



## 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**.

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#### ▪ **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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