

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1619
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 11.02.2022
DELIVERY OF JUSTICE

1619. SHRI NAYAB SINGH:

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken any steps to tackle the challenges and improve delivery of justice to the citizens under the Strategy for New India at 75 and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has taken any steps for addressing the challenges being faced by judiciary as stated in the recent reports of economic survey and NITI Aayog and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Ministry is working out any plan to use the talent of law graduates who have completed their internship and have obtained practical experience in Ministries and Judiciary;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (e) the further steps taken by the Government to deliver justice for all in the society?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE
(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)

(a) and (b): The NITI Aayog has formulated a document " Strategy for New India@75" which is placed in public domain at https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-01/Strategy_for_New_India_2.pdf". Government has taken initiative to improve the infrastructure facilities viz., court halls and residential units under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for judiciary. An amount of Rs.8,758.71 crores has been released to the States since the inception of the scheme in 1993-1994. During the period from 2014 to 31.01.2022, the number of court halls has increased from 15,818 to

21,376 and the number of residential units increased from 10,211 to 18,276. Government has also approved the continuance of this CSS upto 31.03.2026, with a total budgetary outlay of Rs.9000 crores, including Central share of Rs.5,307 crores. The scheme components have been expanded, to also cover the construction of toilets, digital computer rooms and Lawyers' Hall, in addition to the Court Halls & Residential Units in the district and subordinate courts. From 2016 to 31.1.2022, 36 judges have been appointed in the Supreme Court and 616 Judges were appointed in the High Courts while 502 Additional Judges were made permanent judges and 42 Additional Judges were given a fresh term. A separate High Court has been established in Andhra Pradesh State and a circuit bench of Calcutta High Court was established in Siliguri. The Government has approved a scheme for setting up 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) across the country for expeditious disposal of pending cases of Rape under IPC and crimes under POCSO Act.

Under e-Courts Mission Mode Project, 18,735 District and Subordinate courts have been computerized. The other salient initiatives taken under the eCourts project include:

- i. Under Wide Area Network (WAN) Project, 2960 courts sites have been commissioned (as on 07.02.2022) with 10 Mbps to 100 Mbps bandwidth speed. This forms the backbone for ensuring data connectivity in courts across the length and breadth of the country.
- ii. Case Information Software (CIS) which forms the basis for the e-Court services is based on customized Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS) which has been developed by NIC. Currently CIS National Core Version 3.2 is being implemented in District Courts and the CIS National Core Version 1.0 is being implemented for the High Courts. A new software patch and user manual for COVID-19 management has also been developed to help in smart scheduling of cases.
- iii. National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) is a database of orders, judgments and cases, created as an online platform under the eCourts Project. It provides information relating to judicial proceedings/decisions of all computerized district and subordinate courts of the country. Litigants can access case status information in respect of over 19.81 crore cases, and more than 16.61 crore orders / judgments pertaining to these have been computerized (as on 01.02.2022). Open APIs have been introduced in 2020 to allow Central and State Governments and institutional litigants including local bodies to access NJDG data to improve pendency monitoring and compliance.

- iv. As part of eCourts project, 7 platforms have been created to provide real time information on case status, cause lists, judgements etc. to lawyers/Litigants through SMS Push and Pull (2,00,000 SMS sent daily), Email (2,50,000 sent daily), multilingual and tactile eCourts services Portal (35 lakh hits daily), JSC (Judicial Service centres) and Info Kiosks. In addition, Electronic Case Management Tools (ECMT) have been created with Mobile App for lawyers (total 72.20 lakh downloads till 3rd January 2022) and JustIS app for judges (16,961 downloads till 2nd February 2022). JustIS mobile app is now available in iOS as well.
- v. 17 Virtual Courts in 13 States/UTs have been operationalized to handle traffic challan cases. More than 1.24 crore cases have been handled by 17 virtual courts and in more than 21 lakhs (21,45,341) cases online fine of more than Rs. 221 crore has been realised till 02.02.2022.
- vi. The Supreme Court of India emerged as a global leader by conducting 1,81,909 hearings (till 08.01.2022 since the beginning of lockdown period). The High Courts (57,39,966 cases and Subordinate Courts (1,08,36,087 cases) have conducted 1.65 crore virtual hearings till 30.11.2021. VC facilities have also been enabled between 3240 court complexes and corresponding 1272 jails. Funds for 2506 VC cabins and VC equipment for 14,443 court rooms have also been released. 1500 VC licenses have been procured to promote virtual hearings. A sum of Rs. 7.60 crore has been released for procurement of 1732 Document Visualizers.
- vii. New e-filing system (version 3.0) has been rolled out for the electronic filing of legal papers with upgraded features like new dashboard including the options of my partners, Case Filing, Vakalatnama, pleading, e-payments, applications and case portfolio management. Draft eFiling rules have been formulated and circulated to the High Courts for adoption. A total of 17 high Courts have adopted the model rules of e-Filing as on 31.12.2021.
- viii. e-Filing of cases requires the option for electronic payment of fees which includes court fees, fines and penalties which are directly payable to the Consolidated Fund. Online payment of court fees, fines, penalties and judicial deposits has been initiated through <https://pay.ecourts.gov.in>. A total of 16 High Courts have implemented ePayments in their respective jurisdictions. The Court Fees Act has been amended in 23 High Courts till 31.12.2021.

- ix. eSewa Kendras have been rolled out to bridge the digital divide by providing e filing services to lawyers and litigants. Government has released Rs. 12.54 crore for setting up eSewa Kendras. As on 31.12.2021, 451 eSewa Kendra's have been made functional in District Courts under 25 High Courts.
- x. National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP) has been launched for technology enabled process serving and issuing of summons. It has currently been implemented in 26 States/ UTs.
- xi. A new "Judgment Search" portal has been started with features such as search by Bench, Case Type, Case Number, Year, Petitioner/ Respondent Name, Judge Name, Act, Section, Decision: From Date, To Date and Full Text Search. This facility is being provided free of cost to all.
- xii. To make effective use of database created through National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) and to make the information available to public 30 LED Display Message Sign Board System called Justice Clocks, have been installed in 20 High Courts.
- xiii. Towards creating widespread awareness and familiarization of eFiling and eCourts services and to address "skill divide", a manual on E filing and a Brochure on "How to register for E Filing" has been made available in English, Hindi and 12 regional languages for the use of the lawyers. A YouTube channel has been created in the name of the e Court services with video tutorials on e-filing. The eCommittee of the Supreme Court of India has conducted trainings and awareness programmes on the ICT services. These programmes have covered nearly 3,60,993 stakeholders, including High Court Judges, Judges of the District Judiciary, Court Staff, Master Trainers among Judges/DSA, Technical Staff of High Courts, and Advocates.

(c) and (d): National Legal Service Authority (NALSA) has been conducting internship programme for the law students. The objective of the internship programme is that law interns should get a comprehensive idea of the working of the legal services institutions and the legal services programmes with regional focus. The programme is a 3 weeks programme. The interns are required to spend about two weeks with the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) of their choice. After the period of two weeks with the DLSA, the interns are associated with the Delhi State Legal Services Authority and National Legal Services Authority to observe its working. During the period of their internship programmes, the law students visit Central jail or Sub Jail and interact with the inmates; visit Observation Home/Juvenile Justice Board/Child

Welfare Committee/Drug Rehabilitation Centre/District Courts including magisterial, Sessions and Civil courts and police stations; attend and participate in Legal Literacy/Legal awareness programme; watch the mediation proceedings as Mediation/ADR centres and Lok Adalat; etc. On successful completion of the internship, a certificate is issued to the law interns. In addition, Legal Aid Clinics are operational in various Law Colleges and Universities, wherein the students were provided opportunity to work under the guidance of the District Legal Services Authorities of the district. Through such clinics legal aid is promoted and awareness in the villages wherein the students are involved.

(e): With the objective to deliver “justice for all”, the Government has launched “Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice in India”(DISHA) that seeks to enrich the quality of Legal Aid particularly for the marginalised. Tele Law under DISHA seeks to connect the citizens with the Panel Lawyers to seek pre-litigation legal advice via Tele/video conferencing facilities available at the Common Service Centres (CSC) across India and directly through Citizens’ Tele- Law Mobile Application. To maximise the benefits of Tele-Law Outreach to the vulnerable sections of the society, law students in particular and students in general are being motivated to volunteer and register as Para Legal Volunteers on the citizens’ Tele-Law Mobile Application. Till 31.1.2022 more than 13.50 lakh beneficiaries have received advice under Tele-Law. Government has also launched the legal empowerment initiatives of Nyaya Bandhu to link persons eligible to avail free legal aid under Section 12 of Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 with pro bono lawyers. 3853 pro bono advocates and 1436 beneficiaries have been registered. Furthermore to inculcate a culture of pro bono amongst law students, Pro bono Clubs have been initiated wherein 29 Law Schools have been on boarded under the Nyaya Bandhu programme. National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) a statutory body, has taken various steps to strengthening and improving the delivery of legal services to the common citizens in the country, including creation of a web portal to file Applications through online for getting legal assistance; launched Legal Services Mobile App for Android and IOS version to facilitate citizens seeking legal assistance/advice and track their application; provide legal assistance at remand stage to suspects and arrestees; and provide Legal aid to convicts for filing appeals; etc.

The Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act, 1987 provides free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society including beneficiaries covered under Section 12 of

the Act to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities, and to organize Lok Adalats to secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunities.

To meet the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic, NALSA moved holding of Lok Adalats to the virtual platform known as E-Lok Adalat. The first E-Lok Adalat was held on 27.06.2020 and since then E-Lok Adalats have been organized in 28 States / UTs; wherein 66.93 lakh cases were taken up and 23.47 lakh cases were disposed of. During the period from 1st April 2020 to 31st December 2021, more than 1.41 crore pre-litigation and pending cases were disposed of in National Lok Adalats. Further, during the same period, 11.72 lakh pre-litigation and pending cases were settled through State Lok Adalats and 1.23 lakh pre-litigation cases were settled through Permanent Lok Adalats.
