

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-2830
ANSWERED ON-19/12/2024

UTILIZATION AND RECOGNITION OF PARA-LEGAL VOLUNTEERS

2830 SHRI MANOJ KUMAR JHA:

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

- (a) whether Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) play a vital role in providing free legal aid, if so, State-wise distribution in the country;
- (b) whether Government is aware of challenges like lack of training, monitoring, incentives and public trust in PLVs, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps taken to provide training, resources and adequate compensation to PLVs and measures to enhance public awareness and trust in their role; and
- (d) the measures being implemented to ensure effective utilization and recognition of PLVs in bridging the gap between the legal system and citizens?

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) : The Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) act as intermediaries between the common citizens and the Legal Services Institutions in providing free legal aid ensuring access to justice. The State-wise distribution/ availability of PLVs is at Annexure-A.

(b) to (d): The Para-Legal Volunteers Schemewas introduced by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) in the year 2009, with an aim to impart legal training to the volunteers, selected from different walks of life so as to ensure that legal aid reaches the citizens ensuring access to justice. The scheme was revised in 2017 and re-named as ‘Scheme for Para-legal Volunteers (Revised), 2017’.

To enhance the capacities of PLVs, especially their skills and representation, NALSA has prepared an extensive training module namely “Modulefor Training of Para-legal Volunteers”. This Module is intended to sensitize the PLVs on the Constitutional vision of justice, basics of criminal law, labour laws, law for juveniles and laws for protection of women and senior citizens. It lays emphasis on knowledge of procedure as well as social sensitivity, soft skills of behavior and communication skills essential for dealing with a diverse population.

Under the supervision of Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), PLVs undergo training programmes. In addition to orientation and induction trainings, refresher training is also provided to the PLVs from time to time in order to upgrade their skills. The Legal Services Authorities periodically assess the work of PLVs and assist them in identifying the deficits and to tackle the problems in the field. The DLSAs upgrade their skills as per the module. The minimum incentive to the PLVs has been provided as Rs 250/- per day under the scheme. However, the State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs) may fix the honorarium of the PLVs more than Rs. 250/- per day depending on local circumstances.

Recently, NALSA has issued directions to all the SLSAs with a request that PLVs are to be additionally referred to as “Adhikar Mitra” (meaning “A Friend of Rights”) in all programmes organised by the Legal Services Institutions and in all documents, correspondences, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material etc. prepared, circulated and distributed by the Legal Service Institutions. The exemplary services of PLVs are given recognition and are rewarded for providing the best services to the beneficiaries.

Statement as referred to in reply to Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2830 for answering on 19.12.2024 raised by Shri Manoj Kumar Jha, MP – Utilization and recognition of Para-Legal Volunteers.

| The State-wise distribution/ availability of Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| S. No. | Name of State/UT Authority | No. of PLVs (as on September, 2024) |
| 1 | Andaman and Nicobar Islands | 19 |
| 2 | Andhra Pradesh | 1668 |
| 3 | Arunachal Pradesh | 2259 |
| 4 | Assam | 1027 |
| 5 | Bihar | 4031 |
| 6 | Chandigarh | 38 |
| 7 | Chhattisgarh | 1613 |
| 8 | Dadra & Nagar Haveli | 17 |
| 9 | Daman & Diu | 21 |
| 10 | Delhi | 572 |
| 11 | Goa | 37 |
| 12 | Gujarat | 2908 |
| 13 | Haryana | 1135 |
| 14 | Himachal Pradesh | 197 |
| 15 | Jammu & Kashmir | 550 |
| 16 | Jharkhand | 685 |
| 17 | Karnataka | 5169 |
| 18 | Kerala | 1500 |
| 19 | Ladakh | 41 |
| 20 | Lakshadweep | 30 |
| 21 | Madhya Pradesh | 2858 |
| 22 | Maharashtra | 3250 |
| 23 | Manipur | 738 |
| 24 | Meghalaya | 347 |
| 25 | Mizoram | 65 |
| 26 | Nagaland | 117 |
| 27 | Odisha | 2431 |
| 28 | Puducherry | 406 |
| 29 | Punjab | 822 |
| 30 | Rajasthan | 1481 |
| 31 | Sikkim | 223 |
| 32 | Tamil Nadu | 1062 |
| 33 | Telangana | 1173 |
| 34 | Tripura | 189 |
| 35 | Uttar Pradesh | 2580 |
| 36 | Uttarakhand | 665 |
| 37 | West Bengal | 1126 |
| | Total | 43050 |

