

Upcoming: Annual Conference 2027 Law, Economics, Trade and Justice

CLES, in collaboration with the Economic Policy Centre, Mahindra University, will host this conference tentatively on February 19 & 20, 2027, bringing together scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and trade experts to examine the intersections of legal systems, economic governance, trade, and access to justice.

Call for Papers

Abstracts, academic research papers, policy papers, empirical and field studies, and comparative legal and trade studies are all invited.

Key Dates

Stage	Date
Abstract Submission	15 September 2026
Selection Confirmation	15 October 2026
Full Paper Submission	15 November 2026
Paper Development Workshop	15–17 January 2027
Conference	19–20 February 2027

Key Indicative Themes

- Access to Justice and Inequality
- Criminal Justice and Vulnerable Populations
- Economic Impact of Judicial Systems
- Labour Law and Economic Outcomes
- Competition and Regulatory Policy
- Trade Governance and Economic Law
- Trade Agreements and Dispute Settlement
- Anti-Dumping and Trade Remedies
- Intellectual Property and International Trade
- Climate Change and Trade Policy
- Legal Aid and Representation
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Legal Technology and Digital Justice

Submit abstracts to info@cdpp.co.in with the subject line: "Law Conference: Abstract Submission (Your Name)"

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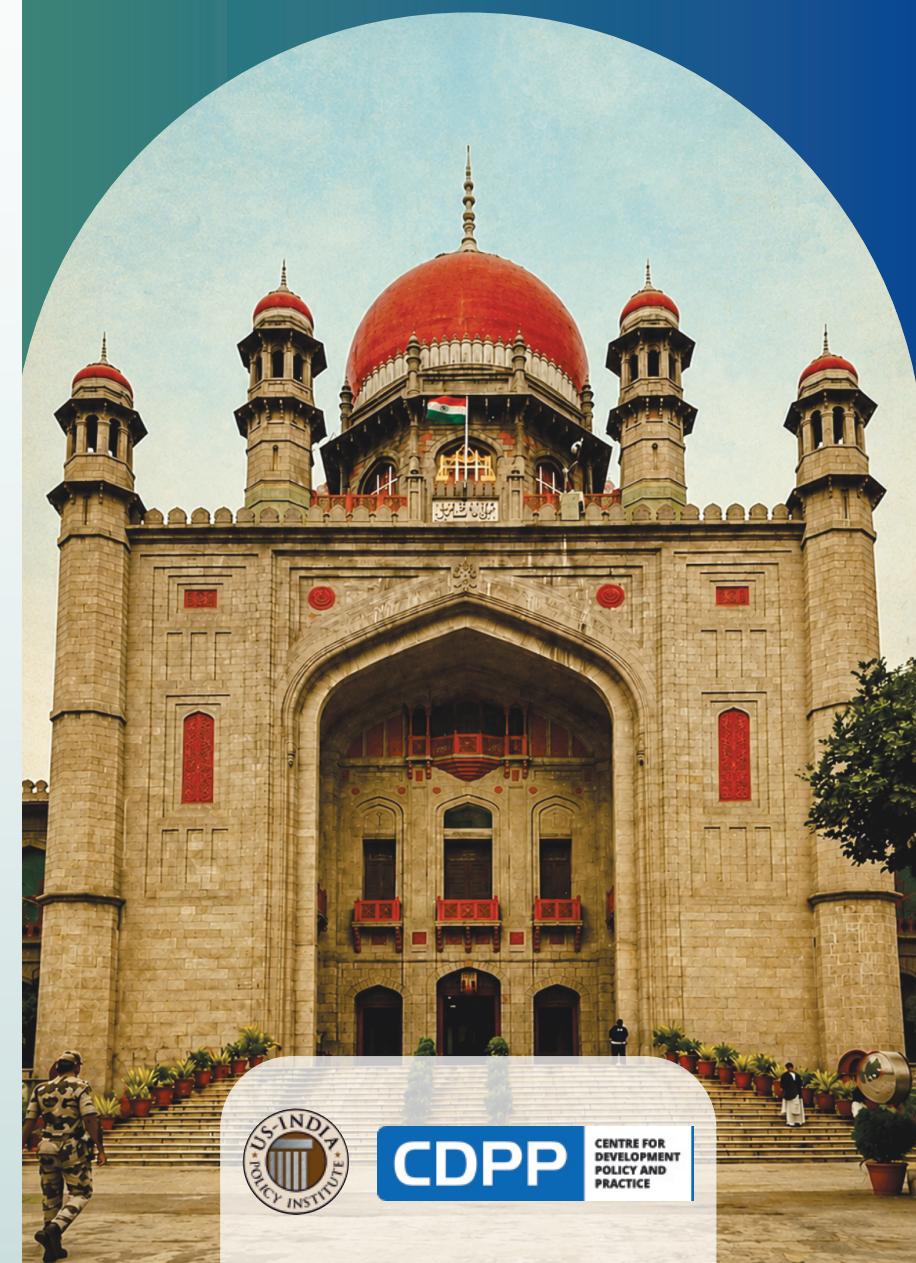


CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE

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To understand
why certain communities are denied
access to justice in India.



About CLES

The Centre for Law, Economics and Society (CLES) is a CDPP initiative that researches the legal landscape in India, focusing on the barriers people face in accessing justice and identifying ways to strengthen legal aid delivery. Access to justice remains a challenge in India. The cost of legal services, uneven representation across regions, and case backlogs discourage many from seeking legal remedies. These barriers fall hardest on marginalised groups, including Muslims, Dalits, indigenous communities, and women.

While the Constitution guarantees legal aid for all, legal institutions continue to face gaps in infrastructure, human resources, and fund utilisation. CLES combines secondary research, being the analysis of national data sets such as the NCRB's Prison Statistics India, with primary research: state-level case analyses conducted with lawyers and civil society partners in Telangana, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh, to generate evidence-based recommendations for reform.

Undertrial Justice in India, What the Numbers Show

The latest Prison Statistics India (PSI) 2024 report, released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), provides comprehensive national-level data on India's prison system.

Key national findings:

- 72.6% of India's prison population are undertrials, meaning they have not yet been convicted.
- Prisons operate at 112.7% of capacity, an improvement from 131.4% in 2022, though overcrowding persists.

- Nearly 9 in 10 undertrials are aged between 18 and 50.
- 30% of undertrials nationally have been in custody for more than 1 year.
- Over 95% of undertrial releases happen through bail.
- Nationally, undertrials are 70.7% Hindu and 20.6% Muslim, with Muslims overrepresented relative to their Census 2011 population share (Religion-wise data was not provided by Maharashtra). By social group, 36.0% are OBC, 20.2% SC, and 11.1% ST. (Many states and UTs did not provide social group data). State-level patterns differ sharply: Muslims constitute 50.3% of Assam's undertrials, while OBCs account for 51.0% in Telangana.

A state-level contrast: Telangana records the shortest detention profile among the states compared (Assam, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and All India datasets), with only 3.5% of undertrials detained for more than a year. In contrast, over one-third of undertrials in Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka are held beyond a year, highlighting sharp state-level variations in undertrial detention. These national patterns provide the broader context for CLES's case-level research in Telangana and Assam.

'While the latest Prison Statistics report released by the National Crime Records Bureau show that the occupancy rate in Indian jails fell to a decade-low of 112.7% in 2024, data shows that overcrowding remains a persisting problem in Indian prisons driven largely by a high share of undertrials. The report also highlighted other concerns such as insufficient capacity expansion and high levels of staff vacancies.'

-The Hindu, May 8, 2026

Primary Research, Case Data Analysis

Between January 2025 and February 2026, CLES analysed 230 anonymised criminal cases from Telangana, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh, laying the foundation for a deeper, state-focused study.

Building on this, from March–July 2026, CLES analysed a further 185 anonymised criminal cases, comprising 85 from Telangana and 100 from Assam, examining accused persons' demographics, crime types, procedural stages, and legal complexity.

In short, the analysis of 185 cases found:

- Both samples were overwhelmingly male-accused, with cases concentrated among adults aged 21 to 50.
- Telangana showed a balanced spread across violence, property, regulatory, and economic offences, with cases at varied procedural stages, from investigation through to judgement.
- Assam was dominated by bail litigation, particularly cases involving violence, sexual offences, and special statutes such as the *Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act*, *Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act*, *Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)*, and *Assam Cattle Preservation Act*.
- Legal complexity differed sharply: 42.4% of Telangana cases involved multiple legal sections, compared with 79% of Assam cases.



Scan the QR Code to view the detailed analysis of the 185 anonymised cases

Note: These findings reflect only CLES-analysed cases and are not representative of statewide crime or justice patterns in Telangana, Assam, or Uttar Pradesh.