

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 443
ANSWERED ON 28/11/2024
Use of regional languages in courts

443. Shri Harbhajan Singh:

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

- (a) whether Government is aware of the difficulties being faced by people in courts due to language barrier as English remains the official language for court proceedings;
- (b) if so, whether there is any proposal for conducting court proceedings, particularly in higher courts, in regional languages; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL)

(a) to (c) Article 348(1)(a) of the Constitution of India states that all proceedings in the Supreme Court and every High Court shall be in English language. However, Article 348 (2) of the Constitution of India provides that the Governor of a State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorize the use of Hindi Language, or any other language used for any official purposes of the State, in proceedings in the High Court having its principal seat in that State. Further, Section 7 of the Official Language Act, 1963 states that the Governor of a State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorize the use of Hindi or the official language of the State, in addition to the English Language, for the purposes of any judgment, decree or order passed or made by the High Court for that State and where any judgment, decree or order is passed or made in any such language (other than the English Language), it shall be accompanied by a translation of the same in the English Language issued under the authority of the High Court.

The Cabinet Committee's decision dated 21.05.1965 has stipulated that consent of the Chief Justice of India be obtained on any proposal relating to use of a language other than English in the High Court.

The use of Hindi in the proceedings of High Court of Rajasthan was authorized under Article 348(2) of the Constitution in 1950. After the Cabinet Committee's decision dated 21.05.1965 as mentioned above, the use of Hindi was authorized in the High Courts of Uttar Pradesh (1969), Madhya Pradesh (1971) and Bihar (1972) in consultation with the Chief Justice of India.

The Supreme Court is collaborating with the High Courts in translation of e-SCR Judgements in 18 vernacular languages. The Chief Justice of India has constituted the Artificial Intelligence Assisted Legal Translation Advisory Committee, headed by a Judge of the Supreme Court of India to monitor the translation of Supreme Court Reportable Judgements (e-SCR) into vernacular languages by using Artificial Intelligence Tools. A similar Committee has been constituted in all the High Courts, headed by the Judges of the respective High Courts.

The Artificial Intelligence Committee of the Supreme Court has been convening frequent meetings with the Artificial Intelligence Committee of the High Courts and giving directions/ suggestions for translation of Supreme Court and High Court Judgements in vernacular language by using Artificial Intelligence Tools. The Artificial Intelligence Committee of the High Courts, Law Secretary, Advocate General, the Secretary in-charge of translation department in the State have been requested to take steps for appointment of translators in every High Court for translation of Supreme Court Reportable Judgements (e-SCR) as well as the High Court judgements into vernacular/ local language of that state.

As on 27.09.2024, 36302 Supreme Court Judgments have been translated in Hindi language and 37661 Judgments of Supreme Court have been translated in other vernacular languages and uploaded on e-SCR portal with the assistance of the High Courts (Annexure-I).

As regards the High Court Judgments, 12629 Judgments of 09 High Courts have been translated in Hindi language and 18315 Judgments have been translated in other vernacular languages as on 27.09.2024 and uploaded on the website of the respective High Courts. The High Court wise details of Supreme Court and High Court Judgments translated and uploaded after vetting is placed as Annexure-II.

The Supreme Court has requested the High Courts to give wide publicity as to availability of Supreme Court and High Court Judgments both in English and regional languages, so that various stakeholders, such as the Government Departments, Police Department, the Revenue Department, the State Bar Council, District Bar Associations, Judicial Training Academies and Law Colleges could make use of this facility free of cost.

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SUPREME COURT VERNACULAR JUDGEMENTS AVAILABLE ON E-SCR PORTAL		
Sl. No.	Local Language	No. of Judgements
1.	Assamese	268
2.	Bengali	989
3.	Garo	7
4.	Gujarati	2305
5.	Hindi	36302
6.	Kannada	1942
7.	Kashmiri	1
8.	Khasi	3
9.	Konkani	16
10.	Malayalam	2575
11.	Marathi	2479
12.	Nepali	150
13.	Odia	253
14.	Punjabi	21183
15.	Santali	31
16.	Tamil	2559
17.	Telugu	1579
18.	Urdu	1321
Total		73963

(As on 27.09.2024)

Annexure-II

**Details of High Court Judgements translated and uploaded by the High Courts as on
27.09.2024**

Sl. No.	High Court	Vernacular Language	HC Judgements
1.	Allahabad	Hindi	8338
2.	Andhra Pradesh	Telugu	811
3.	Bombay	Marathi	1161
4.	Calcutta	Bengali	324
5.	Chhattisgarh	Hindi	791
6.	Delhi	Hindi	469
7.	Gauhati	Assamese	65
8.	Gujarat	Gujarati	2253
9.	Himachal Pradesh	Hindi	877
10.	Jammu & Kashmir	Urdu	9
11.	Jharkhand	Hindi	795
12.	Karnataka	Kannada	745
13.	Kerala	Malayalam	611
14.	Madhya Pradesh	Hindi	152
15.	Madras	Tamil	892
16.	Manipur	Manipuri	83
17.	Meghalaya	Garo	6
		Khasi	5
18.	Orissa	Odiya	161
19.	Patna	Hindi	123
20.	Punjab & Haryana	Punjabi	9365
21.	Rajasthan	Hindi	616
22.	Sikkim	Nepali	3
23.	Telangana	Telugu	811
24.	Tripura	Bengali	1010
25.	Uttarakhand	Hindi	468
Total			30944

(As on 27.09.2024)