



## **EMPOWERMENT OF CITIZENS THROUGH LEGAL AWARENESS AND OUTREACH**

A Pan India Campaign for bridging the gap between the institutions and the underprivileged by spreading legal awareness and ensuring delivery of legal entitlement to eligible beneficiaries

**(31<sup>st</sup> October - 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022)**



## **NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The framework for guaranteeing justice for everyone is outlined in Article 39-A of the Constitution of India. For a country where millions of people live in extreme poverty, effective implementation of the constitutional vision "Equal Justice and Free Legal Aid" is essential. The Parliament has enacted the Legal Services Authorities Act in 1987 in accordance with the aforementioned goal, which came into force on 09<sup>th</sup> November 1995.

In order to provide millions of marginalised people with access to justice in the truest sense of the word, the Legal Services Institutions that have been established in accordance with the Act continuously work to achieve the goal of ensuring "Equal Justice and Free Legal Aid." They do this by attempting to remove impediments besides economic barrier others like legal illiteracy and complicated judicial procedures.

The Constitution of India guarantees equality before the law and envisions a judicial system that advances justice on the basis of equal opportunity for everyone. Legal Services Institutions have a responsibility to make sure that the underprivileged, disadvantaged, oppressed, and weaker segments of society have easier access to justice.

NALSA believes that, in order to maintain social order, easy access to the administration of justice is an important service that must be designed to deliver effective and equitable service to the community at large, in a manner similar to how primary health clinics and schools must be accessible in even the most rural areas of the nation.

## **NALSA'S VISION FOR THE UPCOMING YEARS**

The Mission is to legally empower the marginalized and excluded groups of the society by providing effective legal representation, legal literacy and awareness and bridging the gap between the legally available benefits and the entitled beneficiaries; and To strengthen the system of Lok Adalats and other Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanisms in order to provide for informal, quick, inexpensive and effective resolution of disputes and minimize the load of adjudication on the overburdened judiciary.

NALSA in its aim of building an effective and inclusive system of legal aid is also emphasising specific issues in addition to and apart from carrying out the ongoing current programmes:

1. Legal Services Centres that have been set up across the nation must be strengthened with personnel who can offer the highest calibre legal services. To achieve this, steps must be done to increase both capacity and capabilities through appropriate and efficient training.
2. Every taluka level shall have such higher quality equipped Legal Services Centres, and such services shall also be offered to every prison, correctional facility, or juvenile detention facility where children in conflict with the law are kept.
3. Efforts will be made to persuade all law schools in the country to adopt atleast 2-3 talukas nearby so that students enrolled in the 4th and 5th years of the LLB programme can easily volunteer assistance to the groups in society to whom legal aid must be provided.
4. The advantages of the presence of law students in the aforementioned manner, in addition to the existing community paralegal volunteers who are involved in various legal aid extension programmes, will ensure that the framework of legal aid service achieves its full potential.

5. Along with the many awareness campaigns already in place, efforts shall be made to reach out to rural and remote areas, where the majority of people in need of legal assistance reside.
6. The role of Legal Services Centres ought not to be confined to pending litigations but must also render appropriate guidance to those who seek legal aid at pre-litigation stage as well. They must also guide the concerned individuals about the benefits that various Government Programmes and Schemes offer to various sections of the society and help them in realising what is due to them.
7. In order for the resolved issues to be reported and given a quietus on the days that the Lok Adalats are convened, efforts shall be made to consistently engage in pre-Lok Adalat discussions and sittings. To get even better outcomes, every effort will be made to fully utilise digital or virtual platforms.
8. NALSA has successfully incorporated technology in its major initiatives, its magnum opus being the smooth transition from 'Alternate Dispute Resolution to Online Dispute Resolution' by virtue of its Online Mediation Portal. NALSA shall further extend the use of technology by conducting E-Lok Adalat and awareness campaigns so as to reach every nook and corner of the country.

## **Functions of Legal Services Institutions**



## **NALSA SCHEMES**

1. NALSA (Legal Services to Disaster Victims through Legal Services Authorities) Scheme, 2010.
2. NALSA (Victim of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation) Scheme, 2015.
3. NALSA (Legal Services to the Workers in the Unorganized Sector) Scheme, 2015.
4. NALSA (Child Friendly Legal Services to Children and their Protection) Scheme, 2015.

5. NALSA (Legal Services to the Mentally Ill and Mentally disabled Persons) Scheme, 2015.
6. NALSA (Elective Implementation of Poverty Alleviation Schemes) Scheme, 2015.
7. NALSA (Protection and Enforcement of Tribal Rights) Scheme, 2015.
8. NALSA (Legal Services to the Victims of Drug Abuse and the Eradication of the Drug Menace) Scheme, 2015.
9. NALSA (Legal Services to the Senior Citizens) Scheme, 2016.
10. NALSA (Legal Services to Victims of Acid Attack) Scheme, 2016.
11. NALSA (Legal Services to Differently Abled Children) Scheme 2021.

## **EMPOWERMENT OF CITIZENS THROUGH LEGAL AWARENESS AND OUTREACH**

India, being a heterogeneous society comprises of marginalized and disadvantaged sections in various proportions. These marginalized communities are termed so based on their relative and social mobility assessment by the society itself. In simple words, there are overt trends moving in society whereby those who are lacking in certain expected or desirable traits or deviating from standardized norms get excluded, ostracized and are thus 'marginalized'.

The Legal Services Institutions (LSIs) established under the Act have the duty of making people aware about their rights, entitlements and remedies. It is crucial that people are informed of the institutions that provide legal services, as well as the fact that the country's excluded groups, in particular, receive competent and free legal services.

LSIs render a number of services to assist the marginalized sections of the society and to actualize the statutory goals of ensuring access to justice for all. However, one of the major obstructions in achieving the said goal is lack of knowledge and awareness amongst the eligible beneficiaries. Due to the lack of knowledge and information, people often remain ignorant of their rights and do not avail services provided by the legal services authorities.

In furtherance of the above said legislative mandate, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs) and other functionaries continuously carry out Legal Awareness and Outreach Programmes to impart knowledge and information amongst the

masses. The intent of the LSIs is to reach all the persons including those residing in rural and far-flung areas of the country.

In 2021, a similar outreach and awareness campaign was undertaken by NALSA. The campaign, which went on from 2<sup>nd</sup> October to 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021, was flagged off by the Hon'ble President of India, and aimed at reaching every person in the society with no exceptions. A detailed report of the campaign can be downloaded from NALSA's website.

Globally, it is understood that any human development must begin with making available of basic amenities for life, specifically targeting the poor and the marginalized.

**“The idea behind NALSA's Pan India Legal Awareness and Outreach Campaign is to boost the confidence of the needy and the needy feels empowered when it is done both at a personal and community level.”**

Empowerment at the personal level happens when the person becomes critically aware of his socio-legal environment thus enhancing his capabilities and competency. Empowerment as an approach at community level involves working with the marginalized to identify and remove barriers that prevents them from accessing power and by extension of community resources. NALSA is dedicated to this spirit of empowering people at community level.

The Campaign would further achieve the objective of making the people aware of the various entitlements which are available under the law, thus



giving them a sense of social security and imbibing faith in the system. Also, it should not be forgotten that when initiatives like these are taken up, it starts building capacity in the beneficiaries.

This campaign would provide a platform for much needed deliberations, thus making people 'legally empowered' which have always been the elephant in the room whenever one talks about empowerment. It is believed that this outreach programme would encompass the trinity of 'rights enhancement, raising awareness and rights enablement.'

According to the Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Panchayati Raj there are total 2,38,054 panchayats in India and a report based on Census 2011 indicates that around 70% of the population resides in rural areas of the country.

NALSA under the astute leadership of Hon'ble Executive Chairman, NALSA and Chief Justice of India (Designate) has devised a Nationwide Legal awareness and outreach programme to be carried out from 31st October, 2022 to 13th November 2022. The same will be organised Pan India with the aim and object to reach every village panchayat and organise atleast one program in each and every sub division of all the districts at least once.

The campaign will be flagged off on 31st October, 2022 and simultaneous programmes will be organised in all the States and Districts of the country. The campaign will come to an end on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2022.

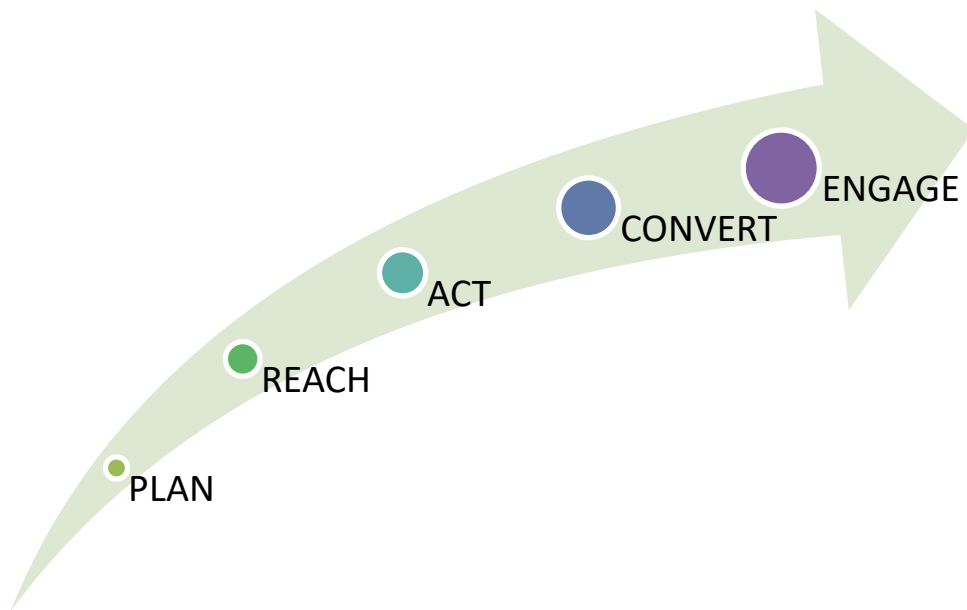
During the 2-week period, the Legal Services Authorities will organise awareness & outreach activities reaching each and every person residing in the rural, tribal and far-flung areas of the country. This campaign will be a

cooperative effort entailing the various stakeholders participating in the initiatives to raise awareness of the rights, entitlements, and remedies of individuals. Its objective is to strengthen the Legal Services Network as a whole and demonstrate how the legal system operates.

## **STRATEGY**

The nationwide campaign has been framed by NALSA and same will be implemented across the country by the Legal Services Institutions and other stakeholders under the supervision and guidance of the State Legal Services Authorities of respective State/UT. The magnitude of the event necessitates strategic coordination amongst all the stakeholders and the Legal Services Institutions.

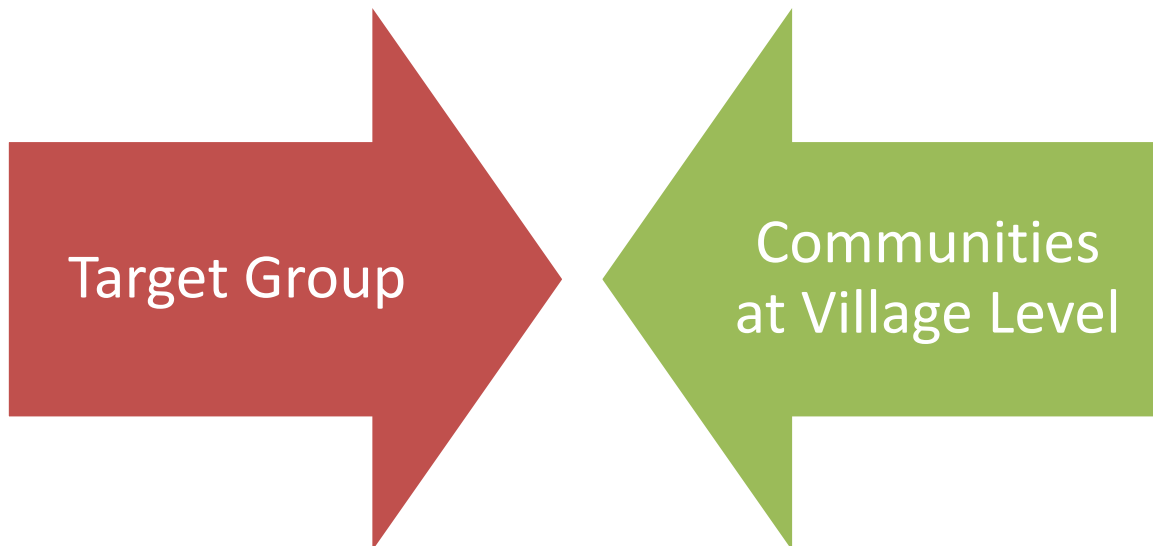
The core strategy will involve developing targeted, result-oriented programmes, implementing them, and properly monitoring, documenting, and evaluating the aforementioned tools in coordination and collaboration with government departments, non-governmental organisations, colleges, universities, and others working to advance the cause of providing legal services to the underprivileged.



The Campaign would focus on

1. Spreading Awareness about Welfare Laws & Schemes enacted for empowerment of people.
2. The Constitution of India- Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties.
3. Free Legal Aid & Services provided by the Legal Services Institutions.
4. Digital initiatives for approaching institution- The Vidhi Chatbot, WhatsApp chatbot, Legal Aid Case Management System, Legal Services Management System, Online Mediation Portal among others.
5. Rights and remedies available under various laws.

## HOW THE CAMPAIGN WOULD UNFOLD



1. Nationwide Awareness & Outreach Campaign to be launched on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022. On 31st October, programmes will be organized at National, State, District and Taluka level.
2. Every DLSA under guidance of SLSA will devise a door-to-door awareness campaign to cover all village panchayats and subdivisions within the district during campaign period.
3. On 6<sup>th</sup> November, one NALSA module Mega legal awareness camp will be organized in every district in their jurisdictions by TLSCs/DLSAs under supervision of SLSA. (This will not be applicable in poll bound state/UT)
4. During the period, various Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material will be prepared by Legal Services Authorities, in regional languages. NALSA has already prepared IEC materials such as posters, brochures, leaflets, informative books and small videos.

5. More resources will be prepared and will be shared with the DLSAs by SLSA concerned with publications during course of this campaign. Wide dissemination of these materials shall be undertaken, through the use of print, digital and social media in addition to other sources for dissemination.
6. On 9<sup>th</sup> November, if feasible, Exhibition at district HQ to showcase working, functioning and achievements of Legal Services Institutions and Judicial Administration, with special focus on available citizen centric services to achieve “Access to Justice” may be organised.
7. Assistance and cooperation of Print and Electronic media may be sought to reach masses.
8. On 9th November, the Legal Services Day will be celebrated at all levels.
9. On 12<sup>th</sup> November 2022, National Lok Adalat will be organised.
10. On 13th November, 2022, DLSA/SLSA may organize any public event marking the finale of the campaign.

## **ACTION PLAN: BUILDING CAPACITY OF THOSE INCAPACITATED**

### **1. Conducting Need Analysis**

The purpose of the legal awareness and outreach programme is to educate the general public on their legal rights, entitlements, and remedies as provided by the Indian Constitution and other welfare laws. The awareness campaign will also try to address different societal problems in a specific location. Therefore, it is essential that the legal services institutions (LSIs)

of each state/district identify the common problems in a given area that need to be resolved as soon as possible, if this has not already been done.

In this context, each location where an event will be held must undergo a need analysis by the concerned LSI. The requirement analysis will assist in identifying prevalent social and legal problems, dangers in society, outlawed behaviours, etc.

Every activity scheduled for this time period must take into account the results of the need analysis. This would guarantee that the resources allotted for various projects are in line with community needs.

## **2. Identifying Competent Resource Persons**

Resource people must be identified by the Legal Services Institutions in accordance with the need analysis and programme schedule. This would make it possible for specialists to address the concerns that have been identified in order to raise as much awareness as possible.

Teachers, academics, social workers, and anyone else with knowledge of the key areas determined during the needs assessment could be a resource person.

In order for the resource person to appropriately conduct his session, the results of the need analysis must be properly presented to them. In order to develop an opt-in communication with the beneficiaries, the authorities should also make sure that at least one resource person from the targeted area is present during the event.

If there is a language barrier in a particular area, the responsible authority must hire a translator who can provide information to beneficiaries in their language.

### **3. Constitution of Teams for Awareness and Outreach**

The teams should work under the supervision of Secretary, DLSA/SLSA and must comprise Judicial Officers, Officers from State/District Administration, Chairman and Members of CWCs, Panel Lawyers, Students of Law, Para Legal Volunteers, Social Workers, Anganwadi Workers.

The teams will be given a specific region to cover during the awareness-raising campaign. The concerned legal services organisation that is hosting the event should send teams of people to identify the targeted beneficiaries and their requirements across the entire region that will be serviced by the event. These teams shall be called 'Outreach Teams'.

The tasks of the OT will include: -

- a) Communicating & distribution of IEC material through handouts, print, digital and social media.
- b) Wide circulation of information pertaining to upcoming events and campaigns in their designated area, including conveying the benefits of attending such events.
- c) Conduct surveys to identify beneficiaries and their needs.
- d) Explore innovative ways to maximize outreach efforts to beneficiaries.
- e) In addition to assisting in the organization of the events, they may also be utilized to conduct door to door awareness and outreach campaigns.
- f) The Mobile Vans must also be deployed to create awareness.

### **4. Collaboration with Schools/Colleges and Print and social media**

The Legal Services Institutions across the country can collaborate with schools and colleges to impart awareness amongst the students and the focus during such discussion should be on the Constitution of India as well as basic legal knowledge of accessing the courts.

There must be proactive collaboration with print, digital and social media to spread large scale awareness and every effort should be made to use radio, TV, internet as well as publication houses.

### **5. Preparing the Schedule of the Activities**

The District Legal Services Authorities or TLSC under guidance of DLSA will, in consultation with Outreach Teams and on the basis of the needs assessment exercise, prepare two-week schedules for conduct of activities during the campaign period i.e., 31st October 2022 to 13th November 2022.

The DLSA should ensure that the activities finalised for this campaign, are not a repetition of the activities undertaken during the Campaign in 2021. Reference may be made to the reports submitted by the DLSA to the SLSA in 2021, particularly where the Secretary, DLSAs are recent appointees.

The Campaign shall be conducted in a single phase spreading over a two-week period. The detailed schedules must be prepared by the State/ District Legal Services Authorities at least 2 days before the start of the week.

The subjects to be considered must include but shall not be limited to-

1. Accessing Courts and Legal Remedies
2. Procedures for filing complaints in police station
3. Rights of arrested persons and suspects
4. Victim Compensation Schemes
5. Empowerment of women including remedies against domestic abuse, sexual offences, discrimination, sexual harassment at workplace etc.
6. Employment related laws.



7. Rights of SC/ST persons, LGBTQ community and other marginalized groups.
8. Alternate dispute redressal mechanism and process of availing them.

## **6. Documentation**

A 2-page write up must be prepared for each event undertaken. The report should include the brief about the event, the details of activity undertaken, the total number of participants/beneficiaries and any other relevant information. It may also document any positive feedback received from the audience regarding the event. A member of the Outreach Team should be assigned to do the documentation. These must be prepared on daily basis and must be submitted to DLSA/TLSC just after the conduct of event.

## **7. Reporting of the Campaign**

The reporting of the Campaign has to be done in two phases i.e. During the Campaign and After the Campaign.

During the Campaign, every DLSA shall also send report of the activities in each week's period to the concerned SLSA in the format prescribed by the concerned SLSA, who in turn shall submit a compiled report to NALSA. The SLSAs must ensure that their report includes High Resolution pictures with proper caption and success stories. The reports must be sent in word file (.docx) and the images must also be sent separately in (.jpeg) format to avoid quality deterioration of the pictures.

After the completion of the campaign, each District Legal Services Authority should compile a detailed report of activities, including photographs for all activities conducted during the period of campaign to concerned SLSA. The Outreach Team would assist the authority in the preparation of this report. This report must be prepared within one week of completion of the campaign i.e., by

17<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The report must be submitted to SLSA by each DLSA. The SLSA must compile the state report after adding state level events or other events, and send a copy to NALSA, latest by 20<sup>th</sup> November 2022.