

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW & JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2523
ANSWERED ON 10/08/2023

PLAN FOR REDUCING THE LITIGATION COST

2523. SMT. PHULO DEVI NETAM:

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

- (a) the number of cases pending in the Supreme Court, High Courts and various districts courts and Tribunals, as on date;
- (b) whether Government has taken any initiative to reduce the backlog of cases in the Supreme Court, High Courts and various district courts and Tribunals in the country; and
- (c) whether Government has any plans to reduce the litigation cost for the common/poor people and the total amount spent by Government for the legal aid during the last five financial years?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE; MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

(SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL)

(a): As per the data made available on National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), inputs provided by Department of Legal Affairs and Supreme Court of India, the number of cases pending in the Supreme Court, High Courts and various Districts courts and Tribunals, as on date, are as under:-

Sl. No.	Name of Court/Tribunals	Pendency as on
1	Supreme Court of India	69,243 (31.07.2023)*
2	High Courts	60,63,499(08.08.2023)**
3	District & Subordinate Courts	4,44,00,820 (08.08.2023)**
4	Tribunals	2,62,611 (18.07.2023)***

Source * Supreme Court of India.**National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG). *** Department of Legal Affairs.

(b): While the disposal of cases is within the exclusive domain of the judiciary and the Central Government has no direct role in the matter, the Government is fully committed to speedy disposal of cases in accordance with Article 21 of the Constitution and reducing pendency. The Government set up the National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms in August, 2011 with the twin objectives of increasing access by reducing delays and arrears in the system and enhancing accountability through structural changes and by setting performance standards and capacities. Over the years, the Mission has been pursuing a co-ordinated approach for phased liquidation of arrears and pendency in judicial administration, which, inter-alia, involves better infrastructure for courts including computerization, increase in strength of subordinate judiciary, policy and legislative measures in the areas prone to excessive litigation, re-engineering of court procedure for quick disposal of cases and emphasis on human resource development. The details of the initiatives undertaken by Department of Justice to provide a supportive ecosystem for speedy disposal of cases by the judiciary as are follows:

Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Judicial Infrastructure, funds are being released to States/UTs for construction of court halls, residential quarters for judicial officers, lawyers' halls, toilet complexes and digital computer rooms that would ease the life of lawyers and litigants, thereby aiding justice delivery. As on date, Rs. 10035 crores have been released since the inception of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for the Judiciary in 1993-94. The number of court halls has increased from 15,818 as on 30.06.2014 to 21,365 as on 30.06.2023, and number of residential units has increased from 10,211 as on 30.06.2014 to 18,846 as on 30.06.2023, under this scheme.

Further under the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, information and communication technology (ICT) has been leveraged for IT enablement of district and subordinate courts. The number of computerised district & subordinate courts has increased to 18,735 so far. WAN connectivity has been provided to 99.4% of court complexes. Video conferencing facility has been enabled between 3,240 court complexes and 1,272 corresponding jails. 815 e-Sewa Kendras have been set up at court complexes to facilitate lawyers and litigants needing assistance ranging from case status, getting judgments/orders, court/case-related information, and e-filing facilities. 22 virtual courts have been set up in 18 States/UTs. As on 31.05.2023, these courts have handled more than 3.113 crore cases and realized more than Rs. 408 crores in fines. E-courts Phase III is about to begin which intends to incorporate latest technology such Artificial Intelligence(AI) and Block chain to make justice delivery more robust, easy and accessible to all the stakeholders.

Government has been regularly filling up the vacancies in higher judiciary. From 01.05.2014 to 10.07.2023, 56 Judges were appointed in Supreme Court. 919 new Judges were appointed and 653 Additional Judges were made permanent in the High Courts. Sanctioned strength of Judges of High Courts has been increased from 906 in May, 2014 to 1114 currently. sanctioned and working strength of judicial officers in district and subordinate courts has increased as follow:

As on	Sanctioned Strength	Working Strength
31.12.2013	19,518	15,115
07.08.2023	25,254	19,846

However, filling up of vacancies in subordinate judiciary falls within the domain of the State Governments and high courts concerned.

In pursuance of a Resolution passed in Chief Justices' Conference held in April, 2015, Arrears Committees have been set up in all 25 High Courts to clear cases pending

for more than five years. Arrears Committees have been set up under District courts as well.

Under the aegis of the Fourteenth Finance Commission, the government has established Fast Track Courts for dealing with cases of heinous crimes; cases involving senior citizens, women, children etc. As on 31.05.2023, 832 Fast Track Courts are functional for heinous crimes, crimes against women, and children etc. To fast track criminal cases involving elected MPs / MLAs, ten (10) Special Courts are functional in nine (9) States/UTs. Further, the central government has approved a scheme for setting up 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) across the country for the expeditious disposal of pending cases of Rape under IPC and crimes under POCSO Act. As on date, 28 States/UTs have joined the scheme.

With a view to reduce pendency and unclogging of the courts, the Government has recently amended various laws like the Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Act, 2018, the Commercial Courts (Amendment) Act, 2018, the Specific Relief (Amendment) Act, 2018, the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2019 and the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2018.

Alternate Dispute Resolution methods have been promoted whole heartedly. Accordingly, the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 was amended on 20th August, 2018 making Pre-institution Mediation and Settlement (PIMS) mandatory in case of commercial disputes. Amendment to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 has been made by the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act 2015 for expediting the speedy resolution of disputes by prescribing timelines.

Lok Adalat is an important Alternative Disputes Resolution Mechanism available to common people. It is a forum where the disputes/ cases pending in the court of law or at pre-litigation stage are settled/ compromised amicably. Under the Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act, 1987, an award made by a Lok Adalat is deemed to be a decree of a civil court and is final and binding on all parties and no appeal lies against thereto

before any court. . Lok Adalat is not a permanent establishment. National Lok Adalats are organized simultaneously in all Taluks, Districts and High Courts on a pre-fixed date. The details of the case disposed off in Lok Adalats during the last three years are as under:-

Years	Pre-litigation Cases	Pending Cases	Grand Total
2021	72,06,294	55,81,743	1,27,88,037
2022	3,10,15,215	1,09,10,795	4,19,26,010
2023 (upto 17.06.2023)	3,00,11,291	61,88,686	3,61,99,977
Total	6,82,32,800	2,26,81,224	9,09,14,024

The Government launched the Tele-Law programme in 2017, which provided an effective and reliable e-interface platform connecting the needy and disadvantaged sections seeking legal advice and consultation with panel lawyers via video conferencing, telephone and chat facilities available at the Common Service Centres (CSCs) situated in Gram Panchayat and through Tele-Law mobile App.

***Percentage Wise break-up of Tele – Law Data**

Till 28th Feb, 2023	Cases Registered	% Wise Break Up	Advice Enabled	% Wise Break Up
Gender Wise				
Female	15,75,140	34.38	15,35,775	34.39
Male	30,06,772	65.62	29,30,601	65.61
Caste Category Wise				
General	9,82,636	21.45	9,52,773	21.33
OBC	13,28,505	28.99	12,93,153	28.95
SC	14,88,971	32.50	14,53,283	32.54
ST	7,81,800	17.065	7,67,167	17.18
Total	45,81,912		44,66,376	

Efforts have been made to institutionalize pro bono culture and pro bono lawyering the country. A technological framework has been put in place where advocates volunteering to give their time and services for pro bono work can register as Pro Bono

Advocates on Nyaya Bandhu (Android & iOS and Apps). Nyaya Bandhu Services also available on UMANG Platform. Pro Bono Panel of advocates have been initiated in 21 High Courts at the State level. Pro Bono Clubs have been started in 69 select Laws Schools to instill Pro Bono culture in budding lawyers.

(c): With the aim to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities, The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been constituted under the Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act, 1987 for providing free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society including beneficiaries covered under Section 12 of the Act.

The details of Grants-in-Aid (GIA) provided to NALSA for legal aid activities during the last five financial years are as under:-

(In crore)

Sl. No.	Year	GIA allocated
1	2018-19	150
2	2019-20	140
3	2022-21	100
4	2021-22	145
5	2022-23	190
