

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1600

TO BE ANSWERED ON WEDNESDAY, THE 27th DECEMBER, 2017

Legal Aid to Poor

1600. DR. KAMBHAMPATI HARIBABU:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has made any efforts for providing legal aid to the poor and the people in rural areas of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has launched or is planning to launch digital and mobile courts in the country; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR LAW & JUSTICE
AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS
(SHRI P.P.CHAUDHARY)

- (a) and (b) The Government has been implementing two projects on Access to Justice in 16 states. The first project was launched in partnership with UNDP in 2009 in 8 states namely, UP, Bihar, M.P, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Odisha and Maharashtra. The focus of the project has been on providing legal aid and creation of legal awareness among the weaker section of the society. Under the project training and capacity building of panel lawyers, para legal volunteers, elected representatives of gram panchayats and anganwadi workers have been undertaken. The second project was launched by the Government in 2012 from its own resources in 7 states of the North East namely, Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Sikkim and the state of Jammu & Kashmir. Similar legal aid and literacy programme are being implemented in these states.

In April, 2017, the Government has launched three new legal empowerment initiatives, namely, Tele Law, Pro bono legal services and Nyaya Mitra. Tele Law scheme has been launched in 1800 gram panchayats in 10 states of the country for providing free legal aid to marginalised persons as mentioned in section 12 of the Legal Services Authority Act, 1987. As on 22.12.2017, out of 10896 cases registered under the scheme, legal advice has been provided in 7779 cases. Under the probono legal service scheme, 298 cases of marginalised persons have been assigned to 195 advocates. Under the Nyaya Mitra scheme, 16 Nyaya Mitras have been engaged in 6 states namely, UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tripura in the first phase. The Nyaya Mitras are required to assist the judiciary in the disposal of long pending cases and also to provide free legal advice to marginalised persons.

The National Legal Services Authority was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to monitor and evaluate implementation of legal aid programmes. Under the Act, legal services institutions have been set up at all levels from taluka courts, the district court, High Court to the Supreme Court. Legal aid clinics setup in jails, observation homes, juvenile justice boards and law schools are being manned by panel lawyers and para legal volunteers of legal services authorities.

NALSA has developed schemes and programmes to ensure equitable access to justice, especially for the marginalised communities is provided for. With this objective NALSA has several schemes for providing legal aid to those specific categories of people who are excluded from the formal legal system due to political, cultural, social or environmental conditions. Such schemes range from providing legal services to victims of disasters-(both manmade and natural) to acid attack victims. NALSA has also been at the vanguard for protecting the rights and interest of some of the most vulnerable members of the society, be it children, women, tribals or mentally ill and disabled people.

(c) and (d) The Government has computerised 16089 courts in the district and subordinate judiciary in the country under the e Courts mission mode project. The National Judicial Data Grid created under the project has online information such as details of case registration, cause list, case status, daily orders and final judgments. The Government of India provides financial assistance to state governments to set up Gram Nyayalayas which may hold mobile court outside their respective headquarters in terms of the provisions contained in the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008.
