

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-3264

TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 17th DECEMBER, 2021

GOVERNMENT COUNSELS

3264. SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV:
SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:
SHRI SANJAY SADASHIVRAO MANDLIK:
SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO:
SHRI SHRIRANG APPA BARNE:

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

- (a) the procedure laid down by the Government for appointing Government Counsel for providing legal assistance to the people;
- (b) the number of Government Counsels in the country at present;
- (c) whether the posts of Government Counsels are vacant or there is a need to appoint more Government Counsels, if so, the details thereof ;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to set up a centre to solve cases with mutual consent along with providing free of cost legal assistance in every district or tehsil for dispensation of justice to all; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF LAW & JUSTICE
(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)

- (a) The National Legal Services Authority (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010 provides for criteria and procedure for empanelment of panel lawyers for providing legal assistance to the eligible sections of the population. The selection of panel lawyers is made by the Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution in consultation with the Attorney General for India [for the Supreme Court], Advocate General [for the High Court], District Attorney or Government Pleader [for District and Taluka level] and the Monitoring

and Mentoring Committee of the Institution. However the Executive Chairman or Chairman of Legal Services Institution can also suo motu empanel a Legal practitioner.

- (b) A total number of 50,168 lawyers have been empanelled in Legal Services Institutions at State & District level across the country for providing legal assistance to the people who are eligible to receive such assistance.
- (c) There are no specific number of posts for appointment of panel lawyers for providing legal assistance as panel lawyers are not on regular roll of Legal Services Authorities. The number of lawyers empanelled depends upon the number of legal aid cases, legal service activities and other ancillary works. As of now, the required number of panel lawyers is already available with the Legal Services Institutions.
- (d) and (e) Legal Services Institutions have set up Mediation Centers for mutual settlement of disputes (pending as well as at pre-litigation stage). Mediation has emerged as a popular and useful method for settlement of disputes. As on 31.10.2021, 572 Mediation Centers have been set up throughout the country. During the year 2020-21, more than 28,000 cases have been settled through mediation amicably. During 2021-22, more than 21,000 cases have been settled till October 2021.
