

**Full text of the speech delivered by**  
**Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India Shri Justice N V**  
**Ramana**  
**on the occasion of**  
**LEGAL SERVICES DAY**  
09 November, 2021

1. At the outset, I would like to begin by greeting my Brother Justice U. U. Lalit on his birthday. I wish him many happy returns of the day. What a coincidence, he is born to help the needy.
2. It gives me immense pleasure to be a part of this vibrant gathering. I am extremely happy to see all these young and enthusiastic faces celebrating one of the most significant days.
3. We are celebrating festivals these days. Festivals such as Dussehra and Deepawali. Under the aegis of NALSA, we also celebrated 02 October, 2021 by way of launching the campaign for legal awareness. We are going to observe its conclusion on 14 November, 2021. We in the Supreme Court are also going to celebrate the Constitution Day on 26 and 27 November, 2021.
4. I am reminded of Swami Vivekananda's words-  
*“Do not look back, look forward! Infinite enthusiasm, infinite daring and infinite patience, then alone can great deeds be achieved.”*
5. Swami ji also said : *“Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached”*. The street play performed a while ago is reflective of the true spirit of what Swamiji had said. I commend the efforts taken by the young performers.
6. This day marks the beginning of our journey towards achieving the constitutional goal of Access to Justice. On this day in 1995, the Legal Services Authorities Act came into force and paved the way for entire framework of Legal Services Authorities. I am glad to see such a grand celebration of Legal Services Day.

7. I must remind you all that while the concept of legal aid was institutionalized in 1995, the actual legal aid movement started much before our Independence and during our freedom struggle. Several legal stalwarts used to offer their pro-bono legal services to our freedom fighters and fought against the might of colonial powers.
8. Growth of this legal aid movement reflected in our Constitution, wherein the expression 'Justice: Social, Economic and Political' finds special place in the Preamble. It reflects the seriousness of the Members of the Constituent Assembly about the notion of Justice and its ambit.
9. Earlier, the idea of legal aid was to be confined to court rooms. Notions of access to justice were understood from traditional viewpoints. But, over the course of 26 years, the legal services authorities have broken the traditional notions of legal aid and have given an expanded meaning to access to justice. Today, the role of legal services authorities is not constrained merely to the provision of court based legal representation. They also work towards legal awareness, legal literacy, social action litigation, settlement of disputes through Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Mechanisms, among others.
10. This continuous upward trend of reaching an amicable solution through alternate dispute resolution mechanisms would proportionally reduce the burden on courts. Considering the significance of the same, as a part of today's celebrations, we inaugurated the new premises of Mediation Center of the Supreme Court and the new office of NALSA equipped with all the modern facilities, in the Supreme Court complex.
11. Coming to today's program, I am extremely glad to see all these young law students who have shown enthusiasm in participating in the moot court competitions organized by the legal services authorities. I honestly feel that you all are doubly privileged. Firstly, you are privileged to be educated in the premier institutes

of the country, where information and knowledge is available at your fingertips. Secondly, being educated in law, you are empowered to be the voices of those, who have none. It is your duty to remain alert about the social realities around you and be mindful about your role in responding to the same.

12. I find it immensely beneficial for the law students that through the legal services authorities, they are coming face to face with grass-root realities of our country. What I find more beneficial is that these students are becoming major players in the legal aid movement. They are essential for expanding the outreach of legal services to every corner of the country.
13. Your decision to join the legal aid movement will pave the path for a great career. This will help you inculcate empathy, understanding and a sense of selflessness. Remember, unlike other professions, the legal profession is not about profit maximization, but about service to the society.
14. Today we have also launched the iOS version of the Legal Services application. You may recall that NALSA had launched an Android application a few months ago. Now with the launch of iOS application its reach has further expanded.
15. Today, NALSA's online portal opened its services in more Indian languages. This is a commendable achievement in removing the language barrier, leading the path towards accessibility.
16. One more initiative, which I would like to commend is the launching of this short film festival on legal awareness. I have been informed that through this competition, the authorities are aiming to tap the potential of young and energetic school going students. I believe that this initiative would provide an opportunity to connect with the society to the young generation. This competition would open a window for these students to bridge the existing inequities within our society. I firmly

believe that this competition would prepare future torch bearers of the legal aid movement.

17. I am very happy to see our Law Minister's personal inclination towards the progress of legal services authorities and I hope that under his leadership, the existing roadblocks in the growth of legal services authorities including the infrastructural issues will be taken care of with prompt intervention. I am glad that he fully understands the hard work put in by Judges.

18. I congratulate my brother Justice U. U. Lalit under whose dynamic leadership, the legal services authorities are aiming to reach every single corner of the country. I have learnt that he is actively monitoring the status of the ongoing Awareness Campaign and continuously guiding and motivating the workforce. He has travelled nook and corner of the country to spread awareness as part of this campaign.

19. Before I end, I am reminded of what Martin Luther King had once said. I quote-

*“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable, every step towards the goal of Justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle, the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals”*

20. Our journey so far could not have been possible without the efforts put in by various stakeholders: the legal services authorities, the panel lawyers and the paralegal volunteers. I express my deep appreciation for your dedication to the cause of justice. You all are absolutely irreplicable in our goal to achieve absolute justice for all. Thank you very much for your cooperation and hard work.

21. Namaskar.

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