

(e) the other far-reaching reforms that are proposed to be made to dispense justice to the needy?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a), (b) and (e) With a view to address the huge backlog and pendency of cases in courts, the Government has set up a National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms to achieve 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*, involve better infrastructure for courts including computerisation, increase in strength of subordinate judiciary, policy and legislative measures in the areas prone to excessive litigation, re-engineering of court procedure for quick disposal of cases and emphasis on human resource development. The judiciary has joined in this endeavour of the Government by setting up of National Court Management System to address issues not only of case and court management but also setting standards for measuring performance of the courts and a national system of judicial statistics in the country.

The Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 has been enacted for the purpose of providing access to justice to the citizens at their door steps and to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of social, economic or other disabilities. So far 168 Gram Nyayalayas have been notified by seven States.

A sum of Rs. 5,000 crore has been awarded to the State Governments by the 13th Finance Commission for improving delivery of justice through a number of initiatives which, *inter-alia*, include setting up of special courts, promoting Alternative Dispute Redressal mechanism, investment in human resource management and empowering marginalised sections of society for access to justice.

(c) and (d) There is no proposal to raise the retirement age of judges in the Supreme Court.

Disposal of pending cases

†391. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether a large number of cases are still pending despite various steps like establishment of Fast Track Courts and Village Courts being taken by Government;

(b) if so, the number of the pending cases disposed of by Fast Track Courts and Village Courts since their establishment along with the number of pending cases, as on date.

(c) whether Government proposes to establish more courts and appoint more judges in the existing courts for quick disposal of the pending cases; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (d) As per the information made available by the High Courts, 2.69 crore cases were pending in subordinate courts as on 31.12.2011. Fast Track Courts were set up on the recommendation of Eleventh Finance Commission, and 1192 Fast Track Courts were functioning in the country as on 31.03.2011. These Fast Track Courts have disposed a total of 32.92 lakhs cases, out of 38.98 lakh cases transferred to them. The scheme of the Fast Track Courts has been discontinued with effect from 31.03.2011. However, the State Governments can continue the Fast Track Courts, from out of their own funds, if they so desire.

The Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 has come into operation with effect from 02nd October, 2009. Out of 168 Gram Nyayalayas notified by seven State Governments, 151 are functional at present.

The research study undertaken by Indian Law Institute (ILI) in the States of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan where majority of functional Gram Nyayalayas are located has found that number of cases disposed of by Gram Nyayalayas are not many at present and they have not made much difference to the overall pendency of cases in subordinate courts.

Under the constitutional provisions, primary responsibility to set up subordinate courts rests with the respective State Governments. However, the Advisory Council of National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms has passed a Resolution at a meeting held on 15th May 2012 *inter-alia* recommending that the number of subordinate courts in the country would need to be increased to double the present number in the next five years in a gradual manner. The recommendations of the Advisory Council have been forwarded to State Governments/High Courts for appropriate action at their end.