



**Annual Report**

**(2018-2019)**

**National Legal Aid Services Organization**

**Law & Justice Division**

**Ministry of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs**

## National Legal Aid Services Organization

Law and Justice Division

Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs

**N**ational Legal Aid Services Organization is a statutory government organization. The

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has enacted "Legal Aid Services Act – 2000" to provide legal aid for the litigants who are incapable of seeking justice due to financial insolvency, destitution, helplessness and for various socio-economic conditions.

Under the Act, the government established "National Legal Aid Services Organization" and set up District Legal Aid Offices in each district's Judge Court premises to ensure the protection of the poor, helpless people's access to justice. In the District Legal Aid Office, the government has appointed "Legal Aid Officer" who is a judge in the rank of Assistant Judge / Senior Assistant Judge. To ensure government legal aid services in the country's highest court, the government has established "The Supreme Court Legal Aid Office" in 2015.

Moreover, to ensure legal aid in root level, Upazila Legal Aid Committee and Union Legal Aid Committee have been constituted at the union and upazila level. Special committees have been formed in the Chowki Court and labor courts. The government is providing legal assistance to the marginalized people to ensure access to justice through these committees and Legal Aid Offices, under the supervision of "**National Legal Aid Services Organization**".

## 1. Vision, Mission and Strategic objectives with key functions of NLASO

### 1.1.1 Vision

Ensuring equal access to justice for all, facilitating the path to justice.

### 1.1.2 Mission

Provide legal assistance with high quality to the poor people according to the law.

### 1.1.3 Strategic Objectives:

- A. Access to justice;
- B. Ensure high quality legal assistance.

### 1.1.4 Functions

- (a) to set up criteria in determining the eligibility of the litigants who are incapable of seeking justice due to financial insolvency, destitution, helplessness and for various socio-economic conditions for receiving legal aid and make procedure for providing legal aid;
- (b) to take projects for expanding, upgrading and promoting legal aid programmes;]
- (c) to take and administer educational and research activities for providing legal aid;
- (cc) to facilitate training for the officers and employees of the Organization for ensuring legal aid services; (ccc) with a view to ensuring legal aid services, to facilitate training

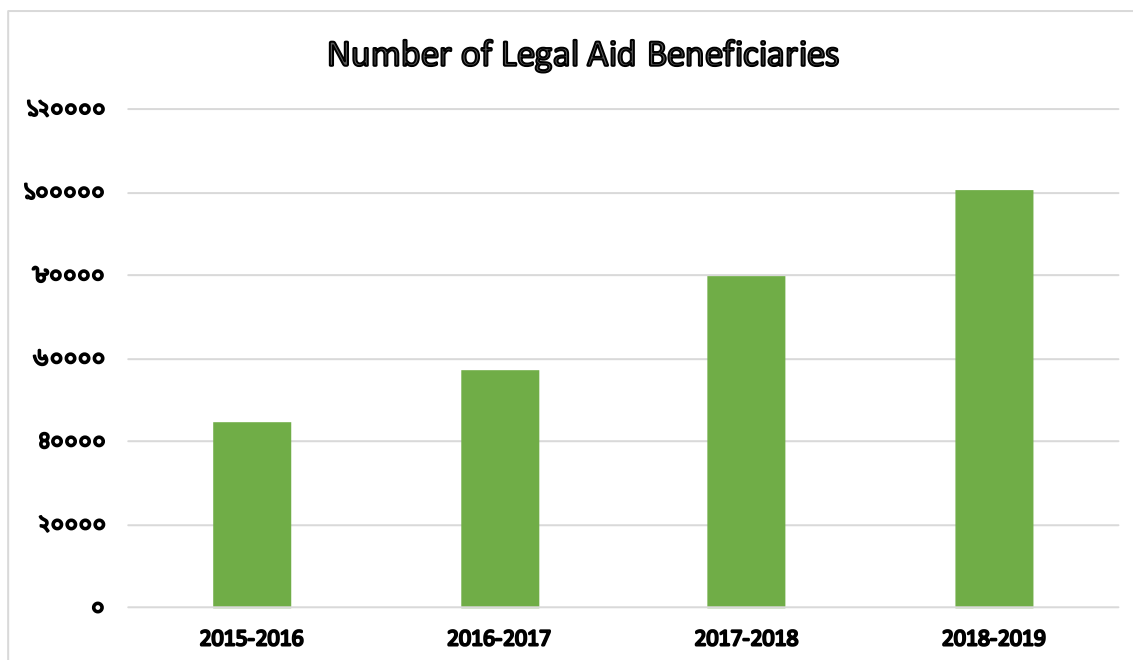
for the members of the Supreme Court Committee, District Committees, Special Committees, Upazila Committees or Union Committees;]

- (d) with a view to creating public awareness on legal aid, to publicize it widely through radio, television, newspaper and other media;
- (e) to consider the applications or petitions rejected by the District Committees or Special Committees;
- (f) to supervise and control the activities of the Supreme Court Committee, District Committees and the Special Committees, and to make local inspection of their activities;
- (g) with a view to creating public awareness on legal rights and responsibilities, to take the following measures, namely:-
  - (i) to disseminate legal education;
  - (ii) to make legal information easily available;
  - (iii) to take initiatives to raise the percentage of the people of basic legal knowledge;
  - (iv) to ensure easy access to justice;
  - (v) to publish book-lets, pamphlets, etc. containing information on legal aid, along with arranging meetings, seminars and workshops;
- (h) to do any other act necessary for carrying out the aforesaid functions and duties.

## 2. The achievements of Government Legal Aid Services in the financial year 2018-2019 :

### 2.1 To provide legal assistance to the poor and helpless people

To provide legal aid for the litigants who are incapable of seeking justice due to financial insolvency, destitution, helplessness and for various socio -economic conditions, sixty four District Legal Aid Office, Supreme Court Legal Aid Office, two Labour Court Legal Aid Cell and National Helpline Call Center works to ensure government legal aid services under National Legal Aid Services Organization. A total number of 100806 beneficiaries have received government legal aid services through National Legal Aid Services Organization (NLASO), during the financial year 2018-2019. After reviewing the data for the last four financial years, it has been seen that the number of beneficiaries is constantly increasing year by year:



## 2.2 “National Legal Aid Day” Celebration

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has declared **28 April** as “**National Legal Aid Day**” in 2013, with a view to spreading the message of government legal aid activities at the grassroots level and to create greater public awareness about government legal services. The National Legal Aid Day is celebrated annually on 28 April, in a dignified manner by organizing rallies, legal aid fairs, blood donation programs, walkways, meetings and seminars across the country. Like every year, National Legal Aid Day is celebrated across the country with huge enthusiasm on 28 April 2019. This year, the theme of the day is announced as:

“বঙ্গবন্ধুর সোনার বাংলায় শেখ হাসিনার অবদান  
বিনামূল্যে লিগ্যাল এইডে আইনি সেবাদান”

In order to celebrate the day, the National Legal Aid Services Organization, under Law and Justice Division, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, took a huge initiative. Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh inaugurated the inaugural ceremony at the central level of National Legal Aid Day . Members of the Jatiya Sangsad, domestic and foreign diplomats, donor agencies, high-ranking government officials, judges, lawyers, leaders, legal aid panel lawyers, law and human rights activists, journalists, civil society representatives, print and electronic media were present in the celebration of National Legal Aid Day event.

## Honor award for the Best Legal Aid Office, the Best Panel Lawyer And the Best Non-Government Organization

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, enacted 'Legal Aid Services Act' - 2000, to provide legal aid to the people who are unable to get justice for financial constraint and various socio-economic reasons. The quality of standardized "legal aid services" depends largely on the legal aid offices' efficient office management and the Panel Lawyers' professionalism and expertise. At the same time, the government as well as the Non-Government organizations (NGO) are playing a constructive role in expanding the legal aid program at grass root level. Therefore, to ensure the transparency, accountability, mobility, and extension of government legal aid programs, for the first time, in three categories, the Best Legal Aid Office, the Best Panel Lawyer and the Best Non-Government Organization have been nominated to provide Honor Award as an incentive in recognition of their works.

**"National Legal Aid Day" 2019 –**

**Best Non-Government Organization (NGO) category:**

Best NGO: **Legal Assistance to Helpless Prisoners and Persons (LAHP)**



প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনা ঢাকায় হোটেল ইন্টারকন্টিনেন্টালে জাতীয় আইনগত সহায়তা দিবস উপলক্ষে আয়োজিত অনুষ্ঠানে বিভিন্ন ক্যাটাগরিতে বিশেষ সম্মাননাপ্রাপ্তদের ক্রেস্ট প্রদান করেন (রবিবার, ২৮ এপ্রিল ২০১৯)।- পিআইডি

**Best Panel Lawyer category:**

Advocate Most. Fatima Begum, Narsingdi Legal Aid Office.



**Best Legal Aid Office category:**

District Legal Aid Office, Barisal.





To celebrate National Legal Aid Day, each district throughout the country, decorated with banners, posters and festoons in public places to create mass awareness about legal aid services. Leaflets have been distributed among the people. Editorials, articles, etc. on the topic of legal aid services have been published in various newspapers. Documentaries and talk shows about government legal aid programs have been aired on Bangladesh Television and other private satellite television. In addition to the central programs, Sixty-four district legal aid committees have organized rallies, discussion meetings, legal aid fairs, voluntary blood donation programs, awarding best panel lawyer awards, postaring and publishing magazines or walls, short films or documentary exhibitions. In addition, NGOs and organizations those are working on law and human rights have carried out various programs on the day at grass root level.

## 2.2 Legal advice

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh asserts the highest importance of access to justice for all, especially for the poor, to provide legal services in the simplest way through digital Helpline Center. On 28th April 2016, National Legal Aid Day, Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh inaugurated the "National Helpline Toll Free Number-16430 ". Since the inauguration of the toll free 16430 Helpline number, countless helpless and mass people from all over the country have been making phone calls for legal advice and information. From this call center, legal advice, legal information and legal counseling services are being provided during the official time. Such Free Legal Advice is making an effective contribution to protecting the legal rights of people. In

this financial year, 33979 people have received legal advice and information services from this call center.

| 2018-2019<br>Fiscal year | Statistics for legal advice recipients from the National Helpline Call Center |       |       |              |       |
|--------------------------|---|-------|-------|--------------|-------|
|                          | Women   | Male  | Child | Third Gender | Total |
|                          | 7767  | 25495 | 651   | 16           | 33979 |



*National Helpline  
for Government  
Legal Aid  
Services*

**16430**

Legal advice is provided not only from the call center, but also from the District Legal Aid Office,



the Supreme Court Legal Aid Office and the Labor Court Legal Aid Cell offices. As per Legal Aid Policy, 2014, any person can avail legal advice/ counseling services under the Government Legal Aid Program. A total of **54,575** people have received legal advice/ counseling services during the fiscal year 2018-2019.

## 2.2 Implementation Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Alternative dispute resolutions have become popular worldwide. Resolving alternative disputes as a decision which is reached with the consent of the opposition parties in a peaceful way. There was no other law-abiding institution for conducting mediation proceedings in Bangladesh except Court. In 2015, District Legal Aid Office under National Legal Aid Services Organization is introduced as the first law-accredited institution that can resolve disputes between the parties through mediation process. In order to implement this objective, the Honorable Minister of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, raised the amendment bill of the Legal Aid Services Act in 2013, and unanimously the bill was passed by the Parliament and “legal aid officer” was inserted in law with the empowerment of

Alternative Dispute Resolutions. Subsequently, the Law and Justice Division of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs issued a Gazette Notification on February 7, 2015 for "Legal Aid Services (Legal Advice and Alternative Dispute Resolution) Rules, 2015". Under these laws and rules, the District Legal Aid Officer is empowered to settle the disputes and cases through mediation in an alternative manner, both before and after the litigation.

During the fiscal year 2018-2019, the District Legal Aid Offices successfully mediate the disputes of parties among 10,375 beneficiaries with realization of money 8,25,02,270 taka (Eight core twenty five lac two thousand seventy taka) . Moreover, ADR beneficiary parties with the consent of each-other, withdrew 243 ongoing cases from the court.



*Mediation Session in the Rajshahi Legal Aid Office*



*A picture of Successful  
Mediation:  
Mymensingh Legal Aid  
Office;*

*Through successful  
mediation, the three  
innocent children  
returned to their  
parents with smile.*

## 2.2

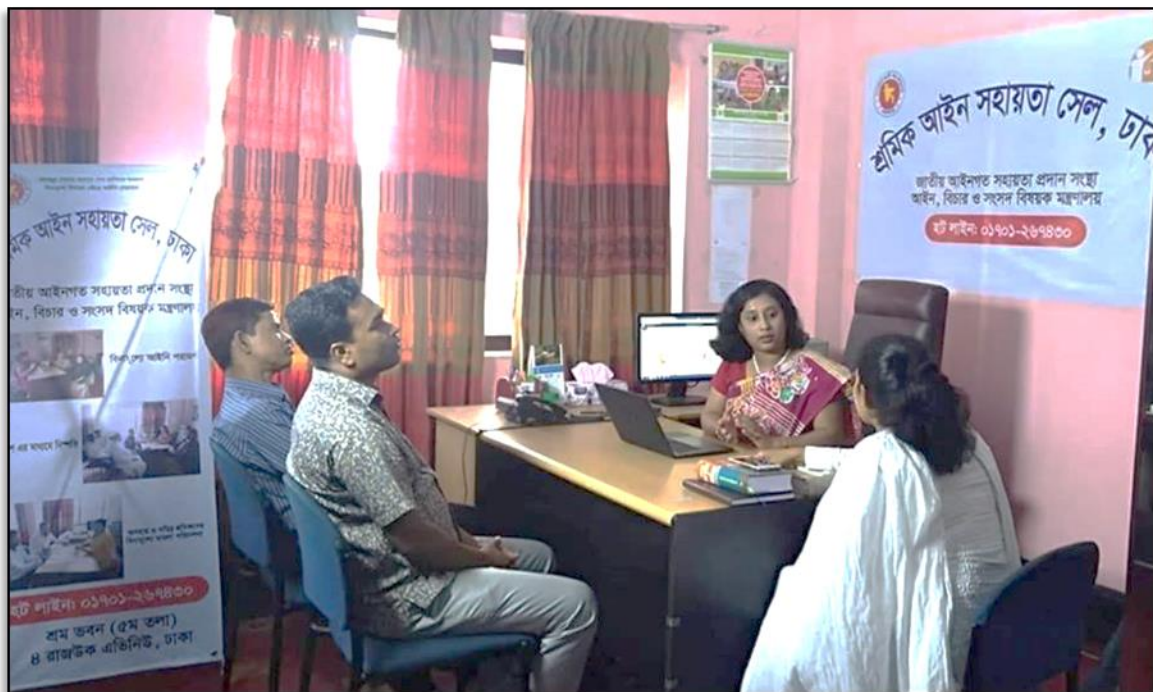
## Legal Aid to the Supreme Court

In 2015, the "Supreme Court Legal Aid Office" was officially established near the Bar Council Bhaban in the Bangladesh Supreme Court premises.

During the fiscal year 2018-2019, the Supreme Court Legal Aid Office provides legal advice to 5077 persons and provides legal assistance to 199 cases.

## 2.6 Labor Court Legal Aid Cell

In order to ensure legal assistance to the helpless workers, the Labor Court Legal Aid Cell was set up in Dhaka's Labor Court building from 2013 and another Legal Aid Cell was established in Chittagong in 2016. During the financial year 2018-2019, Dhaka and Chittagong Labor Court Legal Aid Cell provides legal advice to 3429 helpless workers, provides legal assistance in 412 labor cases, and undertakes 535 mediation initiatives among the workers and the owners parties. Through mediations, 89,06,205/- (Eighty Nine Lac Six thousand two hundred five) taka has been recovered for the helpless labors.



A mediation session is going on in the Dhaka Labor Court Legal Aid Cell

## 2.7 Training for Officers

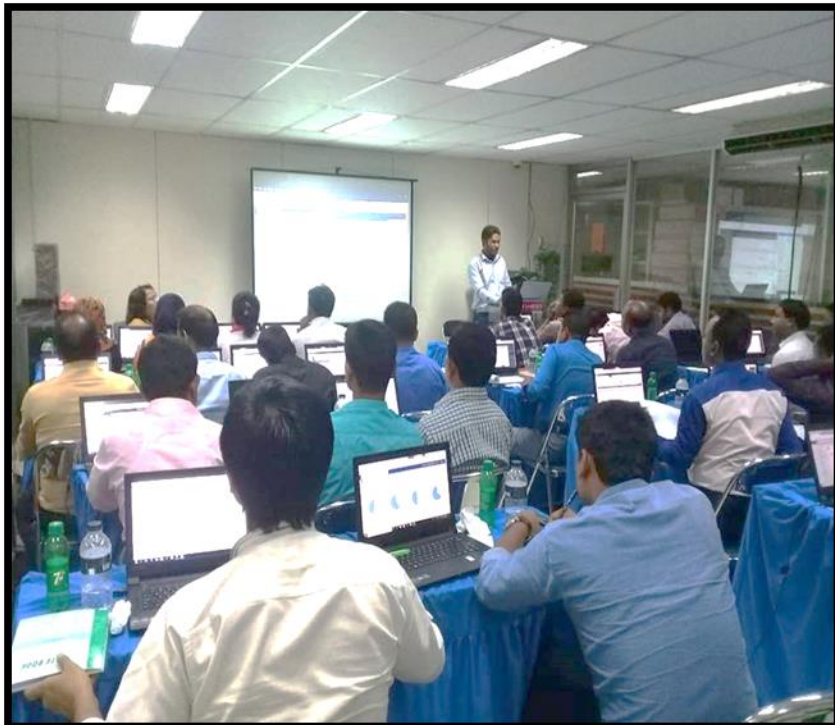
With the aim of ensuring quality legal aid services, NLASO, with the support of its own and various development partners' fund, arranged training program for legal aid officers. In the year, training completed on the topic of legal aid office management, ICT, finance management, mediation etc. 328 officers have been trained during the financial year 2018-2019.



*Restorative Justice Approach in Mediation  
Picture of Training Inauguration  
(Judicial Administration Training Institute: 26-27 June, 2019)*

## 2.8 Training for Staff

National Legal Aid Services Organization arranged training not only for officers but also for staffs with the goal of building skilled employees. During the financial year 2018-2019, NLASO by its' own and project & development partners' fund arranged training on office management software, financial management etc. In the training workshop, trainees have experienced practical knowledge to increase his personal capacity.



*Picture on Digital Database and Office Management Software Training Program, arranged for staffs*



## 2.9 Sensitization Panel Lawyers on Legal Aid Services

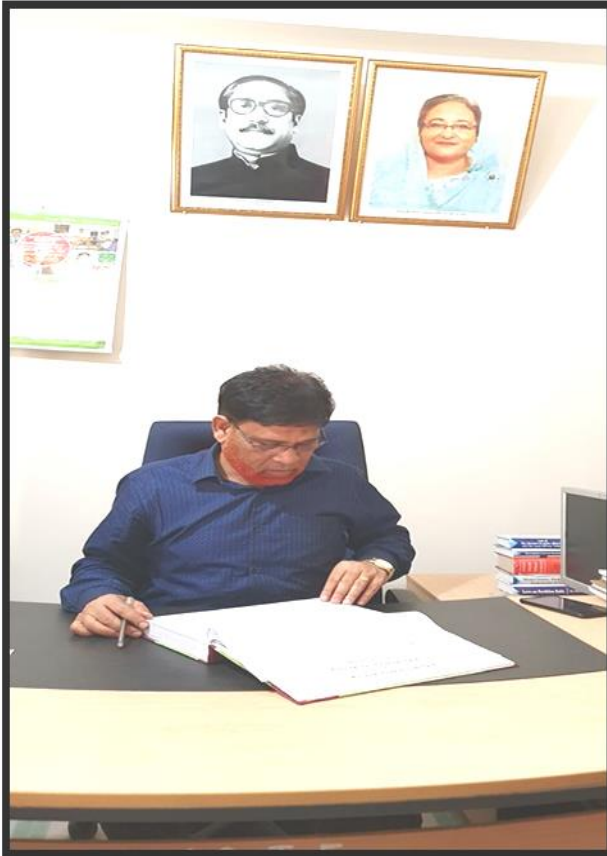
The role of panel lawyers is very important to implement government legal aid programs. It is impossible to ensure quality legal aid services if a panel lawyer deals the cases with negligence with prodigy. In order to implement this objective, various meetings, workshops are organized at the district level to motivate the panel lawyers in this service. During the fiscal year 2018-2019, 378 panel lawyers participated in the sensitization program across the country.



*Meeting with  
Panel Lawyers at  
Kishorgonj  
District Legal  
Aid Office*

## 2.10 Inspection Legal Aid Office

NLASO inspected eight legal aid office in the financial year to ensure the activities



undertaken at district level through the District Legal Aid Office. Such inspection makes the Legal Aid Offices' activities more dynamic and effective across the country and it ensures accountability of the services.

*Md. Aminul Islam, Director (Senior District & Sessions Judge), National Legal Aid Services Organization, inspecting Jessore Legal Aid office.*

## 2.11 Budget for Legal Expenses

In the financial year 2018-2019, National Legal Aid Services Organization received 4,50,00,000/- taka as financial budget for the legal expenses of District and Supreme court Legal Aid Committees.

## 2.12 Publication

To raise public awareness of government legal aid programs, NLASO publishes campaign-aided publications in collaboration with its own and various donor agencies each year. Calendars, diaries, leaflets, posters, video documentaries, etc. are regular publications of the year. During the financial year 2018-2019, more than 40,000 campaign materials were prepared and distributed across the country, and two documentaries were produced in Bengali and English regarding the success of government legal aid programs. Fourteen thousand calendars were published to create awareness in root level and those are distributed in each Union, Upazilla and Central level offices of the country.



### 3. Significant Achievements of National Legal Aid Services Organization in the financial year 2018-2019

- ‘Legal Aid Office E-Management Software’ has been deployed to ensure central Monitoring System of NLASO. Through this software, all information and activities of government legal services are stored in digital database system. Now each legal aid office works in online system and digitally it preserves all works/ services, and so the Central office gets real time data and information about activities and services of each legal aid office. Moreover, client and panel lawyers get automatic SMS notification about services of the office. It ensures quality legal aid services to all.
- For the implementation of “Legal Aid Office E-Management” software, each district Legal Aid Office has provided a smart mobile phone including official SIM card, a laptop, printer, scanner, webcam, projector and other necessary equipment.
- BD Legal Aid Apps has been introduced to serve as a digital medium for promoting and receiving legal aid services for the mass people.

- BTCL's high-speed dedicated Internet connection has been provided in all 68 offices, including headquarters of NLASO, the Supreme Court Legal Aid Office and the 2 Labor Court Legal Aid Cell .
  
- Under the direction of the Cabinet Division, the official e-mail domain has been created for NLASO and legal aid office with technical support of Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) . Now each office uses official e-mail as a means of digital communication.
  
- In this year, all district legal aid office initiated mass awareness programs to spread the message of government legal aid services across the country. They arranged seminar, workshop, meeting with stakeholder, courtyard meeting, debating, quiz competition, radio program, documentary presentation etc. Through such 419 programs, 33,921 persons come to know about legal aid services.


 At a glance

## Statistics of Government Legal Aid Services

(From 2009 to June 2019)

| Name of Office  | Legal Advice | Financial Support for Litigations | Alternative Dispute Resolutions (ADR) | Legal Information by Hot line | Total Person    | Realization of Money through ADR/Mediation (Taka) |
|---|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| District Legal Aid Office (64)                                      | 50206        | 242492                            | 18838                                 | 17328                         | 328864          | 18,08,39,225/-                                    |
| Supreme Court Legal Aid Office                                      | 16071        | 2467                              |                                       |                               | 18538           |   |
| Labour Court Legal Aid Cell (Dhk & Ctg)                             | 12303        | 2513                              | 1690                                  |                               | 16506           | 2,58,43,819/-                                     |
| Government legal aid Services National Helpline Call Center - 16430 | 66865        |                                   |                                       |                               | 66865           |   |
| <b>Total Legal Aid Recipients Number</b>                            |              |                                   |                                       |                               | <b>4,30,773</b> | <b>20,66,83,044/-</b>                             |

Note : Statistics from 2009 to June, 2019

Annual Report (2018-2019) : [http://www.nlaso.gov.bd/site/view/annual\\_reports/](http://www.nlaso.gov.bd/site/view/annual_reports/)

Note: ADR activities started from July 2015, National Call Center-16430 was inaugurated on 28 April 2016, Supreme Court Legal Aid Office started from September 2015 and Labour Court Legal Aid Cell started working from 2013 in Dhaka and 2016 in Chittogram.

Source: Statistics collected from 67 Legal Aid Office. Then the Report is prepared by Monitoring Section, National Legal Aid Services Organization, Law & Justice Division, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

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