

Committees on judicial reforms

1902. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of committees set up to look into the issues concerning judicial reforms alongwith summary of recommendations and the action taken and the effect of implementation of such recommendations;

(b) whether there are any major areas of reform yet to be done in the judiciary and if so, what is the initiative taken or being taken; and

(c) whether there is a way out to reduce the pendency of cases in judiciary drastically and fix time-frame for disposal of cases?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) to (c) While the Government had set up Committees to look into specific issues such reduction of arrears of cases, the Government has not set up any Committee to look into the issues concerning judicial reforms. Recently, the Government has, in principle, decided to set up a 'National Mission for Delivery of Justice and Legal Reforms' with a view to reduce pendency of cases in the courts from an average of 15 years to an average of three years by 2012.

As a major reform initiative to bring justice at the grass roots level and for the purpose of providing affordable and speedy justice, the Government has enacted the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 to enable 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 rural areas.

Government is also implementing various Schemes to augment the financial resources of the States for the development of infrastructure facilities for the judiciary and for the Computerisation of the District and Subordinate Courts so as to facilitate better justice delivery system of justice.

Entry level test for legal practice

1903. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to make it mandatory for law graduates to clear an entry level test to get a license to practise law;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the proposals formulated by his Ministry to raise the standard of legal education and legal profession in the country in line with international norms?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) and (b) The Bar Council of India, a statutory body, has a proposal to conduct Bar Entry test. This matter is before the Supreme Court of India vide SLP (Civil) No.22337 of 2008 – Bar Council of India Vs. Bonnie Foi Law College.

(c) The Bar Council of India has revised the curriculums and framed new Rules of Legal Education and it is at par with international standard which has come into effect from the Session 2009-10 onwards.

Entry of foreign law firms

1904. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether, in a recent judgment, Bombay High Court has barred foreign law firms operating in India from carrying on non-litigious practices unless they follow Advocates Act, 1961;

(b) whether the High Court has also directed Government to quickly decide whether foreign law firms can operate in the country as this issue has been pending with Government for more than 15 years;

(c) whether the High Court has also observed that RBI was not justified in granting the foreign law firms permission to open liaison office as it violated the provisions of the Advocates Act, 1961; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) Yes, Sir. The foreign law firms are bound to follow the provisions of the Advocates Act, 1961 to practice in non-litigious matters in India.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The High Court has held that the RBI was not justified in granting the permission to open liaison offices in India under section 29 of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1973.

(d) The Government is studying the implications of the said judgment in consultation with the Bar Council of India and other stake holders.

Benches of High Court and Supreme Court

†1905 SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria for setting up benches of Supreme Court and High Courts at different places;

(b) whether Government is aware that an agitation to have benches set up at other places, is going on in several States;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether agitation is going on at various places of Orissa, to have a bench of the High Court at other places;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.