

Legal Aid: A Process to Ensure Access to Justice and Human Rights in Bangladesh

Md. Rafiqul Islam Hossaini¹, Md. Sazzad Hossain²

¹Part-time lecturer, School of Law, Britannia University, Bangladesh

²Independent Researcher, LLM (LSBU, UK), LLB (Hon 's) (UoL, UK)

Abstract: *People are the actual owner of the State and persons acting in the service of the Republic are none but the servants of the people. It is a duty of the State to remove exploitation and to ensure rule of law, fundamental human rights, equality and access to justice for the citizens. But these cannot be ensured by leaving a significant number of its population below the poverty line. Legal aid is a proven process by which exploitation of the poor can be removed, and rule of law, equality and justice can be ensured for all citizens of the State. Being the owner of the State, getting legal aid is a right of the poor people, not a mercy or charity from the government. The State is under an obligation to ensure the fundamental human rights and access to justice for all citizens. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Supreme Law of the State, is the unparalleled basis of providing legal aid. It may not be possible to ensure legal aid services to the indigent, vulnerable, disadvantaged people only by enacting laws rather it can be ensured through improving and implementing the existing law. Public awareness is one of the most important mechanisms, by which public at large will be aware about their rights of equality before law and access to justice. To ensure Access to Justice and Human Rights, both governmental and non-governmental organizations need to work in collaboration with each other through raising public awareness and providing legal aid services.*

Keywords: *Legal Aid in Bangladesh, Human Rights, Access to Justice, Rule of Law, Legal Aid Services Act 2000*

I. Introduction

“We the people of Bangladesh, having proclaimed our independence on the 26th day of March, 1971 and through a historic struggle for liberation, established the independent, sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh”. This first paragraph of the Preamble of the Constitution proves that the people of the country are the actual owner of the State. Recognizing the ownership of the people, Article 7 of the Constitution signifies, “(1) All powers in the Republic belong to the people, and their exercise on behalf of the people shall be effected only under, and by the authority of, this Constitution. (2) This Constitution is, as the solemn expression of the will of the people, the supreme law of the Republic, and if any other law is inconsistent with this Constitution that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.”¹ However, persons acting in the service of the Republic are none but the servants of the people, as Article 21 (2) of the Constitution provides, “Every person in the service of the Republic has a duty to strive at all time to serve the people”.² Moreover, the third paragraph of the Preamble of the Constitution states, “...it shall be a fundamental aim of the State to realize through the democratic process a socialist society, free from exploitation a society in which the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice, political, economic and social, will be secured for all citizens;”. Therefore, it is a duty of the State to remove exploitation and to ensure rule of law, protect fundamental human rights, equality and justice for the citizens. But these cannot be ensured in the State leaving a significant number of its population below the poverty line. Legal aid is a proven process, by which exploitation of the poor can be removed and rule of law, equality and justice can be ensured for all citizens of the State. Being the owner of the State, getting legal aid is a right of the poor people, not a mercy or charity from the government, rather the State is under an obligation to ensure fundamental human rights, rule of law, equality and access to justice for all citizens.

II. What is Legal Aid and why it is necessary?

Legal aid is the process by which poor or indigent, underprivileged or deprived, vulnerable sections of the society are encouraged to file or contest their litigations. It is an assistance given to these sections of the people to ensure equality before law and access to justice for all the citizens of the State. It is a support given to these groups of the society, who are not able to afford the expenditures of the litigations due to various socio-economic conditions.

Legal aid is defined by the “New Encyclopedia Britannica” as giving professional legal assistance to the needy indigent people, either for a nominal sum or for free.³ In defining legal aid, Section 2(a) of the Legal

Aid Services Act, 2000 includes the services of: 1) legal advice; 2) fees of the lawyers; 3) fees of the mediators or arbitrators; 4) other pertinent expenses and assistances.⁴ Legal professionals use the phrase “legal aid” to mean any or all of the three following components: 1) giving financial or pecuniary aid to the litigants, 2) giving legal advice for free on legal issues; 3) contesting a case in the court in favour of the litigants for free or with a nominal fee. Legal aid in the modern states includes the models of: 1) providing lawyer’s fee; 2) duty lawyers; and 3) community legal clinics.

Why legal aid is necessary: Legal aid is a necessary ingredient for ensuring “Natural Justice”. Natural Justice is dependent on the principles of: 1) *Audi Altarem Partem* (No one should be condemned unheard); and 2) *Nemo Judex In Causa Sua* (No one should be judge of his own case). To ensure the first principle of natural justice, irrespective of rich or indigent or vulnerable sects, everyone should have access to justice. Moreover, legal aid is necessary to ensure “Access to Justice” for all. Access to justice is described by many judges and academics as “Justice is open to all like the Ritz Hotel”. Therefore, to ensure access to justice for the poor, underprivileged or deprived, vulnerable sects legal aid to those sections of the society is to be assured.

III. Legal Aid under International Instruments

Articles 7, 8 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (UDHR-1948) recognize the right to get legal aid as a human rights. Article 7 of the UDHR-1948 provides, “All are equal before the law and is entitled to equal protection of law without any discrimination”.⁵ This provision has been clearly and inevitably reflected in clause 3 (d) of Article 14 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (ICCPR-1966). Right of a person to get legal aid has, charged with criminal conviction, been ensured by Article 6 (3) (c) of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1950.⁶ Apart from these provisions legal aid for persons with criminal convictions has been accepted and given due importance in the United Nation Conference on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, 1965 and the International Conference on Human Rights, 1968. In addition to these provisions legal aid has been given significant importance under the Commonwealth of Independent States Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms 1995 (Articles 6 (1) and 20 (1)), the Arab Charter on Human Rights 1994 (Article 9), the African Charter on Human and Peoples Right 1981 (Article 3), the American Convention on Human Rights 1978 (Article 24).

IV. Constitutional Basis of Legal Aid

The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, the Supreme Law of the State, can be regarded as the unparalleled basis of providing legal aid. Article 14 of the Constitution provides, “It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to emancipate the toiling masses the peasants and workers and backward section of the people from all forms of exploitation”.⁷ Therefore, the State is under an obligation to ensure the rights of access to justice and equal protection of law for the backward section of the people, so that they cannot be exploited. Moreover, Article 19 (1) of the Constitution states “The State shall endeavour to ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens”.⁸ Thus it is one of the responsibilities of the State to ensure equal opportunity for all of its citizens. Articles 14 and 19 described above are the Fundamental Principles of State Policy incorporated under Part II of the Constitution, the guiding principles for Constitutional interpretation and law making, and shall be applied by the government. If the government does not apply these Articles, an individual cannot go to the court for its implementation as Article 8 (2) of the Constitution says, [Fundamental Principles] “...shall not be judicially enforceable”.⁹ However, Equality before law has been recognized as one of the Fundamental Rights under Part III of the Constitution. Article 27 of the Constitution provides, “All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law”. Legal aid is a substantial process to ensure “equality before law” and “equal protection of law” for all citizens of the State. Moreover, another Fundamental Rights “Right to protection of law” has been ensured under Article 31 of the Constitution which provides, “To enjoy the protection of the law, and to be treated in accordance with law, and only in accordance with law, is the inalienable right of every citizen...”.¹⁰ Moreover, Article 33(1) of the Constitution provides, “No person who is arrested shall be detained in custody without being informed, as soon as may be, of the ground for such arrest, nor shall be denied the right to consult and be defended by a legal practitioner of his choice”.¹¹ Additionally, Article 35(3) of the Constitution provides, “Every person accused of criminal offence shall have the right to a speedy and public trial by an independent and impartial Court or tribunal established by law”.¹² Therefore, equality before law and equal protection of law are the primary themes for ensuring legal aid to the backward sections of the society. Articles 27, 31, 33, 35 are some of the Fundamental Rights that are ensured under Part III of the Constitution. If those rights are violated by any person or authority, Article 44 (1) of the Constitution ensures that an individual can move to the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh for the enforcement of such right with a Writ petition under Article 102 of the Constitution.

V. Provisions of Legal Aid Under Various Bangladeshi Laws

Provisions relating to legal aid are found in various existing laws in Bangladesh. Some significant provisions are discussed in the following:

The Code of Civil Procedure, 1908: In the Code of Civil Procedure 1908, the issue relating to “pauper suit” has been described in Order XXXIII. According to this Order, subject to some conditions, a pauper is permitted to institute a suit (Rule-1). Explanation of Rule-1 defined pauper as, a person who does not possess the sufficient means to enable him to pay the fee for the plaint prescribed by law or otherwise, apart from the subject matter of the suit and his necessary wearing-apparels, he does not entitle to property worthy of five thousand taka.

The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898: Right of person to be defended against whom criminal proceedings are instituted has been represented in Section 340 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898. According to this section, a person has the right to be defended by a pleader, if the person is accused of a criminal offence or against him criminal proceedings are instituted. In respect of this section, Indian Supreme Court observed that, this right of the accused person does not extent to the right to get lawyer by the State, police or magistrate; it is the duty of the accused to engage a lawyer of his choice and the magistrate is under a duty to afford him the necessary opportunity. However, a reversed view is seen in the US case of *Clarence Earl Gideon Vs. Wainwright*¹³ where the Supreme Court held that the accused has a right to get a pleader at the cost of the State.

The Acid Niontron Ain, 2002: Victims of acid violence are provided with legal aid under Acid Niontron Ain 2002. However, Section 8 (c) of the 2002 Act imposes duty upon the council to provide prescribed policy for medical aid, rehabilitation and legal aid. Moreover, the duty also includes taking some steps for monitoring and execution of the policies.

The Legal Aid Services Act, 2000: In order to ensure legal aid for poor or indigent, underprivileged or deprived, vulnerable people of the society a specific law on Legal Aid Services has been enacted by the parliament in 2000. This specific Act was passed to ensure legal aid to the litigants who are not capable of seeking justice because of insolvency, destitution, helplessness, and for various socio-economic conditions.

VI. Steps Taken by the Government to Ensure Legal Aid

Until 2000 legal aid movement was not given any considerable importance in the governmental level. When the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) assured to provide financial cooperation, the government took initiative to provide legal aid to the indigent and vulnerable people, and subsequently the Legal Aid Services Act 2000 was enacted. Until the government has taken this massive step, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) strove for providing financial assistance to the indigent and vulnerable people, and tried to ensure access to justice for them. Now, many NGOs are working in collaboration with the governmental services to provide legal aid service. Some of the significant steps taken by the government have been discussed in the following:

Creation of National Legal Aid Services Organization (NLASO): Under section 3 of the Legal Aid Services Act 2000 the government has created the National Legal Aid Services Organization (NLASO), a statutory organization situated in Dhaka, working under the Ministry of Law, justice and Parliamentary Affairs, responsible for ensuring legal aid throughout the country.¹⁴ Mandate of the NLASO is “To provide legal aid to the litigants who are incapable of seeking justice due to financial insolvency, destitution, helplessness, physical and mental disability, gender disparity and other socio-economic conditions”. Its vision is “To ensure equal protection of the law for all and equal access to justice for the poor and disadvantaged,” and mission is “To provide high quality legal aid services to the poor in accordance with the provisions of the Legal Aid Services Act”.¹⁵ Powers and functions of the NLASO are to be exercised or performed by the “National Board of Management”. National Board of Management is consists of 19 members headed by the Minister for the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, as its Chairman. Members from the ruling party and opposition, governmental, non-governmental and other vital organizations of the State have been incorporated in the Board.¹⁶ At least one meeting in every three months is to be held by the Board.¹⁷

Services of governmental legal aid: NLASO provides legal aid in all types of cases, i.e. Civil, Criminal, Family, Jail Appeal etc. and NLASO bears the entire cost of the legal aid cases, including lawyer’s fee. Though the fees are nominal to the lawyers, they cannot claim any extra fees, charges etc. from the client. NLASO, now, provides wide range of legal services to the poor and disadvantaged people. NLASO’s services includes: 1) Legal Advice; 2) Free *Vocalatnama*; 3) Provide advocate to help in a legal proceeding; 4) Provide fees for the lawyers; 5) Provide fees for the mediator or arbitrator; 6) Supply certified copies of Order, Judgment etc with free of cost; 7) Provide the cost of DNA Test, 8) Provide the cost of paper advertisement in CR Case; and 9) Any other assistance along with expenses for a case.¹⁸

Who are entitled to get free legal aid: Following persons are entitled to get free legal aid: 1) Any insolvent person whose annual average income is not above Tk. 50,000/; 2) Freedom fighters, disabled, partially disabled,

unemployed or unable to make a yearly income above 75,000 Taka; 3) An individual receiving old age allowance; 4) Distressed mother holding a VGD (Vulnerable Group Development) card; 5) Women and children victims of trafficking; 6) Women and children victims of acid throwing by the miscreants; 7) Allottee of a house or land in a model village; 8) Insolvent widow, a woman abandoned by husband or a distressed woman; 9) Disabled person, unable to earn and destitute; 10) Person unable to protect his/her right in court or to defend him/herself due to financial insolvency; 11) Person detained without trial and unable to take proper steps for legal assistance; 12) Person considered by the court as financially helpless and insolvent; 13) Person recommended or considered by the jail authority as financially helpless and insolvent; 14) Person who is identified from time to time by the organization as financially insolvent, destitute and suffered losses due to various socio-economic and natural calamities for the purpose of the Legal Aid Service Act-2000 and unable to conduct a case to protect his/her rights.¹⁹

VII. Structure of the Governmental Legal Aid Services

Governmental legal aid services are decentralized for national level to Union level. Structure of the governmental legal aid services is described in the following:

Supreme Court Legal Aid Office: The Supreme Court Legal Aid Office was created on September 8, 2015. This Office consists of 10 members and 2 observers. The committee provides legal aid in the matters of: 1) Criminal Revision and Appeal; 2) Civil Revision and Appeal; 3) Leave to Appeal; 4) Jail Appeal; 5) Writ Petition, to the persons whose annual income does not exceed 50,000 Taka. Other legal aids provided by the Supreme Court Legal Aid Office includes: 1) Legal advice; 2) Filing and dealing cases; 3) Expert opinion on the merit of the case; 4) Bearing the actual cost. Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee appointed 77 lawyers at the High Court Division and 6 Lawyers at the Appellate Division to handle the cases.²⁰

District Legal Aid Committee: District Legal Aid Committees are created under Section 9 of the Legal Aid Services Act 2000 to ensure governmental legal aid at the district level. There are now 64 District Legal Aid Committees working under the direct supervision and control of the NLASO headed by the District and Session Judge of every District, as its Chairman. Representation from both governmental and non-governmental side is ensured in the District Committees.²¹ At least one meeting of the District Committee is to be held in every month.²² In every District a permanent legal aid office has been established by the government in order to ensure access to justice for the indigent and disadvantaged people. District legal aid officers are appointed in every District from the persons not below the rank of Assistant or Senior Assistant Judge. The office has also created the post of office assistant and MLSS.²³

Upazila Legal Aid Committee: Upazila Legal Aid Committee works under the supervision and control of the District Legal Aid Committee. 480 Upazila Legal Aid Committees are now working across the county, to ensure providing legal aid at the Upazila Level. Upazila Legal Aid Committee consists of 15 members headed by the Chairman of the concerned Upazila Parishad.²⁴

Union Legal Aid Committee: Union Legal Aid Committee is vested with the power to implement governmental legal aid program at the Union level. 4498 Union Legal Aid Committees are now working under the direct supervision of the District Legal Aid Committee headed by the Chairman of the concerned Union Parishad.²⁵

VIII. Effectiveness of the Legal Aid Services

Government seems willing to provide legal aid services to the indigent, disadvantaged and vulnerable people of the society. Law and Justice Division of the government has provided the statistics of legal aid recipients and the number of disposed legal aid cases in its website from the year of 2009 to 2012.

Statistics of Government Legal Aid Recipients 2009-2012:

Year	Female	Male	Child	Total
2009	3175	5953	32	9160
2010	4986	6190	90	11266
2011	6479	6016	73	12568
2012	8078	7325	47	15450
Grand Total	22718	25484	242	48444

* Source: Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Law and Justice Division²⁶

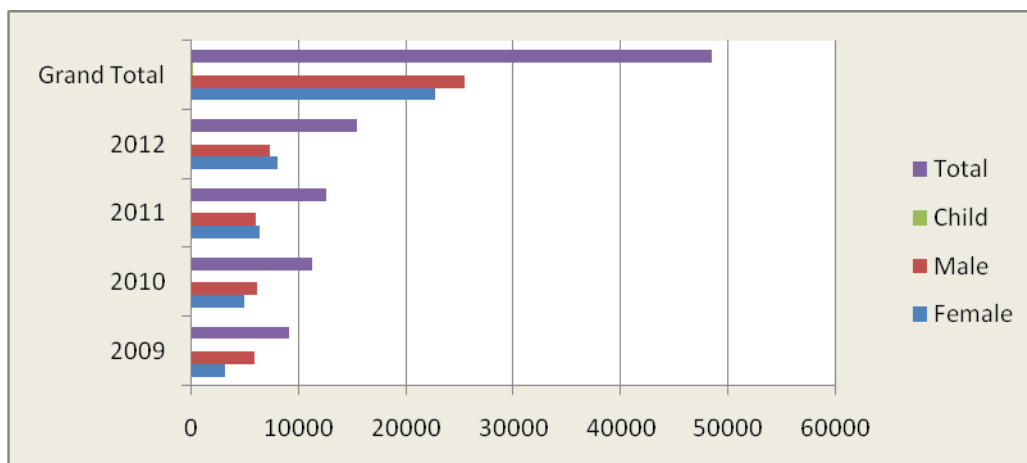


Figure 1: Statistics of the above table has been shown by Clustered Bar.

The above diagram describes that, since 2009-2012, the numbers of the legal aid recipients have gradually increased from 3175 to 8078. Female recipients seems more beneficial from the legal aid services, as the number of female legal aid recipients have gradually increased each year. On the other hand, the numbers of the Male legal aid recipients have slowly increased. The numbers of children legal aid recipients are decreasing since 2010. In this four years time period (From 2009-2012) total 22718 female, 25484 male and 242 child (in total 48444) have received legal aid from the government, which is not appreciable number in comparison with the actual poverty line of Bangladesh in order to ensure access to justice, as in reality many more people are depriving of their rights.

Statistics of number of disposed legal aid cases 2009-2012:

Year	Civil	Criminal	Total
2009	1174	2350	3571
2010	1681	3946	5627
2011	1778	3598	5376
2012	1525	2911	4436
Grand Total	6158	12852	19010

* Source: Government of the People’s Republic Of Bangladesh Law and Justice Division²⁷

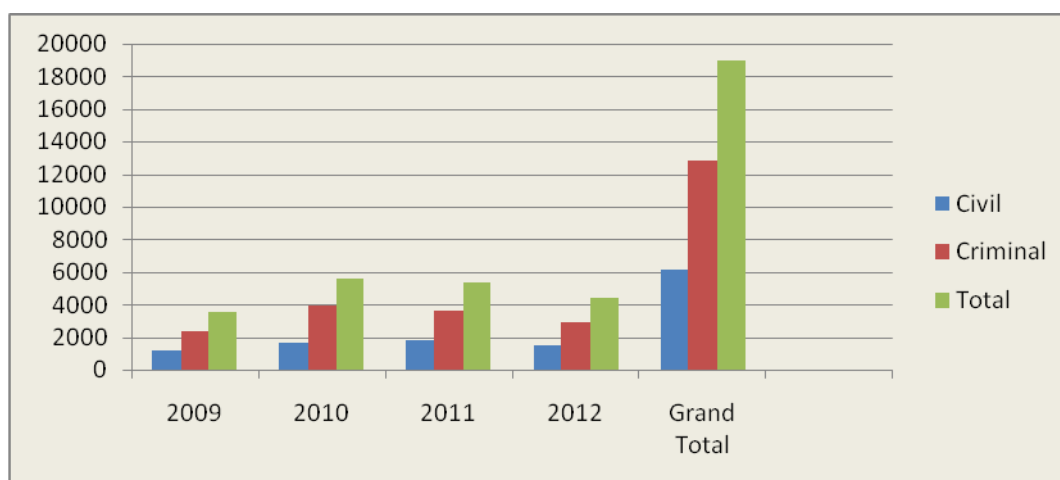


Figure 2: Statistics of the above table has been shown by Clustered Column.

In the above diagram, total 6158 numbers of Civil legal aid cases and 12852 numbers of Criminal cases (in total 19010) have been disposed off. Total numbers of the disposed of cases shows the importance of legal aid for the needy people in order to get access to justice.

Role of the NGOs: In order to providing legal aid to the indigent, disadvantaged and vulnerable sects of the people the NGOs have been playing a vital role in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST), Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), BRAC, RUPANTAR etc. are playing the major role in ensuring access to justice for the needy people through legal aid service. NGOs are providing legal aid services to the helpless people through: 1) Requiring stuff lawyers; 2) Requiring Para-legal experts and

researchers; 3) Providing free legal advice; 4) Providing financial assistance; 5) Arranging and encouraging arbitration and mediation; 6) Pro-bono activities; 7) Arranging awareness programs and seminars etc.

NGOs mostly provide legal aid on the grounds of: 1) Human Rights violations; 2) Violation against women and girls; 3) Violation against religious or ethnic minorities; 4) Violation against Children's right; 5) Torture, murder, abduction, rape, enforced- disappearance, etc. 6) Family rights, dowry, marriage, divorce, etc. 7) Trafficking, acid victims, victims of sexual abuses etc.

Moreover, NGOs are publishing books, journal articles, leaflets, pamphlets, to increase public awareness in respect of the right to get legal aid by the helpless, disadvantaged people. Apart from publications NGOs are arranging seminars and symposiums to increase public awareness.

IX. Shortcomings and Solutions

There are several shortcomings in the existing law of Bangladesh in respect of providing legal aid. Moreover, the process of providing legal aid is not out of criticisms. Significant shortcomings in laws and procedures in providing legal have been identified below and backed with the potential solutions:

- Publicity by the government to encourage needy people for getting legal aid and to ensure access to justice is not done to the expected level. Lack of awareness of the needy and helpless people is a significant barrier to ensure access to justice for all the citizens of the State. In respect of publicity government should give significant importance to ensure public awareness. Apart from other means, both electronic and print media can be used to ensure much publicity.
- Governmental (including: National Legal Aid Services Organization, Supreme Court Legal Aid Office, District Legal Aid Committee, Upazila and Union Legal Aid Committee) and Non-Governmental Organizations are not well equipped with sufficient field officers. As such the appropriate picture of the society is not well pictured through field working. To mitigate the problem sufficient field officers shall be recruited by the organizations.
- According to the Legal Aid Services Act 2000 District Legal Aid Committee is accountable to the National Board of Management for their actions and functions. But the Act does not provide any specific rules relating to the accountability of the National Board of Management. Therefore, proper accountability of the National Board of Management shall be assured for ensuring public awareness.
- According to Section 11 of the Legal Aid Services Act 2000 the District Committee shall held a meeting in every month. But meeting in every month does not meet the requisite expectation of the people in respect of ensuring legal aid and access to justice for the disadvantages and vulnerable section of the society. Therefore, the number of meeting of the District Committee needs to be increased.
- According to Section 8 of the Legal Aid Services Act 2000 the National Board of Management is under an obligation to held meeting in every three months. Meeting in every three months of the Board does not meet the expectation of the people of the society. Therefore, the numbers of meeting of the Board need to be increased.
- Procedures of providing legal aid are not properly followed up. Apart from this, after allotting a case to a lawyer, significant follow up by the committee is not ensured. Therefore, appropriate follow up mechanisms needs to be incorporated.
- Logistic facility of the NLASO is not satisfactory. Apart from this, their monitoring mechanism throughout the Country does not meet the satisfactory level. Therefore, proper monitoring mechanism along with satisfactory logistic support needs to be assured.
- There is a District Legal Aid Committee in every District of the Country. As per the Legal Aid Services Act 2000, The Office of the District Legal Aid need not be in the Court premises. But to avoid unexpected harassment of the helpless vulnerable people the Office of the District Legal Aid Service may be establish in the Court premises.
- Insufficient data in the website of the NLASO reflects the lack of proper management. So, proper management of the website is to be ensured so that people can get known of the current information about the NLASO.
- NLASO, Supreme Court Legal Aid Office, District Legal Aid Committee, Upazila and Union Legal Aid Committee are not enabled with enough researchers. To monitor the current status of the society field research should be done in every level. Therefore, the Committees need be enabled with required number of researchers.
- Though not always, getting legal aid is a lengthy bureaucratic procedure at times. Therefore, to prevent the harassment for the indigent vulnerable people, all the lengthy bureaucratic procedures need to be removed.
- It is always claimed by the litigants, lawyers, non-governmental organizations and academicians that enough funds are not allocated to the District level to ensure legal aid and access to justice for the poor. Therefore, to ensure access to justice of the poor people sufficient funds need to be allocated to the District, Upazila and Union level.

- At the Upazila and Union level, Chairman of the respective Upazila and Union Parishad is also the Chairman of the Upazila and Union Legal Aid Committee respectively. In this regard if a poor villager wants to file a suit against the Chairman he/she might face a great difficulty. As such, proper check and balance need to be assured.
- The Legal Aid Services Act 2000 does not specify cases for which legal aids are to be given by the government. However, in this regard several NGOs have included several specific issues for which they are interested to provide legal aid facilities. Therefore, the NLASO should also specify the cases for which it will provide legal aid facilities.
- Supreme Court Legal Aid Office and District Legal Aid Office desire to engage experienced lawyers for providing legal aid to the poor litigants. But experienced lawyers are much busier than the junior lawyers and are not always interested to deal with the matters. Therefore, junior lawyers can also be engaged for providing legal aid facilities.
- Other problems for which lawyers are not always interested to deal with legal aid cases are- they do not get any advance payment and their fee is nominal than expectation. Therefore, to mitigate those problems a nominal advance payment can be ensured and the lawyer's fee for dealing with cases can be increased to an expected level.
- Any member of the Non-Governmental Organizations from the National Board of Management and District Committee may be removed by the government without showing any cause. This provision under Section 6 and 9 of the Legal Aid Services Act 2000 may hamper to ensure proper check and balance.
- Legal aid funds can be collected from both the national and international organizations. In this regard, collaboration of both governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations is to be ensured.

X. Conclusion

Legal aid is an important mechanism to ensure fundamental human rights, rule of law, equality before law and access to justice for all people in the society. Without providing legal aid assurance of human rights, access to justice for the indigent, vulnerable, disadvantaged people is a day-dream. Bangladesh Government has taken some appreciable steps for ensuring legal aid for the poor people. However, it may not be possible to ensure legal aid services to those indigent, vulnerable, disadvantage people, only by enacting laws rather it can be assured through improving and implanting the existing law. In addition to that, public awareness is one the most important mechanisms, by which public at large will be aware about their rights of equality before law and access to justice. In order to ensure those rights, both governmental and non-governmental organizations need to work in collaboration with each other through raising public awareness and providing legal aid services.

Notes:

¹ Article 7 of the Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, 2015

² 21 (2) of the Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, 2015

³ New Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 6, P.122

⁴ 2(a) of the Legal Aid Services Act, 2000

⁵ Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

⁶ 6 (3) (c) of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1950

⁷ Article 14 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2015

⁸ Article 19 (1) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2015

⁹ Article 8 (2) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2015

¹⁰ Article 31 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2015

¹¹ Article 33(1) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2015

¹² Article 35(3) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2015

¹³ Clarence Earl Gideon Vs. Wainwrgh, 372 U.S. 335 (1963)

¹⁴ Section 3 of the Legal Aid Services Act, 2000

¹⁵ http://www.lawjusticediv.gov.bd/static/legal_aid030413.php; retrieved on 18.01.2017

¹⁶ Section 6 of the Legal Aid Services Act, 2000

¹⁷ Section 8 of the Legal Aid Services Act, 2000

¹⁸ http://www.lawjusticediv.gov.bd/static/legal_aid030413.php; retrieved on 18.01.2017

¹⁹ http://www.lawjusticediv.gov.bd/static/legal_aid030413.php; retrieved on 18.01.2017

²⁰ http://www.supremecourt.gov.bd/nweb/?page=legal_aid.php&menu=10; retrieved on 18.01.2017

²¹ Section 9 of Legal Aid Services Act, 2000

²² Section 11 of Legal Aid Services Act, 2000

²³ <http://www.thedailystar.net/news/overviewofgovernmentlegalaidssystem>; retrieved on 18.01.2017

²⁴ http://www.lawjusticediv.gov.bd/static/legal_aid030413.php; retrieved on 18.01.2017

²⁵ http://www.lawjusticediv.gov.bd/static/legal_aid030413.php; retrieved on 18.01.2017

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