

**IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR THE
STAFF MEMBERS OF
TAMIL NADU STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY**

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY
HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE SATISH K. AGNIHOTRI,
ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE**

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My esteemed sister Mrs. Justice Chitra Venkataraman, Executive Chairperson, U.T of Puducherry Legal Services Authority, my esteemed brother Mr.Justice N. Paul Vasanthakumar, Chairman, High Court Legal Services Committee, other esteemed brother Judges M/s.Justices S.Manikumar, T.S. Sivagnanam and P. Devadas, Retired District Judges, Registrar General, Principal District Judge, Chennai, Registrar (Judicial), Member Secretaries, Tamil Nadu Legal Services Authority and U.T. of Puducherry Legal Services Authority,

This in-service training programme is for the staff members of the Tamil Nadu Legal Services Authority and U.T. of Puducherry Legal Services Authority. You all know very well that Legal Aid is a service-oriented programme. It requires dedication and commitment. You cannot read only in books on

the requirement of access to justice. It is more than that. You all know very well that a work has to be done in a well established method known to law. Law does not mean only statutory law or the law laid down by the Judges; law means natural law. How do you live in a day-to-day life? it is a part of methodology. Likewise, a programme, particularly a service-oriented programme, requires method. If you do in a methodical manner, you are bound to have optimum success. In that process, you have to implement this programme. You will have four sessions chaired by senior retired District Judges and other senior Officers. They will be informing you, sharing their views, with regard to the functioning in the administration as well as in the field. The District Legal Services Authorities and the Taluk Legal Services Authorities have very important roles to play.

The first and foremost requirement of a staff member of this office is to create a conducive, homely and friendly atmosphere so that a person, when approaches you – it will not be proper to say 'a litigant' – a person, who is aggrieved, for want of knowledge or knowledge of rights and duties, comes to

you, you must create an atmosphere, wherein he can develop a confidence, a sense of trust in you. It should not be like a police station. People who go there are afraid of police stations, because the atmosphere is not friendly and not conducive. You have to create that friendly atmosphere. If a person comes to you, you should be friendly. One day, in another programme, I was telling, nothing wrong if you offer a glass of water so that he can feel comfortable. You have to talk to him in his language which he can understand. He may be an illiterate person or person not knowing the niceties of law. You have to explain to him in his own language. When you go to a child, you have to behave like a child; you have to be one of them while playing with them. You may know, the Legal Aid Centres have now been renamed as Legal Aid Care Centres. It is not a clinic; it is a care centre. In a care centre, you are not supposed to tell only about law. For example, a person may come to you having a problem of electricity; he has applied for a connection but not getting it. He does not know how to draft the application. You have to tell him the way; and if necessary, you have to support him. Likewise, other problems. He may need medical treatment; he has no funds;

where to go or where to get help etc. You have to help him. Strictly, it will not be a part of your legal aid work. But now we are in a corporate world. Each and every problem of a person has legal element in it and you have to deal with it. Any problem – medical problem, family problem or matrimonial problem – you to have to help him and if necessary, you can advice him to go to a particular Officer and in fact, if possible, make arrangements for him to see that particular officer.

We had attended an All India Conference recently where Tamil Nadu and Puducherry were mentioned favourably. We are going to a village where education is a distant possibility. Children are not going to schools, they cannot afford. You have to tell them that right to education is free education. You have to persuade them to send their children. That is also a part of your work.

There are certain communities suffering from certain diseases. You have to go and try to bring them to take treatment.

We have an onerous task. You can arrange competitions, essay contests etc – for children and adults. You can arrange adult education. So many things are required. Unless you have that commitment, it will not be possible to do good work. It is a commitment to the society. It is a sort of social reform. Now, the experienced people will tell you every thing in detail.

My brother Mr. Justice N. Paul Vasanthakumar had made some suggestions with regard to the enhancement of honorarium – not remuneration, it is honorarium. It is under our consideration. We will try to do something in that respect.

With this, I inaugurate this day-long training session with my compliments to all of you.

Thank you.
