

Judicial Infrastructure

Adequacy of Judicial Infrastructure is a pre-requisite for reduction of pendency and backlog of cases in Courts. The primary responsibility of infrastructure development for the subordinate judiciary rests with the State Governments. The Central Government augments the resources of the State Governments by releasing financial assistance under a centrally sponsored scheme for the development of judicial infrastructure. The scheme has been in place since 1993-94, and was revised in 2011. It covers the construction of court buildings and residential accommodation of judicial officers. As of March, 2016, the Central Government had released an amount of Rs. 3,694 crore to the State Governments and UT administrations under the revised funding pattern effective from 2011-2012. This represents a significant increase over the sum of Rs. 1,245 crore that was provided by the Central Government in the initial phase of the scheme from 1993-2011. With higher devolution of funds to the State Governments on the recommendations of Fourteenth Finance Commission, the fund sharing pattern under the Scheme has been further revised to 60 :40 between Central and State Governments with effect from 2015-16. For States in the North Eastern Region and Himalayan States, it has been kept at 90:10.

As per information collected from High Courts as of December 31, 2015, there were 16,513 court halls / court rooms available for District and Subordinate Courts in the country. In addition, 2,447 court halls / court rooms were under construction. Comparing these figures with the working strength of 16,070 judges / judicial officers reported by High Courts as of December, 2015, adequate court rooms / court halls are available for the current strength of judicial manpower. Focus is now to match the availability of court rooms / court halls with the sanctioned strength of judicial officers / judges in District and Subordinate Courts. Considerable progress has also been made with regard to availability of residential units for judicial officers in District and Subordinate Courts. As of December, 2015, 14,420 residential units were available for Subordinate Courts and 1,868 residential units were under construction.

Provision of adequate judicial infrastructure is closely connected with the need for proper budgetary planning for the judiciary. In the Chief Justices' Conference held in April, 2016 it was decided that The Chief Justices must adopt proactive steps to (a) identify the infrastructural needs of the State Judiciary by developing suitable five year and annual action plans for the future; (b) ensure the completion of under construction projects pending for three or more years on a mission mode basis; (c) ensure timely completion of projects for the construction of court complexes and residential accommodation, particularly for Judges in the District Judiciary; (d) constitute a Committee of three Judges of the High Court of which Chief Secretary and the Secretaries of the Departments of Finance, Public Works and Law be co-opted as Members to closely monitor the timely completion of projects and to facilitate a proper coordination between the officials at the district level and the decision-making authorities of the State Government including the Chief Secretaries, and Secretaries in the Departments of Finance, Public Works and Law; (e) constitute, at the district level, Committees consisting of the District Judges and Portfolio Judges in-charge of the

districts; (f) create a mechanism for monthly reporting and monitoring of work and the proper utilization of allocated funds to ensure the proper and complete utilisation of funds. It was further resolved that on-line updation of progress made in creating and upgrading of infrastructure by all High Courts be adopted.
