



LEGAL SERVICES, PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION & PARA- LEGAL SERVICES, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2006). By S.S.Sharma, Central Law Agency, Allahabad. Pp.440. Price Rs. 165/-.

THE CONCEPT of legal aid, which plays a significant role in the administration of justice, is not charity, but a constitutional obligation on the part of the state by virtue of article 39A of the Constitution of India, which came into force with the 42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. Article 39A provides that the state should ensure equal opportunity to all for securing justice so that no person can be denied justice only on the ground of economic disability. Along with the Constitution, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Code of Civil Procedure have also made its amendments so as to provide free legal aid to its citizens. The Parliament has also enacted the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 which came into force on November 9, 1995 for the same cause. Further the bar, bench, law schools, voluntary organizations etc., have also extended their full co- operation in implementation of the national legal services programme. But apart from all the above said organizations, any scheme or policy of the government is conveyed to the people through text books which has always helped the government in achieving its goal.

The author of the book has made a sincere attempt in writing a comprehensive book addressing all the important aspects and also provided comparative perspectives. Chapters 1, 2 and 4 of the book focus on the elementary concepts like the meaning, nature, scope and the history of legal aid in India. The author has also made a sincere effort in comparing the Indian concept of legal aid with almost 34 countries throughout the world. Chapter 3 of the book discusses about interlink between the legal aid and human rights at the national and international level and quotes the relevant provisions of international conventions in a thought provoking manner.

In chapter 5 the author has dealt with the legal aid under the Constitution, Civil Procedure Code and Code of Criminal Procedure. Chapter 6 to 13 discusses the provisions of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The author has mentioned powers and duties of the National Legal Services Authority, State Legal Services Authorities, District Legal Services Authorities and various activities at the state level. Further he mentions about the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee, High Court Legal Services Committee and Taluk Legal Services Committees. Their



respective powers and duties have been discussed in detail. The eligibility and procedure for legal services and procedure before *Lok Adalat* are also explained. But under chapter 13, the author could have elaborated on the para legal services because this sector is closest to the people who play an important role in implementing the legal aid programme as a whole. More so when the title of the book also mentions it. What has been given is just a gist of para legal services and the functioning of the social service sector. Chapters 14 and 15 clarifies the concept of public interest litigation as a 'strategic arm' of the legal aid movement and is intended to bring justice within the reach of the poor masses who constitute the low visibility area of humanity. The author has also tried to explain the impact of public interest litigation and the relaxation of principle of *locus standi*.

Chapters 16 to 18 explain development of legal profession in India and in the United States. Along with it, the author has also discussed the clinical teaching of legal aid as a part of the law school curriculum. Finally the author has dealt with the implementation of the legal aid scheme through the voluntary organizations and how the works of these services of the social action groups are recognised.

The author has covered almost each and every aspect of legal aid; provided all the latest and relevant information and also discussed important decisions of the Supreme Court and high courts. Practical experience gained by the author as a member of the Rajasthan High Court Legal Services Committee and the Director of the Legal Aid Clinic of the JNV university must have helped the author in identifying and addressing the real issued involved.

The author has used a very simple language. The table of contents, table of cases along with the appendices provided in the book make it handy for immediate reference. The book has an attractive get-up with good printing and also reasonably priced. The book will be very useful to the students of law, teachers, researchers, members of the bar and the bench.

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