



# **Supreme Court Legal Services Committee**

**A VISION FOR THE FUTURE**





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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Constitution<sup>1</sup> of India embodies '*equality before law and equal protection of law*' as underlying fundamental right in Part III. This includes the right of equal access to justice for all. The Supreme Court by a catena of judgments has enlarged the scope of the administration of justice to ensure that '*justice should not only be done but seen to be done*'. This is the cornerstone of justice and of salutary principle - justice for all.

In 1976, Article 39-A was added to the Constitution of India to provide free legal aid to the poor and weaker sections of the society and to ensure justice for all. This mandate recognizes the right of the people who are prevented from having access to the court for myriad reasons, to obtain free legal aid. Following the insertion of Article 39-A the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 was passed.

The Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee came to be constituted to carry out the mandate under Article 39A. It is under Section 3A of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 that the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee [hereinafter SCLSC] draws its origin and existence. It formally came into being in the year, 1996, with the framing of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee Regulations, 1996 by the Central Government under Section 29 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

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<sup>1</sup> " **Constitution is not a mere lawyer's document, it is a vehicle of life and its spirit is always the spirit of age**" - **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**

Access to Justice as a basic principle of the Rule of Law<sup>2</sup> necessitates providing fair, effective, non-discriminatory and accountable legal services that promote justice without being influenced by considerations of religion, caste, creed, race, sex or any similar exterior condition. Legal aid is provided as per the eligibility norms based on various factors. The SCLSC while following the norms specified also endeavors to ensure that this vital limb of access to justice is extended to vulnerable sections of people who in their circumstances are unable to seek remedies in courts

The SCLSC is committed to provide quality legal aid to such vulnerable sections of people and to reach out to the masses until the last mile. This document outlines the future vision for SCLSC, in furtherance of its goals. It records the major milestones achieved by the SCLSC and sets down the path ahead.

The SCLSC envisions realistic achievable goals, with a focus on the need to streamline the existing structure to facilitate and implement the mandate of Article 39-A of the Constitution of India. These milestones are predicated on the nature of litigation and plethora of parliamentary statutes enacted post the Act of 1987. These statutory changes combined with the continually changing social milieu have brought about a societal transformation in all patterns of work, and in the context hereof, the judicial interface with the people.

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<sup>2</sup> ***" We will be remembered only if we give to our younger generation a prosperous and safe India, resulting out of economic prosperity coupled with civilized heritage." - Dr. A.P.J.Abdul Kalam.***

### **THE JOURNEY SO FAR<sup>3</sup>**

The SCLSC has taken several decisions and initiatives for ensuring the quality of legal aid and legal services provided by the SCLSC. They are *inter alia*: -

1. Organization of interactive legal programs for panel advocates towards improving the quality of assistance provided.
2. Filed and pursued the Writ Petition (Crl.) No.312 of 1994 seeking direction to all States to abide by and implement the 1987 Act. The Hon'ble Supreme Court was pleased to issue directions on 18.08.1998 prescribing the procedure as follows:-
  - a) All jail authorities are required to inform and explain the contents of the judgment by the court of sessions and the High Court to the convicts;
  - b) Complete the legal aid formalities at the cost of state exchequer;
  - c) Compile the records and document to be sent to the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee;
  - d) To have the documents translated at the cost of the State in case they are in regional languages.
3. The applications for legal aid by accused-convicts in criminal cases relating to offences of rape, murder imposing death sentences, life imprisonment and cases involving imprisonment for a term of more than 10 years, are directly processed for filing before the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The

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<sup>3</sup> " ***There is no path to happiness. Happiness is the path***"- ***Gautama Buddha***

stage of a Screening Committee has been done away with to expedite such matters.

4. Matters, in which translation of documents from the vernacular is required, are assigned to the advocates-on-record on the panel having knowledge of that particular language.
5. SCLSC has introduced a system of automated reminders to advocates on the panel about the filing of matters to ensure speedy filing of the matters.
6. Vide circular dated 20.08.2018, the panel advocates have been directed to engage Senior Advocates to argue the causes which pertain to sentence of death, life imprisonment or rape.
7. Project 'SAHYOG' was undertaken to address the issue of long pending cases. The total pendency with the SCLSC was reduced from 3800 (as in January 2018) to 2144 (as on 22.09.2018). Special incentives were introduced during project SAHAYOG to encourage advocates to process matters allocated to them with due expedition.
8. Scanning of all the files before its assignment to the panel advocate was made mandatory to prevent the loss of files by the SCLSC. Further, even Video conferencing facility have been introduced for facilitation of consultation.
9. In order to curb the delay in processing the legal aid applications, an Order was passed laying down the time line for processing of legal aid applications at various stages.

10. Digital mode of payment of honorariums to the advocates on the panel has been introduced.
11. Information about the assignment of cases is sent via email as well as Short Message Service (SMS) to the advocate on panel and applicants to expedite communication with the clients.
12. The National Law University, Delhi was engaged to conduct 'Open Door Audits' of the functioning of SCLSC in 2018 and 2020. The Reports were submitted after research and certain recommendations were given.
13. The official website of SCLSC was launched to receive online applications from the legal aid applicants which has reduced the time for approaching SCLSC to file petition before the Supreme Court<sup>4</sup>.
14. To expedite the process, it was decided that the Affidavit for grant of legal services is not required to be attested through notary or an oath commissioner.
15. The SCLSC while discharging the functions of SCMC has adopted the procedure of hybrid mediation for the purpose of conducting mediation between the parties. This has yielded results which have been beneficial to the parties.

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<sup>4</sup> " ***There is higher court than courts of justice and that is the court of conscience. It supercedes all other courts.***" - Mahatma Gandhi

## THE VISION

### THE SUPREME COURT LEGAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ENVISIONS THE FOLLOWING

LITIGANT CENTRIC PRO-ACTIVE APPROACH

REACHING THE MASSES TO ESPOUSE PUBLIC CAUSES  
AMONGST ALL SECTIONS

STRENGTHENING SCLSC

SELF-SUSTAINING PROGRAMS

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

MEDIATION

### LITIGANT CENTRIC PRO-ACTIVE APPROACH

#### A) **Front Office<sup>5</sup>:**

- One Stop Center and a Litigant Friendly Office:
  - I. SCLSC aims to develop and empower its Front Office as a **'One Stop Center'** where legal aid applicants get legal solutions and made cognizant about the legal issues involved in their cases.
  - II. To make the Front Office 'Litigant Friendly' so that beneficiaries like lactating mothers, differently-able people, children and aged persons can be given necessary facilities during their visit.

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<sup>5</sup> "Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time and always start with the person nearest."- Mother Teresa

- III. To make provision for mental health<sup>6</sup> assistance and/or social assistance at the Front Office.
- IV. Appointment of a person with minimum qualification of diploma or Master's Degree in psychiatry or psychology from any recognized university or institute, as well as a person with qualification of Master's Degree in social work.
- V. Ensure that the Front Office is composed of staffs who speak a range of regional languages, so as to provide accessibility to beneficiaries who are not fluent in Hindi or English.

• Re-structuring of the Front Office:

- I. Constitution of a Sub-Committee to take stock of the existing infrastructure and submit its recommendations every two years.
- II. The Sub-Committee will also submit periodical recommendations for the changes to be made in the front office to make it more Litigant Friendly.
- III. Increasing the existing space of Front Office so as to accommodate more legal aid applicants simultaneously.
- IV. To make the Front office technologically strong and technically equipped.
- V. To digitize the record of the Front office for ready reference and access.

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<sup>6</sup> " **Life means not only physical existence. It means the use of every limb or faculty through which life is enjoyed...The right to life includes the right to healthy environment**" - Justice P.N. Bhagwati

•Training of the consultants who have Front Office Duties:

- I. Conducting periodic '**Client Consultation Techniques Training**' to the Legal Consultants who render legal advice at the front office.

**B) Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices at State, District and Taluka Levels<sup>7</sup>:**

•SCLSC shall establish a complete & holistic one point approach for facilitation of legal aid and for this the **Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices** shall be run at every legal aid institution.

•The **Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices** shall work for filing legal aid applications, dissemination of information about SCLSC, procurement of documents essential for the cases filed by the legal aid applicants, their translations and extending legal aid formalities wherever required, for dissemination of information regarding legal aid services rendered by the SCLSC.

For better co-ordination between the **Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices** and SCLSC, there will be regular virtual (automated) review of the work done by the SCLSC Back Office. To bolster this effort a system of constant feedback to SCLSC shall be put in place.

•Ubiquitous use of the virtual platform of SCLSC by all the duty holders up to Taluka Legal Services Committee as an e-office. It is to facilitate automated processes and maintenance of record including monitoring the output for ensuring timely and effective

<sup>7</sup> For features of Mobile App/Virtual Platform of SCLSC – see Enclosure-A

completion of the processes. It would also facilitate the stakeholders and keep them duly informed on real time basis about the output and progress of their cases.

• Pilot Project '**SAMANVAY**'<sup>8</sup>:

- I. This will be a pilot project for developing and working the '**Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices**' at District and Taluka Levels.
- II. For its working out to ensure due implementation of its objectives, the territory of India may be categorized into five (5) zones namely North, South, East, West and Central.
- III. To begin with, five District Legal Aid Authorities including Taluka Level Legal Aid Committees zone-wise may be selected for creation of '**Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices**' to ensure that the Services of the SCLSC are propagated and extended at the grass-root level where legal aid may be granted by it, in so far as it concerns proceedings to be initiated in the Supreme Court.
- IV. The '**Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices**' can be operated and updated by the duty holders designated by the respective DLSAs and the Taluka Legal Aid Committees.
- V. Training of persons, entrusted with the working of the '**Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices**' will be conducted by the SCLSC.

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<sup>8</sup> "I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things." -  
Mother Teresa

- VI. An automated monthly report to be generated about the five DLSAs and Taluka Legal Services Committees of the concerned district to track the progress and utility of this project.
- VII. A project report shall be prepared at the end of the first year period and the achievement of the **Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices** will be assessed. The project report shall also include recommendations for betterment of the functioning of the **Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices** at State, District and Taluka Levels.
- VIII. Steps to implement the model of back offices pan India as formulated to be carried out in coordination with the Legal Aid Institutions. This will make the working of the SCLSC broad based and cater to the stakeholders at their doorstep.
- c) **Special Attention to Inmates Lodged in Custody:**
- I. To conduct meetings periodically with High Court Legal Services Committees (HCLSCs) and Jail Authorities. This is with the aim to understand the reach of the SCLSC, to improve communication and co-ordination, to update the accused about the procedures of the SCLSC and to ensure expeditious<sup>9</sup> processing of legal aid applications.
  - II. Coordinating with High Court Legal Services Committees and Jail Authorities for displaying the posters and

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<sup>9</sup> " *We win justice by rendering justice to other party*"- Mahatma Gandhi

disseminating information of the services provided by the SCLSC.

- III. To constantly review, re-assess and restructure the system of scrutiny of cases of convicts who have been sentenced to imprisonment for a period less than 10 years in view of the deeming provision contained in governing Rules.
- IV. Providing email address and contact details of the concerned jail authorities for facilitation of gathering documents and other information to accelerate the process of litigation.
- V. Identifying the convict-applicants who are eligible for Remission under the Rules of the concerned state consequent to disposal of proceedings before the Supreme Court. Thereafter, coordinating with the HCLSC or the SCLSC Panel of Lawyers (as the case may be), to provide assistance for filing the requisite application to the State Authority to facilitate pursuing of petition in the Supreme Court seeking remission of sentence.
- VI. To dwell on the re-formative<sup>10</sup> aspect of incarceration, efforts shall be made to collaborate with the Jail Authorities, concerned HCLSC, NGOs and departments of the Government to engage in formative activities for the benefit of the Jail Inmates
- VII. The virtual platform of SCLSC office would come handy for implementing the 'SAMANVAY' Pilot Project connecting

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<sup>10</sup> "Man is made of his belief. As he believes, so he is!" - Bhagwad Gita

with various jails for extending free legal services to the inmates therein and to monitor the progress of their cases. The online platform developed as a virtual App, would disseminate requisite details to the applicant/inmate in jail including about the status of the case. It would be a single window system facilitating easy access to the documents and automated processes in real time ensuring efficiency and transparency<sup>11</sup>.

**D) Expediting Legal Aid Applications and Feedback/Grievance Redressal Mechanism:**

- I. Implementing the time limits for processing legal aid applications, filing of cases and regular monitoring of the same by the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee as per applicable circulars.
- II. Seeking a reasoned opinion from the Screening Committee on the cases marked to them for processing the cause by enforcing a time limit.
- III. Further reduction of intervals between reminders sent to the advocates for following up of the applications/cases.
- IV. Mandatory usage of the video-conferencing by the advocates with prisoners and the clients.
- V. Appreciation of the pro-active work done by the panel advocates by felicitating them in public/awarding appreciation certificates.

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<sup>11</sup> A lack of transparency results in distrust and a deep sense of insecurity” - Dalai Lama

- VI. The beneficiaries of legal aid should have the benefit to approach the local legal services authority and contact the SCLSC through video conferencing facility.
- VII. Constitution of a **Grievance Redressal Committee** for expeditious redressal of inquiries and complaints of the legal aid beneficiaries and launching 24×7 Toll Free Number of SCLSC.
- VIII. Designing of an appropriate insignia to be used on the cover page of paper books of SCLSC matters for easy identification of the matters filed through SCLSC. In the alternative a different colour of marker in the paper-book would make them easily identifiable as well.
- IX. Attaching a form to the inside cover of the SCLSC paper books which allows assessment by the Hon'ble Judges of the quality of the assistance given by the SCLSC Panel Advocate in a particular case, which the Court Master/Section Officer of the concerned section may communicate/upload electronically on the official website.
- X. To expedite communication with the advocates after allocation of legal aid matters, reminders shall be sent to them on all modes of communication, postal and electronic.
- XI. Emphasizing the need of expeditious filing of petitions by the panel advocates of the SCLSC which will maintain the faith and trust<sup>12</sup> of the applicant litigant.

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<sup>12</sup> " **Meet this transient world with neither grasping nor fear, trust the unfolding of life, and you will attain true serenity**" - **Bhagwad Gita**

**E) SCLSC Panels of Advocates:**

- I. For qualitative and quantitative expansion of the panel of advocates in SCLSC, augment the criteria of language, expertise in the given subject, experience in the concerned area etc.
- II. Formation of a Panel of Patron Senior Advocates for appearing in cases assigned by the SCLSC. Those Senior Advocates can be approached who have not been associated with SCLSC and request them to become Patron Advocates to enrich the legal aid journey<sup>13</sup> of SCLSC. Senior Advocates, who have been recently designated, be invited to join the SCLSC movement.
- III. Each Senior Advocate to be requested to accept at least up to two final hearing cases for the SCLSC every month.
- IV. There shall be four panels of advocates in SCLSC: of Patron Senior Advocates, of Senior Advocates, of Advocates-on-Record and of Non-Advocates-on-Record.
- V. Conducting a periodic orientation program for panel advocates. The purpose of the program will be, to have an open house discussion on issues which the panel advocates encounter in SCLSC matters and to find workable solutions for the same.
- VI. Conducting an annual 'Advocacy Training Program' for at least three days comprising of lectures on current legal issues, developments in the field of legal aid, training as

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<sup>13</sup> "A small move toward your small aim, later lets you achieve bigger goals" -

per NALSA training modules and personality enhancement sessions for the benefit of panel advocates. Resource persons like Senior Advocates, Hon'ble Judges of Supreme Court, jurists, etc. may be invited for the said program. This is envisioned to achieve qualitative improvement and widening the knowledge base of the panel advocates.

**F) Scheme of Automated Allocation of Cases:**

- I. A structured system of allocation of matters by rotation to the panel advocates shall be put in place.
- II. The allocation shall be done on the basis of criteria like language, expertise, experience in the concerned area, interest in the area etc.

**REACHING THE MASSES TO ESPOUSE THE PUBLIC CAUSES<sup>14</sup> AMONG ALL SECTIONS**

**A) Dissemination of Information about SCLSC:**

- I. Publication of information in Local Newspapers, magazines etc.
- II. Publication of information in E-Newspapers.
- III. Broadcast of information on Radio Stations by collaborating with All India Radio/Doordarshan.
- IV. Showcasing of information in local transport services like Metro, Buses, Railways etc.
- V. Preparation of a Documentary Film depicting the scope of work of the SCLSC and the legal services provided at

<sup>14</sup> "The purpose of service is so God can reach others through your hands"- Bible

SCLSC, Delhi and various SCLSC Back Offices at State, District and Taluka levels.

**B) Ensuring Digital Use by SCLSC for All Purposes:**

- I. Opening of an account of the SCLSC on social media to reach masses including the information and access to SCLSC Back Offices and SCLSC Virtual Platform.
- II. Efforts will be made for creating awareness about the Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices up to the Taluka Level and all the existing resources shall be put to use for this purpose.

**C) Collaboration with the BCI, SCBA, SCAORA, NGOs and Corporations and Companies:**

- I. Collaborating with various NGOs for circulation of information relating to or concerning the working of the SCLSC and for facilitation of access to SCLSC for beneficiaries desirous of approaching it.
- II. Collaborating with National Commission for Women<sup>15</sup>, National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Backward Classes for legal awareness and dissemination of information about SCLSC.
- III. Collaborating with various Corporations/Companies having Corporate Social Responsibility programs for dissemination of information of SCLSC.

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<sup>15</sup> “Where the female relations live in grief, that family soon perishes; but the family where they are not unhappy ever prospers” - Manu Smriti 3.57

- IV. Further impressing upon the Corporations/Companies to give weightage to jobseekers in their Legal Departments who have worked with/for the SCLSC while considering them for the post.
- V. Impressing upon various corporate groups for providing financial assistance for conducting self-sustaining legal aid programs or projects of SCLSC in collaboration with the local legal services authorities.
- VI. Impressing upon the Bar Council of India (BCI) to introduce extra credits/ weightage in the law courses to those law students who have worked on the projects pertaining to free legal aid.
- VII. Impressing upon the BCI to encourage the newly enrolled lawyers to work for the cause of SCLSC in different ways by visiting jails, meeting with the marginal sections of the society, people residing in remote area.
- VIII. Impressing upon the State Bar Councils to maintain database of advocates willing to work on pro bono<sup>16</sup> basis as counsels on the 'Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices to promote the legal aid of SCLSC Programme.
- IX. Impressing upon the BCI, State Bar Councils, SCBA, SCAORA to introduce in their enrollment forms as well as during the renewal of the membership a column to record the willingness of the applicant to engage in legal aid work.

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<sup>16</sup> ***" If you do deeds of charity openly, it is well; But if you bestow it upon the needy secretly, it will be even better for you"- Quran 2:271***

- X. Impressing upon the SCAORA to encourage the advocates-on-record to provide free legal services and connect to the cause of the SCLSC.
- XI. Impressing upon SCBA/SCAORA to add 1-year pro bono legal services<sup>17</sup> as part of enrolment criteria for membership of SCBA/SCAORA.
- XII. Coordinating with the other legal services authorities to organize legal aid camps in particular districts or village to increase personal interaction and reach with the persons residing in remote areas.
- XIII. All the legal services authorities to share the list of the advocates who are willing to work for the cause of SCLSC on pro bono basis including contacting the legal aid applicants arranging for documents and creating awareness.

**D) E-Newsletter:**

- I. A monthly ***E-Newsletter*** on SCLSC activities, including research articles and reportable judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in favor of legal aid beneficiaries, will be uploaded on the SCLSC website, all social media platforms, as well as sent to the other legal aid institutions.
- II. This E-Newsletter shall have a defined format so as to include comparative analysis of the work done every month.

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<sup>17</sup> “ *Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow-men.*”-  
**Mahatma Gandhi**

**E) Awareness about Categories of Beneficiaries:**

- I. In order to create awareness about provision of legal aid to all besides uploading the information on SCLSC website and social media etc. in electronic form, poster/boards will be designed and placed at the front office of the SCLSC and the Back Offices at the HCLSCs and the DLSAs.

**STRENGTHENING THE SCLSC****A) Constitution of Committees:**

- I. Constitution of the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee (MMC) as prescribed under Regulations 10 of the NALSA (Free & Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010. The MMC will supervise the performance<sup>18</sup> of advocates and also design the capacity building of advocates for improving the overall quality of their performance.
- II. Regular monitoring of the cases allotted to the panel advocates and submission of a monthly report to the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee.
- III. Constitution of a Public Relation Committee to enhance communication of SCLSC with the legal aid beneficiaries and other statutory organizations.

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<sup>18</sup> " **Be steadfast in the performance of your duty, abandoning attachment to success & failure. Such equanimity is called you**" - **Bhagwad Gita**

**B) Regular Training<sup>19</sup> of Staff**

- I. Conducting regular training of the staff of the SCLSC through Institute for Secretarial Training and Management [ISTM] to sensitize and optimize their performance and update them with the best practices.
- II. Staff will be attached to the zones as classified by the SCLSC and accountable for the work carried out in the respective zones and the areas falling under them.
- III. Conducting half yearly in-house training of the staff of the SCLSC to keep them abreast about technical upgradation.

**c) Upgrading Infrastructure and Engagement of Staff and Appointment of Additional Staff:**

- I. Constituting a Sub-Committee to evaluate the infrastructure of the SCLSC main office. This Sub-Committee shall give its biannual report and make recommendations for upgrading the infrastructure of the said office.
- II. SCLSC will take stock of the vacancies as and when they arise and endeavor to fill the vacancies before they fall vacant. Further, engage the services of retainer lawyers and para-legal volunteers, in accordance with the governing rules.

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<sup>19</sup> "Let no man in the world live in delusion. Without a guru none can cross over to the other shore"- **Guru Nanak Dev**

## **SELF-SUSTAINING PROGRAMS**

### **A) Research:**

- I. Collaboration with universities having law departments, law colleges, NGOs, organizations like Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), etc., for conducting research on the extent of goal achieved by the SCLSC in catering to various categories of legal aid beneficiaries.
- II. Research internship to be offered to final year law (LL.B) college students who are willing to work in SCLSC. Further initiatives to collaborator which can give them an opportunity, and motivate them to be part of the movement of 'access to justice for all' to inculcate a culture of pro bono<sup>20</sup> legal services.
- III. Conducting an extensive study through experts to analyze the proportion of legal aid applications coming from states so as to verify whether there is adequate awareness about the legal services rendered by the SCLSC.

### **B) Public Interest Litigation:**

- I. SCLSC will constitute a team of senior panel advocates, advocates on record and legal researchers to identify the areas which require reforms through judicial intervention and guidelines.

### **C) Legal Aid and Awareness Program:**

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<sup>20</sup> "When you do good for others, good things come back to you. This is the law of nature"-  
Gautama Buddha

- I. Organizing a '**Legal Aid Awareness<sup>21</sup> Week**' for the legal aid services rendered by the SCLSC commencing from 26th of November- Law Day to be conducted through the respective Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices at the State, District and Taluka Level and special attention would be paid in organizing such awareness programs in jail premises.
- II. Conducting seminars and webinars on contemporary legal issues in collaboration with the other legal services authorities.

### **LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY**

- I. Introduction of online consultation facility for the legal aid beneficiaries.
- II. Upgrading the internal software of the SCLSC. Constitution of an expert committee to evaluate the software periodically and give recommendations as to the changes to be made keeping in tune with the changing time and technology.
- III. Providing links on the official App of SCLSC of the websites of the District Legal Services Authorities and Jail authorities.
- IV. Upgrading the Official website of the SCLSC to include the feature of tracking progress of applications submitted physically.

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<sup>21</sup> " **Buddha means awareness, the awareness of body & mind that prevents evil from arising in either"- Bodhidharma**

- V. Engaging Services of experts for developing a Mobile App for the SCLSC to facilitate the tracking of status of their applications/cases.
- VI. Digitization of the record of the SCLSC, making it user friendly.

### **MEDIATION**<sup>22</sup>

- I. To train the representatives of the '**Virtual Platform of SCLSC Back Offices**' to create awareness among the litigants about Alternative Dispute Redressal System and encourage them to attempt mediation by both physical and virtual modes concerning Supreme Court cases.
- II. To conduct regular awareness programs regarding benefits of mediation through the SCLSC Back Office at Taluka and District Levels in collaboration with the local Mediation and conciliation centers.
- III. To collaborate with law colleges, law departments of various universities to conduct inter-college, inter state and national competitions on mediation and to promote ADR.

### **ENCLSOURE-A**

#### **Features of Mobile App/Virtual Platform of SCLSC**

- A. The Mobile App/Virtual Platform of SCLSC integrates all software running for different services either for internal

<sup>22</sup> "Renounce the Ego of Individuality & Rejoice in the bliss of Infinity" - Bhagwad Gita (Chapter- 5)

management of office or the information required by the stakeholders through offline and online platform.

- B.** On receiving the application offline at the front office, after necessary entries in the new software, application and other enclosed documents are immediately scanned and made available to the applicant on their login id on the Mobile App and also the New Website with the same credentials forwarded on their Mobile Number.
- C.** The software of SCLSC is directly connected to the Mobile App and Website operated on Cloud, so that as soon as internal processing is complete on each stage in the office, the information is available to the applicant as per the prevailing rules.
- D.** This software ensures that each application is processed within time frame defined in the office manual and accountability<sup>23</sup> is fixed on each stakeholder to complete the work timeline.
- E.** The SCLSC office is paperless and information/documents are available on computer dashboards/Mobile App/Website of the officer/staff/advocate, electronically and after digital signature, it moves to the next stage.
- F.** This software is interoperable and exchanges data/documents with **e-Prison, e-Courts, HCLSCs, SLSAs and DLSAs** through web services.

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<sup>23</sup> ***“ If anyone does righteous deed, it ensures to the benefit of his own soul if he does evil, it works against (his own soul). In the end will you(all) be brought back to your lord” - Quran45.15***

- G. Delay occurring on account of requirement of data/documents (paper book, custody certificate, FIR etc.) *to and from\_e-Prison, e-Courts, HCLSC, SLSA and DLSA* stands reduced completely and applications are disposed of within prescribed timeline.
- H. Online feedback and grievance redressal mechanism.
- I. The Website and Mobile App will be multilingual. Initially, it will be in English and Hindi and progressively<sup>24</sup> include other languages.
- J. The internal software, website and Mobile App have been developed inhouse on 90% open source (free tools) with latest Technology like Laravel Framework, PHP, Psstgres SQL, Python, Dspace DMS, and integrated scanning software etc.
- K. The common data structures have been used, which were being used by different departments including Panchayat Department, Ministry of Home Affairs in Prison and Police software(s), Bar Council of India for Advocate Information connected to respective State Bar Council software(s) and their associations, CIS 3.0 from e-Courts project.
- L. This complete pack of software working on cloud with complete security, can be used by NALSA, HCLSCs, SLSAs, DLSAs and TLSAs independently, as their e-office and for 360-degree monitoring of the activities of the duty holders 24\*7.

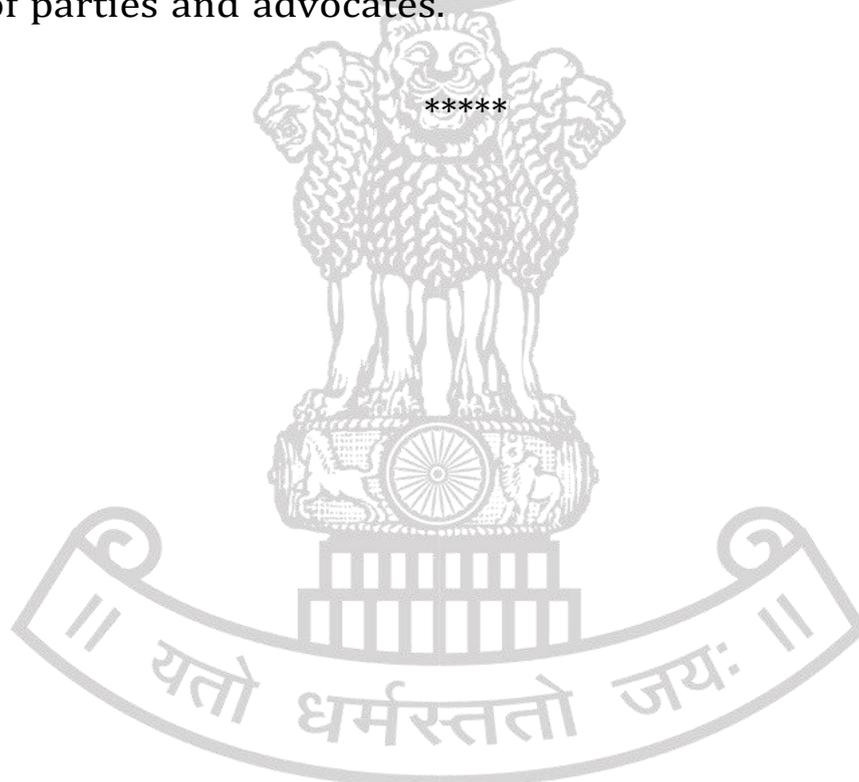
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<sup>24</sup> " *Selflessness is the only way for progress & prosperity*" - *Bhagwad Gita*

M. This software has been developed for the work-from-home environment, so that legal services are not hampered in pandemic like situations.

N. The open-source VC solution has been integrated for interactions with litigants virtually from the front office. Also, the Panel Advocate can interact with accused in jail and the legal aid officers virtually.

O. The open-source VC solution can be used for mediation purpose and will<sup>25</sup> be available to the litigants and advocates on secured environment, thereby reducing the cost of travelling and saving time of parties and advocates.



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<sup>25</sup> " Continually remembering your goals, working hard & self -powering will make the way of success easier"- Maharana Pratap

