

Government Strengthens Accessible Legal Services and Inclusive Digital Justice for Persons with Disabilities

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The Government has undertaken several measures to make available affordable, quality and speedy legal services to the common man, including persons with disabilities. The legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act, 1987 provides for free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society including Persons with Disabilities. As per Section 12(d) of the LSA Act, 1987, “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, 1955” is entitled to free legal aid.

NALSA is also implementing a specific Scheme for Persons with Disabilities named NALSA (Legal Services to Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities) Scheme, 2024. This Scheme aims to ensure that legal services are responsive to the specific legal and social needs of persons with mental illness and persons with intellectual disabilities. Under this Scheme, specialised ‘Legal Services Unit for Persons with Mental Illness & Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (LSUM) called ‘Manonyay’ units have been established in all States/UTs except Lakshadweep. The LSUM is the primary institutional mechanism for the delivery of legal services to persons with mental illness and persons with intellectual disabilities at Mental Health Establishments, Police Stations, Courts, Railway Stations, Bus Stands, Beggar’s Homes, Women’s Protection Homes, Child Care Institutions, Prisons, Detention Centres, Front Offices and through Home Visits.

The details of the persons with disabilities provided legal services under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 during the last three financial years is as under:

Financial Year	Number of persons with disabilities provided legal services
2023-24	11,591
2024-25	8,313
2025-26	15,280

The Government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of infrastructure facilities for the District and Subordinate Courts by augmenting the resources of the State Governments/UTs for construction of Court Halls, Residential Units for Judicial Officers, Lawyers’ Hall,

Digital Computer Rooms and Toilet Complexes. As per guidelines of the Scheme, the States/UTs ensures that the proposed infrastructure have disabled-friendly design. The building design are in conformity with the requisite norms/accessibility standards as laid down by Central Public Works Department, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, from time to time.

The e-Courts Mission Mode Project is being implemented in a phased manner across the country with the objective of strengthening the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the judicial system. The eCommittee, Supreme Court of India is the governing body that oversees the eCourts project and provides policy planning, strategic direction and guidance to the project for effective implementation of all components.

Under eCourts Project Phase III, there are 24 components that have several significant measures devised to foster the creation of a robust and accessible digital infrastructure for citizens including persons with disabilities. Provision has been made for providing enhanced accessible ICT enabled facilities to persons with disabilities, at a budgetary outlay of Rs. 27.54 crore and using S3WaaS platform (Secure, Scalable and Sugamya Website as a Service) that makes the website friendly for persons with disabilities, at a budgetary outlay of Rs. 6.35 crore. S3WaaS platform has features for easy visibility of content for partially and completely visually challenged citizens.

This information was given by the Union Minister of Law and Justice, Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal Ji, in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

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