

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

LOK SABHA

**STARRED QUESTION NO.*165
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 06TH DECEMBER, 2024**

PENDING CASES IN SUPREME COURT

***165. SHRI KULDEEP INDORA:**

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

- (a) whether despite implementation of numerous IT related initiatives by the Supreme Court to streamline its day-to-day operations, the pendency of cases continues to be on the rise;**
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;**
- (c) the number of cases pending in Supreme Court, bench-wise;**
- (d) the reasons for accumulation of these cases in Supreme Court; and**
- (e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for speedy disposal of cases in Supreme Court and various other Courts of the country?**

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) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *165 FOR ANSWER ON 06.12.2024 REGARDING 'PENDING CASES IN SUPREME COURT'.

(a) to (e): As per information provided by the Supreme Court, the number of cases pending before the Constitution Benches of the Supreme Court, as on date, are as under:

S.No.	Bench	No. of pending cases
1	Three-Judge Bench	167
2	Five-Judge Bench	19
3	Seven-Judge Bench	05
4	Nine-Judge Bench	02
5	Eleven-Judge Bench	NIL

*Rest of the cases are pending before Division Benches, Chamber-Judge and Registrar Court.

The disposal of above mentioned cases is within the exclusive domain of the judiciary. However, as per information provided by the Supreme Court, numerous IT initiatives to streamline the day-to-day operations have been carried out by the Supreme Court of India to handle the increasing pendency of cases. There is no single conspicuous reason for pendency of cases. It is a multi-faceted situation. The increase in population of the country, ease of access and awareness amongst the public has contributed to filing of fresh cases that are continuously increasing year after year. The pandemic which set in around 2020 has also contributed significantly in increasing the pendency in the last four years.

The Central Government has unwavering commitment towards speedy disposal of cases and reducing pendency as mandated under Article 21 of the Constitution. To this end, the Government has taken several initiatives to provide an ecosystem for faster disposal of cases by the judiciary:

- i. The National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms was set up 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 coordinated approach for phased liquidation of arrears and pendency in judicial administration, which, inter-alia, involves better infrastructure for courts including computerization, increase in sanctioned strength of District and Subordinate Courts, policy and legislative measures in the areas prone to excessive litigation and re-engineering of court procedure for quick disposal of cases and emphasis on human resource development.

- ii.** Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of 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 ease the life of various stakeholders including the litigants, thereby aiding justice delivery. As on date, Rs. 11571.57 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 23,590 as on 31.10.2024, and number of residential units has increased from 10,211 as on 30.06.2014 to 21,076 as on 31.10.2024, under this scheme.
- iii.** Further under the Phase I & II of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, information and communication technology (ICT) had been leveraged for IT enablement of District and Subordinate Courts. 18,735 District and Subordinate Courts were computerized till 2023. WAN connectivity has been provided to 99.5% of court complexes. Video conferencing facility has been enabled between 3,240 court complexes and 1,272 corresponding jails. As on 30.09.2024, 1375 eSewa Kendras in District Courts and 28 eSewa Kendras in High Courts have been made functional to bridge the digital divide by providing citizen centric services to lawyers and litigants. 28 virtual courts have been set up in 21 States/UTs. As on 30.09.2024, these courts have handled more than 5.82 crore cases and realized more than Rs. 634.74 crores in fines. The Cabinet on 13.09.2023 has approved eCourts Phase-III at an 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 enhanced 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 progressively more robust, easy and accessible to all the stakeholders.

- iv.** The Government has been regularly filling up vacancies of Judges in the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts. From 01.05.2014 to 21.11.2024, 64 Judges were appointed in the Supreme Court. 999 new Judges were appointed and 767 Additional Judges were made permanent in the High Courts during the same period. The sanctioned strength of Judges of the High Courts has been increased from 906 in May, 2014 to 1122 till now. The sanctioned and working strength of judicial officers in District and Subordinate Courts has increased as under:

As on	Sanctioned Strength	Working Strength
31.12.2013	19,518	15,115
30.11.2024	25,727	20,480

However, filling up of vacancies in District and Subordinate judiciary falls within the domain of the State Governments and High Courts concerned.

- v.** 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.
- vi.** Under the aegis of the Fourteenth Finance Commission, the Fast Track Courts have been established for dealing with cases of heinous crimes; cases involving senior citizens, women, children, etc. As on 30.09.2024, 862 Fast Track Courts are functional for handling 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 on 30.09.2024, 750 FTSCs including 408 exclusive POCSO (ePOCSO) Courts are functional in 30 States/UTs across the country which have disposed of more than 2,81,000 cases.

- vii.** With a view to reduce pendency and unclogging of the courts, the Government has 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.
- viii.** Alternate Dispute Resolution methods have been promoted whole heartedly. Accordingly, the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 was amended in 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.

Under the Commercial Courts Act, 2015, there is provision for case management hearing which provides for an efficient, effective and purposeful judicial management of a case so as to achieve a timely and qualitative resolution of a dispute. It assists in early identification of disputed issues of fact and law, establishment of procedural calendar for the life of the case and the exploration of possibilities of the resolution of the dispute.

Another novel feature introduced for the commercial courts is the system of color banding which limits the number of adjournments that can be granted in any commercial matter to three and alerts the judges about listing of the cases in accordance with their stage of pendency.

- ix.** 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 cases disposed of in National Lok Adalats during the last four years are as under: -

Years	Pre-litigation Cases	Pending Cases	Grand Total
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 09.11.24)	6,46,35,285	1,26,34,580	7,72,69,865
Total	17,38,89,774	4,34,36,355	21,73,26,129

- x. The Government launched the Tele-Law programme in 2017, which provides 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 Panchayats and through Tele-Law mobile App.

*Percentage Wise break-up of Tele – Law Data

Category	Cases Registered	% Wise Break Up	Advice Enabled	% Wise Break Up
Gender Wise				
Female	4014611	39.12	3963499	39.06
Male	6247980	60.88	6183286	60.94
Caste Category Wise				
General	2387060	23.26	2352649	23.19
OBC	3252495	31.69	3213067	31.67
SC	3246025	31.63	3215657	31.68
ST	1377011	13.42	1366312	13.47
Total	10262591		10146785	

*Data as on 31-10-2024.

- xi. Efforts have been made to institutionalize pro bono culture and pro bono lawyering in 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 are also available on UMANG Platform. Pro Bono Panel of advocates has been initiated in 23 High Courts at the State level. Pro Bono Clubs have been started in 109 Laws Schools to instill Pro Bono culture in budding lawyers.
