



TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

No. 184]

CHENNAI, FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2026
Maasi 29, Visuvaavas, Thiruvalluvar Aandu-2057

Part II—Section 1

**Notifications or Orders of specific character or of particular interest to the public
issued by Secretariat Departments.**

NOTIFICATIONS BY GOVERNMENT

HOME DEPARTMENT (Police-XII)

SCHEME FOR EMPANELMENT OF PARA-LEGAL VOLUNTEERS IN POLICE STATIONS FOR MISSING CHILDREN AS PER THE DIRECTIONS OF THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA IN W.P.(C) NO.427/2022 TITLED BACHPAN BACHAO ANDOLAN VS. UNION OF INDIA & OTHERS

[G.O.Ms.No.130, Home (Police-XII), 12th March 2026,
மாசி 28, விசுவாச, திருவள்ளூர் ஆண்டு-2057.]

No. II(2)/HO/5(f)/2026.

The Governor of Tamil Nadu hereby notifies the following Scheme for empanelment of Para-Legal Volunteers in Police Stations for Missing Children in the State of Tamil Nadu :-

I. Background

Right to free legal aid and assistance, and reasonable, fair and just procedure for a person accused of any offence is implicit qua guarantee ingrained in Article 21 of the Constitution of India. It is, therefore, essential that access to justice is available at all stages of the criminal process. Access to justice during the early stage of the criminal process has its importance and significance. It ensures, among other things, protection of rights of people when they are most vulnerable. It strengthens the criminal justice system.

While availability of services of trained lawyer at the stage of trial in criminal prosecution and free legal aid for those who cannot afford a lawyer on their own, are the norms in most jurisdictions, legal aid during pre-trial stages also is significant. It, inter alia, ensures protection of rights of people when they are most vulnerable and thereby strengthens the criminal justice system.

Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Bachpan Bachao Andolan versus Union of India and Others [Writ Petition (Civil) No.75/2012] held as follows:-

"Each police station should have, at least, one police officer, especially instructed and trained, designated as a Juvenile Welfare Officer in terms of Section 63 of the Juvenile Justice Act. We are also inclined to accept the suggestions that there should be, in shifts, a Special Juvenile Officer on duty in the police station to ensure that the directions contained in this order are duly implemented. To add a further safeguard, we also direct the National Legal Services Authority, which is being represented by its Member Secretary through Ms. Anitha Shenoy, Learned Advocate, that the para legal volunteers, who have been recruited by the Legal Services Authorities, should be utilized, so that there is at least one para legal volunteer, in shift, in the police station to keep a watch over the manner in which the complaints regarding missing children and other offences against children, are dealt with".

It is also a constitutional mandate that legal aid is a fundamental right. Article 39A of the Constitution of India envisages that the State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on the basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

An analysis of the workload relating to missing children cases indicates that around 8,000 cases of missing children are reported every year in Tamil Nadu, consistently over the past three years. When this annual figure is distributed across 1,626 police stations, it works out to approximately five cases per police station per annum. Further, even if all categories of crimes against children excluding POCSO cases are taken into account, the data of the past three years shows that a maximum of around 13,000 such cases are reported per annum across the State. When distributed among 1,626 police stations, this results in approximately eight cases per police station per annum.

In view of the above and as per the Constitutional mandate and the directions of Hon'ble Apex Court and after due consultation with Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority, Social Welfare Department, Director General of Police / Head of Police Force, and other stakeholders, the following scheme is framed for providing services of Para-Legal Volunteers in various Police Stations in Tamil Nadu for providing assistance in cases of missing children in particular and in cases of crimes against children in general.

II. Definition .-

- (a) **Missing Child** – A child whose whereabouts are not known to the parents, legal guardian or any other person or institution legally entrusted with the custody of the child, whatever may be the circumstances of causes of disappearance, shall be considered missing and in need of care/protection until located or child's safety and wellbeing is established.
- (b) **Para Legal Volunteers** – Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs for the sake of brevity) are persons who are drawn from different sections of the society, such as people from medical profession and various NGOs, teachers and retired Government servants with minimum qualification of a pass in twelfth standard (Plus Two).

III. Procedure to be followed .-

- (a) Upon receipt of a complaint regarding a missing child, an FIR should be registered forthwith as a case of trafficking or abduction.
- (b) Child Welfare Police Officer should be informed and FIR should be forwarded to the Special Juvenile Police Unit for immediate action for tracing the child.
- (c) The police shall send a copy of the FIR by a special messenger or email to the office of nearest Legal Services Institution (District Legal Services Authority/Taluk Legal Services Committee) along with addresses and contact phone numbers of parents or legal guardians of the missing child or the child care institution, after uploading the relevant information in the designated portal.

IV. Role and Functions of Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) .-

With regard to the role and functions of Para Legal Volunteers, the following shall be their duties and responsibilities:-

- (i) **Assistance during enquiry:** To assist the parent or guardian of a missing child during enquiry by helping them to coherently provide all relevant information, including the circumstances leading to the child becoming missing.
- (ii) **Emotional support and information elicitation :**
- To provide emotional support and counselling to the parents, guardian or family members, and to elicit details relating to the family environment or any other information that may aid in tracing the missing child at the earliest, including causative factors, probable places of visit, or situation where the child may be located.
 - To provide emotional support and counselling to child victims in other cases of crime against children and elicit information useful for investigation.
- (iii) **Liaison with Police Authorities :** To liaise with the Station House Officer(SHO) concerned and convey all information gathered from the complainant or the victim's family, so as to facilitate effective investigation and improve outcomes in tracking the missing child.
- (iv) **Post-tracing support to the child :** To provide emotional support to the traced child after recovery, ascertain the circumstances under which the child went missing, and communicate such information to the SHO for appropriate follow-up action.
- (v) **Facilitation of welfare measures:** To assist and support the child and/or the parents or guardian in availing various welfare schemes, facilities, rehabilitation measures, or compensation through the Social Welfare Department, Child Care Institutions, Children's Homes, or other appropriate authorities.

V. Rate of remuneration .-

The PLV shall be entitled to an honorarium of Rs.1,000/- per visit, subject to a maximum ceiling of Rs.5,000/- per case.

VI. Qualification and Age Criteria .-

Minimum qualification required to be selected as PLV is twelfth standard (Plus Two). The age criteria is 25-65 years. Preference may be given to the candidates who are graduates and those who possess qualifications in social work, psychology, or other allied disciplines.

VII. Procedure for Selection .-

- (a) A Committee comprising the Chairman, DLSA; the Superintendent of Police / Deputy Commissioner of Police; the Secretary, DLSA; and the District Child Protection Officer, shall conduct interviews for the selection and empanelment of Para Legal Volunteers. An approved panel of such volunteers shall be drawn by the Chairman, DLSA. The Secretary, DLSA, shall act as Member Secretary of the Committee and shall be responsible for receiving applications from various sections of society and placing them before the Committee for consideration and further processing. The Committee shall convene meetings as and when required to process applications.
- (b) The number of Para Legal Volunteers required to be empaneled per judicial district shall be at an average of 30-40 depending upon the number of police stations operational in the district. In appropriate cases, depending on the other circumstances as are prevalent and number of police stations in the district, the Committee may decide the number of Para Legal Volunteers to be empaneled.
- (c) The panel of Para Legal Volunteers drawn for a district shall be communicated by the Secretary, DLSA, to the Commissioner of Police / Superintendent of Police. The Secretary, DLSA, shall assign the Para Legal Volunteers based on their residential location and draw a police station-wise list of PLVs available on call. Such police station-wise lists shall be maintained by the DLSA.

VIII. Calls and Visits .-

- (a) Whenever a case relating to a missing child or crime against children and matter under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, or the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act is reported, the SHO or the Police Station Writer shall inform the DLSA / Taluk Legal Services Committee (TLSC) to assign a Para Legal Volunteer to visit the police station to assist the complainant or the victim.

- (b) After the initial visit and based on the requirement of the case, the SHO may inform the DLSA / TLSC to extend the services of PLV to provide further assistance. The Secretary, DLSA, after getting inputs / information from the Para Legal Volunteer assigned, may also decide the requirement of further assistance of the PLV to the complainant or the victim.
- (c) Attendance of the PLVs shall be maintained both at the Police Station and the DLSA / TLSC. The honorarium will be paid to the PLVs by the DLSA based on the attendance certificate provided by the SHO concerned and on the report submitted by the PLVs.
- (d) The SHO shall furnish the particulars of cases of missing children and other offences against children, to the District Legal Services Authority / Taluk Legal Services Committee, as the case may be, immediately after complaints are filed, cases are registered or such incidents come to their notice.

IX. Exclusion Clause .-

Since provision for appointing support persons are already available under Section 39 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, cases registered under the POCSO Act shall be excluded from the purview of this Scheme.

X. Tenure of engagement .-

- (a) Para Legal Volunteers shall be empaneled initially for a period of one year which shall be further extended on recommendation of the Chairman, DLSA, on the basis of their performance.
- (b) The PLVs shall file report to the DLSA Secretary on monthly basis. Such reports will be evaluated by the Chairman, DLSA, for assessing their performance and extension of their tenure.

XI. Training of PLVs .-

Training for PLVs shall be imparted by DLSAs in coordination with the Police Department and the Department of Child Welfare and Special Services.

(a) Constitution of India

- To inform the PLVs about the basic structure of the Constitution.
- To inform the PLVs about the sensitivity of the Constitution towards the weak and the underprivileged.
- To enlighten PLVs as to how legal services emanate from the basic structure of the Constitution.

(b) Child Rights

- To Provide PLVs an understanding of working principles of different laws relating to children.
- To give them a clear perspective of the different situations in which children can be in difficult circumstances and need relief.

(c) Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

- Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 is the primary legal framework for juvenile justice in India.
- Act provides for a special approach towards prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency and provides a framework for the protection, treatment and rehabilitation of children in the purview of the juvenile justice system.

(d) Procedure followed in Cases of Missing Children

- Various steps of collection of information from victim family, steps to be taken to trace the missing child, investigation to be conducted after tracing the child, etc.

(e) Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986

- An Act to prohibit the engagement of children in certain employments and to regulate the conditions of work of children in certain other employments.

(f) Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

- To give the PLVs an idea of what constitutes a Child Marriage, Powers of Child Marriage Prohibition Officer, supportive role of Police and District Administration, 1098 – Child Helpline, reporting and referral mechanism.
- To sensitize PLVs to be child friendly and to have general sensitive approach.

(g) Legal Services Authority Act & Role of PLVs

- To introduce the PLVs to entire structure and working of the legal services institutions under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.
- To give the PLVs an overview of the Schemes of National Legal Services Authority and Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority.
- To give the PLVs an insight into the role of PLVs, do's and don'ts, standards of behaviour expected from them.

(h) Criminal Justice System

- To give the PLVs a working knowledge of criminal procedure.
- To inform the PLVs about the rights/duties of accused and victims involved in the criminal proceedings.

XII. Financial Implications :-

Funds for the implementation of the Scheme shall be allocated to the Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority in the budget under any sub-head, and TNSLSA will, in turn, re-allocate the funds to DLSAs according to their requirement.

DHEERAJ KUMAR,
Additional Chief Secretary to Government.