



## Reforms in justice delivery system of subordinate judiciary in India

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### Abstract

The assurance of prompt and equitable justice is essential to the equal legal protection of Indian citizens. The Indian Supreme Court has frequently underlined that the ability to obtain justice promptly and without delay is a component of the right to life. Despite being both a constitutional requirement and a governing principle, access to justice faces a number of obstacles that have effectively kept it from becoming a reality. The effectiveness of the Indian court has been questioned because of its inability to make decisions quickly, despite the fact that it is generally regarded as independent and impartial. All levels of the Indian judicial system are impacted by judicial delays and the backlog of cases that results, but this paper only focusses on the subordinate judiciary, which is made up of district and sub-district courts and has been under a lot of stress as a result of this strain. Arrears and case backlogs have significantly increased as a result. Given this, this article briefly examines the structural issues that India's lower courts are facing. Since lower courts are usually the first to handle litigants, judicial reforms in India should focus on them. Despite the widespread recognition that India's lower courts are chronically underfunded, no concrete steps have been taken to address the problem. The causes of the significant backlog and arrears in the lower courts are examined in this essay. The possible remedies that could be employed to mitigate the severity of court delays are also evaluated in this research paper.

**Keywords:** Judicial, reforms, justice delivery system, subordinate court

### Introduction

The assurance of prompt and equitable justice is essential to the equal legal protection of Indian citizens. The Indian Supreme Court has frequently underlined that the ability to obtain justice promptly and without delay is a component of the right to life. Despite being both a constitutional requirement and a governing principle, access to justice faces a number of obstacles that have effectively kept it from becoming a reality. The effectiveness of the Indian court has been questioned because of its inability to make decisions quickly, despite the fact that it is generally regarded as independent and impartial. All levels of the Indian judicial system are impacted by judicial delays and the backlog of cases that results, but this paper only focusses on the subordinate judiciary, which is made up of district and sub-district courts and has been under a lot of stress as a result of this strain. Arrears and case backlogs have significantly increased as a result. Given this, this article briefly examines the structural issues that India's lower courts are facing. Since lower courts are usually the first to handle litigants, judicial reforms in India should focus on them. Despite the widespread recognition that India's lower courts are chronically underfunded, no concrete steps have been taken to address the problem. The causes of the significant backlog and arrears in the lower courts are examined in this essay. The possible remedies that could be employed to mitigate the severity of court delays are also evaluated in this research paper.

### State of Arrears in Lower Courts

Since 1958, the Law Commission of India (the "LCI") has published numerous reports addressing the issue of delayed justice delivery, the resulting pendency, and the associated backlog of court cases. Lower courts have been successful in resolving newly filed cases in the relevant year, according

to data from 2013 to 2015. Over the same time period, the pendency has varied between 2.64 crores and 2.74 crores. In contrast, the lower judiciary has an authorised workforce of 20,558 officers and an actual working strength of 16,176 officers. During the same time period, there were between 4,382 and 4,589 judicial vacancies. Furthermore, roughly 2 crore cases are filed annually, which is the same number of cases that lower courts decide. Approximately 23% of judicial officer positions in the lower judiciary are still unfilled, and 2.54 crore cases are still pending resolution, according to recent statistics.

### An Overview of the Subordinate Judiciary

The British legacy is reflected in India's court system and subordinate judiciary structure. When there were no codified laws in England, judges and jurists were guided by equity, justice, and good conscience. Even in ancient India, the focus of Indian jurists, such as sages and kings, was on true justice rather than merely making decisions or resolving conflicts by following protocols. Adversarial litigation is the foundation of the Indian judicial system, which was adopted from England. The Indian populace was unfamiliar with the British system of dispute resolution, which was laden with formalities. Achieving the constitutional vision of justice became the standard goal of Indian courts following the country's independence and the adoption of the Constitution of India. The prolonged duration of court cases at all levels and the administration of justice when its goals are not met undermine the effectiveness of our legal system, which has caused serious concern among Indian jurists, solicitors and litigants. The legal and judicial academics have been unable to come up with a workable solution to reduce the length of time it takes for the courts to decide cases, despite their intense concern for prompt justice. The primary cause of the Indian court system's delay in delivering justice may be the

three branches of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—not working together to develop effective judicial policies and reforms to the current structure of the Indian judicial system. In addition to delays, it has become very costly to obtain justice from our nation's courts, especially the higher judiciary. Being at the people's doorstep, the district judiciary may be the first to address their complaints because it is more easily accessible and less costly than the higher judiciary. Under the general direction and oversight of the State High Court, the Principal District & Sessions Judges lead the district judiciary in India and are responsible for serving as the administrators, controllers, and motivators of their respective units. The rapid and massive increase in litigation has essentially made the district judiciary and its resources unfit to handle the challenges of the modern world, even though the district judiciary has been modernised in areas like computerisation and infrastructure expansions. The litigant-public's desire for affordable, prompt, and efficient justice has proven to be a challenging and far-fetched objective. In actuality, the current system of allowing the institution of various lawsuits, including trivial and petty ones, has made it impossible for the courts to dedicate enough time to hearing and swiftly deciding real and serious cases involving people and property. The courts have become overcrowded, overburdened, and unable to handle the delays in disposals due to the simultaneous filing of frivolous and serious disputes on their docket. This has led to a situation where the courts spend the majority of their time hearing and resolving petty and frivolous matters, leaving genuine and serious civil and criminal cases without the necessary attention, which ultimately causes delays and miscarriages of justice.

The old administrative structure of the district courts has largely become outdated and insufficient to handle the challenges that have emerged in the twenty-first century as a result of the significant socio-economic, industrial, scientific, and technological changes that Indian society has undergone over time. An average litigant only expects prompt and authentic justice from our courts. The litigants' community is not particularly impressed by the pages and volumes that the judgements or orders cover, nor is it interested in the verbose and pedantic narration of lexical phrases in the court's decisions and orders. Furthermore, the community of litigants cannot be held accountable for the courts' inability to provide prompt, real justice. One cannot say that the community of litigants is at fault when the judicial system or the State as a whole fail. The public has a very negative opinion of our courts' responsiveness and performance. Real, timely, and affordable justice remains a far-fetched and illusory objective to be attained through the legal system. The problem of costly and delayed justice cannot be eliminated without some drastic changes to the fundamentally flawed areas of the lower judiciary.

### **Systematic Elements Affecting the Subordinate Court's Operation**

#### **Vacancies and Appointments in the Judiciary**

The structural defects in the judicial appointment process for the lower courts have not gotten enough attention, despite the fact that the issues surrounding the nomination of judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts are still fiercely debated. Numerous issues, such as ambiguous recruitment procedures, erratic and drawn-out recruitment cycles, irregular examination procedures, and a lack of

collaboration between the High Courts and the various state governments, have complicated the process of choosing judges. As a result, despite our government's adequate facilities, lower court judges are usually overworked and understaffed. For instance, a trial court judge frequently has between 25 and 35 cases on their daily list, the majority of which are not heard due to time constraints. As a result, the courts are understaffed and judges in lower courts are often overworked. For example, a trial court judge typically handles 25 to 35 cases per day, the majority of which are not heard because of severe time constraints. The lower judicial branch is composed of three cadres of judges: District Judges, Civil Judges (Senior Division), and Civil Judges (Junior Division). Three methods for choosing district judges were established by the Supreme Court in the case of *All India Judges Association v. Union of India*. The methods include promotion on the basis of merit and merit-cum-seniority and direct hiring from a pool of current Civil Judges (Senior Division) with at least seven years of experience.

Since the Constitution does not specify any criteria for the selection of Civil Judges (Senior and Junior) Division, states are free to select their own selection processes. Exams and interviews are used to directly appoint judges to the Civil Judge (Junior Division) position. There are significant differences in practice between states because they still have authority over who gets appointed to the lower courts. The way the High Courts and state public service commissions coordinate has an additional impact on this. In the case of *Malik Mazhar Sultan*, the Supreme Court ruled that a three-tier examination method should take approximately 273 days, while a two-tier examination process should take 153 days. It is not possible to say with enough certainty that direct recruitment through the two- or three-tier examination process happens quickly in most states. Furthermore, governments still have trouble filling judicial vacancies even after the conclusion of the recruiting cycles for Plan Ahead for the Future Judiciary, *The Tribune*. It can be said with some degree of certainty that most states do not carry out direct recruitment through the two or three-tier examination procedure in a timely manner. Additionally, governments are unable to fill open judge positions even after recruitment rounds are complete. It should be considered that subordinate courts are unable to fill judicial vacancies even after recruiting cycles have concluded. Despite the fact that our government has made the exams extremely simple, the candidates are having difficulty passing them. This indicates that the High Courts are having trouble filling the position due to a lack of qualified candidates. It is undeniable that, despite the fact that there are a number of contributing factors, working as a lower-level judicial officer may not seem like a desirable career choice. Lower pay, unattractive terms and conditions of service, a poor working environment, and limited opportunities for advancement are some of the primary barriers that discourage lawyers from applying. With the exception of a few top-notch law schools, legal education in India is still poorly run, which further limits the number of applicants who can be chosen. It is argued that unless the current working conditions for judges of lower courts are improved, the central selection process as it is currently envisioned will be pointless.

### **The state of the Facilities in the Lower Courts**

Judicial infrastructure has a major impact on the state of access to justice. There are three primary types of infrastructure: digital, human resources, and physical infrastructure. The district and sub-district courts in India lack adequate physical infrastructure. Prolonged conflict resolution procedures and judicial backlogs are caused in part by inadequate physical infrastructure. Establishing judicial systems is the responsibility of both the Union and the states. Despite the fact that court infrastructure has an impact on access to justice, it is noteworthy that the majority of states with the exception of Maharashtra spend less than 2% of their budget on the judiciary. Moreover, far too little is being done with funds that have already been set aside for the court. Despite the fact that court infrastructure has an impact on access to justice, it is noteworthy that the majority of states with the exception of Maharashtra spend less than 2% of their budget on the judiciary. Moreover, far too little is being done with funds that have already been set aside for the court. Judges in lower courts, particularly in less developed jurisdictions, are known to face adverse working conditions.

### **Insufficient Support and Administrative Employees**

The number of secretarial and support staff at all court staffing levels is deemed inadequate. The judicial system has become increasingly complex and ineffective due to avoidable problems with scheduling, court date notice, and case listing, as well as a shortage of courtroom staff who are both qualified and responsive. The argument goes that judicial infrastructure needs to advance at the same pace as the hiring of judicial staff. The government pays the judiciary's employees extremely high salaries. This is supported by the Department of Justice's study, which places a high priority on improving the courts' physical infrastructure. The expenditure of Rs. 1400 crores to build a court infrastructure that benefits litigants serve as evidence of this.

### **Reforms to the Subordinate Judiciary's Administrative Structure**

Due to the effects of globalisation, societal change, and an increase in court cases, the district judiciary's traditional administrative structure is out of date and needs to be updated with contemporary managerial knowledge and skills. The district judiciary's issues have been made worse by the custom of having administratively and financially inexperienced judicial officers handle its administrative, financial, and infrastructure issues, among other things. Examining the administrative makeup of the district judiciary is therefore urgently necessary. Since the District Judge cannot handle the extensive judicial, financial, and administrative tasks by themselves, it is imperative that many administrative matters be decentralised from the District Judges' administrative office. It has been observed that numerous administrative issues that require immediate attention from the District Judges are left unattended, leaving many judgements beset by administrative chaos and poor management. The main factor causing administrative mismanagement in the district courts is the concentration of all authority in the hands of the district judges. Administrative authority is distributed among the different High Court judges, even at the High Court level. One indication that authority has already been decentralised at

the High Court level to manage the district judiciary's operations is the appointment of Administrative Judges to each State judgementship and the establishment of an Administrative Committee and Full Court to handle disciplinary, service, and other related issues. Therefore, it is incomprehensible why the district judiciary level cannot also adopt the same administrative mechanism that operates at the High Court level. To make important decisions about staff disciplinary matters, budgetary expenditures, annual planning, infrastructure aspects, and emergent situations arising from the bar's side, among other things, it is recommended that the district courts also have an Administrative Committee made up of seven or nine judicial officers from each of the three cadres of the district judiciary and a Full Court made up of all the judicial officers posted in the judgementship. The Administrative Committee or Full Court, chaired by the Principal District Judge of the judgementship, should make decisions in these cases collectively and democratically. Additionally, it will lessen the corruption that exists in some Principal District Judges' administrative offices.

### **Administrative Codes are Necessary for the Lower Courts**

The various Circular Orders or administrative instructions that the High Courts have issued over the past 150 years have been the main source of administrative guidelines for the district judiciary. Many of these circular orders, which were issued over the past 150 years, are either out of date and irrelevant or cannot be carried out in the present day. Even the complete circular orders are unavailable in many judgementships due to improper compilation and preservation. Therefore, it is suggested that the various Circular Orders and General Letters, etc., that the High Courts occasionally issue be discarded in favour of a new "Code of Administrative Rules and Guidelines" for the subordinate judiciary.

### **Judicial Officer Postings Based on the Case-To-Judge Ratio**

It is necessary to rationalise the current judicial officer posting policy. It is occasionally observed that, in contrast to judgementships with higher caseloads, the concentration of courts and judges in some judgementships with lower caseloads is fairly high. The case-to-judge ratio must be taken into consideration when allocating judicial officers to a specific judgementship. A fair and efficient transfer and posting policy must be implemented in order to dispel the widespread belief among judicial officers that transfers and postings to profitable locations or large cities can be handled simply because of proximity to this or that High Court judge.

### **Rules and Orders for the Lower Judiciary were Created by the Merger of the High Court into the CPC and CRPC**

Universities' and law schools' curricula, as well as the competitive exams for Civil Judges (Junior Division) and the Direct HJS, do not address the supplemental rules of procedure found in the General Rules (Civil) and General Rules (Criminal) in states like Uttar Pradesh and the High Court's rules and orders for subordinate judiciary in other states. Due to their limited familiarity with the procedures outlined in these procedural rules and orders, the judicial officers frequently overlook these provisions and make

procedural errors. The existing procedures in the CPC & CrPC are supplemented by these extra procedural rules. Therefore, it is suggested that these supplemental or residuary procedures be combined into the CPC and CrPC, respectively, so that judicial officers can easily locate all pertinent procedures on any topic in a single book.

### **Larger Benches are Established in the Lower Courts to Make Decisions in Complex Cases**

In order to hear and decide complex cases and cases involving issues of public importance, district courts should adopt the division benches, larger benches, and full court system that are established in the Supreme Court and High Courts. At least two presiding officers from the relevant judgeship's HJS cadre should convene in a Division Bench to hear the case and determine the appropriate punishment for the convicted party when the death penalty is an option. When a case involving a convicted person's right to life, as guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution, is decided at the High Court level by two or more judges, why would the district court level not follow the same procedure?

### **Legal Education, Training, and Knowledge**

Judges of lower courts must receive appropriate and continuous legal training because the law is constantly evolving. Judges of lower courts, however, have been found to be inadequately knowledgeable about new and more specialised areas of the law. Therefore, in order to stay up to date with the ongoing developments in many areas of law, judicial training should be updated frequently. According to an empirical study, judges of lower courts routinely oversee cases that apply legal doctrines they are not familiar with. The nomination of judges through the direct recruitment process of tests is partially to blame for this problem. One major problem with this approach is that judges who are relatively young and lack litigation and courtroom experience may be assigned to preside over cases involving more seasoned bar members, which can make them anxious and less productive. No matter how judges are chosen, it has been found that insufficient training prevents them from being proactive and creative in their decision-making, instead causing them to make decisions in a limited and technical manner. Judges may also discover that they lack the skills and legal knowledge required to decide certain cases that are presented to them. This illustrates the gap between the daily practise of law and legal education at Indian institutions.

### **Transferring the Hiring Process to Government Hiring Agencies**

Many Principal District Judges and other judicial officers involved in the recruitment process had to deal with issues and many of them had to suffer setbacks in their careers as a result of the recent controversy surrounding the hiring of class III and class IV employees of the district judiciary. The general public vehemently disagrees that such district court recruitments are fair. Therefore, it is recommended that the recruitment of subordinate judiciary staff be left to professional recruitment bodies such as the State Public Service Commission, Staff Selection Commission, or any other government recruitment body in order to prevent any kind of controversy surrounding the hiring process and to ensure that only qualified and effective personnel are hired in the district judiciary. In 2004, the Uttar Pradesh Public

Service Commission, Allahabad, was tasked with hiring 42 class III officials and stenographers for the Gonda judgeship for the first time in the subordinate judiciary's history. The employees hired by the State PSC were extremely productive and possessed a high level of job performance skills.

### **Class-III District Judiciary Officials' Annual Declaration of Property**

It is frequently observed that officials with questionable integrity who have received a lot of complaints from the bar and litigants' community not only manage to land positions in prestigious courts and lucrative offices, but also stay there for years at a time. In certain instances, they are re-appointed to the same seats after a brief break. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the District Courts' vigilance system. As is the case with judicial officers, class III officials assigned to the district judiciary should be required to declare their wealth and any movable or immovable property they own or have acquired on an annual basis. It will assist in preventing corruption that is common among some district court officials.

### **Examining Complaints Made Against Judges**

Anonymous complaints ought to be categorically denied, and the concerned judicial officer should not be asked for their thoughts on them unless doing so would cast doubt on their integrity. An affidavit from the complainant must be included with the complaint in order for it to be considered. Punitive costs of at least Rs. 25,000 should be imposed on the complainant if the investigation reveals that the complaint is baseless and dishonest. The money should then be transferred to the District Legal Service Authority so that it can provide legal assistance to the underprivileged and needy litigants. The complainant should face prosecution for both providing false information to the public official and swearing in a false affidavit if it is discovered that he did so in support of his complaint. Unless it becomes clear from the order itself and the evidence attached to the complaint that the order was passed for some unrelated reasons by the concerned judicial officer, no comments should normally be requested from the concerned judicial officer, and no action should be taken in response to the complaint that only reflects a mistake of law or fact, and simply because the judicial order passed and complained of appears to be otherwise erroneous. Only complaints that are backed up by documentary or other evidence provided by the complainant and that seem to have been motivated by extraneous considerations that benefited the concerned judicial officer should be sent to the High Court's vigilance department for fact-finding.

### **District Judiciary Training Policy**

The practical requirements and challenges that judicial officers encounter in their day-to-day work in their courts must be taken into consideration when developing a thorough training program for judicial officers at all levels. Judicial officers should receive this kind of training both during their induction and at regular intervals. To make the training policy realistic and significant, the training methodology and syllabus should be developed after an analysis of the district courts' actual operations, and the opinions of seasoned judicial officers from various cadres should be incorporated into them. One such crucial issue

that requires the High Courts' careful consideration is the posting of judicial officers at the Judicial Training Academies to provide training to the judicial officers. It is observed that judicial officers of very low or no calibre are occasionally assigned on deputation to the Judicial Training Academies. As a result, the entire cadre of state judicial officers suffers as a result of these unworthy and inept judicial trainers.

### **Court Staff Training Policy**

Inexperienced and unskilled employees, especially those who are new hires, pose a significant challenge to the judicial officers' ability to carry out their duties quickly and effectively. Therefore, it is recommended that a policy be developed for the district courts' staff to receive periodic and induction-level training. Senior and seasoned judicial officers as well as staff members assigned to judgeships can also provide local training for the staff.

### **Evaluation of Lok-Adalats' Productivity, etc.**

Lok Adalats and other Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanisms have been in place for almost forty years. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate whether the Lok Adalat and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) systems have actually been successful in lowering the backlog of cases and fostering peace and goodwill among the litigant public, or if they have merely added to the workload of the regular courts by engaging in extrajudicial activities that have no beneficial goals.

### **Giving the Lower Courts the Authority to Punish Violators**

Both the smooth operation of the courts and the public's trust in the effectiveness of the subordinate courts are seriously threatened by the threat of non-observance of court orders and procedures as well as the rising number of criminal contempt cases of the subordinate courts. Even government officials and public officials frequently exhibit a careless attitude when it comes to carrying out court orders and procedures. The majority of subordinate courts' contempt cases go unreported and unpunished because the Contempt of Courts Act of 1971 does not give them the authority to punish violators. Contempt cases from lower courts are only referred to the High Courts in very few and extraordinary circumstances. The current situation with regard to contempt incidents would be revealed by the data regarding the final results of cases filed in the subordinate courts under the current provisions, such as Order 39, Rule 2-A CPC, Order 21, Rule 32 CPC, and Section 228 IPC, among others. People's trust in the effectiveness of the legal system will grow if the district judiciary is also given the authority to handle contempt cases at the local level under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971. This will also protect the litigant public from delays, financial losses, harassment, and other negative consequences. Therefore, it is recommended that the 1971 Contempt of Courts Act be changed to give the district judiciary the authority to punish the contemptors as well.

### **A Distinct Commission for the Lower Courts**

A distinct commission for the study of the subordinate judiciary's makeup, operations, and required reforms must be established in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comprehend the complex issues facing it. Lawyers,

police officers, social workers, law professors, senior and experienced judicial officers, and subordinate judiciary employees should all be nominated to such a commission in order to research the various facets of the subordinate judiciary. It is necessary to conduct a thorough evaluation of the subordinate courts' delivery of justice. It is important to remember that simply issuing orders and judgements entails doing justice in the cases. The foundation of all rulings and directives is justice. Without justice, judgement is as useless and lifeless as a body without a soul. Students from esteemed National Law Universities may be asked to assist the commission in its research on a range of topics pertaining to the subordinate judiciary. The commission's recommendations should then be faithfully put into practice.

### **Increasing the Proportion of Lower Courts Represented in High Courts from the Current 33% To 50%**

Subordinate judiciary currently makes up 33%, or 2:1 ratio, of the High Courts. This ratio's insufficiency frequently leads to discontent among the worthy subordinate judiciary members who, despite their lengthy and meritorious service, are not granted a seat in the High Courts. In order to motivate members of the subordinate judiciary to uphold higher standards for their judicial performance and probity, it is crucial to alleviate their frustration and preserve their confidence regarding career advancement. By increasing the representation of those promoted to the High Courts from the current 33% to 50%, the State's higher judiciary will be able to accommodate the justifiable desires of its subordinate judiciary members.

### **Deficits Within the Legal System**

Both the court and the litigant/counsel are to blame for the judicial inefficiencies that plague lower courts in India. Examples of inefficiencies include the absence of a judge, backlog of cases, inadequate time for hearings, lack of counsel, unjustified postponement, excuses for delays, and requests for restoration and extensions. Access to justice is hampered by inefficiencies like the ones mentioned above, which cause judicial delays. The general trend is to grant such motions, even though some courts have restricted the number of continuances and adjournments granted in response to delays. To stop the culture of excessive delay and postponement, lower courts should impose severe penalties on the parties.

### **Assessment of the Performance of the Lower Judiciary**

Higher courts have the power to oversee lower courts. This entails evaluating the judges' performance in lower courts. Assessing the performance of judges increases transparency and accountability and can assist in making better decisions regarding job distribution, promotions, and transfers. The existing system for assessing the lower judiciary's performance is deficient on a number of levels. The annual confidentiality report (ACR) criterion of the disposal rate is currently overemphasised. The disposal rate is unquestionably a useful indicator, but it is insufficient on its own, and placing too much emphasis on the figure could encourage the disposal of more cases with little to no legal consideration. When evaluating judicial performance as part of ACR, other qualitative factors should be given equal weight in addition to disposal rate. Judicial performance should be evaluated based on preparation, alertness, judicial control in court, timeliness, judgement quality, and the

quantity of appealed and judgements. It is well known that the ACR's assessment and evaluation criteria vary greatly amongst High Courts. As a result, the assessment of the subordinate judiciary's performance in India lacks consistency and standardisation. ACRs are also frequently written in a very subjective manner, taking into account a wide range of subjective factors. A more impartial approach should be used when creating ACRs.

### Conclusion

It is widely believed that lower court judges are doing their best work given the inherent constraints and scarce resources they deal with. Although this opinion is debatable, it is maintained that the federal and state governments should work together to allocate more funds to the lower judiciary. In addition, basic court personnel and facilities need a major overhaul. To reduce the backlog of cases at the lower court level, current judicial vacancies should be filled. Depending on factors like population size, economic prosperity, and the volume of litigation, among others, it might be necessary to increase the current sanctioned judicial strength of subordinate courts in specific states in addition to filling vacancies. To handle court administration and streamline procedures and standards, especially for litigants and lawyers, court staff need to receive more training. The backlog of cases at the lower court level should be reduced by filling the current judicial vacancies. Depending on factors like population size, economic prosperity, and the volume of litigation, states may need to increase the current sanctioned judicial strength of their subordinate courts in addition to filling vacancies. To manage court administration and streamline procedures and standards, especially for litigants and lawyers, court staff need to be more qualified. For instance, all cases that had been pending for ten years or longer has been settled by lower courts in states like Kerala, Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh. Due in large part to the implementation of a case management system, this has been achieved. Tracking the status of cases from filing to disposition is part of the case management system. With the intention of resolving old cases, annual goals and action plans were created. In order to prevent cases from being settled too soon, a performance review was conducted every three months.

It may be crucial to use judicial case management, where the judge takes the initiative to set a timeline for the case and monitor its progress against it. In order to address case backlogs, the LCI's 230th Report includes a number of measures, such as stringent guidelines for adjournment grants, shorter vacations, less time for oral arguments unless the case involves a complex legal issue, and the digitisation of court records. It is crucial to remember that, despite certain similarities in the issues facing lower courts throughout India, subordinate courts suffer from inefficiencies unique to the state's local conditions, which must be taken into account before enacting judicial reform measures. It is argued that a judicial reform program should consider local circumstances and characteristics rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach in the case of the lower judiciary.

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