

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO – 2184
ANSWERED ON 21/12/2023

Improving access to justice

2184# **Shri Surendra Singh Nagar:**

Shri Iranna Kadadi:

Will the Minister of *Law and Justice* be pleased to state:

- (a) key legal reforms and initiatives implemented by Government in the last five years to improve access to justice;
- (b) measures taken to streamline the judicial system and foster legal awareness among citizens;
- (c) manner in which Government envisages fulfilling its constitutional duty under Article 39A by providing free legal services to vulnerable and marginalized sections of society;
- (d) details of impact of agencies like NALSA, DISHA, and Nyaya Bandhu in achieving this goal; and
- (e) details on the effectiveness of Tele-Law in delivering legal aid to disadvantaged groups, especially focusing on women, SCs and STs and variations that exist across different States?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE; MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

(SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL)

(a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Department of Justice (DoJ), Ministry of Law and Justice has undertaken various initiatives/projects/ and developed scheme to increase free legal aid and ensure access to justice to all citizens with the aim to fulfill the obligation as enunciated under Article 39 A of the Indian Constitution.

In 2017, DoJ launched two key legal aid and empowerment programmes under Access to Justice which included Tele-Law (mainstreaming legal aid at grassroots through technology), and Nyaya Bandhu promoting pro bono legal service, to be implemented in pilot manner. In 2021, all these programmes were formulated into a comprehensive, pan -India scheme titled “Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice in India” (DISHA), launched for a period of five- years (2021-2026). The DISHA scheme aims to provide easy, accessible, affordable and citizen -centric delivery of legal services. Till 30th November 2023, Tele-Law services has been made available across 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats in 782 districts across 36 States and UTs and has rendered legal advice to 60,23,222 beneficiaries. The Nyaya Bandhu service enables seamless connect on the Nyaya Bandhu Application (available on Android/ iOS) between the interested Pro Bono Advocates and registered beneficiaries entitled for free legal aid under section 12 of Legal Services Authorities Act,1987. As on 30th November, 2023, there are 10629 Pro Bono advocates and 89 Law schools have constituted Pro Bono Clubs to facilitate the culture of Pro Bono among law students. Moreover approximately 6 lakh beneficiaries at the state and district and local level have been made aware and sensitized on various rights, duties and entitlements.

The eCourts Mission Mode Project is a national eGovernance project for ICT enablement of district/subordinate courts of the country with a view to facilitate faster disposal of cases by speeding up court processes and providing transparent on-line flow of information on case status, orders/judgments etc. to the judiciary as well as litigants, lawyers, and other stakeholders. In initial phase, 14,249 Court sites were computerized. In Phase II of the project which started in 2015, 18735 District and Subordinate Courts have been computerized and 99.4% of total Court Complexes across India inter-linked through WAN connectivity and in addition, various citizen centric services have been initiated. Accessibility to case status information of 24.47 crore cases and more than 24.13 crore orders/judgments is available on the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG). In addition, through Video conferencing, 2.92 crore cases have been heard by the District and Subordinate Courts and High courts and 4.82 lakh cases by the Supreme Court. Live streaming started in 7 High Courts and Constitutional bench of Supreme Court of India. 25 Virtual Courts have been established in 20 States / UTs to try traffic offences. To bridge the digital divide, 875 eSewa Kendras have been made functional under 25 High Courts. The additional features include CIS, NJDG, JustIS app for judges, eFiling, epayments, Judgement & Order Search portal, NSTEP, Justice Clock etc.

Presently, eCourts Phase-III has been approved with a budgetary outlay of Rs.7,210 crore. This phase aims to create a unified technology platform for the judiciary and provide a seamless and

paperless interface between the courts, the litigants and other stakeholders. The important features of the eCourts Phase-III includes Digitisation of the court records, both legacy records and pending cases; state of the art and latest Cloud based data repository for easy retrieval; saturating all court complexes across India with e-Sewa Kendras to provide easy access to citizens not having the necessary know-how or computer equipment; Paperless Courts aiming to bring court proceedings under a digital format leading to transparency and accountability in the Indian Judiciary and speedy disposal of cases; Online Courts aimed at eliminating the presence of litigants or lawyers in the court, thus saving time and money; Online Dispute Resolution to work towards providing an alternative dispute resolution machinery; expansion of scope of Virtual Courts beyond adjudication of traffic challans etc.

Moreover, the Government has set up National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) under the Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act, 1987 to provide free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society as covered under Section 12 of the Act, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities, and to organize Lok Adalats to secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunities. For this purpose, the legal services institutions have been setup from the Taluk Court level to the Supreme Court. The activities/programmes undertaken by Legal Services Authorities include Legal Aid and advice; Legal Awareness Programmes; Legal Services/Empowerment camps; Legal Services Clinics; Legal Literacy Clubs; Lok Adalats and implementation of Victim Compensation Scheme.

In order to make people aware of their entitlements as well as their duties under law, legal awareness programmes are held across the country by Legal Service Authorities on various laws and schemes relating to children, labourers, victims of disaster, SC and ST persons suffering from disability etc. Legal Services Authorities have also prepared booklets and pamphlets in understandable language on various laws which are distributed amongst the people. National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) organises various campaign from time to time to make people aware about various welfare schemes and entitlements of weaker sections of the society and also the undertrials and convicts. It also organizes legal camps with the three-fold objective of spreading awareness about various welfare legislations and schemes, identify target beneficiaries and also to reach out to people individually and address their legal problems. Details of activities/ programmes undertaken by Legal Services Authorities is at Annexure-A.

(e) Yes Sir.State and UT-Wise details on women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) received legal advice under Tele-Law is attached at Annexure-B

Statement as referred to in reply to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.2184 for answering on 21.12.2023 Shri Surendra Singh Nagar and Shri Iranna Kadadi raised by (MPs) on details of Improving access to justice

| Years | Persons provided Panel Advocates | Persons benefited through Advice/ Counselling | Persons benefited through other services | Total |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|-----------|
| 2022-23 | 2,91,410 | 6,39,230 | 2,84,129 | 12,14,769 |
| 2023-24 (upto Sept, 23) | 1,65,362 | 3,92,999 | 1,87,354 | 7,45,715 |

Legal Awareness Programmes:

| Years | No of Legal Awareness programmes organised | No. of Persons attended |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 2022-23 | 4,90,055 | 6,75,17,665 |
| 2023-24 (upto Sept, 23) | 1,93,605 | 1,76,93,492 |

Legal Services / Empowerment Camps:

| YEAR | 2022 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| No. of camps organised | 38,541 |
| No. of beneficiaries in all camps | 1,15,10,207 |

Legal Services Clinics:

| Year | 2022-23 | | 2023-24 (upto Sept, 23) | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| Categories | Legal Services Clinics | Number of persons provided legal assistance | Legal Services Clinics | Number of persons provided legal assistance |
| Law Colleges/ Universities | 1,093 | 37,351 | 1,025 | 9,520 |
| Villages | 4,134 | 2,82,140 | 3,953 | 1,15,321 |
| Community Centres | 776 | 88,638 | 744 | 39,174 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|----------|
| Courts | 904 | 1,16,563 | 936 | 66,921 |
| Jails | 1,177 | 2,64,593 | 1,200 | 1,55,588 |
| JJB/CWC/ Observation Homes | 439 | 29,280 | 454 | 21,151 |
| For the people of North-East | 64 | 1,170 | 52 | 348 |
| Others | 3,124 | 1,94,729 | 2,771 | 88,674 |
| Total | 11,711 | 10,14,464 | 11,135 | 4,96,697 |

Lok Adalats:

National Lok Adalats

| | Pre-litigation Cases disposed of | Pending Cases disposed of | Total Cases disposed of |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2022 | 3,10,15,215 | 1,09,10,795 | 4,19,26,010 |
| 2023 (upto Sept, 23) | 4,94,88,552 | 1,06,83,225 | 6,01,71,777 |

State Lok Adalats

| | Pre-litigation Cases disposed of | Pending Cases disposed of | Total Cases disposed of |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2022-23 | 94,939 | 7,56,370 | 8,51,309 |
| 2023-24 (upto Sept, 23) | 42,352 | 6,10,724 | 6,53,076 |

Permanent Lok Adalats (Public Utility Services)

| Years | Cases settled |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| 2022-23 | 1,71,138 |
| 2023-24 (upto Sept, 23) | 1,10,412 |

Implementation of Victim Compensation Schemes:

| Years | Compensation Awarded in (Rs.) |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2022-23 | 3,47,80,37,352/- |
| 2023-24 (upto Sept, 23) | 1,97,09,14,235/- |

Annexure -B

Statement as referred to in reply to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.2184 for answering on 21.12.2023 Shri Surendra Singh Nagar and Shri Iranna Kadadi raised by (MPs) on details of Improving access to justice

State/UT wise on details of Advice enabled to Women, Scheduled Caste; Scheduled Tribes from 2017onwards (upto 30thNovember, 23) under Tele-Law programme.

| SI No | States and Union Territories | Female | Scheduled Caste | Scheduled Tribe |
|--------------|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Andhra Pradesh | 63,494 | 36,352 | 13,902 |
| 2 | Arunachal Pradesh | 4,949 | 2,868 | 1,441 |
| 3 | Assam | 68,946 | 22,183 | 11,365 |
| 4 | Bihar | 1,48,179 | 1,27,953 | 23,769 |
| 5 | Chhattisgarh | 93,888 | 63,795 | 94,364 |
| 6 | Goa | 1,772 | 1,359 | 186 |
| 7 | Gujarat | 73,886 | 46,135 | 1,17,301 |
| 8 | Haryana | 33,763 | 42,433 | 7,709 |
| 9 | Himachal Pradesh | 25,803 | 29,759 | 9,586 |
| 10 | Jharkhand | 1,31,705 | 64,189 | 67,182 |
| 11 | Karnataka | 78,613 | 42,869 | 12,859 |
| 12 | Kerala | 9,632 | 2,347 | 754 |
| 13 | Madhya Pradesh | 1,94,960 | 2,36,341 | 1,20,113 |
| 14 | Maharashtra | 1,41,760 | 1,91,739 | 1,21,002 |
| 15 | Manipur | 455 | 125 | 473 |
| 16 | Meghalaya | 12,913 | 966 | 24,503 |
| 17 | Mizoram | 6,965 | 1,131 | 7,816 |
| 18 | Nagaland | 11,885 | 792 | 23,654 |
| 19 | Odisha | 78,791 | 84,501 | 60,495 |
| 20 | Punjab | 64,885 | 1,10,942 | 13,354 |
| 21 | Rajasthan | 1,17,966 | 1,14,072 | 48,683 |
| 22 | Sikkim | 1,075 | 897 | 464 |
| 23 | Tamil Nadu | 86,745 | 40,683 | 8,526 |
| 24 | Telangana | 39,390 | 29,975 | 16,471 |
| 25 | Tripura | 24,918 | 19,460 | 15,730 |
| 26 | Uttar Pradesh | 4,20,650 | 4,22,143 | 57,247 |
| 27 | Uttarakhand | 31,166 | 50,128 | 5,101 |
| 28 | West Bengal | 65,791 | 47,012 | 6,259 |
| 29 | Andaman and Nicobar Islands | 776 | 1,608 | 28 |
| 30 | Chandigarh | 3,506 | 3,518 | 504 |
| 31 | Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu | 1,119 | 668 | 362 |
| 32 | Delhi | 4,366 | 3,167 | 221 |
| 33 | Jammu and Kashmir | 1,01,374 | 78,148 | 41,179 |
| 34 | Ladakh | 1,078 | 396 | 1,083 |
| 35 | Lakshadweep | 1,223 | 1,634 | 5 |
| 36 | Puducherry | 1,098 | 1,036 | 48 |
| Total | | 21,49,485 | 19,23,324 | 9,33,739 |

