

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW & JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 98
ANSWERED ON 15.12.2022

Access to libraries at district courts

***98. Shri S Niranjana Reddy:**

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether as per the survey report only 54 per cent of the district courts have access to functional libraries;
- (b) if so, whether Government proposes to switch to a digital library on a web platform and give access of the same to courts and Government lawyers;
- (c) if so, the allocation of funds for the development of such libraries, if not, in what manner Government proposes to address the problem of the lack of libraries in lower courts in the country; and
- (d) the list of the total number of district courts without access to a library, State-wise?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE
(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 98 FOR ANSWER ON 15TH DECEMBER, 2022.

(a) to (d): The Registry of Supreme Court of India compiled data on the status of judicial infrastructure and court amenities as per which only 51% of court complexes have a library.

The primary responsibility of the development of infrastructure facilities for the judiciary rests with the State Governments. The Union Government has been implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the development of infrastructure facilities for the Judiciary by providing financial assistance to State Governments / UTs in the prescribed fund-sharing pattern between the Centre and States. The scheme is being implemented since 1993-94. It covers the construction of court buildings and residential accommodations for judicial officers of the district and subordinate judiciary. A sum of Rs. 9445.46 crores has been released under the Scheme so far since its inception, out of which Rs. 6001.15 crores (63.53 %) has been released since 2014-15. The scheme has been extended from 2021-22 to 2025-26 with a budgetary outlay of Rs. 9000 crores including a central share of Rs. 5307.00 crores. Besides the construction of court halls and residential quarters, the scheme now also covers the construction of lawyers' halls, digital computer rooms, and toilet complexes in the district and subordinate Courts. There are prescribed norms and specifications for the construction of court halls that have been developed on the basis of the recommendations made by the National Court Management Systems Committee of the Supreme Court, existing norms and practices being followed by different State Governments and certain CPWD norms. These norms and specifications delineate additional facilities / common facilities to be made available in each court complex such as judges' chambers, office rooms, conference rooms, judges' libraries, lawyers' libraries, etc. Also, the States have been given the option to use norms higher than prescribed for creating court infrastructure for which the cost shall be borne by the respective States. The release of funds under the scheme is only supplementary in nature and project / component-wise funds are not released under the scheme.

This Department does not centrally maintain any data on number of district courts not having access to functional libraries.

For the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enablement of the district and subordinate courts, the Government has been implementing the e-Courts Mission Mode Project throughout the country. Under the eCourts Phase II Project, a component namely, the Judicial Knowledge Management System (JKMS) for promoting computerisation of court libraries has been developed that includes:-

i. Integrated Library Management Software (ILMS): Court libraries have been equipped with robust library management software. This software caters to all functions of a library acquisition, circulation, catalogue generation etc., and is called an Integrated Library Management System (ILMS). KOHA, open-source library management software, is successfully deployed in the Judges' Library at the Supreme Court of India. The computerization of Court Libraries will enable the beneficiaries to access their catalogue online and request books/journals online.

ii. ILMS as Digital library: ILMS software is being used as a Digital Library wherein content in digital forms is ported and can be accessed by its beneficiaries online. Legal Research Documents, Committee/Commission Reports, Law Articles, Circulars, Orders, High Court Rules, etc. which are in Open Access content can all be ported to ILMS Digital Library.
