

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. †1905**

**TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 06.12.2024**

**New Benches of High Courts**

**†1905 SHRI BRIJMOHAN AGRAWAL:**

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

- (a) the process of prioritizing the setting up of new benches of High Courts especially in view of the uneven distribution of judicial infrastructure;
- (b) whether the Government has undertaken an assessment of lack of judicial access;
- (c) if so, the details of major findings of the said study;
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to address the said lack of judicial access and strengthen regional judicial services;
- (e) the measures proposed to improve the said situation in States with limited High Court facilities leading to people facing difficulties in accessing justice; and
- (f) the plan of the Government to ensure provision of resources and infrastructure for setting up new benches of High Courts especially in States with high judicial work load?

**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 (f) : High Court Benches are established in accordance with the recommendations made by the Jaswant Singh Commission and judgment pronounced by the Apex Court in W.P. (C) No. 379 of 2000 and after due consideration of a complete proposal from the State Government consenting to provide necessary expenditure and infrastructural facilities along with the consent of the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court who is required to look after the day to day administration of the High Court. The proposal to be complete should also have the consent of the Governor of the concerned State. At present there is no complete proposal pending with the Government for setting up of Bench(es) in any High Court.

Based on requirements, the sanctioned strength of the Judges in the Supreme Court has been increased from 31 to 34 Judges and that of High Courts has been increased from 906 to 1122 Judges from May, 2014 till date. Similarly the sanctioned strength of the District and Subordinate judiciary has been increased from 19,518 to 25,725 Judges from 2014 till 18.11.2024. This is a major step in enhancing access to justice.

The Government has also undertaken various initiatives/projects and introduced schemes for free legal aid, provide an ecosystem for faster disposal of cases by the judiciary and thereby improving access to Justice. The National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms established by the Government has adopted a coordinated approach for phased liquidation of arrears and pendency of judicial administration through various strategic initiatives, including improving infrastructure for courts, and leveraging Information and Communication Technology.

Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of Judicial Infrastructure, funds are being released to States/UTs for construction of court halls, residential quarters for judicial officers, lawyers' halls, toilet complexes and digital computer rooms facilitating the work of various stakeholders including the litigants, thereby aiding justice delivery.

Further under the Phase I & II of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) had been leveraged for IT enablement of District and Subordinate Courts. The Project has been supporting Computerization of District and Subordinate Courts along with WAN connectivity. Video conferencing facility has been enabled between a large number of court complexes and jails. To bridge the digital divide by providing citizen centric services to lawyers and litigants a number of eSewa Kendras in District Courts and High Courts have been made functional. Virtual access to the litigants has been made available by setting up of virtual courts in various States/UTs. The e-Courts project aims to usher in a regime of enhanced ease of justice by moving towards digital, online and paperless courts.

Under the aegis of the Fourteenth Finance Commission, the Fast Track Courts have been established for dealing with cases of heinous crimes; cases involving senior citizens, women, children, etc. To fast-track criminal cases involving elected MPs / MLAs, Special Courts are functioning at States/UTs level. The Central Government has also approved a Scheme for setting up exclusive Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) across the country for the expeditious disposal of pending cases of Rape and offences under the POCSO Act.

Alternate Dispute Resolution methods have been promoted. Accordingly, the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 was amended in August, 2018 making Pre-institution Mediation and Settlement (PIMS) mandatory in case of commercial disputes.

The Government also launched the Tele-Law programme in 2017, which provides an effective and reliable e-interface platform connecting the needy and disadvantaged sections seeking legal advice and consultation, with panel lawyers via video conferencing, through telephone and chat facilities available

at the Common Service Centres (CSCs) situated in Gram Panchayats and through Tele-Law mobile App.

Efforts have been made to institutionalize pro bono culture amongst advocates. 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. Nyaya Bandhu Services are also available on UMANG Platform. Pro Bono Panel of advocates has been initiated in High Courts at the State level. Pro Bono Clubs have also been started in Law Schools.

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