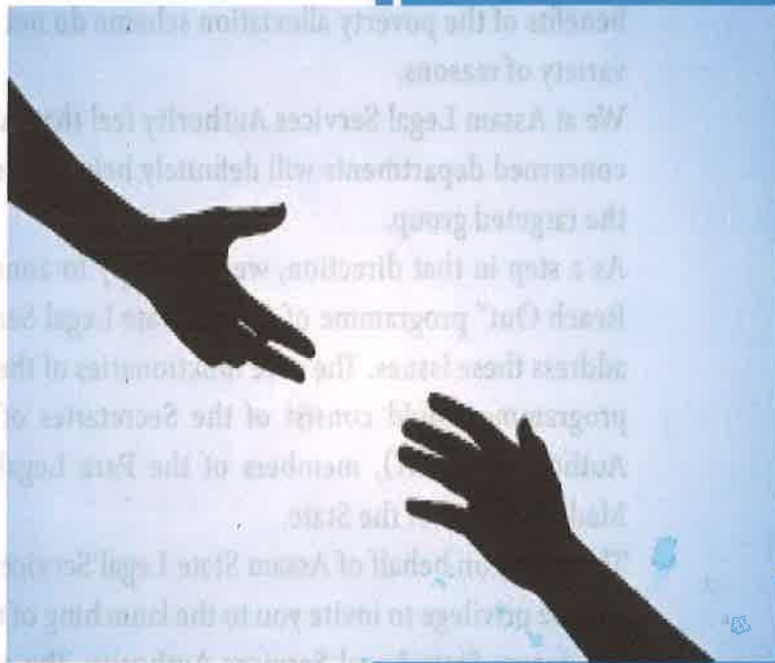


2016

# MINUTES OF THE REACH OUT PROGRAMME



Assam State Legal Services Authority  
Member Secretary, J.C.  
Mr. Saikia

ASSAM STATE LEGAL SERVICES  
AUTHORITY



## ASSAM STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

### INVITATION

India, being a welfare state, we have a large number of poverty alleviation scheme in order to facilitate our citizen from getting access to amenities and services so that they can lead a life with dignity. Though the intention of the policy makers is noble, experience has taught us that more often than not, the benefits of the poverty alleviation scheme do not reach the most needy due to variety of reasons.

We at Assam Legal Services Authority feel that interaction with the concerned departments will definitely help in ensuring that the benefits reach the targeted group.

As a step in that direction, we are happy to announce the launching of "The Reach Out" programme of Assam State Legal Services Authority (ASLSA) to address these issues. The core functionaries of the aforesaid "Reach Out" programme would consist of the Secretaries of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), members of the Para Legal Volunteers and committed Media Persons of the State.

Therefore, on behalf of Assam State Legal Services Authority, the undersigned has the privilege to invite you to the launching of the Reach Out programme of the Assam State Legal Services Authority. The meeting would be graced by Hon'ble, the Chief Justice & His Lordship's brother Judges of Hon'ble the Gauhati High Court.

Your kind presence on the occasion will definitely inspire us to strive in our endeavour towards making Assam a model state with regard to facilitating access to welfare schemes to the most penurious of people.

**Mridul Kr Saikia**

Member Secretary, I/C

Assam State Legal Services Authority





## THE INAUGURAL SESSION:

At the conference hall of the Gauhati High Court, on 06.04.2016 at about 9.18 AM, the meet started with the Hon'ble the Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court Justice Ajit Singh taking the chair. Immediately thereafter the soulful rendition of "*Manuhe Manuhar Baabe*" was played setting the tone for this noble initiative.

Hon'ble the Chief Justice was felicitated on behalf of the Assam State Legal Services Authority by presenting to him a phulam gamusha. Thereafter Hon'ble the Chief Justice was pleased to release the annual activity calendar of ASLSA for the year 2016-17. The calendar pictorially presents some of the major activities conducted by the ASLSA in 2015-16 and also carries the Action Plan for the year 2016-17.

Besides Hon'ble the Chief Justice, Hon'ble Mr. Justice T. Vaiphei, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Hrishikesh Roy, Hon'ble Mr. Justice A. K Goswami, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, Hon'ble Dr. Justice Indira Shah, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Nishitendu Chaudhury, Hon'ble Mr. Justice M. R Pathak, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Monojit Bhuyan, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Suman Shyam and Hon'ble Mr. Justice Paran Kr. Phukan graced the occasion. The Secretaries of all the 22 (twenty) District Legal Services Authority were present. Members of the press from all major print & electronic media houses including Asomia Pratidin, Amar Asom, The Sentinel, The Assam Tribune, Telegraph, Prag News channel were in attendance.

As per the written agenda, the introductory speech was delivered by His Lordship Hon'ble Mr. Justice A. K. Goswami, Executive Chairman Arunachal Pradesh State Legal Services Authority.

### **Hon'ble Mr. Justice A. K Goswami:**

His Lordship began by referring to Article 39 A of the Constitution of India and stated that the constitutional provision mandates that none should be deprived of legal aid. He informed the house that in order to effectuate the constitutional guarantee, Parliament enacted the Legal Services Act in 1987 and the law came into force in 1995.

## অসমীয়া প্ৰতিদিন

ন্যায়াধীশৰ উপস্থিতিত গুৱাহাটী হাইক'ৰ্টত অনুষ্ঠান


# বঞ্চিতসকলক সহায়ৰ বাবে ন্যায়িক সেৱাৰ বিশেষ কাৰ্যসূচীৰ সূচনা

প্ৰতিদিন সংবাদ, গুৱাহাটী, ৬ এপ্ৰিল : কেন্দ্ৰীয় চৰকাৰ আৰু ৰাজ্য চৰকাৰৰ অসংখ্য জনকল্যাণমূলক আঁচনি থকা সত্ত্বেও এনে আঁচনিৰ সুবিধা লাভৰ পৰা বঞ্চিত-উপেক্ষিত হৈ থাকে আমাৰ সমাজৰ দৰিদ্ৰ-অভাবী লোকসকল। এওঁলোকে লাভ নকৰে আইনী সাহায্যও। ৰাজ্যৰ এনে দৰিদ্ৰ-বঞ্চিত লোকসকলক এনে দুৰ্দশাপৰা উদ্ধাৰ কৰিবলৈ সহায়ৰ হাত আগবঢ়োৱাৰ লক্ষ্যৰে আগবাঢ়ি আহিছে অসম ৰাজ্যিক আইন সেৱা প্ৰাধিকৰণ। সমান সুযোগ-সুবিধা লাভৰ সংবিধানপ্ৰদত্ত অধিকাৰ থকাৰ পিচতো দৰিদ্ৰ লোকে বিভিন্ন সময়ত প্ৰাপ্য সা-সুবিধাৰ পৰা বঞ্চিত হৈ থাকিবলগীয়া হোৱা এনে প্ৰেক্ষাপটত আৰ্ত্তজনৰ সুবিধাৰ্থে অসম ৰাজ্যিক আইন সেৱা প্ৰাধিকৰণে আজি সূচনা কৰে 'আউট প্ৰ'গ্ৰাম' শীৰ্ষক এক কাৰ্যসূচীৰ। আজি গুৱাহাটী উচ্চ ন্যায়ালয়ৰ নতুন ভৱনৰ প্ৰেক্ষাগৃহত মুখ্য ন্যায়াধীশ অজিত সিং আৰু আন ন্যায়াধীশসকলৰ উপস্থিতিত আইন সেৱা প্ৰাধিকাৰীৰ এই কাৰ্যসূচী মুকলি কৰা হয়। এই উপলক্ষে আয়োজিত অনুষ্ঠানত ভাষণ প্ৰদান কৰি ন্যায়াধীশ হৃষীকেশ ৰয়ে কয়— 'বিচ আউট' শীৰ্ষক এই কাৰ্যসূচীয়ে কাক সহায় কৰিব, কেনেকৈ সহায় কৰিব আৰু কি সহায় কৰিব এই তিনিটা বিষয়ক প্ৰধানকৈ গুৰুত্ব দিছে। আমি সকলোকে একে সময়তে সহায় কৰিব নোৱাৰিব পাৰো, কিন্তু আমাৰ এই প্ৰচেষ্টাই নিশ্চিতভাৱে সমাজৰ বহু লোকক উপকৃত কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হ'ব। অসম ন্যায়িক সেৱা প্ৰাধিকৰণৰ কাৰ্যবাহী অধ্যক্ষৰ দায়িত্বত থকা ন্যায়াধীশ ৰয়ে বিচ আউট শীৰ্ষক এই কাৰ্যসূচীত ৰাজ্যৰ সংবাদ মাধ্যমৰ কৰ্মীকো জড়িত কৰা হ'ব বুলি উল্লেখ কৰে। লগতে তেওঁ কয়

যে বঞ্চিত-উপেক্ষিতজনক চিনাক্ত কৰাত সংবাদ মাধ্যমে গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা ল'ব পাৰে বাবেই বিচ আউট শীৰ্ষক এই কাৰ্যসূচীত সাংবাদিকসকলক জড়িত কৰা হৈছে। ইয়াৰ পূৰ্বে ভাষণ প্ৰদান কৰি ন্যায়াধীশ অক্ষয় কুমাৰ গোস্বামীয়ে কয় যে ভাৰতৰ সংবিধানে সকলোৰে বাবে সমান সুযোগ-সুবিধা পোৱাৰ অধিকাৰ প্ৰদান কৰিছে। আৰ্থিক দীনতা, দৰিদ্ৰতা আদিৰ ফলত আইন সেৱাৰ পৰা যাতে বঞ্চিত হ'বলগীয়া নহয় তাৰ বাবে বিনামূলীয়া আইন সেৱাৰ ব্যৱস্থা আছে। এনেদৰে দৰিদ্ৰজনৰ সুবিধাৰ্থে বিভিন্ন ধৰণৰ চৰকাৰী আঁচনিৰ ব্যৱস্থা আছে। কিন্তু বহুক্ষেত্ৰত এনেবোৰ আঁচনিৰ সুবিধাৰ পৰা যোগ্যজন বঞ্চিত হৈ থাকিবলগীয়া হৈছে। এনে পৰিস্থিতিত আইন সেৱা প্ৰাধিকৰণৰ এনেবোৰ পদক্ষেপে আৰ্ত্তজনৰ মুখত হাঁহি বিৰিঙাবলৈ সক্ষম হ'ব বুলি আশা প্ৰকাশ কৰে ন্যায়াধীশ গোস্বামীয়ে। অনুষ্ঠানত 'অসমীয়া প্ৰতিদিন' কাকতৰ সহযোগী সম্পাদক সঞ্জীৱ কুমাৰ ফুকনে সংবাদ মাধ্যমৰ ব্যক্তি হিচাপে আৰ্ত্তজনক সহায়ৰ বাবে আইন সেৱা প্ৰাধিকৰণ আৰম্ভ কৰা এনে কাৰ্যসূচীত জড়িত হ'বলৈ পালে সেয়া গৌৰৱৰ বিষয় বুলি মন্তব্য কৰে। চৰকাৰী আঁচনিৰ সমগ্ৰ ব্যৱস্থাটোতে মামৰে ধৰা বুলিও তেওঁ ব্যক্ত কৰি কয়— 'আইন সেৱা প্ৰাধিকাৰীৰ এনে পদক্ষেপে নিশ্চিতভাৱে আৰ্ত্তজনক সহায় কৰিব।' প্ৰাগ মিউজৰ সাংবাদিক দীপক শৰ্মায়ে এই কাৰ্যসূচী সন্দৰ্ভত ভাষণ প্ৰদান কৰে। উল্লেখ্য যে সুধাকণ্ঠ ড° ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ 'মানুহে মানুহৰ বাবে...' শীৰ্ষক গীতেৰে আৰম্ভ হোৱা অনুষ্ঠানটোত জিলা আইন সেৱাৰ প্ৰাধিকাৰীৰ লগতে সংবাদ মাধ্যমৰ ব্যক্তিসকল উপস্থিত থাকে।

News Published in "the Asomiya Pratidin"





Briefing the audience about Section 12 of the Legal Services Act Justice <sup>Goswami</sup> Gogoi spoke as to when and to whom free legal aid is to be provided. His Lordship stated that the application for free legal aid by a person falling under one of the categories under Section 12 pre-supposes a situation where the man is aware of his legal rights and wants to approach the Court for redressal of his grievance but is unable to do so because of financial or other constraints.

His Lordship pointed out that in a society like ours where there is deep-seated poverty it is not realistic to pre-suppose that the people at large would be aware of their rights to the various beneficial schemes and they would come to the Court seeking legal redressal if the benefit from the schemes does not reach them. Justice was of the view that the time has come when the concept of free legal services has to expand and the Assam State Legal Services Authority must make the most penurious of the people aware of what is lawfully due to them.

His Lordship stated that the media personnel have a much better understanding of the conditions in the remote area as they have more access to the society at large and should lend a helping hand in the efforts of ASLSA to reach out and make people aware of the different beneficial schemes and also facilitate, through ASLSA, that the rights stands materialized.

Justice Goswami concluded by calling the Secretaries of District Legal Services Authority to act as torch bearer and exhorted them to be pro-active in their approach.

After the introductory speech by Hon'ble Mr. Justice A.K. Goswami, two (2) persons from the press, one from the print and the other from the electronic media spoke on the occasion.

### **Sri Sanjib Phukan, Assistant Editor, Asomiya Pratidin**

Thanking Assam State Legal Services Authority for inviting him to the meeting Mr. Phukan said that journalists have to act as responsible citizens and must be conscious to their duty towards the society. Mr. Phukan said that clamour for "Paribarton" as is often heard during elections is a reflection of the situation in the society where a large chunk of the populace has remained deprived of the basic needs required to live a life with dignity. Sri Phukan said that benefit of the poverty alleviation scheme of the

THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2016

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE, GUWAHATI 7

## Programme on legal support

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, April 6: Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court Ajit Singh today released the annual calendar of the Assam State Legal Services Authority (ASLSTA), synchronizing with the launching of a reach-out programme which aims to facilitate legal support to the voiceless population.

At a function organised at the Gauhati High Court, different stakeholders, including ASLSTA office-bearers, deliberated on various aspects related to rights and law of the land.

Justice Arup Goswami, while stressing the need to bridge the gap between the deprived population and the justice delivery

system, said that free legal service for the poor and marginalised is viewed as a tool of empowerment and it should be advanced further.

"Ventilation of grievances is very crucial. A good section of the population is still not aware of their rights. If one is not aware of their rights, it is very difficult for them to get justice. The legal services authority pledges to reach out to this lot," Justice Goswami said, explaining the importance of Article 39 A of the Constitution.


Justice Hrishikesh Roy of the Gauhati High Court said the very idea is to assist those who are unable to afford legal services. "I would instead like the mission to be called

Mission Reach Out and Respond. The impetus should also be to cover those who are reluctant and mostly shy away from seeking court intervention," Roy pointed out. He also urged media personnel to play the role of para-judicial volunteers so that justice is done to as many persons as possible. "No matter how many of them we can eventually bail out, one should do whatever he or she can at a given point of time," he said.

"Access to law is an important quotient. It would be crucial to identify whom to reach out, how to reach out and what specifics are to be done to redress the grievance," Roy added.

### News Published in "the Assam Tribune"





government does not often reach the targeted audience because the distribution is made on political rather than economic consideration. Moreover, so pointed out the Editor, the whole system involved in implementation of such scheme has become rusted & rotten from top to bottom and he was of the view that to change and improve, a sustained effort is the need of the hour. He concluded by stating that Asomiya Pratidin newspaper would be very happy, in fact proud, to be associated with such an altruistic initiative.

### **Sri Dipak Sarma, Anchor, Prag News**

Sri Sarma began his speech by stating that there are certain work<sup>which</sup> gives inner satisfactions and referred to a recent incident where a girl from Assam had been trafficked to Haryana and he described his personal efforts and also the work done by Sri Mridul Kr. Saikia Member Secretary ASLSA which led to the rescue of that girl. Sri Sarma said that he would cherish the day when the girl was finally recovered for a long time and concluded that we all need to support wholeheartedly to make this "Reach out" programme a success.

The media personnel having spoken, it was time for Hon'ble Mr. Justice Hrishikesh Roy, Executive Chairman, ~~and~~ Assam State Legal Services Authority, to deliver the key-note address.


### **Hon'ble Mr. Justice Hrishikesh Roy:**

His Lordship began by referring to a news item published on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 in Amar Asom. The news was of a lady named Elachi Basumatary, a widow with five minor children, who were living in abject poverty some-where in Lakhimpur. The news item depicted the pitiable condition of that lady with her so called house<sup>"Urukha poja"</sup> covered with ("Urukha poja") i.e. un-used banners and posters. Though there were six mouths to feed, so further presented the news item, there was no foodstuff and the helpless lady used to collect jungle leaves to feed her children. Justice Roy said that he was shocked and could not fathom as to how the government beneficial schemes have eluded the lady. In that background, so spoke Justice Hrishikesh Roy, the Assam State Legal Services Authority intervened and result was visible in the news item dated 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016 in Amar Asom.



**Story of Smti Elachi Basumatary, Published in "the Amar Asom"**





Because of the intervention of ASLSA, the government machinery immediately provided a temporary house, a BPL card for the widow, and the children were got admitted into government schools. Sufficient food grains were also made available. In the next 20 days process for allotment of a plot of land had reached advanced stage and steps had been initiated for constructing a house under the Indira Awas Yojana for Elachi Basumutary. His Lordship said that the government beneficial schemes to which that lady was entitled to became available when ASLSA intervened and this incident made him decide to launch the "Reach Out" programme for all the districts and his Lordship observed that the initiative should be more properly called "Reach Out & Respond" and in Assamese "XAHARI"

### **The story of the Jelly Fish:**

Justice then spoke of a story of a tiny island, of a day after a very stormy night. A tourist had gone to the island and was walking by side of the shore. A big storm had passed by the previous night. Because of the storm, the vast beach was littered with jelly fish as far as the eye could see. The jelly fish would die once sun comes out unless thrown back into the waters. Of in the distance, at that time, the tourist noticed a man doing a peculiar "exercise" and curiosity made him walk towards that man. As the tourist walked towards that man doing the "exercise", he saw that every so often the man was occasionally bending down and was throwing something into the sea. The tourist soon came close to the place where the man was standing and called out as what it is that he was doing. The man paused looked up and replied that he was throwing jelly fish back into the sea. The tide had washed them up onto the beach and they cannot return to the sea by themselves. The tourist replied that there must be millions of jelly fish on this beach and that he would not really be able to make much of a difference.

The man bent down, picked yet another jelly fish and threw it as far as he could into the sea and then he turned and said that it made a difference to the one that he has just thrown back into the sea.

His Lordship said that the magnitude of the problem should not deter us from taking the first step towards changing the world and though we might not be able to change

# The Sentinel *city*

of this land, for its people

GUWAHATI THURSDAY 7 APRIL 2016

## Legal service body formed to extend legal aid to poor


BY OUR STAFF REPORTER

**GUWAHATI, April 6:** The Assam State Legal Services Authority (ASLSA) has come out with a programme – reach out and response – at a meeting at the conference hall of the Gauhati High Court here today.

Many a poverty alleviation scheme has been taken out in the State in order to benefit the poor. However, most of such schemes fail to reach the target beneficiaries, a large number of whom are not even aware of such schemes. Lack of awareness among the target beneficiaries is one of the reasons behind such schemes coming a cropper. The ASLSA has come out with a view to helping the deprived target beneficiaries get the benefits intended to them. Gauhati High Court Chief Justice Ajit Singh and all other judges were present at the launching of the programme today. In his keynote address, Justice Hrishikesh Roy, who leads the ASLSA from the front, said: "We feel the magnitude of the problem. Though

our reach is limited, we have taken it with a missionary zeal. We hope to extend legal aid to at least a section of the poor and deprived target beneficiaries. In order to make that happen, we are going to engage para legal volunteers who will work in the field with thrust on three key areas – who to approach, how to reach them out and in what ways we can help them out. The media will certainly lend their support in this mission. The crux of the problem lies in the fact that most of the target beneficiaries aren't aware of their rights, and a large section of conscious people can't move the court seeking their rights due to poverty." Earlier, Justice Arup Kumar Goswami said: "The soul of the programme lies in Maestro Bhupen Hazarika's number – *manuh manuhor bhabe*. We'll work hard so that the poor people aren't deprived of legal aid. Awareness on rights is a core issue in society. We'll continue to help them from our end." Earlier at the function, the newly elected Chief Justice was felicitated.

News published in "The Sentinel"



everything but at least we can change a small part of it for someone. And to that jelly fish, so spoke Justice Hrishikesh Roy, let us all make a world of difference.

Continuing his speech Justice Roy observed that a huge chunk of our population is still not aware of their rights under the law. This segment, because of abject poverty and illiteracy, are oblivious of the governmental beneficial schemes available for them and hence do not agitate or seek redressal through the Court. Justice spoke of the urgent need to take these people aware of the beneficial schemes available for them and exhorted the DLSAs to ensure that the poorest of the poor people do get the benefits due to them.

His Lordship Justice Hrishikesh Roy stated that the objective of the reach out and respond programme is to touch these segments blissfully unaware of the government beneficial schemes and are resigned to their fate. He exhorted the media personnel present to act as committed citizens one like Sri Kumud Saikia of Amar Asom who had highlighted the Elachi Basumutary story. Justice Roy was of the opinion that committed journalist working in the remote areas can double up as Para Legal Volunteers (PLV) of the District Legal Services Authority and help in ameliorating the conditions of the most penurious of the people by facilitating the availability of government beneficial schemes to them.

Highlighting the role of PLVs Justice Hrishikesh Roy spoke of a widow named Nagma Begum living somewhere in Delhi. She had four daughters and hoodlums were harassing and tormenting her and her daughters. The PLVs of Campus Law Centre of Delhi University came to the rescue of Nagma Begum and lodged an FIR. The criminal law was thus set into motion and the harassments by hoodlums stopped. Thus the PLVs were able to make a sea of change in the life of Nagma Begum. Justice Hrishikesh Roy exhorted the media persons to come forward and become PLVs and assist the proper implementation of "Reach Out and Respond" Programme.

Elaborating further Justice Roy stated that PLVs will have to identify To whom to Reach Out; How to Reach Out and How to respond having reached out.

Justice said that PLVs would be tasked to identify the beneficial schemes for that penurious person and ensure that the scheme is properly implemented and in that context he requested the media houses to provide list of journalist who are committed

# Help for poor to avail of schemes

A STAFF REPORTER

**Guwahati, April 6:** The Assam State Legal Services Authority (ASLSA) today launched an "outreach programme" on the premises of Gauhati High Court.

The programme aims to help the poor who are not getting benefits of different government schemes that are being implemented in the state.

Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court Justice Ajit Singh presided over the meeting today.

The ASLSA will implement the programme with the help of paralegal volunteers and members of civil society in all districts.

According to the legal services authority, there are many poor people in the state who are supposed to get different central and state-funded schemes, but they never benefit from these schemes because of ignorance and corruption at different levels. Besides, they are also not aware of their legal rights.

The ASLSA has already been providing underprivileged people free service of lawyers.


"We have launched the outreach programme with the objective of assisting the poor and deprived in the state in accessing the benefits of different centre and state-funded government schemes. Most of these people are not even aware of these schemes and even if they are, they do not know who to approach, how to approach and where to go to benefit from these schemes. We aim to address this problem and guide them on when, how and who to approach to reap the benefits of these schemes. These people are also not aware of their legal rights and the programme will try to generate awareness about these among them," said Justice Hrishikesh Roy, a judge of Gauhati High Court and executive chairman of ASLSA.

"To make this programme a success, we require cooperation of civil society and paralegal volunteers who will help identify poor and deprived individuals and bring them to us so that we can help them. They will help us identify deprived beneficiaries from every nook and corner of the state," Roy said.

Justice A.K. Goswami, a judge of Gauhati High Court and executive chairman of Arunachal Pradesh State Legal Services Authority, also spoke on the occasion.

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the cause of a better society so that these committed journalists can be roped in as PLVs and they in turn can assist the DLSAs in the proper implementation of the "Reach Out & Respond" programme.

Lordship concluded by observing that the time for ensuring that the most penurious of the people receive the government beneficial schemes due to them has come and quoted Victor Hugo who stated that "No force can withstand the strength of an idea whose time has come.

*At 10:15 a.m. the programme came to an end.*

Assam State Legal Services Authority

