

SA
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*A Pro Bono Research
Project*

Give time. Transform lives.

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What is SAHYOG?

SAHYOG find its roots in the principle of access to justice to all, which is deeply ingrained in the Constitution of India. As per Article 39A, the State shall ensure that justice is not denied to any citizen due to economic or other disabilities. Pursuant to this core Constitutional principle, the Legal Services Authorities Act was enacted in 1987 to provide free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society and to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are equally available to all citizens.

Over time, lawyers have also bolstered this aspect of the Constitutional ethos, which is further embedded as a moral obligation under the “Standards of Professional Conduct and Etiquette” by increasingly providing free legal assistance to the indigent and oppressed. However, the burden of work amidst the lakhs of pending cases in India often acts as a limitation for accomplished lawyers to advocate the cause of the needy.

SAHYOG, as an initiative, proposes to ease this restraint by connecting student research assistants to lawyers and organizations who take up pro bono assignments with the willingness and noble intention to serve. These research assistants will be students from the West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences who have the grit and fervour to disseminate their learnings among those who are not as privileged yet have an equal right to justice. We aim to create a platform for both lawyers and students to contribute meaningfully to the society through mutual cooperation.

How will SAHYOG work?

The lawyer's team will reach out to the administrators of team SAHYOG for a particular matter. A group of two or more students will be allotted to research on the legal issues of each matter as

required by the lawyer. From thereon, all communication regarding the assignment will take place between the lawyer and student research assistants.

What is the scope of assistance provided by SAHYOG?

Members of SAHYOG will be carrying out thorough research on the legal questions posed by the lawyers. Research will be communicated either through e-mail or on call, as required. The number of students allocated and the time required to be invested by each of them will be taken into consideration before work allocation. It will be tailored to the lawyer's requirements and urgency of the matter. The assistance of the team will not be available in the month of November and April owing to university examinations.

Our Profiles:

Dakshita Chopra is a fifth year student at NUJS. She has been a member of the NUJS-HSF Bridge Project, which aids in the rehabilitation of street children amongst other socially relevant causes. She is also a recipient of the gold medal in the Duke of Edinburgh's award program. Under the programme, she volunteered at the Cheshire Home and was given an orientation on imparting basic life skills to individuals with cerebral palsy and other mental disabilities. She has a keen interest in mooting and is also passionate about mediation and negotiation. She has participated in the Oxford Intellectual Property Moot Court, Leiden University Children's Rights Moot Court as well the INADR Mediation Tournament, where she was a finalist. She also holds an interest in researching and writing and is currently Associate Editor in the Journal of Indian Law and Society.

Adya Jha is a fifth year student at NUJS. She has been involved with the organisation of Increasing Diversity and Increasing Access (IDIA) for three years now. Under the programme, she has assisted in activities related to sensitization, mentoring and training underprivileged students. Presently, she is on the Advisory Board of the West Bengal chapter of IDIA. She has also worked with the Access to Justice Programme of the Ministry of Law and Justice, NUJS-HSF Bridge Project and NUJS Legal Aid Camp. Additionally, she has always balanced a strong academic record along with her involvement in extra curricular activities. She is a recipient of the N.R. Madhava Menon Gold Medal for Media Law. She has received awards at various competitions such as Leiden Sarin International Aviation Moot Court Competition, MC Chagla Constitutional Law Moot Court Competition and INADR Mediation Tournament. She is also passionate about writing and was a member of the NUJS Law Review.