

(b) and (c) As per the Constitutional framework, the selection and appointment of judges in subordinate courts is the responsibility of State Governments and the High Courts concerned. In so far as recruitment of judicial officers in the States is concerned, respective High Courts do it in certain States, whereas the High Courts do it in consultation with the State Public Service Commissions in other States.

Filling up of vacancies in the Supreme Court and the High Courts is a continuous and collaborative process between the Executive and the Judiciary. It requires consultation and approval from various Constitutional Authorities. Initiation of proposal for appointment of Judges in the Supreme Court vests with the Chief Justice of India, while initiation of proposals for appointment of Judges in the High Courts vests with the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court. While every effort is made to fill up the existing vacancies expeditiously, vacancies in High Courts keep on arising on account of retirement, resignation or elevation of Judges (to the Supreme Court) and also due to increase in the strength of Judges.

From 01.01.2014 to 26.12.2018, 27 Judges were appointed in Supreme Court. 446 new Judges were appointed and 379 Additional Judges were made permanent in the High Courts. Sanctioned strength of Judges of High Courts has been increased from 906 in May, 2014 to 1079 currently. Sanctioned and working strength of Judicial Officers in District and Subordinate Courts has been increased as follows:—

As on	Sanctioned Strength	Working Strength
31.12.2013	19,518	15,115
30.09.2018	22,644	17,509

Minister of Law and Justice *vide* letter dated 14th August, 2018 has written to the Chief Justices of High Courts and Chief Ministers of States to monitor the status of vacancies in the district and subordinate courts regularly and to ensure proper coordination with the State Public Service Commission so that the examination and the interviews are conducted in accordance with the time schedule prescribed by the Supreme Court in the Malik Mazhar Sultan case.

Representation of SC/ST Judges

1863. DR. L. HANUMANTHAIAH: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of SC/ST lawyers appointed in Attorney-General panels along with the details thereof;

(b) after the Collegium system came into force, how many Collegiums had representation of SC/ST Judges along with the details thereof; and

(c) the number of appointments made excluding SCs/STs on Collegium along with the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): (a) There is no panel by the name "Attorney General panels". There is only one post of Attorney General for India under Article 76 of the Constitution of India. This article does not provide for reservation for any caste or class of person.

(b) and (c) Appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts is made under Article 124 and 217 of the Constitution of India respectively. These Articles do not provide for reservation for any caste or class of person. Hence, no caste-wise data is maintained by the Government.

Failure in filling vacancies in lower courts

1864. SHRI MAJEED MEMON: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for failure to fulfil vacancies of lower courts, which is standing at staggering 5000 plus, inspite of timelimit of 153 days for a two-tier recruitment process and 273 days for a three-tier process prescribed by the Supreme Court; and

(b) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): (a) and (b) As per the Constitutional framework, the selection and appointment of judges in subordinate courts is the responsibility of the High Courts and State Governments concerned. In so far as recruitment of judicial officers in the States is concerned, in certain States recruitment is done by the High Courts, whereas in other States, the recruitment is done by High Courts in consultation with State Public Service Commission.

During the Chief Justice's Conference held in 2016 it was, *inter alia*, resolved that the Chief Justices shall take effective steps in coordination with the State Governments to ensure an increase in the cadre strength of the District and Subordinate Courts commensurate with the needs of their States in compliance with the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Brij Mohan Lal *versus* Union of India, as well as to ensure compliance with the time schedule and directions laid down in the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Malik Mazhar Sultan case (2006). It was also