

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF LAW & JUSTICE  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

**LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 764**

**TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2024**

**District Courts**

**764. SHRI SAPTAGIRI SANKAR ULAKA:**

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

- (a) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to address the issues of inadequate infrastructure, representation, and resources in district courts across the country;
- (b) whether the Government has assessed the representation of various communities within the district courts' judiciary and support staff, and initiatives to improve diversity in hiring practices, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the status of filling vacant positions for judicial and non-judicial staff in district courts, State-wise,
- (d) whether Government is planning for recruitment drives to address these gaps, if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the breakdown of infrastructure gaps in district courts, including issues such as limited courtroom space, IT facilities, and fire safety equipment, along with the planned measures to address these deficiencies, State-wise; and
- (f) the plan of Government to improve access to essential amenities for support staff, such as common rooms, attached toilets, and computer facilities, to ensure a conducive working environment?

**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): The Central Government has demonstrated its commitment towards modernizing the judiciary by supporting development of physical infrastructure along with digital infrastructure and resources through its Schemes/initiatives.

The Government has been implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for development of infrastructure facilities for the judiciary since 1993-94 to augment the resources of the State Governments for the construction of court buildings and residential accommodations of judicial officers in the district and the subordinate courts. There are three other components covered under the scheme, viz., lawyers' halls, toilet complexes and digital computer rooms for the convenience of lawyers and litigants. While the development of infrastructure in district courts is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments, the Central Government supplements the resources of the State Government through the said Scheme. As of now, a central share of Rs. 11583.07 crores has been released since the inception of the scheme in 1993-94. As against the sanctioned strength of 25,725 Judicial Officers, 22,515 Court Halls and 21,096 Residential Units are available in the district and subordinate courts and 3,154 Court Halls and 2,619 Residential Units are under construction as on date.

Under the eCourts Project, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enablement of courts is being undertaken to enhance judicial productivity, thereby making the justice delivery system accessible, cost effective, reliable, and transparent. The Government has demonstrated its commitment in modernizing the judiciary with advanced digital infrastructure by significantly increasing budget allocations since 2015. For Phase II, an amount of ₹1670 crore, a notable rise from the ₹639 crore disbursed during Phase I was allotted. Furthermore, Phase III (2023-2027) has been approved by the Union Cabinet in Sep'2023 at an outlay of ₹7,210 crore, which is over four times the funding for Phase II.

During Phase I (2011 - 2015) of the eCourts project, 14,249 Courts were computerized and Local Area Network (LAN) was installed at 13,683 courts. Phase II

(2015 - 2023) focused on ICT facilitation of judicial services to citizens and 18,735 District & Subordinate courts were computerized. The components included computer hardware, computerization of DSLAs, Wide Area Network (WAN) connectivity, trainings of stakeholders, establishment of eSewa Kendra, etc. Development of an advanced Customer Information System (CIS) software, portals that enable people to access information about pendency of cases (National Judicial Data Grid) and systems for digital filing and payments, have revolutionized the way public accesses the services provided by the judiciary.

The ongoing Phase III (2023-2027) of the project envisages various new digital initiatives, such as establishment of Digital and Paperless Courts, digitization of court records, expansion of video conferencing facilities to courts, jails and hospitals, expansion of scope of online courts beyond adjudication of traffic violations, saturation of all court complexes with eSewa Kendras, Cloud-based data repository for easy retrieval and supporting the digitised court records, live streaming of court proceedings and use of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and its subsets like Optical Character Recognition (OCR) etc. for analysis of case pendency, forecasting future litigation, etc.

(b) to (d): The selection and appointment of judicial officers and filling up of vacancies related to support staff falls within the domain of the respective High Courts and the State Governments. As per the Constitutional framework, in exercise of powers conferred under proviso to Article 309 read with Articles 233 and 234 of the Constitution, the respective State Government in consultation with the concerned High Court, frames the rules and regulations regarding the appointment and recruitment of Judicial Officers in the respective State Judicial Service.

Vide its order passed in January 2007 in the Malik Mazhar Sultan case, the Hon'ble Supreme Court, has inter-alia, stipulated specific timelines, which are to be followed by the States and the respective High Courts for the recruitment process of judges in subordinate courts.

(e) & (f): Specific information in respect of breakdown of infrastructure gaps in district courts, including issues such as limited courtroom space, IT facilities, and fire safety equipment, is not maintained centrally.

Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of Judicial Infrastructure, the Government of India supplements the resources of the States/UTs. The central assistance to the States/UTs is restricted to the budgetary provision available under the scheme during the financial year. However, the States/UTs are at liberty to spend additional amount, as per their requirement from their own resources.

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