

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

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *77**

TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 26.07.2024

Permanent Bench of Supreme Court at Chennai

***77. DR. T SUMATHY ALIAS THAMIZHACHI THANGAPANDIAN:
THIRU D M KATHIR ANAND:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has received any request from the legal fraternity and civil society for establishment of a permanent Bench of the Supreme Court of India at Chennai and if so, the details thereof and the stand of the Government thereon;
- (b) the steps taken by the Government to expedite the clearance of pendency of cases in Supreme Court;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to mitigate the transportation problems and language issues faced by the people living far away in Southern part of the country seeking justice in the Supreme Court;
- (d) whether the Government has taken an affirmative stand on making Tamil as an official court language; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

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 (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (e) in respect of Lok Sabha Starred Question no. 77 due for answer on 26th July, 2024 regarding “Permanent Bench of Supreme Court at Chennai” asked by Dr. T Sumathy alias Thamizhachi Thangapandian and Thiru D M Kathir Anand.

(a) to (e): Article 130 of the Constitution of India provides that the Supreme Court shall sit in Delhi or in such other place or places as the Chief Justice of India may, with the approval of the President, from time to time, appoint.

2. Representations have been received from time to time from various quarters for establishment of Benches of Supreme Court in various parts of the Country. The Eleventh Law Commission in its 125th Report titled “The Supreme Court - A Fresh Look”, submitted in 1988, reiterated the recommendations made by Tenth Law Commission in its 95th Report for splitting the Supreme Court into two namely (i) Constitutional Court at Delhi and (ii) Court of appeal or Federal Court sitting in North, South, East, West and Central India. The Eighteenth Law Commission in its 229th Report submitted in 2009 had also suggested that a Constitutional Bench be set up at Delhi and four Cassation Benches be set up in the Northern region at Delhi, Southern region at Chennai/Hyderabad, Eastern region at Kolkata and Western region at Mumbai.

3. The matter was referred to the Chief Justice of India, who informed that after consideration of the matter, the Full Court in its meeting held on 18th February, 2010, found no justification for setting up of benches of the Supreme Court outside Delhi. The Chief Justice of India had earlier conveyed similar views in August, 2007.

4. In Writ Petition WP(C) No. 36/2016 on establishment of National Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court vide its judgment dated 13.07.2016 deemed it proper to refer the aforementioned issue to Constitutional Bench for authoritative pronouncement. The matter is currently sub-judice in the Supreme Court.

5. The issues concerning disposal of pending cases in courts is within the domain of the judiciary. Timely disposal of cases in courts depends on several factors which, inter-alia, include availability of adequate number of judges and judicial officers, supporting court staff and physical infrastructure, complexity of facts involved, nature of evidence, involvement of various stake holders viz. advocates, investigation agencies, witnesses, litigants etc.

6. In order to ensure that there is no pendency due to shortage of Judges in the Supreme Court, timely action was taken on Supreme Court Collegium (SCC) recommendations to ensure that the Supreme Court is functioning at full strength.

7. The Central Government has been fully committed to speedy disposal of cases in accordance with Article 21 of the Constitution and reducing pendency. Several initiatives have been taken to provide an ecosystem to facilitate faster disposal of cases by the judiciary which includes enhancing judicial infrastructure and use of technology such as e-filing, Video Conferencing etc. to allow virtual access to litigants.

8. As far as Supreme Court and all High Courts are concerned, Article 348(1)(a) of the Constitution of India states that all proceedings in these Courts shall be in English language. Article 348 (2) of the Constitution of India provides that the Governor of a State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorize the use of Hindi Language, or any other language used for any official purposes of the State, in proceedings in the High Court having its principal seat in that State. Further, Section 7 of the Official Language Act, 1963 states that the Governor of a State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorize the use of Hindi or the official language of the State, in addition to the English Language, for the purposes of any judgment, decree or order passed or made by the High Court for that State and where any judgment, decree or order is passed or made in any such language (other than the English

Language), it shall be accompanied by a translation of the same in the English Language issued under the authority of the High Court.

9. The Committee of the Cabinet appointed to consider the different aspects of the Official Language Policy on 21.05.1965 stipulated that consent of the Chief Justice of India be obtained on any proposal relating to use of a language other than English in the High Court.

10. Proposals had earlier been received from the Governments of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Karnataka to permit use of Tamil, Gujarati, Hindi, Bengali and Kannada in the proceedings of the Madras High Court, Gujarat High Court, Chhattisgarh High Court, Calcutta High Court and Karnataka High Court respectively. In accordance with the decision of the Cabinet Committee appointed to consider the different aspects of the Official Language Policy, the advice of Chief Justice of India was sought on these proposals. The Chief Justice of India vide his D.O. letter dated 16.10.2012 intimated that the Full Court in its meeting held on 11.10.2012, after due deliberations, decided not to accept the proposals.

11. Based on a subsequent request from the Government of Tamil Nadu, the Chief Justice of India was requested to review the earlier decisions in this regard and convey the consent of the Supreme Court of India. The Chief Justice of India vide his D.O. letter dated 18.01.2016 conveyed that the Full Court, after extensive deliberations, unanimously resolved that the proposals could not be accepted.

12. In order to promote access in different regional languages the Supreme Court has developed Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software (SUVAS), a machine assisted translation tool, trained by Artificial Intelligence (AI), with technical support from Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. This tool is specially designed for the judicial domain and currently has the capacity of translating Judicial Documents, Orders or Judgments from English

into eighteen Indian languages and vice versa. As on 15.07.2024, by using AI translation tools, 51,501 judgements of Supreme Court, have been translated into 18 languages viz. Assamese (34), Bengali (622), Garo (03), Gujarati (1,299), Hindi (36,260), Kannada (1,911), Kashmiri (0), Khasi (01), Konkani (14), Malayalam (1409), Marathi (2248), Nepali (101), Odia (190), Punjabi (3,825), Santhali (22), Tamil (2,256), Telugu (1069) and Urdu (237). The details of the judgments of Supreme Court translated into 18 languages, as on 15.07.2024, is available on the e-SCR Portal of the Supreme Court website.
