



# Appointing Law Researchers in High Courts and District Judiciary

*Policy, Practice, Pathways*



*Prepared by*

Centre for Research and Planning  
**SUPREME COURT OF INDIA**

November, 2025

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We owe our deepest gratitude to Justice B.R. Gavai, Chief Justice of India, whose guidance and constant encouragement to the Centre for Research and Planning ('CRP') have led to the finalisation of this Report. We also thank Mr. Shekhar C. Munghate, Ld. Secretary General, Supreme Court of India, for his sustained guidance throughout the process.

We take this opportunity to acknowledge the support extended by the officers of the Registry. Their insights on the requirement of Law Clerks in the District Judiciary have contributed significantly to shaping this Report. We are equally grateful to all Law Clerks and Interns at CRP for their research assistance, which helped shape the comparative perspective on clerkships at the District level. We are also grateful to Basima P for proofreading and providing editorial inputs.

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## **Executive Summary**

This Report examines the evolving role of Law Clerks-cum-Research Associates within the Indian judiciary, and proposes a framework to extend this programme across all levels of the judicial system.

Law Clerks have become an indispensable part of judicial administration. By assisting judges in legal research, brief preparation, and the drafting of orders and judgments, they enhance both the quality and the timeliness of judicial work. However, existing clerkship programmes across High Courts display significant variation in eligibility criteria, recruitment methods, remuneration, and tenure. This lack of transparency has led to uneven professional experiences and limited access to opportunities across jurisdictions. To address these disparities, the Report recommends streamlining transparent recruitment cycles administered via official High Court websites, selection processes combining written assessments and interviews, inclusion and diversity measures, transparent tenure and remuneration bands, and the introduction of formal training and evaluation mechanisms through State Judicial Academies. Collectively, these measures would promote transparency, attract higher-quality applicants, and strengthen institutional accountability.

While clerkships have proven invaluable for the Supreme Court and High Courts, the absence of a corresponding system at the District Court level represents a significant structural gap.

As the first and often only point of judicial engagement for most citizens, the District Court bears the constitutional responsibility of delivering timely, reasoned, and accessible justice. Due to this, the pendency of the District Courts in India also

currently lies at nearly 4.72 crore.<sup>1</sup> Yet, District Judges are not provided with institutional research support, which places undue burden on them.<sup>2</sup>

There is, thus, an institutional need to appoint Law Clerks-cum-Research Associates to District Court Judges. The introduction of such a cadre would:

- Improve the quality, clarity, and constitutional accuracy of judicial orders at the District level;
- Reduce judicial delays by freeing judges from the burden of extensive legal referencing and documentation;
- Facilitate the implementation of structured case management and time-bound trials;
- Assist judges in navigating complex statutory frameworks such as POCSO, NDPS, PMLA, and Commercial Laws;
- Enhance the digital transformation of courts by supporting the use of legal databases and e-court systems;
- Cultivate a new generation of well-trained legal professionals grounded in judicial process and ethics.

Comparative experiences from jurisdictions such as the United States, Canada, Australia, South Korea, and France reveal that Trial-level clerkships significantly contribute to adjudicative quality and systemic efficiency. Even within India, nearly

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<sup>1</sup> National Judicial Data Grid, as viewed on 11 November 2025, [https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/njdg\\_v3/](https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/njdg_v3/).

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Research and Planning, State of the Judiciary Report: A Report on Infrastructure, Budgeting, Human Resources, and ICT (2023), [https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0490f1f4972d133619a60c30f3559e/documents/misc/state\\_of\\_the\\_judiciary.pdf](https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0490f1f4972d133619a60c30f3559e/documents/misc/state_of_the_judiciary.pdf).

every High Court has operationalised a Law Clerk programme with positive outcomes in terms of judicial productivity and institutional learning.

Against this backdrop, this proposal advocates for the establishment of a formal District Court Law Clerkship Programme, to be designed and supervised by the respective High Courts in consultation with State Governments. A structured recruitment process, adequate remuneration, and targeted training modules would ensure both the effectiveness and sustainability of this initiative.

The appointment of Law Clerks at the District level is a timely and necessary reform that would modernise the functioning of the District judiciary, improve access to justice, and uphold the promise of the Constitution that justice must not only be done, but done well, and done for all.

## **1. Introduction**

The Centre for Research and Planning, Supreme Court of India, undertook this study to examine the role and impact of Law Clerks in enhancing the quality, timeliness, and efficiency of justice delivery within the Indian judiciary. Recognising that well-trained Law Clerks constitute an integral support system and function as an intellectual extension of the Court, the study assesses how such institutional research support contributes to the deepening of judicial reasoning, the strengthening of precedent-based decision-making, and the overall capacity of courts to respond effectively to the ever-growing demands of justice.

### **1.1 Methodology**

In approaching this issue, the Centre first assessed the efficacy of the High Court clerkship model as well as clerkships across various divisions in the High Courts, Tribunals and the Delhi Judicial Academy. Following the analysis, the Centre has made recommendations to streamline the clerkship experience across High Courts. The Centre then engaged in conversations with Judicial Officers in the District Judiciary who are currently serving as Registrars in the Supreme Court. Through these conversations, the Centre refocused the study to assess how law researchers may aid District Judges. This understanding of the Indian experience was then placed in a wider comparative framework. Thus, clerkship models in other global jurisdictions, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Russia, among others, were analysed. These models have historically demonstrated how structured research support holds the potential to enhance judicial productivity at both Constitutional and District Court levels. Thus, a comparative perspective enables the identification of best practices, and offers valuable insights into how Indian courts, particularly at the District

level, may benefit from institutionalising similar frameworks. These learnings were then juxtaposed with national models where recruitment of researchers and legal counsels is conducted at the District level. Finally, this understanding was relied on to suggest a pilot scheme for Law Clerks at the District Court level.

## **1.2 Structure of the Report**

The second section focuses on the schemes at the Supreme Court and High Court, as well as the District Judiciary. It summarises the history of the clerkship program in the Supreme Court, highlights how clerkships aid High Courts and the need for a streamlined recruitment process. It also emphasises how District judiciaries are the first point of contact for most litigants and analyses how the appointment of Law Clerks or Research Associates could significantly augment the capacity of District Judges to handle complex questions of fact and law.

The third section presents a detailed account of existing clerkship models currently operational in different High Courts across India, followed by an analysis examining eligibility criteria, processes of recruitment and selection, remuneration structures, and the typical range of tasks entrusted to Law Clerks. It concludes by providing recommendations to streamline the selection method for Law Clerks at the High Court.

The fourth section dwells on why law researchers are required at the District Court level and the various benefits such a programme would yield, both for judges and law students. It broadens the scope of analysis by providing a comparative overview of international experiences. It studies how various jurisdictions structure their clerkship programmes, the functions assigned to clerks in different levels of courts, and the tangible benefits recorded in terms of judicial efficiency, institutional learning, and quality of adjudication. This analysis is continued in the domestic context by evaluating

schemes where District Courts recruit researchers and counsels and judges practice autonomy over the process.

The fifth section enumerates the pilot scheme designed to strengthen the research capacity of the District Judiciary. It advances proposals for institutional reform aimed at ensuring that the advantages of clerkship programmes hitherto concentrated in Constitutional Courts are extended to District level, which shoulder the greatest burden of litigation and serve as the true backbone of the Indian judicial system. The final section of the Report concludes why it is imperative to reimagine clerkship programmes in the Indian judiciary, both at the High Court and District Court level.

This Report seeks to document existing practices and also provide a forward-looking vision: where robust research support to judges at every level becomes an integral feature of India's judicial architecture. By embedding such institutional mechanisms, the Indian judiciary can take a decisive step towards ensuring that justice delivery remains both timely and substantively rich, thereby fulfilling its constitutional promise to the people.

## **2. Overview of the Clerkships in Various Courts in India**

### **2.1 Supreme Court**

The clerkship program at the Supreme Court was formalised in 1991, with only graduates from National Law Schools (NLUs) being considered for the position.<sup>3</sup> The recruitment process was initially informal and ad hoc, it was later formalised by the Registry, when it started soliciting applications from 5 NLUs, who would forward applications of students on the basis of the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).<sup>4</sup> By May 2009, this list of 5 NLUs was expanded to include 12 NLUs, 4 colleges in “stand-by-category”, and 2 colleges in the ‘other approved’ category.<sup>5</sup> This exclusive selection pool was challenged in the 2013 Delhi High Court judgment of *Phaguni Nilesh Lal v. The Registrar General, Supreme Court of India*,<sup>6</sup> where the Court held that the recruitment process at the time was unconstitutional. The Court further held that each judge could choose candidates from the pool of applicants who applied.<sup>7</sup> Following this ruling, the Supreme Court issued a *Revised Scheme for Engagement of Law Clerk-cum-Research Assistants* in January 2015.

As per the 2015 scheme, an advertisement would be published by the Registry in the month of January every year, inviting online applications. Following which, a competitive exam would be conducted for applicants, and the shortlisted applicants would be invited for an interview with a committee of judges.<sup>8</sup> However, the scheme

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<sup>3</sup> Anurag Bhaskar, ‘Law Clerks and Access to Judges: A Comparative Reflection on the Recruitment Process of Law Clerks in India,’ (2021) 6(1) Comparative Constitutional Law & Administrative Law Journal.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> 206 (2014) DLT 674.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Anurag Bhaskar, ‘Law Clerks and Access to Judges: A Comparative Reflection on the Recruitment Process of Law Clerks in India,’ (2021) 6(1) Comparative Constitutional Law & Administrative Law Journal.

also provided that all judges may hire one Law Clerk as per their discretion. In 2020, the Supreme Court Registry issued an order stating that the Court may not invite application in any particular year.<sup>9</sup>

A revised scheme for engaging Law Clerk-cum-Research Associates was published by the Supreme Court in 2023 (updated in 2024), which mandates that Law Clerks will be recruited on a contractual period of one year, with a monthly remuneration of Rs. 80,000/-.<sup>10</sup> The shortlisting process is conducted in three stages, involving a written test and interview. To ensure an equitable hiring process, the Supreme Court specified in its Recruitment Scheme, that it will formulate and implement a diversity and inclusion policy. Furthermore, the scheme stipulates that in order to ensure diversity in the application process, the Court will publicly advertise the notification in several national and regional publications, coordinate with the Commission of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, and Women, and conduct online and offline sessions to raise awareness about the clerkship scheme.<sup>11</sup>

Apart from Law Clerks, the Supreme Court also hires Research Consultants and Research Associates at the Centre for Research and Planning, the Supreme Court's policy centre.<sup>12</sup> Applications for both these positions are invited through a public notice on the Supreme Court website. Candidates are then shortlisted on the basis of their application and interview. Consultants receive a remuneration of Rs. 1,25,000/- per

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Supreme Court of India, *Scheme for Engaging Law Clerk-cum-Research Associates on Short-Term Contractual Assignment* (2024) <https://cdn.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0490f1f4972d133619a60c30f3559e/uploads/2024/01/2024012565.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Supreme Court of India, *Engagement of Consultant (Research) and Research Assistants on short-term contractual basis* (2025) <https://cdn.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0490f1f4972d133619a60c30f3559e/uploads/2025/06/2025062488.pdf>

month, while Research Associates receive a remuneration of Rs. 80,000/- per month.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.2 High Courts

There are 25 High Courts in India, with a national Case Clearance Ratio of 94%.<sup>14</sup> Of these, 10 states had a case clearance ratio of over 100% in 2024.<sup>15</sup> Despite this, the current pendency at High Courts lies at nearly 45 lakh cases.<sup>16</sup> In the face of these overwhelming figures, law clerks prove an invaluable resource in assisting judges in their judicial and administrative tasks. However, a look at the clerkship schemes enacted across the country reveals significant variations in the eligibility criteria, remuneration and other factors. Streamlining these aspects of the schemes would result in a more transparent recruitment process across the country, thereby ensuring that all state clerkship programmes appeal equally to law students and attract stronger applicants.

## 2.3 District Judiciary

With over 777<sup>17</sup> Districts and 723 District Courts,<sup>18</sup> the District Judiciary constitutes the foundational layer of the Indian legal system. The majority of civil and criminal litigation originates at the District level. This tier of the judiciary represents the first point of contact for litigants seeking legal recourse, while also serving as the principal interface between the citizenry and the formal structures of adjudication. In this sense, the District Court Judge occupies a uniquely critical position, where they are entrusted

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> India Justice Report (2024)

[https://indiajusticereport.org/files/IJR%204\\_Full%20Report\\_English%20\(1\).pdf](https://indiajusticereport.org/files/IJR%204_Full%20Report_English%20(1).pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> As per the National Judicial Data Grid on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025,

[https://nidg.ecourts.gov.in/hcnjdg\\_v2/?app\\_token=](https://nidg.ecourts.gov.in/hcnjdg_v2/?app_token=)

<sup>17</sup> Integrated Government Online Directory, *State/UT-Wise List of Districts*,

<https://igod.gov.in/sq/District/states>

<sup>18</sup> Integrated Government Online Directory, *Districts Courts*, <https://igod.gov.in/jud/J003/organizations>

with the duty to deliver justice expeditiously, fairly, and in a manner consistent with constitutional values. However, the realities on the ground reveal that District Judges are overburdened, with nearly 4.71 crore cases currently pending across all District Courts in India.<sup>19</sup> Hence, most judges preside over daily cause lists running into 100-200 matters, with little time available for comprehensive legal research. In addition to this, they are expected to carry out administrative tasks on a daily basis. Yet, they are not supported by any law researchers. Hence, a structured programme for the appointment of Law Clerks-cum-Research Associates to District Court Judges would mark a significant step toward modernising the Indian judiciary, reducing pendency, and reinforcing access to justice with adequate institutional support.

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<sup>19</sup> As per the National Judicial Data Grid on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025, [https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/njdg\\_v3/](https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/njdg_v3/)

### 3. Law Clerkship Programme at Various High Courts In India

#### 3.1 Law Clerkship Programmes at High Courts

The engagement of Law Clerks by the judges of the High Courts over the years has proven to be an integral and indispensable component of judicial functioning. Law Clerks provide valuable research and administrative assistance to the Bench, while simultaneously familiarising themselves with judicial processes.<sup>20</sup> Further, their recruitment encourages the engagement of researchers to ease the judicial and administrative burden at the High Court level. An overview of the clerkship process across various High Courts is summarised in the table below:

S No	Name of the High Court	Whether the High Court has a position for Law Clerks	Method of Selection (Procedure)	Remuneration (In Rs.)	Tenure
1.	Allahabad <sup>21</sup>	Yes	The selection process consists of an exam, a screening test, and an interview.	Fixed honorarium of Rs. 25,000/- per month.	Engagement shall be for one year, subject to satisfactory performance. The maximum term shall not exceed two years.
2.	Andhra Pradesh	Yes	The selection process requires the candidates to	Rs. 35,000/- per month as honorarium. <sup>23</sup>	Engagement shall be for a period of one year. The assignment can be extended for a further period not

<sup>20</sup> Anurag Bhaskar, 'Law Clerks and Access to Judges: A Comparative Reflection on the Recruitment Process of Law Clerks in India' (2021) 6(1) Comparative Constitutional Law & Administrative Law Journal; Abhinav Chandrachud, 'From Hyderabad to Harvard: How U.S. Law Schools Make Clerking on India's Supreme Court Worthwhile' (HLS Program on the Legal Profession Research Paper No 2014-15, 24 March 2014) <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2413576>

<sup>21</sup> High Court of Judicature at Allahabad, *Notice for Engagement of Law Clerk (Trainee)-2024*, [https://www.allahabadhighcourt.in/event/event\\_15264\\_02-06-2023.pdf](https://www.allahabadhighcourt.in/event/event_15264_02-06-2023.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> High Court of Andhra Pradesh, *Notification by Recruitment Cell for Appointment of Law Clerks (2025)* [22032025092425recruitment\\_notifications.pdf](https://www.allahabadhighcourt.in/event/event_15264_02-06-2023.pdf)

			appear for Viva Voce. <sup>22</sup>		exceeding four years on the approval of the Chief Justice.
3.	Bombay <sup>24</sup>	Yes	Interview before the Selection Committee comprising Judge/s nominated by the Chief Justice.	Rs. 65,000/- per month as Stipend/Honorarium.	Engagement shall be for a period of one year. The term can be extended up to one year if recommended by the Judge to whom the Law Clerk is attached along with the approval of the Chief Justice.
4.	Calcutta <sup>25</sup>	Yes	The eligible candidates may be required to appear for a written test and/or a viva voce examination for screening.	Remuneration of Rs. 35,000/- per month.	NA
5.	Chhattisgarh <sup>26</sup>	Yes	Selection is based on an interview.	Fixed honorarium of Rs. 30,000/- per month.	Engagement shall be for a period of one year. The term can be extended up to 3 years on the approval of the Chief Justice. <sup>27</sup>
6.	Delhi <sup>28</sup>	Yes	The selection is based on the applications	Rs. 80,000/- per month. <sup>29</sup>	Law Researchers shall be engaged on a purely short term

<sup>22</sup> High Court of Andhra Pradesh, *Notification* (2025) [18032025184208recruitment\\_notifications.pdf](#)

<sup>24</sup> Office of the Registrar General, High Court of Judicature at Bombay and its Benches at Nagpur and Aurangabad, *Recruitment for the Post of Law Clerk* (2025) [recruitbom20250114162828.pdf](#)

<sup>25</sup> The High Court of Calcutta, *Notice* (2024) [notice-11807-11-Jul-2024.pdf](#)

<sup>26</sup> High Court of Chattisgarh, *Legal Assistant Advertisement* (2025) [https://highcourt.cg.gov.in/recruit/rec/2025/Legal\\_Assistant\\_adv\\_2025.pdf](#)

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> High Court of Delhi, *Scheme for Engagement of Law Researchers in the High Court of Delhi* (2018) [https://www.google.com/url?q=https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec021160453108d3e537255e9f7b931f/documents/circular/1\\_5.pdf&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1762163412174112&usq=AOvVaw2Z1WPLqf\\_uQOIFiy2Y9cQzQ](#)

<sup>29</sup> W.P.(C) 7998/2025.

			made either to the Judges' offices itself or routed to the Court Registry. This is usually followed by an interview or personal interaction on the discretion of the Judge.		contractual basis as determined by the Judge, extendable up to three years or till the retirement/cessation of office of the Judge, whichever is earlier.
7.	Gauhati <sup>30</sup>	Yes	The selection process includes a written examination and an interview/ <i>viva voce</i> .	Rs. 30,000/- per month.	Engagement shall be for a period of 2 years.
8.	Gujarat <sup>31</sup>	Yes	A written test followed by an interview ( <i>viva voce</i> test).	Fixed remuneration of Rs. 60,000/- per month.	Engagement shall be for a period of 11 months initially. The term can be extended up to another 11 months subject to the approval of the Chief Justice.
9.	Himachal Pradesh	No	NA	NA	NA
10.	Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh <sup>32</sup>	Yes (Research Assistant)	Selection based on an Interview.	Rs. 40,000/- per month as Honorarium.	Engagement shall be for a period of one year. The term can be extended up to one year on the approval of the Chief Justice or the Committee

<sup>30</sup> Gauhati High Court at Guwahati, *Advertisement for Engagement of Law Clerks* (2025) <https://ghconline.gov.in/Recruitment/Notification-06-02-2025.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> High Court of Gujarat, SOLA, Ahmedabad, *Advertisement No. RC/B/1320/2025 (LA)* (2025) [999 999 2025 4 28 18.pdf](https://ghconline.gov.in/Recruitment/Notification-06-02-2025.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> High Court of Jammu and Kashmir, *Notification No. 461 for Engagement of Research Assistant* (2019) [notification461\\_23072019.PDF](https://ghconline.gov.in/Recruitment/Notification-06-02-2025.pdf)

					nominated by the Chief Justice.
11.	Jharkhand <sup>33</sup>	Yes (Law Researcher/ Research Associate)	Based on an initial screening based on the candidates' CVs followed by an interview.	Monthly remuneration of Rs. 40,000/-	Engagement shall be for a period of one year. The term can be extended up to one year on the approval of the Chief Justice.
12.	Karnataka <sup>34</sup>	Yes	Selection based on academic record, achievements and interview to be conducted by a Committee of Judges constituted by the Chief Justice	Monthly honorarium of Rs. 25,000/-	Engagement shall be for a period of one year. The term can be extended at the approval of the Government of Karnataka and the High Court of Karnataka.
13.	Kerala <sup>35</sup>	Yes (Research Assistant)	Based on Viva Voce Examination	Rs. 30,000/- per month.	Engagement shall be for a period of one year. The term can be extended up to one year at the approval of the Government of Kerala.
14.	Madhya Pradesh <sup>36</sup>	Yes	Selection based on applications made to the Judges' offices or to the Registry	Rs. 30,000/- per month. <sup>37</sup>	Engagement shall be for a period of one year. The term can be extended up to one

<sup>33</sup> High Court of Jharkhand, Ranchi, Advertisement No. 04/Accts. /2024 for engagement of Law Researchers/ Research Associates (2024) [https://jharkhandhighcourt.nic.in/pdfshow.php?pdfnm=recruitment/law\\_researcher\\_adv\\_04\\_accts\\_2024\\_18042024.pdf](https://jharkhandhighcourt.nic.in/pdfshow.php?pdfnm=recruitment/law_researcher_adv_04_accts_2024_18042024.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> High Court of Karnataka, Selection of Candidates To The Post of "Law Clerk – Cum – Research Assistant" On Honorarium Basis (2024) [https://judiciary.karnataka.gov.in/common\\_folder/notification/LCRA2024\\_Notification.pdf](https://judiciary.karnataka.gov.in/common_folder/notification/LCRA2024_Notification.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> High Court of Kerala, Notification no. HCKL/9464/2023-REC2 for Temporary Appointment as Research Assistant (2024) <https://hckrecruitment.keralacourts.in/hckrecruitment//Recruitment/viewPdf?token=Mw==>

<sup>36</sup> High Court of Madhya Pradesh, Jabalpur, Advertisement For Engagement of Legal Assistant/Law Clerk-Cum-Research Assistants (2022-2023) [Advertisement for Legal Assistant.pdf](#)

<sup>37</sup> Endorsement No. B-5988 Jabalpur dated 23.08.2023.

			followed by an interview.		year at the approval of the Chief Justice.
15.	Madras <sup>38</sup>	Yes	By the Selection Committee based on <i>Viva Voce</i> . The Committee may opt for a screening test.	Rs. 30,000/- per month.	Engagement shall be for a period of one year.
16.	Manipur <sup>39</sup>	Yes (Legal Researcher)	Skill Test + Personal Interview	Rs. 500/- per day.	NA
17.	Meghalaya <sup>40</sup>	Yes	Based on the recommendation of the interview board, constituted by the Chief Justice.	Rs. 22,500/- per month.	Engagement shall be for a period of two years.
18.	Orissa <sup>41</sup>	Yes (Research Assistant)	First, the shortlisting of applications, then an interview before the selection committee, then recommendation by the Judge or the Chief Justice	Rs. 30,000/- per month.	Engagement shall be for a term coterminous with the tenure of the Chief Justice/ Judge or for a period of two years, whichever is earlier.
19.	Patna <sup>42</sup>	Yes (Law Assistant)	First, the shortlisting of applications, then	Rs. 35,000/- per month.	Engagement shall be for a period of one year. The term can be

<sup>38</sup> High Court of Madras, *Notification No 271 of 2024 for Recruitment of Research Law Assistant (2024)* <https://www.mhc.tn.gov.in/recruitment/docs/Notification%20No.271%20of%202024.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> High Court of Manipur at Imphal, *Advertisement No. HCM/D-42/2023-Estt.-1/28867 for the post of Legal Researcher (2024)* [https://hcmimphal.nic.in/Documents/legal%20researcher\\_dw\\_0001.pdf](https://hcmimphal.nic.in/Documents/legal%20researcher_dw_0001.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> High Court Of Meghalaya, Shillong, *Advertisement No.HCM.11/133/2019-Rect./96 for engagement of Law Clerks-cum-Legal Research Assistants (2025)* <https://meghalayahighcourt.nic.in/sites/default/files/recruitment/R174.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> High Court of Orissa, Cuttack, *Abridged Advertisement No 06/2024 for Selection and Appointment of Research Assistant (2024)* <https://www.orissahighcourt.nic.in/recruitment-corner-pdf-view/221/>

<sup>42</sup> High Court of Judicature at Patna, *Advertisement No.- PHC/LA-01/2022 for Engagement Of Law Assistant In Patna High Court (2022)* <https://patnahighcourt.gov.in/getfile/NjE3Mw==dUcEhb--ak1----am1--KFo=>

			an interview before the selection committee.		extendable up to three years based on the sole discretion and approval of the competent authority.
20.	Punjab & Haryana	No	NA	NA	NA
21.	Rajasthan <sup>43</sup>	Yes	Based on the recommendation of the Committee, constituted by the Chief Justice.	Rs. 50,000/- per month.	Engagement shall be for a period of one year. The term can be extendable up to four years or the retirement of the concerned Judge with whom the Legal Researcher is attached, whichever is earlier.
22.	Sikkim	Yes	Based on an initial screening test followed by an interview by Judge <sup>44</sup>	Rs. 35,000/- per month. <sup>45</sup>	Engagement shall be for a maximum period of two years, renewable for subject period of each year as may be decided by the Judge that the Law Clerk is attached with.
23.	Telangana <sup>46</sup>	Yes	Viva Voce by the Chief Justice or a committee nominated by him.	Rs. 25,000/- per month.	Engagement shall be for a period of one year.

<sup>43</sup> Rajasthan High Court, *Abridged Advertisement for Engagement of Legal Researcher* (2025) [https://hcraj.nic.in/hcraj/hcraj\\_admin/uploadfile/recruitment/lrgm174858006438.pdf](https://hcraj.nic.in/hcraj/hcraj_admin/uploadfile/recruitment/lrgm174858006438.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> The High Court of Sikkim, Gangtok, *Notification No.39/ESTT./HCS For Engaging Law Clerks-Cum-Legal Research Assistants In The High Court of Sikkim* (2022) [https://hcs.gov.in/hcs/sites/default/files/rules/Notification\\_39.pdf](https://hcs.gov.in/hcs/sites/default/files/rules/Notification_39.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> The High Court of Sikkim, Gangtok, *Advertisement No.22/ESTT./HCS for the posts of Law Clerk-cum-Research Assistant* (2022) <https://hcs.gov.in/hcs/sites/default/files/Notification/Notification22.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> High Court For The State Of Telangana, at Hyderabad, *Notification No. 33/S0/2024 for the posts of Law Clerks* (2024) [https://tshc.gov.in/documents/splofficer\\_2024\\_10\\_24T11\\_57\\_53.pdf](https://tshc.gov.in/documents/splofficer_2024_10_24T11_57_53.pdf)

24.	Tripura <sup>47</sup>	Yes	By Lordship's Choice	Fixed Honorarium of Rs. 40,000/- per month.	Engagement shall be for a period of one year.
25.	Uttarakhand <sup>48</sup>	Yes	Direct interview (Judge/Registry)	Rs. 35,000/- per month; no Dearness Allowance or other benefits.	Engagement shall be for a period of one year.

- Eligibility Criteria:** The eligibility criteria to apply for clerkships at the High Court levels typically includes securing minimum aggregate marks at the undergraduate level. These vary from 50%,<sup>49</sup> 55%,<sup>50</sup> to 60%<sup>51</sup> across various High Courts. Other eligibility criteria also include age. This varies across Courts, with certain schemes allowing persons between the ages of 21 to 26 to apply,<sup>52</sup> while others specify an age range of 21 to 28,<sup>53</sup> 21 to 30,<sup>54</sup> and 23 to 32 years.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>47</sup> High Court Of Tripura, Agartala, *Advertisement No.F.11(60)-HC/2023/13670 for engagement of Law Clerks-cum-Legal Research Assistant (2023)* <https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec012bd235c31c97855b7ef2dc8b4147/uploads/2023/05/2023052274.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> High Court of Uttarakhand at Nainital, *Advertisement No. – 01/Law Clerks (Trainee)/2021, for the post of 'Law Clerks (Trainee), (2021)* <https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3bc7f621451b4f5df308a8e098112185d/uploads/2024/12/202412181235455218.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> High Court of Karnataka, *Notification No. HCRB/LCRA - 20/2022 For Selection of Candidates To The Post of "Law Clerk – Cum – Research Assistant on Honorarium Basis (2024)* [https://judiciary.karnataka.gov.in/common\\_folder/notification//LCRA2024\\_Notification.pdf](https://judiciary.karnataka.gov.in/common_folder/notification//LCRA2024_Notification.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Office of the Registrar General, High Court of Judicature at Bombay and its Benches at Nagpur and Aurangabad, *Recruitment for the Post of Law Clerk (2025)* [recruitbom20250114162828.pdf](https://recruitbom20250114162828.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> High Court of Jharkhand, Ranchi, *Advertisement No. 04/Accts. /2024 for engagement of Law Researchers/ Research Associates (2024)* [https://jharkhandhighcourt.nic.in/pdfshow.php?pdfnm=recruitment/law\\_researcher\\_adv\\_04\\_accts\\_2024\\_18042024.pdf](https://jharkhandhighcourt.nic.in/pdfshow.php?pdfnm=recruitment/law_researcher_adv_04_accts_2024_18042024.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> High Court Of Uttarakhand at Nainital, *Advertisement No. – 01/Law Clerks (Trainee)/2021, for the post of 'Law Clerks (Trainee) (2021)* <https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3bc7f621451b4f5df308a8e098112185d/uploads/2024/12/202412181235455218.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> High Court of Jharkhand, Ranchi, *Advertisement No. 04/Accts. /2024 for engagement of Law Researchers/ Research Associates (2024)* [https://jharkhandhighcourt.nic.in/pdfshow.php?pdfnm=recruitment/law\\_researcher\\_adv\\_04\\_accts\\_2024\\_18042024.pdf](https://jharkhandhighcourt.nic.in/pdfshow.php?pdfnm=recruitment/law_researcher_adv_04_accts_2024_18042024.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> Office of the Registrar General, High Court Of Judicature at Bombay and its Benches at Nagpur and Aurangabad, *Recruitment for the Post of Law Clerk (2025)* [recruitbom20250114162828.pdf](https://recruitbom20250114162828.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> The High Court of Calcutta, *Notice (2024)* [notice-11807-11-Jul-2024.pdf](https://notice-11807-11-Jul-2024.pdf)

While eligibility requirements are usually limited to the aforementioned two criteria, some courts also specify other eligibility criteria such as a working knowledge of computer skills.<sup>56</sup>

- **Duties and Responsibilities:** While the recruitment process differs across High Courts, the duties of the Law Clerks share a largely common pattern. Once the Law Clerks are hired by the High Courts, they are tasked with assisting in research, drafting, preparing case briefs, attending court proceedings, helping with judgment writing, file management, and preparation of bench ready notes.<sup>57</sup> The Calcutta High Court's scheme further states that Law Clerks will also be required to prepare statistical reports on the timely delivery of judgments and any other relevant matters.<sup>58</sup>

The Delhi High Court also mandates that Law Clerks may be required to assist the judges in administrative functions, as per their requirements.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the High Court of Madhya Pradesh states that in addition to the work allotted by the judges, Law Clerks may be required to perform other duties assigned by the Principal Registrar or Registrar General from time to time.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> High Court Of Uttarakhand at Nainital, *Advertisement No. – 01/Law Clerks (Trainee)/2021, for the post of 'Law Clerks (Trainee) (2021)* [https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3bc7f621451b4f5df308a8e098112185d/uploads/2024/12/2024\\_12181235455218.pdf](https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3bc7f621451b4f5df308a8e098112185d/uploads/2024/12/2024_12181235455218.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Office of the Registrar General, High Court Of Judicature at Bombay and its Benches at Nagpur and Aurangabad, *Recruitment for the Post of Law Clerk (2025)* [recruitbom20250114162828.pdf](https://www.recruitbom20250114162828.pdf); High Court of Karnataka, *Notification No. HCRB/LCRA - 20/2022 For Selection Of Candidates To The Post Of "Law Clerk – Cum – Research Assistant" On Honorarium Basis (2024)* [https://judiciary.karnataka.gov.in/common\\_folder/notification/LCRA2024\\_Notification.pdf](https://judiciary.karnataka.gov.in/common_folder/notification/LCRA2024_Notification.pdf); High Court of Jharkhand, Ranchi, *Advertisement No. 04/Accts. /2024 for engagement of Law Researchers/ Research Associates (2024)* [https://jharkhandhighcourt.nic.in/pdfshow.php?pdfnm=recruitment/law\\_researcher\\_adv\\_04\\_accts\\_2024\\_18042024.pdf](https://jharkhandhighcourt.nic.in/pdfshow.php?pdfnm=recruitment/law_researcher_adv_04_accts_2024_18042024.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> The High Court of Calcutta, *Notice (2024)* [notice-11807-11-Jul-2024.pdf](https://www.notice-11807-11-Jul-2024.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> The High Court of Delhi, *Notice No. 38/Rules/DHC (2018)* [https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec021160453108d3e537255e9f7b931f/documents/circular/1\\_5.pdf](https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec021160453108d3e537255e9f7b931f/documents/circular/1_5.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> High Court of Madhya Pradesh, Jabalpur, *Advertisement For Engagement of Legal Assistant/Law Clerk-Cum-Research Assistants (2022-2023)* [Advertisement for Legal Assistant.pdf](https://www.advertisement-for-legal-assistant.pdf)

- **Conduct During and After the Tenure:** In addition to their duties, some High Court recruitment schemes list out the expected conduct of the clerks as well. Clerks are bound by confidentiality, and restricted from private practice during their tenure.<sup>61</sup> Schemes like that of the Delhi High Court also specify that the clerks cannot appear before the Judge they were attached to for one year after the completion of their clerkship.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, they cannot appear in a case handled by the Judge to whom the Law Clerks were attached for at least three years, regardless of whether they worked on that case or not during their clerkship.<sup>63</sup>

### 3.2 Law Clerks in Other Divisions

Apart from the institutionalised hiring of Law Clerks in High Court, the Delhi High Court also undertakes specialised recruitment for law researchers for Delhi International Arbitration Centre (DIAC), Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLISA) and the Intellectual Property Division (IPD) of the Delhi High Court through official notifications published under the “Job Openings” column on its website. These notifications are distinct and independent of the chamber-based appointments.

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<sup>61</sup> Office of the Registrar General, High Court Of Judicature at Bombay and its Benches at Nagpur and Aurangabad, *Recruitment for the Post of Law Clerk* (2025) [recruitbom20250114162828.pdf](https://recruitbom20250114162828.pdf); The High Court of Delhi, *Notice No. 38/Rules/DHC* (2018) [https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec021160453108d3e537255e9f7b931f/documents/circular/1\\_5.pdf](https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec021160453108d3e537255e9f7b931f/documents/circular/1_5.pdf); High Court of Jharkhand, Ranchi, *Advertisement No. 04/Accts. /2024 for engagement of Law Researchers/ Research Associates* (2024) [https://jharkhandhighcourt.nic.in/pdfshow.php?pdfnm=recruitment/law\\_researcher\\_adv\\_04\\_accts\\_2024\\_18042024.pdf](https://jharkhandhighcourt.nic.in/pdfshow.php?pdfnm=recruitment/law_researcher_adv_04_accts_2024_18042024.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> The High Court of Delhi, *Notice No. 38/Rules/DHC* (2018) [https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec021160453108d3e537255e9f7b931f/documents/circular/1\\_5.pdf](https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec021160453108d3e537255e9f7b931f/documents/circular/1_5.pdf); High Court Of Uttarakhand At Nainital, *Advertisement No. – 01/Law Clerks (Trainee)/2021, for the post of ‘Law Clerks (Trainee)* (2021) [https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3bc7f621451b4f5df308a8e098112185d/uploads/2024/12/2024\\_12181235455218.pdf](https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3bc7f621451b4f5df308a8e098112185d/uploads/2024/12/2024_12181235455218.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

#### A. DIAC (Delhi International Arbitration Centre) <sup>64</sup>

- **Eligibility:** Unlike the High Courts, candidates applying for DIAC must have a diploma or an LL.M. in arbitration law, commercial law or Arbitration and Dispute Resolution (ADR). They must also not be older than 27 years at the time of applying.
- **Selection Process:** All applicants must fill a form provided by the DIAC mentioning their details, work experience and CV. Subsequently, an interview is held and the shortlisted candidates are selected on the basis of the interview and their CVs.
- **Tenure and Remuneration:** Researchers at the DIAC are initially hired for a period of 6 months, which is extendable up to 3 years. They are paid Rs. 65,000/- per month.
- **Duties:** Researchers at the DIAC are expected to have excellent research and analytical skills, and be well-versed with digital platforms and legal search engines such as SCC and Manupatra.
- **Conduct:** Akin to the High Court, researchers at the DIAC are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding the matters they are working on. They are expected to maintain confidentiality even after the completion of their tenure. Additionally, they cannot accept any other assignment during their tenure as researchers.

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<sup>64</sup> Delhi International Arbitration Centre, *Advertisement for the Post of Law Researcher (LR) At Diac, No. 1/2025/LR/DIAC (2025)*  
<https://dhcdiac.nic.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Advertisement-of-Law-Researcher-1.pdf>

## B. DSLSA (Delhi State Legal Services Authority)<sup>65</sup>

- **Eligibility:** All intending applicants must be below the age of 27 and must have secured at least 60% aggregate marks at the undergraduate level. They must also be fluent in Microsoft Office tools.
- **Selection:** All applicants must attach a 15 slide PowerPoint Presentation along with their applications on any one of the following topics: *"Provisions of Legal Services Authorities Act 1987/ Research Methodology/ Victimology/ Victim Compensation/ Rights of Under Trial Prisoners/ Rights of Children/ Right of Persons of LGBT Community"*. Shortlisted candidates are then interviewed, and the final selection is made on the basis of the interview.
- **Tenure and Remuneration:** Law Clerks are initially hired for a period of 3 months, but their tenure is extendable up to one year based on their performance. They are paid Rs. 35,000/- per month.
- **Duties:** Law Clerks are typically involved in studying and researching methods for better implementation of NALSA and DSLSA's schemes, supporting and assisting victims under the Delhi Victim Compensation Scheme in District Legal Service Authorities, providing legal assistance to victims of human trafficking, ensuring their welfare, and coordinating with various NGOs for their rehabilitation. Additionally, Law Clerks also assist in the preparation of PowerPoint Presentations, flyers, pamphlets, newsletters and any other informational material to be used in legal awareness camps and campaigns.

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<sup>65</sup> Delhi State Legal Service Authority, *Advertisement for Engagement of Law Clerk-cum-Research Assistant on Short Term Contractual Basis (2025)* <https://dlsa.org/11-07-2025-advertisement-for-engagement-of-law-clerk-cum-research-assistant-on-short-term-contractual-basis/>;

### C. Law Researchers for Intellectual Property Division, Delhi High Court<sup>66</sup>

- **Eligibility:** Akin to the researchers hired for DIAC, researchers applying for the IP Division are expected to fulfill specific criteria such as a specialisation in IPR or a graduate law degree with at least 2 years of work experience in IPR. Additionally, applicants must not be above the age of 27 and must be Indian citizens.
- **Selection:** Law researchers in the IP Division are appointed via a Committee designated by the Chief Justice.<sup>67</sup> All applicants are required to submit their application to the Joint Registrar, which is subsequently be forwarded to the Committee. Applicants must also include a writing or research sample regarding their work in IPR with the application for the Committee's consideration. Shortlisted candidates are then interviewed for final consideration.
- **Tenure and Remuneration:** While the scheme for engaging law researchers in the IP Division does not mention the minimum tenure for which researchers may be hired, it states that their tenure may be extendable to 3 years depending on their performance, and 4 years in exceptional circumstances. The researchers are paid Rs. 65,000/- per month.
- **Duties:** Law researchers are required to closely work with the judges in the IP Division in order to assist them in the adjudication of disputes. Their responsibilities include preparing case briefs on the technical aspects of the

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<sup>66</sup> Call for Applications - Law Researchers (Intellectual Property Division), Delhi High Court, No. 117/E-VII/Estt/DHC (2022)

[https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0232b3ee0272954b956a7d1f86f76a/documents/circular/14122022c\\_0.pdf](https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0232b3ee0272954b956a7d1f86f76a/documents/circular/14122022c_0.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> Delhi High Court Intellectual Property Rights Division Rules, 2022, Corrected as per *Corrigendum* No. 63/Rules/DHC (11.04.2022)

[https://delhihighcourt.nic.in/files/Notifications%20and%20Practice%20Directions/notificationfile\\_wd6kndkfb4g.pdf](https://delhihighcourt.nic.in/files/Notifications%20and%20Practice%20Directions/notificationfile_wd6kndkfb4g.pdf)

case, including a concise brief on the technology involved and the precise points of the dispute. Researchers must also provide a comparative analysis on the state of the industry in which the matter needs to be adjudicated.

- **Conduct:** Researchers are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding the matters they are working on. Additionally, they cannot accept any other assignment during their tenure as researchers.

### 3.3 Law Clerks in Tribunals and State Judicial Academies

Tribunals such as the National Green Tribunal (NGT), the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) and the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), as well as the Delhi Judicial Academy, also appoint researchers. Their recruitment process, eligibility criteria, tenure and remuneration are as given in the following tables.

#### A. Tribunals

Name of Tribunal	Method of Selection (Procedure)	Remuneration (In Rs.)	Tenure
NGT	Not mentioned	To be decided by the competent authority based on the prior experiences and last pay drawn of the candidate. <sup>68</sup>	Varies depending on the Bench. While the notification for the Principal Bench in Delhi did not mention the tenure, <sup>69</sup> the Bench at Pune recruited researchers for a period of 3 months, extendable upon the

<sup>68</sup> National Green Tribunal, *Advertisement for engagement of Legal Researcher on contractual basis in the National Green Tribunal, Principal Bench* (2023) [https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public\\_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2024.08.2023.pdf](https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2024.08.2023.pdf); National Green Tribunal, *Advertisement for engagement of one Legal Researcher on contractual basis in National Green Tribunal, Western Zone Bench, Pune* (2025) [https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public\\_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2017.07.2025.pdf](https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2017.07.2025.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> National Green Tribunal, *Advertisement for engagement of Legal Researcher on contractual basis in the National Green Tribunal, Principal Bench* (2023) [https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public\\_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2024.08.2023.pdf](https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2024.08.2023.pdf)

			discretion of the competent authority. <sup>70</sup>
<b>NCLAT<sup>71</sup></b>	Candidates must submit the application form attached in the notification. Shortlisted candidates are then invited for a written examination or a <i>viva voce</i> .	Remuneration of Rs. 60,000/- per month.	The initial contract period is for one year, extendable for another year on the basis of the discretion of the Member with whom the Research Associate is attached.
<b>NCLT<sup>72</sup></b>	Selection is based on written examination and interview.	The remuneration for researchers depends on the Bench. While all other researchers are paid Rs. 60,000/- per month, those in the Principal Bench in Delhi are paid Rs. 80,000/-.	The initial contract period is for one year, extendable for another year on the basis of the Member with whom the Research Associate is attached.

- **Eligibility:** The NGT does not iterate the eligibility criteria for researchers in its notification. However, it requires details of previous work experience in the application form attached with the notification.<sup>73</sup> The NCLAT, on the other hand,

<sup>70</sup> National Green Tribunal, *Advertisement for engagement of one Legal Researcher on contractual basis in National Green Tribunal, Western Zone Bench, Pune* (2025) [https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public\\_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2017.07.2025.pdf](https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2017.07.2025.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> National Company Law Appellate Tribunal, *Office Memorandum* (2023) [https://nclat.nic.in/sites/default/files/2023-12/Vacancy%20Circular%2013122023\\_LRA%20in%20NCLAT.pdf](https://nclat.nic.in/sites/default/files/2023-12/Vacancy%20Circular%2013122023_LRA%20in%20NCLAT.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> National Company Law Tribunal, *Office Memorandum* (2025) <https://nclt.gov.in/sites/default/files/Career/Adv%20dated%2023.09.2025%20for%20all%20NCLT%20Benches.pdf>

<sup>73</sup> National Green Tribunal, *Advertisement for engagement of Legal Researcher on contractual basis in the National Green Tribunal, Principal Bench* (2023) [https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public\\_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2024.08.2023.pdf](https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2024.08.2023.pdf); National Green Tribunal, *Advertisement for engagement of one Legal Researcher on contractual basis in National Green Tribunal, Western Zone Bench, Pune* (2025) [https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public\\_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2017.07.2025.pdf](https://www.greentribunal.gov.in/sites/default/files/public_notice/Advertisement%20dated%2017.07.2025.pdf)

states that all intending applicants must have secured at least 55% aggregate marks at the undergraduate level.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, the NCLT in its notification mentions that all intending applicants must have secured at least 50% aggregate marks at the undergraduate level.<sup>75</sup> Candidates for both, the NCLAT and NCLT, are expected to have research and analytical skills, writing abilities, and must be fluent in navigating digital legal platforms such as SCC and Manupatra.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, they must also be well versed with MS Office Tools and must have the requisite knowledge of Company Law, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), as well as Competition Law. The notification further mentions that candidates must be below 30 years of age.<sup>77</sup>

- **Duties and Responsibilities:** The notification by the NGT does not specify the roles and responsibilities of the researchers. However, as per the NCLAT notification, researchers are expected to read case files, prepare case summaries and notes, conduct research on the facts and relevant laws in each case. They are also expected to take notes of the arguments of counsels and verify citations.<sup>78</sup> They also verify the final order to ensure there are no

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<sup>74</sup> National Company Law Appellate Tribunal, *Office Memorandum* (2023)

[https://nclat.nic.in/sites/default/files/2023-12/Vacancy%20Circular%2013122023\\_LRA%20in%20NCLAT.pdf](https://nclat.nic.in/sites/default/files/2023-12/Vacancy%20Circular%2013122023_LRA%20in%20NCLAT.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> National Company Law Tribunal, *Office Memorandum* (2025)

<https://nclt.gov.in/sites/default/files/Career/Advt%20dated%2023.09.2025%20for%20all%20NCLT%20Benches.pdf>

<sup>76</sup> National Company Law Appellate Tribunal, *Office Memorandum* (2023)

[https://nclat.nic.in/sites/default/files/2023-12/Vacancy%20Circular%2013122023\\_LRA%20in%20NCLAT.pdf](https://nclat.nic.in/sites/default/files/2023-12/Vacancy%20Circular%2013122023_LRA%20in%20NCLAT.pdf);

National Company Law Tribunal, *Office Memorandum* (2025)

<https://nclt.gov.in/sites/default/files/Career/Advt%20dated%2023.09.2025%20for%20all%20NCLT%20Benches.pdf>

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Scheme for the Engagement of Law Research Associates in NCLAT and NCLT,

<https://nclat.nic.in/sites/default/files/2023-12/Scheme%20for%20engagement%20of%20Law%20Research%20Associates%20in%20NCLAT.pdf>;

National Company Law Tribunal, *Office Memorandum* (2025)

<https://nclt.gov.in/sites/default/files/Career/Advt%20dated%2023.09.2025%20for%20all%20NCLT%20Benches.pdf>

grammatical or factual errors. Additionally, they prepare research or academic papers or speeches for conferences as required.<sup>79</sup> They are also expected to prepare statistical reports regarding the timely delivery of judgements, and undertake any other work as directed by the members.<sup>80</sup> Researchers at the NCLT are also expected to undertake the same responsibilities as those outlined for researchers at the NCLAT.<sup>81</sup>

- **Conduct:** The NGT does not specify the conduct expected by the researchers. However, researchers at the NCLAT and NCLT are not entitled to take up any alternate employment or engagement during their tenure.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, they are expected to maintain high ethical and moral standards during their tenure, and maintain confidentiality regarding the nature of their work.<sup>83</sup>

## B. Delhi Judicial Academy

Name of Position	Method of Selection (Procedure)	Remuneration (In Rs.)	Tenure
Law Clerks <sup>84</sup>	Candidates must submit an application form as prescribed the Academy. Shortlisted candidates are thereafter called for an interview comprising 100 marks.	Remuneration of Rs. 65,000/- per month.	The initial contract period is for one year, extendable for another year on the basis of the discretion of the Appointing Authority.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Scheme for the Engagement of Law Research Associates in NCLAT and NCLT, <https://nclat.nic.in/sites/default/files/2023-12/Scheme%20for%20engagement%20of%20Law%20Research%20Associates%20in%20NCLAT.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Delhi Judicial Academy, *Engagement Notice* (2024) <https://judicialacademy.nic.in/sites/default/files/LR.pdf>

<b>Research Assistant<sup>85</sup></b>	Candidates are shortlisted on the basis of the eligibility conditions. They are then interviewed by the Expert Committee, which subsequently selects candidates on the basis of their professional ability.	Rs. 56,100/- per month plus DA of the requisite post.	The initial contract period is for six months. The contract will lapse upon the completion of the stipulated period. Extension of the contract is on the sole discretion of the appointing authority.
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- Eligibility:** The notification for the recruitment of Law Researchers only stipulates that applicants must have a law degree from a recognised university.<sup>86</sup> However, the application form also requires applicants to submit details of their previous work and research experience as well as the names of two references.<sup>87</sup> The notification for the Research Associate, on the other hand, comprehensively states that applicants must have an LLM with a good academic record.<sup>88</sup> The notification further states that the age bar for candidates belonging to Other Backward Castes is 43, 45 for candidates belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and 40 years for unreserved candidates.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, upper age limit for disabled persons is 50 years for unreserved candidates, 53 years for candidates belonging to Other Backward Castes and 55 years for candidates belonging to Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Delhi Judicial Academy, *Employment Notice* (2019)  
[https://judicialacademy.nic.in/sites/default/files/1548134738\\_RA.pdf](https://judicialacademy.nic.in/sites/default/files/1548134738_RA.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> Delhi Judicial Academy, *Engagement Notice* (2024)  
<https://judicialacademy.nic.in/sites/default/files/LR.pdf>

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Delhi Judicial Academy, *Employment Notice* (2019)  
[https://judicialacademy.nic.in/sites/default/files/1548134738\\_RA.pdf](https://judicialacademy.nic.in/sites/default/files/1548134738_RA.pdf)

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

- **Duties and Responsibilities:** Although the duties and responsibilities of the Law Researchers are not iterated by the Academy, the notification for Research Assistants mentions that they will work on academic or training programs, or research projects. They also assist in policy responses, organising and conducting conferences, and all other activities undertaken by the Academy. They also coordinate and manage the work of the Law Researchers. Additionally, they may be assigned any other work as the Academy deems fit.<sup>91</sup>
- **Conduct:** The notification for law researchers by the Delhi Judicial Academy does not outline the expected conduct of the Law Researchers. However, the notification for the Research Assistants stipulates that they are expected to maintain a high ethical and moral standard during their tenure. They are also expected to maintain confidentiality regarding their work.<sup>92</sup>

### 3.4 Concerns in the Recruitment of High Court Clerks

A comparative review of recruitment mechanisms across the High Courts, its various divisions, Tribunals and the Delhi Judicial Academy, reveals significant procedural diversity in the engagement of law researchers. While such heterogeneity reflects the administrative autonomy of each High Court, it also exposes the absence of a coherent framework ensuring transparency, inclusivity, and consistency in appointments.

The following reforms may be considered to streamline clerkships at the High Court and attract more applicants:

- **Transparent and Structured Recruitment:** High Courts may institutionalise recruitment cycles by uploading vacancies on the High Court websites and

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

conducting the recruitment through the Registry.<sup>93</sup> Selections may also be based on objective assessments, done by means of written tests or structured evaluation or interviews, assessing research aptitude and legal reasoning.

- **Balancing Judicial Discretion and Administrative Oversight:** Judicial discretion in selecting research staff is of paramount importance, given the confidential and trust-based nature of the role. However, this discretion must operate within a transparent administrative framework. Thus, the process of applying for such positions should be made public only through the High Courts' websites to avoid informational asymmetry and ensure equal opportunity for all applicants.
- **Inclusion and Diversity Measures:** Although the engagement of Law Clerks is contractual and short-term in nature, the recruitment process should be reflective of the judiciary's commitment to diversity and equal opportunity.<sup>94</sup> To this end, the Supreme Court's order in *Md. Imran v. Union of India*,<sup>95</sup> must be followed and reservation must apply for persons belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Back Classes in the clerkship recruitment.
- **Streamlining of Tenure and Remuneration:** Disparities in tenure and remuneration across High Courts have led to uneven professional experiences. A standard tenure of one year, extendable up to another year, based on satisfactory performance based on an evaluation and feedback, can ensure

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<sup>93</sup> Scheme of Engaging Law Clerk-cum-Research Associates on Short-Term Contractual Assignment in the Supreme Court of India (2024)  
<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0490f1f4972d133619a60c30f3559e/uploads/2024/01/2024012565.pdf>

<sup>94</sup> Anurag Bhaskar, 'Law Clerks and Access to Judges: A Comparative Reflection on the Recruitment Process of Law Clerks in India,' (2021) 6(1) Comparative Constitutional Law & Administrative Law Journal.

<sup>95</sup> Writ Petition (Civil) No. 1100/2022.

both administrative consistency and continuity of support to the Bench. Moreover, a recommended remuneration band based on the cost of living and the respective city, revised by High Courts in consultation with State Governments, may promote parity while allowing space for local flexibility. Such streamlining is also likely to make High Court clerkships a more appealing job prospect to law students, and attract more applicants. Importantly, this would not alter the contractual nature of these positions cannot be regularised into a permanent post.<sup>96</sup>

- **Institutionalising Training and Evaluation:** Following their appointment, Law Clerks should undergo a short orientation programme on judicial ethics, research methodology, court procedures and workplace conduct, administered by the State Judicial Academies or the High Court itself. This would promote uniform standards of research assistance and professional discipline. At the conclusion of tenure, an evaluation of certificate issued jointly by the concerned Judge and the Registrar (Judicial) can serve both as professional recognition and as a record for institutional accountability.

Implementation of these suggestions will streamline recruitment processes, reduce *ad hocism* and institutionally strengthen clerkships at the High Court level.

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<sup>96</sup> Engagement of Law Clerk-cum-Research Associates on short-term contractual assignment, *No.F.21 (LC)/2025-SC (RC)* (January 10, 2025) <https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0490f1f4972d133619a60c30f3559e/uploads/2025/01/2025011066.pdf>.

#### 4. Why Do District Court Judges Need Law Clerks?<sup>97</sup>

Despite the overwhelming number of matters filed at the District level, District Judges continue to be expected to swiftly dispose of matters. However, such an expectation is often antithetical to the equally important requirement of delivering well-reasoned, precedent-aligned judgments that stand up to appellate scrutiny. Moreover, District Judges are required to adjudicate matters involving intricate questions of fact and law, including under special statutes, without the benefit of dedicated research support or assistance in organising legal material or preparing case briefs. They are also singlehandedly expected to familiarise themselves with evolving laws and answer interpretive questions of law.

In contrast, the Supreme Court and various High Courts, have, over the years, institutionalised the engagement of ‘Law Clerks’, ‘Research Assistants’, ‘Law Researchers’ or ‘Judicial Clerks’<sup>98</sup> to support judges in tasks such as legal research, note preparation and providing other forms of assistance essential to the effective discharge of judicial functions.<sup>99</sup> These arrangements have significantly enhanced the quality of judicial output and allowed judges to devote more focused attention to core adjudicative functions.<sup>100</sup> However, no parallel framework exists at the District level. This asymmetry in institutional support creates a structural imbalance in the administration of justice. It is both anomalous and counterproductive that judges operating at the grassroots of the judicial system, who are often called upon to make

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<sup>97</sup> As observed from conversations with District Judges.

<sup>98</sup> These terms have been used interchangeably throughout the document.

<sup>99</sup> Government of India, *Office Memorandum* (2024)

<https://cdn.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0490f1f4972d133619a60c30f3559e/uploads/2024/02/2024021281.pdf>; Sidharth Chauhan, ‘Clerkships in the Indian Supreme Court: Some Reflections and Suggestions,’ *Critical Twenties* (2012) [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3295959](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3295959)

<sup>100</sup> Madan B Lokur and Valay Singh, ‘Why District Court Judges Need Research Assistants like High Court and Supreme Court Judges’ *The Indian Express* (22 December 2024) <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/why-District-court-judges-need-research-assistants-like-high-court-and-supreme-court-judges-9739013/>

fact-intensive, legally significant determinations, do so without research support or assistance.

The successful engagement of Law Clerks models at the Supreme Court and High Courts across India indicates how formalising similar Research Associate positions at the District Court level can prove beneficial. If clerkships are institutionalised, District Judges will gain from Law Clerks across several stages of the legal process. Law Clerks will be able to provide not just research support but also other forms of logistical assistance.

Based on interviews with the judicial officers at the Registry, it has been found that Research Associates at the District level can assist in the following manner:

**A. Assisting in judicial work through legal research support:** Assigning legal researchers to District Court Judges can significantly improve judges' access to relevant precedents, statutes and comparative jurisprudence, thereby enhancing the depth and precision of judicial reasoning at the first level of adjudication.

Beyond the immediate task of research, such institutional support will also create a more research-oriented environment within the District Judiciary. Regular engagement with legal research will foster a jurisprudentially conscious culture, encouraging judgments that are better reasoned and attuned to contemporary legal developments and constitutional values.

**B. Improving the quality of judicial orders by reducing the research burden on judges:** Similar to their responsibilities in the Supreme Court and High Court, Law Clerks at the District Courts can assist in preparing concise research

notes, legal referencing, structuring judgments, and managing citation accuracy.<sup>101</sup> This will also give judges the ability to focus on the core tasks of adjudication and legal interpretation, thereby reducing delays and improving the clarity and coherence of judicial orders. Consequently, improving the overall quality of judicial orders, not only in linguistic and citational accuracy but also in jurisprudential depth.

**C. Creating a pool of young legal professionals:** The engagement of fresh law graduates as Law Clerks will serve as an entry point for young professionals into the justice system. This experience will act as a practical training ground, equipping them with institutional exposure from courtroom processes to administrative functioning of courts. They will learn court craft, judicial thinking, and procedural law, providing a strong foundation and serving as a robust training ground for future legal professionals.<sup>102</sup>

Notably, the value of clerkships in shaping future jurists was recognised by the Supreme Court in *All India Judges' Association v. Union of India*<sup>103</sup> wherein the Court held that clerkships would be considered as valid experience while calculating the total number of years of practice for candidates appearing for judicial service examinations. This affirmation by the Court reinforces the view that clerkships can prove invaluable in honing the skills of young legal professionals.

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<sup>101</sup>Abhinav Chandrachud, 'From Hyderabad to Harvard: How U.S. Law Schools Make Clerking on India's Supreme Court Worthwhile' (HLS Program on the Legal Profession Research Paper No 2014-15, 24 March 2014) <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2413576>.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid at pg. 18.

<sup>103</sup> (2002) 4 SCC 247.

#### **D. Aligning the District Court's functioning with best practices of the High**

**Courts and Supreme Court:** Extending research support systems to the District Judiciary is essential to align its functioning with the best practices of the Supreme Court and High Court. It is an institutional step towards eliminating institutional disparities and ensuring transparency and coherence across judicial tiers. Not only will this move align research assistance and professional support across the judiciary, it will also reiterate the Supreme Court's stance on the position of the District Judiciary.

In *State of Bihar v. Bal Mukund Sah*,<sup>104</sup> the Supreme Court held that the usage of the expression "lower/subordinate judiciary" for the District Judiciary a misnomer. A District Judge, while subject to administrative control under Article 235 of the Constitution, is not subordinate to any other person in the exercise of judicial functions, and is a "*vital cog in the judicial system*".<sup>105</sup>

As Upendra Baxi observed, the District Judiciary remains the "*resource base of Indian democracy*", realising the constitutional promise of justice in its most immediate form.<sup>106</sup> Thus, extending structured research support to the District Judiciary is not an act of administrative benevolence, but a constitutional necessity.

#### **E. Reducing pendency through improved time management by judges:**

These researchers will ease the Judges' workload. Judges, freed from the extensive burden of researching, can devote more focused attention to

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<sup>104</sup> AIR 2000 SC 1296.

<sup>105</sup> Writ Petition (Civil) No. 643/2015; May 19, 2023; 2023 (7) SCR 26.

<sup>106</sup> Upendra Baxi, 'The Judiciary as a resource for Indian Democracy', (India Seminar, November 2010), [https://www.indiaseminar.com/2010/615/615\\_upendra\\_baxi.htm](https://www.indiaseminar.com/2010/615/615_upendra_baxi.htm).

hearings and case management, enabling quicker disposal of matters and lowering overall pendency.

**F. Supporting procedural reforms like time-bound trials and structured case**

**management:** With greater emphasis on case management, pre-trial scheduling, and strict timelines under various statutes (e.g., POCSO Act, Commercial Courts Act), the engagement of Law Clerks can help streamline case briefs, management of records, preparation of summaries, and monitoring compliance with procedural deadlines.

**G. Assisting judges in complex cases arising out of special statutes:**

District Court Judges are often required to deal with and adjudicate specialised legislation such as Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (“PMLA”), Companies Act, 2013, Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (“NDPS Act”), Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO), Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, among others. Given the expanding volume of such cases before the District Judiciary, the availability of structured research assistance can substantially enhance judicial preparedness. Law Clerks through their academic orientation and familiarity with electronic research tools, can assist the Bench in identifying relevant authorities, tracing legislative history, and summarising judicial trends. Their role to aid in facilitating efficient access to relevant materials within the parameters of their presiding judge.

**H. Strengthening the capacity of District Courts in responding to rights-**

**based claims raised at the first instance:** District Courts are often the first forums where questions involving personal liberty, gender justice, caste discrimination, and digital rights are raised. Law Clerks can help judges stay up

to date with the emerging legal developments, particularly when interim relief or urgent relief is sought, which infringe upon the aforesaid questions involving personal liberty and dignity.

- I. **Enhancing the clarity and accessibility of judicial orders:** Assistance in research, proof-reading, and editing can improve the readability, structure, and public accessibility of judicial decisions, which is pertinent to improve the accessibility of court orders in a legally plural society like India.
- J. **Supporting District Judges in policy-oriented and administrative functions:** Principal District Judges also serve as administrative heads of judicial Districts and are involved in inspection, training, infrastructure oversight, legal aid and implementation of various directions. Law Clerks can provide briefing notes and policy summaries for the effective discharge of the administrative duties of the Principal District Judges.
- K. **Improving engagement with the District Judiciary through promising young law graduates:** By working closely with District Judges, young law graduates will be able to appreciate the administrative and judicial nuances required to adjudicate upon matters at the District level. This will in turn, allow them to deepen their understanding of the Court's functioning at the District level, as well as understand the central role District Courts play in delivering justice. Thus, they will be able to view the District Judiciary as a viable career choice, thereby improving the attention and importance accorded to it. Consequently, enhancing the visibility and esteem accorded to the District Judiciary.

Implementing such a model at District Courts would, thus, streamline research support to judges across all tiers of the Indian judiciary. It would strengthen the quality of judgments while also presenting clerkships as a career choice to law students.

#### **4.1 International Comparative Model**

Globally, several countries have adopted judicial clerkship models at the District Court level. Although the recruitment process and the roles of the clerks may differ across countries as per their needs, their responsibilities largely remain the same i.e. legal research, making case briefs, judgment summaries, observing case proceedings, making notes and assisting in ensuring efficient case management, among others. An overview of the prominent clerkship programmes across different countries at the court of first instance is as follows:

##### **A. Russia<sup>107</sup>**

A comparative example of institutionalising judicial research support at the Trial Court level can be found in the Russian Federation, where the system of Judicial Assistants is fully embedded within the judicial administration. They are civil servants whose positions are formally codified and operationalised through labour regulations approved by the Chairperson of each court. Their principal responsibilities include assistance in identifying applicable statutes, reviewing judicial precedents, and conducting doctrinal research relevant to complex questions of law. Separate memoranda are also prepared for cases being

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<sup>107</sup> Judicial Department at the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, *Questionnaire for the Preparation of the CCJE Opinion No. 22 (2019)*, <https://rm.coe.int/russian-federation-reponse-questionnaire/168093199c>.

considered for appeal or constitutional review and cases where simplified procedures or summary dismissal may be applicable.

Since Judicial Assistants are classified as civil servants, their salaries are disbursed through the federal budget or the budgets of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. They are also provided allowances, social security contributions, and professional development benefits under applicable rules for federal civil servants.<sup>108</sup>

## **B. United States of America**

The U.S. District Courts hire temporary as well as permanent or 'career' Law Clerks.<sup>109</sup> The temporary Law Clerks are hired on a short-term contractual basis, while 'career' Law Clerks are hired on the expectation that they will serve for a period of more than four years.<sup>110</sup> Their role includes quasi-judicial functions like preparing bench memoranda on legal issues, drafting research notes, judgment research and composing drafts of judicial opinions.<sup>111</sup>

The selection process for clerks is based on application and interview basis. The application process includes a letter of interest, résumé, three professional references, and a writing sample of up to ten pages.<sup>112</sup> There is also a dedicated portal for the Online System for Clerkship Application and Review (OSCAR) where clerks can apply and track their applications.<sup>113</sup> Other eligibility

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> United States Courts, *About U.S. District Courts*, <https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/court-role-and-structure/about-us-District-courts>.

<sup>110</sup> Federal Judicial Center, *Court Officers and Staff: Law Clerks*, <https://www.fjc.gov/history/administration/court-officers-and-staff-law-clerks>.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Online System for Clerkship and Application Review, *Temporary Law Clerk Positions, Employment Resources*, <https://oscar.uscourts.gov/>.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

requirements include analytical skills, research skills, and familiarity with court processes.<sup>114</sup>

The term of the temporary Judicial Clerks varies from state to state. For instance, the District of Illinois offers clerkships for a period of one year, which may be extended upon the District Judge's consent for a period of up to four years.<sup>115</sup> The Districts in California, on the other hand, offer a clerkship of up to eighteen months.<sup>116</sup>

### C. Canada

Each Canadian province and territory maintains its own judiciary, comprising Trial-level courts (including Provincial/Territorial Courts and Superior Courts) and an appellate division. While most judicial clerkships in Canada are concentrated at the appellate and federal levels, some provinces have operationalised clerkship or articling opportunities at the Trial Court stage. For instance, in Saskatchewan<sup>117</sup> province, judicial clerkships are available at the superior Trial Court level. The clerks participate in diverse aspects of the trial including pre-trial hearings, sentencing circles, and attending court proceedings. Clerks also assist judges with legal research, analytical support, and written memoranda. Selection is based on a competitive process involving academic records, legal writing samples, and recommendations.

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<sup>114</sup> Online System for Clerkship and Application Review, *Temporary Law Clerk Positions, Employment Resources*, <https://oscar.uscourts.gov/>.

<sup>115</sup> United States District Court (Southern District of Illinois), *Career Opportunity –Term Law Clerk Vacancy Announcement* (2025) <https://www.ilsd.uscourts.gov/sites/ilsd/files/VacancyAnnouncement202502--SMYTermLawClerk.pdf>.

<sup>116</sup> United States District Court (Central District of California), *Law Clerk to a District Judge*, <https://www.cacd.uscourts.gov/employment/law-clerk-us-District-judge-5>.

<sup>117</sup> Courts of Saskatchewan, *Clerkship Positions*, <https://sasklawcourts.ca/provincial-court/clerkship-positions/>.

In Alberta<sup>118</sup> province, a unique system permits law graduates to complete their mandatory articleship (a prerequisite for Bar admission) under the supervision of a sitting judge. Only applicants who are eligible under Alberta's Legal Profession Act and submit a detailed application including academic transcripts, a writing sample, and references are considered for these positions. Articleship involves direct research and writing responsibilities. The articling student, assigned to a judge referred to as the "principal", participates in legal analysis, draft memoranda preparation, court attendance, review of submissions, and discussion of draft judgments. The programme lasts for a minimum of ten months.

#### **D. Australia**

In Australia, the equivalent of a law clerk is known as a Judge's Associate and is typically a recent law graduate or qualified lawyer who assists a judge through tasks such as legal research and handling administrative duties. The District Courts of New South Wales and the Federal Courts offer positions as Associates or legal research officers within the court Registry.

Usually, a judge can employ 3-4 Judge's Associates, demarcated between Senior Associate and Junior Associates employed as part of the chamber staff of a particular judge.<sup>119</sup> The Federal Court usually employs recent law graduates as Judges' Associates for a 12-month cycle.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Alberta Court of Justice, *Law Students*, <https://albertacourts.ca/cj/information-for/law-students>.

<sup>119</sup> Federal Court of Australia, *Judge's Associate*, <https://www.fedcourt.gov.au/about/employment/associates>

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

There are different processes at different courts for recruitment across Australia.<sup>121</sup> In Federal Court, some judges provide information about the status of their recruitment, i.e., which year they are seeking Associates for (often recruitment occurs 1–2 years in advance of the start date) and the specific requirements they may have for Associates working in their chambers. Selected candidates are employed on a non-ongoing basis at the Australian Public Service Level 5 for a period of approximately 12 months. For recruitment in the Federal Circuit and Family Courts across Australia, the vacancies are advertised through the Australian Public Service.<sup>122</sup> There are two types of Associate vacancies: the Associate at the Australian Public Service Level 5, and the Deputy Associate at the Australian Public Service Level 4. Associates are generally employed on a non-ongoing basis for a period of approximately 12 months, with possible extensions. In Queensland, the applications for the post of Judge’s Associate in the District Court or the Supreme Court can be submitted through a unified website as an application, wherein the applying candidates are supposed to specify the name of the judge with whom they would prefer to get attached.<sup>123</sup>

## E. New Zealand

In New Zealand, the District Court known as “*Te Kōti ā Rohe*” is the primary court of first instance. In New Zealand’s District Courts, a clerkship is often

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<sup>121</sup> Queensland Courts, *Applications for Judge’s Associate Positions* (2026) <https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/about/jobs-with-the-courts/judges-associates/apply>

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Queensland Courts, *Judge’s Associates*, <https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/about/jobs-with-the-courts/judges-associates>; Queensland Courts, *Duty Statement for Judges’ Associates*, [https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/90047/ja-duty-statement-judges-associates.pdf](https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/90047/ja-duty-statement-judges-associates.pdf)

referred to as a “*Judges’ Clerk*” or “*Judicial Clerk*”. These roles are typically short-term.<sup>124</sup> Judge’s Clerks become an integral part of the judge’s daily work. The responsibilities include conducting in-depth legal research on complex issues, drafting legal opinions, assisting in writing judgments, and preparing materials for court hearings. Clerks also observe court proceedings firsthand, gaining exposure to courtroom etiquette, judicial reasoning, and case management. Beyond the legal work, clerks often support judges with administrative tasks.

Securing a clerkship in a District Court typically involves directly contacting individual courts to inquire about openings, as these roles are not always part of a centralised recruitment process. Positions may be advertised on government job boards, court websites, or through university career services. When applying, it is essential to highlight relevant experience, especially strong research, writing, and communication skills. While many clerkships are paid, salaries vary depending on the court and the candidate's experience. The duration can range from a few months to a year or more, depending on the Judge's needs and the nature of the role. The salary range for this role is 68,000 NZD to 80,000 NZD per year.<sup>125</sup>

## **F. South Korea**

In South Korea, judicial clerks (*jaepan yeongu-won* in Korean) are entry-level legal professionals who assist Judges in District Courts and specialised courts

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<sup>124</sup> Courts of New Zealand, *Structure of the Court System*, <https://www.courtsofnz.govt.nz/about-the-judiciary/structure-of-the-court-system>.

<sup>125</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Justice, MOJ-1893562, Judges Clerk, <https://apply.justice.govt.nz/jobs/MOJ-1893562>

at first instance. The Court Organization Act, 1987<sup>126</sup> authorises each court to appoint such clerks. Clerks help Judges handle both civil and criminal cases by researching legal issues, reviewing evidence, and preparing draft opinions.

The Court Organization Act permits each court level to appoint Law Clerks among persons admitted to the bar for a definite period up to 3 years as a public official in fixed-term positions. During this term, they receive a salary and benefits according to national court civil service rules. The Supreme Court also sets rules governing the clerk system – for example, it fixes the total number of clerks and the structure of their offices by regulation.<sup>127</sup>

Their duties include examining filings, evidence, and trial records, summarising the facts and procedural history for cases, writing *sin-geon* (initial-case) or *sok-haeng* (continuing-case) reports that analyse newly filed or ongoing cases and recommend how they should be handled. Clerks may also outline legal arguments or proposed holdings, which the Judge then reviews and finalises. They also assist in checking citations, verifying facts, and helping manage trial proceedings. These tasks are carried out under the Judge's direction.

In their daily work, judicial clerks report to Judges and court leadership in the court where they are posted.<sup>128</sup> The Supreme Court's regulations govern their duties, ethics, and allowances, and any disputes over a clerk's administrative actions can be raised to the supervising Judge or court administrator.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Court Organisation Act, art 53-2,  
[https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng\\_service/lawView.do?hseq=55374&lang=ENG](https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_service/lawView.do?hseq=55374&lang=ENG).

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Court Organisation Act, art 53-2(2)  
[https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng\\_service/lawView.do?hseq=55374&lang=ENG](https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_service/lawView.do?hseq=55374&lang=ENG).

<sup>129</sup> Court Organisation Act, art 53-2(4)  
[https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng\\_service/lawView.do?hseq=55374&lang=ENG](https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_service/lawView.do?hseq=55374&lang=ENG).

## G. France

The Law Clerks in France are called *assistants de justice, juristes assistants, or assistants spécialisés*<sup>130</sup>. Law No. 2016-1547 of 18 November 2016 on the modernisation of justice in the 21st century incorporated Article L. 123-4 into the Code of Judicial Organisation<sup>131</sup> establishing the posts of legal assistants in the courts.

The post of judicial assistant is contractual in the civil service.<sup>132</sup> The judicial assistant works part-time (60 hours per month) for a period of two years, renewable twice, for a maximum period of six years. During this period, they may engage in another professional activity. However, to do so, they must obtain permission from the head of court.

Applicants must have a diploma certifying legal training of at least four years of higher education after the baccalaureate. They must send an application to the heads of court (First President and Attorney General) of the place where they wish to practice. The application consists of a CV, a handwritten cover letter, and a copy of their diplomas. For any additional information, they can contact the same court of appeal.<sup>133</sup> To be appointed, one should be a citizen of France enjoying civil rights. Further, the entries in bulletin no. 2 of one's criminal record must be compatible with the exercise of one's duties.

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<sup>130</sup> Frédéric Charlon and Clément Cousin, 'Les juristes assistants nouveaux venus dans l'équipe autour du magistrat, Recueil Dalloz, (2018)

<sup>131</sup> Code of Judicial Organisation, art L. 123-4, [https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/texte\\_lc/LEGITEXT000006071164/](https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/texte_lc/LEGITEXT000006071164/).

<sup>132</sup> La Justice recrute, 'Portrait d'un assistant de justice' <https://lajusticerecrute.fr/actualites/portrait-assistant-justice>.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid

The method of organisation of the judicial assistants is an apprentice model, where they may be assigned to one Judge specifically or to a panel of Judges.<sup>134</sup> They contribute their expertise in civil and criminal matters to the legal analysis of technical or complex cases submitted to them by the magistrates under whose supervision they are placed. They do not participate in the proceedings or hearings. They cannot attend deliberations.

The main mission of the legal assistant is to support the magistrate in developing their decision-making by contributing to the legal analysis of complex cases: preparation of summary notes and analysis of cases, research of case law and doctrine, drafting of draft decisions and indictments, preparation of hearings, in particular.<sup>135</sup> The judicial assistant is also required to deal with the erasure of criminal records or the drafting of European arrest warrants.<sup>136</sup>

The selected judicial assistants are trained in the French National School for the Judiciary (ENM). They are trained by the ENM in a number of ways, including organisation of an induction day for new judicial assistants, participation in certain in-service sessions organised for Judges and prosecutors and access to a dedicated e-learning platform for judicial assistants. This dedicated digital platform provides theoretical input in a variety

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<sup>134</sup> European Judicial Training Network, 'Judicial Assistants: Ethical and Managerial Concerns – A Comparative Study' (2022),

<https://portal.ejtn.eu/PageFiles/20509/Themis%20D%20Team%20France%204.pdf>.

<sup>135</sup> The National School for the Judiciary (ENM), *Training Assistant Lawyers*, <https://www.enm.justice.fr/juristes-assistants>

<sup>136</sup> Ministry of Justice – Freedom Equality Fraternity (n 75), <https://lajusticerecruite.fr/actualites/portrait-assistant-justice>.

of formats as well as practical tools to help them to build and develop their professional skills.<sup>137</sup>

These global models demonstrate that a District level clerkship program is possible and sustainable. Furthermore, they illustrate how such a models can be made covered and attract maximum applications.

## 4.2 National Models for Recruiting at the District Level

In addition to these global models, certain national models can also be evaluated to understand how recruitment processes can be institutionalised at the District level.

### A. Delhi Commercial Courts<sup>138</sup>

- **Selection:** The engagement of law researchers for the District Judges (Commercial Courts) is undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for Engagement of Law Researchers for the District Judges (Commercial Courts) in Delhi, 2023*,<sup>139</sup> approved by the Chief Justice on the recommendation of the Judges of Ease of Doing Business Committee of the High Court of Delhi.

Recruitment is initiated by the concerned Principal District and Sessions Judge through an open notification inviting applications in the prescribed format. Eligible candidates are shortlisted based on qualifications and interviewed by a Selection Committee comprising the Principal District & Sessions Judge

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<sup>137</sup> ENM, Institutional Brochure, [https://www.enm.justice.fr/api/getFile/sites/default/files/2023-10/plaquette\\_instit\\_ENM\\_EN.pdf](https://www.enm.justice.fr/api/getFile/sites/default/files/2023-10/plaquette_instit_ENM_EN.pdf)

<sup>138</sup> Office of the Principal District and Sessions Judge (South) District Court, Notice (2023) <https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0292a08bf918f44ccd961477be3002/uploads/2023/04/2023042924.pdf>

<sup>139</sup> Delhi District Courts, *Recruitment Notice*, (2025) [https://delhicourts.nic.in/viewdocuments/QTdPc0VsdjNtNDhWaUV3Z0x3VGVwYTU4NXVNL0hGUUVDYkVydEJFcEZJUHBNeExBcHYzTGhGL2ITUUdaTmlydG1uM3pKc05EYkxRcURKVWJzVTdSRHc9PQ\\_EQUALS\\_EQUALS](https://delhicourts.nic.in/viewdocuments/QTdPc0VsdjNtNDhWaUV3Z0x3VGVwYTU4NXVNL0hGUUVDYkVydEJFcEZJUHBNeExBcHYzTGhGL2ITUUdaTmlydG1uM3pKc05EYkxRcURKVWJzVTdSRHc9PQ_EQUALS_EQUALS)

(Chairperson), the Principal Judge (Family Court), and the Senior-most District Judge (Commercial Court) of the concerned District.

- **Eligibility:** All intending applicants must be below the age of 32 at the time of applying and must have secured at least 55% aggregate marks at the undergraduate level. They must also be fluent with computers, with preference being given to those with requisite work experience or a postgraduate degree.
- **Tenure and Remuneration:** Researchers are engaged for one year, extendable by another year upon recommendation of the concerned District Judge (Commercial Court) and approval of the Principal District and Sessions Judge. They receive Rs. 50,000/- per month as remuneration.
- **Duties:** Researchers assist the District Judges (Commercial Courts) in judicial and administrative work such as conducting legal research on statutory provisions, case law, and precedents relevant to ongoing matters, and preparing briefs, synopses, lists of dates, and explanatory notes for the Judge's reference. They also review and proofread judgments and orders to ensure factual accuracy, clarity, and consistency before pronouncement and publication. They also assist the Judges in drafting and finalising of orders, including citation and uploading on the District Court website. Researchers are also expected to provide administrative support, including maintaining case records, coordinating schedules, preparing meeting notes, and facilitating communication between the Court and its administrative branches. They also conduct research for speeches, reports and any academic or policy work the Judges may assign.
- **Conduct:** Researchers are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding the matters they are working on.

## **B. Model Legal Aid Defence Counsel Scheme (LADCS)**

The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has framed a *Model Legal Aid Defence Counsel Scheme (LADCS)*, which serves as a guiding framework for the establishment of District-level Legal Aid Defence Counsel offices across India. The model scheme, issued in 2022 and subsequently circulated to all State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs), was developed to ensure that persons in custody and those without adequate legal representation receive continuous and competent legal aid in criminal matters.<sup>140</sup> The scheme outlines the overall institutional design, constituting offices of Chief, Deputy, and Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsels along with standard principles governing selection, tenure, remuneration, and monitoring. However, NALSA has explicitly provided that States retain discretion to adapt the model to local requirements, including determination of the number of posts, specific eligibility thresholds, honorarium bands, and procedural modalities for recruitment and review.<sup>141</sup>

Engagement is on a contractual and performance-linked basis, generally for two years, subject to review and possible extension upon satisfactory service. Each position carries distinct eligibility criteria emphasising practical experience in criminal law, professional integrity, and demonstrated commitment to access to justice. Unlike clerks, who assist judicial officers in research, drafting, and administrative coordination, LADCs are full-time practising advocates engaged by the Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLISA) to provide continuous,

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<sup>140</sup> Legal Aid Defense Counsel Scheme (2022)

<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s395b7a6d9a47c56ff9118bb45379fc884/uploads/2025/06/20250610544074406.pdf>

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

quality legal representation to underprivileged and unrepresented persons in criminal cases.

While the functions and objectives of the Legal Aid Defence Counsel (LADC) system differ significantly from those of Law Clerks or law researchers, its District-level recruitment and operational model offer a useful reference for institutional design.<sup>142</sup> Most States implement the scheme pursuant to the *NALSA (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010*<sup>143</sup> and the *LADC Scheme, 2022*,<sup>144</sup> issued under the directions of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). Recruitment is typically conducted at the District level by the respective District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs), under the supervision of the State Legal Services Authority (SLSA) and in accordance with a uniform template circulated by NALSA.<sup>145</sup> Across jurisdictions such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Kerala, selection is carried out through an open notification and a transparent, criteria-based process overseen by a Selection Committee headed by the Principal District and Sessions Judge. Appointments are contractual and time-bound, usually for a period of two years, with provisions for review and renewal based on performance and administrative assessment.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Delhi State Legal Services Authority, *Ref. No.209./Dslsa/Law-ii/Empanelment Ladcs/2023/8197-8219* (2023)  
<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s395b7a6d9a47c56ff9118bb45379fc884/uploads/2025/08/202508011395903406.pdf>

<sup>143</sup> The National Legal Services Authority (Free And Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010 (As amended vide notification F.No. L/61/10/NALSA dated 28.08.2019 and Addendum dated 18.9.2019)  
<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s32e45f93088c7db59767efef516b306aa/uploads/2025/04/20250408420654188.pdf>

<sup>144</sup> Legal Aid Defense Counsel Scheme (2022)  
<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s395b7a6d9a47c56ff9118bb45379fc884/uploads/2025/06/20250610544074406.pdf>

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> See, for instance, Uttar Pradesh State Legal Services Authority, *LADC Guidelines* (2023) [https://jkslsa.gov.in/pdf/2025/Advertisement%20LADCS.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://jkslsa.gov.in/pdf/2025/Advertisement%20LADCS.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com) ; Kerala State Legal Services Authority *Circular No. 325/2023*.

### 4.3 Analysis

The clerkship programmes adopted across various High Courts, International District Courts as well as at the District-level in India, demonstrate that a clerkship programme with a District-level recruitment can be implemented successfully. The application process adopted by the Delhi Commercial Courts and LADCs highlights how the autonomy for the selection process can remain with District Judges in such a programme. It illustrates how guidelines such as those adopted by the Delhi Commercial Courts can be expanded across Districts, wherein a selection committee can be constituted of Judges including the Principal District Judge, as well as other District Judges.<sup>147</sup>

To assess the efficacy of this programme, it can be implemented on a pilot basis, with two Law Clerks being recruited for Principal District Judges across Districts. The programme may then be scaled to other Judges depending on its success.

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<sup>147</sup> Delhi District Courts, *Recruitment Notice* (2025) [https://delhicourts.nic.in/viewdocuments/QTdPc0VsdjNtNDhWaUV3Z0x3VGVwYTU4NXVNL0hGUUVDYkVydEJFcEZJUHBNeExBcHYzTGhGL2ITUUdaTmlydG1uM3pKc05EYkxRcURKVWJzVTdSRHc9PQ\\_EQUALS\\_EQUALS](https://delhicourts.nic.in/viewdocuments/QTdPc0VsdjNtNDhWaUV3Z0x3VGVwYTU4NXVNL0hGUUVDYkVydEJFcEZJUHBNeExBcHYzTGhGL2ITUUdaTmlydG1uM3pKc05EYkxRcURKVWJzVTdSRHc9PQ_EQUALS_EQUALS)

## **5. Pilot Scheme**

The following model may be considered for the recruitment of Law Clerks at the District level:

- **Eligibility Criteria:** Law Clerks must be selected on the basis of a transparent process, which must be notified on the District Court websites or websites of the High Court. Akin to the High Court and Supreme Court, the notification for these vacancies must mention how many Law Clerks may be designated. Additionally, eligibility criteria such as age, minimum marks and year of graduation must be stipulated. Diversity must also be a key crucial aspect to consider while hiring candidates for these positions.

In keeping with the Supreme Court's order in *Md. Imran v. Union of India*,<sup>148</sup> reservation must apply for persons belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Back Classes in the clerkship recruitment.

- **Selection Process:** The selection process may be twofold, beginning with the submission of an application. The application should require all candidates to submit their transcript, relevant documents, a short statement of purpose, a writing sample, resumé and a letter of recommendation from a previous supervisor (academic or professional). This will allow the Committee to holistically review each candidate.

Shortlisted candidates may then be required to appear for an analytical exam or interview, for assessing candidates on their technical skills and legal prowess.

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<sup>148</sup> Writ Petition (Civil) No. 1100/2022.

- **Tenure:** In order to maintain transparency, the Law Clerks must be hired for a period of one year, which may be extendable based on their performance and the Judges' discretion up to 2 years.
- **Duties :** The primary task of the clerks must be to provide research assistance to Judges. This would include preparing case notes and briefs for ongoing matters. Additionally, they would provide research notes on recent precedents on relevant and evolving questions of law. Judges may also seek the assistance of the Law Clerks in other tasks such verifying citations, or in administrative tasks as and when required.
- **Remuneration:** High Courts, in consultation with the Supreme Court, may suggest a standard remuneration rate for all District level clerks in the range of Rs 35,000 to Rs 80,000 per month depending on the cost of living and other factors of the respective Districts.
- **Conduct:** All Law Clerks must be expected to maintain confidentiality during and after their tenure. They must also undergo an orientation programme to familiarise themselves with research ethics and workplace conduct. Additionally, they must be informed that in case they face any grievances, they may write to their guardian High Court Judge regarding the same.

## **6. Conclusion**

Restructuring the clerkship programme at the High Court and institutionalising it at the District Court level is a critical institutional reform necessary for strengthening the foundations of justice delivery in India.

High Courts face a significant case burden and Law Clerks can greatly assist them in managing the same.<sup>149</sup> As discussed above, the reforms in the High Court clerkship will allow transparency in the hiring process across High Courts. Moreover, revisions such as reconsideration of the remuneration paid to Law Clerks according to the cost of living in their respective cities may make these positions more coveted among law students, thus encouraging a more competitive application pool.

As the first point of contact for the vast majority of litigants, District Courts have an immense responsibility in upholding constitutional values, ensuring procedural justice, and maintaining public trust in the legal system. However, the increasing volume and complexity of cases, coupled with the absence of dedicated research support of trained professionals, severely constrain the adjudicative efficiency of District Court Judges. Given the complexities involved in a case at the District level, it becomes imperative to extend the services of a dedicated Law Clerk or Research Associates to the Judges of the District Courts.

This study highlights that across the world, and even within our own judiciary, the role of Law Clerks has been recognised as a key component in supporting judicial functioning. Bringing similar support to the District Courts could significantly reduce delays, improve the quality of research and consistency of judicial orders, and allow Judges to focus on core tasks of adjudication and interpretation.

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<sup>149</sup> W.P.(C) 7998/2025.