

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARTED QUESTION NO. 835
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 7-2-2025

Expenditure on Litigation

835. Shri Raja Ram Singh:

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

- (a) the details of the total expenditure incurred on litigation carried out by the Union Government during the last ten years, year-wise;
- (b) the details of the breakup for the same, ministries, department and year-wise;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to reduce litigation and the costs associated with; and
- (d) whether the remedial results envisaged therein have been achieved, if so, the details thereof and 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) & (b): The requisite data is not maintained by the Government in the form and manner sought. However, the expenditure incurred on litigation during the last ten years, year-wise is as follows:

S. No.	Financial Year	Expenditure (in ₹)
1	2014-15	26,64,66,066
2	2015-16	37,43,25,971
3	2016-17	48,12,92,060
4	2017-18	65,83,50,532
5	2018-19	51,85,65,364
6	2019-20	61,08,76,154
7	2020-21	58,43,62,137
8	2021-22	48,56,53,683
9	2022-23	57,45,33,707
10	2023-24	66,57,83,403

(c) & (d): The reduction of pendency in court cases is within the domain of the judiciary as the adjudication of cases is done by the Courts. The Government has no role in the adjudication and timely disposal of cases in courts. However, the Central Government is fully committed to aid the speedy disposal of cases in accordance with Article 21 of the Constitution and reducing pendency. In order to provide an ecosystem for faster disposal of cases by the judiciary, the Government set-up National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms in August, 2011 with the twin objectives of increasing access by reducing delays and arrears in the system and enhancing accountability through structural changes and by setting performance standards and capacities. The Mission has been pursuing a co-ordinated approach for phased liquidation of arrears and pendency in judicial administration, which, inter-alia, involves better infrastructure for courts including computerization, increase in strength of subordinate judiciary, policy and legislative measures in the areas prone to excessive litigation, re-engineering of court procedure for quick disposal of cases and emphasis on human resource development.

Some of the initiatives taken by Department of Justice to aid the cause of justice delivery are as under:-

Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for 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 that would ease the life of lawyers and litigants, thereby aiding justice delivery. As on date, Rs. 11167.36 crores have been released since the inception of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for the Judiciary in 1993-94. The number of court halls has increased from 15,818 as on 30.06.2014 to 23,020 as on 30.06.2024, and number of residential units has increased from 10,211 as on 30.06.2014 to 20,836 as on 30.06.2024, under this scheme.

Further under the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, information and communication technology (ICT) has been leveraged for IT enablement of the Indian Judiciary. The number of computerised district & subordinate courts has increased to 18,735 so far. WAN connectivity has been provided to 99.4% of court complexes. Video conferencing facility has been enabled between 3,240 court complexes and 1,272 corresponding jails. As on 30.04.2024, 1050 e-Sewa Kendras have been set up at court complexes to facilitate citizen centric services to lawyers and litigants. As on 31.05.2024, 28 virtual courts have been set up in 21 States/UTs and these courts have handled more than 5.08 crore cases and realized more than Rs. 561.09 crores in fines.

The Cabinet on 13.09.2023 has approved eCourts Phase-III with a budgetary outlay of Rs.7,210. Taking the gains of Phase-I and Phase-II to the next level, the main objective of the Phase-III is to create a unified technology platform for the judiciary, which will provide a seamless and paperless interface between the courts, the litigants and other stakeholders. The proposed timeframe for the Project is four years starting from 2023 onwards. It envisages digitization of the court records, both legacy records and pending cases; state of the art and latest Cloud based data repository for easy retrieval; eSewa Kendras at all court complexes across India; paperless courts; video conferencing facilities to be expanded to also cover district hospitals; Live Streaming of court proceedings and expansion of the scope of Virtual Courts. The project will help provide a smoother user experience by building a "smart" ecosystem. Registries will have less data entry and minimal file scrutiny facilitating better decision-making and policy planning. The eCourts Phase-III will thus prove to be a

game changer in ensuring ease of justice by making the Court experience convenient, inexpensive and hassle free to all the citizens of the country.

Under eCourts Phase III, out of Rs. 825 crores allotted in FY 23-24, highest ever funds amounting to 805.57 Crore were released in one single financial year under the Project. The funds were received in the month of October'23 and expenditure of Rs 768.25 Cr (93.11%) was made in the space of five months, which is the highest under eCourts Project till date. During FY 24-25 an allocation of Rs 1500 Cr. in the BE has been received, out of which Rs 464.98 Cr has already been released to the various High Courts.

Government has been regularly filling up the vacancies in higher judiciary. From 01.05.2014 to 09.07.2024, 62 Judges were appointed in Supreme Court. 976 new Judges were appointed and 745 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 1114 currently. sanctioned and working strength of judicial officers in district and subordinate courts has increased as follow:

As on	Sanctioned Strength	Working Strength
31.12.2013	19,518	15,115
10.07.2024	25,523	20,414

However, filling up of vacancies in subordinate judiciary falls within the domain of the State Governments and high courts concerned.

In pursuance of a Resolution passed in Chief Justices' Conference held in April, 2015, Arrears Committees have been set up in all 25 High Courts to clear cases pending for more than five years. Arrears Committees have been set up under District courts as well.

Under the aegis of the Fourteenth Finance Commission, the Government has established Fast Track Courts for dealing with cases of heinous crimes; cases involving senior citizens, women, children etc. As of 31.05.2024, 866 Fast Track Courts are functional for trying cases of heinous crimes, crimes against women and children etc. To fast-track criminal cases involving elected MPs / MLAs, ten (10) Special Courts are functional in nine (9) States/UTs. Further, 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 31.05.2024, a total of 755 FTSCs including 410 exclusive POCSO (ePOCSO) Courts are functional in 30 States/UTs across the country which have disposed of more than 2,53,000 cases.

With a view to reduce pendency and unclogging of the courts, the Government has recently amended various laws like the Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Act, 2018, the Commercial Courts (Amendment) Act, 2018, the Specific Relief (Amendment) Act, 2018, the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2019 and the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2018.

Alternate Dispute Resolution methods have 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.

Lok Adalat is an important Alternative Disputes Resolution Mechanism available to common people. 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 June,24)	2,86,75,168	56,88,231	3,43,63,399
Total	13,79,29,657	3,64,90,006	17,44,19,663

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 30th June, 2024	Cases Registered	% Wise Break Up	Advice Enabled	% Wise Break Up
Gender Wise				
Female	34,77,951	38.43	34,38,027	38.38
Male	55,73,180	61.57	55,19,687	61.62
Caste Category Wise				
General	21,09,811	23.31	20,81,215	23.23
OBC	28,25,925	31.22	27,95,376	31.21
SC	29,01,087	32.05	28,74,044	32.08
ST	12,14,308	13.42	12,07,079	13.48
Total	90,51,131		89,57,714	

Efforts have been made to institutionalize pro bono culture and pro bono lawyering the country. 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 (Android & iOS and Apps). Nyaya Bandhu Services also available on UMANG Platform. Pro Bono Panel of advocates has been initiated in 22 High Courts at the State level. Pro Bono Clubs have been started in 89 Laws Schools to instill Pro Bono culture in budding lawyers.

Some of the initiatives taken under the Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism are as under-

During the past decade, the Government of India has taken various initiatives to promote Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms and continues to take further policy and legislative intervention to strengthen these mechanisms and make them more efficacious and expeditious. ADR mechanisms including arbitration and mediation are less adversarial and are capable of providing a better substitute to the conventional methods of resolving disputes. The use of ADR mechanisms is also expected to reduce the burden on the judiciary and thereby enable timely justice dispensation to citizens of the country.

The major initiatives, steps and measures taken by the Central Government over the years in this regard include;

The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 has been progressively amended in the years 2015, 2019 and 2020. These amendments aim at ensuring timely conclusion of arbitration proceedings, neutrality of arbitrators, minimizing judicial intervention in the arbitral process and efficacious enforcement of arbitral awards. The amendments are further aimed at promoting institutional arbitration, updating the law to reflect best global practices and resolve ambiguities thereby establishing an arbitration ecosystem where arbitration, domestic and international conducted by way of institutional arbitration can grow and flourish.

The Commercial Courts Act, 2015 was amended in the year 2018, to provide inter-alia for Pre-Institution Mediation and Settlement (PIMS) mechanism. Under this mechanism, where a commercial dispute of specified value does not contemplate any urgent interim relief, the parties have to first exhaust the mandatory remedy of PIMS before approaching the Court. This is aimed at providing an opportunity to the parties to resolve the commercial disputes through mediation.

The India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019, was enacted to provide for the establishment of the India International Arbitration Centre (Centre) for the purpose of creating an independent, autonomous and world class body for facilitating institutional arbitration and to declare the Centre to be an institution of national importance. The Centre has since been established and aims to inspire confidence amongst parties, both domestic and international, by providing a neutral dispute resolution platform for resolution of commercial disputes through arbitration. The Centre has also notified the India International Arbitration Centre (Conduct of Arbitration) Regulations, 2023 to facilitate conduct of domestic and international arbitrations with a focus on efficient and time-bound arbitration process. The Chamber of Arbitration established under Section 28 of the India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019 continues to empanel reputed arbitrators, both for domestic and international arbitrations. The Centre is envisaged to become a model arbitral institution in the country, thereby paving the way for enhancing the quality of institutional framework for arbitration.

The Mediation Act, 2023, lays down the statutory framework for mediation to be adopted by parties to a dispute, especially institutional mediation, wherein various stakeholders have also been identified to establish a robust and efficacious mediation ecosystem in the country.

Some other initiatives taken under by Government to reduce litigation and the costs associated with:

* The Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas (DTVSV) Scheme, 2024 and 2020 were introduced by the Finance Act, 2024 and 2020 respectively, to reduce the litigation.

* The CBDT has notified the e-appeals scheme, 2023 and 100 new posts of Addl./JCIT (Appeals) have been created.

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* The CBDT has enhanced the monetary limits of filing appeals by the Department before the ITAT, HC and SC to Rs. 60 lacs, 2 Cr. And 5 Cr. in 2024. The revision of monetary limits of filing appeals has been undertaken from time to time.

* The CBDT has notified the e-Dispute Resolution Scheme, 2022 (e-DRS) on 30% August, 2024 with the aim to minimize litigation and provide relief to small taxpayers.

* The Central Action Plan 2024-25 has raised the appeal disposal targets for both the CIT(Appeals) and Addl./JCIT(Appeals). The targets have been fixed at 600, 450 and 800 appeals disposal for CIT(A/AU), CIT(IT& TP) and Addl./JCIT(A) respectively.

* The CIT(Appeals) have been empowered under section 251 of the Income Tax Act, 1961 to set aside appeals filed against ex-parte assessment orders for fresh examination by the assessing officer w.e.f 1.10.2024.

* The total of 44 PCsIT and 39 CIT(DR) have been assigned the additional charge of CIT(Appeals) as a measure to augment manpower at first appellate level.

(d). The following results, till date, are achieved after steps taken to reduce litigation:-

* 40,166 eligible assesses have opted for DTVSV, 2024, from 1.10.2024 to 31.01.2025.

* The disposal of appeals at first appellate level in the first nine months of the current year has already reached the appeals disposed in the entire previous year.

* By raising monetary limits for filing appeals by the Department, a total of 43,895 appeals have been withdrawn from the ITAT, HC and SC since 2015.
