

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

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1653

TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 16th DECEMBER, 2022

EVALUATION OF LEGAL AID PROGRAMMES

1653. SHRIMATI POONAMBEN MAADAM:

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

- (a) whether the Government has undertaken any study-evaluation of legal aid programmes, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of monitoring and evaluation done by National Legal Services Authority (NALSA);
- (c) whether the Government has taken steps to improve access for justice to everyone and if so, the details of programmes undertaken therefor;
- (d) whether Government is replicating the initiatives like legal aid kiosks, para-legal volunteers etc. to other parts of India; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE

(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)

(a) & (b): National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), established by Government under Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, has undertaken through third party agencies

three Evaluation and Impact Assessment Studies for evaluation of legal aid programmes which include :-

- (i) Evaluation and Impact Assessment of Practice and Procedure of Empanelment, Capacity Building, Engagement and Management of lawyer empanelled with Legal Services Authorities.
- (ii) Evaluation of Legal Aid provided in Civil and Criminal matters in Courts, Tribunals, Quasi-Judicial Body & Jails.
- (iii) Evaluation & Impact Assessment of Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs).

NALSA has taken several steps to provide speedy and cost effective justice through free legal aid services. They include :-

- (i) NALSA has created a web portal to file Applications through online for getting legal assistance. The applicant may file the applications either directly to State Legal Services Authority/District Legal Services Authority/High Court Legal Services Committee/Supreme Court Legal Services Committee from where the applicant requires legal assistance. The applicant has the option to file application directly to NALSA and in that case the said application is transferred to the concerned Legal Services Institutions for appropriate action i.e. to provide legal assistance. Thereafter, the concerned Legal Services Institution has to update the action taken report. The online web portal for filing legal aid applications has also been made more inclusive and a legal aid application can now be filed in Ten (10) languages i.e. English, Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Gujarati, Bengali, Odia and Kannada.

- (ii) NALSA has also launched Legal Services Mobile App for Android and IOS version on 8th August, 2021 and on 09th November, 2021 respectively which will facilitate following functions:-
- a) Any citizen may apply for seeking legal assistance, legal advice and for redressal of other grievances through Mobile App.
 - b) Any citizen may track his application submitted for legal aid & advice and other grievances.
 - c) Reminder can be sent and clarifications can be sought through Mobile App.
 - d) Any victim of crime or applicant can apply for victim compensation through the Mobile App.
 - e) Application for pre-institution mediation in commercial matters or application for mediation may be filed through this Mobile App.

Besides above, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), Helpline assistance and assistance through e-mail are also provided in the Mobile App. In addition, a six week long Pan India Legal Awareness and outreach campaign was carried out from 02nd October to 14th November, 2021 as a part of AzadiKaAmritMahotsav to reach each and every village/Urban area of the country in order to maximize the outreach of Legal Services Authorities as well as to spread awareness regarding the availability of free legal services. During the campaign, various activities were carried out by the Legal Services Authorities at every level of the society, witnessing huge response from the general public.

The said Pan India Legal Awareness and Outreach Campaign was planned with the intent to enhance the outreach of Legal Services Authorities to all 6.7 Lakh villages and 4100 municipal town across the country so that a visible imprint of the activities of legal services authorities can be made in these villages and municipal towns. In this regard, various activities were planned and carried out, out of which the major activities included Door-to-Door Campaigns, Legal Awareness Programs, Awareness through Mobile Vans,

and Awareness through Legal Aid Clinics. Apart from these major activities, the Legal Services Authorities organised specific legal awareness programs for women and children, organised Mega Legal Services Camps, Programs for Children who lost either or both parents due to covid, Exhibitions at State and District level, Moot Court Competitions for students of law universities, etc.

(c): Department of Justice, Government of India launched a new Scheme on Access to Justice namely “Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice” (DISHA) for the FY 2021-2026 wherein various initiatives have been introduced and consolidated to provide citizen- centric delivery of legal services. Under DISHA, the Tele-Law: Reaching the Unreached and Nyaya Bandhu (Pro Bono legal services) programmes are being implemented to provide pre-litigation legal advice and legal assistance in courts respectively. The Tele-Law Service connects the citizen with the Panel lawyers through the use of video /Tele conferencing facilities available at the Common Service Centres (CSCs) and through Tele-Law Mobile App. This service is currently operational in 1,00,00 Gram Panchayats across 755 Districts (including 112 Aspirational districts) in 36 States /UTs. As on 30th November, 2022 advice has been enabled to 28 lakh beneficiaries. The Nyaya Bandhu (Pro Bono Legal Services) programme aims to provide free legal assistance and counsel to the marginalized sections. Nyaya Bandhu Mobile Application, for android and iOS phones, has been developed to connect the registered Pro Bono Advocates with the registered applicants. As on 30th November, 2022, 5202 Advocates have registered under the programme. As on 30th November, 2022, 69 Law schools across the country have constituted “Pro Bono Clubs” under Nyaya Bandhu (Pro Bono) programme to instil a culture towards pro bono lawyering among the law students.

(d) & (e): Through Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, Legal Services Institutions have been setup at all levels from the level of Taluk Courts to the Supreme Court to provide free legal services to the persons eligible under Section 12 of said Act, 1987. The following Authorities/ Institutions are established nation-wide to provide free

legal aid to poor and weaker sections of the society and to conduct Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes pending in courts as well as at pre-litigation stage:-

- i. National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)- At National level
- ii. Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC) - At Supreme Court level
- iii. State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs) - At State level
- iv. High Court Legal Services Committees (HCLSCs) - At High Court level
- v. District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs)- At District level
- vi. Taluk Legal Services Committees (TLSCs)- At Taluk level

The number of Legal Services Institutions at Taluk level to Supreme Court level are as under:-

National Legal Services Authority	State Legal Services Authorities	District Legal Services Authorities	Taluk Legal Services Committees	Supreme Court Legal Services Committee	High Court Legal Services Committees
1	37	676	2361	1	39

Apart from this legal services clinics have also been set up at college/universities, villages, community centres, courts, jails, and juvenile justice boards etc. for providing free legal aid and advice. These clinics are manned by the Panel Lawyers and Para Legal Volunteers. As on 30.09.2022, about 12,158 number of Legal Services Clinics were functioning in the country. In these clinics, around 4.81 lacs persons were provided legal

assistance during the current financial year 2022-23 (upto September, 2022). The statistical data of the above mentioned legal services clinics is as under:-

	Colleges / Universities	Villages	Community Centres	Courts	Jails	JJBs	For the people of North-East	Others	Total
No. of Legal Services Clinics	1018	4391	833	947	1126	428	71	3344	12158
No. of persons visited	21611	186697	58424	68761	152983	21593	1292	198630	709991
No. of persons provided legal assistance	16718	135002	41081	56709	118682	14912	721	97591	481416
