

REGIONAL MEET OF STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITIES
OF NORTH-EASTERN REGION

27th September 2017 at State Convention Centre Shillong

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Judge Supreme Court of India and Executive Chairman, National Legal Services Authority today stressed on the need to provide legal services to people especially those from below the poverty line (BPL).

Addressing the inaugural session of the Regional Meet of the State Legal Services Authorities of the North-Eastern Region organised by the National Legal Services Authority held at Shillong, Justice Gogoi said that 51% of the population of India is below the age of 35. Youth in India is between 15 and 29 years old. "You have about 50 crores population of this Country 15-and 29 years. This is a very volatile situation and given the scenario today, the need is to reach out to these people"

He added " Even if we succeed in reaching out to 20% of people BPL, I think the very existence of NALSA would be justified"

" What is that you have to do to reach out... if we have reached out, upto what extent? If we have not, what should we do about it- is the basic theme of today's meeting," he said.

Referring to the Legal Services Authority Act, he said the aims and objectives of the act is to provide legal services, which includes legal aid.

“ Keeping in mind with the definition, you have the NALSA’s motto, which is access to justice and it does not mean access to Courts,” he said.

He asked whether the 10 schemes that NALSA has framed are adequate?

“ Should we try to understand what is happening in the ground, what is happening to BPL people so that they can provide inputs which will be some basis for law making and the legislature?,” he said.

“ This is one area which I would like to debate with all of you, because you are the stakeholders, torchbearers, you are the people who are implementing the NALSA schemes,” he told the gathering of lawyers and Legal Services Authority functionaries.

Addressing the Chairmen and Secretaries of DLSAs, his Lordship said “ You are a busy judge, but you have to do this, sacrifice, hard work and commitment. This is the only quality that the Judges have, we do it everyday, in and out, without being acknowledged, but acknowledgement does not come in a way” he said.

Meanwhile, Justice Gogoi informed that a similar meet is also proposed to be held in Chandigarh for the North Zone and other eight states- Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

Hon’ble Mr Justice Dinesh Maheswari, Chief Justice, High Court of Meghalaya in his address, emphasized on the role of Para Legal volunteers in percolating the work of NALSA and the SLAs. His Lordship stated they are the backbone of the process of implementation of NALSA schemes. His Lordship also lauded the

Meghalaya SLSA for their initiating public interest litigation, particularly with regard to undertrial prisoners.