

R. K. Modh

Project Officer

(Officer in the cadre of Senior Civil Judge
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**GUJARAT STATE LEGAL
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PRESS NOTE

Gujarat State Legal Services Authority is amongst the few States who have dedicated the Legal Aid Defence Counsel System to the public at large. Gujarat State Legal Services Authority has always been the trailblazer for legal services activities, to name the few, organizing the first Lok Adalat; first 24 hours Free Legal Aid Clinic; having the fully functional panel of Pro Bono Legal Aid Lawyers in all the Districts of State of Gujarat; launching of 'Prisoner Information Module' (PIM) of GujLam Software and Menstrual Hygiene Awareness Programme in prisons across the State of Gujarat.

On 26th January, 2020, Office of 'Legal Aid Defense Counsel System', was Inaugurated at District Court, Surendranagar, at 5.00 p.m by the auspicious hands of Hon'ble Mr.Justice Vikram Nath, Chief Justice, High Court of Gujarat & Patron-in-Chief, Gujarat State Legal Services Authority in the august presence of Hon'ble Mr.Justice S.R. Brahmbhatt, Judge, High Court of Gujarat & Executive Chairman, Gujarat State Legal Services Authority; Hon'ble Mr. Justice R.M.Chhaya, Judge, High Court of Gujarat & Chairman, High Court Legal Services Committee; Hon'ble Mr. Justice Umesh A. Trivedi, Judge, High Court of Gujarat & Hon'ble Administrative Judge, Surendranagar District.


At the time of inauguration, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Vikram Nath, Chief Justice, High Court of Gujarat & Patron-in-Chief, Gujarat State Legal Services Authority as well as Hon'ble Mr. Justice S.R. Brahmbhatt, Judge, High Court of Gujarat & Executive Chairman, Gujarat State Legal Services Authority have insisted the Officials of the Office of the Legal Aid Defense Counsel System to ensure that the poor litigants may not deprive of Justice and get quality and speedy justice.

The Legal Aid Defense Counsel System, is a Pilot Project for providing Legal Aid in Criminal matters (in Sessions Cases, at the first instance) that has been envisaged by the National Legal Services Authority, to make legal services more professional and to provide quality legal services in Criminal matters to eligible, on the line of Public Defender System.

This system will involve salaried Lawyers with Assistants. **The lawyers engaged for the system shall not be taking any private cases.** The said unit would be dealing *exclusively with the legal aid work in criminal matters*. At first instance, (1) Mr. Vinodkumar L. Rahod, Advocate, having experience of more than 10 years as an Advocate has been appointed as Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel, with monthly salary of Rs. 60,000/- ; (2) Mr. Nareshbhai L. Makwana, Advocate, having experience of more than 7 years as an Advocate has been appointed as Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel, with monthly salary of Rs. 40,000/- and (3) Mr. Narendrasinh J. Zala, Advocate, having experience of 1 year as an Advocate has been appointed as Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel, with monthly salary of Rs. 30,000/- . These appointments are purely on contract basis and initially for a period of two years.

Legal Aid Defense Counsel Office shall provide legal services to accuses/convicts,

- Legal Advice and Assistance
- Conducting trial and appeals in Sessions Courts.
- Handling Bail applications in Sessions Courts
- Any other legal aided work related to Sessions Courts


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