

HARMONY HUB

“A KeLSA initiative aimed at resolving conflicts between individuals
in relationships”



HARMONY HUB

INTRODUCTION

In our society, family holds a central place, serving not only as a unit that fulfills economic needs but also as the cornerstone for emotional support and well-being. Families, as both organizations and groups of individuals, inevitably face challenges and stress at various points in their lives. Relationship issues, whether due to economic pressures, professional concerns, or psychological imbalances, can escalate into significant disputes. These conflicts can sometimes lead to the difficult decision to end the partnership, often following a lengthy and painful process that involves separation, stress, disagreements, and, in some cases, even violence. Mediation involves a neutral third party, a mediator, who facilitates communication and helps the parties reach a mutually agreeable resolution.

I. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of "Harmony Hub" is to provide a neutral and peaceful environment for resolving issues arising out of relationships through dialogue, mediation, and mutual understanding. It promotes familial harmony rather than simply cutting ties with one's partner. The guiding principle for this scheme is to encourage reconciliation and discourage separation amongst family members through mediation.

II. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Individuals who are in relationship, including those related by marriage or a relationship in the nature of marriage, are covered under the scope of this Scheme.

Any one of the individuals in relationship can approach the District Legal

Services Authority concerned for getting the service under the Scheme. The service can be availed even online at the convenience of all the parties.

Harmony Hub offers the following services:

- (1) **Counseling sessions for Parties:** Counseling sessions for parties offer a supportive environment where parties can work through relationship challenges with the help of a trained professional. These sessions are designed to foster communication, enhance understanding, and resolve conflicts in a healthy, constructive manner. They can seek counseling when they face difficulties such as communication breakdowns, emotional distance, infidelity, or parenting disagreements.

Through counseling, parties can gain valuable insights into the dynamics of their relationship, improve their problem-solving skills, and rebuild trust and intimacy. Whether the aim is to resolve ongoing issues or to navigate a challenging transition such as marriage or parenthood, counseling offers a proactive approach to maintaining and enhancing the emotional connection between parties. For parties considering separation or divorce, counseling can also provide clarity on whether reconciliation is possible or help them navigate the process more amicably. Ultimately, counseling helps couples strengthen their bond, improve their relationship, and develop a deeper understanding of one another.

- (2) **Mediation services to resolve disputes:** Mediation is an effective and constructive approach to resolving disputes in matrimonial cases, offering couples an opportunity to reach amicable solutions outside of the courtroom. In the context of marriage or divorce, mediation involves a neutral third-party mediator who facilitates discussions between the spouses, helping them identify their

concerns, clarify misunderstandings, and negotiate mutually acceptable agreements. This process can address various issues such as child custody, property division, alimony, and other financial matters, allowing couples to resolve differences in a more cooperative and less adversarial manner.

One of the key advantages of mediation in disputes between parties is its ability to preserve relationships, particularly important when children are involved. Unlike traditional litigation, which can be emotionally draining and result in long-term hostility, mediation encourages communication and understanding, reducing the likelihood of bitter conflict. It also provides a platform for spouses to make decisions together, rather than having a judge impose a solution. The flexibility of mediation allows couples to explore creative solutions tailored to their unique circumstances, rather than being confined to the rigid outcomes often seen in court decisions.

Furthermore, mediation is typically faster and more cost-effective than going through formal legal proceedings, which can be prolonged and expensive. It offers a confidential setting, ensuring that sensitive issues are discussed privately and without the fear of public exposure or the information being used against either party in the future. In addition, mediation empowers the parties to take control of the outcome, giving them the autonomy to negotiate terms that best suit their needs and priorities.

Mediation provides a less confrontational, more empathetic approach to resolve disputes between parties, promoting a healthier and more sustainable resolution. Whether the goal is to reconcile or to amicably separate, mediation offers a way to move forward with dignity and mutual respect, safeguarding both emotional well-being

and legal interests.

- (3) **Legal guidance (non-binding advice)/Legal aid:** This scheme guarantees free legal aid to individuals who are eligible under Section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, whenever needed. Non-binding legal advice refers to guidance provided by the legal aid lawyers in the panel of Legal Services Institutions to the parties involved in a dispute. This helps individuals understand their legal rights, obligations, and possible courses of action, but the parties are not legally obligated to follow the advice given.
- (4) **Emotional support and wellness programs:** Emotional support and wellness programs are designed to promote mental, emotional, and psychological well-being of parties, offering them a safe space to manage stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges. This aims to provide assistance and coping mechanisms for individuals facing life's difficulties, such as relationship issues, grief, or health problems.

III. CONFIDENTIALITY:

All discussions, documents, and information shared during the process are strictly confidential. No information will be disclosed to third parties or any of the parties to the proceedings without the explicit written consent of both or other parties as the case may be, unless required by law. This ensures that privacy is maintained and that the parties involved can feel secure in sharing sensitive information during the process.

IV. CODE OF CONDUCT

- (1) Parties must engage in discussions with respect, patience, and honesty.
- (2) Any form of verbal or physical abuse, intimidation, or harassment

is strictly prohibited.

- (3) Both parties should aim for constructive communication and refrain from unnecessary blame or hostility.

V. MEDIATION PROCESS

- (4) **Voluntary Participation:** Mediation is a voluntary process, meaning both parties must agree to participate. Either party can withdraw from the process at any time, without any legal obligation to continue.
- (5) **Neutral Mediator:** A neutral third party, the mediator, facilitates the discussions. The mediator does not take sides, offer legal advice, or make decisions for the parties. Their role is to help the parties communicate and find mutually acceptable solutions.
- (6) **Confidentiality:** All discussions, documents, and information exchanged during the mediation process are confidential. This means that any information shared cannot be used against either party in future legal proceedings. The mediator is also bound by confidentiality, and information can only be disclosed with the written consent of both parties unless required by law.
- (7) **Good Faith Participation:** Both parties are expected to participate in the mediation process in good faith, with the willingness to listen, negotiate, and find a resolution. Dishonesty, manipulation, or unwillingness to engage in constructive dialogue may undermine the process.
- (5) **Self-Determination:** The parties have control over the outcome of the mediation. Unlike a court decision, the mediator does not impose a solution. Instead, the parties are encouraged to work

together to create a resolution that is mutually acceptable.

- (6) **Binding Agreement:** The outcome of the mediation is non-binding unless both parties sign a formal settlement agreement. If both parties agree to the terms, the agreement may be legally enforceable.
- (7) **Equal Opportunity:** The mediation process encourages respectful and open communication. The mediator ensures that both parties have an equal opportunity to speak and that no party dominates the conversation. This helps in addressing the issues constructively.
- (8) **Written Agreement:** If the parties reach an agreement during mediation, it is typically documented in writing. This agreement outlines the terms of the resolution and is signed by both parties. If it is a legally binding agreement, it can be submitted to the court for enforcement.

VI. AWARD

If the settlement agreement contains terms that require enforcement, the matter can be presented before the Lok Adalat, which can then pass an award based on the terms of the agreement. This process allows the settlement to be formally recognized and legally binding. Once the award is passed by the Lok Adalat, it has the same effect as a decree of a civil court, and the terms of the settlement can be enforced through appropriate legal mechanisms. This provides a quicker and more accessible route for the parties to ensure compliance with the settlement, without the need for prolonged litigation. Awards passed by the Lok Adalat are typically final and cannot be appealed in a higher court.

VII. PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Sessions will be conducted by certified professionals, including counselors,

mediators, and legal experts.

- (1) **Mediators/Panel Lawyers:** There shall be a panel of skilled mediators, proficient in resolving disputes between parties in relationship and also in handling disputes including custody matters, matrimonial disputes, and cases under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.
- (2) **Counsellors:** There shall be a panel of expert counselors for the Scheme. Additionally, the services of counselors from family courts, NGOs, the Family Counseling Centre of the High Court, and the Women and Child Department can be utilized.
- (3) **Para Legal Volunteers:** There shall be special panel of paralegal volunteers to provide legal assistance and support to the parties in dispute, helping them participate in the proceedings, draft applications etc.

VIII. FEES

No fees shall be charged for service from the parties.

IX. FINANCIAL OUTLAY

- (4) The panel lawyers and paralegal volunteers shall be entitled to honorarium as per the guidelines set by NALSA for the legal aid provided to the parties in dispute.
- (5) The services of mediators and counselors shall be on a pro-bono basis.

X. EXCLUSION CLAUSE FOR CRIMINAL MATTERS

All disputes falling under Schedule A of the Mediation Act, 2024, are also excluded from the scope of this Scheme.

XI. WITHDRAWAL

Either party may choose to withdraw from the process at any stage. Mediators reserve the right to terminate the mediation if they determine that it is unproductive or detrimental to either party.

XII. IMPLEMENTATION AND CO-ORDINATION

The Scheme shall be implemented through District Legal Services Authorities. Nodal Officers shall be appointed by KeLSA to co-ordinate the functioning of this Scheme.

XIII. SELECTION AND REMOVAL OF THE PROFESSIONALS

The mode of selection and empanelment of mediators/lawyers, counselors, and paralegal volunteers shall be as determined by the Executive Chairman of KeLSA. They may be removed at any time by the Executive Chairman, either suo motu or upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the District Legal Services Authority.

XIV. RESTRICTION

The mediators/lawyers engaged to provide services under this scheme shall not represent the parties before any authority or court of law.

XV. FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

Parties are encouraged to provide feedback at the end of the process to help improve services.

HARMONY HUB:

The KeLSA launches Harmony Hub offering free services to the parties to resolve domestic disputes out of relationship.

Scope of Services:

Harmony Hub offers:

- ◆ Counselling sessions for couples.
- ◆ Mediation services to resolve disputes.
- ◆ Legal guidance (non-binding advice).
- ◆ Emotional support and wellness programs.

Contact DLSA of your District between 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.

Phone Number:- (...of the concerned DLSA)

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Email Addresses (...of the concerned DLSA)