

Performance Appraisal of Permanent Lok Adalat in Haryana: A Comprehensive Analysis

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36676/jrps.v15.i2.1411>

Published: 29/06/2024



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Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of Haryana Legal Services Authority (HALSA) provisions, evaluate the functioning of Lok Adalats, assess the effectiveness of mediation centers alongside PLAs, review the process for granting free legal aid, and analyze the challenges faced by Permanent Lok Adalats in Haryana. This study employs a multistage sampling approach, including structured interviews with stakeholders, open discussions, and observations for primary data collection, alongside secondary sources like annual reports and published studies. Quantitative tools such as averages and percentages, as well as qualitative content analysis, were used for data analysis, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of PLA performance. The study finds that awareness of HALSA provisions is primarily driven by print and social media, with moderate overall awareness among respondents. Beneficiaries are generally satisfied with HLSA services, although improvements in accessibility and responsiveness are needed. PLA proceedings are viewed positively regarding information clarity and timeliness, but challenges persist in transparency, communication, and the handling of personal details. The study highlights the need for better infrastructure, enhanced awareness, and support mechanisms to ensure equal access to justice and effective dispute resolution by PLAs in Haryana. The findings indicate that while PLAs and HLSA have made notable progress in providing legal services, targeted awareness campaigns, especially in Sirsa and Sonipat, improved service delivery, and enhanced communication channels are necessary. Policymakers should focus on leveraging diverse media for awareness, continuously assessing service accessibility and responsiveness, addressing delays, and improving infrastructure to ensure equitable access to justice and build public trust in the judicial system.

Keywords: Permanent Lok Adalat (PLA), Haryana, Free Legal Aid, Legal Awareness, Dispute Resolution, Judicial System

Introduction

The inability of the Lok Adalat to make binding decisions without the assent of the parties was viewed as a serious flaw, causing the administration of justice to be held up. A Permanent Lok Adalat (PLA) was created in 2002 when the Legal Services Authority Act, 1987 (LSAA) was revised and chapter VI A was added in it. Pre-litigation, conciliation, and resolution of issues involving public utility services handled by the Permanent Lok Adalat with the objective of reducing the workload of the ordinary courts (Government of India, 2022).

Pre-litigation mediation and settlement are methods used in Permanent Lok Adalat to resolve disputes over public utility services. P.L.A. is defined in section 22A, with its scope. Public utility



services, as defined in section 22 A(b) of the Legal Services Authority Act, 1987, include the cases/issues of air, road, and water transportation; postal, telegraph, or telephone services; establishments that provide the public with power, light, or water; systems for public conservation or sanitation; and services provided in hospitals or dispensaries. Honorable Court also concluded in *New India Assurance Co. Ltd. vs. Sabharathanam* (AIR 2009 Ker 71) that disputes connected to insurance business conducted by Insurance Company were “public utility services” under the abovementioned provision (Government of India, 1987, section 22C).

It is important that the court consider natural justice principles such as objectivity and fair play while coming to a settlement under PLA (Government of India, 1987, section 22C). The Act gives the court the authority to reach a settlement that is binding on the parties, and the award of such a settlement is deemed to be a decree of the Civil Court and is conclusive in its nature. Section 22-E of the Act gives PLA the authority to use this authority.

Permanent Lok Adalat, on the other hand, is a distinct entity from Lok Adalat. Even if one of the parties fails to reach an agreement during conciliation proceedings, the Permanent Lok Adalat for public utility services can still decide the dispute on the merits u/sec.22C (8) of the Act. This is the main difference between the regular Lok Adalat and the Permanent Lok Adalat for Public Utility Services (Government of Haryana, 2022).

Despite the PLA’s ability to resolve the disagreement in a cost-effective and expeditious way, it has also been the target of numerous critiques. First and foremost, the PLA’s use on adjudication rather than conciliation to resolve disputes has been criticized. Even though pre-litigation conciliation and settlement is specifically included in the title of Chapter VI-A, PLA has the authority to reach a settlement even if the parties have not consented to it. After conciliation, if the parties are still unable to come to an agreement, the PLA has the authority to make a final decision on the matter without the agreement of the parties. This is why the PLA prefers binding arbitration over conciliation to resolve the conflict. Section 22-D of the PLA makes it plain that the Code of Civil Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act do not apply while deciding a case under the PLA. As a result of this, PLA judgments can be arbitrary or summative in nature (Abdul Gafoor, 2002).

Review of Literature

The concept of Permanent Lok Adalat (PLA) is integral to the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms in India. This review examines the evolution, objectives, and performance appraisal of PLAs, drawing on various scholarly articles, government reports, and legal commentaries. Lok Adalats, or People’s Courts, are a critical part of India’s alternative dispute resolution (ADR) framework. Established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, Lok Adalats aim to provide speedy and cost-effective justice. This review examines previous studies and their findings related to the performance of Lok Adalats, focusing on their efficiency, user satisfaction, and overall impact on the justice system.

Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) were envisioned as a beacon of hope to alleviate the overwhelming caseload of regular courts by providing a platform for pre-litigation settlement of disputes, especially those related to public utilities such as transport, postal, and telegraph services. These forums aim for swift, cost-effective resolutions, as highlighted by P.C. Rao and William Sheffield. The performance of PLAs is gauged by their efficiency in case disposal, with the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) noting varied disposal rates across different states, reflecting both triumphs and areas needing attention (NALSA Annual Report, 2018-19). Evaluating how PLAs enhance access to justice involves scrutinizing user satisfaction with factors like accessibility, fairness, and cost-effectiveness. Research presents mixed results; some regions exhibit high satisfaction levels,

while others face notable barriers (Jain). The quality of settlements is another critical measure, focusing on the legal soundness and sustainability of outcomes. Enforceability of PLA awards remains pivotal to their effectiveness (Sampath). States like Karnataka have been lauded for their effective PLA implementation, owing to proactive administrative support and strong community engagement (Karnataka State Legal Services Authority Annual Report, 2017). However, challenges persist, including inadequate infrastructure, lack of awareness, and occasional resistance from legal professionals, which vary significantly across regions (Sharma). Compared to traditional courts, PLAs offer a more conciliatory and less formal approach, beneficial for swiftly resolving smaller disputes, though their effectiveness wanes with complex cases (Madhava Menon). As part of a broader alternative dispute resolution framework that includes mediation and arbitration, historical reviews indicate that PLAs complement these mechanisms by offering a structured yet flexible pre-litigation forum (Panchu, 2011). Performance appraisal in judicial systems is crucial for evaluating efficiency, fairness, and overall impact on justice delivery, with theories like Goal-Setting, Balanced Scorecard, and Stakeholder Theory providing valuable frameworks for assessment (Locke & Latham, 2002; Kaplan & Norton, 1992; Freeman, 1984). Overall, while PLAs have proven effective in reducing court backlogs and enhancing access to justice, continuous evaluation and improvements are necessary to address regional disparities and ensure the quality and sustainability of their resolutions.

The historical perspective on the performance appraisal of Permanent Lok Adalats highlights their significant role in the Indian judicial system. While they have made notable contributions to reducing the burden on traditional courts and enhancing access to justice, ongoing evaluation and improvements are crucial. Future research should focus on standardizing best practices, improving infrastructure, and increasing public awareness to fully realize the potential of PLAs. Theories and models of performance appraisal offer valuable frameworks for evaluating and improving judicial systems. By applying these models, judicial systems can enhance efficiency, ensure fairness, and better meet the needs of their stakeholders. Future research and practical implementations should continue to adapt and refine these models to address the unique challenges and opportunities within judicial contexts. Studies on the performance of Lok Adalats reveal that they are effective in providing speedy and cost-effective justice, reducing the backlog of cases in regular courts, and enhancing access to justice for marginalized groups. However, challenges such as regional inconsistencies and perceptions of informality need to be addressed to further improve their effectiveness. Continuous evaluation and improvements are essential to maintain the quality and sustainability of resolutions achieved through Lok Adalats.

Research Methodology

This study focuses on the performance appraisal of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) in Haryana, motivated by the lack of comprehensive studies in this region. The research aims to provide empirical insights into the functioning and effectiveness of PLAs across selected districts. Haryana state, with its fifteen PLAs, serves as the universe for this study. To ensure a representative sample, the researcher classified the PLAs into four clusters based on geographical proximity: East, West, North, and South. The following PLAs were categorized into clusters:

- **East Cluster:** Faridabad, Karnal, Sonapat
- **West Cluster:** Hisar, Sirsa, Bhiwani
- **North Cluster:** Panchkula, Ambala
- **South Cluster:** Gurugram, Rewari
- **Central:** Rohtak (excluded from clusters)

The clustering method allowed for a balanced geographical representation. A lottery method was used to select one PLA from each cluster, ensuring objectivity. Two students assisted in drawing one chit from each cluster, resulting in the selection of the following PLAs:

1. Panchkula from North Cluster
2. Rewari from South Cluster
3. Sonapat from East Cluster
4. Sirsa from West Cluster

The study employed a multistage sampling approach. All officials and 100 beneficiaries from each sampled PLA were included. Primary data was collected through structured interviews with stakeholders, using two different interview schedules tailored to each respondent category. Additionally, open discussions and observations were conducted to gather comprehensive insights. Secondary data sources included annual reports, websites, journals, books, newspapers, and published studies. This mixed-method approach ensured a robust and holistic data collection process.

Data analysis utilized various quantitative tools such as averages and percentages to interpret the collected data. Content analysis and archival methods were employed to authenticate findings and contextualize them within existing literature. This dual approach of quantitative and qualitative analysis provided a nuanced understanding of PLA performance. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality of their responses. The research adhered to academic standards of objectivity and integrity, with all processes transparently documented.

This methodology combines rigorous sampling, diverse data collection methods, and robust analytical tools to appraise the performance of PLAs in Haryana comprehensively. The study's findings are expected to contribute significantly to the understanding and improvement of PLA operations in the region.

Analysis and Findings

Awareness about Haryana Legal Services Authority (HLSA) Provisions

Print media and social media are the leading sources of awareness about HLSA provisions, with print media being the most prominent. Television and community outreach are also significant, while radio is the least influential. The data highlights the need for diverse communication channels, especially print and social media, to effectively disseminate HLSA information across communities. The data reveals that most respondents are "Moderately Aware" of HLSA Legal Services, especially in Rewari (61%) and Panchkula (58%). "Slightly Aware" responses are notable in Sirsa (32%) and Sonipat (23%). "Very Aware" respondents are fewer, led by Panchkula (27%) and Sonipat (26%). There are no respondents in the "Not at all" or "Extremely Aware" categories. Targeted campaigns could enhance awareness. The data shows moderate understanding of HLSA Legal Services eligibility criteria, with Panchkula and Sonipat having the highest percentages of moderately aware respondents. Rewari and Sonipat have notable disparities in the slightly aware category, indicating a need for increased educational efforts. No respondents indicated "Not at all" awareness, but extremely aware individuals are notably absent, particularly in Rewari and Sirsa.

Beneficiaries Experience and Satisfaction

The data shows that most beneficiaries occasionally avail HLSA Legal Aid, particularly in Panchkula (44%) and Sirsa (51%). Rewari and Sonipat display similar patterns. Rarely and frequently availing categories are present but less common. No respondents indicated "never" or "always" availing services, suggesting a balanced distribution of experiences. Overall, beneficiaries use legal aid as needed, indicating flexible and responsive service utilization. Beneficiaries of HLSA Legal Aid

services are generally satisfied, with Panchkula and Sonipat showing the highest moderate satisfaction at 45% and 53%. Sirsa (37%) and Rewari (29%) lead in very satisfied responses. No extremely satisfied responses highlight improvement areas, though low dissatisfaction indicates overall positive sentiment. Beneficiaries view HLSA accessibility positively, with Panchkula and Rewari leading in moderate satisfaction at 49% and 51%. Rewari (30%) and Sonipat (20%) show high very satisfied rates. Limited extremely satisfied responses and some dissatisfaction highlight improvement areas. Ongoing assessment is crucial to enhance HLSA service accessibility. Beneficiaries generally view HLSA responsiveness positively, with Rewari and Sonipat leading moderate satisfaction at 40% and 47%. Rewari (40%) and Sirsa (32%) show notable very satisfied rates. Limited extremely satisfied responses and some dissatisfaction indicate improvement areas, stressing the need for ongoing assessment and enhancement of responsiveness. Beneficiaries generally perceive HLSA's information clarity positively, with Rewari leading in moderate satisfaction at 48%. Rewari (30%) and Sonipat (18%) show notable very satisfied rates. Some dissatisfaction exists, indicating room for improvement. Limited extremely satisfied responses suggest further enhancements needed for absolute clarity. Continuous assessment and improvement are crucial for ensuring information benefits all beneficiaries.

Working and Procedures of Permanent Lok Adalats

Access to information about PLAs is generally perceived positively across Sampled PLAs, with Panchkula and Rewari leading at 53% and 64% ease of access, respectively. Very easy responses are notable, especially in Sirsa (61%) and Sonipat (57%). However, some respondents find access difficult, suggesting areas for improvement in information dissemination. This underscores the importance of facilitating public understanding and engagement with PLAs through easy access to information. Respondents across Sampled PLAs largely find information about PLAs sufficient and clear, with Rewari leading at 52% ease of understanding. Very easy responses are notable, especially in Sonipat (59%) and Rewari (52%). However, some find the information difficult, suggesting areas for improvement in clarity and accessibility. Efforts should ensure information accessibility for all seeking knowledge about PLAs. Perceptions of PLA proceedings' timeliness across Sampled PLAs are generally positive, with Rewari leading at 63% rating proceedings as good and 5% as excellent. Panchkula and Sirsa also show significant positive perceptions. However, a minority-rate proceedings as poor or very poor, indicating room for improvement. Addressing delays is crucial for efficient dispute resolution services. Perceptions of resolution within a timeframe in PLAs across Sampled PLAs are mixed. Panchkula and Sirsa show significant satisfaction rates, but many respondents express neutrality, indicating varied experiences with timeliness. A minority perceive resolution as poor, highlighting dissatisfaction with delays. Addressing timeliness concerns is crucial to enhance overall satisfaction with PLA services. Perceptions of communication processes in PLAs across Sampled PLAs vary. Sirsa and Sonipat show significant satisfaction, but many respondents express neutrality, suggesting room for improvement or mixed experiences. A minority perceive communication as poor, indicating dissatisfaction with clarity, effectiveness, or responsiveness. Addressing these concerns is vital for transparent and effective communication within PLA services.

Transparency in PLA Decisions

Perceptions of transparency in PLA decisions across sampled PLAs vary. Rewari leads with good transparency at 42%, followed by Sirsa and Sonipat. However, many respondents express neutrality, suggesting room for improvement or mixed experiences. A minority perceive transparency as poor, indicating dissatisfaction. Addressing concerns related to clarity, fairness, and openness is crucial for building confidence and trust in PLA decision-making processes. The data indicates a significant portion of beneficiaries across sampled PLAs receive legal assistance, with mostly and completely

assistance prevailing. Rewari stands out with the highest percentages at 52% mostly and 7% completely assisted. Sirsa and Sonipat also show considerable assistance rates. However, some beneficiaries report receiving less comprehensive support, suggesting varied satisfaction levels. Addressing the needs of those requiring more comprehensive assistance is essential for equitable access to legal aid services across all regions. Perceptions of expertise and professionalism in PLAs across Sampled PLAs also vary. Sonipat leads with 53% mostly and 5% completely satisfied, followed by Rewari and Panchkula. However, some express slight or moderate satisfaction, suggesting room for improvement or varied experiences with PLA personnel. A minority perceive expertise and professionalism as not at all satisfactory, indicating dissatisfaction with service quality. Efforts should focus on addressing concerns and improving service quality to ensure consistent and high standards of professionalism across all regions. Perceptions of handling personal details by PLAs across Sampled PLAs vary. Rewari leads with 55% moderately and 10% mostly satisfied, followed by Sonipat. However, some express slight or moderate satisfaction, suggesting room for improvement or varied experiences with confidentiality and security. A minority perceive handling personal details as not at all satisfactory, indicating concerns about privacy breaches. Efforts should focus on addressing concerns and ensuring robust mechanisms for safeguarding personal information to uphold privacy and confidentiality standards across all regions. Data on satisfaction with the transparency of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) shows varied responses. While many agree on transparency, significant neutrality and some dissent exist, suggesting mixed perceptions. Addressing concerns and enhancing transparency are vital for fostering confidence and trust in PLA processes uniformly across all regions.

User-friendliness of PLAs Procedure

Data from sampled Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) reveals varying satisfaction levels with procedure user-friendliness. Rewari leads with highest satisfaction (52%), followed by Sirsa and Sonipat. Some respondents express slight dissatisfaction, indicating need for simplification. Minor concerns about complexity are noted, urging improvements for enhanced accessibility. Data from sampled Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) highlights varied satisfaction levels with open communication facilitation. Sirsa leads with highest satisfaction (29%), followed by Panchkula and Sonipat. Some respondents express moderate dissatisfaction, suggesting improvement opportunities. Minor concerns about communication barriers are noted, urging enhancements for transparent communication across regions. Data on Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) reveals mixed satisfaction levels with feedback mechanisms. Sirsa leads with highest satisfaction (29%), followed by Panchkula. Some express moderate dissatisfaction, indicating scope for improvement. Minor concerns about accessibility and responsiveness are noted, emphasizing the need for robust and accessible feedback channels across regions. Data on Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) reveals mixed perceptions of privacy measures. While many agree on adequacy, significant dissent exists, especially in Rewari. Urgent actions are needed to bolster privacy protection uniformly across all PLA regions. Data on awareness of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) in Haryana shows mixed levels. While significant awareness exists, particularly in Rewari, some respondents express neutrality or disagreement, highlighting gaps in knowledge dissemination. Improving awareness efforts, especially among neutral or dissenting groups, is essential for comprehensive PLA utilization across all regions.

Equal Access to Justice

Data on perceptions of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) ensuring equal access to justice reveals varied sentiments. While many agree on PLA's role, significant neutrality and some dissent exist, suggesting mixed perceptions. Addressing concerns and enhancing inclusivity are essential to ensure equitable access to justice for all socio-economic groups uniformly across all regions. Data assessing

Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) in reducing case backlogs in Haryana reveals varied perceptions. While many strongly agree on PLA's contribution, significant neutrality and some dissent exist, suggesting mixed views. Addressing concerns and enhancing efficiency are crucial to further alleviate backlogs in the state's judicial system. Data on perceptions of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) members' competency across Sampled PLAs reveals mixed sentiments. While many agree on their competence, significant neutrality and dissent exist, suggesting varied perceptions. Addressing concerns and enhancing skills are vital to ensure effective justice delivery and maintain public confidence in the judicial system. Data evaluating perceptions of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) in handling cases involving vulnerable groups across Sampled PLAs shows varied sentiments. While many strongly agree on effectiveness, significant neutrality and some dissent exist, indicating mixed views. Addressing concerns and enhancing support mechanisms are crucial to ensure adequate protection and representation of vulnerable individuals within the judicial system.

Infrastructure and other Facilities Available with Permanent Lok Adalats

Data on satisfaction levels with infrastructure and facilities provided by Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) in Haryana reveals varied sentiments. While many agree on adequacy, significant neutrality and some dissent exist, suggesting mixed experiences. Addressing concerns and improving infrastructure are vital for optimal working conditions and service delivery across all PLA regions. Data assessing perceptions of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) services' accessibility to weaker sections across Sampled PLAs reveals varied sentiments. While many strongly agree on accessibility, significant neutrality and some dissent exist, indicating mixed views. Addressing concerns and improving outreach and support mechanisms are essential for ensuring equitable access to justice for all individuals across all regions. Data on perceptions of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) efficiency in resolving disputes compared to traditional courts across Sampled PLAs shows varied sentiments. While many strongly agree on efficiency, significant neutrality and some dissent exist, indicating mixed views. Addressing concerns and improving awareness of PLA advantages compared to traditional courts are essential for enhancing confidence in PLA mechanisms. Data assessing perceptions of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) efficiency in resolving disputes compared to traditional courts across Sampled PLAs reveals varied sentiments. While many strongly agree on efficiency, significant neutrality and some dissent exist, indicating mixed views. Addressing concerns and improving awareness of PLA advantages over traditional courts are essential for enhancing confidence in PLA mechanisms. 32. Data assessing perceptions of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) contribution to reducing litigation costs across Sampled PLAs reveals varied sentiments. While many strongly agree, significant neutrality and some dissent exist, indicating mixed views. Addressing concerns and enhancing awareness of cost-saving benefits are essential for promoting PLA mechanisms for dispute resolution.

Result and Discussion

The analysis of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) and Haryana Legal Services Authority (HLSA) reveals several insights into their performance, awareness, and satisfaction among users. Print media and social media emerge as the primary sources of awareness for HLSA provisions, with print media leading. Television and community outreach also play significant roles, while radio is the least influential, emphasizing the need for diverse communication channels to disseminate information effectively.

- **Awareness Levels:** Most respondents are "Moderately Aware" of HLSA Legal Services, with the highest awareness in Rewari (61%) and Panchkula (58%). Regions like Sirsa and Sonapat show notable "Slightly Aware" responses (32% and 23%, respectively), indicating areas

needing targeted awareness campaigns. There are no respondents in the "Not at all" or "Extremely Aware" categories.

- **Understanding Eligibility:** Respondents show moderate understanding of HLSA Legal Services eligibility criteria, with Panchkula and Sonipat leading. However, Rewari and Sonipat exhibit notable disparities in the "Slightly Aware" category, indicating a need for increased educational efforts. No respondents indicated "Not at all" awareness, but the absence of "Extremely Aware" individuals, particularly in Rewari and Sirsa, highlights areas for improvement.
- **Beneficiaries' Experience and Satisfaction:** Most beneficiaries occasionally use HLSA Legal Aid, especially in Panchkula (44%) and Sirsa (51%). Rarely and frequently availing categories are less common, suggesting balanced service utilization. Satisfaction is generally high, with moderate satisfaction highest in Panchkula and Sonipat (45% and 53%). Sirsa and Rewari lead in "Very Satisfied" responses, while the lack of "Extremely Satisfied" responses indicates areas for improvement despite overall positive sentiment.
- **Accessibility and Responsiveness:** Beneficiaries view HLSA accessibility positively, with Rewari and Panchkula showing high moderate satisfaction (49% and 51%). Some dissatisfaction exists, highlighting the need for ongoing assessment to enhance accessibility. Similarly, responsiveness is viewed positively, with Rewari and Sonipat leading moderate satisfaction. Limited extremely satisfied responses and some dissatisfaction stress the need for continuous improvement.
- **Information Clarity:** Clarity of HLSA information is generally perceived positively, with Rewari leading in moderate satisfaction (48%). Significant "Very Satisfied" rates in Rewari and Sonipat indicate positive perceptions, but some dissatisfaction suggests room for improvement, particularly in achieving absolute clarity.
- **PLAs Information Access and Understanding:** Access to information about PLAs is generally positive, with Panchkula and Rewari leading ease of access (53% and 64%). Very easy access is notable in Sirsa and Sonipat, but some respondents find access difficult, underscoring the need for improved information dissemination. Similarly, understanding of PLA information is generally clear, with Rewari and Sonipat showing high ease of understanding, though some respondents indicate difficulties, suggesting areas for enhancement.
- **Timeliness and Resolution:** Perceptions of PLA proceedings' timeliness are generally positive, particularly in Rewari (63% rating as good). However, some rate proceedings as poor, highlighting the need to address delays. Satisfaction with resolution timeliness is mixed, with significant satisfaction in Panchkula and Sirsa, but neutrality and poor ratings indicate varied experiences. Addressing timeliness concerns is crucial for overall satisfaction.
- **Communication and Transparency:** Communication processes in PLAs receive varied responses. Significant satisfaction in Sirsa and Sonipat contrasts with neutrality and some dissatisfaction, indicating a need for clearer and more effective communication. Transparency perceptions also vary, with Rewari leading in good transparency, but neutrality and poor ratings suggest mixed experiences and highlight the need for improved clarity, fairness, and openness.
- **Legal Assistance and Professionalism:** Beneficiaries receive varying levels of legal assistance, with Rewari showing high assistance rates. Satisfaction with PLA personnel's expertise and professionalism varies, with Sonipat leading but some expressing slight or

moderate satisfaction, indicating room for improvement. Ensuring consistent and high standards of professionalism across regions is essential.

- **Confidentiality and User-Friendliness:** Handling of personal details by PLAs varies, with Rewari leading in moderate and mostly satisfied responses. Some dissatisfaction suggests concerns about privacy, emphasizing the need for robust confidentiality measures. Satisfaction with procedure user-friendliness is highest in Rewari, but slight dissatisfaction indicates areas for simplification.
- **Feedback Mechanisms and Infrastructure:** Satisfaction with feedback mechanisms is mixed, with Sirsa leading but moderate dissatisfaction indicating improvement opportunities. Infrastructure and facilities satisfaction also varies, with adequacy agreed upon by many but neutrality and dissent suggesting mixed experiences. Improving infrastructure is vital for optimal service delivery.
- **Accessibility and Cost Efficiency:** Accessibility to weaker sections shows varied sentiments, with strong agreement on accessibility but neutrality and dissent indicating room for improvement. Addressing outreach and support mechanisms is crucial. Efficiency in resolving disputes compared to traditional courts is viewed positively by many, but mixed views highlight the need for improving awareness of PLA advantages and enhancing overall efficiency.

These insights suggest that while PLAs and HLSA have made significant strides in providing legal services, ongoing efforts to improve communication, accessibility, responsiveness, and infrastructure are crucial for maximizing their effectiveness and ensuring equitable access to justice across all regions.

Conclusion

The analysis of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) and Haryana Legal Services Authority (HLSA) reveals that while significant progress has been made in providing legal services, there remain areas for improvement to enhance their overall effectiveness. Awareness of HLSA provisions is primarily driven by print media, with television and community outreach also playing crucial roles. However, regions like Sirsa and Sonipat require targeted awareness campaigns due to lower awareness levels. Beneficiaries generally report moderate satisfaction with HLSA services, although there is a notable absence of extremely satisfied responses, indicating potential for improvement in service delivery. Accessibility and responsiveness are viewed positively, yet some dissatisfaction underscores the need for ongoing assessments. Similarly, while information clarity and access to PLA information are largely satisfactory, some users experience difficulties, highlighting the need for better dissemination and education. Timeliness in PLA proceedings and resolution, along with communication and transparency, receive mixed reviews, suggesting the need for enhanced efficiency and clearer communication channels. Additionally, satisfaction with legal assistance, professionalism, confidentiality, and user-friendliness varies, pointing to the necessity for consistent service standards and robust privacy measures. Feedback mechanisms and infrastructure also present opportunities for enhancement to ensure optimal service delivery. Overall, while PLAs and HLSA have made notable strides, continuous efforts to improve communication, accessibility, responsiveness, and infrastructure are essential to maximize their effectiveness and ensure equitable access to justice.

To enhance the performance of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs), policymakers should focus on a multifaceted strategy addressing awareness, accessibility, responsiveness, and infrastructure. Firstly, leveraging diverse communication channels, especially print and social media, alongside targeted campaigns in areas like Sirsa and Sonipat, can significantly increase public awareness and understanding of HLSA services and PLAs. Educational efforts should clarify eligibility criteria to bridge knowledge gaps, particularly in regions showing moderate awareness. To improve user

experience, continuous assessment of service accessibility and responsiveness is crucial, with specific attention to enhancing clarity, transparency, and user-friendliness. Addressing delays in PLA proceedings and ensuring timely resolutions will boost overall satisfaction. Strengthening feedback mechanisms and maintaining high standards of professionalism and confidentiality are essential for building trust. Finally, improving infrastructure and ensuring equitable access to justice for vulnerable groups will foster confidence in the judicial system. Enhanced outreach and support mechanisms are vital for ensuring that PLAs effectively serve all socio-economic segments, thereby promoting efficient and fair dispute resolution.

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