

- (d) whether ECI has demanded an independent secretariat for itself;
- (e) the reasons given by ECI for these demands;
- (f) the stand taken by the Ministry on these demands along with the reasons therefor; and
- (g) if the Ministry has made no decision so far, by when it is likely to decide on these demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): (a) Sir, as per records available no such proposal has been received.

(b) to (g) Question does not arise.

Reservation for women in legislatures and Urban Local Bodies

647. SHRI DILIPBHAI PANDYA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of steps taken by Government for consideration of a bill providing 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and in State Assemblies; and
- (b) the steps taken in the past one year to provide for 50 per cent reservation for women in the Urban Local Bodies, if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): (a) It has been the endeavor of the Government to provide for reservation of one-third seats for women in the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies. The issue involved needs careful consideration on the basis of consensus among all political parties before a Bill for amendment in the Constitution is brought before Parliament.

(b) The matter to provide 50% reservation for women in Urban Local Bodies is under consideration of the Government.

Vacancies in High Courts

648. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that there are huge vacancies in various State High Courts;
- (b) if so, the details of the vacancies existing in various States, including the State of Tamil Nadu; and

(c) the time-frame, if any, fixed by Government to fill up those vacancies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): (a) and (b) Details indicating existing vacancies in High Court-wise including High Court of Madras as on 20.7.2016 are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(c) Filling up of the vacancies in the High Courts is a continuous process, as it requires consultation and approval from various Constitutional Authorities. While every effort is made to fill up the existing vacancies expeditiously, vacancies do keep on arising on account of retirement, resignation or elevation of Judges and increase in Judge strength. After striking down the constitutional validity of the Constitution (Ninety-Ninth Amendment) Act, 2014 and the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014, the Supreme Court passed an order regarding improving the Collegium System in December, 2015 by supplementing the existing Memorandum of Procedure (MoP). As the process was likely to take some time, at the initiative of the Government of India, the matter was taken up with the Supreme Court and the process of appointment of Judges has been resumed. During 2016, 110 Additional Judges have been made Permanent and 52 fresh appointment of Judges have been made.

Statement

Details indicating existing vacancies in High Courts

Sl. No.	Name of the Court	Vacancies as on 20.07.2016
A.	High Courts	
1.	Allahabad	83
2.	High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad	36
3.	Bombay	30
4.	Calcutta	31
5.	Chhattisgarh	14
6.	Delhi	25
7.	Gauhati	11
8.	Gujarat	19
9.	Himachal Pradesh	02
10.	Jammu and Kashmir	08
11.	Jharkhand	11
12.	Karnataka	35

Sl. No.	Name of the Court	Vacancies as on 20.07.2016
13.	Kerala	14
14.	Madhya Pradesh	19
15.	Madras	37
16.	Manipur	01
17.	Meghalaya	01
18.	Odisha	08
19.	Patna	26
20.	Punjab and Haryana	39
21.	Rajasthan	19
22.	Sikkim	01
23.	Tripura	0
24.	Uttarakhand	05
TOTAL		475

Simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies

649. SHRIMATI WANSUK SYIEM: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is examining the feasibility of conducting assembly and Lok Sabha polls simultaneously on the basis of the opinion of Central Election Commission that the proposal is not insurmountable;

(b) whether apart from provisioning additional funds of around ₹ 10,000 crore for procuring additional EVMs and Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) Systems, there is a need for a constitutional amendment to make it possible to synchronise the elections both in States and the Lok Sabha; and

(c) whether holding both elections together will provide political parties to dovetail the local/regional issues with the policies at the Centre?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): (a) to (c) The matter regarding conduct of simultaneous election for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies was examined by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice. The Committee in its 79th Report has given certain recommendations which are under examination of the Government.