

Access to Justice in North Eastern States and Jammu & Kashmir Project

Introduction

The Department of Justice (DoJ), Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India is implementing a project on “**Access to Justice in North Eastern States and Jammu and Kashmir**” under 12th Five Year Plan. It is being implemented in the eight states of North East namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and in Jammu & Kashmir at the total cost of Rs. 30 crore for five years from 2012-2017.

Objectives

The objectives of the project are as follow:

- To address the legal needs of the marginalized and vulnerable sections of the society, particularly women, children, Scheduled Castes, Tribal communities who do not have the requisite means to ensure that their rights are guaranteed.
- To support justice delivery systems in improving their capacities to serve the people and in empowering the ordinary people to demand improved services and to access their rights and entitlements.
- To support innovative activities to enhance legal awareness of the vulnerable populations and their ability to seek redress.
- To support Legal Services Authorities in providing legal aid and legal empowerment of the marginalized in the nine project states.

Initiatives

Initiatives taken under the project are as follow:

- **Established and running 46 Legal Aid Clinics in most backward districts of Nagaland- Tuensang and Mon:** Nagaland State Legal Services Authority has completed a project where it has successfully set up 46 Legal Aid Clinics (LACs) in the most interior and remote districts of Nagaland- Tuensang and Mon. Till January 2016, total 1,539 people were benefitted through these Legal Aid Clinics. 1,304 people were benefitted through the Legal awareness programme.

- **Needs Assessment Study to Identify Gaps in the Legal Empowerment of People:**

This study was conducted by Impulse NGO Network based in Shillong, Meghalaya. It was a field based study to identify the gaps in the legal empowerment of people particularly those who are poor, marginalized and vulnerable, and therefore do not have the means to ensure that their rights are guaranteed. It was successfully completed and released by DoJ and Impulse NGO Network.

- **Supporting Legal Aid Clinics in Jammu and Kashmir:**

The project is supporting a legal aid clinic established by the Department of Law, University of Kashmir. The Law students have been engaged in innovative activities like legal awareness programmes, skit play on 8 legal literacy themes, translation of 4 pro poor legislations, research projects on environmental law as well as „The Legal Problems of the Poor and Vulnerable Sections of the Population at Pahalgam“ etc.

- **Training of State Legal Services Authorities 400 Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) on Social Welfare Legislations in Eight North Eastern States:**

This activity was taken up by the Committee for Legal Aid to Poor (CLAP), a civil society organization based in Odisha. It has successfully trained 400 PLVs from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim and Nagaland (50 from each state).

- **Training of 150 Panel Lawyers in North East:**

An organization based in Guwahati called Legal Cell for Human Rights was selected to undertake training of 50 panel lawyers from each of the NE States. The training of 150 Panel lawyers was successfully conducted in 3 States of NE (Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur).

- **Training of 184 Paralegal Volunteers of SLSA, J&K:**

Raman Development Consultants Private limited was selected to train 225 PLVs in the J & K region. This was successfully completed for 184 participants. This proved to be a unique opportunity for PLVs in J&K as they have been provided training for the first time.

- **MoA signed with State Resource Centre, Srinagar:**

On 14th January 2016, DoJ signed MoA with SRC, Srinagar. With the signing of agreement, legal

literacy activities will be initiated. First of all, a review workshop will be conducted to prepare IEC (Information Education Communication) material for legal literacy. The first activity is yet to start.

- **MoA signed with State Resource Centre, Guwahati:**

On 21st January 2016, MoA was signed between DoJ and SRC, Assam to initiate Legal Literacy activities (Preparing IEC Material, Training of RPs/MTs/Preraks). IEC material review workshop has been completed by SRC Assam for 3 states namely-Sikkim, Assam and Tripura.

- **MoA signed with State Resource Centre, Shillong:**

On 21st January 2016, MoA was signed between DoJ and SRC, Shillong to initiate Legal Literacy activities (Preparing IEC Material, Training of RPs/MTs/Preraks) for legal empowerment of marginalized community in North eastern States(Meghalaya, Nagaland and Manipur). IEC material review workshop has been completed and literature has been updated as per local need in terms of issues as well as format of presenting laws in the simplest way with folk illustrations.

- **MoA signed with State Resource Centre, Arunachal Pradesh:**

On 29th February 2016, MoA was signed between DoJ and SRC Arunachal Pradesh. Legal Literacy activities (Preparing IEC Material, Training of RPs/MTs/Preraks) by SRC Arunachal Pradesh. In the last week of March 2016, the first activity of the project has been scheduled.

- **MoA signed with Common Services Centre, Delhi:**

On 3rd March 2016, DoJ signed MoA with CSC in 5 North Eastern States including Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. The programme would focus on training citizens on legal literacy and conducting legal literacy workshops especially for marginalized sections. It will conduct master training for Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs), who will organise legal literacy sessions and facilitate people in seeking justice through CSCs in different districts of five North Eastern States. On the same line, another MoA was signed on 23rd March 2016 between DoJ and CSC to do legal literacy activities in remote areas of Manipur, Nagaland and Sikkim as well as J&K.

- **NFDC documentary on Rights of Under trial prisoners in North Eastern States:**

NFDC was selected to prepare the short film on Rights of Under Trials Prisoners in the north eastern

region. The purpose of the film is to raise awareness on rights of under trial prisoners among SLSA, PLVs, Panel lawyers, under trial prisoners, police and layperson. Till now, the script has been submitted for review.

- **Drafting a Policy Framework to Secure Rights of Orphan Children and Govern Orphanages in Jammu & Kashmir:**

An organization called K FORD based in Srinagar was selected to undertake an assessment study of orphanages in Jammu and Kashmir and to draft a policy framework for governing orphanages in Jammu and Kashmir. The draft is under scrutiny.

- **Needs Assessment Study in Jammu and Kashmir to Identify Gaps in the Legal Empowerment of marginalized in J&K region:**

This Study is being conducted by the Department of Law, University of Kashmir to identify gaps in the legal empowerment of marginalized people of the State. The study is in the last phase.

- **Rendering human resource to SLSAs through appointment of Project Team in the nine States:**

A team of two professionals (Project Coordinator and Project Assistant) is being appointed in all the nine project states to coordinate the activities of A2J(NE&JK) project at the states level and support the State Legal Services Authority. The recruitments have been completed for all the States except J&K (PC & PA), Meghalaya (PC & PA) & Mizoram (only PC). In the upcoming months recruitment for such States will commence.

Projects

Projects in the pipeline:

- Empowerment of Women in the State of Nagaland by Nagaland State Women Commission.
- Translation of Women related Legislation in Manipur by Department of Law, Manipur.
- Government Law College, Tripura proposal on legal aid clinic.
- Prasar Bharti, Tripura proposal titled "AAI NER SHAKTI".
- NIRD proposal on legal empowerment of village council and Gaon Burhas of North East Region