HIGH COURT OF DELHI
Shershah Road, New Delhi

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No. DHC/Gaz.-IB/G-3/Misc./2025 Dated: 21/04/25

From

The Registrar General,
High Court of Delhi,
New Delhi.

To

1. The Principal District & Sessions Judge (Headquarters), Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi.
2. The Principal District & Sessions Judge, New Delhi District, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi.
3. The Principal District & Sessions Judge, South-West District, Dwarka Courts, New Delhi.
4. The Principal District & Sessions Judge, West District, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi.
5. The Principal District & Sessions Judge, East District, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi.
6. The Principal District & Sessions Judge, South District, Saket Courts, New Delhi.
7. The Principal District & Sessions Judge, Shahdara District, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi.
8. The Principal District & Sessions Judge, North-West District, Rohini Courts, New Delhi.
9. The Principal District & Sessions Judge-cum-Special Judge (PC Act) (CBI), Rouse Avenue Court Complex, New Delhi.
10. The Principal District & Sessions Judge, South-East District, Saket Courts, New Delhi.
11. The Principal District & Sessions Judge, North District, Rohini Courts, New Delhi.
12. The Principal District & Sessions Judge, North-East District, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi.
13. The Principal Judge, Family Court (HQs), Dwarka Courts, New Delhi.
14. The Director, Delhi Judicial Academy, Sector-14, Dwarka, Delhi.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to forward herewith an email dated 28.03.2025 alongwith its enclosure, received from the Director cum Additional Registrar, Centre for Research and Planning, Supreme Court of India, with the request to kindly circulate the report of the "National Conference on Addressing Issues faced by the State Judiciary" (held on 01.02.2025) amongst all the Judicial Officers working under your respective control.

[redacted] OIC Genl. Br. for circulation

Yours Sincerely,

(Vinay Sharma)
Deputy Registrar (Gazette-IB)
for Registrar General

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL DISTRICT & SESSIONS JUDGE: ROHINI COURTS, DELHI

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Copy forwarded, alongwith its enclosures **(through electronic mode)** for information & necessary action, to :-

1. All Ld. Judicial Officers posted at **North-West & North District**, Rohini Courts, Delhi
2. The Dealing Official, Computer Branch, Rohini Courts for uploading the same on WEBSITE (through e-mail of Ld. Judicial Officers also).

NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON ADDRESSING ISSUES FACED BY THE STATE JUDICIARY

01 FEBRUARY 2025



NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON ADDRESSING ISSUES FACED BY THE STATE JUDICIARY

01 FEBRUARY 2025

Acknowledgements

It is with great pleasure that we present this comprehensive Report on the 'National Conference on Addressing Issues faced by the State Judiciary', which brought together Hon'ble Judges of the Supreme Court of India and different High Courts as well as esteemed members of the District Judiciary under one roof, to share the wealth of their knowledge, experiences, and insights. The Conference was a resounding success, with all the participants engaging in thought-provoking discussions, debates, and deliberations on critical issues affecting the State judiciary, especially the District Judiciary. The event provided a unique platform for Judges and Judicial Officers from different States to converge, share perspectives, and explore innovative solutions to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and accessibility of justice delivery at the district level.

This Report has been prepared in line with the vision of the Chief Justice of India, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sanjiv Khanna. This Conference Report aims to capture the essence of the deliberations, presentations, and outcomes of the Conference. It provides a comprehensive summary of the key takeaways, recommendations, and action points emerging from the different Technical Sessions in the Conference. We hope that this Report will serve as a valuable resource for all stakeholders seeking to strengthen the State judiciary.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the distinguished Judges of the Supreme Court, High Courts, and District Judges from different States for their active participation in the technical sessions. The invaluable insights, expertise, and

experiences, which they shared with us enhanced the quality of deliberations and elevated the Conference to new heights.

We express our special gratitude to:

1. Hon'ble Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Chief Justice of India
2. Hon'ble Justice B R Gavai, Judge, Supreme Court of India
3. Hon'ble Justice Surya Kant, Judge, Supreme Court of India
4. Hon'ble Justice Abhay S. Oka, Judge, Supreme Court of India
5. Hon'ble Justice Vikram Nath, Judge, Supreme Court of India
6. Hon'ble Justice J.K. Maheshwari, Judge, Supreme Court of India
7. Hon'ble Justice B V Nagarathna, Judge, Supreme Court of India
8. Hon'ble Justice M.M. Sundresh, Judge, Supreme Court of India
9. Hon'ble Justice Bela M Trivedi, Judge, Supreme Court of India
10. Hon'ble Justice P.S. Narasimha, Judge, Supreme Court of India
11. Hon'ble Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, Judge, Supreme Court of India
12. Hon'ble Justice Dipankar Datta, Judge, Supreme Court of India
13. Hon'ble Justice K.V. Viswanathan, Judge, Supreme Court of India,

for chairing/co- chairing the different technical sessions in the Conference and having interactions with the participants, during their respective sessions.

We are also immensely grateful to Shri Bharat Parashar, Ld. Secretary General of the Supreme Court of India, who played a pivotal role in conceptualising this Conference. We would further like to extend our sincere gratitude to Shri Rakesh Kumar, Ld. Registrar (Judges' Admn. & International Relations), Shri H.S. Jaggi, Registrar (Technology) and Shri Tauzeeh-Ul-Islam Rajput, Registrar (Court & Building) for their meticulous planning and coordination which ensured that the Conference was a resounding success.

In the end, we would like to thank all the Officers and staff of the Supreme Court Registry whose tireless efforts and unwavering support ensured the success of the Conference. A special note of thanks for the team at the Centre for Research and Planning, who worked behind the scenes and literally burnt the midnight oil to bring this document to light.

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India

Introduction

The Supreme Court of India, under the visionary leadership and guidance of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India, Justice Sanjiv Khanna, organized a "*National Conference on Addressing Issues Faced by the State Judiciary*" on February 01, 2025 at the Multi-purpose Hall, Administrative Buildings Complex, Supreme Court of India. The idea behind this Conference was to engage in a meaningful dialogue with different stakeholders and functionaries in the State Judiciary, especially the District Courts, to first understand the challenges being faced by them and thereafter, chalk out a plan to address the same.

The Conference had four Technical Sessions, which covered diverse topics affecting the performance of State Judiciary. The 1st Technical Session which was Chaired by Hon'ble Justice Sanjiv Khanna and co- chaired by Hon'ble Justice Abhay S. Oka, Hon'ble Justice B.V. Nagarathna; and Hon'ble Justice Dipankar Datta, witnessed discussions on: Ways to narrow the gulf between Institution & Disposal of cases; Identification of case types flooding the judicial dockets; Identification of bottlenecks in case disposal; Strategies to reduce backlog of cases at different levels.

In the 2nd Technical Session, which was Chaired by Hon'ble Justice B.R. Gavai and co- chaired by Hon'ble Justice P.S. Narasimha and Hon'ble

Justice K.V. Viswanathan, the feasibility of having a uniform case categorization in different Courts was explored. In this Session, ways to leverage technology better to optimize the judicial processes was also deliberated upon.

In the 3rd Technical Session, which was Chaired by Hon'ble Justice Surya Kant and co-chaired by Hon'ble Justice J.K. Maheshwari and Hon'ble Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, there were discussions about timely recruitment of Judicial Officers and Court Staff; continual recruitment/empanelment of Public Prosecutors/Legal Aid Counsels/ Legal Aid Defence Counsels; creation of a permanent IT and Data Cadre in all High Courts and District Courts; the need for an objective and transparent transfer policy of Judicial Officers; and measures to enhance objectivity in the process of recommending suitable candidates from District Judiciary for elevation to the High Courts.

In the 4th Technical Session, which was Chaired by Hon'ble Justice Sanjiv Khanna and co- chaired by Hon'ble Justice Vikram Nath; Hon'ble Justice M.M. Sundresh; and Hon'ble Justice Bela M. Trivedi there were discussions on Career Progression and Continuous Performance Evaluation of Judicial Officers; Mentoring of Judicial Officers by Inspecting Judges as well as State Judicial Academies; need for establishing a common curriculum for training and capacity building of Judicial Officers; and ways of ensuring accountability of Judicial Officers and Court Staff.

Hon'ble Judges of the Supreme Court; and the Chief Justices and Judges of various High Courts graced the occasion. The Conference witnessed participation of District Judges from all States and Union Territories. Senior Bureaucrats from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Law and Justice also attended the Conference.

This Conference gave an invaluable opportunity to all stakeholders within the judiciary to come together and engage in a meaningful dialogue to addresses the challenges faced by the State Judiciary. This Conference was a testament to the judiciary's unswerving commitment to address issues plaguing the justice dispensation system at the grass root level. This Conference was yet another occasion where the three tiers of the Indian Judiciary assembled under one roof to discuss crucial issues which have a great effect on the vitality and resilience of judicial institutions in protecting the rule of law in our country. Building on the deliberations already initiated in the last two Conferences held in 2024, this Conference intended to have a more granular view of the problems faced by the State Judiciary. This would help inspire meaningful reforms, improvements, and innovations in the State judiciary, to improve access to justice and thereby promote a more just and equitable society.

Prefatory Remarks from **The Chief Justice of India**

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, the Chief Justice of India, began his Address by commending the fact that despite being spread across the length and breadth of the country, with varying time zones, languages, and cultural nuances, the Indian Judiciary remains a cohesive and committed force, united in its pursuit of justice. Reflecting on the glorious institutional journey of the Supreme Court of India over the last 75 years, he said that this Court had consistently and relentlessly shouldered the responsibility of upholding the principles enshrined in our Constitution. Justice Khanna also pointed out that the present lot of Judges in the Supreme Court as well as High Courts, constitute the eighth or ninth generation of Judges manning the Constitutional Courts since Independence, while the District Judges constituted the fourth or fifth generation of Judges in the District Judiciary.

While talking about the phenomenal work done by the Supreme Court of India in the last 75 years, he highlighted the exponential increase in its workload vis-a-vis the growth in the number of Judges in the Supreme Court. He mentioned that in 1950, the Supreme Court had a strength of 8 Judges who pronounced 43 judgments in the first year of its establishment. At present, the Supreme Court has a strength of 33 Judges, and it pronounces more than 1000 judgments per year.



Justice Khanna in his Address, also appreciated the fact that the Indian Judiciary had leveraged technology to analyse and leverage information in unprecedented ways, thereby fostering accessibility, efficiency, and justice. He stated that by making significant strides in harnessing technology, the Indian Judiciary had been able to expand its footprints, enhance transparency, and increase accessibility. He noted that this momentum should not be lost and sustained efforts should be made to harness the technological winds of change. This, he said, shall optimize the quality of judicial outcomes.

Justice Khanna further noted that 'judging' had a human angle attached to it and that justice remained a fundamentally human endeavour. He noted that Courts were not just buildings of brick and mortar but the common man's last hope for justice. It is here that human stories unfolded and wrongs were redressed. Noting that Courts were the places where law met the people, not in abstraction but in action, he exhorted all Judges to lend an empathetic ear to the litigants and mould reliefs accordingly.

Towards the end of his Address, Justice Khanna emphasized on the need of the Indian Judiciary to evolve in tandem with the rapidly changing society. He hoped that the insights we gained from the Conference must not remain confined within the four walls but should permeate into the functioning of all District Courts. He ended his Address by saying "Let us strengthen the very foundation of justice, together. Let us deliberate judicial functioning, to do justice better!"

Technical Session I

Narrowing the Gulf between Institution and Disposal of Cases

The 1st Technical Session was chaired by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Chief Justice of India. The Co-Chairs for the Session were Hon'ble Mr. Justice Abhay S. Oka, Judge, Supreme Court of India; Hon'ble Mrs. Justice B.V. Nagarathna, Judge, Supreme Court of India; and Hon'ble Mr. Justice Dipankar Datta, Judge, Supreme Court of India.

The Chief Justice of India presented a comprehensive overview of the Indian judicial system, emphasizing key concerns, data insights and recommendations which are as follows:



Vignette from the Technical Session I



Vignette from the Technical Session I as Hon'ble Mr Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Chief Justice of India addresses the participants

1. Case Clearance Rate of District Courts in Civil cases (as per National Judicial Data Grid) is 103% while that in Criminal Cases, the Rate is only 94%, resulting in a dip in the overall Case Clearance Rate i.e. 96%.

2. Case Clearance Rate cases qua cases under Section 138 Negotiable Instruments Act is 88% only. These cases constitute 9.13% of total pending cases in the District Courts contributing significantly to court congestion, diverting resources away from other critical cases and thereby affecting the overall efficiency of the justice delivery system. All the High Courts would endeavour to develop strategies for efficient case management and utilize Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms to swiftly resolve disputes under the Negotiable Instruments (NI) Act.

3. With regards to workload per judge, India's district courts have 21,153 Judicial Officers, with each judge handling approximately 1,147 cases annually and disposing of 1,096 cases on average. While there has been a notable improvement in the Case Clearance Rate, from 88.14% in 2018 to 96.11% in 2024, concerns persist regarding judicial vacancies, particularly in Maharashtra where vacancies constitute 56.34% of the total sanctioned strength.

4. Several Indian states are struggling with



Vignette from the Technical Session I as Hon'ble Mr Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Chief Justice of India gives his presentation

high judicial vacancy rates, exceeding 30% of their sanctioned strength. These states include Meghalaya (42.42%), Gujarat (37.65%), Sikkim (37.14%), Ladakh (35.29%), Mizoram (35.14%), Puducherry (33.33%), Telangana (31.89%), Nagaland (31.43%), and Goa (31.03%). To address this issue, it is essential for these states to prioritize recruitment and comply with the timelines set by the *Malik Mazhar Sultan v. U.P. Public Service Commission and Ors.* Judgment.

5. Notable variations exist in the composition of pending cases across states. For instance, Andhra Pradesh has a nearly equal split between civil (48.7%) and criminal (51.3%) cases, whereas Delhi's pending cases are predominantly criminal (85%). A thorough analysis of such data is essential to inform judicial postings and court requirements in each State and Union Territory.

6. There is a pressing need to rationalize the number of pending cases per judge. The significant disparity in case pendency across states is a concern. For instance, Meghalaya has a relatively low 262 cases per judge, whereas Uttar Pradesh has a staggering 4,270 cases per judge. To address this issue, High Courts must consider these metrics when determining the required number of Courts in their jurisdictions. This will help optimize judicial resources, reduce case backlogs, and ensure timely justice delivery.

7. There is a significant disparity in case disposal rates across Indian states. Kerala leads with an impressive 2,046 cases disposed of per judge annually, whereas Bihar and Delhi lag behind with 485 and 979 cases, respectively. Looking at the time to disposition data, it's concerning to note that while 72.7% of criminal cases are wrapped up within a year, only 37.8% of civil cases meet this timeline. This highlights the need to accelerate trials for both civil and criminal cases to ensure timely justice delivery.

8. At the High Court level, the average Case Clearance Rate is 93.77% (Civil matters being 95.43% and Criminal matters being 91.53%), meaning thereby the pendency keeps increasing by 7-8% annually.

9. Per-judge case institution in High Courts is 3,169 cases annually, while per judge annual disposal is 2,971 cases, which indicates a higher per judge disposal than in District Courts. The Jharkhand High

Court earned recognition for achieving the highest Case Clearance Rate in the country, standing at 128.83%. This impressive feat indicates that the court is not only disposing of a significant number of cases but also effectively reducing its backlog. Several other High Courts have also demonstrated remarkable performance, with case clearance rates exceeding 100%. These include:

Chhattisgarh High Court	113.38%
Tripura High Court	110.49%
Punjab and Haryana High Court	106.48%
Madras High Court	105.01%
Andhra Pradesh High Court	103.23%
Kerala High Court	103.23%
Telangana High Court	102.15%
Orissa High Court	101.04%
Calcutta High Court	100.42%

These notable achievements signify a positive trend towards reducing case pendency across these High Courts.

10. High Courts with a Case Clearance Rate (CCR) of less than 100% must take proactive steps to improve their efficiency and dispose of more cases annually. The goal is to achieve an average CCR of 100% across all High Courts in the near future.

11. Per-judge pendency in High Courts is significantly higher than in District Courts, with Rajasthan leading at 20,458 cases per judge. Allahabad follows with 13,309 cases per judge, while Delhi had 3,270 cases per judge. The heavy case load per judge raises serious concerns about the quality of justice being delivered, as it inevitably results in prolonged disposition times, potentially compromising the fairness and effectiveness of the judicial process.

12. Vacancies in different High Courts were also highlighted, e.g there are high vacancy rates in High Courts of Allahabad (50%), Orissa (42.22%), Calcutta (40%), and Delhi (38%), which severely impact the administration of justice by putting immense pressure on the existing judges and forcing litigants to wait indefinitely for their cases to be heard. Appointment of ad-hoc judges to clear such cases may go a long way in reducing the pendency of criminal appeals.

13. When determining the optimal judge strength for a state, it's essential to consider a broader range of factors beyond just population and case filing numbers. Socio-economic differences, varying timelines for different case types, and the time required for each case should all be taken into account. Additionally, the caseload per judge must be carefully evaluated to ensure that the judicial system can deliver efficient and effective justice.

After the Chief Justice's presentation, Justice **Abhay S. Oka**, addressed the audience. He spoke on numerous issues and also gave suggestions as under:

1. Pendency of around 4.56 crore cases in District Courts, out of which 1.09 crore cases were of civil nature while 3.47 crore cases were of criminal nature. Out of these, around 47,59,596 cases were older than 10 years. Over 10 lakh such cases have remained undated.



Vignette from the Technical Session I as Hon'ble Mr Justice Abhay S Oka, Judge, Supreme Court of India, gives his presentation

2. The Action Plan for Arrears Reduction in District Judiciary is a targeted initiative designed to tackle the longstanding issue of backlog in the judicial system. Recognizing the complexity and diversity of challenges faced by district judiciaries across various states, the plan adopts a nuanced approach, considering factors such as variations in case volume and nature, differences in human resources, infrastructure facilities. Rather than imposing a uniform solution, the plan allows for tailored strategies to address the unique needs and circumstances of each district judiciary, ensuring a more effective and sustainable reduction in case arrears.

3. All High Courts would endeavour to prioritize long-pending cases, ensuring they receive prompt attention. Additionally, measures will be taken to expedite case progression and facilitate timely judgments.

4. To achieve equitable case distribution, a balanced allocation of cases among judges has to be ensured, taking into account the complexity and nature of each case. This approach will prevent overburdening and facilitates efficient case resolution.

5. In some States, undated cases accounted for 18-19% of total case pendency. All the High Courts have to ensure that cases do not remain without a scheduled date, facilitating their timely progression and resolution. There has to be an effective handling of unready and stayed cases.

6. All High Courts would endeavour to take steps to encourage use of Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms in reducing case pendency. Judicial officers to leverage NJDG and related tools for better case management. High Courts to implement a system for the continuous monitoring of case progress and regular review meetings to assess the effectiveness of the Action Plan.

7. Based on the implementation of the Action Plan, out of 1,17,930 old cases pending for more than 30 years, 42,915 cases have been disposed of by the end of the Phase-II of the Action Plan. Likewise, out of 6,39,580 cases pending for 20-30 years, 1,05,777 cases have been disposed off.

8. Chief Justices of the High Courts would endeavour to personally (or through senior colleagues) monitor the Action Plan's implementation. Administrative and Guardian judges should also regularly interact with Judicial Officers and encourage them to dispose of old cases. Chief Justices of different High Courts may also constitute

Special Benches to dispose off cases which are more than 20 years old and where a stay order was in operation.

9. Highlighted concerns raised by the Bar regarding Judicial Officers not granting adjournments even on reasonable grounds. Judicial Officers are required to eschew a rigid approach while considering requests for adjournments and to balance competing interests i.e. timely disposal of case and interests of the litigants. A distinction between effective and expeditious disposal of cases and a hasty disposal of cases was also drawn.

10. To ensure adequate human resource support to Judicial Officers, all the Chief Justices and Registrar Generals would endeavour to fill up staff vacancies promptly.

11. Issue of shortage of Public Prosecutors in District Courts was also flagged, which would invariably put a spanner in the progress of a criminal case. He noted that some States had to take up the issue of non-availability of Public Prosecutors on their own and issue directions to the State Government to recruit more Public Prosecutors. All the High Courts would endeavour to ensure that each Criminal Court has a dedicated Public Prosecutor.

12. Recent trend of judges taking leaves was also highlighted. Absence of judges due to leaves can lead to delayed hearings, adjournments, hardships for litigants and ultimately, delayed justice. All the Judges would endeavour to consider the impact of their leaves on the judiciary as a whole and ensure that their absence does not compromise the administration of justice. Judicial Academies would also endeavour to sensitize Judicial Officers to adopt a more responsible and disciplined approach to leaves.

13. Recognizing the vital role of District Courts in delivering justice, a growing concern was raised with respect to labelling them as "Lower Courts", which was called out as being unfair and misleading. This terminology undermines the importance of District Courts, which are, in fact, the primary courts for most citizens. Hence, it is essential for High Courts to take the lead in changing the narrative around District Courts. By dropping the term "Lower Courts," we can work towards a more inclusive and respectful judicial system that recognizes the critical role played by District Courts.

14. Lawyers often face difficulties in getting fresh cases listed in the bigger High Courts. All the Chief Justices would endeavour to consider auto-listing of fresh cases within a set time. All the High Courts to address the issue regarding the delay in timely listing of bail applications as delay in their listing often renders them in-fructuous.

15. Nominations for training programs at the National and State Judicial Academies should be more diverse and broad-based, contrary to the current practice where only a chosen few were sent for these trainings repeatedly.

Taking the Session forward, Justice **B.V. Nagarathna** in her inimitable style, began her address with the quote "Justice hurried is Justice



Vignette from the Technical Session I as Hon'ble Mrs Justice B V Nagarathna, Judge, Supreme Court of India, gives her presentation

buried, but Justice delayed is Justice denied". She noted that a silent crisis festers in the Indian Judiciary and that crisis is that of mounting case arrears. She also raised concerns over the problem of case arrears which has become a chronic affliction, eroding public trust and undermining the very fabric of our democracy. Justice B.V. Nagarathna raised important key points and also gave several suggestions:

1. The growing case arrears require immediate attention and collective action. To address this, we must increase judge strength and improve court infrastructure, leverage technology to streamline processes, implement efficient case management and performance metrics and foster a culture of accountability and transparency within the judiciary.

2. Judicial vacancies are significantly contributing to the growing case arrears. Despite knowing about upcoming retirements, Chief Justices and senior judges of High Courts are not making timely recommendations, leading to delays. Furthermore, there's non-compliance with recruitment timelines for Judicial Officers, as outlined in the *Malik Mazhar Sultan* case, which is exacerbating the issue.

3. Qua case pendency in High Courts, she urged that similar criminal matters arising from interim applications disposed of by the District Courts and pending before the High Courts must be taken up collectively.

4. Emphasis was placed on prioritizing and expediting the disposal of cases with prolonged trial and execution petitions with stay orders, Motor accident claim matters and workmen's compensation matters.

5. *Lok Adalats* must be regularly organized and matters of like nature be referred to the *Lok Adalats* for quicker resolution.

6. Priority should be given to disposing of the cases remanded from the Supreme Court, condonation of delay applications in pending appeals, Death Penalty references, cases under special enactments (e.g. POCSO, Prevention of Corruption Act), appeals against Family Court judgments/ orders, etc.

7. To reduce backlog, the strategies like early identification and disposal of infructuous Writ Appeals, Land Acquisition Matters (as per judgment in *Indore Development Authority v. Manohar Lal.*), Low-tax-effect cases, designating one Saturday per month for out-of-turn disposal of priority cases identified through Full Court meetings, should be adopted.

8. In Family Court matters, prolonged litigation can intensify the emotional trauma experienced by parties involved in matrimonial disputes, as well as their children. To mitigate this, the following reforms were proposed:

    - Consolidate related cases: Assign all connected cases to a single Family Court.
    - Software-enabled case management: Develop software to automatically assign linked cases to the same court.
    - Limit adjournments
    - Complete witness examinations promptly (ideally in one day)
    - Assign block dates for uninterrupted testimony

9. To ensure compliance with Family Court orders, courts should impose costs on non-compliant parties, strike out defences if necessary, attach movable and immovable properties for non-payment of maintenance/ alimony.

10. Family Court judges should be trained to refer matrimonial cases to mediation wherever it is suitable.

11. Introduction of mandatory pre-litigation mediation in family disputes to reduce pendency of cases and the emotional distress and financial burden that parties face.

12. In order to prevent filing of false cases, Family Court judges should scrutinize allegations and assess credibility of the complainant, verify documents such as marriage certificates, birth certificates and medical records in support of allegations and check for inconsistencies and impose heavy costs on false cases to deter abuse.

13. To reduce delays in trial on account of delays in service of summons, courts should coordinate with process-serving agencies, use Indian Embassies abroad for serving summons, streamline e-service through WhatsApp, email, etc. and utilize video conferencing for witness examination.

14. To expedite bail hearings and trials, courts should limit lengthy bail hearings in PMLA, UAPA cases, ensure timely replies from investigation agencies, avoid sequential filing of applications by multiple accused, minimize changes in prosecutors, restrict applications for recall of witnesses and adjournments.

15. Suggested implementation of time-bound case management schedules for quicker disposal of cases, once the chargesheet has been filed. Invocation of Section 294 CrPC and Section 296 Cr.P.C/counterparts in BNSS to streamline proof of formal documents and reliance on affidavit-based evidence.

16. All Judicial Academies to organize capacity building programs for judges and prosecutors by organizing regular training programs with focus on special procedures prescribed under the Special Acts and trial techniques.

17. Strengthening collaboration between investigation agencies, prosecution, and judiciary to ensure timely compliances.



Vignette from the Technical Session I as Hon'ble Mr Justice Dipankar Datta, Judge, Supreme Court of India, shares a lighter moment with other judges on the panel

Thereafter, Justice **Dipankar Datta** began his presentation by saying that over the last two decades or more, the people of this great democracy—the largest democracy that is India—feel that the Judiciary is failing to deliver. He said that the increasing backlog of undecided cases is a matter of grave concern requiring deep introspection and emergent action. He also highlighted numerous issues and made several suggestions as follows:

1. Judicial vacancies in High Courts and District Courts are a major concern, with a significant gap between working and sanctioned strength persisting for over a decade. Delays in elevations to High Courts and recruitment exams have worsened the issue, particularly in High Courts of Allahabad, Bombay, Punjab & Haryana, Madras, Calcutta, Karnataka, Delhi, and Telangana. To address this, it's crucial to expedite recommendations for High Court elevations, conduct timely recruitment exams for District Judiciary and fill existing vacancies to reduce the gap between working and sanctioned strength.
2. Judge to population ratio is abysmally low in India despite judicial directions to improve the same. He also expressed his reservations about the available judicial talent pool from among lawyers who want to become judges. Highlighting delays in clearing names of lawyers, he said that many good lawyers were no longer interested in becoming Judges.
3. He said that challenges of Indian Judiciary were unique and they required a strong and decisive approach. The Executive must coordinate with the Judiciary.
4. There are more than 1 lakh contempt petitions pending in the High Courts. He called for urgent measures to get these cases disposed off.
5. Shortfall in the number of Public Prosecutors available in Courts was also flagged along with other issues like delay in receiving FSL reports, sanctions for prosecution, service reports etc.
6. Case allocation in the High Courts ought to be done as per domain expertise and

frequent change of rosters should be eschewed. Adoption of an objective transfer policy by all High Courts and also for transparency in performance evaluation.

7. To enhance court efficiency, consider regular training for Judicial Officers, prosecutors and staffs, implementing best practices in court management, uniform guidelines for specialized courts, increased use of video conferencing and establishing in-house IT departments.

8. Government should prioritize adequate funding for the judiciary to enable it to deliver justice efficiently, effectively, and in a timely manner, thereby strengthening the rule of law and promoting social justice.

At the end, Justice Khanna requested the State Judicial Academies to undertake a study to identify case types flooding the judicial dockets in their respective States and thereafter, they must identify and fix timelines for the disposal of such cases. Once the trial of the case exceeds the stipulated timeline, then it should be counted as an arrear, which requires a different approach in handling. He stressed upon having a case management system for different types of cases which can tell what will be the optimal timeline for disposal.



Vignette from the Technical Session I as Hon'ble Mr Justice Dipankar Datta, Judge, Supreme Court of India, gives his presentation



Vignette from the Technical Session I as Hon'ble Chief Justice of India and Hon'ble Mr Justice Abhay S Oka, Hon'ble Mrs Justice B V Nagarathna, Judges, Supreme Court of India respond to queries of the participants

Technical Session II

Ushering Uniformity in Case Categorization and Leveraging Technology for Justice Delivery

The 2nd Technical Session was chaired by Hon'ble Mr. Justice B.R. Gavai, Judge, Supreme Court of India. Co- Chairs for the Session were Hon'ble Mr. Justice P.S. Narsimha, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Hon'ble Mr. Justice K.V. Viswanathan, Judge, Supreme Court of India.

Justice **B.R. Gavai** in his address, spoke about the following aspects:

1. Judiciary across the globe is evolving and reorienting itself to enhance effective delivery of judicial services and address longstanding challenges.



Vignette from the Technical Session II



Vignette from the Technical Session II as Hon'ble Mr Justice B R Gavai, Judge, Supreme Court of India, addresses the participants

2. Several factors contribute to the docket explosion, some being procedural and administrative. Lack of standardization in case categorization is one such factors. For instance, Courts at different levels use varied criteria and formats for categorization of cases, leading to inconsistencies in tracking and managing cases across the board. Non-uniform case categorization leads to misclassification, causing delays in listing and prioritization of cases.

3. The Supreme Court's Report on Case Categorization proposes refining of existing nomenclature for the listing process by introducing specific categories and coding at the appellate court level.

4. Transfer of case records from trial courts to appellate courts also takes time, leading to delays.

5. Implementing a uniform case categorization system would aid in developing of a national policy for the efficient disposal of cases. The Supreme Court's report can serve as a model for High Courts to create their own systems, tailored to local needs.

6. To improve the delivery of justice, it's crucial to leverage technology at the District Court level, which is the primary point of contact for most litigants and lawyers. Technology can significantly enhance transparency in District Court functioning. The e-Courts Project has been instrumental in achieving this goal by computerizing courts nationwide and introducing citizen-centric services, including e-filing, virtual courts: remote court proceedings, video Conferencing and National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG). Continuing the e-Courts Project will help streamline justice delivery, making it more accessible, efficient, and transparent

7. To reduce paper usage, the judiciary must adopt a technology-driven approach. This requires a collective willingness to change, hand-holding support, and effective management to ensure a smooth transition to paperless processes. Collaboration at all levels is necessary to digitize processes

and integrate technology into the judicial system.

8. Capacity building of all stakeholders in the justice system is necessary to maximize the benefits of technological investments.

9. High Courts should utilize e-Courts Project funds by March 31, 2025, to ensure future allocations of larger grants.

Justice **P.S. Narasimha** addressed the audience thereafter. In his address, he spoke extensively about the Report of the Case Categorization Advisory Committee. The highlights of his address are as under:

1. Categorization of cases filed in the Supreme Court of India serves multiple purposes, such as tracking case data for analysis, decision-making, identifying cases requiring specific Court Fees and working out uniformity in listing similar cases before the same Bench.

2. Over the years, number of subject categories of cases have significantly increased, reflecting the diverse range of legal issues that are brought before the Supreme Court. At present, there are 47 categories, 05 of which are related to the Bench strength and the remaining 42 qua different subjects of law and, in some cases, categorisation is made on the basis of the sentence in criminal proceedings. The 47 main categories are divided into 307 sub-categories, with each subject category and sub-category being assigned a unique code.

3. The current subject category framework is outdated, with overlapping and unused categories, making it difficult to accurately identify case types. A re-examination of the framework is necessary to reflect the correct picture of current legal landscape.

4. A data driven exercise was thus undertaken to identify and suggest renaming/ merging the existing subject categories and/or sub-



Vignette from the Technical Session II as Hon'ble Mr Justice P S Narasimha, Judge, Supreme Court of India, addresses the participants

categories. The said exercise focuses not just on simplification and ease of listing, but considerable emphasis has been placed to ensure that case management is powered by accurate data.

5. A new methodology was adopted to improve data accuracy, retrieval, and case listing. Key changes include:

   (a) Reduced sub-categories from 307 to 188

   (b) Removed redundant categories

   (c) Added new categories for specialized fields (e.g. insolvency, IP, IT, MSME etc.)

   (d) Suggested a separate category to cover PILs with sub-categories to cover its varied range.

   (e) Suggested use of AI for case categorization and data extraction

   (f) Suggested clubbing of partition suits, maintenance proceedings under Section 125 of CrPC, family law matters, personal law matters under a new comprehensive category 'family law'.

   (g) Suggested change in nomenclature, amendments, and realignment for clarity and efficiency.

   (h) Suggested a sub-classification in criminal law depending on the nature of punishment, sentencing etc.

6. The model prepared by the Case Categorization Advisory Committee of the Supreme Court can be replicated by High Courts, paving the way for a national case categorization system. This requires coordinated efforts and collaboration with High Courts to identify clogged judicial dockets and ensure future reforms.

Hon'ble Mr. Justice **K.V. Viswanathan** addressed the participants thereafter. The highlights of his address are:

1. Justice is the cornerstone of a civilized society. As technology advances, the judicial system must adapt to meet modern governance demands. Integrating technology is now essential for efficient, accessible, transparent, and fair justice, bridging the accessibility gap and making justice reachable for all.

2. E-Courts Initiatives such as e- filing; Digital Courts; Electronic Service of Processes; Virtual Courts; Video Conferencing; Transcription Facilities; e-Sewa Kendras/e-Kiosks; and Digitization of Judicial Records are some initiatives which can play a transformative role in justice dispensation.

3. E-filing is revolutionizing the judicial system by enabling litigants and lawyers to submit petitions, evidence, and documents online. This reduces paperwork and procedural delays, providing end-to-end solutions for filing cases online, along with readymade templates. Some notable features of e-filing include: Asynchronous mode: allows for flexible filing processes, Video recording of oath: enables remote oath-taking, e-signing of documents: streamlines document authentication, e-filing of vakalatnama: simplifies lawyer representation documents. Delhi High Court has shown promising adoption rates, with 47.43% of cases e-filed. To encourage wider adoption, the government should introduce incentives, such as lower court fees for e-filing. This could motivate litigants to request e-filing from their lawyers, ultimately driving lawyers to overcome their technological



Vignette from the Technical Session II as Hon'ble Mr Justice K V Viswanathan, Judge, Supreme Court of India, addresses the participants

hesitations. Making e-filing mandatory for government and public sector undertakings could further accelerate this shift.

4. Virtual court proceedings have proved to be a game changer, saving considerable time and resources for all stakeholders. So far more than 90 lakh cases had been heard through VC in the High Courts and more than 2.5 crores cases had been heard through VC in the District Courts. There is a need to sustain or build up the momentum with which virtual hearings are taking place as it will reduce logistical delays, save costs, and make the judicial process more inclusive for those who face travel constraints.

5. Digital archives of court judgments and records offer numerous benefits, including preventing tampering, enhancing searchability, and preserving judicial history. However, digitization is not just about scanning records; it requires safe and long-term digital preservation to avoid issues with technological obsolescence. The e-committee of the Supreme Court of India has taken steps to address this challenge by formulating a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for digital preservation of judicial records. The goal is to establish Judicial Trusted Digital Repositories (JTDR) in High Courts, ensuring the integrity and accessibility of digital records. To overcome the issue of technological obsolescence, the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) has been tasked with developing the JTDR. Effective utilization of the budget allocated for digitization and enhancing the pace of digitization are crucial to achieving this goal.

6. There is a need to have a multilingual software to assist the common man understand legal processes and outcomes. Enhancing readability of judicial documents would go a long way in enhancing access to justice and increasing transparency of proceedings. This can be done by translating judgments and orders and by having facilities in place for Live Transcription of court hearings in local language. Steps should also be taken to develop bilingual or multilingual websites of the High Courts.

7. Real time transcription of depositions of witnesses; hearings/ arguments in the Courts etc. will also enhance transparency. The e-Committee's Digital Courts Software can be better used for transcription of witness deposition, as this will save considerable time.

8. There are 25 e-Sewa Kendras in the High Courts and 970 e-Sewa Kendras in the District Courts. Steps should be taken to make these more user friendly.



Vignette from the Technical Session II as Hon'ble Mr Justice B R Gavai, Judge, Supreme Court of India, and Hon'ble Mr Justice P S Narasimha, Judge, Supreme Court of India, share a light moment

9. The National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP) is a landmark initiative aimed at revolutionizing the service and tracking of electronic processes in Indian courts, aiming to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability in court proceedings. It enables electronic service of court processes, such as summons, notices, and orders, to reduce delays and increase efficiency. By providing real-time tracking of electronic processes it provides a digital audit trail of all electronic processes. The successful implementation of NSTEP requires the collective efforts of the judiciary, lawyers and litigants.

10. While traditional courtroom procedures have their significance, modernization is necessary to keep up with the changing times. Governments, judicial bodies, and legal practitioners must collaborate to implement digital solutions while safeguarding judicial independence and fairness.

11. In the Financial Year, 2024-2025, out of the total budget allocated i.e. Rs. 1,226 crores, only Rs. 362 crores have been utilized (i.e. 29.50% of the allocated amount have been utilized). There is a need to increase the pace of utilization of funds released under the e-Courts project so that the funds don't remain un-utilised and are remitted back.

At the end of the technical session, Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India, Justice Sanjiv Khanna, called upon the State Judicial Academies to explore feasibility of adopting the Case Categorization mooted by the Supreme Court's Advisory Committee in their respective States. Suitable modifications may be made to cater to the unique needs of the States but a uniform case categorization will help eventually. Justice Khanna also harped on the need to fasten the pace at which transcription is being done. He also emphasized on the need to accelerate the pace at which e-certified copies of orders and judgments are given. To counter the problem of pendency of MACT cases, Justice Aravind Kumar suggested that governments should come up with settlement schemes by involving NALSA, respective SLSAs etc. whereunder claims upto Rs. 10 lacs can be settled at the district level or at the High Court level. Coordination with Insurance Regulatory Development Authority, and Insurance Regulation Development Council is also needed so that all the National Insurance Companies can be brought on one platform and this will also ensure withdrawal of around 8.96 lakh cases from the High Courts and/or District Courts at one go.

Addressing Issues Pertaining to Human Resources in the District Judiciary

The 3rd Technical session was chaired by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Surya Kant, Judge, Supreme Court of India and co-chaired by Hon'ble Mr. Justice J.K. Maheshwari, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, Judge, Supreme Court of India.

The highlights from this Session are as under:

1. India's judicial system is hindered by delays and inconsistencies in recruiting Judicial Officers, leading to vacancies and a growing backlog of cases. The



Vignette from the Technical Session III



Vignette from the Technical Session III as Hon'ble Mr Justice Surya Kant, Judge, Supreme Court of India, addresses the participants

lack of a timely and institutionalized recruitment process results in ad-hocism, compromising the quality and competence of selected candidates.

2. Delays in conducting exams for recruitment of Judicial Officers were on account of several factors. One such factor was the delay in amendment of Recruitment Rules for adding new criminal laws in the syllabus of Judicial Services Examination.

3. District judiciaries across India face significant challenges due to inadequate infrastructure and insufficient support staff. To enhance judicial efficiency, it is essential to provide sufficient support staff to all Judicial Officers and ensure they receive proper training to effectively assist in the discharge of judicial duties.

4. A calendar of staff recruitments should be in place to have a continuous and consistent flow of court staff. Collaboration with private entities may also be entered into for the purpose of holding recruitment exams.

5. Making local language a compulsory subject in Judicial Services Exams is deterring out-of-state candidates. It's proposed to assess language proficiency during training, rather than as a pre-condition for selection, similar to All India Service Officers.

6. Timelines for filling up of vacancies as highlighted in different judgments of the Supreme Court should be adhered to by all States.

7. Consultations with the State Government should be undertaken to increase the sanctioned strength of judges.

8. Effective delivery of justice in India's criminal justice system depends on Public Prosecutors and Legal Aid Counsels. However, their shortage undermines the system, causing trial delays, acquittals, and unequal access to justice, particularly for those who cannot afford private counsel.

9. Steps should be taken to ensure that Public Prosecutors are not given the duty



Vignette from the Technical Session III as Hon'ble Mr Justice Surya Kant, Judge, Supreme Court of India, and Hon'ble Mr Justice J K Maheshwari, Judge, Supreme Court of India, respond to the queries of the participants

of attending to 2-3 courts at a given time. The Public Prosecutors should also be made to undergo a rigorous training.

10. To address the shortage of Public Prosecutors, contractual appointments can be made instead of waiting for new permanent positions. A flexible approach to hiring can also be adopted, prioritizing potential over strict experience and case history requirements.

11. Special Public Prosecutors, who are domain experts may also be appointed for conducting specialized and sophisticated trials involving cyber-crime, transnational crimes etc.

12. There is a need to empanel more lawyers in the Legal Aid Authorities. Increase in number of female Legal Aid Counsels was also appreciated.

13. To overcome the resistance from the Bar Associations, it is suggested that the Bar Associations should be involved in the process of empanelments. There should be transparency and uniformity in suggesting criteria for empanelment of the Legal Aid Counsels.

14. India's judiciary is leveraging technology to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. Creating a permanent IT and Data Cadre in all courts will streamline processes, reduce delays, and boost overall efficiency.

15. A robust IT infrastructure will facilitate the online publication of court orders, judgments, and case status, promoting transparency and accountability. A specialized Data Cadre will ensure accurate and efficient data collection, analysis, and dissemination, enabling informed decision-making and policy development. It will enable courts to provide citizen-centric services, such as online case filing, e-payments, and virtual court proceedings. The Delhi High Court has already created six permanent IT posts. This model could be replicated in other courts to ensure the smooth functioning of IT services.



Vignette from the Technical Session III as Hon'ble Mr Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, Judge, Supreme Court of India, addresses the participants



Vignette from the Technical Session III as Hon'ble Mr Justice J K Maheshwari, Judge, Supreme Court of India, takes a question from the participants

16. The judiciary's reliance on temporary IT professionals from organizations like National Informatics Centre (NIC) creates continuity and accountability gaps. Establishing a permanent IT cadre would address these concerns, enabling the appointment of senior experts to oversee critical tasks and ensure long-term accountability.

17. Another concern raised was that individuals in permanent cadres may not always update their skills, which is essential in the rapidly evolving field of technology. To address this, a mixed model can be adopted, combining a small permanent cadre for critical tasks with contractual employees who bring fresh expertise and stay updated with the latest technological advancements.

18. The Supreme Court e-Committee should develop uniform guidelines for creating a permanent IT and Data Cadre in High Courts and District Courts. A proposed mixed model would combine permanent and contractual posts, ensuring accountability and flexibility in managing IT and data-related tasks. Key Features of the Proposed Model:

    (a) Permanent Posts: A small number of permanent positions for handling confidential and critical tasks

    (b) Contractual Posts: Remaining roles filled by contractual employees on long-term assignments

    (c) Benefits: Ensures accountability, flexibility, and effective management of IT and data-related responsibilities while adapting to rapid technological changes. The Supreme Court e-Committee is expected to draft a module based on these discussions, serving as a blueprint for courts to follow.

19. One crucial aspect of ensuring the integrity of the judiciary is the transfer policy for Judicial Officers. An objective and transparent transfer policy is essential for



Vignette from the Technical Session III as Hon'ble Judges of the Supreme Court of India respond to queries of the participants during the interactive session

ensuring the independence and impartiality of the judiciary; promoting accountability and merit-based transfers; reducing political interference and favouritism; boosting the morale and confidence of Judicial Officers; and enhancing public trust and confidence in the judiciary.

20. At present, Judicial Officers with connections often secure comfortable postings, while others are assigned to remote areas. The current system lacks objectivity, leading to arbitrary decisions. To address this, technology can be used to decide on postings of Judicial Officers. A software maybe developed for this purpose which would minimize human interference, ensuring that postings are allocated based on objective criteria rather than on basis of personal connections or biases.

21. The Supreme Court should constitute a Committee comprising of 2-3 members to draft Guidelines for a Transparent Transfer Policy.

22. Elevation to High Courts should be based on merit, not just seniority. A more objective and fair process is needed to recommend Judicial Officers, considering performance and deserving candidates beyond seniority.

23. Recommendations must be free from individual prejudices and based on institutional needs. The focus should be on selecting candidates who can meet the challenges of the judiciary and uphold constitutional values. Further, High Courts should provide strong justifications for their recommendations, even in the face of opposition.

Enhancing Professional Proficiency

This Session was chaired by Hon' ble Mr. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Chief Justice of India. It was co-chaired by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Vikram Nath, Judge, Supreme Court of India; Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.M. Sundresh, Judge, Supreme Court of India; and Hon'ble Ms. Justice Bela M. Trivedi, Judge, Supreme Court of India.



Vignette from the Technical Session IV

The highlights of the address of Hon'ble Justice Sanjiv Khanna are as follows:

1. The district judiciary, as the first point of contact between citizens and the justice system, is crucial. However, opaque and subjective career progression policies hinder morale and efficiency. Implementing transparent and objective policies is vital for institutional integrity, public confidence, and judicial reform, ensuring justice is served both in verdicts and internal operations.

2. At present, the career progression of Judicial Officers at the district level can often appear ambiguous, influenced by factors beyond merit and performance. This lack of clarity breeds dissatisfaction, fosters a culture of favouritism, and, at its worst, can compromise judicial independence. To achieve true objectivity, it is imperative to establish standardized evaluation metrics based on quantifiable parameters such as case disposal rates, judgment quality, and adherence to procedural timelines.

3. Continued legal education and participation in judicial training programs is also essential to ensure professional competency.

4. Implementing a bell curve approach for performance evaluation can enhance the assessment of Judicial Officers. This curve shall typically display a normal distribution, with most scores clustering around the mean (average) and tapering off gradually towards the extremes. By plotting scores on a graph, the judiciary can:

    - Compare performance across officers
    - Identify areas of excellence and improvement
    - Develop targeted training initiatives
    - Establish performance benchmarks for realistic goal-setting and progress evaluation

    This comprehensive framework fosters informed evaluations, supporting judicial excellence and continuous improvement.

5. The bell curve method of performance evaluation can be tried on an experimental basis in the district judiciary, where out of 100 Judicial Officers, 20 will be placed in the 'outstanding' category, while 70 will be those 'in between' i.e. the average performers and the remaining 10 would fall in the category of 'laggards'. By adopting such an approach, high performers as well as above-average performers may receive positive reinforcement and appreciation,



Vignette from the Technical Session IV as Hon'ble Mr Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Chief Justice of India, interacts with the participants



Vignette from the Technical Session IV as Hon'ble Ms Justice Bela M Trivedi and Hon'ble Mr Justice Vikram Nath, Judges, Supreme Court of India take questions from the participants

while the poor-performers may receive targeted feedback, encouraging them to improve their performance.

6. Adopting objective criteria for transfers will ensure that Judicial Officers are assigned to courts based on their skills, experience, and merit, rather than arbitrary decisions, ultimately enhancing the quality and fairness of justice delivered.

7. Digital tools can be utilized to maintain detailed records of an officer's performance metrics, training history, and feedback from higher judicial authorities. Such platforms can facilitate a more streamlined and impartial review process, accessible to all stakeholders, ensuring that career progression is a matter of public record rather than private discretion.

8. Judicial Academies should establish evaluation metrics to assess the performance of Judicial Officers, considering key parameters such as:

- Efficient case listing and management
- Prudent approach to adjournments
- High case clearance rates
- Regular uploading of judgments and orders
- Proper case file maintenance
- Adherence to judicial discipline and deference towards higher court orders
- Effective use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) techniques

These metrics will help evaluate Judicial Officers' performance, promoting efficiency, accountability, and excellence in the judiciary.

9. A hybrid approach is proposed for calculating an ideal judge strength, combining multiple methods such as demography, filing ratio, disposal rate, ideal caseload, time-based, and unit-based methods to provide a comprehensive and accurate assessment.

Thereafter, Justice **M.M. Sundresh** addressed the audience. Key points as highlighted by him are as follows:

1. Elucidating the qualities of a good Judicial Officer, he said that a good Judicial Officer possesses key qualities, including impartiality and independence, high ethical standards, deep understanding of the law and its evolution, patience and composure, strong analytical and logical skills, clear and well-reasoned decision-making, effective communication. These qualities ensure that justice is delivered with dignity, respect, and in accordance with the latest legal standards.

2. There is a need to strengthen the District Judiciary as it constitutes the base of the entire judicial superstructure. This would drastically reduce the number of appeals and revisions pending in the higher courts.

3. To boost morale and performance, the evaluation of Judicial Officers must be made transparent, objective, and free from bias, eliminating favouritism and subjective assessments that can lead to demotivation.

4. Lack of transparent career progression policies and delayed filling of judicial vacancies/promotions can severely impact the quality of Judicial Officers, ultimately compromising the integrity and effectiveness of the judiciary.

5. A structured mentorship system, where senior judges guide junior officers, is crucial for Judicial Officers to develop necessary legal acumen, ethical standards, and decision-making skills. Mentoring helps young judges navigate ethical dilemmas, build confidence, and ensure judicial independence, ultimately upholding the integrity of the judiciary.



Vignette from the Technical Session IV as Hon'ble Mr Justice M M Sundresh, Judge, Supreme Court of India addresses the participants

6. A robust accountability mechanism is essential to ensure Judicial Officers are held to the highest ethical standards. This requires a multi-faceted approach, including strict accountability, transparency, continuous ethical training, and a culture of integrity, to prevent corruption, promote justice, and maintain public trust.

7. A scrutiny of bail orders should be done to ensure that extraneous factors do not influence the decision making. Periodic audits of case disposal rates, judgment quality, and procedural compliance to identify patterns of inefficiency or corruption, should be conducted.



Vignette from the Technical Session IV as Hon'ble Ms Justice Bela M Trivedi, Judge, Supreme Court of India addresses the participants

Justice **Bela M. Trivedi** addressed the audience thereafter. The highlights of her address are as follows:

1. The notion that judges elevated from the district judiciary are inherently "below average" performers is a misconception that must be dispelled. This notion warrants scrutiny, as it undermines the credibility and competence of judges who have risen through the ranks. It is essential to recognize the value and expertise that these judges bring to the higher courts, and to evaluate their performances based on merit rather than prejudice.

2. Judges elevated from the district judiciary have undergone a rigorous selection process, which assesses their merit, competence, and performance. Judges from the district judiciary bring a unique perspective and expertise, honed through years of handling a wide range of cases and interacting with diverse stakeholders. Many judges elevated from the district judiciary have demonstrated remarkable adaptability and growth, quickly adjusting to the demands of higher courts and delivering high-quality judgments.

3. There is a need for self- introspection as well among the officers of the District Judiciary so that they can identify their weaknesses and work to improve on the same. Institutional introspection was also needed so that the judicial vacancies are filled in time, lest they also contribute to systemic inefficiencies.

4. Enhancing judicial performance demands a comprehensive approach, encompassing specialized training on laws and skills, as well as establishing clear performance metrics and evaluation frameworks to assess, improve, and provide constructive feedback.

5. There is a need to leverage technology to streamline judicial processes, improve access to justice, and enhance transparency and accountability.

6. Judges should be encouraged to prioritize their physical and mental well-being, recognizing the critical importance of judicial wellness in maintaining high performance.

7. A mechanism is necessary to safeguard against the misuse of judicial discretion. Integrity is paramount, as a dishonest judge can cause irreparable harm, whereas an inefficient one can be addressed through training and support.

In his concluding remarks, the Chief Justice of India lauded the co-chairs for sharing their unique perspectives and insights.

Glimpses from the Interactive Sessions
















Glimpses of Judicial Camaraderie































Letter by
CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for attending the National Conference on Addressing Issues Faced by the State Judiciary, which was held on 1st February, 2025. Your presence was a testament to your commitment to strengthening our judicial system and ensuring that justice is delivered efficiently and effectively.

The Conference provided a unique opportunity for us to come together and engage in meaningful discussions on the challenges faced by the State Judiciary. Your valuable insights and suggestions will go a long way in shaping the future of our judicial system. Your participation enriched our discussions and demonstrated the collective commitment of our judiciary towards strengthening the foundations of our justice delivery system. The free-wheeling discussions on the problem of arrears of cases and case management; uniformity in case categorization; way forward to leverage technology for better administration of justice; judicial vacancies and transfers, standardized judicial training etc. have helped us formulate a comprehensive roadmap for the future.

I sincerely hope that the deliberations of this Conference will lead to concrete action points on which all High Courts work as it is only then that a meaningful change would be seen at the ground level.

With regards,
Justice Sanjiv Khanna
Chief Justice of India



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