

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

LOK SABHA

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2248
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 15TH DECEMBER, 2023**

FINDINGS OF NATIONAL JUDICIAL DATA GRID

2248. DR. AMAR SINGH:

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

(a) whether the Government has taken cognizance of the findings of the National Judicial Data Grid, which States that there are currently over 40 million pending cases in our courts, while the sanctioned strength of judges is around 20,000 only; and

(b) if so, the details of the remedial steps proposed to be taken by the Government keeping in mind that a large number of cases are being assigned to each judge which lead to delay in the disposal of cases?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW
AND JUSTICE; MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY
OF CULTURE**

(SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL)

(a)& (b): As per information available on National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) the pendency of cases in the courts, as on 1.12.2023, are as follows:

S. No	Court	No. of Pending Cases
1	Supreme Court	80,040
2	High Court	61,75,579
3	District & Subordinate Courts	4,46,30,237
	Grand Total	5,08,85,856

Source: National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)

At present, as on 1.12.2023, the sanctioned strength of the judges is as follows:

S. No	Court	Sanctioned Strength of Judges
1	Supreme Court	34
2	High Court	1,114
3	District & Subordinate Courts	25,420
	Grand Total	26,568

Source: MIS portal, Department of Justice

Assignment of cases to the judges and its disposal lies within the exclusive domain of the judiciary. The Central Government has no direct role in the matter. The Government, however, has been making constant endeavors to provide an ecosystem for faster and efficient disposal of cases by the judiciary.

- i.** To this end, the National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms was set up in August, 2011 with the avowed 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.
- ii.** 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. 10035 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 21,507 as on 30.11.2023 and number of residential units has increased from 10,211 as on 30.06.2014 to 18,882 as on 30.11.2023, under this scheme.
- iii.** Under the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, information and communication technology (ICT) has been leveraged for IT enablement of district and subordinate courts. Furthering computerization of the district and subordinate courts with proper WAN connectivity, video conferencing facility, setting up of e-SewaKendras in the court complexes and virtual courts etc. under Phase-I and II of the eCourts project.

Recently, the Cabinet on 13.09.2023 has approved Phase-III of eCourts with a budgetary outlay of Rs.7,210 crore. Taking the gains of Phase-I and Phase-II to the next level, the e-Courts Phase-III aims to usher in a regime of maximum ease of justice by moving towards digital, online and paperless courts. It intends to incorporate latest technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Block chain etc. to make justice delivery more robust, easy and accessible to all the stakeholders.

- iv.** Besides, the government has been regularly filling up the vacancies in the higher judiciary. From 01.05.2014 to 08.12.2023, 61 Judges were appointed in Supreme Court. 965 new Judges were appointed and 695 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.
- v.** Over a period of time, the strength of district & subordinate judiciary has seen a marked increase. The district judiciary's sanctioned strength of judicial officers increased from 19,518 in the year 2014 to 25,423 in the year 2023 while the corresponding working strength increased from 15,115 in the year 2014 to 19,518 in the year 2023.
- vi.** Separate Arrears Committees have been set up in all 25 High Courts to clear cases pending for more than five years in the wake of Chief Justices' Conference held in April, 2015. Similar Committees are functional at district courts.
- vii.** 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, HIV/AIDS etc. and property related cases pending for more than five years. As of 31.10.2023, 848 Fast Track Courts are functional. A scheme for setting up Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) across the country for the expeditious disposal of pending cases of Rape under IPC and crimes under POCSO Act. As of 31.10.2023, a total of 758 FTSCs including 412 exclusive POCSO (ePOCSO) Courts are functional in 30 States/UTs.
- viii.** 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.

- ix.** 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.

Recently the Government has enacted the Mediation Act, 2023 which lays down that mediation can be conducted in civil and commercial matters in terms of the provisions of the Mediation Act, 2023 barring such matters explicitly listed in the First Schedule of the Act in which only major offences have been excluded, leaving majority of the petty offences under the ambit of Mediation Act, 2023.

- x.** Lok Adalats have come up as a viable 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.

There are three types of Lok Adalats: National Lok Adalats, State Lok Adalats and Permanent Lok Adalats. Mobile Lok Adalats are also organized in various parts of the country, which travel from one location to another to resolve disputes in order to facilitate the resolution of disputes through a mediated mechanism. Since June, 2020, online Lok Adalat/e-Lok Adalats have been organised virtually that facilitates party interaction and exchange of information, allowing people to effectively participate from their homes with the help of internet technology.

- xi.** 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 application.

As on 30th November, 2023 legal advice for 60,23,222 cases had been enabled through 2.5 lakh CSCs under the aegis of Tele Law and Tele Law Mobile App.

- xii.** Efforts have been made to institutionalize pro bono culture and pro bono lawyering in the country.
