

Legal Clinics

Overview

The Constitution of India under Article 39A, 14 and 21 safeguards the right of a person to secure justice notwithstanding his/her economic, social or mental status. This means every person who comes in conflict with the criminal justice system has a constitutional right to have a lawyer to defend him/her efficiently. The National Legal Services Authority and its counterparts in all the states and districts have been set up to ensure the practical realization of this right. Far from the letter, the reality speaks otherwise. Many prisoners are often not able to avail legal aid due to uncoordinated efforts of various stakeholders, poor public defense and lack of information flow. This prejudices fair trial and cripples the realization of legal safeguards that are present for the welfare of a prisoner.

We strengthen information flow by setting up legal aid clinics inside prisons in collaboration with National Law Schools in West Bengal (NUJS) and Rajasthan (NLU-Jodhpur). Through the legal aid clinics, inmates are interviewed and their requests for legal representation are forwarded to the legal services authorities. We help in drafting applications and petitions on behalf of the inmates and provide them urgent legal advice and assistance. We often write to the Chief Judicial Magistrates, State Legal Services Authorities, High Court Judges, District Collector and State Human Rights Commissions for drawing their attention to individual cases. We train convicted paralegal volunteers to ensure smooth functioning of the clinic and deeper outreach of the work. We also streamline legal aid delivery at the appellate stage.

Featured Work:

1. Shadinota
2. Swadhikaar