

NALSA @ 30
A LEGACY OF FREE LEGAL AID



Article 39A

Equal justice and free legal aid

The State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.



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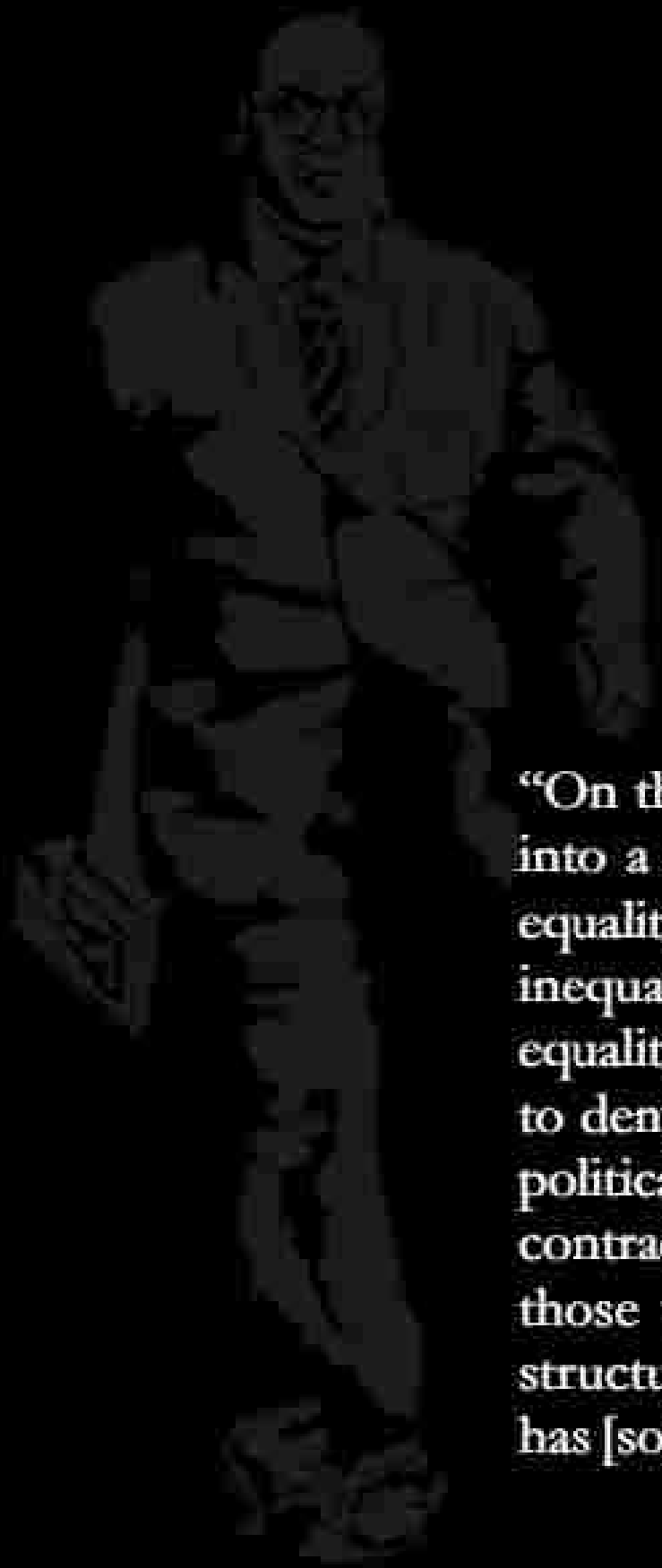
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“I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away.”

- Mahatma Gandhi



“On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality... How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which [this] Assembly has [so] laboriously built up.”

- Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar



NALSA @ 30
A Legacy of Free Legal Aid



SANJIV KHANNA
CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

FOREWORD

"If we do not maintain justice, justice will not maintain us."

—Francis Bacon

As we commemorate three decades of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), the call for access to justice for all, rings with renewed urgency and purpose. Justice is not only a constitutional guarantee but a shared responsibility. Since its inception, NALSA has worked to ensure this responsibility is not quietly laboured, if not denied, to those at the margins, albeit one that is actively pitched in as a constitutional duty by a dedicated network of legal aid providers across the country.

At the heart of this effort lies Article 29A of the Constitution, which directs the state to ensure that justice is not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities. This vision has guided NALSA's evolution, from the early recommendations of the Bombay Committee and Trevor Hartree Committee to the establishment of the Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes (CILAS) in 1986. Enacted in 1987 and enforced from 9 November 1995, the Legal Services Authorities Act gave legal aid a statutory footing. NALSA, constituted on 5 December 1995, became fully operational by early 1998, marking the beginning of a more structured and accessible system.

Today, NALSA stands as a tangible expression of that vision, making access to justice a lived reality for millions, especially those long excluded from it. This impact has been made possible by its people: Panel Lawyers, Legal Aid Defender Counsel and Para Legal Volunteers, each are a vital part of the system that ensures the law works not as an abstraction, but as a shield and resource for those most in need.

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CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

Over the years, NALSA has kept pace with changing times and needs. Legal Services Clinics, court-based help desks, front offices and the 24x7 helpline 15100, available in several regional languages, have made legal assistance more immediate and accessible. Lok Adalats, Alternative Dispute Resolution Centres and over 1300 Mediation Centres across the country have created new pathways for dispute resolution. The recent launch of a 40-hour online mediation training programme is an important step in expanding community level resolution. Legal support is further strengthened by Prison Legal Aid Clinics, Just Writing Lawyering, Untrial Review Commissions and structured victim compensation schemes.

NALSA's reach also extends through targeted schemes for disaster victims, survivors of trafficking, migrant and unorganised workers, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and others often excluded from justice systems. These efforts tie legal aid to rehabilitation, helping individuals rebuild their lives with dignity.

As we mark thirty years of NALSA, it is a moment to reflect on how far we have come, and how much remains to be done. Legal aid and access to justice are not static ideals but evolving responsibilities. The path ahead demands that we remain resolute in our efforts, adapting to new challenges while holding firm to the constitutional promise of justice for all.

This coffee table book captures that journey. It reflects the work of thousands who have shaped NALSA into more than a statutory body: a nationwide effort to bring justice within reach.



(Sanjay Khanna)

New Delhi;
April 19, 2023

B. R. Gavai
Judge, Supreme Court of India
ex-officio
Executive Chairman,
National Legal Services Authority



Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee
Administrative Buildings Complex
Supreme Court of India, New Delhi-110002

MESSAGE

*'Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy.
What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognises liberty,
equality, and fraternity as the principles of life.'*

— Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

It gives me immense pride and satisfaction to witness the release of this Coffee Table Book, which captures the remarkable journey of legal aid in India under the aegis of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). This visual and narrative compilation beautifully encapsulates NALSA's legacy, over three decades of tireless commitment to the constitutional mandate under Article 39A: equal justice and free legal aid.

Dr. Ambedkar's words serve as a timeless reminder of the foundational values on which our democracy rests. NALSA's work reflects these very ideals: liberty, equality and fraternity, by striving to make justice accessible to all. Through its expansive outreach, NALSA has truly reached the unreachable, delivering legal aid to the most marginalised and vulnerable. In doing so, it has worked tirelessly to realise the spirit of justice: social, economic and political, as enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution.

This publication offers a comprehensive look at NALSA's various activities and programmes aimed at supporting marginalised communities, including those in various prisons of the country. It highlights the crucial role of Prison Legal Aid (PLA) which, staffed by Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) and Jail Visiting Lawyers (JVLs), provide timely support to those in need. It also highlights the role of Under Trial Review Committees (UTRCs) in identifying prisoners eligible for release, and the premature release framework that supports the rehabilitation of reformed convicts, that not only help decongest prisons but also uphold the principle of restorative justice. Additionally, it also details the establishment of the Legal Aid Defense Counsel System (LADCS), ensuring dedicated, full-time representation for

individuals accused in criminal matters. These initiatives reflect a compassionate and systemic approach to justice, emphasising access, dignity and rehabilitation.

Complementing these initiatives is a broad range of schemes designed to address the unique needs of various vulnerable groups. These include, among others, the NALSA (Protection and Enforcement of Tribal Rights) Scheme, 2015, the Legal Services to Victims of Drug Abuse Scheme, 2013, the Child-Friendly Legal Services for Children Scheme, 2024, and the Scheme for Persons with Mental Illness and Intellectual Disabilities, 2024. Each of these schemes exemplifies NALSA's commitment to delivering legal empowerment, social inclusion and targeted support across diverse segments of society.

It also highlights NALSA's innovative use of technology to enhance service delivery. Featuring landmark judgments and inspiring success stories, it illustrates the tangible impact of legal aid on individuals' lives. This Coffee Table Book is more than just a record of accomplishments; it is a testament to a broader social mission, a quiet revolution that continues to transform lives in meaningful and lasting ways.

I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone involved in this publication and to the entire NALSA family. May this work inspire greater awareness, deeper involvement, and ongoing innovation in our shared pursuit of justice for all.



(M. H. Ghatge)

Surya Kant
Judge, Supreme Court of India



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MESSAGE

April 30, 2025

"The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others."

- Mahatma Gandhi

It gives me immense pleasure to share a message for this special publication, which thoughtfully chronicles the journey, guiding principles, and the transformative impact of legal aid in India, under the stewardship of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

NALSA has over the past three decades consistently pursued its mission to ensure that access to justice is not a privilege of the few but a right guaranteed to all, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised sections of our society. From the modest beginnings of legal aid services in India to the expansive network of legal aid clinics, para-legal volunteers, and robust institutional frameworks we see today, the journey has been remarkable - marked by both challenges and significant achievements.

Among the countless beneficiaries of NALSA's work, children occupy a special place. Whether in need of care and protection, entangled in conflict with the law, or affected by family disputes, children are in dire need of sensitive, timely, and informed legal support. NALSA has played a vital role in safeguarding their rights through child-friendly legal aid services, awareness initiatives, and effective coordination with juvenile justice boards and child welfare committees. These interventions have

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helped uphold the dignity and well-being of children in vulnerable situations.

Another key pillar of NALSA's work, which I wish to particularly emphasise, is the promotion of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms. I have always believed that accessible, amicable, and less adversarial forms of dispute resolution are indispensable to the true democratisation of justice. NALSA's continuous efforts in promoting Lok Adalats, E-Lok Adalats and Mediation Centers have not only eased the burden on the judiciary but have also brought timely, effective and meaningful resolutions to those who need them most.

This coffee table book is not merely a compilation of facts and milestones — it stands as a testament to the spirit of social justice enshrined in our Constitution. It honours and celebrates the collective efforts of countless individuals — judges, lawyers, para-legal volunteers and dedicated administrators — whose tireless commitment has breathed life into the provisions of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

As we commemorate thirty years of NALSA's dedicated service to the cause of legal aid and social justice, this publication stands as a visual and narrative reminder of how far we have come and how much more remains to be achieved. May it continue to inspire future generations to pursue the cause of equitable and inclusive justice with renewed resolve and unflinching dedication.

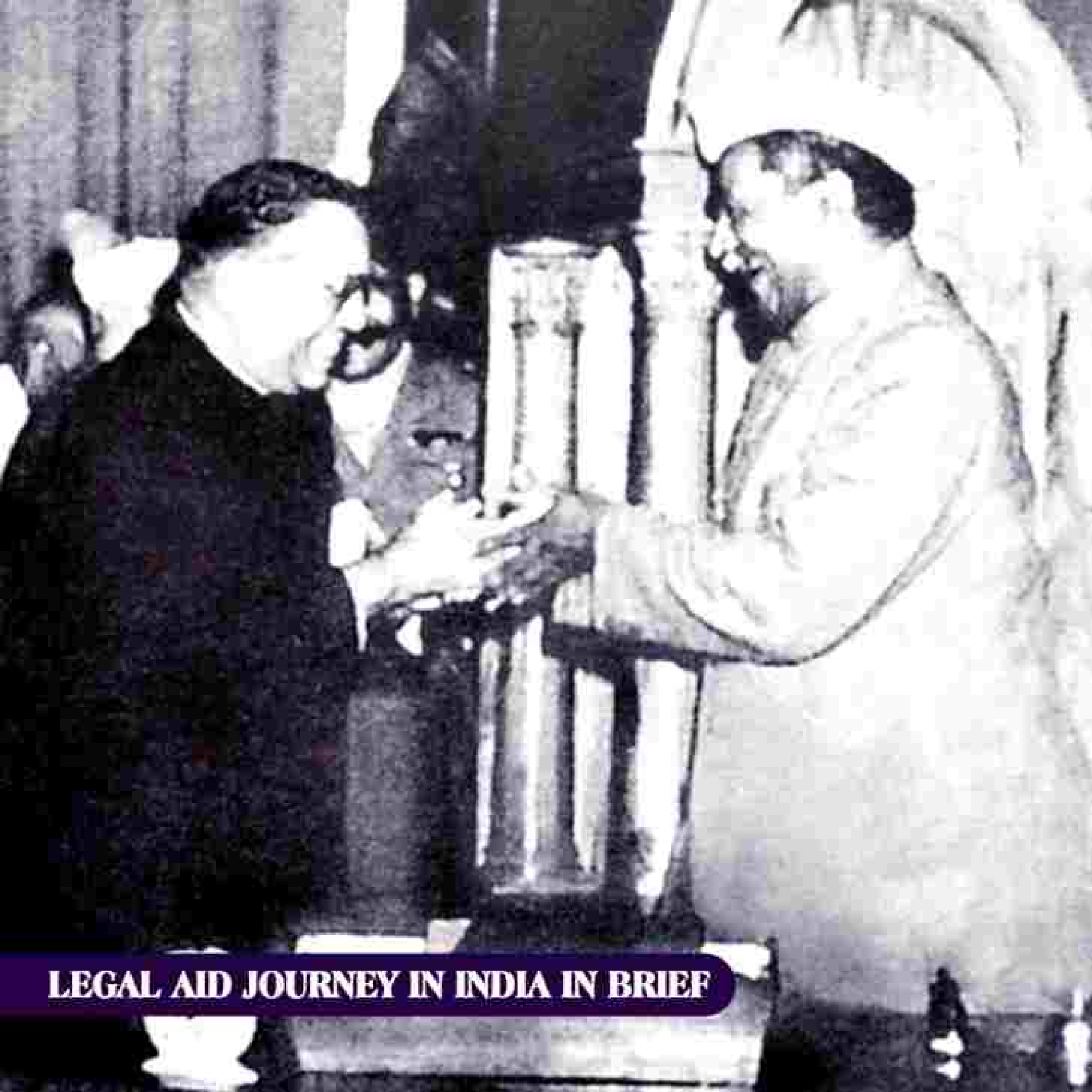

(Surya Kant)

“Legal aid to the poor should not be poor legal aid.”

— *The Supreme Court of India in Subas Chakma v. Union of India, (2024) INSC 813*

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LEGAL AID JOURNEY IN INDIA IN BRIEF

The Bombay Committee (1949)

The Bombay Committee emphasized the duty of the government to provide free legal aid to citizens who cannot afford legal representation. It recommended that legal aid should cover: court fees and process fees, out-of-pocket expenses, diet money for witnesses, costs of obtaining certified copies, fees of pleaders.

Trevor Harries Committee (1949)

Set up in West Bengal, this committee proposed a three-tier institutional structure for delivering legal aid services. It suggested that funds should be sourced from state government grants and costs recovered from civil litigation.

Janardan Reddy v. State of Hyderabad (1951 INSC 18)

Within the first year after the adoption of the Constitution, the Supreme Court of India expressed concern over lack of legal representation available to a person in a court proceeding. A Constitution bench of the Supreme Court noted "that a court of appeal or revision is not powerless to interfere, if it is found that the accused was so handicapped for want of legal aid that the proceedings against him may be said to amount to negation of a fair trial."

Kerala Rules (1958)

The Kerala Legal Aid (to the Poor) Rules were enacted to provide free legal aid in proceedings before the High Court, Court of Sessions, and District Magistrates' Courts in all criminal trials, appeals, and revisions.

14th Report of the Law Commission of India (1958)

This report reinforced the recommendations of the Bombay and Trevor Harries Committees, advocating that legal representation should be provided at the government's expense for those in need.

Central Government Scheme (1960)

The Union Government drafted an outline for a legal aid scheme based on earlier recommendations. This scheme was sent to various states for their input and to guide them in drafting their own legal aid frameworks.

Third All India Lawyers Conference (1962)

The conference highlighted that legal aid is fundamentally the responsibility of both the Central and State governments. It urged the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive legal aid scheme at all levels.

State of Madhya Pradesh v. Shobharam (AIR 1966 SC 1910)

A 7-judge bench of the Supreme Court noted that an accused so deprived of the "right to be defended by one's own counsel" stands "in danger of losing his personal liberty".

National Conference on Legal Aid (1970)

This conference recommended that legal aid should be made a statutory obligation of the State. It also called for active participation from courts, the Bar, and law faculties in promoting legal aid services.

The Gujarat Committee (1970)

The Gujarat Committee stressed that legal aid must be available in all courts, ensuring access to professional legal help for the poor. It also advocated for legal aid bodies to function autonomously, free from government control.

The Expert Committee Report (1973)

The Expert Committee report in May 1973, titled "Processual Justice to the People" recommended "systematised and extensive assistance through legal aid lawyers to our prison population". It recommended the passing of legislation to establish a National Legal Services Authority, State Legal Aid Board, and Legal Aid Committees at the District and Taluk (sub-district) levels with the aim to provide legal aid to the needy.

Madhukar G.E. Pankakar v. Jaswant Chobbildas Rajani (1976 INSC 75)

The Supreme Court also supported the idea of establishing a National Legal Services Authority. It noted that "if a National Legal Services Authority funded largely by the State comes into being, a large segment of the legal profession may be employed part-time in the enabling occupation of legal aid to the poor".

42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976)

- Parliament passed a constitutional amendment, inserting Article 39A into the Constitution. The said Article provides: "Equal justice and free legal aid.-The State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities."

The Juridicare Committee Report (1977)

- In a report titled "National Juridicare: Equal Justice-Social Justice", the committee recommended decentralization of justice mechanisms and strengthening Nyaya Panchayats to facilitate grassroots dispute resolution. It introduced 'class action' as a crucial tool for addressing collective legal grievances.

Sunil Batra v. Delhi Administration (1978 INSC 147)

- The Supreme Court considered Article 39A as a tool to effectively interpret Article 21, which provides for right to life. A Constitution bench envisaged "legal aid as a pipeline to carry to the court the breaches of prisoners' basic rights".

Hussainara Khatoon v. Home Secretary, State of Bihar (1979)

The Supreme Court declared that the “right to free legal services” is “clearly an essential ingredient of ‘reasonable, fair and just’ procedure for a person accused of an offence and it must be held implicit in the guarantee of Article 21”. The Court also stated that “Legal aid is really nothing else but equal justice in action. Legal aid is in fact the delivery system of social justice.”

Initiatives by State Governments (1979)

In the absence of national legislation on legal aid, several State governments started their own provincial legal aid programmes. For instance, Tamil Nadu had a well-run free legal aid programme with which the Governor and Chief Justice of the State were associated. The State Legal Aid Board worked actively with two retired Judges of the High Court at the head.

Khatri v. State of Bihar (1980 INSC 241)

The Court noted: “It is common knowledge that about 70 per cent of the people in the rural areas are illiterate and even more than that percentage of people are not aware of the rights conferred upon them by law. There is so much lack of legal awareness that it has always been recognised as one of the principal items of the programme of the legal aid movement in this country to promote legal literacy.”

Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes (CILAS) (1980)

- CILAS was established to oversee the implementation of legal aid schemes under joint executive and judicial control. In 1985, it finalized a model scheme circulated to states. A major outcome was the rise of Lok Adalats, which became a popular, cost-effective mechanism for swift, out-of-court dispute resolution, reducing the judiciary's burden while enhancing legal aid accessibility.

Legal Services Authorities Act (1987)

- To give an institutional mechanism to free legal aid services, Parliament passed Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The Act established the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) to exercise powers and perform functions, ensuring effective implementation of its mandate to promote legal aid and services across the nation. The Chief Justice of India is the Patron-in-Chief of NALSA, while the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court is its Executive Chairman.

National Legal Services Authority (1995)

- The Act of 1987 came into force on 9 November 1995. Under the Act, NALSA was constituted on 5 December 1995. Justice K. Ramasamy, Judge, Supreme Court of India took over as the Executive Chairman of NALSA. The first Member Secretary of the Authority joined in December, 1997 and by January, 1998 the other officers and staff were also appointed. By February, 1998 the office of National Legal Services Authority became properly functional for the first time.



ESSENCE OF LEGAL AID: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

In September 2012, the UN High-Level Meeting on Rule of Law urged Member States to ensure fair, transparent, and accountable legal services for all. That same year, the General Assembly unanimously adopted the UN Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems, which provided: “...*States should guarantee the right to legal aid in their national legal systems at the highest possible level, including, where applicable, in the constitution.*” A 2016 UN Global Study on Legal Aid found that 71% of 105 surveyed countries have separate legal aid laws.

On November 27 and 28, 2023, 191 participants from 51 countries of the Global South came together to be part of the “1st Regional Conference on Access to Legal Aid: Strengthening Access to Justice in the Global South” at New Delhi, India. Participants included judges of the highest courts, ministers and representatives of the concerned ministries, legal aid administrators, bar associations, intergovernmental organisations, academics, legal aid lawyers, paralegals, members of civil society, and other experts. The conference was organized by NALSA, with support from the Government of India and in collaboration with the International Legal Foundation (ILF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF).



National Legal Services Authority
in collaboration with the
Ministry of Law and Justice
welcome you to the

1st Regional Conference

Access to Justice
Strengthening Access to Justice

28 November

Sanjay Kumar

The Minister, Law and Justice
Government of India

Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice

Shri. H. K. Sharma, Secretary, National Legal Services Authority

Valedictory Ceremony of 1st Regional Conference on
"Strengthening Access to Justice in the Global South" (2023)





INSTITUTIONAL SETUP OF NALSA

Central Authority

Section 3 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 provides:

- (1) The Central Government shall constitute a body to be called the National Legal Services Authority to exercise the powers and perform the functions conferred on, or assigned to, the Central Authority under this Act.
- (2) The Central Authority shall consist of—
 - (a) the Chief Justice of India who shall be the Patron-in-Chief;
 - (b) a serving or retired Judge of the Supreme Court to be nominated by the President, in consultation with the Chief Justice of India, who shall be the Executive Chairman; and
 - (c) such number of other members, possessing such experience and qualifications, as may be prescribed by the Central Government, to be nominated by that Government in consultation with the Chief Justice of India.
- (3) The Central Government shall, in consultation with the Chief Justice of India, appoint a person to be the Member-Secretary of the Central Authority, possessing such experience and qualifications as may be prescribed by that Government, to exercise such powers and perform such duties under the Executive Chairman of the Central Authority as may be prescribed by that Government or as may be assigned to him by the Executive Chairman of that Authority.
- (4) The terms of office and other conditions relating thereto, of members and the Member-Secretary of the Central Authority shall be such as may be prescribed by the Central Government in consultation with the Chief Justice of India.
- (5) The Central Authority may appoint such number of officers and other employees as may be prescribed by the Central Government, in consultation with the Chief Justice of India, for the efficient discharge of its functions under this Act.
- (6) The officers and other employees of the Central Authority shall be entitled to such salary and allowances and shall be subject to such other conditions of service as may be prescribed by the Central Government in consultation with the Chief Justice of India.
- (7) The administrative expenses of the Central Authority, including the salaries, allowances and pensions payable to the Member-Secretary, officers and other employees of the Central Authority, shall be defrayed out of the Consolidated Fund of India.
- (8) All orders and decisions of the Central Authority shall be authenticated by the Member-Secretary or any other officer of the Central Authority duly authorised by the Executive Chairman of that Authority.
- (9) No act or proceeding of the Central Authority shall be invalid merely on the ground of the existence of any vacancy in, or any defect in the constitution of, the Central Authority.

Dharni, Maharashtra



Legal Services Authorities at Different Levels

**National Legal Services
Authority**

**Supreme Court Legal Services
Committee**

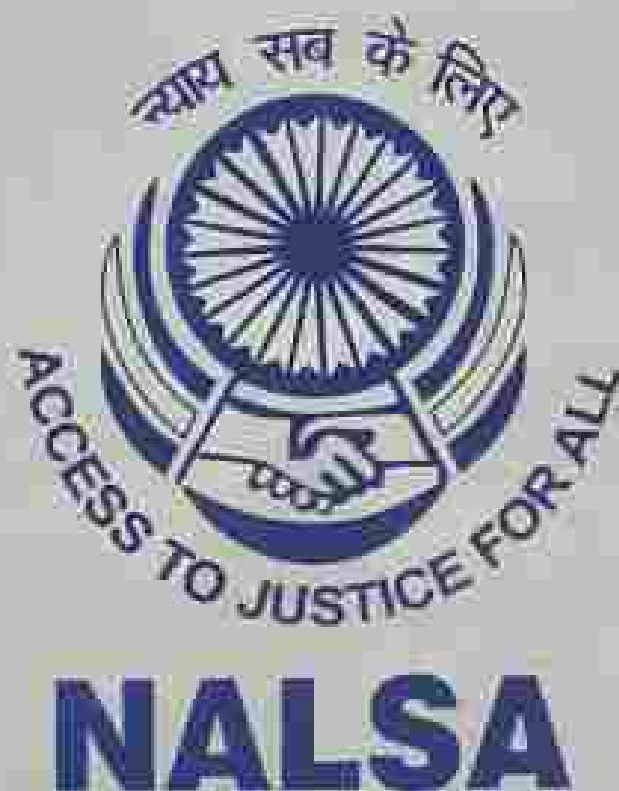
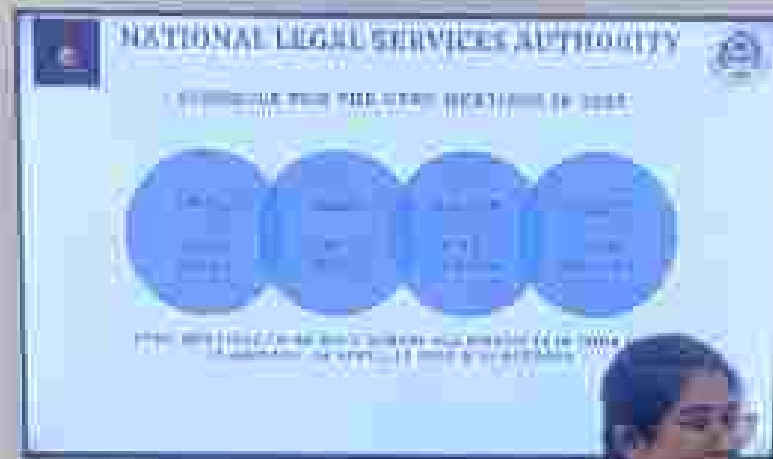
**State Legal Services
Authorities**

**High Court Legal Services
Committees**

**District Legal Services
Authorities**

**Taluk Legal Services
Committees**

Front offices, Panel Lawyers and pro-bono Lawyers, Legal Services
Management System Portal and Legal-aid Case Management System Portal



Front Office

Every Legal Services Authority has a Front Office, which is a dedicated space for the reception of legal aid beneficiaries to file applications for legal aid, access assistance, legal consultation and legal representation in courts. The front offices have Para Legal Volunteers, Panel Lawyers, Retainer Lawyers and other staff members along with an infrastructural setup.

Online Legal Aid Systems

NALSA developed the Legal Services Management System (LSMS), an online platform, to streamline and enhance access to legal aid services across India. This e-portal allows beneficiaries to apply for legal aid, upload necessary documents, track their application status, seek clarifications, and send reminders, all through a user-friendly interface. Accessible through NALSA's official website, the LSMS portal offers several key features:

- **Apply for Legal Aid:** Users can submit applications for legal assistance directly through the portal.
- **Track Application Status:** Applicants can monitor the progress of their legal aid requests in real-time.
- **Victim Compensation:** Information and application facilities for victim compensation are available.
- **Pre-Arrest Assistance:** Guidance and support for individuals seeking legal aid before an arrest.
- **Reminders/Clarifications:** Users can set reminders and seek clarifications regarding their applications.

These features ensure that legal aid services are more accessible, transparent, and efficient, enabling citizens, especially those from marginalized communities, to exercise their legal rights effectively.

In addition to the web portal, NALSA has introduced a mobile application to further extend its reach. The 'NALSA Legal Services' app allows users to apply for legal aid and related services, including assistance from the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee.

For empanelled advocates, the 'NALSA Case Management System' app facilitates the management of assigned cases, including features like adding CNR numbers for case tracking. By leveraging technology through the LSMS portal and mobile applications, NALSA aims to ensure that free legal services are readily available to those in need, thereby upholding the principles of justice and equality enshrined in the Indian legal system.



ARUNACHAL PRADESH STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY, ITANAGAR



Legal Aid Lawyers

The effectiveness of legal aid framework depends on a dedicated and structured workforce committed to delivering free and competent legal services.

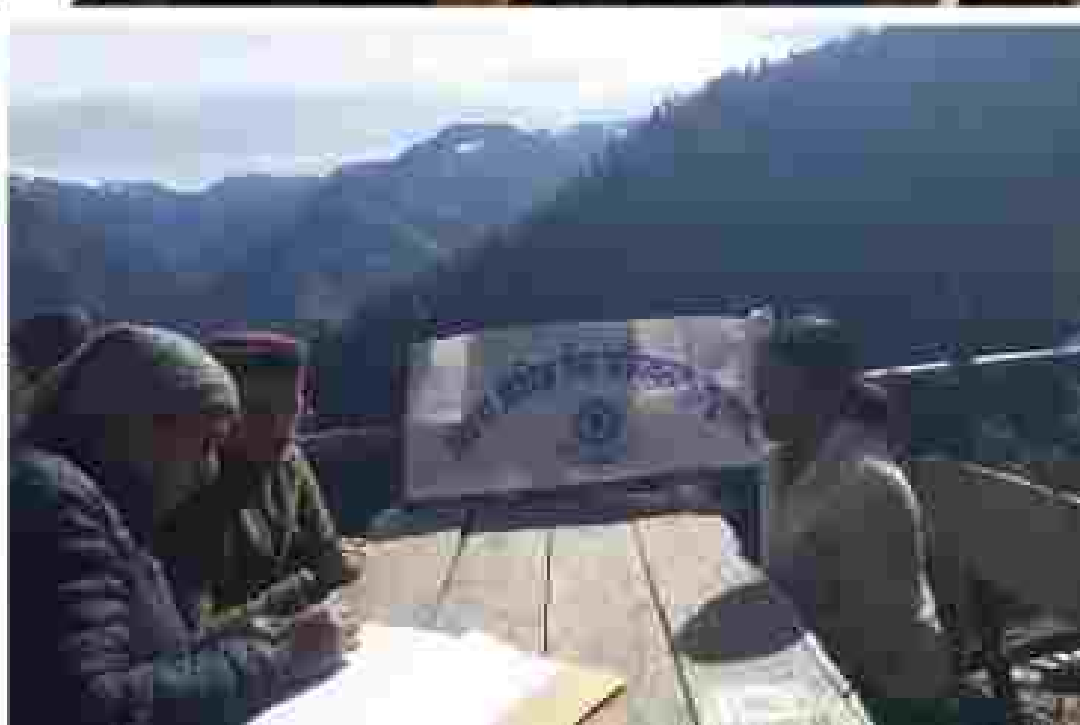
Panel Lawyers are the legal practitioners empanelled under Regulation 8 (1) of the NALSA (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010. The competency, integrity, suitability and experience of lawyers are considered when empanelling them with the Legal Services Institutions. They are tasked with representing beneficiaries in proceedings before the court. Panel Lawyers are paid fees by the Legal Services Institutions, approved by the regulation of NALSA. They never ask for or receive any fee or consideration from the client assigned through LSI.

Retainer Lawyers are the panel lawyers designated so by the Chairman of the Legal Services Institution in consultation with the Executive Chairman of the State Legal Services Authority or National Legal Services Authority as the case may be. They are selected for a fixed period and are present at the Front Offices of the LSI as per the roster. The services rendered by them include drafting applications, notices, and written statements, providing free legal advice, rendering legal opinions etc to persons approaching LSI for assistance.

Duty Lawyers are deputed by the Secretary DLSA to provide legal assistance at the pre-arrest and arrest stages. At the pre-arrest stage, they assist a beneficiary who has been called for interrogation by the police. They are also responsible for explaining the alleged offence and the matter for which the person has been called for interrogation. They also provide legal advice and assistance as sought and required in the situation. They also ensure the mandate of law during interrogation especially of a woman and child. At the arrest stage, the Duty Lawyer is to explain the Arrestee, the alleged offence and the ground of arrest. He is also responsible for providing legal advice and assistance as sought and required in the situation.

Remand Advocates are deputed by the DLSA in the magisterial Courts, Sessions Court and also in the courts of Executive Magistrate as per the requirement. One Remand lawyer is deputed for two or more courts keeping in view the workload. They even work during holidays and after court hours as and when unrepresented arrestee is produced for remand. They are also responsible for the translation of documents if the accused is not able to understand the language of the documents.

In addition, the Member Secretary may send a request to Senior Advocates to volunteer their pro-bono professional services for rendering advice as and when required.



Kullu, Himachal Pradesh

Para-Legal Volunteers

Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) or *Adbikar Mitra* (अधिकार मित्र) play a crucial role in ensuring access to justice at the grassroots level. As trained community representatives, they assist individuals—especially the marginalized—in navigating the legal system.

Key Responsibilities of PLVs are as follows:

- **Legal Aid at Police Stations:** Upon learning of an arrest, PLVs visit police stations to ensure that the arrested person receives legal assistance through the nearest legal services institution.
- **Regular Visits & Legal Awareness:** PLVs are deputed to police stations to help individuals understand their rights, including their right to consult a lawyer and the availability of free legal services.
- **Facilitating Legal Aid:** PLVs inform arrested persons about their legal rights, assist in securing legal representation, and connect them with legal aid lawyers for effective legal support.

Through their proactive engagement, PLVs serve as a vital link between communities and the legal system, ensuring that justice is not just a privilege but a right accessible to all.



Dadra and Nagar Haveli

ARUNACHAL PRADESH STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY (ARPSUSA)

Organises

COMMENDATION CEREMONY

of

BEST DISTRICT LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

THE BEST PARA LEGAL VOLUNTEER OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

VENUE: ARPSUSA CONFERENCE HALL, ITANAGAR

DATE: 05 OCTOBER 2019

ARUNACHAL PRADESH STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY



LOVED WITH US, FREE



ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL





Arunachal Pradesh

NAGALAND



STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

8th 9th 10th
2017
AUGUST

Induction Training

for

NAGALAND PARA LEGAL VOLUNTEERS

Location: Kohima

8th 9th 10th AUGUST 2017

Organized by Nagaland State Legal Services Authority





Sikkim

Legal Aid Clinics

Legal Aid Clinics, established under NALSA's initiatives, bridge the gap between legal education and community service by providing free legal aid to marginalized groups. Governed by the NALSA (Legal Services Clinics) Regulations, 2011 and the NALSA (Legal Services Clinics in Universities, Law Colleges, and Other Institutions) Scheme, 2013, these clinics operate under the supervision of District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) in villages, educational institutions, and other accessible locations. Law students, para-legal volunteers (PLVs), and panel lawyers offer legal advice, assistance in documentation, dispute resolution, and legal literacy programs. By integrating student participation and professional oversight, these clinics promote social responsibility while ensuring justice reaches the grassroots.

In 2024, the Supreme Court of India released a report titled "Legal Aid Through Law Schools: A Report on Working of Legal Aid Cells in India", which presents an overall picture on the functioning of these clinics.





Legal Aid Defense Counsel System (LADCS)

LADCS, adopted by NALSA), received official approval during the All India Meet of State Legal Services Authorities, convened in the year 2019. This system establishes a specialised panel of Legal Aid Defense Counsels dedicated solely to providing legal aid in criminal cases. It provides legal aid, assistance, and representation to the beneficiaries in Criminal matters, which is in line with the 'Public Defender System'.

Initially launched as a pilot initiative in 13 districts nationwide for two years, the LADCS underwent a comprehensive evaluation. Following the success of this pilot project, the LADCS was subsequently expanded to various regions across the country. In its inaugural phase in 2022, NALSA implemented the LADCS in 365 districts across 22 States/Union Territories.

As on 31 December 2024, LADCS offices are functional in 654 districts across the country wherein 5251 staff including 3448 Defense Counsels have been engaged. LADCS is currently functional in districts across 37 States/Union Territories.





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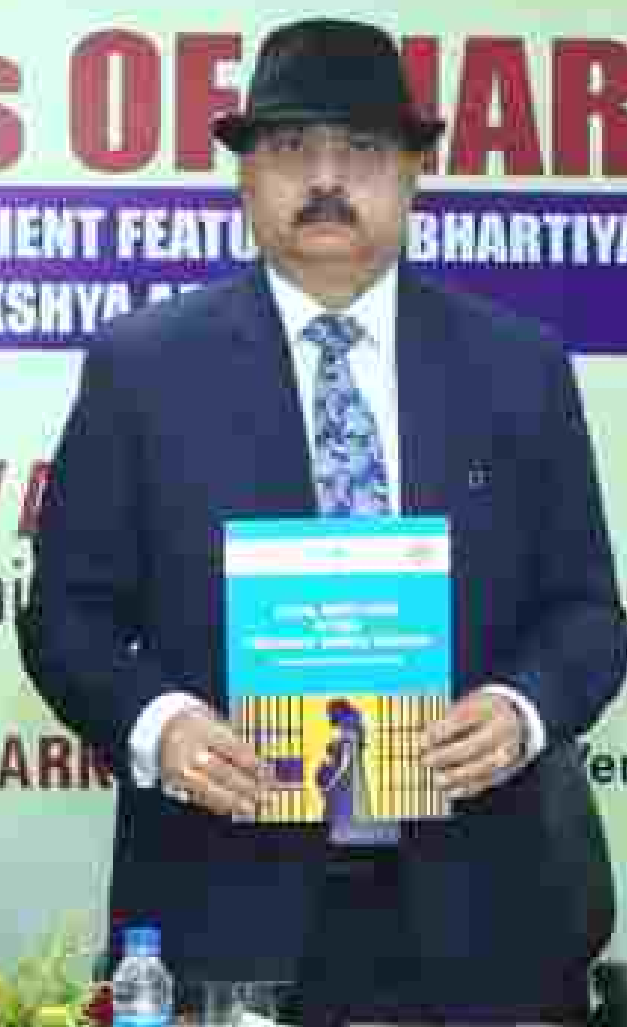
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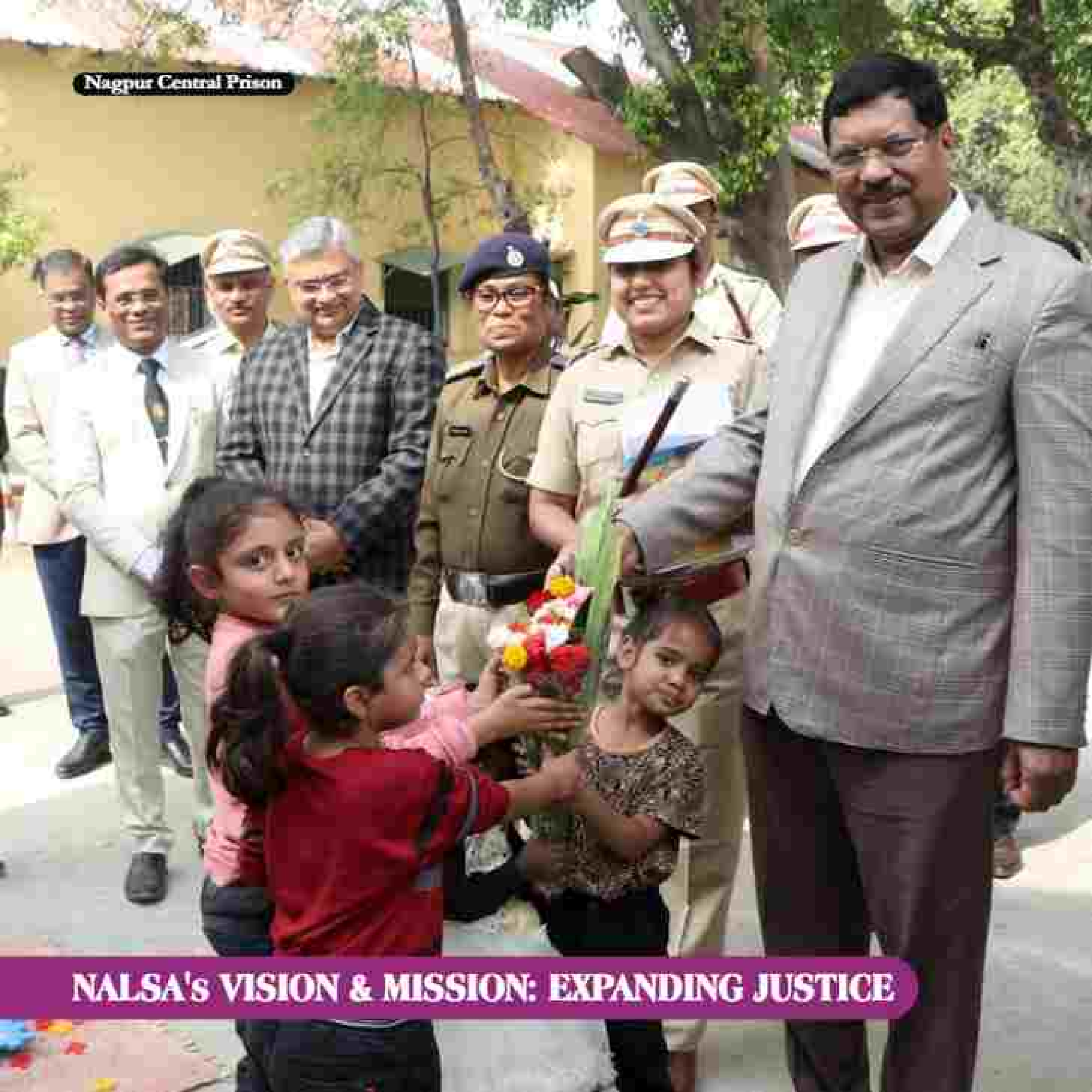
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Venue : Ny

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Nagpur Central Prison



NALSA's VISION & MISSION: EXPANDING JUSTICE

NALSA envisions a future where justice is not a privilege but a guaranteed right accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status. With a commitment to bridging the gap between legal services institutions and the beneficiaries, NALSA has dedicated itself to strengthening legal aid services, ensuring that every individual in need—especially those from marginalized and vulnerable sections of society—has the opportunity to access justice without financial or social constraints.

According to official statistics, approximately 21.9% of India's population is below the poverty line. This stark reality underscores the need for a robust legal aid system that reaches the remotest corners of the nation while also ensuring that people can actively seek support from Legal Services Institutions.

Empowering Communities through Legal Awareness

Legal literacy forms the bedrock of an empowered society. An informed citizenry is more likely to exercise its rights, seek legal remedies, and approach LSIs when needed. Recognizing this, NALSA has made legal awareness as one of its integral functions. Through Legal Services Help Desks, Front Offices, and Prison Legal Aid Clinics, individuals in need can receive guidance and support in navigating the justice system.

At the educational level, Legal Literacy Clubs in schools and Legal Aid Clinics in colleges serve as platforms to disseminate knowledge about legal rights and remedies. These initiatives foster an environment where young minds grow up with an awareness of the law and their entitlements under it.

To fulfill its ambitious vision, NALSA continually strengthens its institutions and builds the capacity of legal service providers. By motivating and equipping them with the necessary skills and resources, NALSA ensures that they uphold the highest standards of performance and integrity. Training programs, workshops, and continuous legal education initiatives help in creating a cadre of dedicated professionals committed to the cause of justice.

Additionally, robust monitoring mechanisms are put in place to evaluate the effectiveness of legal aid services. This ensures transparency, accountability, and optimal utilization of resources. Financial prudence remains a key priority, with NALSA advocating for the rationalization of expenses and effective fund management to maximize the impact of its initiatives.

In today's digital age, technology plays a crucial role in making justice accessible. NALSA has embraced digitization to streamline processes and enhance efficiency. Standardization of services, e-governance initiatives, and online legal aid application platforms have simplified access to legal assistance, making it more convenient and user-friendly. In an era where digital platforms dominate information exchange, NALSA has leveraged social media, including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X, to expand its reach. The 24x7 NALSA helpline No. 15100, available in numerous regional languages, along with Mobile Vans, ensures that no corner of the country remains untouched by legal assistance. Additionally, e-portals on the NALSA website enable individuals to file applications for legal aid and seek redressal, making justice more accessible than ever before. By integrating technological advancements, NALSA is setting new benchmarks in the delivery of legal aid services.



Legal Aid Mobile Van, Odisha



Beneficiaries

Section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 provides:

Criteria for giving legal services.—Every person who has to file or defend a case shall be entitled to legal services under this Act if that person is—

- (a) a member of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe;
- (b) a victim of trafficking in human beings or begar as referred to in article 23 of the Constitution;
- (c) a woman or a child;
- (d) a person with disability as defined in clause (i) of section 2 of the Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (1 of 1996);
- (e) a person under circumstances of underserved want such as being a victim of a mass disaster, ethnic violence, caste atrocity, flood, drought, earthquake or industrial disaster; or
- (f) an industrial workman; or
- (g) in custody, including custody in a protective home within the meaning of clause (g) of section 2 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (104 of 1956), or in a juvenile home within the meaning of clause (i) of section 2 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 (53 of 1986), or in a psychiatric hospital or psychiatric nursing home within the meaning of clause (g) of section 2 of the Mental Health Act, 1987 (14 of 1987); or
- (h) in receipt of annual income less than rupees nine thousand or such other higher amount as may be prescribed by the State Government, if the case is before a court other than the Supreme Court, and less than rupees twelve thousand or such other higher amount as may be prescribed by the Central Government, if the case is before the Supreme Court.

In addition, in compliance of various directions of the Supreme Court of India, NALSA takes several initiatives to provide free legal aid to the persons in need.



Delhi

34



Arunachal Pradesh



Dharni, Maharashtra



Arunachal Pradesh



Celebration of Children

ORGANIZED BY MEGHALAYA POLICE

Jointly Sponsored by: Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority

Jointly Sponsored by: 4th Battalion MLJ, Solapur

Jointly Sponsored by: Superintendent of Police, West

Jointly Sponsored by: The High Court Legal Services Authority

Jointly Sponsored by: South West Khasi Hills District Police

Jointly Sponsored by: South West Khasi Hills District Police

Supported by: Social Welfare Department

Children's Day - 14 November 2023
WEST KHAIL HILLS DISTRICT
Legal Services Authority
West Khail Hills District
Children's Day District
Legal Services Committee, Shilling
West Khail Hills District
P. R. Singhania, Chairman of
Children's Day District
SHILLONG, 14 NOV 2023

HAPPY
CHILDREN'S
DAY







उ.प्र.राज्य विधिक सेवा प्राधिकरण के
तत्वावधान में
जिला विधिक सेवा प्राधिकरण नखतक द्वारा आयोजित
बृहद लोक अदालत
का उद्घाटन

माननीय न्यायाधीश श्री बी.ए.ए. न्यायालय
माननीय न्यायाधीश श्री बी.ए.ए. न्यायालय



Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

The Indian judicial system, while robust, faces the persistent challenge of case backlog, delaying justice for millions. To address this, the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 laid the foundation for a system that promotes accessible, cost-effective, and speedy dispute resolution. This includes methods such as negotiations, arbitration, conciliation, and Lok Adalats, all of which have become essential in ensuring justice reaches everyone.

Over the last three decades, NALSA has been at the forefront of institutionalizing and expanding these mechanisms, making justice more accessible to the common citizen. From organizing Lok Adalats at national and state levels to the establishment of Mediation and ADR Centres, NALSA has worked relentlessly to provide a platform for amicable settlement through dialogue and mutual agreement, reducing the burden on India's formal judicial system.

Lok Adalats offer an accessible, cost-effective, and swift means of settling disputes outside the conventional court system. By providing an equitable platform for both pre-litigation and pending cases, Lok Adalats have become an essential tool in promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) across India. They allow for resolutions that are fair, speedy, and harmonious – alleviating the burgeoning caseload of the formal judicial system.

The continued success of the National and State Lok Adalats over the years stands as a testament to public trust in its efficiency and fairness. This reflects NALSA's unwavering commitment to facilitating dispute resolution, restoring societal harmony, and strengthening access to justice. With millions of cases resolved – including civil disputes, matrimonial matters, land acquisition issues, compoundable criminal cases, etc. – Lok Adalats have become an indispensable part of India's legal system. In the past 7-8 years, over 26 crore cases have been disposed of through National Lok Adalats and more than 61 lakh cases have been settled through State Lok Adalats across the country.

The advent of **e-Lok Adalats** in 2020 has further revolutionized access to justice. Virtual Lok Adalats have expanded the reach of justice, allowing individuals from remote areas to access resolution mechanisms without the financial and logistical challenges of travel. This digital transformation has not only saved time and costs but has also made participation in legal proceedings more inclusive. Since the introduction of E-Lok Adalats, over 1.1 crore cases have been disposed of, making justice more accessible than ever before.

Permanent Lok Adalats have also emerged as key institutions for alternative dispute resolution in India, offering a swift and affordable mechanism for settling disputes related to public utility services outside the traditional court system. NALSA's role in establishing and strengthening PLAs across the country is instrumental in ensuring their success. Over the past 8-9 years, more than 11 lakh cases have been resolved through Permanent Lok Adalats nationwide, offering accessible, efficient, and equitable solutions.











ADR Centers: A Path to Quick and Fair Justice

ADR Centres are at the forefront of promoting faster, more accessible justice. By offering negotiation, arbitration, and conciliation, these centres provide individuals with a structured yet informal environment to resolve their disputes. With over 450 ADR Centres across India, these institutions have transformed how people engage with the legal system.

ADR Centres are not just about quick resolution; they are about ensuring fairness and fostering mutual respect between parties. These centres alleviate the burden on traditional courts while promoting peaceful conflict resolution. By focusing on collaboration rather than contention, ADR Centres contribute to building stronger, more harmonious communities.

Mediation Centers: Promoting Peaceful Resolutions

Mediation is recognised as one of the most important and effective mode of alternative dispute resolution in India. It helps the parties to adopt a problem-solving approach to find out a "win-win" outcome. Once the dispute is resolved, there is no winner or loser for the parties agree to the solution, encouraging mutual understanding and long-lasting resolutions. Currently, mediation is government by the Mediation Act, 2023.

With over 1,300 Mediation Centres operating across the country, mediation has gained recognition as a highly effective tool for resolving a wide variety of disputes. From business contracts to matrimonial matters, from banking and insurance cases to child custody, mediation offers an alternative to lengthy court battles. NALSA has furthered this cause by launching a 40+ Hour Online Mediation Training Program, in collaboration with the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee, to equip individuals with the skills needed to resolve disputes efficiently.

Legal Services Authorities also facilitate pre-institution mediation under Section 12A of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015.

NALSA is also organising 15-Hours Advanced Commercial Mediation Training Program in collaboration with the International Academy of Mediators, bringing global expertise to India's mediation landscape. This initiative aims to enhance skills for dealing with complex commercial disputes.





Inauguration of MEDIATION CENTRE & COMMENDATION CEREM

Chief Guest

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sharad A. Bobde,
Judge, Supreme Court of India

Guest of Honour

Hon'ble Mr. Justice A. S. Bopanna,
Chief Justice, Gauhati High Court

ORGANIZED BY

GAUHATI HIGH COURT, KOHIMA BENCH & NAGALAND STATE LEGAL SERVICES
Gauhati High Court, Kohima Bench | Date: 1st of December, 2018





Chandigarh



Haryana



40 HOURS MEDIATION TRAINING PROGRAMME, 2020 (FIRST BATCH)

ORGANIZED BY
ASSAM STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION PROJECT COMMITTEE (MCPC),
SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

DATE : 19th TO 23rd JANUARY, 2020
VENUE: DON BOSCO INSTITUTE, JOYPUR, KHARGHULL, GUWAHATI-781004



MASTERING MEDIATION IN DISPUTE RESOLUTION

(Concepts & Techniques of Mediation)
Two Days Training for Legal Professionals
18th to 20th December, 2020



Andhra Pradesh



MAHARASHTRA STATE
MAIN MEDIATION MONITOR

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

SATURDAY

HON. JUDGE
JUDGE, High Court

HON. JUDGE

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LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY, MUMBAI
AND
COORDINATING COMMITTEE, BOMBAY HIGH COURT



CONFERENCE ON MEDIATION

DAY 30th NOVEMBER, 2024

HON. JUSTICE B R GAVAI
Chief Justice of India and Executive Chairman, NALSA

HON. JUDGE P B VALLABH
Judge, Court of India

HON. JUDGE RAJESH K
Judge, Bombay High Court

HON. JUDGE KA
Judge, Bombay High Court

HON. JUDGE HUO
Judge, Bombay High Court

HON. JUDGE GRE
Judge, Bombay High Court

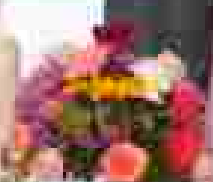
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Judge, Bombay High Court

HON. JUDGE CHA
Judge, Bombay High Court

HON. JUDGE RI
Judge, Bombay High Court

HON. JUDGE A
Judge, Bombay High Court

HON. JUDGE A
Judge, Bombay High Court



Kachchh, Gujarat



Victim Compensation

At its core, justice serves to protect the innocent and hold wrongdoers accountable. Beyond punishment, true justice must be reparative – ensuring victims receive adequate compensation for their suffering. This principle recognizes that the law must not only punish offenders but also help heal those harmed by criminal offences.

Victims often become the forgotten people in our criminal justice system. They and their families bear the heaviest burdens – financial hardship, emotional trauma, loss of reputation, and enduring grief. While no monetary sum can restore a human life or erase trauma, compensation provides crucial support for rehabilitation and recovery.

The journey toward structured victim compensation began with the 2003 Malimath Committee report (Committee on Reforms of the Criminal Justice System). This comprehensive review of India's legal framework identified critical gaps in victim rehabilitation. The Committee's recommendations led to significant reforms, culminating in the 2009 amendment introducing Section 357A – establishing the Victim Compensation Scheme. This provision provided a decisive role to the District Legal Service Authority/State Legal Service Authority to decide the quantum of compensation to be awarded under the relevant victim compensation scheme.

The present framework governing the Victim Compensation Scheme (VCS) in India is primarily guided by the provisions of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sंहita (BNSS), 2023, the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973 and various State-specific laws and policies. Additionally, NALSA has also issued guidelines for the implementation of the scheme, outlining procedures for filing claims and disbursing compensation to victims.

NALSA's Pioneering Role

NALSA has spearheaded transformative initiatives for victims across India. A landmark achievement is the NALSA Compensation Scheme for Women Victims/Survivors of Sexual Assault/Other Crimes – 2018, framed in compliance with the Supreme Court's directive in *Nipun Saxena and Anr. v. Union of India & Ors.* (Writ Petition (Civil) No. 565 of 2012). This comprehensive scheme aims to provide monetary aid for rehabilitation of victims of sexual violence and abuse. It outlines clear application procedures, eligibility criteria, and compensation amounts based on offense gravity.

The commitment of Legal Services Authorities goes far beyond monetary compensation to victims. It is about offering holistic support – from medical treatment and psychological counselling to legal assistance. It is about ensuring that victims receive not just financial support for their losses, but also the necessary resources to rebuild their lives and find a path to recovery.

Since implementation, victim compensation schemes have benefited over 1.2 lakh victims through interim and final compensation and disbursed an impressive amount of ₹206 crores. This reflects NALSA's unwavering dedication to creating a justice system that not only punishes crime but also heals its wounds.







कायदे विषयक सेवा केंद्र

(नागपुर मध्यवर्ती कारागृह)

मोफत कायदेविषयक सल्ला व सहाय्य मिळवण्यासाठी
नालसा टोल फ्री हेल्पलाईन क्रमांक 15100

ऑनलाईन आवेदन : 

<https://www.nalsa.gov.in/isams/>

निलहा विधी सेवा प्राधिकरण, नागपूर

मुख्य पत्ता - न्यायमंदीर, इमारत, तिसरा माळा, जिल्हा कारागृह, नागपूर
संपर्क क्रमांक - 9712-254

Under Trial Review Committee

The Under-trial Review Committee (UTRC) is an oversight mechanism headed by the District. It reviews cases of undertrials who have visibly stayed longer in prison than necessary, and recommend the release of such undertrials.

UTRCs originated after a letter by retired Chief Justice R.C. Lahoti in 2013 highlighted prison overcrowding concerns. This letter was registered as Public Interest Litigation (WP (C) 406/2013) by the Supreme Court of India. Through landmark orders, the Court gradually expanded UTRCs' mandate – directing review of cases under Section 436A CrPC in 2015, establishing quarterly meetings from 2016, and significantly expanding its purview to fourteen categories of inmates in May 2016.

Each district-level UTRC operates under the District Judge's chairmanship, with members including the District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police, Secretary of District Legal Services Authority, and Prison Officer-in-charge. In 2018, the Supreme Court approved NALSA's Standard Operating Procedures for UTRCs, providing nationwide standardized guidelines.





Pre-mature release/remission of prisoners

The Premature Release Framework

As of October 2024, India's 1,250 prisons are operating at 114% capacity, housing 505,870 inmates despite a capacity of 378,000.

Throughout 2024, UTRCs identified 78,492 prisoners, recommended 53,594 for release, filed 39,744 applications, and secured freedom for 25,982 individuals (5% of the total prison population). This represents a 108% increase in releases compared to 2019, with the undertrial proportion marginally declining from 75% to 74.6%.

While UTRCs address undertrials, NALSA's commitment extends to convicted prisoners showing reformation. The premature release process, established through NALSA's 2022 Standard Operating Procedures, offers a pathway for rehabilitated convicts to rejoin society before completing their full sentences.

This authority derives from Section 432 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Section 473 in BNSS) and Articles 161 and 72 of the Constitution, which vest discretionary power in the appropriate government, Governor, and President respectively. The Model Prison Manual 2016 outlines four types of premature release: commutation of sentence, remission of term, release through constitutional powers, and release under special state laws.

Responding to Supreme Court directives in multiple cases, NALSA developed comprehensive procedures addressing key process points: standardized identification of eligible convicts, streamlined application preparation, coordination between authorities, clear timelines, and robust follow-up mechanisms for rejected applications.

For rejected applications, NALSA ensures comprehensive legal assistance through a multi-tiered support system involving District Legal Services Authorities, High Court Legal Services Committees, and the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee when necessary.

NALSA's dual focus on UTRCs and premature release creates an integrated ecosystem where justice extends beyond procedural compliance to meaningful transformation. By facilitating both undertrial review and post-conviction release processes, NALSA ensures that reformation and rehabilitation remain central to India's correctional philosophy.

Through these concerted efforts, NALSA continues its mission to decrease prison overcrowding, reduce unnecessary detention, and fulfil the constitutional promise that justice reaches every individual within India's prison system – transforming lives and upholding dignity through the power of law.

Prison Legal Aid Clinics & Jail Visiting Lawyers



Prison Legal Aid Clinics (PLACs) stand as vital bridges connecting incarcerated individuals with the justice system. Established under the National Legal Services Authority's mandate, these clinics ensure that the constitutional guarantee of legal representation reaches every corner of India's prison system.

The Evolution of Prison Legal Aid



Inside a Prison Legal Aid Clinic

Each PLAC operates as a dedicated space within prison premises, strategically located in common areas to ensure unfettered access for all inmates. These clinics are equipped with essential infrastructure—tables, chairs, computers, internet access, printers, and basic law books in bilingual format. This creates an environment where the primary mandate of ensuring no person remains without legal representation at any stage of criminal proceedings can be effectively pursued.

Jail Visiting Lawyers spend several hours each week inside prisons, identifying cases eligible for release under the mandate of Undertrial Review Committees, providing legal advice, drafting applications, and connecting inmates with the outside world. Both community PLVs and convict PLVs work to ensure no prisoner remains unrepresented.

The Face of Legal Aid in Prisons

The heart of the PLAC system lies in its dedicated functionaries, which include (as on 31 October 2024):

- 3,529 Jail Visiting Lawyers, out of which 2,538 (71.9%) male lawyers and 991 (28.1%) female lawyers
- 1,132 Community PLVs, out of which 773 (68.2%) male PLVs and 359 (31.7%) female PLVs
- 1,035 Convict PLVs (selected from among educated, well-behaved inmates)

The PLACs stand as reminders that the pursuit of justice knows no boundaries, physical or otherwise, with over 475,000 individuals in jails receiving legal assistance in 2024 alone.

The effectiveness of PLACs stems from the robust monitoring mechanism established in the July 2024 Framework. DLSA Secretaries conduct monthly inspections of the clinics, while District & Sessions Judges (as Chairmen of DLSAs) conduct quarterly inspections.





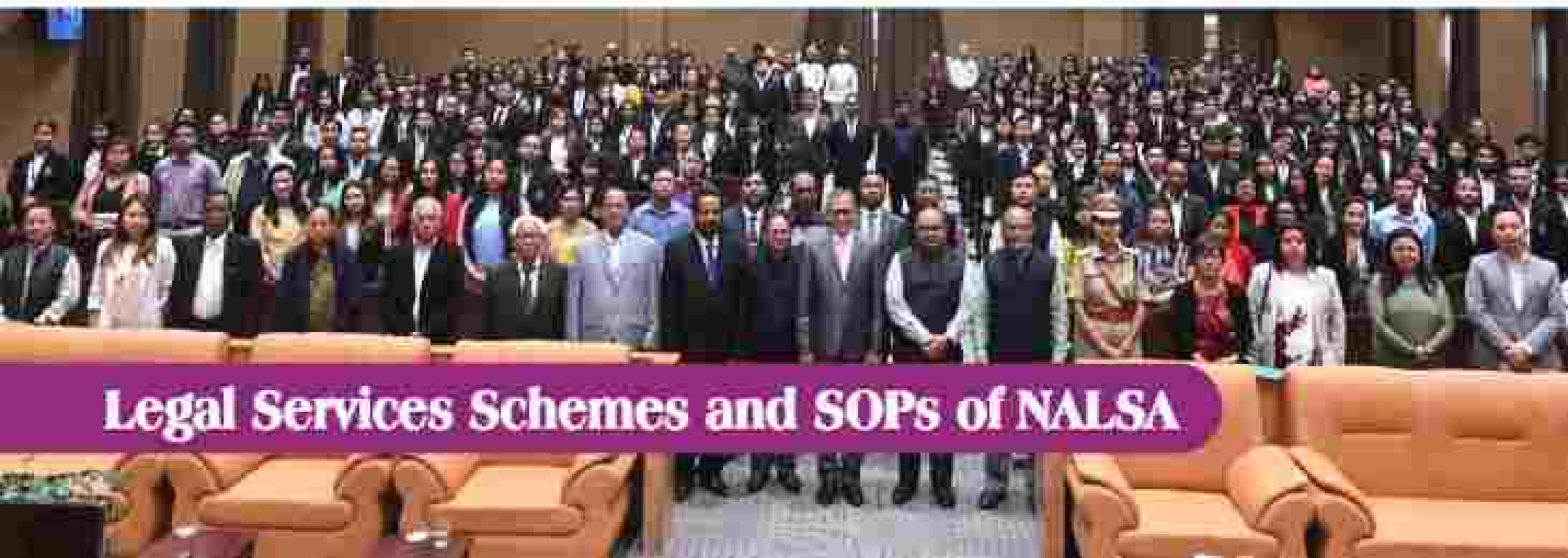
Delhi



Odisha



Manipur



1. NALSA (Legal Services to Disaster Victims through Legal Services Authorities) Scheme, 2010
2. NALSA (Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation) Scheme, 2015
3. NALSA (Legal Services to the Workers in the Unorganised Sector) Scheme, 2015
4. NALSA (Effective Implementation of Poverty Alleviation Schemes) Scheme, 2015
5. NALSA (Legal Services to Senior Citizens) Scheme, 2016
6. NALSA (Legal Services to Victims of Acid Attack) Scheme, 2016
7. Standard Operating Procedure for Representation of Persons in Custody, 2016
8. Standard Operating Procedure for Redressal of Complaints/Public Grievances, 2016
9. Ensuring Access to Justice for Widows Living in Shelter Homes, 2017
10. NALSA's Compensation Scheme for Women Victims/Survivors of Sexual Assault/Other Crimes, 2018
11. Early Access to Justice at Pre-Arrest, Arrest and Remand Stage, 2019
12. Legal Aid Defense Counsel Scheme, 2022 (modified)
13. Standard Operating Procedure for Under-Trial Review Committees, 2022
14. NALSA Standard Operating Procedures On The Process Of Premature Release, Parole And Furlough Of Prisoners, 2022
15. NALSA (Child-Friendly Legal Services for Children) Scheme, 2024
16. NALSA (Legal Services to Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities) Scheme, 2024
17. NALSA (ASHA- Awareness, Support, Help and Action) Standard Operating Procedure Towards Eliminating Child Marriage, 2025
18. NALSA (JAGRITI - Justice Awareness For Grassroots Information And Transparency Initiative) Scheme, 2025
19. NALSA (DAWN- Drug Awareness And Wellness Navigation - For A Drug Free India) Scheme, 2025
20. NALSA (SAMVAD — Strengthening Access to Justice for Marginalized, Vulnerable Adivasis and Denotified/Nomadic Tribes) Scheme, 2025



LANDMARK JUDGMENTS ON LEGAL AID



National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India, (2014) 5 SCC 438

NALSA, by virtue of Section 4(d) of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, has to take necessary steps by way of social justice litigation with any matter of special concern to the weaker sections of the society.

NALSA stood up for the Transgender community by filing a Writ Petition to address their struggles. The petition highlighted the painful experiences of Transgender individuals and stressed that everyone has the right to determine their own gender identity.

The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the petition, recognizing the Transgender community's right to self-identify and granting legal recognition for their gender, whether male, female, or third gender. The Court also directed the government to ensure the community's welfare, offer educational and social benefits, and provide reservations in educational institutions and government jobs which further supports their integration into society. Furthermore, it declared that Hijras and eunuchs would be recognized as a "third gender" to protect their rights under the Constitution and the law.

The Court declared that "Hijras, eunuchs, apart from binary genders, be treated as "third gender" for the purpose of safeguarding their rights under Part III of our Constitution and the laws made by Parliament and the State Legislature. It held: "Recognition of transgender persons is not a social or medical issue, but a human rights issue."

Bachpan Bachao Andolan v. Union of India, (2014) 16 SCC 616

The background of the case stems from a contempt petition filed by the petitioner, which raised concerns about how a complaint regarding a missing child was being handled by the police. The case involves the implementation of various provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, as amended in 2006. The petition raised as a result of the need to address the mishandling of missing child cases and ensure better enforcement of child protection laws under the Juvenile Act.

In response to these concerns, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) came into the picture as it plays a critical role in providing legal aid and ensuring that the rights of vulnerable groups, such as children, are protected. The Legal Services Authorities recruit Para-legal volunteers (PLVs) at various levels. The Hon'ble Court directed that these PLVs shall be utilized, in a way that at least one PLV is deputed in each police station "to keep a watch over the manner in which the complaints regarding missing children and other offences against children are dealt with".

Considering the suggestions and submissions made by NALSA, the Court also directed that every found/recovered child must be immediately photographed by the police for the purposes of advertisement and spreading awareness about the missing child which further supports efforts to reunite missing children with their families.

The case significantly impacted the protection and welfare of children, who are one of the key beneficiaries under Section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act. The Court ensured that children's rights are better protected at the grassroots level. This case thus strengthened the framework for providing legal aid and safeguarding the rights of children, aligning with the objectives of the Legal Services Authorities Act to ensure timely justice and support for vulnerable groups, particularly children.



Sampurna Behura v. Union of India & Ors., (2018) 4 SCC 433

This landmark case is yet another effort towards effective implementation of child welfare laws. The case relates to effective implementation of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 pertaining to juveniles in conflict with the law. The Court stated that "the primary objective of the JJ Act, is to reintegrate a juvenile in conflict with law in society and to rehabilitate that juvenile". (Para 71)

A concerned citizen, Sampurna Behura raised the issues regarding the lapses and flaws in the systematic implementation of the Act and how, only cosmetic changes were introduced at ground level with the result that voiceless children continue to be subjects of official apathy.

The Court highlighted the statutory and constitutional obligations of the Government. The Court issued a continuing mandamus, for implementation of laws enacted by the Parliament in public interest. Pointed out that it is "essentially the primary responsibility of the executive".

A detailed report developed by NALSA on the existing facilities or implementation of the 2000 Act was referred. The Report consisted issues pertaining to Juvenile Justice Boards, Child Welfare Committees and Homes under the 2000 Act. The Court emphasized the role of Probation Officers in rehabilitation and social integration of a juvenile in conflict with law, giving due importance to their duties.

Another Report was submitted by NALSA which pointed out large number of inquiries pending before the JJBs. Thereby, a "Training Module for Probation Officers" in the Juvenile Justice Boards was brought by NALSA in 2016. The same was believed to be extremely useful for training the legal aid lawyers who represent juveniles in conflict with law.

The Court directed NALSA to implement the "Visitor" system through DISAs, to make unscheduled visits to Child Care Institutions to ascertain their functioning as per mandates, for improvement of living conditions. The writ petition was for forthwith implementation of the JJ Act, 2000 in true letter and spirit. The Court stated "The obligation of society is to provide solace and comfort to these children and adherence to the minimum standards of care". (Para 85)

These measures aimed to improve juvenile care, enhance oversight of child care institutions, and ensure better rehabilitation and social integration of juveniles. The case reinforced society's obligation to protect and care for vulnerable children, ensuring the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act in true letter and spirit.



Suhas Chakma v. Union of India, (2024) INSC 813

This case addressed the critical issue of overcrowded prisons and the inhumane treatment of prisoners due to poor conditions, including overcrowding and unhygienic environments. This case also focused on the right to access free legal aid for inmates. The data received by the Jail Visiting Lawyers (JVLs) is collected and compiled by NALSA.

It was highlighted that free legal assistance is a fundamental right, even if the individual is unaware of this right or does not seek legal aid on their own. Every person in custody is a beneficiary under Section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, and entitled to legal services under this Act. These rights are also inherent under Article 21 and Article 39-A of the Constitution. Additionally, new criminal laws, such as Section 341 of the Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, further reinforce these provisions.

The Court emphasized that “Legal aid to the poor should not be poor legal aid. It must involve a counsel who defends the accused diligently and to the best of their abilities.” The Court further stated that this is a “constitutionally guaranteed expectation.” The Court also stressed the importance of awareness for the successful functioning of the legal aid mechanism.

The Court directed:

- In public places like police stations, post offices, bus stands, railway stations etc. boards in prominent places be displayed furnishing the address for contact and the phone numbers of the nearest legal aid office. This should be done in the local language and in English.
- Promotional campaigns in the local language be undertaken through Radio/ All India Radio/ Doordarshan. This will be in addition to the promotional measures undertaken through the digitalization process – like hosting of websites and prominent mention thereon on the landing page of the legal services authority wherever permissible.
- To create complete awareness about the existence of legal aid schemes, promotional campaigns may include such other creative measures including organization of street corner plays (nukkad natak) in rural areas so that the poor rural masses comprehend the facility available to them through the legal aid scheme. These should be undertaken without dislocating the normal life of citizens. Further, these measures will not only create awareness about legal aid to the accused but will also create awareness for the victims and for those whose civil rights have been infringed.
- The Legal Services Authorities will periodically review and update SOP-2022 for the Undertrial Review Committee

In response, NALSA formulated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for access to legal aid services in prisons and the functioning of Prison Legal Aid Clinics (PLACs). NALSA also introduced measures to strengthen the monitoring of PLACs and review their functioning. Furthermore, NALSA introduced the “Early Access to Justice at Pre-Arrest, Arrest, and Remand Stage Framework” to provide free legal assistance from the outset of the legal process.

To improve transparency, NALSA implemented the “Inmates Information Access to Relatives” system, which allows prisoners and their relatives to access details regarding the prisoner’s case, including hearing dates, parole applications, and remission periods, through e-Kiosks installed in jails.



Information of NALSA Helpline on Public Places

GLIMPSES FROM DIFFERENT STATES



LEGAL SERVICES DAY

CUM

COMMENDATION CEREMONY, 2023

Organized by:
Manipur State Legal Services Authority
under the aegis of
National Legal Services Authority

Venue:
ADR Building, Imphal
Court Complex, Imphal



Shri B. Bibari Sharma (94 years), retired UDC, was given Lifetime Achievement Award by Justice Siddharth Mridul, Chief Justice, High Court of Manipur in recognition of exemplary services rendered as a functionary of Manipur SLSA for 32 years.



Awarding of Best DLSA to the Secretary, Imphal West DLSA by Justice Siddharth Mridul, Chief Justice, High Court of Manipur







Uttarakhand



ALTERNATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTRE
INAUGURATED BY
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Harwan Singh
Judge, Supreme Court of India
AND
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Surya Kant
Judge, Supreme Court of India
ON

4 THE JOURNAL OF LAW, ECONOMICS, & ORGANIZATION, V16 N1

Ludhiana, Punjab



Punjab



UNDER THE AGIES OF NALSA & TSLA
DISTRICT LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY
CITY CIVIL COURT HYDERABAD. T.S.
LEGAL AWARENESS CAMP
(నామక శాసన సదస్సు)









Dadra and Nagar Haveli



Mega Legal Awareness Camp, Ladakh



Legal Awareness about CARA, Meghalaya





Haryana

Release of
Short Film
on
Juvenile Justice (Care
and Protection of
Children) Act, 2015





Himachal Pradesh



Goa



Delhi



Andaman and Nicobar Islands



Odisha





Meghalaya



Arunachal Pradesh

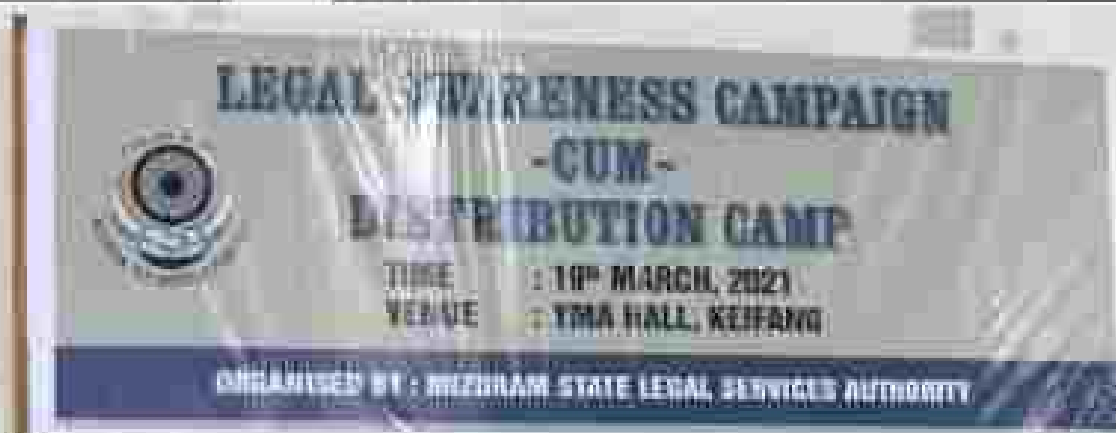
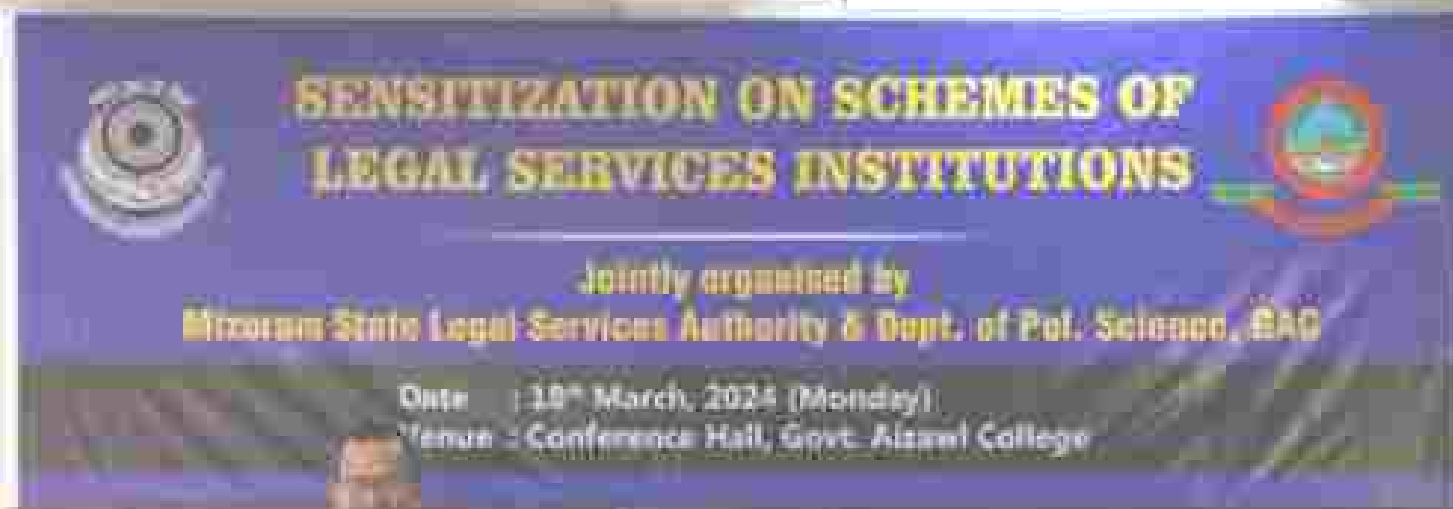






Karnataka







WUOLW
WUOLW
WUOLW



Nagaland

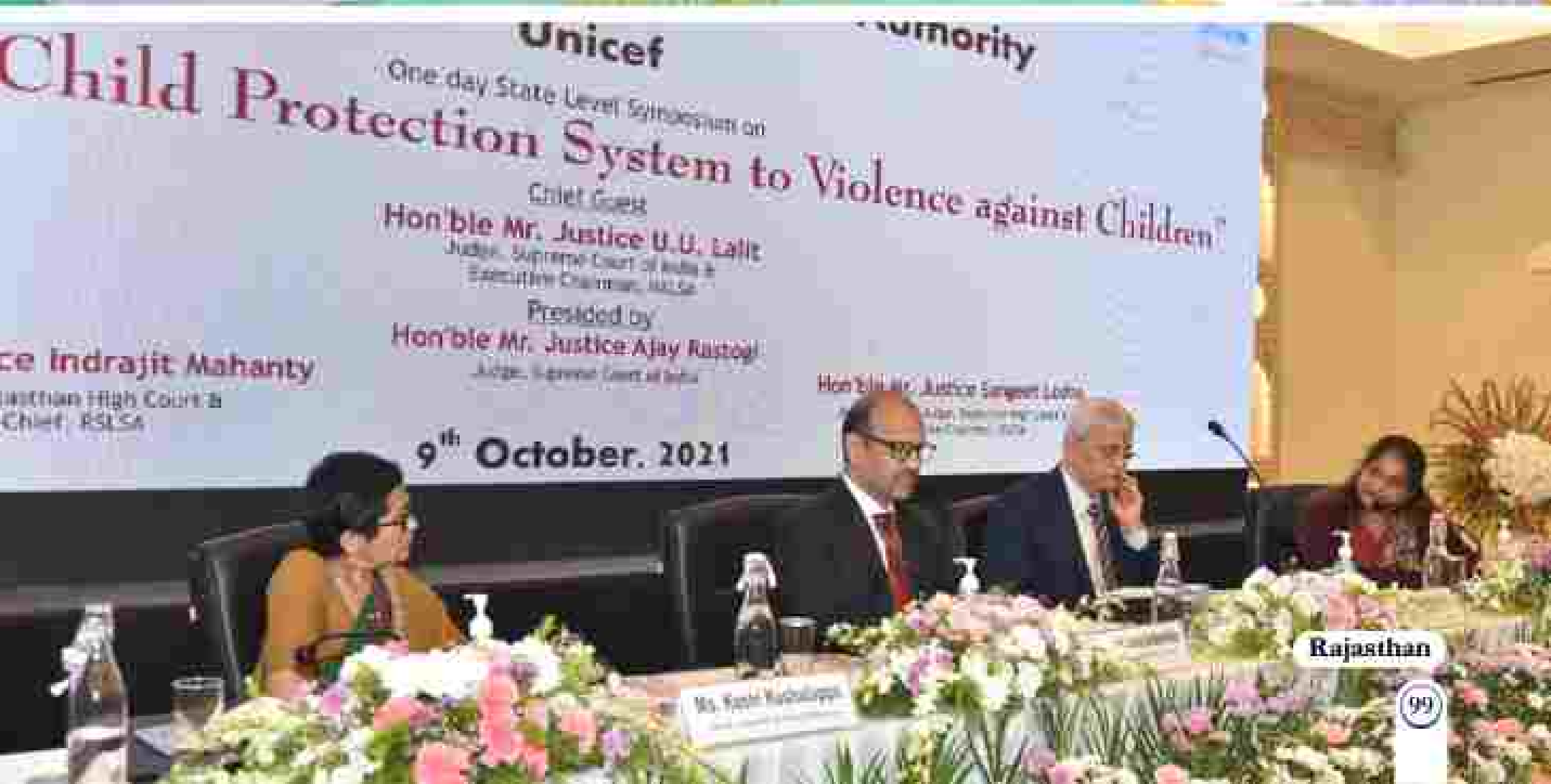




LEGAL AWARENESS PROGRAMME
February 2020
4th MARKET STREET
PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2005
CRIME AGAINST WOMEN
WOMAN EMPOWERMENT
GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE



Piplantri, Rajasthan









Sikkim





Tripura





Tamil Nadu

Commemoration Ceremony
of the enactment of
**THE BONDED LABOUR SYSTEM
'ABOLITION ACT, 1946'**







Telangana





Uttar Pradesh



West Bengal



Uttarakhand




Puducherry

Guardians of NALSA

Profiles of Executive Chairman in last 30 years

Justice K. Ramaswamy		05.12.1995 - 16.07.1997
Justice A. S. Anand		17.07.1997 - 09.10.1998
Justice S. P. Bharucha		22.10.1998 - 31.10.2001
Justice B. N. Kirpal		21.11.2001 - 05.05.2002

Justice G. B. Pattanaik		24.05.2002 - 07.11.2002
Justice S. Rajendra Babu		13.01.2003 - 01.05.2004
Justice N. Santosh Hegde		22.06.2004 - 16.06.2005
Justice Y. K. Sabharwal		05.07.2005 - 31.10.2005
Justice Ruma Pal		10.11.2005 - 03.06.2006
Justice K.G. Balakrishnan		22.06.2006 - 13.01.2007

Justice Ashok Bhan		08.02.2007 - 02.10.2008
Justice Arijit Pasayat		30.09.2008 - 10.05.2009
Justice S. B. Sinha		11.05.2009 - 08.08.2009
Justice Tarun Chatterjee		07.08.2009 - 14.01.2010
Justice Altamas Kabir		14.01.2010 - 28.09.2012
Justice D. K. Jain		15.10.2012 - 24.01.2013

Justice P. Sathasivam		25.01.2013 - 18.07.2013
Justice G. S. Singhvi		31.07.2013 - 12.12.2013
Justice Rajendra Mal Lodha		12.12.2013 - 26.04.2014
Justice H. L. Dattu		05.05.2014 - 27.09.2014
Justice Tirath Singh Thakur		28.09.2014 - 02.12.2015
Justice Anil R. Dave		03.12.2015 - 18.11.2016

Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar		19.11.2016 - 03.01.2017
Justice Dipak Mishra		04.01.2017 - 27.08.2017
Justice Ranjan Gogoi		28.08.2017 - 02.10.2018
Justice Madan Bhimrao Lokur		03.10.2018 - 30.12.2018
Justice Arjan Kumar Sikri		31.12.2018 - 06.03.2019
Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde		07.03.2019 - 17.11.2019

Justice N. V. Ramana		27.11.2019 - 23.04.2021
Justice Uday Umesh Lalit		14.05.2021 - 26.08.2022
Justice D. Y. Chandrachud		02.09.2022 - 07.11.2022
Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul		25.11.2022 - 25.12.2023
Justice Sanjiv Khanna		26.12.2023 - 10.11.2024
Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai		11.11.2024 - Present

Member Secretaries

National Legal Services Authority

Member Secretaries	Date of Commencement of Office	Held Office Till
Mr. R.C.Chopra	02.12.1997	13.12.2000
Mr. S.M.Chopra	01.02.2001	11.02.2003
Mr. Kamlesh Kumar	11.05.2004	16.05.2008
Mr. G.M.Akbar Ali	01.08.2008	30.03.2009
Mr. U.Sarathchandran	08.04.2009	01.01.2013
Mrs. Asha Menon	06.03.2013	10.12.2015
Mr. Alok Agarwal	10.12.2015	31.05.2020
Mr. Ashok Kumar Jain	30.06.2020	14.01.2023
Ms. Santosh Snehi Mann	22.03.2023	26.09.2024
Mr. Bharat Parashar	21.11.2024	04.02.2025
Mr. S.C. Munghate	06.02.2025	Present

Current Officers **National Legal Services Authority**



S.C. Munghate
Member Secretary I/C



Samarendra P. Naik-Nimbalkar
Director



Amandeep Sibia
OSD



Shreya Arora Mehta
OSD



Aavritee Naithani
OSD



Anurag Bhaskar
OSD (Research)



Rajeev Kumar Yadav
Under Secretary



Pratul Joshi
Under Secretary



Ajay Kumar
Private Secretary



Meena
Section Officer



**Inaugural Session of 15-Hours Advanced Commercial Mediation Training Programme
conducted by NALSA (3-5 March, 2025)**



Officers and Researchers of NALSA







National Legal Services Authority

*B Block, Ground Floor,
Administrative Buildings Complex, Supreme Court of India,
New Delhi-110001*

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26, Man Singh Road, New Delhi-110011
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