

DISHA Scheme, Objectives, Features, Components, Challenges

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The **DISHA Scheme (Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice)** is a multi-dimensional government initiative designed to ensure **citizen-centric access to justice** and **early intervention for children with disabilities**. It works at the pan-India level and addresses both legal empowerment and the developmental needs of children.

The scheme aligns with the **Preamble of the Constitution of India** and constitutional provisions under **Articles 14, 21, and 39A**, focusing on equality, right to life, and free legal aid for marginalized citizens. Under the **National Trust Act**, DISHA also supports early intervention and school readiness for children with developmental disabilities, helping them integrate into society and mainstream education.

DISHA Scheme Objectives

The DISHA Scheme aims to provide citizen-centric access to justice and ensure early intervention for children with developmental disabilities, promoting inclusion, empowerment, and holistic development across India.

- To provide free legal aid and pre-litigation advice to marginalized citizens.

- To improve awareness of legal rights and facilitate citizen engagement with the justice system.
- To detect developmental disabilities in children at an early stage and provide timely interventions.
- To deliver therapies and training for children with disabilities to prepare them for inclusive education.
- To empower parents and caregivers with counseling and skills to support child development at home.
- To promote physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development for holistic growth.
- To bridge gaps between marginalized populations or children with disabilities and mainstream society.
- To enhance overall quality of life and enable independence and social integration.

DISHA Scheme Features

The DISHA Scheme is designed to provide holistic support for legal access and early intervention for children with disabilities, combining technology, therapy, and awareness programs for effective implementation.

- **Targeted Support:** Focuses on children aged 0-10 years with developmental disabilities and citizens needing legal aid.
- **Tele-Law Services:** Provides pre-litigation legal advice via video calls at CSCs and through the Tele-Law Mobile App.
- **Nyaya Bandhu Programme:** Free legal assistance through registered pro bono advocates for marginalized communities.
- **Early Intervention Therapies:** Offers physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and behavioral interventions.
- **School Readiness:** Prepares children for inclusive education by developing cognitive, social, and communication skills.
- **Parental Involvement:** Counseling and training for parents and caregivers to support progress at home.
- **Customized Care:** Individualized intervention plans based on each child's needs for better outcomes.
- **Capacity Building:** Enhances independence, adaptability, and social inclusion for children and marginalized groups.
- **Legal Awareness Programmes:** Educates citizens about their rights and responsibilities, promoting access to justice.
- **Community-Based Implementation:** Delivered through CSCs, registered DISHA centers, and National Trust organizations.
- **ICT Enablement:** Use of mobile apps, e-courts, and technology-driven tools for efficient service delivery.

Read about: [Wardha Scheme](#)

DISHA Scheme Components

1. Tele-Law: Reaching the Unreached

The Tele-Law Service provides pre-litigation legal advice through video or teleconferencing facilities at **Common Service Centres (CSCs)** and via the **Tele-Law Mobile App**.

- Citizens in remote and rural areas can consult panel lawyers without visiting courts.
- Strengthens legal awareness and reduces delays in judicial processes.

2. Nyaya Bandhu Programme

Nyaya Bandhu (Pro Bono Legal Services) connects marginalized citizens with free legal assistance. The **Nyaya Bandhu Mobile App** links registered advocates with applicants needing support. It focuses on helping economically weaker sections navigate the legal system effectively.

3. Legal Awareness Programmes

DISHA promotes legal literacy through a network of Legal Service Institutions under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 at national, state, district, and taluk levels. It helps citizens understand their rights and facilitates access to justice.

4. Early Intervention and School Readiness for Children with Disabilities

DISHA under the **National Trust Act** focuses on **children aged 0-10 years** with developmental disabilities such as autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities.

- Provides therapies including **physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and behavioral interventions**.
- Prepares children for **inclusive education** and social integration.
- Educates and counsels **parents and caregivers** to reinforce support at home.
- Offers **customized care** to meet individual developmental needs, promoting independence and confidence.

DISHA Scheme Challenges

Despite its wide-ranging objectives, the DISHA Scheme faces several challenges that limit its effectiveness in both access to justice and early intervention for children with disabilities:

- **Limited Coverage:** Many rural and remote areas remain underserved, reducing the scheme's reach.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Some DISHA centers lack proper equipment, facilities, and trained personnel.
- **Shortage of Specialists:** There is a deficit of qualified legal professionals, therapists, and counselors.
- **Low Awareness:** Eligible citizens and parents often remain unaware of the scheme and its benefits.
- **Funding Constraints:** Delayed or insufficient funds hinder proper functioning of DISHA centers.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Gaps:** Limited mechanisms for tracking outcomes and ensuring accountability.
- **Digital Literacy Barriers:** Difficulty in using mobile apps, online portals, or ICT-enabled services for beneficiaries.
- **Transition to Inclusive Education:** Coordination gaps between early intervention programs and mainstream schools.

Way Forward

To strengthen the impact of the DISHA Scheme and ensure inclusive justice and early intervention, the following measures can be adopted:

- **Expand Rural Outreach:** Extend services to underserved rural and remote areas to ensure equitable access.
- **Improve Infrastructure:** Upgrade DISHA centers with modern facilities, equipment, and therapy tools for children and digital tools for legal services.
- **Train Specialists:** Increase the number of qualified legal professionals, therapists, and counselors to meet growing demand.
- **Raise Awareness:** Conduct campaigns to educate citizens and parents about DISHA services and benefits.
- **Enhance ICT Integration:** Leverage mobile apps, e-courts, and digital platforms for efficient service delivery and case management.
- **Strengthen Monitoring & Evaluation:** Implement robust mechanisms to track program outcomes and ensure accountability.
- **Promote Inclusive Education:** Ensure smooth coordination between early intervention programs and mainstream schools.

UPSC CSE Prelims PYQs

Q1. With reference to National Legal Services Authority, consider the following statements: [2013]

1. Its objective is to provide free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society on the basis of equal opportunity.
2. It issues guidelines for the State Legal Services Authorities to implement the legal programmes and schemes throughout the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (c)

Q2. In India, Legal Services Authorities provide free legal services to which of the following type of citizens? [2020]

1. Person with an annual income of less than 1,00,000
2. Transgender with an annual income of less than 2,00,000
3. Member of Other Backward Classes (OBC) with an annual income of less than ` 3,00,000
4. All Senior Citizens

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 and 4 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1 and 4 only

Ans: (a)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/disha-scheme/>

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