



VISION & MISSION STATEMENT

2021-2022

National Legal Services Authority

12/11, Jam Nagar House, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi-110011

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NALSA shall always be guided by

*“The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye”**

*Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his speech – *Tryst with Destiny* – delivered on the eve of Independence

To achieve the constitutional goal under Article 39(A) to provide equal justice and free legal aid, the Act¹ has been enacted to constitute Legal Services Authority to provide free and competent legal service to the weaker sections of the society to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities, and to organize Lok Adalats to secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity.

Much before the Act was enacted, a visionary in one of his lectures had stated:

“There is something basically wrong in a system wherein the poor and the indigent cannot obtain judicial redress of the wrongs done to them because of their poverty.”²

1. The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

2. Lecture delivered on 28.2.1979 by Justice H.R. Khanna on “Judicial Reforms” at the 100th sitting of the Maharashtra State Law Commission.

Around the same time, the father of legal aid in this country had observed:

“We do not think it is possible to reach the benefits of the legal process to the poor, to protect them against injustice and to secure to them their constitutional and statutory rights unless there is a nation-wide legal service programme to provide free legal services to them.”³

Since its inception, NALSA has been striving to achieve the constitutional goal put in concrete shape by the provisions of the Act and has envisaged that qualitative legal service must reach the marginalized sections of the society in a structured manner with the network of State Legal Services Authorities, District Legal Services Authorities and Taluk Legal Services Committees. The attempts have always been made to reach the remotest corners and all stratas of the society and to provide succor to the marginalized sections.

NALSA is of the firm view that for an orderly society, dispensation of justice is an essential service which must be geared to provide efficient and equitable service to the community at large, much the same way that primary health

3. Justice P.N. Bhagwati in *Hussainara Khatoon & Ors. v. Home Secretary, State of Bihar*, Patna AIR 1979 SC 1369.

clinics and schools must be available in the remotest corners of the country. In its pursuit of providing efficient and inclusive system of legal aid, following roadmap for coming years will put emphasis on certain issues apart from and in addition to carrying out of the existing programmes.

1. Legal Services Clinics established all over the country shall be strengthened with personnel who shall provide legal aid of the best available quality. For that purpose, measures for augmenting the capacity as well as enhancing the capabilities by adequate and effective training shall be undertaken.
2. Such qualitatively better equipped Legal Services Clinics shall be there at every taluka level and such services shall also be extended to every prison and correction homes or juvenile justice homes where the children in conflict of law are kept.
3. The benefit of such Legal Services Clinics must reach all marginalized sections.

4. Attempts shall be made to impress upon all Law Colleges in the country to adopt a designated area or a taluka close to said colleges so that students of the 4th and 5th year LL.B. course can have easy opportunity to render voluntary assistance to the sections of the society where legal aid must be extended.
5. Apart from the existing para-legal volunteers who are engaged in various legal aid extension programmes, the benefit of the large contingent of law students in the aforesaid manner will ensure that the framework of legal aid service attains maximum potential.
6. In addition, attempts shall be made to have more female para-legal volunteers all throughout the country to ensure better connectivity with the women who suffer from domestic violence or similar infractions.
7. The present Legal Aid Defense Counsel System which was introduced as a pilot project in some of the States having shown encouraging results, the model shall be repeated or replicated progressively. This system must

finally attain the status akin to the one enjoyed by the Office of the Public Prosecutor and will strengthen the network of providing court-based legal aid.

8. Attempts shall be made to strengthen the number and quality of panel lawyers and remand lawyers attached to various Legal Services Clinics. Training programs shall be arranged through physical as well as virtual mode to have energetic, competent and devoted lawyers providing legal aid.
9. NALSA shall strive to engage the services of senior and established lawyers to render pro-bono services so that legal aid of superior quality shall be extended and at the same time junior panel lawyers will have adequate opportunities to learn under the guidance of established senior lawyers.
10. Apart from various awareness programmes which are presently operating, steps shall be taken to reach out to the rural and far-flunged

areas which constitute the large bulk of those who require legal aid.

11. The Department of Posts, Government of India has readily agreed to put up Boards in every Post Office in the country and to provide the requisite material so that those residing in every nook and corner can easily get in touch with the nearest Legal Services Clinic. These Post Offices will act as the first connection between those who require legal aid and the Legal Services Clinics.
12. In its attempt to fulfil the promises made in the proposal of NALSA - “Early Access to Justice at Pre-Arrest, Arrest and Remand Stage”, NALSA impressed upon the Home Ministry which has in principle agreed to put up Boards in every Police Station informing the suspects or arrestees of their right to seek free legal aid. Such Boards shall give address and particulars of the nearest Legal Services Clinic.
13. In addition to various Reach out programmes, and involvement of para legal volunteers, the information so available in the Police Stations is

designed to guarantee that no person goes unrepresented by a legal professional, in case the criminal law machinery moves against him.

14. In the recent interactions with various State Legal Services Authorities, it has been unanimously accepted that adequate steps be taken so that even at the pre-arrest stage, access to justice is provided in the form of legal aid. The imbalance on account of poverty and inadequacy of a person to secure relief at pre-arrest stage will thus get eliminated. This shall be achieved through awareness programs and strengthening of Legal Services Clinics.
15. NALSA firmly believes that role of Legal Services Clinics ought not to be confined to pending litigations but the Clinics must also render appropriate guidance to those who seek legal aid at pre-litigation stage as well. The Clinics 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 realizing what is due to them.

16. The existing system of Lok Adalats shall be appropriately nurtured to make it strong and vibrant. The attempts shall be made to continuously engage in pre-Lok Adalat meetings so that on the days when the Lok Adalats are held, the settled matters can be reported and given a quietus. Attempts shall be made to utilize the virtual platforms to the extent possible to achieve better results.

In the recently held National Lok Adalat through hybrid format, more than 23 lakh cases, which is the highest number in recent times, were settled. The system shall therefore be strengthened to achieve better and greater results.

Jai Hind

*“It (Legal Aid) implies the need for development of specialized skills of advocacy and administration, and recruitment and training of specialized personnel whose knowledge and experience may be systematically perpetuated. There must be people at the Central, State and grass-roots levels for whom legal aid is a full-time crusade and career, around whom the useful part-timers and volunteers may be deployed”.***

** Report of Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer Committee on *Legal Aid - 'Processual Justice to the People'* May 1973



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