

(a) whether Government has decided to set up 5000 Gram Nyayalayas to deal with the pending cases in rural areas; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the measures being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) and (b) The Central Government has enacted the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 on 07.01.2009 which enables the State Governments to establish one or more Gram Nyayalayas for every Panchayat at intermediate level to cater to specified Civil and Criminal cases in the rural areas. The Gram Nyayalayas Act was brought into force with effect from October 2, 2009. Under the scheme, over 5000 Gram Nyayalayas are likely to be set up across the country.

While concerned State Governments had been requested in this regard to set up Gram Nyayalayas in their respective States, the Central Government will provide financial assistance to the States for establishing the Gram Nyayalayas and for operating the same during the first three years by bearing the non-recurring cost of establishment of Gram Nyayalayas subject to a ceiling of Rs. 18.00 lakhs per Gram Nyayalaya and 50% of Rs. 6.40 lakhs per annum as recurring cost of one Gram Nyayalaya for the first three years.

Banning criminals and corrupt persons from elections

1128. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL:

SHRI N.K. SINGH:

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

(a) whether the Election Commission has made a proposal which was backed by the second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) to ban persons facing serious criminal and corruption charges from contesting polls;

(b) if so, the present status thereof;

(c) whether the Prime Minister has also assured that the recommendations made by ARC would be considered;

(d) if so, the details of proposals of Election Commission and ARC ignored by Government; and

(e) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) to (e) The Election Commission of India had forwarded a set of 22 proposals on Electoral Reforms in July, 2004 which *inter alia* included the proposal on criminalization in politics which was backed by the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) to ban persons facing serious criminal and corruption charges from contesting poll.

While the said proposals of the Election Commission of India on electoral reforms were under consideration of the Department Related Parliamentary Stranding Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, the Chief Election Commissioner wrote to the

Hon'ble Minister of Law and Justice on the 27th October, 2006 about the danger of certain persons becoming Members of Parliament or of State Legislatures, suggesting amendments in the Representation of the People Act, 1951 to disqualify any persons accused of an offence punishable by imprisonment for five years or more, from contesting elections even when trial is pending, provided charges have been framed against them by a competent court. The Committee in its Eighteenth Report on the subject inter alia disagreed with the aforesaid proposal as it is a major departure from the law of the land that a person is not guilty until he is convicted by the highest court of the land. The Committee, however, recommended that proclaimed absconders under section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 be disqualified from contesting polls. The recommendation of the Committee has been examined in Legislative Department. Thereafter, the matter was further examined in consultation with the concerned Ministries and it has been decided not to pursue the matter at this juncture.

Awareness of Gram Nyayalayas

1129. SHRI ISHWAR SINGH:

SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

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

(a) whether Government has decided to make the Gram Nyayalayas functional from 2 October, 2009 to provide citizens access to justice at their door steps;

(b) if so, whether the citizens residing in rural areas and villages would be benefited from Gram Nyayalayas;

(c) whether the citizens in rural areas have been given proper awareness of Gram Nyayalayas; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR. M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) to (d) The Central Government notified the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 to come into force *w.e.f.* 2.10.2009. This was also widely advertised in the print media including the vernacular press. A few States have begun the operation with Gram Nyayalayas functioning in some districts at the intermediate Panchayat level serving the rural areas and villages.

Grant of LTC to judges

1130. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI:

SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that judges of Supreme Court and High Courts are availing of the Leave Travel Concession twice a year, instead of usual prevalent practice of once in two years;