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**STATUS OF LEGAL
LITERACY IN INDIA**
A REPORT ON NATIONAL LEGAL
LITERACY MISSION

ANOOP KUMAR

STATUS OF LEGAL LITERACY IN INDIA: A REPORT ON NATIONAL LEGAL LITERACY MISSION

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“Now it is common knowledge that about 70% of the people living in rural areas are illiterate and even more than that percentage of the people are not aware of the right conferred upon them by law. Even literate people do not know what are their rights and entitlements under the law. It is this absence of legal awareness which is responsible for the deception, exploitation and deprivation of rights and benefits from which the poor suffer in this land”.

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Anoop Kumar

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- g. Mental Health Act, 1987
- h. Poor Prisoner's Defence Act of 1903

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| | |
|--------|---|
| BPFA | Beijing Platform for Action |
| CNRI | Confederation of NGOs of Rural India |
| DLSA | Delhi Legal Services Authority; District Legal Services Authority |
| HPSLSA | Himachal Pradesh State Legal Services Authority |
| JHALSA | Jharkhand State Legal |

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| | |
|---------|---|
| | Services Authority |
| KELSA | Kerala State Legal Services Authority |
| LLS | Legal Literacy for Students |
| LLUP | Legal Literacy Mission for empowerment of underprivileged |
| MARG | Multiple Action Research Group |
| MGNREGA | Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act |
| MPSLSA | Madhya Pradesh Legal Service Authority |
| MSLSA | Maharashtra State Legal Service Authority |
| NALSA | National Legal Services Authority |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NLLM | National Legal Literacy Mission |
| NREGS | National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme |

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| | |
|---------|--|
| PIAAC | Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies |
| PLLM | Prisoners Legal Literacy Mission |
| RLEK | Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra |
| SAPLING | Students Advocacy Programme Linking Institutes of Learning |
| SLSA | State Legal Service Authority |
| TSLSA | Tripura State Legal Services Authority |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| VEERSI | Visible Research Educational & Environment Society of India |

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Chapter-1

INTRODUCTION.

The legislature of the state and the Parliament, while enacting the legislation, consider the objectives of it. Some laws lay down the substantive rights of the masses and some touch upon the procedural aspect of certain laws. But it is due to lack of awareness of beneficiaries that most of the legislations are ineffective at the stage of their execution. To quell this problem, the step of generating among the masses, awareness of their rights has been recognized as the appropriate initiative. The source of power among the masses has been attributed to such awareness. India is a land of various laws on a variety of subjects. Most of these pertain to the benefits of the people. But due to the lack of their awareness for such provisions

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hardly yield any benefit to them.

To ensure justice for all, safeguard popular rights, and promote legal empowerment of the society, need is always felt for making the public aware about their rights and entitlements. With the same token, such awareness can be credited for facilitating the aggrieved person to quickly take resort to channels available for the redressal of grievances, through agencies like the Police, the Executive and the Judiciary. Further the awareness of one's legal rights paves the way for participation of the masses in the decision making process.

It is due to this situation, that Legal literacy has been recognized as a tool of qualitative change at the basic level as it provides them with the adequate knowledge of their rights. Legal literacy

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connotes the knowledge of the primary level in law. After the citizens (particularly marginalized or underprivileged groups) become aware of the rights provided to them by law, they can use such awareness as a tool to fight injustices. Such awareness can transform their lives. Legal literacy is the first step to that end¹. Further, the better awareness of laws is a contributing factor to help people work more effectively in diverse spheres. To give effect to such initiative, in 2005, National Legal Literacy Mission (NLLM) was adopted by the Central government.

Chapter-2

NEED FOR LEGAL LITERACY.

Being the part of the largest democracy, knowledge of law serves the people with the tool of power and self realization. Unless the people are aware of rights, they cannot live in consonance with the true dictates of democracy and rule of law. Legal literacy is commonly understood as knowing the primary level in law. Need of the legal literacy is accentuated due to following reasons:

- 1. *Fighting Injustice and Women Empowerment.*** It is through awareness of the laws and the objectives served by them that citizens, particularly marginalized or underprivileged groups, can obtain

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the benefits that law seeks to offer them. Taking into consideration the present scenario, the issues like empowerment of women and making them aware of their rights which they can use to fight injustices, becomes a distant dream in the absence of legal literacy. Hon'ble Mr. Justice Kabir has aptly remarked that lack of awareness and education are the main causes for injustices being meted out to the marginalized populations especially women². Similar observation has been made by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Pradeep Kumar, the Judge of the High Court of Jharkahand. He emphasized upon the women's need to be aware about the laws that safeguarding their interests, so that they can approach the right authorities with their

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grievances in order to ensure quick justice³.

In the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, the *Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)* was adopted, with the object of achieving equality for women in various walks of life⁴. As a result, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted, which emphasized the need for access to free or low-cost legal services, including legal literacy, especially focusing on women living in poverty⁵. It also noticed that women's poverty had its connection to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic resources, including credit, land ownership and

inheritance, lack of access to education and support services and their minimal participation in the decision-making process⁶. Also Legal literacy programmes have been attributed for helping women to understand the link between their rights and other aspects of their lives and in demonstrating that cost-effective initiatives can be undertaken to help women obtain those rights⁷.

2. Understanding the Scope of Rights and Challenging their Violations.

Legal literacy is essential as it is the knowledge of law that can be used as a tool by vulnerable groups to understand and evaluate the law, to get acquainted with the scope of their rights under the law, and get

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their rights enforced by taking action and bringing the legal machinery into force. Knowing their rights, the people can challenge violations thereof. Article 39A of the Constitution of India directs the State to provide free legal aid with the aid of suitable legislation or schemes. It is the awareness of rights and duties that makes the delivery of justice and balancing of various interests an easy task.

3. *Transparency and Accountability in the Governance.* Growing legal literacy opens the gate for a transparent and accountable Government truly based on the 'Rule of Law'. It is the awareness about rights, governance and state obligations that has contributed to

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the changed attitude of the masses resulting in demand for justice and accountability from the government. In this regard, the contributions made by a renowned NGO, Multiple Action Research Group (MARG), is acclaimed. Undertaking the projects like *Harshingar project* and project of *Building legal capacity in Savda Ghevra, Delhi*, it has played its due role in achieving the goal of legal literacy⁸.

4. *Empowering the Poor.* The legal system of a nation has a big share in empowerment of the poor people, as it confers upon them rights, powers, privileges, and immunities along with a strong judicial system that can give effect to these legal entitlements. The object

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empowerment cannot see the light unless, the target group (here the poor) are made aware of their entitlements in a legal system. Taking the note of the step to that end in international arena, in 2005, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hosted the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor. The Commission realised that, lack of understanding of legal rights and obligations serves as a barrier to access to justice for the poor.⁹

Chapter-3

CONCEPT OF LEGAL LITERACY IN INDIA.

Defining Legal Literacy. To understand the meaning of Legal Literacy, it is essential to go through the definition of the term literacy. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Literacy can be defined as reference to *both ability to read and write in any language*¹⁰. In the terms of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) “*Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and*

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potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society”¹¹.

Legal literacy has been defined by Laird Hunter, in Reading the Legal World, in following words:

"People using the legal system must be able to guide themselves through a process that they understand [...] and, at appropriate places along the way,

- recognize they have a legal right or responsibility, in order to exercise or assume it;*
- recognize when a problem or conflict is a legal conflict and when a legal solution is available;*
- know how to take the necessary action to avoid problems and where this is not possible, how to help themselves appropriately;*

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- *know how and where to find information on the law, and be able to find information that is accessible to them,*
- *know when and how to obtain suitable legal assistance;*
- *have confidence that the legal system will provide a remedy, and*
- *Understand the process clearly enough to perceive that justice has been done...*

Translating the information and meanings of the legal system to learners and people with limited literacy skills requires that lawyers and others clearly understand the dual nature of legal literacy: the ability to read and familiarity with the legal context”¹².

The quest for legal literacy forms the part and parcel of the Legal Aid to the masses.

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Even before the launch of the NLLM, the quest for the legal literacy was recognized in India. The journey of legal literacy, from its inception has taken the shape of legal rights. It was evident that the meaning of law will stand neglected, if only the privileged sections of the society have access to it. It was further observed that the law is meaningless unless people have equal access to it for their protection.

Legal Aid Movement in Other Parts of the World. The earliest Legal Aid movement is considered to have been in France in the year 1851 when some enactment was introduced for providing legal assistance to the indigent¹³. The same pursuit for legal aid in England that gave birth to laws like the Poor Prisoner's Defence Act of 1903, emphasizing an effective form of legal aid to poor prisoners¹⁴. But it was after

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Rushcliffe Committee, making a number of recommendations in its Rushcliffe Report 1945¹⁵, which led to the introduction of the first legal aid scheme in the Legal Aid and Legal Advice Act 1949¹⁶.

Legal Aid Movements in India. The legal aid movement in India took its shape in around the year 1952, when the Government of India brought its attention towards legal aid for the poor in various conferences of Law Ministers and Law Commissions. Later in the year 1960, Government laid down some guidelines for legal aid schemes. The legal aid schemes were floated through Legal Aid Boards, Societies and Law Departments in different states¹⁷.

Constitution of Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes. In

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1980, Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes was constituted at the national level to oversee and supervise legal aid programmes throughout the country under the Chairmanship of the former judge of the Supreme Court, Hon. Mr. Justice P.N. Bhagwati¹⁸. Later a new chapter of Lok Adalats was added to the justice dispensation system, which succeeded in providing a supplementary forum to the litigants for conciliatory settlement of their disputes.

Enactment of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The year 1987 marks a golden chapter in the history of legal aid in India, as it was in this year that *Legal Services Authorities Act* was enacted, with the end of giving a statutory base to legal aid programmes throughout the country on a uniform pattern¹⁹. After

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introduction of certain amendments by the Amendment Act of 1994, the *Legal Services Authorities Act* was enforced on 9th November, 1995.

Establishment of Legal Service Authorities. On 5th December, 1995, the apex body for legal aid services, the National Legal Services Authority was constituted, with the former Supreme Court judge Hon. Dr. Justice A.S. Anand as the Executive Chairman of it²⁰. It lays down policies and principles for making legal services available under the provisions of the Legal Services Authorities Act and to frame most effective and economical schemes for legal services²¹. It also disburses funds and grants to State Legal Services Authorities and NGOs for implementing legal aid schemes and programmes.

Chapter-4

NATIONAL LEGAL LITERACY MISSION.

The National Legal Literacy Mission, with its motto “*From Ignorance to Legal Empowerment*”, was launched by the honorable Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh launched. This five-year Mission had its foundation in the goal of legal empowerment of all sections of the society. Its object was to simplify the language of the law to make people able to understand laws and judgments. Special focus was laid on the downtrodden, minorities and women.

As evident from the speech of the Prime Minister, a democracy is meaningless, unless the people know their basic human rights like education,

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employment and the right to live a life of dignity and self respect²². Such awareness is possible only through the mechanism of legal literacy. To remove the obstacles, such as complex legal language of the statutes, in understanding their rights, the Mission has been prepared as a weapon.

In the words of the former Chief Justice of India RC Lahoti, women, children, tribal and minority communities, victims of militancy, crime, disaster, drought-hit farmers, and sex workers needed urgent attention²³. Legal literacy, being the first step towards knowledge of the law, the Mission aims at legal education of all sections of society.

Objective of the Mission. NLLM was initiated with the aim of providing legal education to the underprivileged persons,

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including disabled people. The subject matter of the mission was to educate the people about law, legal terminology and legal rights. Looking deep into the structure of the NLLM, it had following goals:

1. To achieve 100% legal literacy.
2. To target the most disadvantaged, distraught, disintegrated, vulnerable and victimized populace first and progress further in the grass-root level.
3. To prepare State Specific Plan of Actions for implementation of objective of the Mission.
4. To undertake survey, research, documentation drive, social investigation reporting and social audit as a learning exercise of people's problems, grievances and to understand the nature of redressal required.

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5. To sensitize the Judicial Officers to people's cause particularly to that of women and children, *dalit* and minorities, tribal and such other most vulnerable groups as well as persons in custody in addition to implementation of the Acts pertaining to mentally and physically challenged, the destitute and beggars, the orphans and neglected citizens, the abandoned elderly citizens, discrimination in case of any caste, communal violence, disaster and disease outbreak.

Target Groups. Taking into account the provision of the section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which prescribes the criteria for giving legal services to the eligible persons, following

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persons are covered under the target group of the Legal Aid services:

1. a member of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe;
2. a victim of trafficking in human beings or begar as referred to in Article 23 of the Constitution;
3. a woman or a child;
4. a mentally ill or otherwise disabled person;
5. a person under circumstances of undeserved want such as being a victim of a mass disaster, ethnic violence, caste atrocity, flood, drought, earthquake or industrial disaster; or
6. an industrial workman; or
7. a person in custody, including custody-
 - a. in a protective home within the meaning of clause (g) of

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- section 2 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956; or
- b. in a juvenile home within the meaning of clause (j) of section 2 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 or
 - c. in a psychiatric hospital or psychiatric nursing home within the meaning of clause (g) of section 2 of the Mental Health Act, 1987; or
8. a person who receives an annual income of less than rupees nine thousand or such other higher amount as may be prescribed by the State Govt., *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 Govt., *if*

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the case is before the Supreme Court.

The Mission was launched, focusing those sections of the society which form the part of the most disadvantaged, distraught, disintegrated, vulnerable and victimized populace. In other words, following form the target groups for the Mission:

1. Weaker sections of the society that include women and children, *dalit* and minorities, tribal etc.;
2. Some most vulnerable groups such as persons in custody, persons suffering from mental and physical disabilities, the destitute and beggars, the orphans and neglected citizens, the abandoned elderly citizens; and
3. Persons, being the victims of discrimination on the ground of

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caste, communal violence, disaster and disease outbreak.

The main features of the Mission are as under:

In line with the directives of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), State Specific Plan of Action for implementation of the Mission has been prepared having estimated cost of Rs.71.23 lakh and activities as per guide-lines of NALSA, in this regard are in progress to achieve the goal.

Funding of the Mission. As far as the funding of the Mission is concerned, it had no funds allocated for it in the Budget.

Chapter-5

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MISSION.

In the present scenario, the implementation of any reform policy in India does not merely depend upon the Government policies for its implementation. In this regard, the role played by the non-governmental agencies can't be ignored as they have deeper contacts at the grass roots than official government machineries. The implementation of the legal literacy programmes as well as this Mission depends largely upon the NALSA, state legal service authorities, the non-governmental agencies (mainly NGOs) and the colleges.

Therefore, in order to understand the significance of the bodies involved in the implementation of the legal literacy

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programmes, it is essential to know their working and modes of implementation adopted by them.

A. National Legal Service Authority.

The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), as constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 has a paramount role to provide free Legal Services to the weaker sections of the society.

Among its other functions, the Authority has an obligation to adopt measures for spreading legal literacy and legal awareness amongst the people and, also for educating weaker sections of the society about the rights, benefits and privileges guaranteed by social welfare legislations and other enactments as

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well as administrative programmes and measures²⁴.

Also, the NALSA has the duties pertaining to:

1. monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the legal aid programmes at periodic intervals²⁵;
2. independent evaluation of programmes and schemes implemented in whole or in part by funds provided under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987²⁶;
3. providing grants-in-aid for specific schemes to various voluntary social service institutions and the State and District Authorities, from out of

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the amounts placed at its disposal for the implementation of legal services schemes under the provisions of this Act²⁷; and

4. Organizing legal aid camps, especially in rural area, slums or labour colonies with the puposes of educating the weaker sections of the society as to their rights and the settlement of disputes through Lok Adalats²⁸.

Measures of NALSA towards Legal Literacy and Awareness.

1. *National Plan of Action*. In its newsletters, the NALSA describes the National Plan of Action for every year. As far as the legal literacy and legal awareness is concerned, the NALSA focuses upon the legal

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literacy and legal awareness programmes in these plans. In the National Plan of Action for the year 2010-11, a significant focus has been given to the legal literacy and awareness camps²⁹.

2. ***Legal Literacy Classes in Schools and Colleges.*** In the year 2010, the NALSA took giant leap in the realm of legal literacy, by taking initiative to impart legal awareness to the younger generation. Through this programme, the NALSA aims at creating consciousness amongst the school going children that our country is governed by rule of law³⁰.
3. ***Students Advocacy Programme Linking Institutes of Learning***

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(*SAPLING*). The NALSA has launched this programme, involving law students in order to promote legal awareness. This programme is part of National Legal Literacy Mission. Also it launched 'Project Combat,' which, aimed at protection of the rights of girl child³¹.

B. Supreme Court Legal Services Committee. Section 3A of the Act lays down the provision for the establishment of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee, for the purpose of exercising such powers and performing such functions as may be determined by regulations made by the Central Authority.

C. State Legal Service Authorities (SLSAs). The Legal Services

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Authority Act provides for the constitution of State Legal Services Authority under Section 6 of the Act.

It has the obligation to give effect to the policies and directions of the NALSA³². Also it has duty to provide legal services to those who need and fulfill the criteria as laid down in the Act; to conduct Lok Adalats and perform other functions as fixed by regulations³³.

It also coordinates with NGOs, voluntary institutions, universities and other bodies, involved in promoting legal awareness³⁴.

D. High Court Legal Services Committee. Section 8A of the Act lays down the provision for the

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establishment of the High Court Legal Services Committee, for the purpose of exercising such powers and performing such functions as may be determined by regulations made by the State Authority.

E. District Legal Services Authorities.

Under section 9 of the Act, the State Government has been empowered to constitute a body to be called the District Legal Services Authority for every District in the State, in consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court. The authorities perform the following functions³⁵:

1. coordination in the activities of the Taluk Legal Services Committee and other legal services in the District;

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2. organizing Lok Adalats within the District; and
3. Such other functions as fixed by the State Authority by regulations.

F. Taluk Legal Services Committee.

Under section 11A of the Act, the State Authority has discretion to constitute a Committee, to be called the Taluk Legal Services Committee, for each taluk or mandal or for group of taluks or mandals. It performs following functions³⁶:

1. Coordinating the activities of legal services in the taluk;
2. Organizing Lok Adalats within the taluk; and
3. Such other functions as the District Authority may assign to it.

Chapter-6

MEASURES ADOPTED BY STATES FOR LEGAL LITERACY AND AWARENESS- AN ASSESSMENT.

1. **Himachal Pradesh State Legal Services Authority.** The HPSLSA took a lead in spreading legal literacy and awareness programmes in the schools of northern India. It has been preparing books for schools, like '*Lesions in Law*' (English) and '*Kanoon Ke Path*' (Hindi)³⁷.
2. **Andhra Pradesh State Legal Services Authority.** In the state of Andhra Pradesh, the SLSA has taken the giant leap towards setting up the Legal

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Literacy Clubs/ Legal Aid Clubs in schools and colleges for the purpose spreading awareness about the legal aid programmes and for creating legal awareness amongst the masses³⁸.

The club members have functions of identifying the persons in their neighbourhood, who deserve legal aid and who need the protection of their rights conferred by the laws. Those persons are brought to the nearest Legal Services Authority/Committee. The services of Legal Literacy Clubs are free of cost³⁹.

Apart from these clubs, the SLSA has been consistently organizing the legal literacy and awareness camps. By the end of August 2012, as much as 3491 camps were organised, granting legal aid to 2,792 persons⁴⁰.

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3. State Legal Services Authority, Chandigarh. When it comes to the implementation of the legal literacy programmes, the contribution of the SLSA of Chandigarh can't be ignored. In the year 2011 and 2012, it gave a huge emphasis to the legal literacy and awareness programmes. It organized, following programmes for securing the goal of complete legal literacy⁴¹:

A. Legal Literacy Programme organized with NSS Chandigarh Unit, wherein the topics like salient features of A.D.R, laws on traffic/accidents, drugs, constitutional law, Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, Right to Education Act, Right to Information Act, 2007, Anti-ragging, eve-teasing, the rights

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of children and fundamental duties etc were dealt with.

B. *Consumer Awareness Camp*, dealing with rights of consumers.

C. *Interaction Programme with NSS Incharges of various Schools of Chandigarh for the launch of Student Legal Literacy Clubs Scheme*. The purpose was to make NSS incharges of various schools of Chandigarh aware of the Students Legal Literacy Clubs Scheme which was to be started in various schools with the association of NSS Cell, Chandigarh.

D. *Opening of the Student Legal Literacy Club*. As per the directions of the NALSA, the SLISA opened its

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Legal Literacy Clubs in various schools.

- E. *Nukkad Natak at Plaza, Sector 17, Chandigarh on the eve of "International Environment Day, on the issue of environment protection;*
- F. *Legal Awareness Camp-cum-Seminar against Child Labour ;*
- G. *Rally to make people aware of the Right to Education Act;*
- H. *Workshop on "Protection of the Rights of Girl Child";*
- I. *Street Play "Jago" against Child Labour, to depict the problem of Child Labour in the society and how child labour effects the overall personality of a child.*

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J. *Legal Awareness Camps on*

- a. Child Labour;
- b. Care and Protection to women and children;
- c. availability of Free Legal Services for SC/ST;
- d. salient features of A.D.R;
- e. Right to Education Act,
- f. Right to Information Act 2005.
- g. problems of Ragging and Eve Teasing
- h. *Mobile Legal Awareness camp at the village Maloya, Chandigarh;*

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- i. *On the Spot Slogan/Poster Making Competition to observe "World Environment Day";*

Till August, 2012, the total number of legal literacy and awareness camps held was 450 (89 alone in 2012)⁴².

4. **Chhatisgarh State Legal Services Authority.** As far as the contribution of the SLSA is concerned, its achievement shows that in the year 2010-11, it conducted 16 legal awareness camps at district level and 67 camps at Taluka level. Also, it has taken a giant leap in organizing legal literacy clubs at schools and colleges⁴³. Further, to promote the legal awareness among the masses, it runs various publications

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including *Nyayasangwari* and *Aadharshila*⁴⁴.

The statistics show that From 2009 to 2010, it organized 2,559 legal literacy/ awareness camps at various places including jails, which benefitted 3,14,124 persons.⁴⁵

5. Delhi Legal Services Authority. The DLSA has taken several initiatives, in the form of various legal awareness programmes from time to time to sensitize the public about their legal rights. These initiatives are⁴⁶:

- I. Advertisements through electronic media, print media and by publishing articles in various newspapers;
- II. Celebration of events like Womens Day, Labour Day, World Anti-Tobacco Day, and National Legal

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- Services Day in partnership with Governmental and NGOs;
- iii. Nukkad Nataks, street plays, skits, etc. to educate and generate public awareness on social and legal issues like Female Foeticide, Child Labour, Domestic Violence against Women etc;
 - iv. Documentary films namely Satyamev Jayate on legal aid & Desh Ki Shaan Hai Beti on women issues;
 - v. Radio programme on FM Rainbow for making the general public aware about their legal rights and the laws passed for eradication of social evils; and
 - vi. Legal literacy Mission through Electronic Media, Print Media, Articles, Pamphlets, Booklets,

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Magazines and *Nyaya Kiran*.

In the span of 4 months in 2010 (from January 2010 to April 2010), the DLSA conducted following activities to spread legal awareness⁴⁷:

1. Organization of workshop on Tobacco Hazards & De-Addiction, highlighting the issues and informed people about the law relating to smoking in collaboration with Delhi Medical Association;
2. Workshops on legal literacy;
3. On the occasion of the 100th Women's Day Celebration on 8th March 2010, the Delhi Legal Services Authority organized 9 legal awareness camps;

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4. Six Legal Awareness Programmes were organized, out of which one was in association with Adharsheela—an NGO, working for the Women about the rights of women. Information booklets were distributed freely and necessary advice was given to the persons who approached the Counsellor of DLSA with their problems;
5. Spreading awareness of the Anti-Smoking and Tobacco Laws, through two seminars, organized by State Tobacco Control Cell; and
6. Participation in the National Legal Services Authority's statutory Meet at Chandigarh, suggesting for DLSA's

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participation in developing a curriculum for a basic introduction to law at college level, which was unanimously accepted. It was also decided to go ahead with the creation of Legal Literacy Clubs in the Schools for which preliminary data has already been gathered.

The statistics show that in the year 2010, the DLSA organized 12 legal literacy/ awareness camps (3 camps organized by the SLA and 9 camps by the District Legal Services Committees), which benefitted a total of 900 people in that year⁴⁸.

6. Goa State Legal Services Authority.

During the period spanning April, 2010

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to March, 2011, the SLSA organized a number of 36 legal education seminars and legal literacy camps at 11 *taluka* places in North as well as South Goa⁴⁹. In these camps, the speakers have addressed the lesions on subjects of:

- A. Law relating to Arrest and Bail;
- B. Motor Accident Claims;
- C. Divorce under Family Laws as Applicable to Goa;
- D. Right of Maintenance under Section 125 of Cr.P.C.

7. Jharkhand State Legal Services Authority (JHALSA). There lies an onerous task upon the shoulders of the JHALSA as most of the people in this state are unaware of their rights. The JHALSA has performed its function in pragmatic way. During the tenure of February, 2004 to January, 2009, as

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much as 21 Workshops, Seminars and Legal Awareness Camps⁵⁰. JHALSA has taken following initiatives to achieve the end of complete legal literacy:

A. Mobile Lok Adalat-cum - Legal Awareness Van. On 5th July 2009, the Mobile Lok Adalat-cum - Legal Awareness Van was inaugurated by Hon'ble Mr. Justice S B Sinha, Judge of Supreme Court of India and Executive Chairman, National Legal Services Authority⁵¹. Van has visited Kanke Block at Ranchi, and districts of Deoghar and Dumka during the ongoing Shrawani Mela. It benefitted 650 persons.

The van spread the awareness on general laws, property rights, govt. beneficial schemes, laws

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related to National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, protection of rights of women and children, domestic violence, dowry prohibition act, marriage laws, Domestic Violence Act, Right to Information Act, maintenance, right to education, wards and guardianship acts, family disputes counseling, importance of institution of marriage and fundamental rights, fundamental duties, provisions of free legal aid, other local laws etc.

Also the documentary film *Phulbasia Ki Kahani* and other films on Child Labour, Dowry and Mediation were exhibited in the said camps.

B. Micro-Legal Literacy Camps. The JHALSA has organized 385 Micro-

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Legal Literacy Camps in 22 districts at block and panchayat levels, remote villages, hospitals, etc., during the period spanning November 2008 to March 2009⁵². It covered the subjects like protection of rights of women and children, Domestic Violence Act, dowry harassment, property rights, marriage laws, right to education, motor accident cases, cyber crimes etc⁵³.

8. **Karnataka State Legal Services Authority.** On 9th November, 2005, the State Authority observed the “National Legal Literacy Day”. The programme was inaugurated by Hon'ble Shri Justice B.Padmaraj, Judge, High Court of Karnataka. 7 Tele episodes, produced by the State Authority in respect of

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several laws relating to working women, dowry prohibition, Lok Adalat, were released⁵⁴. In the year 2008, the State Authority organized 4,555 Legal Literacy Programmes, which benefitted 43,07,721 persons⁵⁵.

9. Uttarakhand Legal Service

Authority. The state authority has taken following initiatives to implement the legal literacy/awareness programs⁵⁶:

A. *Mega Legal Literacy Camp.* A Mega Legal Literacy Camp was organized under the joint auspices of Uttarakhand State Legal Services Authority and District Legal Services Authority, Bageshwar in the year 2009 at Bageshwar. Around 5000-7000 people from far-flung

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villages were attended the camp. Wheel chairs, crutches and hearing machines were also distributed to the needy and poor. Medical Check-up was made and medicines were also distributed free of cost. A sum of Rs. 32 lacs was distributed on the spot by the Administration in various welfare schemes.

B. Bus Panel. To create legal awareness among the people residing in far-flung areas of the state, the State Authority signed a contract with the Uttarakhand Transport Corporation for 100 Bus Panel, in order to advertise informative materials.

C. Lok Adalat-Cum-Legal Literacy Camp. A Lok Adalat-cum-Legal Literacy Camp was organized in

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2007, on the visit of Parliamentary Standing Committee personnel, to the Uttarakhand State on the day.

D. Legal-Cum-Medical Literacy Camp.

A two day big and successful Legal cum Medical Literacy camp was organized in July, 2006 at District Champawat. About 4000-5000 people participated in the camp.

From January 2002 to October 2010, the State Authority organized 622 legal literacy camps benefitting 2,71,473 persons⁵⁷.

10. Tripura State Legal Services Authority (TSLSA). To spread legal literacy amongst the people and in particular to educate the weaker sections of the society about the rights, benefits

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and privileges guaranteed by Social Welfare legislations and other enactments as well as administrative programmes and measures, 27 leaflets in Bengali and in *Kokborok* (local tribal language) on following subjects are being distributed to the participants in different programmes and seminars organized by the Authorities/Committees⁵⁸:

- a. Legal Aid Scheme and Suggestions;
- b. Laws relating to Alternative Justice Delivery System;
- c. Laws relating to Family Dispute, Counselling and Family Court;
- d. Constitutional Rights and Duties of the Citizen;

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- e.* Laws relating to Rights of Women with specific reference to Human Rights Act, 1993;
- f.* Laws relating to National Women Commission Act, 1990;
- g.* Laws relating to Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994;
- h.* Laws relating to Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956;
- i.* Laws relating to Adoption & Maintenance Act; 1956;
- j.* Laws relating to Maternity Benefits Act, 1961;
- k.* Laws relating to Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961;
- l.* Laws relating to Maintenance;
- m.* Laws relating to Position of Women in Islamic Society;
- n.* Laws relating to Consumers Protection Act, 1986;

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- o.* Laws relating to Physically Disabled People and different Schemes prescribed thereunder;
- p.* Laws relating to Hindu Marriage and Divorce;
- q.* Laws relating to Tripura Recording of Marriage Act, 2003;
- r.* Laws relating to Right to Information Act, 2005;
- s.* Social Welfare Schemes (Book No.1);
- t.* Social Welfare Schemes (Book No.2);
- u.* Laws relating to Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2002;
- v.* Laws relating to NBFCs;
- w.* Laws relating to Plea Bargaining;
- x.* Laws relating to Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007;

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- y. Laws relating to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005;
- z. Laws relating to Labour Laws; and
- aa. Laws relating to 'Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008.

In order to achieve 100% legal literacy, legal awareness programmes are being organized in 513 Gram Panchayats and 527 ADC villages as well as 12 Nagar Panchayats and 1 Municipal Council in Tripura. In the year 2010, till the end of July, 270 legal literacy and awareness camps were organized, which saw participation of 33,221 persons⁵⁹.

11. Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority. To implement the

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programmes on legal literacy, the State Authority has given following contributions⁶⁰:

(1) *Legal literacy camps and legal aid clinics.* In every part of the state, legal awareness is spread through legal literacy camps and legal aid clinics. Every DLSA and the Taluk Legal Services Committee is required to conduct monthly Legal Literacy camps. Out of 18,603 villages in the state, the entire villages have been covered.

(2) *Folk songs and folklore.* *Villuppattu*, a traditional folklore of Tamil Nadu performed by famous artist

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“Kalaimamani Subbu Arumugam” is exhibited through electronic media since 2002. The public at large and the advocates find it interesting to hear them and they also purchase the cassettes for their personal use. Folk songs carrying the message of various Laws, enactments and schemes on Lok Adalat, sung by various famous playback singers were recorded and are being played at the venue where legal literacy programmes are organized from the year 2003.

(3) *The video and audio CDs and cassettes.* The video and

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audios CDs and cassettes containing the substance of the various laws were prepared with the funds provided by Neyveli Lignite Corporation, a Public Sector Undertaking, and the same have been released for public consumption.

(4) *Film on Lok Adalat.* A short film on “Lok Adalat” highlighting the benefits of the Lok Adalat has been produced and released by the Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority.

(5) *Release of Booklets in Vernacular Language.* In

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order to enlighten the general public, following booklets titled as “Legal Literacy and awareness series” were published by the State Legal Services Authority:

- a. Consumer Protection Act;
- b. Protection for Women under IPC;
- c. Protection for Women under various laws other than IPC;
- d. Rights of Arrested persons;
- e. Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act;
- f. Hindu Marriage Act;
- g. Child Marriage Restraint Act;

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- h. Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955;
- i. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act 1956;
- j. The Child Labour (prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986;
- k. The Guardian and Wards Act 1890;
- l. How to get compensation in Motor Accident cases?
- m. Maintenance – Legal position;
- n. The constitution and activities of the Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority; and
- o. Benefits under various welfare schemes of

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Government – How to
get them?

As a part of legal literacy and awareness campaign, the State Authority has released a booklet in vernacular language under the caption “SATTAPPANIGAL MUTHAL KAIYEDU” in question-and-answer form.

(6) *Meeting with Press and Electronic Media.* As part of the legal literacy and awareness camps, a meeting with Press and Electronic Media was arranged in July, 2004 and the benefits of conciliation and mediation of the disputes and settlement of disputes through Lok Adalats,

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the importance of legal literacy and awareness camps were brought to their notice.

(7) *Documentary Film “Access to Justice for All”*. In order to enlighten the people of the various beneficial enactments passed by the Central and State Governments as well as the various programmes and schemes implemented by the State Authority, through legal literacy and awareness, a 30 minutes documentary film “Access to Justice for All” in English and “Anaivarukkum Samaneethi” in vernacular language was produced and released by the Tamil Nadu

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State Legal Services
Authority.

From 1st January, 2011 to 31st July, 2011, the State Authority has organized 2,329 legal literacy and awareness camps, benefitting 18624 persons⁶¹.

12. Maharashtra State Legal Service Authority (MSLSA). The steps taken by MSLSA toward the achievement of the goal of complete legal literacy are also noteworthy. Some of its programmes are⁶²:

- a. *The Legal Literacy Campaign on Plea Bargaining.* giving priority to the problems of under trial prisoners, the MSLSA, in its Common Minimum Programme requested all the DLSA's for Legal Literacy

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Campaign on plea bargaining. The members of the DLSA organized Legal Literacy Camps in the Jail Premises for awareness of various Legal Provisions related to Plea Bargaining to under trial prisoners. MSLSA also published a Booklet on “Plea Bargaining” to facilitate for invoking the new provisions of Plea Bargaining to reduce the pendency of litigation.

- b. *Micro Legal Literacy Camp & Camps on the subject of NREGS.* Acting on directives of NALSA, MSLSA took great efforts for organizing various kinds of Micro Legal Literacy Camps on various topics all over Maharashtra for implementation of Micro Legal Literacy Scheme.

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- c. *Annual Meet of DLSAs.* Annual meet was organized in the month of September 2009 at Nagpur, in which various topics including involvement of Law students in Legal Literacy Mission and Expansion of work of Legal Literacy Mission and Lok Adalats to develop Para Legal Force to promote Legal Services effectively and efficiently were discussed. Subject such as Probation of Offenders Act, PCPNDT Act, Plea Bargaining, Juvenile Justice Act, Protection of Rights of Women and Children against violence and harassment, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Mobile Legal Literacy Campaign, etc. were thoroughly discussed.

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d. *Justice at Doorsteps.* MSLSA launched the 1st Mobile Legal Services Cum Lok Adalat Scheme in Maharashtra in the month of January, 2010, for holding Lok Adalats and Legal Literacy Camps. Trained Judicial Officers and Social activists will visit every nook and corner of the villages and more particularly, remote tribal areas, villages and hamlets of tribals and rustic, slum, industrial areas, etc. to impart legal awareness among the weaker and oppressed sections of Society and to hold Lok Adalats⁶³.

In its Common Minimum Programme for the year 2011, MSLSA has given significant place to legal literacy⁶⁴. In the year 2010-11, it organized 6302 legal literacy

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camps, which benefitted 7,09,830 persons⁶⁵.

13. Madhya Pradesh State Legal Service Authority (MPSLSA). In 1999, the MPSLSA formulated the Legal Literacy Camp, Scheme, 1999, with the object of:

- (i) Formulating guidelines for contents of legal literacy materials.
- (ii) Considering the use of visuals in legal literacy materials with a view to supporting or illustrating the legal concepts or legal processes;
- (iii) Undertaking preparation of sample materials on legal literacy;

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- (iv) Reviewing the existing materials on legal literacy;
- (v) Organising the Legal Literacy Camps known as “Vidhik Saksharata Shivir” in rural areas as well as in urban slums; and
- (vi) Providing the information about all schemes launched by State Government as well as Central Government and all statutory laws rules etc. to the weaker section of the society including scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, backward class, agriculturists and labourers, which are made for protection of their interests.

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During the period of 2008-09, the MPSLSA organized 907 Legal Literacy Camps, benefitting 2,04,827 persons⁶⁶.

14. Kerala State Legal Services Authority (KELSA). The State Authority organized several workshops and legal literacy camps, some of which are⁶⁷:

- 1. Legal Awareness Workshop.* To impart Legal Awareness to the newly elected Local Body Members of their duties, functions and power to materialize the spirit of Panchayat Raj, legal awareness workshop was organized in 2011.
- 2. Legal Literacy Programme for Tribals.* KELSA conducted a Legal Literacy Programme for the

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Welfare and Legal Upliftment of
Tribals in Januray 2011

3. *Formation of Student Legal Aid Club and Legal Awareness Seminar.* Taluk Legal Services Committee formed Student Legal Aid Club in Pattanakkad Block Panchayath.
4. *Legal Literacy Camp.* KELSA, in association with Shreyas Social Service Centre, Kozhikode Region and District Legal Services Authority, Kozhikode organized a ONE DAY LEGAL LITERACY CAMP.

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5. *Chapter on Ragging.* 'Lessons in Law,' an 80-page booklet in Malayalam was brought out by the Kerala State Legal Services Authority (KELSA), has included a chapter on ragging in its latest issue published recently. The booklet was distributed in colleges as a part of legal literacy classes conducted by the KELSA. The project is a part of the National Legal Literacy Mission⁶⁸.

6. *Legal Literacy classes for Kudumbashree members.* KELSA joined hands with Kudumbashree in conducting about 600 Legal Literary classes for poor women as a part of KELSA's programme of empowerment of women

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through legal literacy⁶⁹. The Kudumbashree project is a community based venture for economic empowerment of women, engendering sustainable development in Kerala, which strives to alleviate poverty.

KELSA in association with District Legal Services Authority, Ernakulam has decided to organize a one day Legal Awareness Programme for the Officers and members of *Gramma*, Block, District Panchayats, Munisipalities and Corporations in Ernakulam District on 15th October 2011⁷⁰.

15.Haryana State Legal Services Authority (HSLSA). The contribution

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of the HSLSA does not lag behind, in terms of the implementation of legal literacy programmes. It has taken following initiatives towards that end⁷¹:

(1) *Prisoners Legal Literacy Mission (PLLM)*. This mission targets the prisons and jails in a systematic manner. Also, it holds Legal Awareness Camps in prisons; prepares and publishes Legal Literacy Literature in local language and circulates the same amongst the prisoners. Apart from that, it organizes skits and audio/visual presentations for the prisoners to educate them about their rights and co-ordinates with the prisons authorities to ensure that

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freedoms that belong to the prisoners are made available to them and to help improve prison conditions.

(2) *Legal Literacy Mission for empowerment of underprivileged (LLUP)*. It envisages creating awareness among neglected children, who are forced to take shelter in orphanage centres, helpless girls and women who are forced to take shelter in Nari Niketan or other such institutions, neglected old age people, disabled, mentally ill persons living under helpless situation under the care or control of government-run or

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non-government-run
organizations.

(3) *Legal Literacy for Students (LLS)*. The HSLSA, with the collaboration of Education Department of Haryana has opened Legal Literacy Clubs in 1444 Senior Secondary/Secondary Schools and 169 Colleges. At these Legal Literacy Clubs the students are apprised about the various rights and duties of citizens and they are informed about various socio-legal issues. The students also participate in activities such as debates, declamation, poetry, skits, essay writing, slogan

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writing on issues of socio-legal relevance.

(4) *Legal Literacy Camps for Grass root level officials.* Special Legal Literacy Camps for Grass root level officials such as Anganwari Workers, teachers, Panchayat Members etc. are also being organized. One such camp was organized at Mullana (Ambala).

(5) *Exhibiting documentary films.* HSLSA exhibited the following documentary films in all schools of Haryana:
(a) “Beti” (dealing with evils of female foeticide).

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(b) “Nashakhori Sey
Nashamukti Ki Aur”
(dealing with evil of drug
abuse).

(c) “Savera” (dealing with
knowledge of legal
services and Lok Adalats).

(d) Message on “Save Water”
& “Save Planet Earth”
prepared by His Excellency
Dr. A.P.J.Abdul Kalam,
Former President of India.

(6) *Publication of books and
magazines.* HSLSA has
published books, folders,
pamphlets dealing with legal
rights and duties of citizens.
Following are some of the
books published by Haryana

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State Legal Services Authority
during the year 2009⁷²:

- a) *Bal Shram*;
- b) *Bandhuya Majdooori*;
- c) *Chhua-Chhut* ;
- d) *Dahej* ;
- e) *Hindu Vivah, Sampati
Ka Adhikar* ;
- f) *Manav Adhikar Aur
HIV/AIDS*;
- g) *Sir Par Maila Dhona*;
- h) *Nagrikon Ke Maulik
Adhikar*;
- i) *Police Se Sambandhit
Adhikar*;
- j) *Mahilayon Ka Youn
Utpeeran*;
- k) *Soochana Ka Adhikar*;
- l) *Theka Majdooori, Antar-
Rajyik Parvasi
Masdoor, Rashtriya*

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*Gramin, Rozgar
Guarantee; and
m) Constitutional values*

In the same year, the HSLSA published its first Quarterly Magazine namely “*Nyay-Gyan-Udai*”. In the year 2010, it planned to publish following books⁷³:

- a. Right to Maintenance;
- b. Laws governing Child Marriages, Minority and Guardianship, Juvenile Justice, Right to Education;
- c. Rights of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes/Backward Classes;
- d. Trafficking in Human Beings;

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- e. Labour Laws;
- f. Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- g. Environment and Pollution;
- h. Spirituality and law;

Also, it planned to publish 4 Quarterly Magazines in 2010.

From 1985 to 2011 (31st Sept., 2011), the HSLSA has organized 11,765 Legal Literacy/Legal Awareness Camps, which has benefitted as many as 3,59,437 persons⁷⁴.

Taking into the consideration the progress of other states, regarding implementation of the legal literacy/awareness programmes, the statistics in the ANNEXURE show the trend of

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implementation of these programmes in other states.

Chapter-7

ROLE OF NGOS AND COLLEGES IN LEGAL LITERACY.

Apart from the NALSA and the SLAs, several NGOs have also shared the responsibility of promoting legal literacy and legal awareness through programmes like:

- 1. Panchayat Shivir.** NGOs like Astha and Enviro Legal Defence Firm (ELDF) mutually focused on tribal empowerment in the state of Rajasthan. It was possible only if people actually understood the law and could use it. They organised interactive legal literacy sessions called *Panchayat Shivir*⁷⁵.

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2. Bharat Vikas Yatra. CNRI and VREESI organized a development journey throughout India, named *Bharat Vikas Yatra* for uniting people for the emergence of an Inclusive society, which commenced on 14th November 2007. The *Yatra* was a catalyst in promoting the National Legal Literacy Mission⁷⁶.

3. Legal Literacy Programmes by Antrashtriya Manavadhikar Sangthan. The *Sangthan* is a registered trust for charitable activities. During 2009-10, it conducted 41 legal literacy programmes in the state of Jharkhand, which has benefitted more than 4 lack persons. Some of these prorammes were organized with the assistance of JHALSA⁷⁷.

4. Programmes by RLEK. Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra (RLEK) is a Dehradun based NGO. In 2006-07, it conducted 32 Legal Literacy Camps for generating legal awareness in 8 districts of Chattisgarh, as part of the National Legal Literacy Mission. It benefitted 2574 persons. They were enlightened about their rights, guaranteed under the Constitution of India or under various other laws like the Right to Information Act 2005, Fair trial, Fundamental rights etc. and also information regarding filing of F.I.R⁷⁸.

In the same year, 30 camps were conducted in 8 district of the State of Jharkhand. Total numbers of beneficiaries were 2298. A total of 10 legal literacy camps and 20 Follow-up camps in 9 districts of Uttarakhand State and one district of Himachal

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Pradesh were conducted, which benefitted 1149 persons.

In 2007-08, RLEK conducted 50 camps in several districts of Jharkhand, in which 3486 people participated in these camps⁷⁹. Also it organized State Level Congregation of women with Higher Judiciary for solution finding, Itki, Ranchi from 17th- 19th January 2010, with the support of NALSA and JHALSA⁸⁰.

5. Legal Literacy Programmes by Jananeethi. Jananeethi is a registered NGO, which also aims at providing Human Rights education and legal literacy. The services of Jananeethi are primarily intended for the victims of violence, corruption and gender-racial discriminations. The recipients of its legal literacy include women, children,

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small peasantry, labour unions, unorganized workers, women's groups like *Kudumbasree*, Self Help Groups, NGOs, Community Organizations, Police, Service providers, Clinical practitioners, Media persons, Elected women representatives to local bodies, Students, and Government servants⁸¹.

6. Legal Aid Cells in Colleges. Most of the law universities and colleges have a special cell for promotion of legal aid and legal literacy. The function of these cells is to promote legal literacy, with the volunteering of the college students. For this purpose they organize various workshops and camps.

Chapter-8

EMPIRICAL SURVEY ON NLLM AND ANALYSIS.

Till now, we have become aware of the various government initiatives taken to implement the legal literacy programmes. The progress of NLSA, various SLSAs and NGOs towards that end has been taken into consideration in that regard. But the question still arises “to what extent the goal of legal awareness has been achieved”. This question explores the reality of the implementation of the legal literacy programmes. With the same view, an empirical survey was conducted by the author, via internet as well as by meeting the target groups.

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1. **Structure of Questionnaire.** The questionnaire contained 12 questions relating to the implementation of the NLLM as well as regarding awareness of rights of the target groups.
2. **Division of Target Groups.** The target groups were planned into following sections:
 1. *Informed group.* In this group, persons from academia, legal community, judges and some lawyers were included;
 2. *Semi-informed group.* In this group, students from colleges and schools were included; and
 3. *Ignorant Group.* In this group, the workers of NALSAR mess, security guards etc were included.

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In this survey of 25 days 52 persons responded. Analyzing the survey, the author finds that following vital facts in the report:

1. 76% of the target groups belonged to the urban area; 10 % from town and 14% from rural areas;
2. 45 persons (87% of the target groups) were unaware of the Mission;
3. When asked about the remedies that they would like prefer, 44% of them were in favour of approaching to the superior authority; and
4. Only 9 persons were aware of the functionaries involved in the implementation of the mission.

Keeping in mind the democratic set up of India, though the government has taken initiative to teach the masses about law and

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their benefits and rights arising out of it, still some lacuna lies in the implementation process. The empirical survey conducted by the author shows that still the Mission needs a strict scrutiny and needs to be implemented in more effective way. The Mission needs to be properly advertised, especially in rural areas. Also, the reports of the legal literacy camps and other legal aid services should be timely updated on the websites. Most of the states do not have the data on the legal literacy camps and legal aids.

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