

(i) The particulars of its organization functions and duties.

Organization:-

With considerable advancement in the fields of industrialisation, information technology, education, transportation and communication, people have become aware of their legal rights and the regular Courts have been flooded with cases which take years to dispose of the same finally. It has become very difficult to cope up with the present system of dispensation of justice with utmost promptitude. The litigation is costly and sometimes beyond the reach of common people, who are below poverty-line. The Preamble of our Constitution provides to secure to all its citizens JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY of status and of opportunity. Article 21 further provides that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. Article 22 protects the rights of a person arrested and detained in custody. Article 39-A casts a duty on the State to secure that 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 scheme 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. Thus there exists constitutional obligation to provide free legal services to needy and poor persons at State expenses.

In the year 1987, the Legal Services Authorities Act was enacted with a view to provide free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities and to organize Lok Adalats so as to secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity. Pursuant to the Legal Services Authorities Act, many States have framed rules and regulations for providing free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society. The State Authority has constituted Legal Services Committees throughout the State at Sub Divisional Head Quarters, headed by the senior most Judicial Officer in the Sub Division. The District Legal Services Authorities have been constituted under the Chairmanship of respective District & Sessions Judges. At the High Court -level, a Legal Services Committee is functioning under the chairmanship of a sitting Judge of the Hon'ble High Court. All these Committees/Authorities have been provided with adequate funds to meet their requirements, so that free legal aid is provided to the needy persons at their door-steps. As per the Rules framed under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 a person is entitled to free legal aid if his annual income does not exceed Rs.50,000/- per annum. In deserving cases Legal Services Committee/ Authority is competent to give relaxation in the aforesaid monetary limit of Rs.50,000/- per annum.

The State Legal Services Authority to provide competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society to insure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities and to organised Lok Adalats to secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on a basis of equal opportunities.

Functions of the State Authority:

1. It shall be the duty of the State Authority to give effect to the policy and directions of the Central Authority.

- 2 give legal service to persons who satisfy the criteria laid down under this Act;
- 3 conduct Lok Adalats, including Lok Adalats for High Court cases;
4. undertake preventive and strategic legal aid programmes, and
- 5 perform such other functions as the State Authority may, in consultation with the Central Authority, fix by regulations.