

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW & JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. †796

TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 29TH NOVEMBER, 2024

Proposal for Integrated Judicial Complex

†796. SHRI ANIL FIROJIYA:

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

- (a) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to increase the number of courts and to improve their efficiency;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to build an Integrated Judicial Complex for convenient and speedy justice;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

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 (d): The establishment of new courts, increasing the number of courts, and setting up of Integrated Judicial Complexes in the country lies within the domain of the State Governments, who setup such courts, as per their requirement and resources, in consultation with the respective High Courts, having territorial jurisdiction. However, the Central Government is fully committed to improve the efficiency of the courts and has taken several initiatives for the same. Some of the initiatives taken by Department of Justice to aid the cause of justice delivery are as under:-

- i. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of Judicial Infrastructure, the Government of India supplements the resources of the States/UTs, by way of release of funds for construction of court halls, residential quarters for judicial officers, lawyers' halls, toilet complexes and digital computer rooms. This is for the convenience of various stakeholders including the litigants, thereby aiding justice delivery. As on date, Rs. 11,583 crores have been released since the inception of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for the Judiciary in 1993-94. As a consequence, the number of court halls have increased from 15,818 as on 30.06.2014 to 23,590, as on date. The number of residential units for judicial officers have increased from 10,211 as on 30.06.2014 to 21,076, as on date, under this scheme.

- ii. As part of the National eGovernance Plan, the eCourts project is an integrated Mission Mode Project for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enablement of the Indian Judiciary based on the "National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology in the Indian Judiciary". It was launched with the objective of improving access to justice, using technology. 18735 District and Subordinate Courts have been computerized till 2023 under this scheme. As part of the Wide Area Network (WAN) project, connectivity has been provided to 99.5% of total Court Complexes across India. Various initiatives of eCourts project include Video conferencing facility, Live Streaming of court proceedings in 9 High Courts and Supreme Court of India, Virtual Courts for adjudicating traffic challans, Citizen centric services through 7 platforms, JustIS app for judges, eFiling, ePayments, eSewa Kendras, Judgement & Order Search portal, National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP) and the Justice Clock.

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.

The efforts of the Government of integrating technology with the governance is envisaged to be a game changer in eCourts Phase III, as it envisages various new digital initiatives, such as, establishment of Digital and Paperless Courts that aim to bring court proceedings under a digital format and digitization of court records (both legacy records and pending cases). As a result, over 391.15 crore pages of court records have been digitized in the High Courts and District Courts as of Sep'24. Besides, the expansion of video conferencing facilities to courts, jails and hospitals, increasing the scope of online courts beyond adjudication of traffic violations, saturation of all court complexes with eSewa kendras, state of the art and latest Cloud based data repository for easy retrieval and supporting the digitised court records, software applications, live streaming, and electronic evidence etc., 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., are other initiatives towards efficient court management.

- iii. The Government has also been regularly filling up the vacancies in higher judiciary. From 01.05.2014 to 21.11.2024, 64 Judges were appointed in Supreme Court. 999 new Judges were appointed and 767 Additional Judges were made permanent in

the High Courts. Sanctioned strength of Judges of High Courts has been increased from 906 in May, 2014 to 1122 till date.

The sanctioned and working strength of judicial officers in district and subordinate courts have also increased as under:

As on*	Sanctioned Strength	Working Strength
31.12.2013	19,518	15,115
31.10.2024	25,725	20,487

*Filling up of vacancies in subordinate judiciary falls within the domain of the State Governments and High Courts concerned.

- iv. Under the aegis of the Fourteenth Finance Commission, Fast Track Courts have been established for dealing with cases of heinous crimes; cases involving senior citizens, women, children etc. 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 and POCSO Act. As of 31.10.2024, 750 FTSCs including 408 exclusive POCSO (ePOCSO) Courts are functional in 30 States/UTs across the country, which have disposed of more than 2,87,000 cases. To fast-track criminal cases involving elected MPs / MLAs, ten (10) Special Courts are functional in nine (9) States/UTs.
- v. Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods have also been promoted whole heartedly. Accordingly, the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 was amended on 20th August, 2018 making Pre-institution Mediation and Settlement (PIMS) mandatory in case of commercial disputes. Amendment to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 has been made by the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2015 for expediting the speedy resolution of disputes by prescribing timelines. The Mediation Act, 2023 has also brought in suitable changes in the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 in order to promote ADRs. According to the said Mediation Act, any suit which does

not contemplate any urgent relief shall not be instituted before a court before the plaintiff has exhausted the remedy of pre-litigation mediation which could be carried out by any authority as constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 or by a ‘mediation service provider’ under the Mediation Act, 2023. Further, any mediated settlement agreement arrived at under Section 12-A shall be enforced in the same manner, as if it were a judgment or decree passed by court. If pre-institution mediation and settlement fails then a suit is instituted before a Commercial Court.

- vi. Lok Adalat is an important Alternative Disputes Resolution Mechanism available to the citizens. It is a forum where the disputes/ cases pending in the court of law or at pre-litigation stage are settled/ compromised amicably. Under the Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act, 1987, an award made by a Lok Adalat is deemed to be a decree of a civil court and is final and binding on all parties and no appeal lies against thereto before any court. Lok Adalat is not a permanent establishment. National Lok Adalats are organized simultaneously in all Taluks, Districts and High Courts on a pre-fixed date. The details of the case disposed off in National Lok Adalats during the last three years are as under:-

Year	Pre-litigation	Pending Cases	Total Cases
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	7,10,32,980	1,43,09,237	8,53,42,217
2024 (upto 09.11.24)	6,46,35,285	1,26,34,580	7,72,69,865
Total	17,38,89,774	4,34,36,355	21,73,26,129

- vii. Ministry of Law and Justice had been implementing a unified Pan-India Central Sector Scheme namely ‘Designing Innovative Solutions on Holistic Access to Justice India’ (DISHA) that endeavours to provide comprehensive, integrated, technology-

based citizen-centric solutions on Access to Justice. Under the Scheme various programmes like Tele-Law, Nyaya Bandhu, and Legal Literacy & Legal Awareness are being mainstreamed in the country. The scheme aims to supplement and complement the mandate given by the Constitution of India under Articles 14, 21 and 39A, to provide equal justice and free legal aid. DISHA also aims to abide by the statutory requirements of the Legal Services Act, 1987, by giving impetus to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16, especially the aspect of providing access to justice for all. As a part of this initiative, the Government launched the Tele-Law programme in 2017, which provided an effective and reliable e-interface platform connecting the needy and disadvantaged sections seeking legal advice and consultation with panel lawyers via video conferencing, telephone and chat facilities available at the Common Service Centres (CSCs) situated in Gram Panchayat and through Tele-Law mobile App.

*Percentage Wise break-up of Tele – Law Data

Till 31ST October, 2024	Cases Registered	% Wise Break Up	Advice Enabled	% Wise Break Up
Gender Wise				
Female	4014611	39.12	3963499	39.06
Male	6247980	60.88	6183286	60.94
Caste Category Wise				
General	2387060	23.26	2352649	23.19
OBC	3252495	31.69	3213067	31.67
SC	3246025	31.63	3215657	31.68
ST	1377011	13.42	1366312	13.47
Total	10262591		10146785	

- viii. Efforts have been made to institutionalize pro bono culture and pro bono lawyering in the country. A technological framework has been put in place where the advocates volunteering to give their time and services for pro bono work can register as Pro

Bono Advocates on Nyaya Bandhu (Android & iOS and Apps). Nyaya Bandhu Services also available on UMANG Platform. Pro Bono Panel of advocates has been initiated in 23 High Courts at the State level. Pro Bono Clubs have been started in 109 Laws Schools to instill Pro Bono culture in budding lawyers.
