

## **NEW SCHEME FOR SETTING UP OF LEGAL AID CLINIC IN ALL DISTRICTS OF THE STATE OF PUNJAB (State Plan)**

The State Govt. is committed to take effective measures for Prevention of Atrocities against the members of the Scheduled Castes. This can be possible only by taking appropriate measures for spreading Legal Literacy and legal awareness amongst the people and in particular to educate weaker section of the society about the rights, benefits and privileges guaranteed by Social Welfare Legislation and providing free legal aid to poor and needy persons of the State by establishing the free legal aid clinics.

Under Legal Aid Services Act, 1987 free legal aid is to be provided to a member of Scheduled Castes, a women or a child, a mentally ill or otherwise disabled persons, beggar, industrial workman, victims of natural calamities without any income limit and every other persons with annual income not more 50,000/- per annum.

The Welfare Department proposes to set up Legal Aid Clinics in association with the Punjab Legal Services Authority, Chandigarh at all districts headquarters to be housed in Ambedkar Bhawans so that the Scheduled Caste persons can easily approach these clinics for getting legal advice free of cost. Such clinics would provide legal advice through dedicated legal aid lawyers, retired judicial officers, police officers, teachers and professors who would be involved as counselors for such purposes to poor and needy people. As it is often seen that the Scheduled Castes people avoid to the Clutches of greedy advocates, touts operating in Court's Complex who often misguide the poor people in order to take financial gain from them. Sometimes due to lack of funds a needy person cannot have access to justice.

Twenty Legal Aid Clinics will be set up on the pattern of Delhi Legal Services Authority in twenty districts in the State of Punjab. The timing of these clinics shall be from 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. with a lunch break from 1.00 P.M. to 2.00 P.M. These clinics will work five days of the week and will be remained closed on Saturday's and Sunday's. Three counselors will sit in a day turn by turn for two hours each.