

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

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2029

TO BE ANSWERED ON WEDNESDAY, THE 7TH MARCH, 2018

Accessibility to Legal Service

2029. SHRI GANESH SINGH:

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

- (a) whether the Government is concerned about the hurdles to common citizens in accessibility to legal services;
- (b) if so, whether the Government has already initiated free legal services scheme in the country;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the total number of legal aid clinics established by the Government, State-wise and the financial assistance provided to the States during the last three years and the current year in this regard; and
- (d) whether the Government has made any efforts to ensure that legal aid reaches the poor and the people residing in rural areas and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

- (a) to (d) The Government and the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) have undertaken a number of measures to address the problems of common citizens for accessing legal services. The Government has been implementing Access to Justice Project since 2012 in 8 States of the North East namely, Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Sikkim and the State of Jammu & Kashmir in partnership with State Legal Services Authorities and State Governments. Under the project a number of legal aid and literacy programme are being implemented in these States. In 2016-17, 46 legal aid clinics were setup in Tuensang and Mon districts of Nagaland. The Government in partnership with UNDP also implemented another project on Access to Justice in 8 States namely, UP, Bihar, M.P, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Odisha and Maharashtra from 2009 to 2017. Under the project training and capacity building of panel lawyers, para legal volunteers, elected representatives of gram panchayats and anganwadi workers were undertaken. Under the project, 04 legal aid clinics were setup in Odisha in partnership with National Law University, Odisha and 02 legal aid clinics were setup in Mumbai in partnership with Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS).

In April, 2017, the Government has launched three new legal empowerment initiatives, namely, Tele Law, Pro bono legal services and NyayaMitra. 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 01.03.2018, out of 13947 cases registered under the scheme, legal advice has been provided in 10703 cases. Under the Pro Bono legal service scheme, 215 advocates have registered. Under the NyayaMitra scheme, 15 NyayaMitrashave been engaged in 6 States namely, UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tripura. The NyayaMitras are required to assist the judiciary in the disposal of long pending cases and also to provide free legal advice to marginalised persons.

NALSA 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 i.e. taluka courts, the district courts, High Court and 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. A total number of 20, 134 legal aid clinics have been established in the country as on 31.12.2017. [Statement showing details of these clinics setup State wise is annexed].

NALSA has developed schemes and programmes to ensure equitable access to justice, especially for the marginalised communities. These schemes are meant 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. During the current financial year (up to December, 2017) more than 5.47 lakh persons have benefited through legal aid services in the country.

Annual Grants allocated by National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) to State Legal Services Authorities for financing activities including legal aid clinicsduring the financial years 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 (upto 31.01.2018) are Rs. 53.41 crores, Rs. 57.05 crores, Rs. 110.10 crores and Rs. 89.00crores respectively.

Statement as referred to in reply to Lok Sabha Unstarred Qn. No.2029 for 07.03.2018 by Shri Ganesh Singh, MP - State-wise number of Legal Services Clinics.		
S.No.	Name of the SLSAs	Number of Legal Services Clinics established as on 31.12.2017
1	Andhra Pradesh	858
2	Arunachal Pradesh	21
3	Assam	186
4	Bihar	261
5	Chhattisgarh	493
6	Goa	120
7	Gujarat	638
8	Haryana	506
9	Himachal Pradesh	1010
10	Jammu & Kashmir	215
11	Jharkhand	498
12	Karnataka	876
13	Kerala	652
14	Madhya Pradesh	1138
15	Maharashtra	645
16	Manipur	81
17	Meghalaya	133
18	Mizoram	102
19	Nagaland	124
20	Odisha	522
21	Punjab	526
22	Rajasthan	7432
23	Sikkim	31
24	Tamil Nadu	818
25	Telangana	392
26	Tripura	370
27	Uttar Pradesh	181
28	Uttarakhand	267
29	West Bengal	886
30	A&N Islands	0
31	U.T. Chandigarh	19
32	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	13
33	Daman & Diu	7
34	Delhi	50
35	Lakshadweep	0
36	Puducherry	63
	Total	20134