

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1857
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 6TH DECEMBER, 2024
Regional Languages in Courts

1857. SHRI RAJA A:

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

- (a) the progress made regarding decision to conduct court proceedings right from district courts to High Courts in regional languages including Tamil;
- (b) whether online filing of petitions, affidavits and counters and rejoinders have been fully facilitated in all the courts, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the option has been given to lawyers and witnesses to appear either physically or virtually in various High Courts including Tamil Nadu, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) whether Government has any proposal to provide judgement of court in regional languages to facilitate the people and if so, the details regarding assistance provided by the Ministry in providing judgments in regional languages to the common people, with details?

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) As far as Supreme Court and all High Courts are concerned, Article 348(1)(a) of the Constitution of India states that all proceedings in these Courts 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 Hon'ble 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.

As far as District and Subordinate Courts are concerned, the provision of Article 235 of the Constitution of India vests the administrative control over these courts with the concerned High Courts in the respective states. Thus, the use of Hindi or regional language in lower courts is generally decided by the High Court and State Government concerned in consultation with each other and accordingly implements it in their respective district and subordinate courts.

(b) & (c) Under eCourts Mission Mode Project, e-Filing has been made functional and it is available for all High Courts and District & Subordinate Courts across India. New e-Filing system (version 3.0) has been rolled out for the electronic filing of legal papers with upgraded features.

Mode of appearance, whether physical or virtual, of lawyers and witnesses in High Courts is an administrative matter under the purview of respective High Courts. However, in the case of Sarvesh Mathur vs The Registrar General, High Court of Punjab & Haryana (WP (Crl.)No. 351/2023), Hon'ble Supreme Court in its order dated 06.10.2023 directed that after

a lapse of two weeks from the date of this order, no High Court shall deny access to video conferencing facilities or hearing through the hybrid mode to any member of the Bar or litigant desirous of availing of such a facility.

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 started, the District & Subordinate courts heard 2,48,21,789 cases while the High Courts heard 90,21,629 cases (totalling 3.38 crore) till 31.10.2024 using videoconferencing. Since the beginning of lockdown period, the Supreme Court held 7,54,443 hearings from 23.03.2020 to 04.06.2024. In Tamil Nadu, Madras High court heard 14,80,662 cases while the District & Subordinate courts heard 3,92,067 cases. One video conference equipment each has been provided to all Court Complexes including taluk level courts and funds have been released for additional VC equipment for 14,443 court rooms. Funds for setting up 2506 VC Cabins have been made available. VC facilities are already enabled between 3240 court complexes and corresponding 1272 jails.

(d) Government of India had received proposals from the Government of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Karnataka to permit use of Tamil, Gujarati, Hindi, Bengali and Kannada in the proceedings of the Madras High Court, Gujarat High Court, Chhattisgarh High Court, Calcutta High Court and Karnataka High Court respectively. The advice of Chief Justice of India was sought on these proposals as per the Cabinet Committees decision taken in 1965 and the Chief Justice of India vide his D.O. letter dated 16.10.2012 intimated that the Full Court in its meeting held on 11.10.2012, after due deliberations, decided not to accept the proposals.

Based on another request from the Government of Tamil Nadu, the Government requested the Chief Justice of India to review the earlier decisions in this regard and convey the consent of the Supreme Court of India in July, 2014. The Chief Justice of India vide his D.O. letter dated 18.01.2016 conveyed that the Full Court, after extensive deliberations, unanimously resolved that the proposals could not be accepted.

However, 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.

Statement referred to in reply of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1857

Details of Supreme Court Judgments translated in Hindi language and in other vernacular languages and uploaded on e-SCR portal as on 27.09.2024.

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

Statement referred to in reply of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1857**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