

File No. N-9/2/2013-NM (e-1982)
Government of India
Department of Justice
Ministry of Law and Justice

Jaisalmer House, 26-Mansingh Road,
New Delhi – 110011
Date: 13th August, 2024

Subject: Call for Proposals under “Scheme for Action Research and Studies on Judicial Reforms” of Department of Justice-reg.

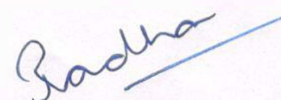
The National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms was set up by the Government to achieve the twin goals of (i) increasing access by reducing delays and arrears; and (ii) enhancing accountability through structural changes and by setting performance standards and capacities.

2. With a view to involve Judicial Academies, Law Universities, Indian Institutes of Management/Technology and reputed Institutions/Organizations working in the field of justice delivery, legal research and judicial reforms for achieving the objectives of the National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms, the Department formulated “Scheme of Action Research and Studies on Judicial Reforms”. Recently, we have added emergent areas of research to the list of topics for studies under the said Scheme, as enclosed.

3. All projects sanctioned under the said Scheme are subject to the approval of Project Sanctioning Committee (PSC) of Scheme. The “Guidelines of the Scheme” and “Proforma” for submitting proposals is available at <https://doj.gov.in/scheme-for-action-research-and-studies-on-judicial-reforms-5/> including further information regarding the said Scheme for Action Research.

4. Department of Justice invites proposals for undertaking research on the indicated topic(s) from aforementioned esteemed institutions. The proposals, as per the prescribed format, may please be sent to the undersigned for consideration by the Project Sanctioning Committee **latest by 15th September, 2024**. In case of any further queries, kindly contact the undersigned.

Enclosed: List of topics/areas



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“List of Topics/Areas” for inviting new research proposals under “Scheme for Action Research and Studies on Judicial Reforms”, Department of Justice

- i. **Assessment studies on Commercial Courts in India**
The Dedicated and Designated Commercial Courts were created as a specialized forum for disposal of commercial disputes of a specified value as per The Commercial Courts Act, 2015 mandate. Reforms like establishment of Commercial Courts were envisioned to help reduce the time taken to resolve commercial cases. The Department is seeking proposals to assess the performance of such Courts based on the following parameters:
- Assessment study of Dedicated/Designated Commercial Courts in the country
 - Analytical study on performance, adherence to timelines for disposal of cases in Commercial Courts.
 - Statistical analysis of commercial case disposal timelines in India with a view to suggest best practices being followed by other jurisdictions; corrective measures required thereof.
 - Suggestions for steps to be taken for effective and expeditious enforcement of decree/judgement time taken for civil/commercial cases.
- ii. **Pilot Study for simplification and rationalising of High Court Rules for achieving uniformity of Court Rules across courts**
Each High Court under the Constitutional mandate of Article 227 has been empowered to make and issue general rules and prescribe forms for regulating the practice and proceedings of such courts. This includes rules related to service process like summons, filing and verification of documents and evidence in cases. Naturally, these rules and procedures have a direct impact of the pace of progress of cases in courts. For onboarding the legal and digital reforms in the courts of the future, it is imperative to rationalize, simplify and harmonise courts rules and procedures for enabling of features like e-Filing, e-Summons and e-Notifications and going forwards e-documents as admissible evidence etc. The proposed study can be taken up with select High Courts with a view to achieve the following:
- Draw out common elements in the Court rules and procedures that can be harmonised across the board to achieve uniformity
 - Suggestions for amending the Rules where the same are required to be rationalised for expediting the case proceedings.
- iii. **Review of Centrally Sponsored Scheme(CSS) for Judicial Infrastructure, Department of Justice**
Conduct a study as to the relevance of the existing five components viz. Court Halls, Residential Units, Lawyers' Halls, Toilet Complex and Digital Computer room of CSS for Judicial Infrastructure which is due for review in 2025-26 and to study whether new relevant components should be included in the revised guidelines.

iv. Issues related to Gram Nyayalayas Scheme, Department of Justice

Examine the issue of overlapping jurisdiction of the Gram Nyayalayas and the local courts in the States and the legal hassles in the successful implementation of the Gram Nyayalayas Scheme.

v. Need to develop Access to Justice Index in the Indian context

Access to Justice is an essential metric to evaluate how easily and in speedy manner the citizens in India can seek, access and afford the legal services and finally obtain justice. Framing an index on access to justice is not merely a technical exercise but a step forward to ensure an equitable and effective justice system wherein access to justice could be ensured as a fundamental right to all. The need is felt:

- To identify the services/areas/technology that could be listed under the access to justice parameters
- To set benchmarks and identify key performance indicators and data points under each service to assess quality of those legal services/areas
- To assess the quality and competencies of stakeholders/service providers and
- To analyze India's international commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 16 and other international conventions.

vi. Effectiveness of Tele-Law program in increasing Access to Justice

- How has Tele-Law impacted the accessibility of legal services in rural and remote areas?
- What are the primary challenges faced in the implementation of the Tele-Law program and how can they be addressed?
- What are the satisfaction levels and outcomes for users who have accessed legal services through Tele-Law?
- How has the Tele-Law program affected marginalised communities such as women, children, SC/ST and other disadvantaged groups?
- Technology and Infrastructure Assessment during the implementation of the Tele-Law program
- How cost-effective is the Tele-law program compared to other legal aid services across India?
- How well prepared and trained are field functionaries and legal professionals for delivering their services through Tele-Law platform?
- How effective is the need to have door to door delivery of legal services through the Tele-law platform with support from Nyaya Sahayak?

vii. Empirical study of cross-sectoral datasets with Tele-Law data and identification of best practices

Tele-Law raw data can be analysed to identify a trend and projection for future demand of the program through a predictive analysis. A qualitative analysis could be done of the best practices so far and how these practices can be further refined to accelerate program's growth and impact. A cross-analysis study of the Tele-Law data and with the other datasets on crime rates, Lok Adalat data, NALSA/SLSA's data. Through such analysis, it is aimed to find out:

- How effective the Tele-Law program in contributing in reduction of legal disputes/conflicts and issues in its target areas or the availability of remote legal assistance has led to a decrease in legal disputes/conflicts.

- Study will also assess the possible synergy between Tele-law and other legal in India. Can Tele-law program be integrated with other existing legal services/aid.

viii. Comprehensive evaluation of Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) including exclusive POCSO Courts

The aim of this study would be to assess whether FTSCs have been able to achieve the desired objective of delivering justice swiftly and speedily in a time bound manner. It will evaluate case disposal timelines, operational challenges and compare FTSCs with regular courts in terms of conviction rates and time taken for trial of cases. The study should also analyse progress made by these court from year to year since their inception, availability of Judicial Officers/Staff and infrastructure facilities, cost factors and the overall impact of these courts. The study will suggest improvements in the functioning of these courts, compile best practices and evaluate the need for establishment of additional courts to enhance the justice delivery system.

ix. Functionality and Impact Assessment of Special Courts for Elected MPs/MLAs

Following the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Writ Petition (Civil) 699.2016 (*Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay vs. Union of India & Anr.*) the Union Government established 12 Special Courts in 11 States for the expeditious trial and disposal of criminal cases involving elected MPs/MLAs. As of May, 2024, 10 Special Courts are functional in 9 States. This study should conduct a comprehensive evaluation of these Special Courts to assess their functionality, efficacy and overall impact in view of the fact that their performance is monitored by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and these are partly funded by the Government of India.

x. Review and Simplification of the Family Courts Act, 1984

This study should comprehensively review the Family Courts Act, 1984 and assess whether Family Courts Act, 1984 needs to be simplified.

xi. Study on document defects and AI- powered solution for streamlined processing

xii. Prototype of a generative AI-based Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) for automated recommendation of Motor Accident Claims Tribunals (MACT) cases under The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988
