

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

LOK SABHA

**STARRED QUESTION NO. †*84
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 08TH DECEMBER, 2023**

AFFORDABLE JUSTICE TO COMMON MAN

†*84. SHRI HAJI FAZLUR REHMAN:

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to provide affordable and accessible justice to the common man in the country;**
- (b) if so, the details thereof;**
- (c) whether the Government has formulated any plan in this regard; and**
- (d) if so, the details thereof?**

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. †*84 FOR ANSWER ON 08.12.2023 REGARDING 'AFFORDABLE JUSTICE TO COMMON MAN.

(a) to (d): The Government has taken several initiatives and initiated many schemes and programmes for providing affordable and accessible justice to the common man in the country which are as follows:

- i. National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been step up under The Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act, 1987 to provide free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society as covered under Section 12 of the Act, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities. The activities/programmes undertaken by Legal Services Authorities include Legal Aid and advice; Legal Awareness Programmes; Legal Services/Empowerment camps; Legal Services Clinics; Legal Literacy Clubs; Lok Adalats and implementation of Victim Compensation Scheme.
- ii. Under the aegis of the Legal Services Act, Lok Adalats are organised to promote justice on a basis of equal opportunities. For this purpose, the legal services institutions have been setup from the Taluk Court level to the Supreme Court. National Lok Adalats are organized simultaneously in all Taluks, Districts and High Courts on a pre-fixed date. State Lok Adalats are organised by State Legal Services Authorities as per local conditions and needs and Permanent Lok Adalats are conducted on daily basis or as per the number of sittings decided per week.

Further in view of Covid, E-Lok Adalat was conceptualized which significantly improved access to justice for people who were otherwise unable to participate in the Lok Adalats. The first E-Lok Adalat was held on 27.06.2020 and since then E-Lok Adalats have been organized in 28 Stats / UTs, wherein 441.17 lakh cases were taken up and 76.16 lakh cases disposed of.

The details of the case disposed off in these Lok Adalats during the last three years are at *Annexure-I*.

- iii. Besides, a scheme on Access to Justice titled “Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice in India” is implemented by the Government of India which aims to strengthen Pre-Litigation Advice and consultation through Tele-Law; to ensure pan - India dispensation framework to deliver Pro Bono legal Services through Nyaya Bandhu (Pro Bono Legal Services) programme and to empower citizens through Pan India Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness Programme. The Scheme embeds use of technology and developing contextualized IEC (Information, Education and Communication) material in regional / local dialect to support its intervention and to achieve easy accessibility of legal services to the poor and weaker sections of the society.

The Tele-Law service seeks to connect the beneficiary with the lawyer via tele/video conferencing facilities available at the Common Service Centers and through Tele-Law Citizens Mobile Application. As on 30th November 2023, Tele-Law services is available across 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats in 766 districts across 36 States and UTs and has rendered legal advice to 60,23,222 beneficiaries, which includes women, children, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe etc.

The Nyaya Bandhu platform enables seamless connect on the Nyaya Bandhu Application (available on Android/ iOS) between the interested Pro Bono Advocates and registered beneficiaries entitled for free legal aid under section 12 of Legal Services Authorities Act,1987. As on 30th November, 2023, there are 10,629 Pro Bono advocates and 89 law schools have constituted Pro Bono Clubs to facilitate the culture of Pro bono among law students. All these services under the scheme are provided free of cost to all citizens of the weaker sections of the society.

- iv. The National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms set up in August, 2011 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, 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.

Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for the Development of Infrastructure Facilities for the Judiciary going on since 1993-94, court buildings and residential accommodations for judicial officers of the district and subordinate judiciary is being constructed. Three new components viz., digital computer room, lawyers' halls and toilet complexes have also been added under the ambit of the above CSS. The scheme has been extended from 2021-22 to 2025-26 with a budgetary outlay of Rs. 9000 crores including central share of Rs. 5307.00 crore for this scheme. It has been ensured under the scheme guidelines that the States/UTs send project proposals which are disabled friendly and meet the requisite norms/accessibility standards as laid down by CPWD/Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

- v. The government has established Fast Track Courts for dealing with cases of heinous crimes; cases involving senior citizens, women, children etc. As of 31.10.2023, 848 Fast Track Courts are functional for heinous crimes, crimes against women, and children etc. Further, the central government has approved a scheme for setting up 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 of 31.10.2023, a total of 758 FTSCs including 412 exclusive POCSO (ePOCSO) Courts are functional in 30 States/UTs across the country which have disposed of more than 2,00,000 cases.

- vi. A path breaking initiative of the Government has been the eCourts Mission Mode Project which is a Central Sector Scheme being implementing in close association e-Committee, Supreme Court of India. It is under implementation for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) development of the District & Subordinate courts. Some of the digital initiatives taken by Government under the eCourts Project to make justice accessible and available to common man is at *Annexure-II*.

Recently, in September 2023, the Union Cabinet approved eCourts Phase-III with a budgetary outlay of Rs.7,210 crore, in which one of the important component is digitisation of entire court record - both legacy court records and pending cases at an estimated outlay of Rs. 2038.40 crore, that would pave the wave for end-to-end digital and paperless courts facilitated through saturation of all court complexes with e-Sewa Kendras for universalizing e-filing of court cases. These e-Sewa Kendras would help in bridging the digital divide amongst citizens particularly in the rural areas to function as one-stop solution kiosk to provide free of cost services like e-filing, virtual hearing, etc., which would reduce the cost and time of the litigants and lawyers, thereby enhancing affordability and accessibility of justice delivery system.

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National Lok Adalats

	Pre-litigation Cases disposed of	Pending Cases disposed of	Total Cases disposed of
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 Sept, 23)	4,94,88,552	1,06,83,225	6,01,71,777

State Lok Adalats

	Pre-litigation Cases disposed of	Pending Cases disposed of	Total Cases disposed of
2021-22	1,14,278	4,18,251	5,32,529
2022-23	94,939	7,56,370	8,51,309
2023-24 (upto Sept, 23)	42,352	6,10,724	6,53,076

Permanent Lok Adalats

Years	Cases settled
2021-22	1,18,136
2022-23	1,71,138
2023-24 (upto Sept, 23)	1,10,412

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- a) Under the Wide Area Network (WAN) Project, connectivity has been provided to 99.4% (2977 out of earmarked 2992) of total Court Complexes across India.
- b) National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) is a database of orders, judgments, and cases, created as an online platform under the eCourts Project. Litigants can access case status information in respect of over 24.35 crore cases and more than 23.80 crore orders / judgments (as on 01.11.2023).
- c) Case Information Software (CIS) based on customized Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS) has been developed.
- d) As part of eCourts project, 7 platforms have been created to provide real time information on case status, cause lists, judgements etc. to lawyers/Litigants through SMS Push and Pull (2,00,000 SMS sent daily), Email (2,50,000 sent daily), multilingual and tactile eCourts services Portal (35 lakh hits daily), JSC (Judicial Service centres) and Info Kiosks. In addition, Electronic Case Management Tools (ECMT) have been created with Mobile App for lawyers (total 2.03 crore downloads till 30.09.2023) and JustIS app for judges (19,405 downloads till 31.10.2023).
- e) Video Conferencing has emerged as the viable medium for better and economical delivery of justice, apart from ensuring greater transparency. The High Courts heard 79,92,249 cases (totaling 2.88 crore) till 30.09.2023 using video conferencing system. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India held 4,82,941 hearings through video conferencing till 15.05.2023.
- f) Live Streaming of court proceedings has been started in High Courts of Gujarat, Gauhati, Orissa, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Patna, Madhya Pradesh & Constitutional

- g) Bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India thus allowing media and other interested persons to join the proceedings.
- h) 25 Virtual Courts in 20 States/UTs have been operationalized to handle traffic challan cases.
- i) New e-filing system (version 3.0) has been rolled out for the electronic filing of legal papers with upgraded features.
- j) To bridge the digital divide, 869 eSewa Kendras have been rolled out with the intention of facilitating the lawyer or litigant who needs any kind of assistance ranging from information to facilitation and eFiling.
- k) A new "Judgment Search" portal has been started free of cost to all.
- l) LED Display Message Sign Board System in the form of Justice Clockshavebeen installed. A total of 39 Justice Clocks in 25 High Courts has been installedso far.
