



National Legal Services Day

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Why in News

The **National Legal Services Day** is celebrated on **9th November** every year to spread awareness for ensuring reasonable fair and justice procedure for all citizens.

Key Points

- National Legal Services Day (NLSD) was first started by the **Supreme Court of India** in 1995 to provide help and support to poor and weaker sections of the society.
- Free legal services are provided in matters before **Civil, Criminal and Revenue Courts, Tribunals** or any other authority exercising judicial or quasi judicial functions.
- **In line with Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 39A** of the Constitution of India provides that State shall secure that the operation of the legal system **promotes justice** on a 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 disability.
 - **Articles 14 and 22(1)** also make it **obligatory** for the State to ensure equality before law and a legal system which promotes justice on a basis of equal opportunity to all.
- **Objectives of Legal Services Authorities are:**
 - Provide free legal aid and advice.
 - Spread legal awareness.
 - Organise **lok adalats**.
 - Promote settlements of disputes through **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)** Mechanisms. Various kinds of ADR mechanisms are **Arbitration, Conciliation, Judicial settlement including settlement through Lok Adalat, or Mediation**.
 - Provide compensation to victims of crime.

- **Legal Services Institutions for providing Free Legal Services**
 - **National Level** : National Legal Services Authority. The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) was constituted under **the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**. The **Chief Justice of India** is the **Patron-in-Chief**.
 - **State Level** : State Legal Services Authority. It is headed by the **Chief Justice of the State High Court** who is its Patron-in-Chief.
 - **District Level** : District Legal Services Authority. The **District Judge** of the District is its **ex-officio Chairman**.
 - **Taluka/Sub-Division Level** : Taluka/ Sub-Divisional Legal Services Committee. It is headed by a senior Civil Judge.
 - **High Court** : High Court Legal Services Committee
 - **Supreme Court** : Supreme Court Legal Services Committee

Way Forward

It can be noted that the role played by NALSA and its networks is very much relevant to achieving the **Sustainable Development Goal-16**, which seeks to "**Promote peaceful and inclusive societies** for sustainable development, provide **access to justice for all** and **build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**".