

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

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 688

TO BE ANSWERED ON WEDNESDAY, THE 26TH JUNE, 2019

Free Legal Assistance to Poor

†688. SHRI RAMCHARAN BOHRA:

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

- (a) whether the Government provides financial assistance to States/Union Territories to give free legal assistance to poor and undertrial prisoners;
- (b) if so, the criteria fixed for this purpose;
- (c) the details of funds provided/utilised for this purpose during each of the last three years, States/Union Territorywise;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to amend the present norms so that proper utilisation of the said funds can be ensured and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the other steps taken/being taken by the Government to provide free legal assistance to poor and undertrial prisoners in the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF LAW & JUSTICE, COMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRONICS
& INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

- (a) & (b) Central Government provides financial assistance to State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs) through National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) to carry out the functions as provided under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. These functions include providing free legal services to all entitled categories of persons, including poor and undertrial prisoners, under section 12 of the said Act. NALSA

allocates funds out of the grants-in-aid received from Central Government to various SLSAs to achieve the objectives of the said Act. In addition, grants or donations could be made to the SLSAs by the respective State Government.

(c) A statement showing funds allocated by NALSA to different SLSAs and funds utilized by SLSAs during the last three years is at Annexure-I.

(d) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(e) In April, 2017, Government has launched three legal empowerment initiatives, namely, Tele-Law, Pro Bono legal services and Nyaya Mitra. Tele-law scheme has been launched in 1800 gram panchayats in 11 States of the country for providing free legal advice to marginalized persons under section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Other persons can obtain legal advice on payment of Rs.30 only. The facility is available at Common Service Centres (CSCs) where legal advice is provided through video conferencing or telephone chat with a Panel Lawyer. Tele-Law Mobile Application & Tele-Law Dashboard for facilitating last mile connectivity was launched in February, 2019.

Under Pro Bono legal services scheme, free legal aid including legal representation, is provided to marginalized persons under section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. 533 advocates have been registered for providing pro bono legal services. Nyaya Bandhu Mobile Application to connect registered Pro Bono Advocates with registered Applicants was launched in February, 2019.

In addition, NALSA also provides free and competent legal services to under trial prisoner and convicts through legal services clinics opened in jails. About 11,800 Remand Advocates have been appointed in Magisterial Courts and Session Courts for providing legal services to arrestees in criminal courts. Further, awareness camps / programmes are conducted in jails at regular intervals to make prisoners aware about free legal aid and their legal rights including right to bail. Regular visits are made by functionaries of Legal Services Authorities to jails to identify prisoners who require legal

aid and advice. Apart from the above measures, Under Trial Review Committee headed by District Judge have also been set up in all the Districts to review the cases of all under trials who have completed half of the maximum sentence provided for the offences they are charged with.

Annexure-I

Statement as referred to in reply to Part (c) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 688 for 26.06.2019 raised by Shri Ramcharan Bohra, MP regarding Free Legal Assistance to Poor.

Details of funds allocated by National Legal Services Authority to State Legal Services Authorities and utilized during the last three financial years viz 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.

S. No	Name of the State Authority	Amount of Funds Allocated (in lakhs) Rs.	Funds utilised (in lakhs) Rs.	Amount of Funds Allocated (in lakhs) Rs.	Funds utilised (in lakhs) Rs.	Amount of Funds Allocated (in lakhs) Rs.	Funds utilised (in lakhs) Rs.
		2016-17	2016-17	2017-18	2017-18	2018-19	2018-19
1	Andhra Pradesh	400	493.41	400	529.3	400	418.93
2	Arunachal Pradesh		85.83	100	227.32	100	225.34
3	Assam	200	288.7	550	579.36	600	360.33
4	Bihar		123.36		392.71	250	428.73
5	Chhattisgarh	300	284.32	400	511.96	800	794.90
6	Goa	100	69.34		68.35		82.94
7	Gujarat	100	375.54	350	368.81	350	385.58
8	Haryana	732.96	494.46	700	959.09	850	950.43
9	Himachal Pradesh	400	429.34	100	487.86	400	468.18
10	J & K	200	185.52	200	368.43	450	503.50
11	Jharkhand	800	293.57	100	633.24	700	753.56
12	Karnataka	722	322.05	700	828.56	850	984.92
13	Kerala	800	590	800	955.59	1050	1263.18
14	Madhya Pradesh		476.23	400	595.35	300	442.47
15	Maharashtra	700	356.96	100	735.03	600	597.55
16	Manipur	100	235.42	300	425.39	350	333.89
17	Meghalaya		26.56		92.2		25.16
18	Mizoram	250	264.07	200	437.23	400	335.29
19	Nagaland	450	260.26	300	396.61	300	417.19
20	Orissa	530	429.7	800	907.32	700	682.04
21	Punjab	600	563.3	800	999.23	950	1209.85
22	Rajasthan	750	546.35	800	1161.04	1800	1804.04
23	Sikkim	100	28.63		120.55		123.43
24	Tamil Nadu	600	398.75	700	762.35	600	707.98
25	Telangana	250	190.4	200	357.68	200	347.48
26	Tripura	250	327.13	500	445.25	300	444.42
27	Uttar Pradesh	300	295.38	600	550.61	100	349.88
28	Uttarakhand	200	106.16	100	261.32	200	224.16

29	West Bengal	300	245.56	200	549	900	769.78
30	And. & Nico. Islands		8.38		13.66		20.94
31	U.T. Chandigarh	100	68.98	200	162.2		163.54
32	D & Nagar Haveli		3.52		7.86		4.36
33	Daman & Diu		3.02		1.2		3.52
34	Delhi	775	535.28	700	777.92	1000	983.11
35	Lakshadweep		13.61		10.23		9.96
36	U.T.Puducherry		75.92	200	108.04		37.90
	TOTAL	11009.96	9495.01	11500	16787.85	15500	17658. 46

Note: The unspent grant pertaining to any particular previous financial year is carried forward to the subsequent financial year for its utilisation.