

PRESS NOTE
National Legal Services Authority

**“Empowering women through Legal Awareness”- A Campaign launched
by Justice N.V. Ramana**

15th August, 2020
New Delhi

A Campaign for empowering women has been launched by Hon’ble Mr. Justice N.V. Ramana, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Executive Chairman, NALSA today on the occasion of 74th Independence Day. It is a Joint initiative of National Legal Services Authority and National Commission for Women.

Under the Project, legal literacy programmes for women will be carried out in 285 districts in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Under the Project, 570 legal awareness programmes are to be held with the overarching objective to make women aware of the relevant rights and protections available under the various laws and to enhance their capacities so that they are able to advance their rights and navigate the judicial and administrative set up for actualisation of their rights.

In his Presidential address, Hon’ble Mr. Justice N.V. Ramana said that the source of inequity within our society often lies in lack of awareness and resources to take advantage of the laws.

His Lordship also said that the absence of information and legal awareness often prevents women from taking advantage of progressive policies. Therefore, broad-based awareness campaigns must be parallelly undertaken along with policy changes.

His Lordship stated that historically, women have been discriminated due to patriarchal ideology, rampant tradition and norms. However, with the liberalisation and rejuvenation of women empowerment movements, the status of women has transformed. With economic independence and education, women have a better opportunity to compete with men in any field.

His Lordship highlighted that the traditional roles are changing within the family, as is the structure of the family itself. There is no doubt that we are in the midst of a great revolution in the history of women. The evidence is everywhere; the voice of women is increasingly heard in Parliament and courts.

His Lordship further informed that the Legal Services Authorities through their large network spreading across every district of the country, have been carrying out various legal aid programmes for women. 1.96 lakh legal awareness programmes held in 2019 were attended by around 2.68 crore people. In almost every programme, women and girls participated. In 2019, through legal services clinics, assistance was provided to 14.27 lacs persons which also included women. In Legal services camps, people are connected to their rights and entitlements under various laws and welfare schemes. In 2019, 13.62 lac persons were connected to their entitlements. Thousands of them were women. Apart from this, 2.65 lac women were provided representation before courts and tribunals. With respect to amount of compensation being paid to victims of acid attack, there is an increase of 97.03% since 2016-2017.

Justice N.V. Ramana informed that in legal aid movement, women are playing a major role. 12,155 female panel lawyers and 24,000 para legal volunteers are enrolled across the country, and they have been contributing a lot from legal awareness to legal assistance.

On this occasion, NALSA's "Handbook on laws relating to Women" was released. The NALSA Handbook covers laws relating to women in easy to understand language. Apart from this, other IEC material consisting of seven booklets was also released by Justice N.V. Ramana.

On this occasion, Ms. Rekha Sharma, Chairperson, National Commission for Women (NCW) in her address said that women empowerment comes only from awareness. Unless women know of their legal rights, there can be no women empowerment. NCW has been regularly conducting legal awareness programmes but this time in collaboration with NALSA we aim to reach out to women in every district creating legal awareness among women living in remote areas".

Shri Ashok Kumar Jain, Member Secretary, NALSA welcomed all the dignitaries and participants. He gave overview of the project "Empowering Women through Legal Awareness"

The event was also attended by Executive Chairpersons of eight SLSAs; Ms. Meeta Rajivlochan, Member Secretary, NCW; Officers of NALSA and NCW; Secretaries of DLSAs; Nodal Officers and panel lawyers.