an effective tool to prevent corruption among the politicians and government officials.

Ms. Subathra spoke about how the money of the common people goes in vain and explained why it is important for everyone to question and to hold the government accountable.

Dr. K. Sathyamurthi delivered the vote of thanks and also expressed the need to make amendments and allow the information of private bodies as well accessible to the citizens.

Ms. P. Elakkiya, President of the Social Work Forum presented the speaker with a memento as a token of love.