

vacancies keep on arising on account of retirement, resignation or elevation of Judges. Due to combined efforts of Government and Judiciary, 126 Judges in 2016, 115 Judges in 2017, 108 Judges in 2018 and 66 Judges in 2019 (as on 02.12.2019) have been appointed in High Courts.

(c) As regards physical infrastructure, the Union Government has been administering the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for District and Subordinate Judiciary in order to augment the resources of State Governments in this regard in association with the States/UT Governments. As on date, ₹ 7,453.10 crores have been released since the inception of the CSS in 1993-94. Out of this, ₹ 4,008.80 crores (which is 53.79% of the Total amount released till date) have been released to the States and UTs since April, 2014. Under the CSS, the number of court halls has increased from 15,818 as on 30.06.2014 to 19,423 as on 02.12.2019 under this scheme. In addition, 2,826 court halls are under construction. As on 02.12.2019, the sanctioned strength of Judicial Officers in the District and Subordinate Judiciary is 23,567 and working strength is 18,120. Thus, compared with the sanctioned strength, there is a shortfall of 4,144 court halls (including court halls under construction, the shortfall is 1,318 court halls). However, compared with the working strength, there is an excess of 1,303 (including court halls under construction, the excess is 4,129 court halls).

SC/ST Judges in Supreme Court

2020. SHRI RONALD SAPA TLAU: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is eager to provide maximum accommodation to the deserving/qualified minority groups *i.e.* SCs/STs etc. even in high places like the Supreme Court;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the present number of Supreme Court Judges belonging to the SCs/STs; and

(d) how many such posts are lying vacant in Supreme Court as on date?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (d) Appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court is made under Article 124 of the Constitution which does not provide for reservation for any caste or class of persons. Therefore, no caste or class-wise data of Judges is maintained. However, the Government is committed to

social diversity in the appointment of Judges in the Supreme Court and makes such request to the High Courts from time to time.

As per the Memorandum of Procedure the initiation of proposal for appointment of Judges of Supreme Court vests with the Chief Justice of India. The Government considers only those names for appointment as Judges of Supreme Court, which are recommended by the Chief Justice of India/Supreme Court Collegium. As on 01.12.2019, out of sanctioned strength of 34 Judges in Supreme Court, there is a working strength of 33 Judges, leaving one vacancy.

Fast Track Courts in Andhra Pradesh

2021. SHRI KANAKAMEDALA RAVINDRAKUMAR: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 14th Finance Commission has urged the State Government to use the additional fiscal space provided by the Commission in tax devolution from 32 per cent to 42 per cent to set up Fast Track Courts across the country including the State of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government/State Governments has set up Fast Track Courts (FTCs) pursuant to this;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (e) Yes Sir. The Union of India proposed setting up of 1800 FTCs at a Total cost of ₹ 4144 crore during the period of 2015-2020, in its memorandum to the 14th Finance Commission. The Commission endorsed the proposal and urged the State Government to use the additional fiscal space provided by the Commission in the tax devolution from 32% to 42% to meet the requirements. Further the Union Government has also urged the State Governments to allocate funds for the activities mentioned in the 14th Finance Commission recommendation including setting up of FTCs from their State budgets from the financial year 2015-16 onwards. The number of FTCs and fund proposed, State-wise, is given in the Statement-I (*See below*). The present status of number of Fast Track Courts functional, State-wise made available, by the various High Courts is given in the Statement-II.