

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW & JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

RAJYA SABHA

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3452
TO BE ANSWERED ON THURSDAY, THE 25TH MARCH, 2021**

SCHEME FOR JUSTICE TO POOR

3452# SHRI NARAYAN RANE:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the poor are deprived of justice on account of existing judicial system and increasing fee of the lawyers;**
- (b) if not, the response of Government in this regard; and**
- (c) the scheme in place to get justice to the poor, alongwith the process of such scheme?**

**ANSWER
MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE, COMMUNICATIONS AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)**

(a) to (c): Article 39-A of the Constitution provides that the State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on the 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 reasons of economic or other disabilities.

Towards this end, the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 was enacted by the Parliament to establish a nation-wide uniform network for providing free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society and to organise Lok Adalats to secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on a basis of equal opportunities. Accordingly, Legal Services Institutions have been set up at all levels from the level of Taluk Courts to the Supreme Court under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to provide free legal services to the persons eligible

under Section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, and also to organise Lok Adalats.

Apart from providing Court based legal services, Legal Services Authorities are also implementing Lok Adalats and Mediation for settlement of cases at pre-litigation and pending stages. This also facilitates Access to Justice for the poor. Lok Adalat is an important Alternative Disputes Resolution Mechanism available to common people. It is a forum where the disputes/ cases pending in the court of law or at pre-litigation stage are settled/ compromised amicably. The Lok Adalat has been given statutory status under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Under this Act, an award made by a Lok Adalat is deemed to be a decree of a civil court and is final and binding on all parties and no appeal lies against thereto before any court.

Lok Adalats are organised by Legal Services Authorities under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Usually 3 to 4 Pan India National Lok Adalats are held in a year. Apart from this, Permanent Lok Adalats (Public Utility Services) have been established which deal with the matters relating to the public utility services at pre-litigation stage.

During the period from April, 2020 to December, 2020, more than 4.36 lacs case (both pre-litigative and pending cases) have been settled in State Lok Adalats and about 23,600 have been settled in Permanent Lok Adalat (PUS) at the pre-litigation stage. In the year 2020, more than 25.48 lacs cases (both pre-litigative and pending cases) have been settled in National Lok Adalat. In view of Covid, E-Lok Adalat was conceptualized which significantly improved access to justice for people who were otherwise unable to participate in the Lok Adalats. The first E-Lok Adalat was held on 27.06.2020 and since then E-Lok Adalats have been organized in 24 States / UTs wherein 8.07 lakh cases were taken up and 4.11 lakh cases disposed of.

Besides, the Department of Justice has implemented Tele-Law and Pro Bono Legal Services (Nyaya Bandhu) programme for legal assistance of the poor and marginalized sections of the society. The Tele-Law Service connects the citizen with the Panel lawyers to seek pre-litigation legal advice through the use of video /Tele conferencing facilities available at the Common Service Centres (CSCs) at the Panchayat level. This service is currently operational in 29,860 CSCs in 285 Districts (including 115 Aspirational districts) across 29 States /UTs. As on 15th March, 2021 advice has been enabled to 6,75,403 beneficiaries. The Pro Bono Legal Services (Nyaya Bandhu) programme aims to provide free legal assistance and counsel to the marginalized sections. Nyaya Bandhu Mobile Application has been developed to connect the registered Pro Bono Advocates with the registered applicants and as on 15th March, 2021, 2513 Pro Bono Advocates have registered under the programme.
