



Legal Aid
made Accessible & Affordable

ANNUAL REPORT

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Legal Aid Trust's – Annual Report 2022

Vision rooted in justice could also become a beacon of progressive employment, digital transformation, and social engagement.

Introduction

The year 2022 was transformative for the Legal Aid Trust, marking its transition from a modest initiative to a professionally managed legal services organization. A key milestone was the formal recruitment of the Trust's first full-time employee, Ms. Kumud Ranjan, who joined on January 3, 2022. Previously associated with the Trust on an informal basis, she returned after a short break and committed to a daily commute from Hosa Road to Rajaji Nagar. Her dedication has been deeply appreciated by the Trustees. With her IT background, Ms. Kumud has taken charge of POSH Act-related activities, employee coordination, and supervision of internal software and website redevelopment, which was undertaken on a pro bono basis by aspiring developers Siddharth and Ravi.

In parallel, the Trust introduced corporate-style employment policies inspired by the tragic and sudden passing of Adv. Rakshit KN. The decision was made to structure employee compensation as Cost to Company (CTC), ensuring transparency and integrating long-term benefits. The salary model included basic pay, HRA, conveyance, DA, and CCA, along with meal cards, performance-related pay, and medical insurance for employees and their immediate families. Contributions to the Public Provident Fund (PPF) were introduced, and future expansion to include NPS, group accident coverage, and gratuity was planned. While parental insurance coverage is aspirational at present, it remains a future priority when finances allow.

This progressive approach to employee welfare is rare among small and mid-sized legal entities. The Trust's ethos—that charity begins at home—reverberated through every policy shift. A strong internal culture was fostered where employee dignity, health, and motivation were central to the Trust's mission. The implementation of dress code, holidays and leave policy, internet access policy, internship policy, and a substance abuse prevention policy further reinforced a structured and respectful workplace.

Operations and Infrastructure Development

The Trust undertook significant infrastructural and administrative reforms. Offer letters and employee data forms were formally designed and issued. Internship form templates were created, facilitating a more standardized selection and orientation process. With these systems in place, the Trust began accepting interns from across India. By February 2022, educational video content for the Trust's YouTube channel began to be recorded by these interns, enhancing both their learning experience and the Trust's public outreach.

Corporate branding also saw an upgrade. A professionally designed Trust logo with defined color codes and a tagline was introduced. Business cards, letterheads, envelopes, PowerPoint templates, ID cards, lanyards, desktop wallpapers, and screensavers were created and implemented across all Trust systems. Simultaneously, efforts were made to maintain meticulous operational records through trackers for invoices, purchase orders, vendor empanelment, and a comprehensive cash book.

To streamline record-keeping and litigation management, a custom internal file management application was developed and cloud-hosted. Files were digitized and categorized based on the nature of the case and court jurisdiction. This digital transformation enhanced efficiency and accessibility within the Trust's operations.

Training, Legal Outreach, and Community Service

In line with its dedication to legal advocacy and education, the Trust prioritized training under the POSH and POCSO Acts. The Trust developed a POSH/POCSO training calendar, established an ICC meeting tracker, and began conducting employee training sessions for both in-house staff and client organizations. The Trust's empanelment under POSH and POCSO with client ICC panels expanded its footprint and reinforced its commitment to safe and compliant workspaces.

A significant milestone in outreach and legal education came with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in January 2022 with the CMR University School of Legal Studies. The MoU outlined a shared vision to promote legal literacy, community awareness, research, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. This collaboration brought academia and practice together, offering law students hands-on experience in legal drafting, citation research, and fieldwork.

One of the most impactful projects under this collaboration was the Community Legal Programme inaugurated on May 16, 2022, in Chintamani Taluk, Karnataka, in association with the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority and CMR University School of Legal Studies. Legal Aid Clinics were established at Mununganahalli and Kuruburu Gram Panchayats. Students conducted grassroots legal needs assessments, compiled reports, and presented them to government representatives and the judiciary. Their findings inspired immediate follow-up action, reinforcing the value of combining legal education with community engagement.

People and Organizational Growth

September 1, 2022, saw the onboarding of Ms. Haripriya N as the Trust's second full-time associate. A graduate of CMRU SoLS, she joined as a paid intern, assisting the Trust while also filling in for departed staff at Nag Associates. Her presence enabled the Trust to expand its litigation efforts. This strategic recruitment exemplified the Trust's goal of cost-efficiency while sustaining its growing workload.

Internally, the Trust scaled up its commitment to research and document quality by implementing a multi-level review system for court-bound submissions. By the end of 2022, the Trust's legal research, citation practices, and documentation standards reflected a high level of professional rigor.

Digital Transformation

The development of an in-house client case management software was one of the most ambitious undertakings in 2022. Starting with a massive data migration effort in 2021, interns from CMRU SoLS handled exhaustive data entry over a two-month period. Despite teething issues, real-time corrections were made, followed by quality checks conducted by Nag Associates' advocates. By the end of 2022, the software was live—ushering in a new era of digitized, transparent, and client-friendly case management.

A book authored by the Trust was also uploaded to the official website, enriching its digital repository and increasing its knowledge-sharing capacity. Social media engagement expanded across platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Gmail, further strengthening public visibility.

Conclusion

The year 2022 was a landmark period in the evolution of Legal Aid Trust. What began as an informal initiative had by year's end become a structured, tech-savvy, and welfare-oriented legal services provider. Through investments in human resources, internal systems, legal education, and community service, the Trust demonstrated how a vision rooted in justice could also become a beacon of progressive employment, digital transformation, and social engagement.

As we move forward, Legal Aid Trust remains committed to deepening its mission of accessible justice while continuing to uphold the dignity and well-being of those who serve it.

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