

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 182
ANSWERED ON 12.12.2024

LEGAL SERVICE AUTHORITIES

182. DR. AJEET MADHAVRAO GOPCHADE:

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

- (a) the actions taken by Government in collaboration with the Supreme Court and relevant stakeholders to ensure that legal service authorities deliver high-quality legal services to those who are in need;
- (b) the actions implemented by Government in collaboration with the Supreme Court to evaluate the ongoing performance of lawyers from legal service authorities;
- (c) the actions taken by Government in collaboration with the Supreme Court to eliminate underperforming lawyers from legal service authorities; and
- (d) the actions taken by Government to ensure appropriate fees for lawyers of legal service authorities?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) IN RESPECT OF
RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 182 FOR REPLY ON 12.12.2024
REGARDING “LEGAL SERVICE AUTHORITIES”**

(a) : 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. The Chief Justice of India is the Patron-in-Chief of NALSA and generally the second seniormost judge of the Supreme Court acts as the Executive Chairman of NALSA.

In order to reach out to the citizens in every corner of the country, the legal services institutions have been setup from the Taluk level up to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC) functions at the Supreme Court whereas, there are 38 High Court Legal Services Committees (HCLSCs), 37 State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs), 709 District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) and 2376 Taluk Legal Services Committees (TLSCs). The activities/programmes undertaken by Legal Services Authorities include Legal Aid and advice; Legal Awareness Programmes; Legal Services Clinics; Legal Literacy Clubs; Lok Adalats and implementation of Victim Compensation Scheme. The details of activities/programmes undertaken by Legal Services Authorities are at **Annexure-A**. The following steps have been taken by the Legal Services Authorities to ensure that the poor and marginalised sections of the society get quality legal aid:

- (i) The legal practitioner having minimum three years of experience at the Bar are empanelled as Panel Lawyers. Over 34,000 lawyers, possessing more than ten years of practice experience have been empanelled as Panel Lawyers.
- (ii) The panel prepared for three years is also reviewed and updated periodically, keeping in view the performance of the panel lawyers.
- (iii) Monitoring and Mentoring Committees have been setup for close monitoring of the Court based legal services and also to guide and advise the panel lawyers.
- (iv) NALSA has prepared training modules for panel lawyers to upgrade their skills.

- (v) Lok Adalats and Mediation services are also offered free of cost to the litigants across the country.
- (vi) NALSA has created a web portal to file an application for getting legal assistance wherein application can be filed in ten different languages i.e. English, Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Gujarati, Bengali, Odia and Kannada.
- (vii) NALSA has launched a Legal Services Mobile App for Android and IOS version which facilitate seeking legal assistance, legal advice, tracking of application, applying for victim compensation, etc.
- (viii) Legal Services Authorities are also providing legal advice through NALSA's National Toll-Free Helpline Number 15100 through IVRS Technology. From 09.11.2023 to 29.11.2024, 1.45 lakh calls have been received on NALSA helpline number 15100.
- (ix) NALSA is implementing a new Central Sector Scheme namely Legal Aid Defense Counsel System (LADCS) Scheme in order to strengthen the criminal court based legal services. The approved financial outlay of LADCS scheme is Rs. 998.43 crore for 3 years (F.Y. 2023-24 to F.Y. 2025-26). As on 30th September 2024, LADC offices are functional in 653 districts across the country on-boarded with 4674 staff including 3164 Defense Counsels. During the year 2024-25 (upto September, 2024), LADCS offices dealt more than 2.54 lakh criminal cases.

(b) to (d) : NALSA has framed 'The National Legal Services Authority (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010'. The Regulation 8 of the aforesaid Regulations provides for Selection of legal practitioners as panel lawyers. The sub-regulations of Regulation 8 provide for evaluation of the performance of the panel lawyers and for removal of the panel lawyer from the panel. The Regulations 10 and 11, inter-alia, provide for setting up of Monitoring and Mentoring Committees for close monitoring of the court based legal services rendered and the progress of the cases in the legal aided matters and to guide and advise the panel lawyers in providing quality legal services, and if the progress of the case is not satisfactory, the Committee may advise the Legal Services Institution to take appropriate steps. The Regulation 12 provides for submitting bi-monthly reports by the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee containing its independent assessment on the progress of each and every legal aid case and the performance of the panel lawyer or Retainer lawyer, and after

evaluating the reports by the Committee, the Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution shall decide the course of action to be taken in each case.

The Legal Services Institutions have empanelled 41,775 Panel Advocates as on September, 2024, to provide services across the country. No beneficiary is denied free legal services for the reason that there is shortage of panel lawyers. The Regulation 14 contains the following provisions:-

- (i) Panel lawyers shall be paid fee in accordance with the Schedule of fee, as approved under the State regulations.
- (ii) The State Legal Services Authority and other Legal Services Institution shall effect periodic revision of the honorarium to be paid to panel lawyers for the different types of services rendered by them in legal aid cases.
- (iii) As soon as the report of completion of the proceedings is received from the panel lawyer, the Legal Services Institution shall, without any delay, pay the fees and expenses payable to panel lawyer.

Annexure-A**Legal aid and advice:**

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	3,24,914	9,47,087	2,78,163	15,50,164
2024-25 (upto Sept,24)	1,68,380	5,05,386	86,012	7,59,778

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	4,30,306	4,49,22,092
2024-25 (upto Sept. 24)	1,90,231	1,61,35,058

Legal Services Clinics:

Years	2023-24		2024-25 (upto Sept.24)	
Categories	Legal Services Clinics	Number of persons provided legal assistance	Legal Services Clinics	Number of persons provided legal assistance
Law Colleges/ Universities	1034	27545	944	9689
Villages	3659	234515	3771	137556
Community Centres	971	75114	831	44351
Courts	1018	141539	1081	85278
Jails	1215	324867	1227	194229
JJB/CWC/ Observation Homes	479	48565	520	38072
For the people of North-East	47	615	49	1131
Others	2961	183280	3568	117173
Total	11384	1036040	11991	627479

Lok Adalats:National Lok Adalats

Years	Pre-litigation Cases disposed of	Pending Cases disposed of	Total Cases disposed of
2021	72,06,294	55,81,743	1,27,88,037
2022	3,10,15,215	1,09,10,795	4,19,26,010
2023	7,10,32,980	1,43,09,237	8,53,42,217
2024 (upto 09.11.24)	6,46,35,285	1,26,34,580	7,72,69,865

State Lok Adalats

Years	No. of benches constituted	Pre-litigation Cases disposed of	Pending Cases disposed of	Total Cases disposed of
2021-22	74,480	1,14,278	4,18,251	5,32,529
2022-23	62,194	94,939	7,56,370	8,51,309
2023-24	9,865	2,19,230	9,87,873	12,07,103
2024-25 (upto Sept.24)	5,944	6,81,938	3,29,974	10,11,912

Permanent Lok Adalats (Public Utility Services)

Years	Cases settled
2021-22	1,18,136
2022-23	1,71,138
2023-24	2,32,763
2024-25 (upto Sept. ,24)	98,776