



Tele-Law

Why in News

Recently, the Justice Department commemorated the **milestone of crossing 9 lakh beneficiaries** under its **Tele-Law programme** through **Common Service Centres**.

- **Common Services Centre (CSC) programme** is an initiative of the **Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY)**, that serves as the **access points for delivery of various electronic services to villages in India**, thereby contributing to a digitally and financially inclusive society.

Key Points

- **About:**

- It was **launched by the Ministry of Law and Justice in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in 2017** to address cases at the pre-litigation stage.
- It is presently operating in **633 districts** (including 115 **Aspirational Districts**) across 34 States/UTs through a network of **50,000 CSCs**.
- Under this programme, **smart technology of video conferencing, telephone/instant calling facilities available** at the vast network of Common Service Centres at the Panchayat level are used to connect the indigent, down-trodden, vulnerable, unreached groups and communities with the Panel Lawyers for seeking timely and valuable legal advice.
- Even though the Tele-law programme is technology driven, its success is dependent on the working of field functionaries comprising **Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs), Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs), State Coordinators and Panel Lawyers**.



▪ **Benefits:**

- It enables anyone to **seek legal advice without wasting precious time and money.** The service is free for those who are eligible for free legal Aid as mentioned under **Section 12 of the Legal Services Authority Act, 1987.** For all others a nominal fee is charged.
- According to a recent report titled '[Quality of Legal Representation: An Empirical Analysis of Free Legal Aid Services in India](#)', the majority of the people who are entitled to the free legal aid system see the service as an option only when they cannot afford a private lawyer.

▪ **Supports SDGs:**

- It can be noted that this initiative is in line with [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".

Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act

- **In 1987, the Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act was enacted to give free and competent legal services to the poor** and paved the way for the constitution of [National Legal Service Authority \(NALSA\)](#) and other legal service institutions at the State, district and taluka level.
 - NALSA along with other Legal Services Institutions conducts **Lok Adalats**. Lok Adalat is one of the alternative dispute redressal mechanisms, it is a forum where disputes/cases pending in the court of law or at pre-litigation stage are settled/ compromised amicably.
- Free legal services under LSA Act are available to a person belonging to [Schedule Tribe](#) and [Schedule Caste](#), woman, child, victim of human trafficking, differently abled person, industrial workman, and person in custody in a protective home and the poor.

Related Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 39A** of the Constitution provides for **free legal aid to poor and weaker sections of the society**, to promote justice on the basis of equal opportunity.
- **Articles 14 and 22(1)** also make it **obligatory for the State to ensure equality before the law.**

[Source: PIB](#)

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