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Legal Aid Index

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Concept Note

Access to Justice and Legal Aid are essential for efficient and effective functioning of judicial system. Article 39A of the Constitution of India also guarantees for equal justice and free legal aid. Government of India came up with exclusive legislation namely National Legal Services Authority Act, 1987 to fulfil the above objectives. National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been carrying out various activities at central level and at the state level through State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs). SLSAs carry out activities through District Legal Service Authorities and Taluka Legal Services Authorities with the support of NALSA and the State Government. We can see that various legal services authorities initiated several programmes to meet the objectives of the law in force. On the contrary, some states and districts are not putting much effort for legal and awareness activities in their respective regions.

Now the time has come to introduce Legal Aid Index which will rank the state for their activities, different programmes in the area of legal aid and awareness. This ranking will add element of competitiveness among states in execution of legal aid and awareness activities.

Mechanism

- NALSA will carry out the Legal Aid Indexing with the help of third party expert/firm.
- Every year NALSA will release the rankings based upon the third party report under its supervision and guidance.
- NALSA will give the annual award with financial support.

Criteria for Ranking under Legal Aid Index

- Number of activities done
- Nature of activities done
- New initiatives, innovation in legal aid and awareness
- Infrastructure
- Number of beneficiaries
- Numbers of lawyers, para legal volunteers involved
- Leading cases in previous years top 10 only
- State support for legal aid and awareness activities.
- Any other matter incidental thereto.