

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW AND JUSTICE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:468
ANSWERED ON:15.03.2012
AFFORDABLE JUSTICE
Chavan Shri Harischandra Deoram

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to make affordable and easy justice available to common man in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has evolved any scheme in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID)

(a) to (d): The Government has been taking several initiatives from time to time to improve the justice delivery system and for making it affordable and accessible to the common man. These initiatives inter-alia include measures for strengthening the judicial system, reviewing the strength of the judges from time to time and setting up of part time/special courts, improving infrastructure in the courts and increasing use of ICT for court management as well as for providing citizen centric services at all levels starting from Supreme Court/High Courts to the district and subordinate courts. Some of these initiatives are detailed further as under:-

i) Increasing access by reducing delays and arrears in the system has been the constant endeavor of the Government. For this, several steps have been taken in the past both for making structural changes as well as for monitoring the performance of the courts in so far as their disposal art concerned. The disposal has been accelerated by undertaking special drives, the recent one being from 1st July, 2011 to 31st December, 2011. Of late, the Government has set up a National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms which will be addressing the issues of delays and arrears in the judicial system as well enforcing better accountability at all levels through a variety of methods which will include setting and monitoring of performance standard, enhancement of capacity through training at various levels etc.

ii) The 11th Finance Commission had recommended setting up of fast track courts for which a provision of Rs. 502.90 crores was made for 2000-05. This was extended later till 2010-11. As per the reports received, 1192 fast track courts were functional in the country as on 31.3.2011. Nearly 33 lakh cases were disposed of by the fast track courts over a period of 11 years of central assistance from 2000-01 to 2010-11. The 13th Finance Commission has recommended a grant of Rs.5000 crores for the states over a period of 5 years between 2010-2015. The amount will be provided as a grant to the States for various initiatives such as (i) Increasing the number of court working hours using the existing infrastructure by holding morning / evening / shift courts; (ii) Enhancing support to Lok Adalats to reduce the pressure on regular courts; (iii) Providing additional funds to State Legal Services Authorities to enable them to enhance legal aid to the marginalized and empower them to access justice; (iv) Promoting the Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism to resolve part of the disputes outside the court system; (v) Enhancing capacity of judicial officers and public prosecutors through training programmes; (vi) Supporting creation or strengthening of a judicial academy in each State to facilitate such training; (vii) Creation of the post of Court Managers in every judicial district and High Courts to assist the judiciary in their administrative functions and (viii) Maintenance of heritage court buildings. An amount of ? 1353.623 crores has already been released to the States on this account.

iii) Under the central sector scheme for computerization of the District and Subordinate Courts (e-Courts project) in the country and for upgradation of the ICT infrastructure of the Supreme Court and the High Courts, a 9501 courts out of 14,229 courts as on 25.02.2012 in the country have been computerized. The balance courts would be computerized by 31.3.2014.

In the second phase, digitization, library management, e-filing and establishment of data warehouse are expected to be added to the ongoing computerization and performing of citizen centric services.

iv) The Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 has been enacted for establishment of Gram Nyayalayas at the grass roots level for providing access to justice to citizens at their doorstep. The Central Government is providing assistance to States towards non-recurring expenses for setting up of Gram Nyayalayas subject to a ceiling of 18.00 lakhs per Gram Nyayalaya. The Central Government also provides assistance towards recurring expenses for running these Gram Nyayatayas subject to a ceiling of 3.20 lakhs per Gram Nyayaiaya per year for the first three years. As informed by the State Governments, 153 Gram Nyayalayas have been notified so far. Out of which 151 Gram Nyayalayas have started functioning. An amount of 25.39 crores has been released to the State Governments for establishment of Gram Nyayalayas during last three years.

v) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of infrastructure facilities for the judiciary is being implemented since 1993-94 under which central assistance for construction of court buildings and residential quarters for judicial officers is released to augment the resources of the State Governments. The expenditure on the scheme is shared by the Centre and the State Governments on 75:25 basis, except for States in North East Region, which is on 90:10 basis. An expenditure of 1565.40 has been incurred on this scheme up to 31.12.2011.

vi) For legal empowerment of the marginalized people in India an externally aided project 'Access to Justice for Marginalized People in India' is being implemented, in the selected 07 States, with the support of UNDP.