

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF LAW & JUSTICE  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 496.  
ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 09TH DECEMBER, 2022**

**DISPOSAL OF CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CASES**

**496. SHRI DHANUSH M. KUMAR:  
SHRI C.N. ANNADURAI:  
SHRIMATI MANJULATA MANDAL:  
SHRI GAJANAN KIRTIKAR:**

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

- (a) the number of pending cases of civil and criminal nature taken up and disposed off by the Supreme Court, High Courts and Lower Courts during each of the last three years and the current year;**
- (b) the challenges faced by the Government while disposing of the pending court cases;**
- (c) whether the number of pending cases in Subordinate courts in the country is more than that of High Courts and Supreme Court and if so, the details thereof and the reasons for such huge pendency;**
- (d) whether poor infrastructure is one of the main reasons for the slow delivery of justice and if so, the details thereof along with the efforts made by the Government so far, to improve the infrastructure of subordinate courts in the country;**
- (e) the details of other measures proposed to be initiated by the Government to speed up disposal of cases in subordinate courts in the country, including Tamil Nadu; and**
- (f) the steps taken by the Government to ensure quick delivery of justice and to improve judicial system for the people in the country?**

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE**

**(SHRI KIREN RIJIJU)**

**(a):** The number of pending cases of civil and criminal nature taken up and disposed off by the Supreme Court, High Courts and Lower Courts during each of the last three years and the current year is at *Annexure-I*.

**(b):** Disposal of pending cases in courts is within the domain of the judiciary. No time frame has been prescribed for disposal of various kinds of cases by the respective courts. Central government has no direct role in disposal of pending court cases.

**(c):** The number of pending cases in supreme court, high courts and district & subordinate courts and is as under:-

Name of the Court	Pendency
Supreme Court (as on 01.12.2022)	69,598
High Court (as on 06.12.2022)	59,57,704
District & Subordinate Court (as on 06.12.2022)	4,28,21,378

There are several reasons for large pendency of cases in the district and subordinate courts as indicated above which, inter-alia, include availability of adequate number of judges and judicial officers, supporting court staff and physical infrastructure, frequent adjournments and lack of adequate arrangement to monitor, track and bunch cases for hearing, complexity of facts involved, nature of evidence, co-operation of stake holders viz. bar, investigation agencies, witnesses and litigants and proper application of rules and procedures.

**(d):** The primary responsibility of the development of infrastructure facilities for the judiciary rests with the State Governments. To augment the resources of 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 center and states. The scheme is being implemented since 1993-94. It covers the construction of court buildings and residential accommodations for judicial officers of district and subordinate judiciary. As against the sanctioned strength of 24,989 and the working strength of 19,235 judges/judicial officers, there are 21,159 available court halls and 18,557 residential units as on 30.11.2022.

As on 30.11.2022, a sum of Rs. 9291.79 crores has been released under the scheme so far since its inception, out of which Rs. 5847.48 crores (62.93 %) 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. The scheme also includes the norms & specifications for the court buildings, which suggest the state governments have to comply with the existing standards for disabled-friendly people.

**(e) & (f):** The Government has taken several initiatives to provide an ecosystem for faster disposal of cases by the judiciary.

The National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms was set up 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. The Mission has been pursuing a coordinated approach for phased liquidation of arrears and pendency in judicial administration, which, *inter-alia*, involves better infrastructure for courts, including computerization, an 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 major steps taken during the last eight years under various initiatives are as follows:

**(i) Improving infrastructure for Judicial Officers of District and Subordinate Courts:** As on date, Rs. 9291.79 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 21,159 as on 30.11.2022, and number of residential units has increased from 10,211 as on 30.06.2014 to 18,557 as on 30.11.2022, under this scheme. In addition, 2,673 court halls and 1,662 residential units are under construction (as per Nyaya Vikas Portal). The Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary has been extended till 2025-26 at a total cost of Rs. 9,000 crores, out of which the central share will be Rs. 5,307 crores. Besides, the construction of court halls and residential units, it would also cover the construction of lawyer's halls, toilet complexes, and digital computer rooms. There are 21,159 court halls and 18,557 residential units made available under the scheme so far. 2673 court halls and 1,662 residential units are under construction as part of ongoing projects.

**(ii) Leveraging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for improved justice delivery:** The Government has been implementing the e-Courts Mission Mode Project throughout the country for information and communication technology 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 99.3% of court complexes. New and user-friendly version of Case Information Software has been developed and deployed at all the computerized district and subordinate courts. All stakeholders, including judicial officers can access information relating to judicial proceedings/decisions of computerized district & subordinate courts and high courts on the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG). As on 01.12.2022, litigants can access the case status of over 21.74 crore cases and 19.80 crore orders/judgments pertaining to these courts. eCourts services such as details of case registration, cause list, case status, daily orders & final judgments are available to litigants and advocates through the eCourts web portal, Judicial Service Centers (JSC) in all computerized courts, the eCourts Mobile App, email service, and SMS push, and pull services. A video conferencing facility has been enabled between 3,240 court complexes and 1,272 corresponding jails. With a view to handling the COVID- 19 challenges better and making the transition to virtual hearings smoother, 619 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. Rs. 5.01 crore has been allocated for providing equipment in video conferencing cabins in various court complexes to facilitate virtual hearings. Rs. 12.12 crore has been allocated for 1,732 help desk counters for e-filing in various court complexes.

21 virtual courts have been set up in 17 States/UTs viz. Delhi (2), Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala (2), Maharashtra (2), Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir (2), Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, West Bengal, and Rajasthan to try traffic offences. As on 03.03.2022, these courts have handled more than 1.69 crore cases and realized more than Rs. 271.48 crore in fines.

Video conferencing emerged as the mainstay of the courts during the Covid lockdown period as physical hearings and normal court proceedings in the congregational mode were not possible. Since Covid lockdown began, the district courts heard 1,65,20,791 cases while the high courts heard 75,80,347 cases (totalling 2.41 crore) via video conferencing till 31.10.2022. The Supreme Court had 2,97,435 hearings since the lockdown period upto 03.09.2022.

**(iii) Filling up of vacant positions in Supreme Court, High Courts and District and Subordinate Courts:** From 01.05.2014 to 05.12.2022, 46 Judges were appointed in Supreme Court. 853 new judges were appointed and 621 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 1108 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
06.12.2022	24,994	19,205

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

(iv) **Reduction in Pendency through / follow up by Arrears Committees:** 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. Arrears Committee has been constituted in the Supreme Court to formulate steps to reduce pendency of cases in high courts and district courts. In the past, Minister of Law & Justice has taken up the matter with the Chief Justices of High Courts and the Chief Ministers of states drawing their attention to the cases pending for more than five years and to take up pendency reduction campaign. The Department of Justice has developed an online portal for reporting by all High Courts on the compliance of Arrears Eradication Scheme guidelines of the Malimath Committee Report.

(v) **Emphasis on Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR):** Commercial Courts Act, 2015 (as amended on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2018) stipulates mandatory Pre-institution Mediation and Settlement (PIMS) 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.

(vi) **Initiatives to Fast Track Special Type of Cases:** The Fourteenth Finance Commission endorsed the proposal of the Government to strengthen the judicial system in states which included, inter-alia, establishing Fast Track Courts for cases of heinous crimes; cases involving senior citizens, women, children etc., and urged the State Governments to use the additional fiscal space provided in the form of enhanced tax devolution from 32% to 42% to meet such requirements. As on 31.10.2022, 838 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 (1 each in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and 2 in NCT of Delhi). 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. Rs.140 crore was released in the financial year 2019-20, Rs. 160 crore has been released during the financial year 2020-21 and Rs. 134.557 crore has been released during the financial year 2021-22 for the scheme Rs. 53.55 crore has been released during current FY upto October, 2022. 731 FTSC are functional 412 exclusive POCSO Courts, which disposed more than 1,24,000 cases as on 31.10.2022.

(vii) In addition, 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.

(viii) 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. In order to reduce the pendency of cases in courts and also to settle the disputes at pre-litigation stage, Lok Adalats are organized by Legal Services Institutions at such intervals as it deems fit. Lok Adalat is not a permanent establishment. However, as per Section 19 of the LSA Act, 1987, Lok Adalats are organized by Legal Services Institutions as per requirement. 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 two 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
Total	3,82,21,509	1,64,92,538	5,47,14,047

(ix) 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.

Category	Total Advice Enabled	%
SC	8,62,464	31.51%
ST	4,90,729	17.93%
OBC	7,94,986	29.04%
Women	9,19,389	33.59%
General	5,88,932	21.52%
As of 30th Nov 2022,		

(x) 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.

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**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (A) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 496 FOR ANSWER ON 09.12.2022 REGARDING 'DISPOSAL OF CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CASES'.****Pendency in Supreme Court**

Year	No. of Pending Cases at the end of the Year		No. of Cases Disposed of	
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal
2019	48,606	11,253	28,683	12,417
2020	52,290	12,796	14,756	5,914
2021	55,973	14,266	15,804	8,782
2022 (as on 31.10.2022 )	54,840	14,941	19,365	9,744

**Pendency in High Courts**

Year	No. of Pending Cases at the end of the Year		No. of Cases Disposed of	
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal
2019	33,37,156	13,47,198	11,45,070	7,71,979
2020	35,13,509	14,53,456	6,12,530	5,09,343
2021	37,2,6261	15,81,586	7,63,169	6,77,853
2022 (as on 30.09.2022)	37,43,452	16,07,832	8,19,865	6,74,336

**Pendency in District & Subordinate Court**

Year	No. of Pending Cases at the end of the Year		No. of Cases Disposed of	
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal
2019	89,91,997	2,33,04,227	38,55,047	1,45,16,527
2020	99,55,186	2,73,30,556	17,09,657	74,95,227
2021	1,06,66,303	3,03,87,195	28,93,054	1,41,35,550
2022 (as on 30.09.2022)	1,06,86,169	3,21,40,608	32,46,338	1,43,77,969