

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:332

ANSWERED ON:12.12.2002

JUDICIAL REFORMS

ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN;SHIVAJI MANE

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

- (a) whether there is an urgent need to bring about judicial reforms in the country to provide speedy and easily accessible justice to the poor;
- (b) if so, the efforts made by the Government in this regard;
- (c) if not, the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (d) the benefits of the free legal aid system for the poor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. JANA KRISHNAMURTHY):

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government has taken various steps to provide speedy and easily accessible justice to all including the poor. Judicial reforms are an ongoing and continuous process. Judicial Reforms include amendments to laws providing for time limits at various stages of proceedings, restrictions on adjournments, prompt delivery of judgments, setting up of new courts like Fast Track Courts and the use of information technology in courts to speed up disposal of cases.

The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Act, 1999 and 2002, inter-alia, contain provisions regarding fixing of time limits at various stages of a suit, granting of not more than three adjournments to a party to a suit, recording of evidence by the commissioner, delivery of judgement within 60 days after hearing of the case. Various other measures have been taken by the Government for the speedy disposal of cases, like filling up of vacancies of judges, increase in the number of posts of Judges/Judicial Officers, establishment of Special Courts/Tribunals, appointment of Special Judicial/ metropolitan Magistrates, etc.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 contains provisions for free legal services to the poor. According to the resolution adopted in the first annual meet of State Legal Services Authorities held under the aegis of the National Legal Services Authority, every person whose annual income does not exceed Rs. 25,000 is eligible for free legal aid in respect of cases before High Courts Subordinate thereto. In cases before the Supreme Court, the limit is Rs. 50,000. Limitation as to the income does not apply in case of persons belonging to Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes, women, children, handicapped etc. as per provisions of the Act. Upto 30.6.2002, about 1,39,172 Lok Adalats have been held in different parts of the country where about 1.42 crore cases have been settled. In about 73 Lakh Motor Vehicles Accident Claims cases, compensation amounting to over Rs. 3615.93 crores has been awarded. As on 30.6.2002, about 43.6P lakh persons have been benefitted through legal Aid and Advice throughout the country.