

Access to Justice (GOI-UNDP) Project
Government of India
Ministry of Law and Justice
Department of Justice

Project duration: January 2013 - December 2017

Project States: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh

Background

The Department of Justice has been implementing a project on 'Access to Justice for Marginalized People' with UNDP support. The focus of the Project is on empowering the poor and marginalized to be aware of their rights and demand legal services, while at the same time supporting national and local justice delivery institutions to bring justice to the poor. In the previous phase, the Project reached out to 2 million people, provided trainings to 7000 paralegals and young lawyers, created simplified information, education and communication materials. With the support of UNDP a new phase of the Project has been initiated for a period of 5 years (2013-17). In this phase, the Project is building upon achievements of previous phase and continues to work on creation of demand for justice and ensuring its supply.

Project Focus:

- Strengthening access to justice for the poor by developing strategies that address barriers to accessing justice and empowering marginalised communities.
- Build capacities of national and local justice delivery institutions to bring justice to the poor.

Project Activities:

1. Training of Paralegal Volunteers (PLVs)

Odisha State Legal Services Authority(OSLSA) sought support from the project in the form of trainings to PLVs. Series of PLVs training programs conducted in Odisha, 300 PLVs were trained.

2. Incorporation of Legal literacy into NLMA and SIRD

- Project conducted legal literacy training programmes for faculty members and resource persons of National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) and State Institute of Rural Development, Uttar Pradesh (SIRD-UP).
- Two legal literacy training manuals prepared in Hindi for NLMA and SIRD-UP.
- Training provided to State Level and District Level Coordinators of NLMA on legal literacy.
- The DoJ and NLMA have signed a MoU on 2nd June 2015 for strengthening legal literacy in Project States.

3. Legal literacy campaign in Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh:

Department of Justice executed an MOA with SIRD-UP to initiate a Legal Literacy Campaign in 10 blocks of Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh for a period of three years.

4. Legal awareness campaign in Sehore, Madhya Pradesh:

Project extended its support to Bharat GyanVigyanSamiti (BGVS) to carry out a legal awareness campaign in 55 Panchayats of Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh.

5. Establishing Helpdesks for Juveniles in Observation Homes in Maharashtra

Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) established helpdesks in Observation Homes in Maharashtra to provide socio-legal guidance to those faced with the juvenile justice system and provide assistance. Project is extending its support to TISS established helpdesks.

6. Establishment of Voice Based Legal Information Kiosks:

50 voice based legal information kiosks installed in various DLSAs across Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand to provide legal information and raise legal awareness of the masses.

7. Support for innovative legal empowerment initiatives

Project activities have been initiated with five agencies namely AID India, Antodaya, National Law University, Odisha and Tata Institute of Social Sciences. These agencies are conducting legal aid and legal empowerment initiatives in three Project States - Jharkhand, Odisha and Maharashtra.

8. Law School based Legal Aid Clinics

TISS, Mumbai and NLU, Odisha established community based legal aid clinics to facilitate marginalized sections.

9. Legal awareness campaign in Sehore, Madhya Pradesh:

Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS) has initiated a legal awareness campaign in 55 Panchayats of Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh. Community awareness programmes through cultural methods such as folk theatre to enable legal awareness and legal literacy across Sehore District, MP.

10. Research and Study

Partners for Law in Development (PLD) is conducting a study of fast track courts in Delhi to assess how women friendly their procedures are. The pilot study is examining the gender sensitivity of court room procedures in rape cases, with the objective of providing recommendations for policy reform.

11. Short films on POCSO

The Project aims to develop two short films on Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012 – one for the purpose of training on the law along with a screening guide and the other for the purpose of spreading awareness about the law.

12. MOA with e-Governance Services India Ltd.

Project received a proposal from e-Governance Services India Ltd., Ministry of Communications and I.T. for spreading legal literacy through their Common Services Centers (CSCs) in Jharkhand. Proposal received necessary approvals, accordingly an MOA was signed between e-Governance Services India Ltd. and DoJ.