INDIA JUSTICE REPORT

Ranking States on the Capacity of
Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid

India Justice Report | 2025

India Justice Report: Ranking States on the Capacity of Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid

Published in April 2025

The **India Justice Report** is a first of its kind national periodic reporting that ranks the capacity of states to deliver justice.

Through the filters of human resources, infrastructure, budgets, workload and diversity it assesses the capacity of 4 core pillars of the justice system to deliver to mandate: police, prisons, judiciary, legal aid and Human Rights Commissions. Importantly, by comparing data over a five-year period, the IJR assesses efforts governments make year on year to improve the administration of justice. This trend analysis helps discern each state's **intention** to improve the delivery of justice and match it with the needs on the ground. To its assessment of police, prisons, legal aid, judiciary, and state human rights commissions, this edition of the IJR draws attention to forensics, mediation, and disabilities.

By bringing previously siloed data all in one place the IJR provides policy makers with an easy but comprehensive tool. On the one hand having the data all in one place, provides a jumping off point on which to base holistic policy frameworks while on the other hand, the itemisation of the data into budgets, human resources, infrastructure, workload and diversity helps to pinpoint low hanging fruit which, if tackled early on can set up a chain reaction reformative of the whole.

The findings of the report are important for donors, civil society and the business community as well because it provides important stakeholders within influential circles with objective data around which to fashion their own recommendations. It allows for participatory dialogues between governments and active citizens of disparate ideologies to be underpinned by objective facts rather than premised in opinion. This enhances the chances for reforms through consensus building.

After all, justice is the business of us all.

For more information, please visit
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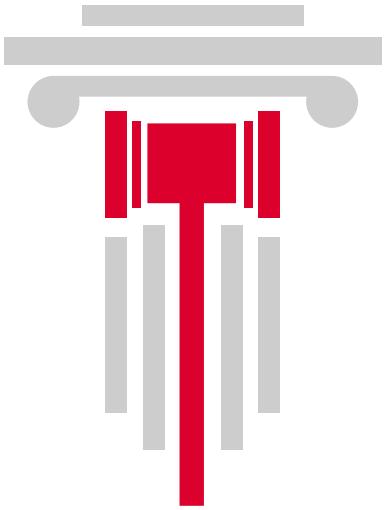

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INDIA JUSTICE REPORT 2025

The India Justice Report (IJR) 2025 remains the only comprehensive quantitative index using government's own statistics to rank the capacity of the formal justice system operating in various states. This IJR is a collaborative effort undertaken in partnership with DAKSH, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Common Cause, Centre for Social Justice, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and TISS-Prayas.

First published in 2019, the fourth edition of the IJR continues to track improvements and persisting deficits in each state's structural and financial capacity to deliver justice based on quantitative measurements of budgets, human resources, infrastructure, workload, and diversity across police, judiciary, prisons, legal aid and Human Rights Commissions for all 36 states and UTs.

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About the Partners

- **Centre for Social Justice (IDEAL)** is an organisation fighting for the rights of the marginalised and the vulnerable, principally in the sphere of access to justice. Inspired by Freirean thought, CSJ has been active in more than eight states across India, creating human rights interventions, using law as a key strategy through an intimate engagement with grassroot realities. Central to CSJ's efforts are its institutional interventions in legal reform and research, which bridge and symbiotically combine grassroots activism, law and policymaking on a wide gamut of issues concerning the rights of women, Dalits, Adivasis, minorities and other socially vulnerable groups.

- **Common Cause** is dedicated to championing public causes, campaigning for probity in public life and the integrity of institutions. It seeks to promote democracy, good governance and public policy reforms through advocacy and democratic interventions. Common Cause is especially known for the difference it has made through a large number of Public Interest Litigations (PILs), such as the cancellation of the entire telecom spectrum; cancellation of arbitrarily allocated coal blocks; and the Apex Court's recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity. Common Cause and CSDS-Lokniti bring out the Status of Policing in India Reports (SPIRs) on police accountability and citizen-centric policing since 2018.

- **Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)** is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organisation working for the practical realisation of human rights through research, strategic advocacy and capacity building within the Commonwealth. CHRI specialises in the areas of access to justice (police and prison reforms) and access to information. It also works to advance freedom of expression, media rights and the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery. CHRI is a Commonwealth Accredited Organisation and has a Special Consultative Status with the UN ECOSOC.

- **DAKSH** is a Bengaluru-based think-tank working on promoting the rule of law by working towards robust, responsive and citizen-centric public institutions.

- **TISS–Prayas** is a social work demonstration project of the Center for Criminology and Justice, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, established in 1990. Prayas's focus is on service delivery, networking, training, research and documentation, and policy change with respect to the custodial/ institutional rights and rehabilitation of socio-economically vulnerable individuals and groups. Their mission is to contribute knowledge and insight to the current understanding of aspects of the criminal justice system policy and process, with specific reference to socio-economically vulnerable and excluded communities, groups and individuals who are at greater risk of being criminalised or exposed to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

- **Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy** is an independent think-tank doing legal research to make better laws, and improve governance for the public good. It does this through high quality, peer reviewed original legal research; through engaging with the Government of India, State governments and other public institutions to both inform policy-making and to effectively convert policy into law; and through strategic litigation petitioning courts on important law and policy issues. Their abiding values are impact, excellence, and independence.

Foreword

Justice delivery requires both integrity and time bound resolution of disputes so that the faith of the litigant is maintained in the judicial institution. In an age of technology, it cannot be expected that litigants will wait for years and decades. Inordinate delay results in citizens taking law into their own hands.

The justice system, like any other institution requires an independent assessment. The India Justice Report has been performing the task of an independent auditor of the justice delivery system. The Report lays bare a stark and undeniable truth that our justice delivery system is still far from fulfilling its mandate. The authenticity of the report is that in arriving at its conclusion it relies on evidence based entirely on the Government's own data to confront us with the uncomfortable reality that the promise of equal justice from the law is still aspirational.

The data presented in the report seeks to raise a fundamental question for those interested with the stewardship of our justice system — how do we break the cycle of stagnation and initiate a virtuous cycle of improvement?

We must recognise that the core thesis that emerges is not a critique of the people within the system, but rather a lament for the system itself, which for too long has been denied the inherent capacities required to function independently of the efforts of those who serve within.

Too often, these individuals find themselves battling the very structures they are meant to uphold. True institutional strength cannot rely on the fleeting brilliance or momentary innovations of individuals but must ensure it maximises the skills and talents of ordinary folks and incentivises them to contribute their all into a robust framework that transcends personal contribution. A. well-functioning justice system prioritises resilience, predictability, and fairness, ensuring routine efficiency over extraordinary heroism. It cannot depend on sheer force of will, but must be designed for sustained, consistent performance, transcending personal contributions.

A truly effective justice system must also be anchored in a clear, independent vision and a set of unwavering values. These principles, drawn from our Constitution, must permeate every aspect of the system, informing the training and orientation of all who enter its ranks. Beyond vision, the system must possess well-defined structures and processes, ensuring routine, predictability, accessibility, accountability, transparency, and allowing for genuine participation. It must be representative of the diverse populace it serves. Crucially, a system must be purpose-built, tailored to the specific needs it is designed to address. It should not be individual based effort but a uniform system-based endeavour.

For decades courts, commissions, (governments and civil society have analysed and chronicled the accumulating deficits and dysfunctions of our justice system even as its users daily experience its manifestations. The sheer volume of prescriptions, recommendations, and proposed solutions is itself overwhelming.

Yet, the justice system does not exist in isolation, it is embedded within the broader governance framework, subject to political, financial, and administrative forces that shape its performance. Reforming it, therefore, requires more than a list of recommendations; it demands sustained pressure, political will, and a clear strategy for incentivising change. Ultimately, we must identify the common pathways across all sub-systems that can translate paper recommendations into tangible, practical outcomes.

The India Justice Report exemplifies how rigorous, data-driven assessments can serve as a catalyst for reform. By tracking state performance over time, it uses benchmarks that can inform policy decisions and shape public discourse. Transparency and comparative rankings create a sense of competition among states, encouraging them to improve their standing. To translate these insights into action, civil society, academia, and the media must use this collated data to demand better performance. Courts, commissions, and policymakers must engage with this information not merely as an

academic exercise but as a tool to drive reforms that impact real lives.

The Report's focus is on one singular challenge: chronic under-resourcing of justice institutions. Whether it is the judiciary struggling under the burden of five crore pending cases, police departments operating with large vacancies, or prisons designed more for containment than rehabilitation, the reality is bleak. Budget allocations have increased over the years, yet their utilisation remains suboptimal. Without addressing structural inefficiencies, increased spending alone cannot not translate into better outcomes. As well, curing capacity deficits is indeed one necessary step to success — but not a sufficient one.

Change is most likely when there are tangible incentives. Performance-linked funding, recognition for well-functioning institutions, leadership accountability mechanisms and feedbag through user and citizen audits all play a role in motivating reform. For instance, states that demonstrate improvements in judicial vacancies, police training, or prison rehabilitation programs could be rewarded with additional financial support. Similarly, individual orientation and accountability within institutions- through better training and transparent evaluation systems, promotions linked to service quality, and clear consequences for inaction—could encourage performance-driven positive outcomes. Investigation of Crime and Law and Order are two different subjects requiring different aptitude and training. Scientific investigation of crimes is the cry of the hour.

Reform cannot be piecemeal. Justice is not delivered in silos but through a network of interdependent institutions. Courts cannot function efficiently if the police force is understaffed and untrained. Prisons cannot rehabilitate if legal aid is ineffective. The large number of undertrials as against convicted inmates is a reflection of this problem. Holistic reform demands that all components of the system—police, judiciary, legal aid, defence and prosecution lawyers, prisons, forensics, and human rights commissions—be strengthened simultaneously.

No reform can succeed without the buy-in of those who run the system. Leaders within the judiciary, government, and civil services must be willing to champion change, take risks, and challenge the status quo. Equally important is the role of public pressure. Justice reform is too important to be left solely to institutions, it must become a societal demand.

This means there must be broad recognition that the delivery of justice is not merely a moral imperative but a vital pathway to the nation's economic progress, social peace, rapid development and the realisation of individual freedoms.

The India Justice Report is serving as a crucial catalyst for this essential dialogue. It is not just a document of record. It is a call to action. Its findings are both a mirror and a roadmap reflecting the reality of our justice system while offering a path forward. The question before us is whether we will use this knowledge to drive change or allow yet another cycle of inaction to unfold. The task before us is clear. What remains is the will to act.

Sanjay Kishan Kaul
Former Judge, Supreme Court of India

24th March 2025

Acknowledgements

The India Justice Report (IJR) 2025 is the outcome of a keen collaboration between the independent IJR Collective and several external advisers, guides and supporters.

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We hope this report will inspire readers to consider a fundamental question: How can a system designed to deliver specific quality standards hope to achieve them when essential, officially recognised building blocks remain absent? This gap–between aspiration and implementation–remains an oversight and a profound failure, one so critical that we cannot in good conscience continue to ignore it.

Valay Singh
Lead, India Justice Report

Abbreviations

Addl. DGP	Additional Director General of Police
Addl. SP	Additional Superintendent of Police
ADR	Alternate Dispute Resolution
AFSPA	Armed Forces Special Powers Act
AIGP	Assistant Inspector General of Police
AIMO	All India Manufacturers Organisation
ASI	Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police
ASP	Assistant Superintendent of Police
A&N Islands	Andaman and Nicobar Islands
BNS	Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita
BNSS	Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita
BPR&D	Bureau of Police Research and Development
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
BoV	Board of Visitor
CAG	Comptroller and Auditor General of India
CAMC	Court Annexed Mediation Centre
CCR	Case Clearance Rate
CCTNS	Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems
CCTV	Cameras Closed circuit television cameras
CPC	Code of Civil Procedure
CrPC	Code of Criminal Procedure
CSBC	Central Selection Board of Constable
DAR	District Armed Reserve police
DGP	Director General of Police
DIG	Deputy Inspector General
DLSA	District Legal Service Authority
DMFU	District Mobile Forensic Unit
DNH & DD	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu
DoPO	Data on Police Organisation
Dy. SP	Deputy Superintendent of Police
FSL	Forensic Science Laboratory
FTSC	Fast Track Special Court
FY	Financial Year
HPC	High Powered Committee
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICJS	Interoperable Criminal Justice System
IGP	Inspector General of Police
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPC	Indian Penal Code
IRB	Indian Reserve Battalion
LADC	Legal Aid Defense Counsel
LSI	Legal Services Institution
MCPC	Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MPF	Modernisation of State Police Forces Scheme
MSME	Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NALSA	National Legal Services Authority
NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
NJDG	National Judicial Data Grid
NPC	National Police Commission
NRC	National Register of Citizens
OBC	Other Backward Classes

OMR	Optical Mark Recognition
PET	Physical Endurance Test
PHRA 1993	Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993
PIMS	Pre-Institution Mediation and Settlement
PLA	Permanent Lok Adalat
PLV	Paralegal Volunteer
POCSO	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences
PP	Percentage Points
PSI	Prison Statistics India
PST	Physical Standard Test
PWD Act	Persons with Disabilities Act
RFSL	Regional Forensic Science Laboratory
RTI	Right to Information
SAR	Special Armed Police
SC	Scheduled Caste
SEBC	Socially and Economically Backward Classes
SFSL	State Forensic Science Laboratory
SHRC	State Human Rights Commission
SI	Sub-Inspector
SLSA	State Legal Services Authority
SMWP	Suo Motu Writ Petition
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SP	Superintendent of Police
Spl. DGP	Special Director General of Police
SSP	Senior Superintendent of Police
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TRP	Transparent Recruitment Process
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UR	Unreserved
UT	Union Territory
UTP	Undertrial Prisoner
UTRC	Under Trial Review Committees
WHO	World Health Organisation
WP	Writ Petition

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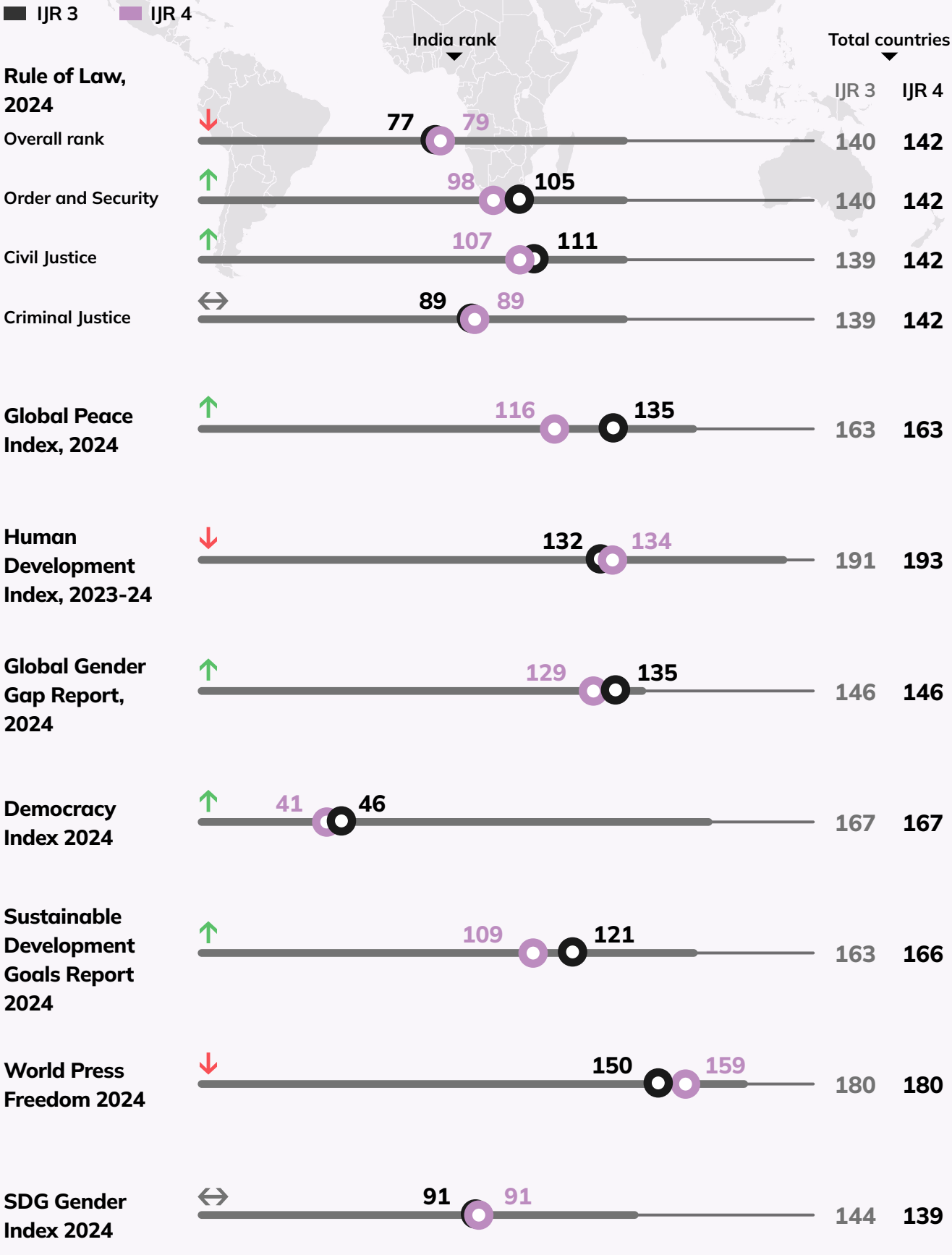
India in the World



National Deficits

Police

50%
Vacancy among the 10,000-odd forensic staff across the country

1.25%
National average share of training budget in police budget

0
States/ UTs that meet their own reserved quotas for women in the police

Prisons

176 Prisons with 200% and above occupancy

20 states/UTs
Over 20% undertrials detained for 1-3 years.

25 psychologists/ psychiatrists for 5.7 lakh prisoners in the country. 25 states/UTs sanctioned none.

Judiciary

Karnataka: Only state to meet SC, ST and OBC quotas in judiciary and police

6 High Courts have had annual case clearance rates above 100% since 2017

Legal Aid

38% Drop in number of paralegal volunteers since 2019

SHRC

Only **4%** of total cases are initiated suo moto.

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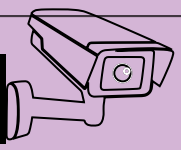
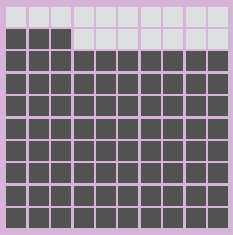
Good News

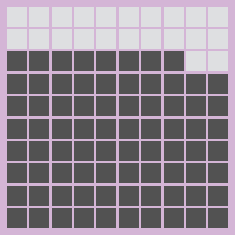
Police





83%

of all police stations in the country have at least one CCTV camera



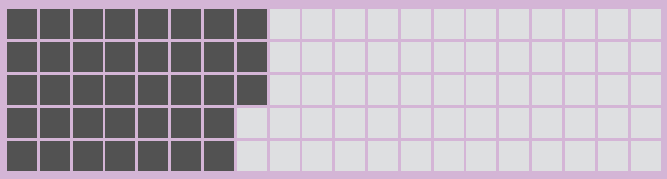
78%

of all police stations have women helpdesks

Judiciary

38%

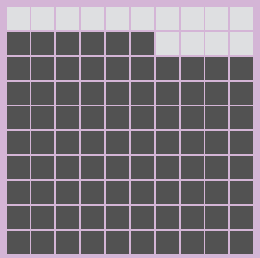
Share of women judges in district judiciary



Prisons

86%

Share of prisons equipped with at least one video conferencing facility



8 States meet the **1:300 benchmark** of women inmates per women medical officers

Introduction

"What gets measured gets improved." — *Peter Drucker*

The fourth edition of the India Justice Report (IJR) is all about comparisons, trends, and projections as it continues to assess the structural capacity of 18 large and medium-sized states and 7 small states to deliver justice. To its assessment of police, prisons, legal aid, the judiciary, and state human rights commissions, the report draws attention to forensics, mediation, and disabilities. Decadal comparisons and recent changes capture patterns, highlighting areas where states are making headway or falling behind, as well as allow for future projections. As always, the IJR relies entirely on official data.

The India Justice Report's time-series assessments reveal a landscape of dynamic change across the spectrum. Occupying the top five places, southern states dominate the latest rankings. Karnataka once again takes top position and Andhra climbs to second from fifth. Telangana, eleventh in 2019, has retained its third position. Historically strong performers like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have experienced minor fluctuations but remain within the top five.

In the mid-tier, states like Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha have shown steady gradual improvement. Maharashtra though sees a significant decline from its previously held top position and Gujarat and Punjab exhibit inconsistent performances.

At the bottom tier, states such as Bihar, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal have largely maintained their positions with minor shifts. Notably, Uttar Pradesh rising one rung from the bottom has switched places with West Bengal. Overall, these changes underscore the shifting dynamics of state performance, shaped by evolving governance, economic policies, and other influencing factors.

The rankings of small states reveal a mix of trends. Sikkim consistently retains its top position. Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Tripura occupy the middle ground but Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Goa show a dip in their most recent rankings to 5th, 6th, and 7th places, respectively.

The good news is that, overall, there has been a steady growth in investment in strengthening the structural capacity of the justice delivery system across all key institutions assessed by the India Justice Report. Budget allocations have risen, with judiciary per capita expenditure improving, and gender diversity within the lower judiciary and police has shown an upward trend as it has among legal aid secretaries and paralegal volunteers. Human resource capacity has seen some progress, with judicial vacancies reducing in select states and forensic staffing receiving renewed attention. Infrastructure improvements include reducing the deficits in court halls, and technology being used to fill critical gaps. Despite rising workloads, subordinate courts have improved case clearance rates, urban police stations have increased in number, and targeted interventions in prisons—such as expanded legal aid, video conferencing, and open prisons—are creating more avenues for decongestion and reform.

Trends and Ranking

Nevertheless, now four years distant from the severe disruptions of COVID-19, the present assessment finds that the gap between policy and implementation remains. The shocks, and shortfalls of the pandemic have not led to radical changes in policy, practice, and procedures but instead to a gradualist approach of business as usual.

Financial constraints fundamentally shape the structure and efficiency of every subsystem, compelling difficult trade-offs between competing priorities. Over the past decade, budget allocations for police, prisons, legal aid, the judiciary, and forensic services have seen only modest increases. In real terms, these allocations diminish further when adjusted for inflation.

Salaries consume the lion's share of all budgets leaving minimal scope for infrastructure development,

modernisation, or capacity-building. This directly impacts training, which requires duty holders to have a thorough grounding in domain knowledge, job-related norms, procedures, and skills attuned to the positions they occupy.

Adequate investment in training is not merely an expense, but a crucial investment in the effective functioning of the entire justice system. Given the persistent pressure to do more with less, it is imperative that training be prioritised, not marginalised.

A cursory analysis of budgets and training facilities reveals a sparse landscape. Illustratively, national police training budgets do not exceed 1.25 per cent, with only four states allocating more than 2 per cent. Current data does not capture deeper facts about ranks or numbers trained, course durations, or availability of resource staff, and hence cannot inform policy decisions. Elsewhere, more insights are available. In 2023, The Centre for Research and Planning of the Supreme Court of India, in collaboration with the National Judicial Academy, evaluated judicial training. It analysed quality, emphasised the need for standardising substantive knowledge, and recommended skill development.

Diversity and Disabilities

India, a diverse agglomeration of marginalised communities, presents a complex challenge to inclusion. From caste groups to women, Dalits, minorities, transgender individuals and persons with disabilities, demands for representation within the justice system are ever-present. The aspiration behind affirmative action is to address historical and systemic inequalities faced by marginalised groups. The standard is to repair the gulf in representation of consistently underrepresented groups in all spheres—placing the onus on governments and public authorities to lead the way.

The years have seen some progress, particularly for women and caste groups. The share of women in the police force has grown in all states and Union Territories (UTs), with five states showing a positive trajectory toward achieving 33 per cent representation.[1] The proportion of women judges in subordinate courts has improved in nearly all states, while their presence in legal aid structures as panel lawyers and paralegal volunteers continues to expand. Additionally, caste-based representation formalised through quotas has ensured the Schedule Caste and Tribes and OBCs mark their presence in the justice eco-system. Nevertheless, leadership positions remain elusive.

One group continues to remain largely invisible within the justice system—persons with disabilities. The nearly decade-old Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD) of 2016 mandates a 4 per cent reservation. While India's legal framework acknowledges the rights of disabled individuals, systemic inaction has led to their continued exclusion. Within the police, judiciary, and prison administration, the representation of persons with disabilities is negligible, often ignored in recruitment policies or implementation. This leaves them both underrepresented as professionals and underserved as users of justice. True diversity in the justice system requires moving beyond token representation. While strides have been made for women and caste-based inclusion, leadership gaps persist, and disability representation remains an afterthought.

Judiciary

Persisting vacancies, low case clearance rates and mounting arrears continue to dog the formal court system. By 2024, case accumulation had crossed the five crore mark—an increase of over 30 per cent across all court levels: an increase that reflects the ongoing challenges with judicial vacancies, procedural inefficiencies, and the influx of new cases each year.

Efforts to improve recruitment speed and compliance with timelines for district judges have constantly been in the public eye, but structural issues like funding shortages, complex procedures, and judicial time to attend to these while being short-handed have remained major impediments to repair. Toward standardising recruitment processes, reducing regional disparities, and ensuring timely appointments in future, the need for an All India Judicial Service (AIJS), and standardised recruitment calendars has been frequently mooted.

Numbers-wise, this has been one of the few periods in which the Supreme Court has managed to reach its full

1 Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chandigarh, Ladakh, and Tamil Nadu

Practical pathways to improvement have emphasised the use of technology. With the objective of processing significantly higher numbers of new cases and streamlining administrative workload,[3] some focussed initiatives included an emphasis on digitisation and e-governance—pushing for e-filing, setting up E-Sewa Kendras and a case management and information system, digitising court records, and paperless courts. The push for broader transparency saw more live-streaming of proceedings, an expansion of the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), and efforts to further enhance the dashboard's technological infrastructure. NALSA's Legal Service Management System platform now allows litigants to apply for legal aid online and track the status of their cases.[4] Additional video-conferencing facilities at district courts and prisons provided access for individuals unable to attend in person and allowed for prioritisation of urgent cases, especially those involving individuals at risk of prolonged detention.

Optimisation of technological interventions was nevertheless hostage to prevailing power supply and bandwidth, hardware availability, and entrenched cultures. The issue now is whether even the halting momentum in some areas achieved over the last two years—whether amazing or unremarkable—will be carried forward at a steady pace.

sanctioned strength of 34 judges several times. Efforts to fill vacancies have seen a record 165 high court judges appointed in 2022—the highest annual appointment rate thus far— with 110 appointments being made in 2023.[2] Yet, over two years (2022 to 2024) high court vacancies have gone up, and in the lower courts where most cases originate, they continue to hover around 20 per cent.

Too often, specialisations—fast-track courts, human rights courts, juvenile justice, consumer redressal systems, commercial courts—though recognised as aids to efficiency, fall short of desired outcomes for the same reasons that everyday courts fail: under-resourcing and overburden. Similarly, with shortages of trained personnel and lack of standardised procedures the promise of mediation as a means of decluttering courts and speeding dispute resolution remains potential.

Police

Nationally, the police-population ratio remained stagnant at 155 police personnel per 100,000 population, significantly below the sanctioned strength of 197.[5] This shortfall varies considerably across states—at just 81 police per lakh Bihar exemplifies the situation. These gaps have far-reaching consequences: investigations take longer, crime prevention efforts falter, and public safety is compromised. Overburdened investigating officers must too often juggle with multiple serious cases—murder, fraud, cybercrime, rape—resulting in investigation backlogs, poor case preparation, uncertain outcomes at court and an accumulation of unresolved crimes that then feed a sense of lawlessness.

Concurrently, demographic shifts over five years have seen a 4 per cent increase in urban police stations and a 7 per cent decrease in rural areas. While urban stations typically cover 20 sq km, rural stations, stretched across over 300 sq km, signal the disparity in accessing policing services.

While progressive policies and legislative reforms are frequently enacted, their impact is often blunted by systemic failures in implementation. For instance, the Supreme Court's 2020 detailed mandate for CCTV installation in police stations, aimed at enhancing accountability, has seen patchy compliance, with some states even showing an actual decline in compliance. As of early 2023, many police stations still lacked even a single CCTV, let alone meeting the stringent specifications set out in the Paramvir judgment of that year.

2 Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1006 dated 8 December 2023. Available at: https://sansad.in/getFile/loksabhaquestions/annex/1714/AU1006.pdf?source=pqals
3 Supreme Court of India, E-committee Newsletter, November 2024. Available at: https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s388ef51f0bf911e452e8dbb1d807a81ab/uploads/2025/01/20250122910849551.pdf
4 NALSA Legal Aid Case Management System. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/lsams/
5 Bureau of Police Research and Development, Data on Police Organisations 2023, Table 2.1.3 p.54. Available at: https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/1716639795_d6fce11ed56a985b635c.pdf

Forensics

Forensic science plays a crucial role in the delivery of justice. Across India the administrative control and capacity of forensic laboratories varies significantly, raising concerns about their efficiency and impartiality. In several states—such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Karnataka—state forensic science laboratories function under the direct control of the police. This arrangement risks compromising the independence of forensic analysis. Elsewhere, forensic services work under the Home Department, ensuring some degree of institutional separation in forensic investigations.

Despite their importance, forensic labs across the country face significant capacity constraints. Many suffer from chronic underfunding, outdated infrastructure, and an acute shortage of skilled personnel. The increasing demand for forensic analysis, coupled with limited resources, has led to case backlogs that delay both investigations and trials. Budgetary allocations remain insufficient, and slow recruitment processes exacerbate the shortage of trained experts. Additionally, the lack of adequate regional forensic facilities means that crucial evidence often has to be sent to overburdened state-level laboratories, further prolonging forensic examinations and delaying investigation and trials.

To address these challenges, both the central and state governments have initiated efforts to strengthen forensic capacity. The Union government has proposed setting up regional forensic science laboratories to ease case pendency, while also working to modernise infrastructure and integrate forensic training into law enforcement and judicial processes. Some states have taken independent steps: Tamil Nadu, for one, has expanded its forensic workforce and invested in advanced forensic technology, while Delhi has introduced measures to streamline forensic and autopsy coordination to expedite case resolution. The Centre has also introduced the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill to establish standardised forensic procedures and enhance the reliability of forensic evidence. Ensuring the long-term effectiveness of these measures will require sustained investment, inter-agency collaboration, and a commitment to keeping forensic science independent, well-resourced, and aligned with the broader goal of justice delivery.

Prisons

Despite amended legislation, numerous judicial directions, targeted interventions to reduce populations, and the adoption of the Model Prison Manual 2016 by many states, prison conditions remain lamentable. Over the last decade prison populations have surged by nearly 50 per cent. The proportion of undertrials—people awaiting completion of investigation or trial—has escalated from 66 per cent to 76 per cent.

Nationally, average overcrowding in prisons stands at 131 per cent. But a dozen prisons house four times more inmates than they should. The Amitava Roy Committee points out in its 2023 report to the court (Re Inhuman Conditions in 1,382 Prisons) that only 68 per cent of inmates have adequate sleeping space. Though budgets have increased, human resources and infrastructure simply cannot keep pace. All too often a single doctor is available for hundreds of inmates, grossly exceeding the stipulated benchmark of 300 inmates per doctor. A lack of trained welfare officers, social workers, and psychologists ensures prisoners often leave in a worse condition than when they entered, increasing recidivism and further burdening the justice system. The Amitava Roy Committee's ringing exhortations to "act with committed sincerity and resolute responsibility in a mission mode with vision and passion" remain unattainable without the fundamental raw materials of adequate financial, infrastructure, and human resource capacity. Until then prisons must remain holding pens far distant from the centres of reform and rehabilitation envisioned in the Model Prison and Correctional Services Act of 2023.

Legal Aid

This period has seen legal aid emphasise support for specific mechanisms, such as the Legal Aid Defence Counsel (LADC) system, jail clinics, and the careful calibration of timelines and funds for National Lok Adalats. This focus on targeted interventions has been accompanied by a significant shrinkage of resources for broader, community-based interventions. Consequently, the number of paralegal volunteers has trimmed down, the broader legal awareness mandate has been deprioritised, and taluka-level legal advice and counseling centers, important points of access for distant communities, are now all but defunct. This

shift in direction, while beneficial in addressing specific concerns like prisoner representation, may inadvertently neglect another foundational pillar of legal services—the widespread need for basic legal information and accessible localised support—potentially worsening existing inequalities in access to justice.

State Human Rights Commissions

The India Justice Report 2022 (published in 2023) assessed the capacity of State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs) to effectuate their broad mandates for the first time. Two years on their functioning remains underscored by a recurring theme of gaps between their intended mandate and actual capability on the ground.

Incremental improvements measured through basic metrics such as enhanced budget utilisation, advancements in gender diversity, and improved case disposal rates, have a significant impact on rankings. For instance, West Bengal's SHRC has risen from the bottom to first place due to these changes. However, this does not in itself signal an ability to deliver quality functionality. For instance, impressively high disposal rates of over 80 per cent across SHRCs are misleading as the figure is mainly made up of complaints that are rejected at the outset rather than any institutional effort at comprehensive and early resolution of grievances.

Finally, SHRCs do little to help their own image or functionality by frequently failing to update websites, publish detailed case and diversity statistics or to publish timely annual reports. A reluctance to respond to RTI queries that require little more than access to public data, as well, impedes public accountability, obscures operational deficits and good practice, and leaves much of their functioning beyond public scrutiny.

Conclusion

India's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 includes ambitious targets for gender equality, reduced inequalities, peace, justice, and strong institutions. While some progress is likely in certain areas, particularly improved access to justice that is driven by digitisation and increased legal awareness, full achievement across all goals will remain a challenge. Women's participation in the justice system may rise, though parity is unlikely given the current pace of change. Assuring justice for all will also remain an aspiration despite targeted programmes, as capacity deficits and implementation gaps will persist. Significant progress is most achievable where policy reforms are combined with technology and increased public awareness. Ultimately, transformative change requires sustained effort, increased investment, and a holistic approach to addressing complex social and economic inequalities.

In the time between 2022 and 2024, post the disruptions of Covid, there has been a national election and a series of state elections. Governments have changed and with this have assumed the responsibility of improving and making the justice delivery systems fit for purpose.

Valuable initiatives aimed at strengthening India's justice system are evident in the implementation of mechanisms like the Under-Trial Review Committees (UTRCs), Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) committees, Legal Aid Defense Counsel (LADC) systems, and the new compulsory forensic investigation in serious crime cases mandated in the Bhartiya Nagrik Surakhsha Sanhita. While each addresses distinct facets of justice delivery, they reflect an effort to address long-term challenges. To stand strong they need a solid foundation of structural capacity.

Illustratively, sudden infusions of technology alone cannot be relied upon. Nor is its introduction any guarantee of reductions in workload stress. For example, the introduction of video-conferencing in prisons may have reduced time and cost to administrators who no longer have to expend time and personnel to ferry hundreds of prisoners back and forth from courts in district after district, but given the ever-increasing figures of inmates awaiting trial, there is nothing to show that it has sped up the delivery of justice. Meanwhile, its potential for improving medical attention and expanding education possibilities in prison is yet to be realised.

Of necessity, constrained finances require duty holders to do more with less. Inevitably, limited financial resources demand that those responsible for service delivery maximise efficiency and achieve more with fewer resources. It is logical then to prioritise increased spending and systemic improvements only in areas yielding the greatest positive impact for the largest number of citizens.

> While a perfectly funded system may remain an aspirational ideal, the guiding principle should be resource allocation that generates equitable benefits across all public goods.

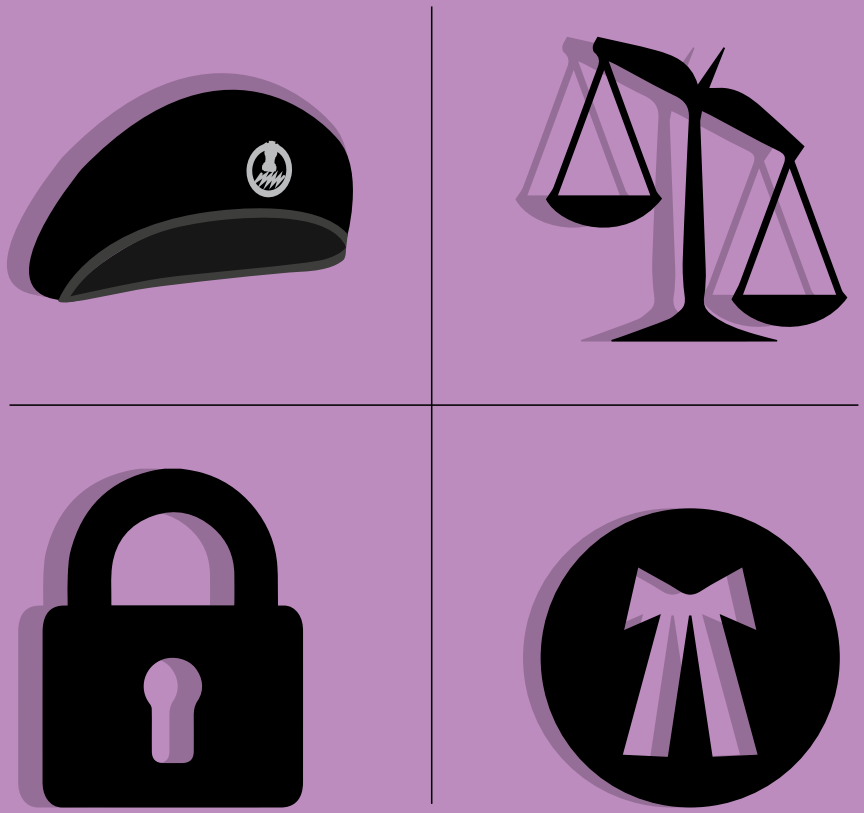
Data can help with this. Disaggregated, consistent, timely and accurate data, accessible and compiled year-on-year in one place in relation to justice delivery provides the basis for policy makers to frame future directions and identify priorities within a complex set of interdependent operations. Digital initiatives like e-Prisons and digitised court records offer potential for improved data utilisation, but a fragmented ecosystem of data sources makes cross-referencing and correlation difficult, hindering the ability to draw meaningful conclusions on which to base overall policy or pinpoint pain points that need priority intervention.

Weak institutions breed injustice. Persistent institutional deficits hinder the fair application of law, creating a system where some individuals or groups are more vulnerable to unfair treatment, while others may enjoy impunity. Over time, when the system is unable to address this pattern of inconsistent application of the law it erodes public trust and leads to a tacit acceptance that the rule of law is not a priority.

The problems of overall capacity deficits, impossible arrears, overfull jails, and inadequate avenues of legal redress have culminated in creating a 'wicked problem' – multifaceted, deeply challenging, and inviting no single definite pathway to a complete solution; a problem so big from every angle that the solution is not one but many. Multiple efforts need to move forward at the same time and together before solutions can take shape and build momentum.

Even then, the problem may not go away but morph into other forms. Yet, endeavour will defeat stasis and accumulation, and we will not be where we began. As India moves forward into a hundred years of being a democratic, rule of law nation, making the justice system 'better' envisions a system that is more accessible, equitable, efficient, and responsive to the needs of the people it serves—a system that truly lives up to the ideals of the Constitution and works tirelessly to ensure that justice is not only done but is seen to be done.

Maja Daruwala,
Chief Editor, India Justice Report



National Findings

Overall ranking *

* Composite ranking across police, prisons, judiciary and legal aid

Color guide

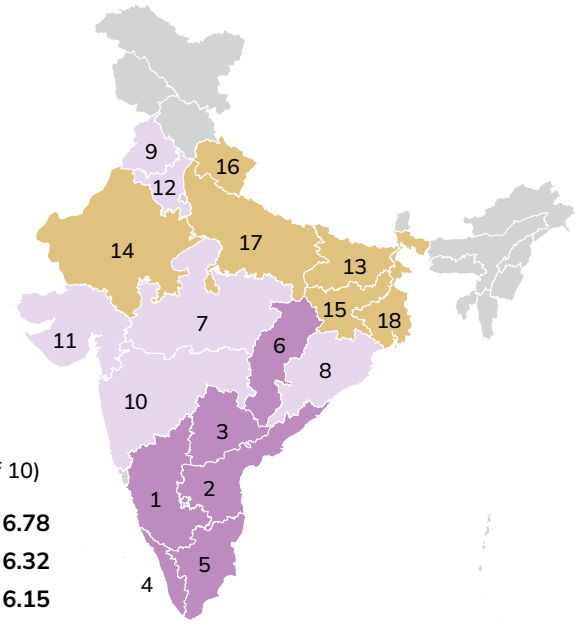
Best | Middle | Worst

Indicators (in IJR 4) **102**

Clusters

I. 18 large and mid-sized states (population above 10 million)

II. 7 small-sized states (population up to 10 million)



Map 1: Large and mid-sized states

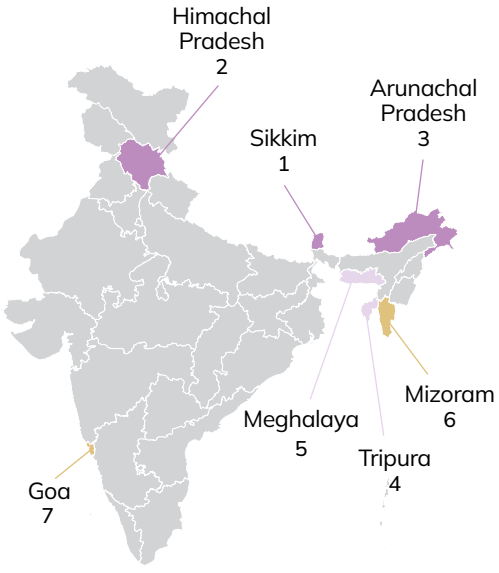
Rank (out of 18)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
6	14	1	1	Karnataka	6.78
13	12	5	2	Andhra Pradesh	6.32
11	3	3	3	Telangana	6.15
2	5	6	4	Kerala	6.09
3	2	2	5	Tamil Nadu	5.62
10	7	9	6	Chhattisgarh	5.54
9	16	8	7	Madhya Pradesh	5.42
7	11	11	8	Odisha	5.41
4	4	10	9	Punjab	5.33
1	1	12	10	Maharashtra	5.12
8	6	4	11	Gujarat	5.07
5	9	13	12	Haryana	5.02
17	13	16	13	Bihar	4.88
14	10	15	14	Rajasthan	4.83
16	8	7	15	Jharkhand	4.78
15	15	14	16	Uttarakhand	4.41
18	18	18	17	Uttar Pradesh	3.92
12	17	17	18	West Bengal	3.63

Map 2: Small states

Rank (out of 7)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
2	2	1	1	Sikkim	5.20
3	4	6	2	Himachal Pradesh	4.36
6	5	2	3	Arunachal Pradesh	4.21
7	1	3	4	Tripura	4.11
5	7	4	5	Meghalaya	4.02
4	6	5	6	Mizoram	3.81
1	3	7	7	Goa	3.51



How each ranked state fared in its cluster across the 4 pillars of justice

Table 1: Rank and score for large and mid-sized states

Ranks 1 to 6 | Ranks 7 to 12 | Ranks 13 to 18

	Overall rank	Police				Prisons				Judiciary				Legal aid			
	IJR 4 2025	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2021	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2021	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2021	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2021	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025
Karnataka	1	6	1	2	3	3	14	2	2	16	12	2	4	7	16	2	1
Andhra Pradesh	2	5	4	3	2	15	7	5	4	13	14	11	5	10	14	13	5
Telangana	3	11	10	1	1	13	2	3	7	11	6	5	2	4	6	5	10
Kerala	4	13	14	17	15	1	5	4	3	5	3	4	1	1	7	6	6
Tamil Nadu	5	1	5	6	13	10	6	1	1	1	1	1	3	12	11	12	16
Chhattisgarh	6	10	2	9	4	8	11	13	13	12	4	6	8	8	15	11	7
Madhya Pradesh	7	15	18	7	11	7	8	7	5	6	11	10	9	9	12	14	9
Odisha	8	7	3	4	8	5	9	11	6	9	15	13	12	15	8	10	8
Punjab	9	3	12	13	7	16	13	12	15	2	2	3	7	3	3	9	2
Maharashtra	10	4	13	10	5	2	4	10	10	4	5	12	11	5	1	7	14
Gujarat	11	12	8	8	9	9	10	6	9	7	8	9	14	6	9	3	13
Haryana	12	8	9	12	14	11	16	16	14	3	7	14	10	2	5	4	3
Bihar	13	14	11	16	10	6	3	9	12	18	18	16	15	16	2	16	12
Rajasthan	14	17	16	14	16	12	1	8	8	8	10	17	6	11	13	17	18
Jharkhand	15	9	6	11	12	18	15	15	17	14	9	7	13	14	4	1	11
Uttarakhand	16	2	7	5	6	17	18	18	18	15	13	8	16	17	10	8	4
Uttar Pradesh	17	18	15	15	17	14	17	17	16	17	17	15	17	18	18	18	17
West Bengal	18	16	17	18	18	4	12	14	11	10	16	18	18	13	17	15	15

States arranged in descending order of overall rank in IJR 4.

Table 2: Rank and score for small states

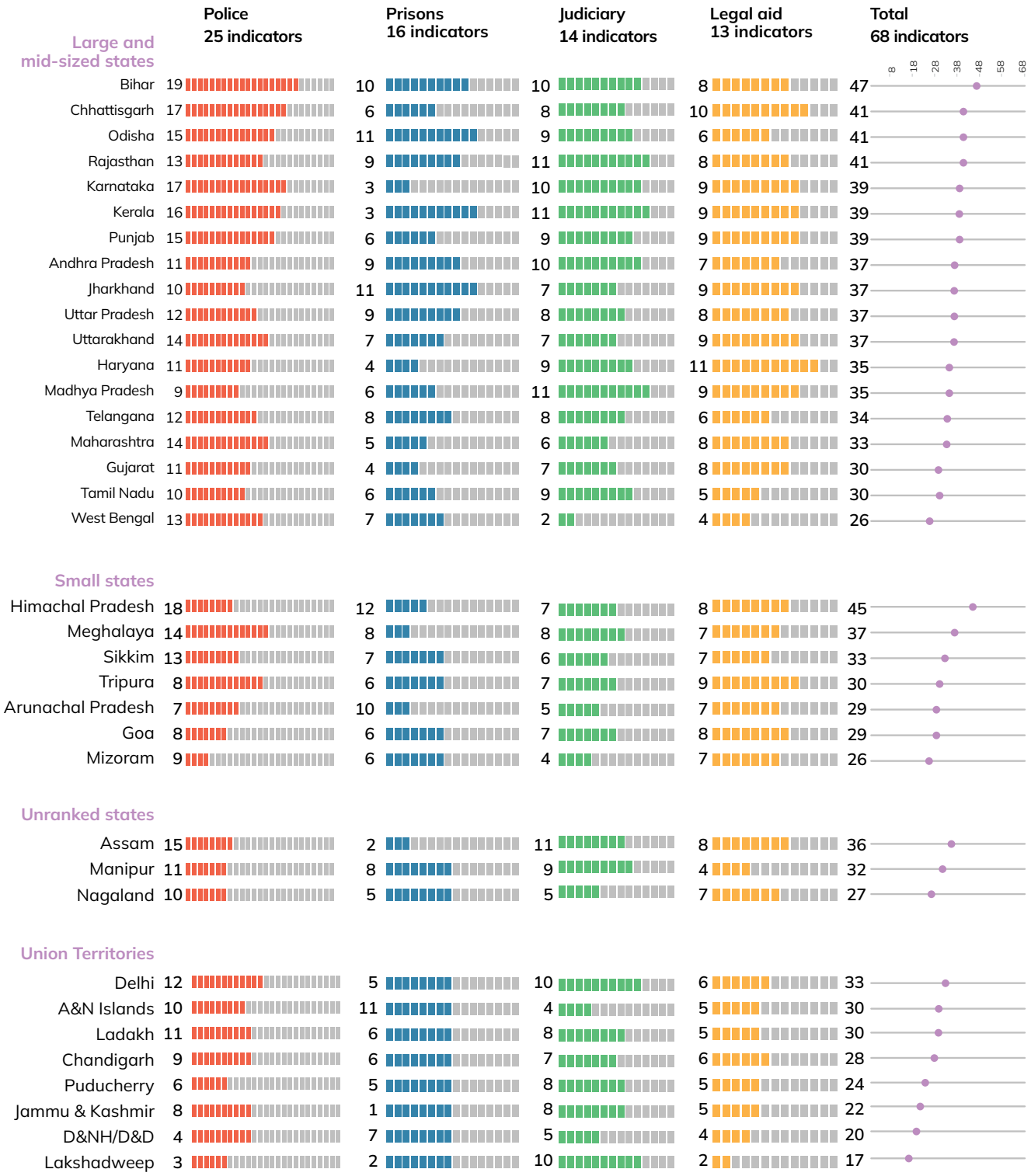
Ranks 1 to 3 | Ranks 4 to 5 | Ranks 6 to 7

	Overall rank	Police				Prisons				Judiciary				Legal aid			
	IJR 4 2025	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2021	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2021	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2021	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2021	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025
Sikkim	1	1	1	1	1	7	6	4	3	1	1	1	2	4	3	1	1
Himachal Pradesh	2	6	2	5	4	6	1	2	2	3	2	6	5	3	6	5	4
Arunachal Pradesh	3	2	4	2	2	3	3	1	1	7	5	4	4	7	7	7	7
Tripura	4	4	5	7	6	5	2	5	6	6	6	2	1	5	2	4	3
Meghalaya	5	5	3	3	5	2	5	6	4	4	7	5	3	6	5	3	5
Mizoram	6	7	6	4	3	4	7	3	5	5	3	3	6	2	4	6	6
Goa	7	3	7	6	7	1	4	7	7	2	4	7	7	1	1	2	2

States arranged in descending order of overall rank in IJR 4.

Figure 1: The improvement scorecard between IJR 2022 and IJR 2025

Of the 68 static indicators (listed on page 33) common to this and IJR 2022, in how many did a state/UT improve?



Methodology: Count of indicators on which a state has improved over IJR 3. Only non-trend and comparable indicators present in both IJR 3 and IJR 4 have been considered. For indicators with benchmarks, if a state met the benchmark, it was marked as an improvement even if its value declined within the benchmark. If a state didn't meet the benchmark but its value improved, it was marked as an improvement. Where an indicator value was not available for one or both years, that indicator was not considered.

Ranking diversity *

* How do states fare on 17 diversity indicators across police, prisons, judiciary and legal aid? Indicators listed on Page 32.

Color guide

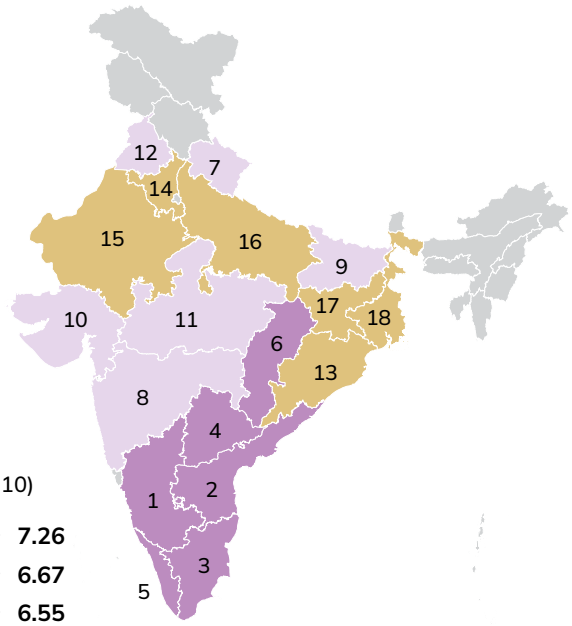
Best | Middle | Worst

Indicators (in IJR 4) **17**

Clusters

I. 18 large and mid-sized states (population above 10 million)

II. 7 small-sized states (population up to 10 million)



Map 3: Large and mid-sized states

Rank (out of 18)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
2	1	2	1	Karnataka	7.26
6	4	4	2	Andhra Pradesh	6.67
1	7	1	3	Tamil Nadu	6.55
11	9	3	4	Telangana	6.02
3	2	7	5	Kerala	5.87
13	5	5	6	Chhattisgarh	5.82
7	14	10	7	Uttarakhand	5.58
4	8	6	8	Maharashtra	5.31
17	10	12	9	Bihar	5.30
8	6	9	10	Gujarat	4.81
12	17	8	11	Madhya Pradesh	4.69
10	12	13	12	Punjab	4.68
5	3	11	13	Odisha	4.49
14	11	15	14	Haryana	3.90
16	15	14	15	Rajasthan	3.46
18	18	17	16	Uttar Pradesh	3.38
15	13	16	17	Jharkhand	3.21
9	16	18	18	West Bengal	2.95

Map 4: Small states

Rank (out of 7)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
1	2	1	1	Sikkim	5.01
6	3	5	2	Himachal Pradesh	4.44
4	6	3	3	Meghalaya	4.30
2	1	2	4	Mizoram	4.23
5	5	4	5	Arunachal Pradesh	3.31
3	4	6	6	Goa	2.98
7	7	7	7	Tripura	1.98

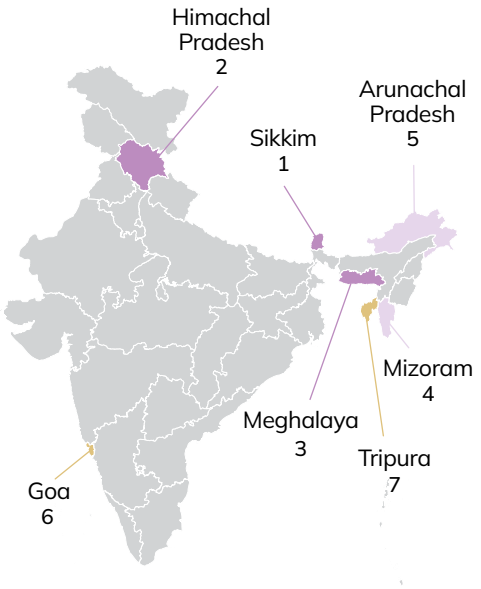


Figure 2: Caste representation in judiciary

Most states fail to fill their quotas for SCs and STs while doing much better in filling the reserved seats for OBCs.

SC and ST judges in subordinate courts: actual to reserved ratio (%)

90% and above
70% to 90%
Below 70%

Large and mid-sized states	Judges in subordinate courts: actual to reserved ratio (%)						Improvement between IJR 3 and IJR 4		
	Scheduled caste (SC) judges		Scheduled tribe (ST) judges		Other backward classes (OBC) judges				
	IJR 3 (Jul 2022)	IJR 4 (Feb 2025)	IJR 3 (Jul 2022)	IJR 4 (Feb 2025)	IJR 3 (Jul 2022)	IJR 4 (Feb 2025)	SC judges	ST judges	OBC judges
Andhra Pradesh	91	111	69	83	119	138	↑	↑	↑
Bihar	68	74	77	84	51	60	↑	↑	↑
Chhattisgarh	128	92	79	60	123	97	↓	↓	↓
Gujarat	108	97	2	2	55	47	↓	↓	↓
Haryana	56	60	NA[3]	NA[3]	33	40	↑		↑
Jharkhand	39	21	35	16	36	16	↓	↓	↓
Karnataka	85	110	66	116	75	168	↑	↑	↑
Kerala	79	84	9	16	106	112	↑	↑	↑
Madhya Pradesh	73	82	56	58	90	112	↑	↑	↑
Maharashtra	80	80	5	5	120	120	↔	↔	↑
Odisha	11	18	0	2	48	64	↑	↑	↓
Punjab	83	92	0	0	100	104	↑	↔	↑
Rajasthan	63	69	58	62	94	76	↑	↑	↓
Tamil Nadu	93	86	68	73	122	113	↓	↑	↑
Telangana	82	81	117	119	125	123	↓	↑	↑
Uttar Pradesh	64	69	45	53	83	86	↑	↑	↑
Uttarakhand	83	81	125	101	96	89	↓	↓	↓
West Bengal	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Small states									
Arunachal Pradesh	NA[1]	NA[1]	104	91	NA[5]	NA[5]		↓	
Goa	0	0	33	33	15	15	↔	↔	↔
Himachal Pradesh	57	56	91	78	38	40	↓	↓	↑
Meghalaya	NA[2]	NA[2]	57	64	NA[7]	NA[7]		↑	
Mizoram	NA[1]	NA[1]	NA[4]	NA[4]	NA[6]	NA[6]			
Sikkim	0	0	66	60	116	100	↔	↓	↓
Tripura	63	57	61	53	NA[6]	NA[6]	↓	↓	

1. No SC reservation and no SC judges. 2. No specific reservation for SC judges. 3. No ST reservation and no ST judges. 4. No specific reservation for ST judges.
5. No OBC reservation. 6. No OBC reservation and no OBC judges. 7. No specific reservation approved for OBCs.

Source: Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2354 dated 20 March 2025.

Available at: https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/267/AU2354_GpF5iE.pdf?source=pqars.

Figure 3: Share of women across pillars

More women have joined the judiciary but remain clustered at the lower echelons. The same pattern is observed in police where women account for just 8%. In 17 ranked states women officers were below 10%.

Up to 10%
10% to 20%
20% to 30%
Above 30%

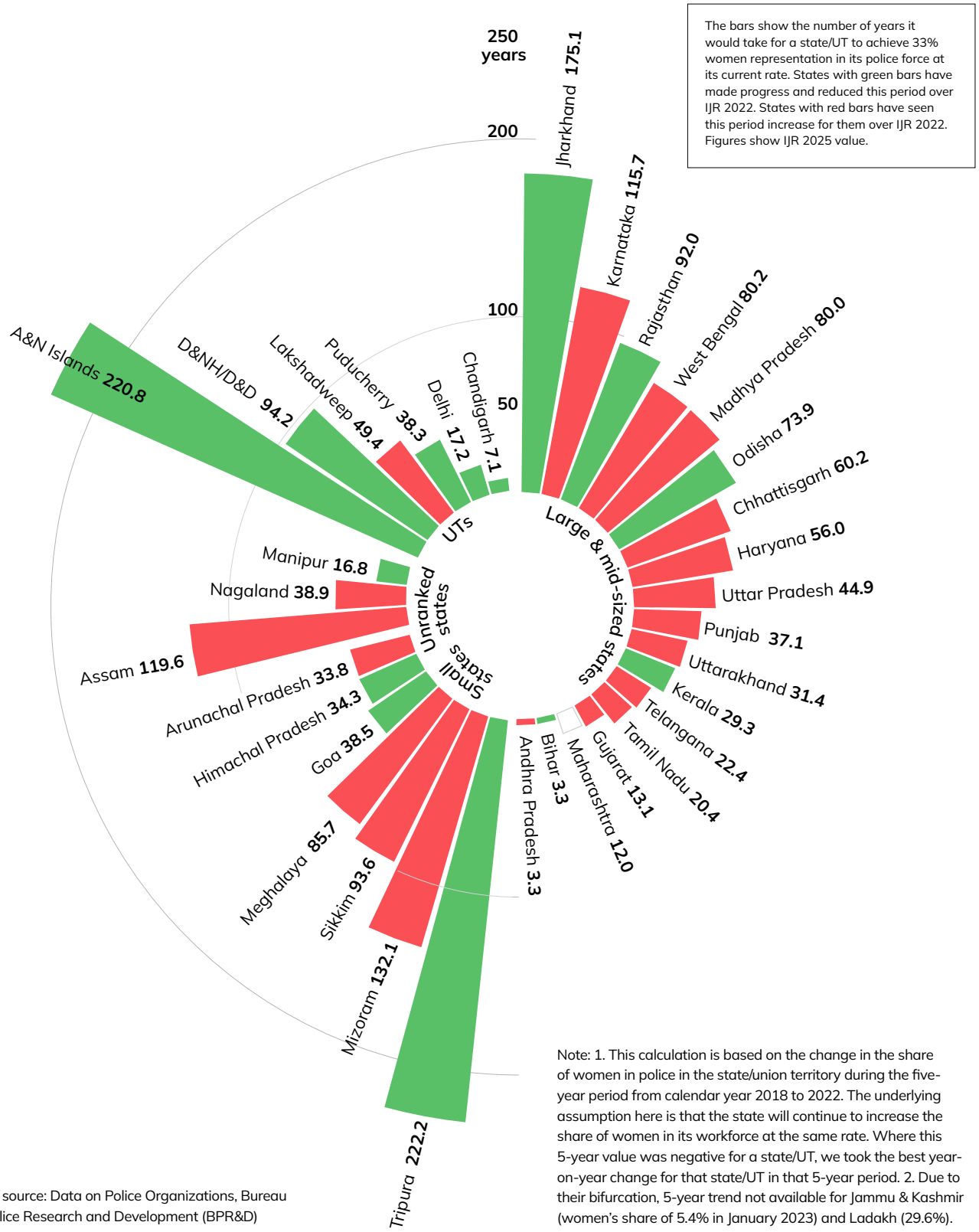
Share of women (%)

	Police		Prisons	Judiciary		Legal Aid		
	Total police staff	Police officers	Total prison staff	Judges (High Court)	Judges (Sub. court)	Panel lawyers	PLVs	DLSA secretaries
Large and mid-sized states								
Andhra Pradesh	21.5	5.2	8.4	16.7	50.9	20.7	33.6	50.0
Bihar	23.7	12.6	22.2	2.9	26.6	18.1	29.3	22.2
Chhattisgarh	7.6	9.3	11.1	6.3	43.7	22.2	37.8	43.5
Gujarat	16.7	10.0	7.3	25.0	20.8	26.9	46.4	NA[2]
Haryana	9.2	12.2	1.8	25.5	40.7	28.3	40.2	27.3
Jharkhand	7.4	3.7	9.4	6.3	26.5	15.7	32.4	25.0
Karnataka	8.9	6.1	32.9	16.3	37.0	43.8	59.0	20.0
Kerala	8.3	2.7	8.3	8.9	48.8	48.6	63.3	60.0
Madhya Pradesh	7.1	9.2	17.8	3.0	40.6	15.6	37.7	18.0
Maharashtra	18.7	6.8	15.4	16.2	30.8	34.5	40.8	13.5
Odisha	11.0	14.2	12.9	5.6	47.7	14.2	38.5	69.2
Punjab	11.1	8.5	8.6	25.5	51.9	24.3	38.7	63.6
Rajasthan	10.9	7.5	19.6	9.1	42.4	NA[1]	26.7	0.0
Tamil Nadu	20.7	20.1	13.8	20.0	40.8	23.6	46.9	NA[2]
Telangana	8.7	7.6	6.6	33.3	55.3	18.1	44.0	23.5
Uttar Pradesh	10.5	4.6	10.8	3.8	35.5	14.6	28.4	15.5
Uttarakhand	12.2	10.2	3.0	0.0	40.7	32.5	53.1	30.8
West Bengal	9.6	4.2	10.9	14.0	42.4	25.0	38.4	65.2
Small states								
Arunachal Pradesh	11.3	6.5	18.6	16.7	33.3	26.1	40.6	40.0
Goa	10.8	16.3	1.2	16.2	70.0	50.5	78.4	100.0
Himachal Pradesh	14.5	5.5	8.7	8.3	37.5	26.5	44.2	72.7
Meghalaya	5.8	8.9	16.1	0.0	60.7	62.6	41.5	83.3
Mizoram	8.2	18.2	34.5	16.7	51.1	61.4	29.2	NA[3]
Sikkim	8.2	6.4	25.3	33.3	47.8	44.7	75.8	NA[3]
Tripura	5.7	6.0	4.4	0.0	35.8	30.4	27.0	57.1

Footnotes: 1. Data shows no panel lawyers. 2. Data on women secretaries not available. 3. Data shows 0 DLSA secretaries sanctioned and appointed.
Note: 1. States ranked in alphabetical order within cluster. 2. Data as of January 2023 for police indicators; December 2022 for prisons indicators; February 2025 for judges; March 2024/September 2024 for legal aid indicators.
Source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D); Prison Statistics India (PSI); National Legal Services Authority (NALSA); Parliament questions

Figure 4: How long will it take for women's share in police to hit 33%?

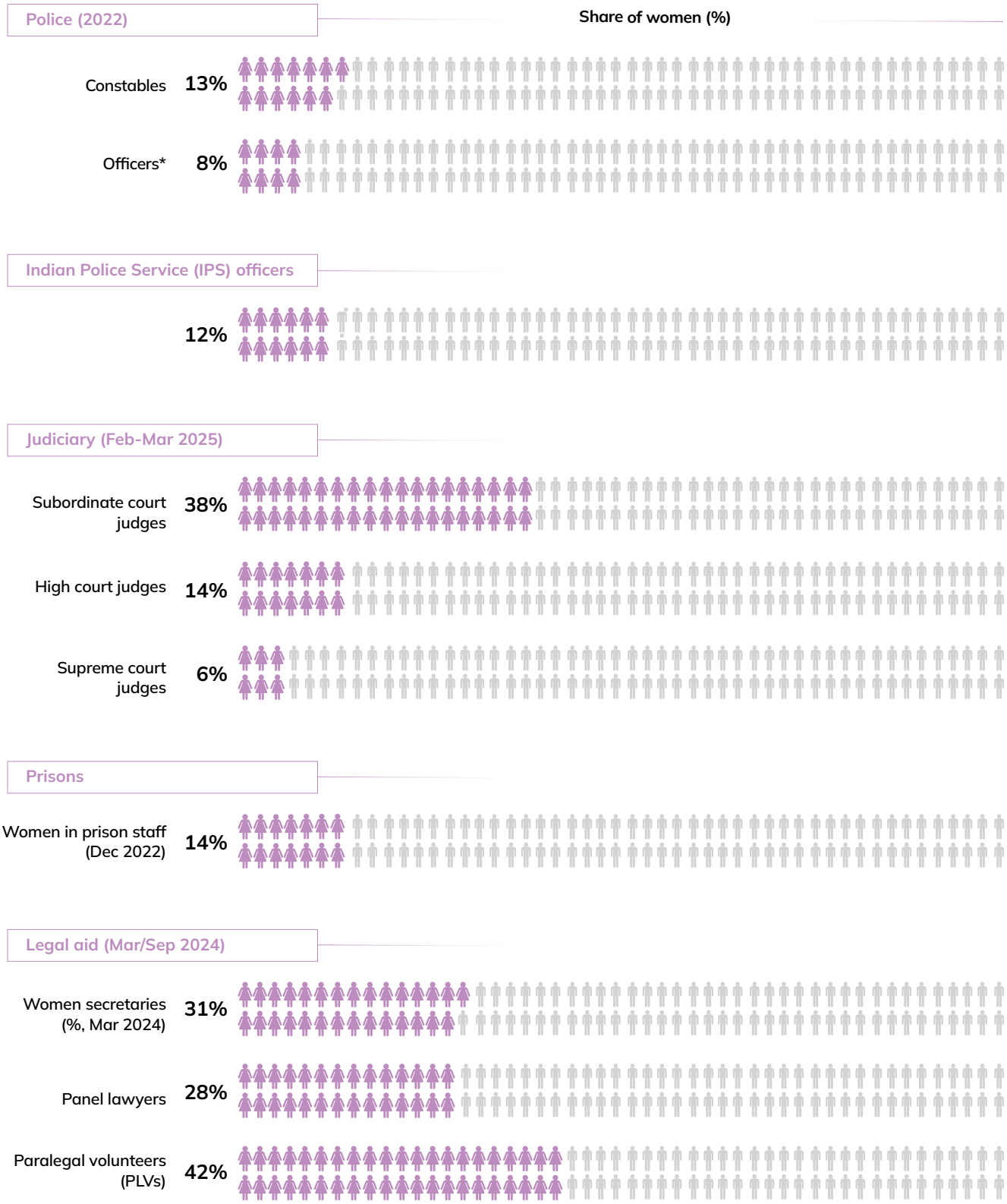
Compared to IJR 2022, 22 states/UTs have marginally improved representation of women in their police force in IJR 2025. Current rates remaining constant, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar would see 33% women in roughly three years. At around 200 years, it would take Jharkhand, Tripura and Andaman and Nicobar Islands several generations to meet this quota.



Note: 1. This calculation is based on the change in the share of women in police in the state/union territory during the five-year period from calendar year 2018 to 2022. The underlying assumption here is that the state will continue to increase the share of women in its workforce at the same rate. Where this 5-year value was negative for a state/UT, we took the best year-on-year change for that state/UT in that 5-year period. 2. Due to their bifurcation, 5-year trend not available for Jammu & Kashmir (women's share of 5.4% in January 2023) and Ladakh (29.6%).

Data source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

Figure 5: Where can you find women in the justice system?



Source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D); Prison Statistics India; Department of Justice; Parliamentary Question – Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2354; RTIs to State Legal Services Authorities and National Legal Services Authority

Ranking human resources *

* How do states fare on 19 human resources indicators across police, prisons, judiciary and legal aid? Indicators listed on Page 32.

Color guide

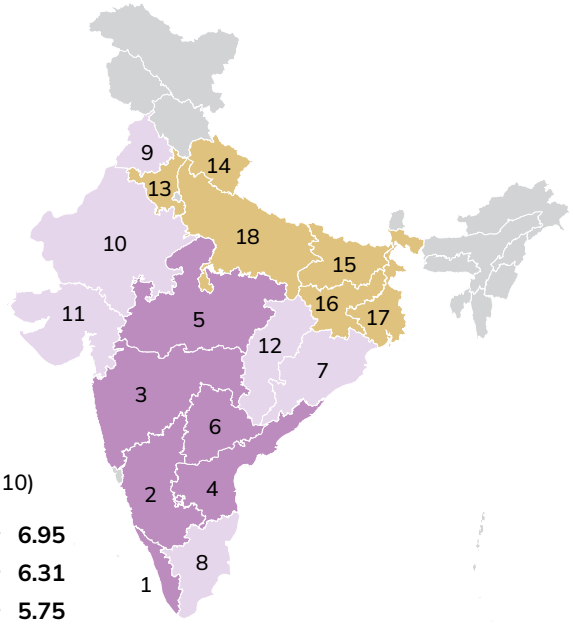
Best | Middle | Worst

Indicators (in IJR 4) **19**

Clusters

I. 18 large and mid-sized states (population above 10 million)

II. 7 small-sized states (population up to 10 million)



Map 5: Large and mid-sized states

Rank (out of 18)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
1	3	2	1	Kerala	6.95
6	11	1	2	Karnataka	6.31
2	1	3	3	Maharashtra	5.75
13	16	12	4	Andhra Pradesh	5.33
5	9	10	5	Madhya Pradesh	5.27
12	5	6	6	Telangana	5.19
3	4	4	7	Odisha	5.15
4	2	5	8	Tamil Nadu	4.94
7	6	8	9	Punjab	4.75
8	7	14	10	Rajasthan	4.55
10	8	7	11	Gujarat	4.51
14	14	9	12	Chhattisgarh	4.44
9	12	11	13	Haryana	4.27
15	13	16	14	Uttarakhand	4.02
17	15	18	15	Bihar	3.76
16	10	13	16	Jharkhand	3.66
11	17	15	17	West Bengal	3.56
18	18	17	18	Uttar Pradesh	3.55

Map 6: Small states

Rank (out of 7)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
1	1	1	1	Himachal Pradesh	4.78
6	2	4	2	Arunachal Pradesh	4.29
3	5	5	3	Meghalaya	3.92
5	4	3	4	Tripura	3.67
4	3	2	5	Sikkim	3.59
7	6	7	6	Mizoram	3.21
2	7	6	7	Goa	2.80

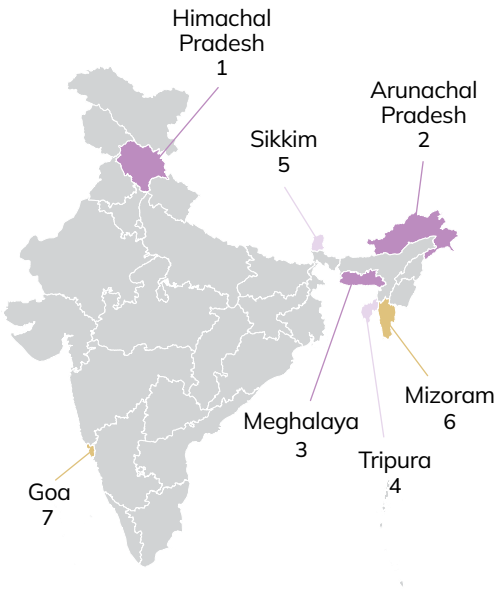


Figure 6: Para legal volunteers (PLVs) trained versus deployed

On average, only 7 states/UTs record deploying more than 75% of the PLVs trained. Nationally, out of more than 53,000 PLVs trained, just one-third were actually deployed.

Figure 1a: All-India, PLVs deployed vs trained

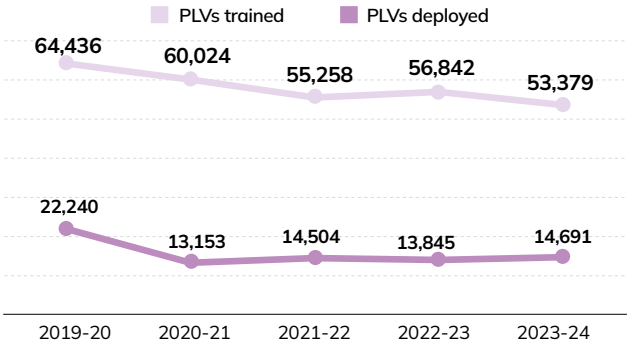


Figure 1b: PLVs deployed by location

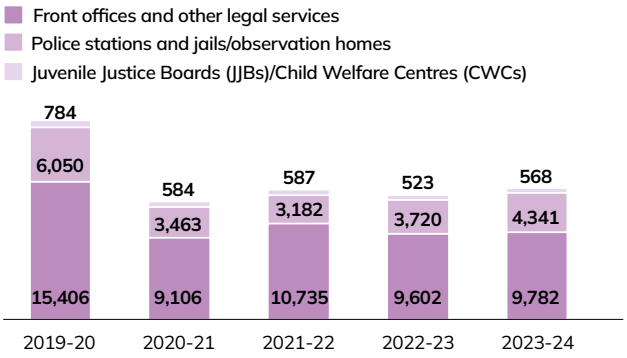


Figure 1c: State-wise, PLVs deployed vs trained

Up to 25% | 25.1% to 50% | 50.1% to 75% | Above 75%

	PLVs deployed as a share of PLVs trained (%)					
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Average for 5 years
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Andhra Pradesh	32.7	19.0	21.1	23.8	16.9	23.0
Arunachal Pradesh	5.4	4.5	16.2	2.0	1.7	3.3
Assam	66.3	30.6	51.3	49.0	59.2	51.7
Bihar	93.9	66.9	59.4	68.0	87.3	75.0
Chandigarh	5.0	3.9	4.3	5.2	5.5	4.8
Chhattisgarh	38.2	34.1	13.1	16.8	35.0	27.6
Delhi	3.3	3.7	2.0	5.4	4.0	3.8
DNH & DD	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Goa	24.5	20.3	1.5	16.9	100.0	16.4
Gujarat	25.7	21.0	25.9	23.9	29.3	25.2
Haryana	71.3	32.8	20.9	8.4	11.9	27.9
Himachal Pradesh	7.2	6.7	6.7	5.9	3.5	6.0
Jammu & Kashmir	83.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	96.5
Jharkhand	49.8	40.8	25.8	26.0	26.2	33.9
Karnataka	20.3	8.4	5.3	3.3	4.6	8.2
Kerala	54.7	21.8	34.9	17.5	19.3	32.4
Ladakh	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	131.5
Lakshadweep	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Madhya Pradesh	44.1	43.5	53.4	47.9	60.4	48.6
Maharashtra	31.6	25.7	28.0	27.2	24.0	27.4
Manipur	100.0	45.8	74.9	68.7	66.8	71.8
Meghalaya	123.5	73.4	78.6	76.5	65.7	80.6
Mizoram	102.9	87.5	102.3	169.6	100.0	107.4
Nagaland	14.3	20.3	17.9	14.6	13.9	16.1
Odisha	13.0	6.4	49.6	57.3	72.9	36.6
Puducherry	9.9	3.9	13.5	16.0	17.0	12.1
Punjab	68.1	7.7	8.3	16.5	20.9	29.2
Rajasthan	40.5	9.6	21.6	26.8	33.3	26.4
Sikkim	35.5	36.0	36.0	36.7	36.7	36.2
Tamil Nadu	18.1	10.2	27.2	23.7	19.9	17.9
Telengana	23.4	37.0	34.3	11.0	29.6	26.2
Tripura	125.2	9.8	128.7	100.0	100.0	83.1
Uttar Pradesh	31.7	16.2	13.9	14.9	7.3	17.0
Uttarakhand	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
West Bengal	69.8	12.4	46.7	44.3	100.0	48.8
All-India	34.5	21.9	26.2	24.4	27.5	27.1

Note: In Figure 1c, states and union territories arranged in descending order.

Source: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

Figure 7: Judge to population ratio

The benchmark laid out by the Law Commission in 1987 recommended 50 judges per million people. In reality, all states/UTs are far from meeting this number.

Note: 1. Data as of February 1, 2025, for High Court judges, January 30, 2025 for subordinate court judges and March 2025 for estimated population. 2. States arranged in descending order of total value within respective cluster. 3. States that share a High Court (HC) have been assigned the identical value for HC judges. 4. Data for Andaman & Nicobar Islands not available as its subordinate court judge data was combined with that of West Bengal.
Source: Parliament questions; National Commission on Population

Figure 8: Vacancies in forensics

Out of nearly 10,000 sanctioned posts across states, nearly 50% remain vacant. Some states like Telangana, Haryana and Bihar have over 70% scientific staff missing.

Footnote: 1. Data not available for regional forensic science laboratories (FSL) and forensic unit/district mobile forensic units (DMFUs).
Source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

Figure 9: Vacancy across pillars

We looked at vacancies on 11 key personnel ranks across the 4 pillars. Many states, of all sizes, have vacancies that exceed 25% of the state's own sanctioned strength.

Up to 20% | 20% to 40% | Above 40%

	Police vacancy (%)		Judiciary vacancy (%)		
Large and mid-sized states	Constables Jan 2023	Officers Jan 2023	High Court judges Feb 2025	Subordinate court judges Jan 2025	High Court staff Jun 2024
Andhra Pradesh	21.0	10.4	18.9	11.7	18.0
Bihar	23.3	44.7	35.8	23.9	39.8
Chhattisgarh	21.0	27.8	27.3	29.9	22.1
Gujarat	29.0	24.2	38.5	31.1	46.6
Haryana	38.9	17.8	40.0	29.4	35.4
Jharkhand	25.9	33.9	36.0	28.2	22.1
Karnataka	5.7	1.2	21.0	16.1	16.6
Kerala	5.7	16.4	4.3	12.9	4.1
Madhya Pradesh	12.9	19.3	37.7	16.6	18.1
Maharashtra	29.1	21.3	27.7	11.4	26.1
Odisha	21.9	23.6	45.5	19.2	35.1
Punjab	12.6	23.4	40.0	10.1	35.4
Rajasthan	8.4	51.8	34.0	20.7	30.9
Tamil Nadu	4.4	28.0	13.3	25.3	17.2
Telangana	30.4	13.0	28.6	20.5	23.8
Uttar Pradesh	28.3	41.7	50.6	26.9	19.4
Uttarakhand	0.6	19.6	27.3	9.4	22.0
West Bengal	40.7	27.3	40.3	20.8	33.4
Small states					
Arunachal Pradesh	28.0	37.0	20.0	25.0	9.8
Goa	18.6	28.9	27.7	20.0	26.1
Himachal Pradesh	2.1	14.6	29.4	10.6	14.9
Meghalaya	14.4	12.3	0.0	43.4	12.2
Mizoram	38.2	27.2	20.0	39.2	9.8
Sikkim	-0.5	-20.1	0.0	34.3	15.3
Tripura	25.6	45.4	0.0	18.0	11.4

Note: States ranked in alphabetical order within cluster.
Footnotes: 1. PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual correctional staff. 2. 0 DLSA secretaries sanctioned and appointed.
Source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023; Department of Justice; Parliamentary Question – Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 433; Supreme Court Annual Report (Volume 2 - High Courts) 2023-2024; Prison Statistics India (PSI), December 2022; National Legal Services Authority

Figure 9: Vacancy across pillars

We looked at vacancies on 11 key personnel ranks across the 4 pillars. Many states, of all sizes, have vacancies that exceed 25% of the state's own sanctioned strength.

Up to 20% | 20% to 40% | Above 40%

	Prisons vacancy (%)					Legal Aid vacancy (%)
Large and mid-sized states	Officers Dec 2022	Cadre staff Dec 2022	Correctional staff Dec 2022	Medical staff Dec 2022	Medical officers Dec 2022	DLSA secretary Mar 2024
Andhra Pradesh	20.6	27.9	NA[1]	21.7	4.5	7.7
Bihar	28.6	44.9	48.7	42.7	42.2	2.7
Chhattisgarh	65.6	30.6	49.5	52.6	58.7	0.0
Gujarat	42.5	37.6	44.4	28.6	15.2	0.0
Haryana	34.6	30.5	100.0	50.5	47.2	0.0
Jharkhand	68.2	64.8	33.3	55.8	75.5	0.0
Karnataka	10.8	23.8	20.7	63.8	74.1	0.0
Kerala	9.2	17.8	7.1	25.5	16.7	23.1
Madhya Pradesh	43.0	12.2	28.9	35.6	31.0	2.0
Maharashtra	25.9	10.5	46.5	30.0	22.7	0.0
Odisha	14.2	23.7	44.7	51.1	62.8	13.3
Punjab	28.8	40.7	100.0	27.3	19.0	0.0
Rajasthan	36.4	25.0	87.5	17.8	15.4	0.0
Tamil Nadu	11.4	7.2	19.6	12.4	25.6	50.0
Telangana	8.8	18.8	0.0	58.5	47.8	0.0
Uttar Pradesh	25.4	29.9	NA[1]	54.2	34.8	0.0
Uttarakhand	69.0	39.0	NA[1]	62.5	90.0	0.0
West Bengal	20.5	21.8	30.4	65.1	73.5	0.0
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh	37.5	2.3	NA[1]	10.0	0.0	0.0
Goa	29.6	34.3	100.0	84.6	83.3	0.0
Himachal Pradesh	27.3	19.3	61.5	60.9	25.0	0.0
Meghalaya	42.1	26.6	100.0	5.0	0.0	45.5
Mizoram	21.2	22.6	NA[1]	-8.3	33.3	NA[2]
Sikkim	51.9	59.5	NA[1]	28.6	50.0	100.0
Tripura	68.8	54.7	100.0	28.6	0.0	12.5

Note: States ranked in alphabetical order within cluster.
Footnotes: 1. PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual correctional staff. 2. 0 DLSA secretaries sanctioned and appointed.
Source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023; Department of Justice; Parliamentary Question – Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 433; Supreme Court Annual Report (Volume 2 - High Courts) 2023-2024; Prison Statistics India (PSI), December 2022; National Legal Services Authority

Ranking intention *

* What the trends show based on 5-year data for 23 indicators across police, prisons and judiciary. Indicators listed on Page 32.

Color guide

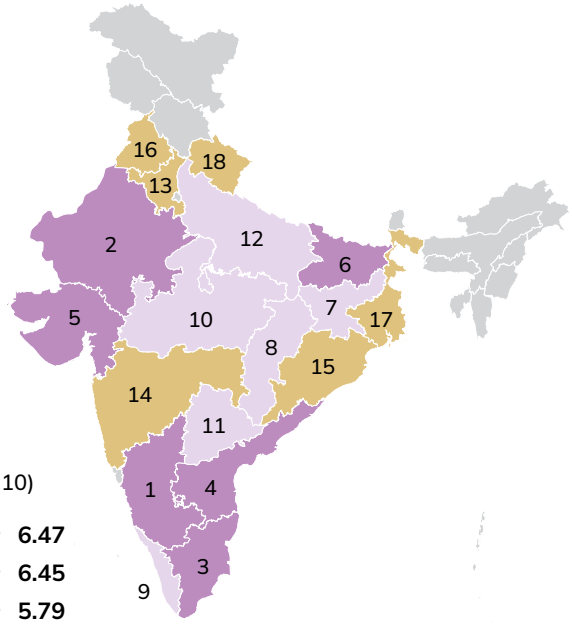
Best | Middle | Worst

Indicators (in IJR 4) **23**

Clusters

I. 18 large and mid-sized states (population above 10 million)

II. 7 small-sized states (population up to 10 million)



Map 7: Large and mid-sized states

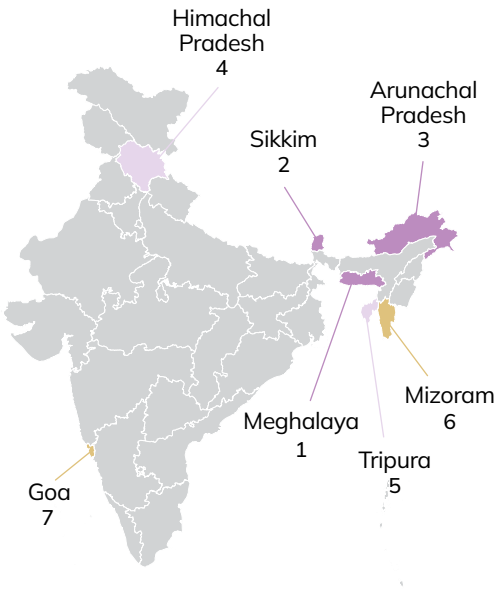
Rank (out of 18)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025 (NEW)	State	Score (out of 10)
14	16	1	1	Karnataka	6.47
10	5	14	2	Rajasthan	6.45
7	1	6	3	Tamil Nadu	5.79
NA	6	5	4	Andhra Pradesh	5.78
3	3	4	5	Gujarat	5.78
13	4	3	6	Bihar	5.66
15	7	2	7	Jharkhand	5.66
6	2	10	8	Chhattisgarh	5.65
12	15	12	9	Kerala	5.59
11	17	7	10	Madhya Pradesh	5.50
NA	18	9	11	Telangana	5.32
9	12	8	12	Uttar Pradesh	5.03
4	14	18	13	Haryana	4.64
2	9	17	14	Maharashtra	4.56
8	11	11	15	Odisha	4.28
5	8	15	16	Punjab	4.19
1	10	13	17	West Bengal	3.35
16	13	16	18	Uttarakhand	3.03

Map 8: Small states

Rank (out of 7)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025 (NEW)	State	Score (out of 10)
2	7	1	1	Meghalaya	5.64
4	5	3	2	Sikkim	5.33
7	4	2	3	Arunachal Pradesh	5.24
3	1	6	4	Himachal Pradesh	4.81
5	3	5	5	Tripura	3.63
6	6	4	6	Mizoram	3.49
1	2	7	7	Goa	2.89



Note: Scores are shown up to 2 decimals. Thus, while they both show the same score, Andhra Pradesh is ranked above Gujarat on the third decimal (5.785 vs 5.777) and Bihar above Jharkhand (5.661 vs 5.655).

Figure 10: Budgets for the justice system

The graphic below shows the 5-year average growth in expenditures to police, prisons and judiciary, and whether they have kept pace with the increase in the total state budget expenditure. Among the 25 ranked states, the increase in police budgets trails the increase in total budget in 13 states, prisons in 9 states and judiciary in 7 states.

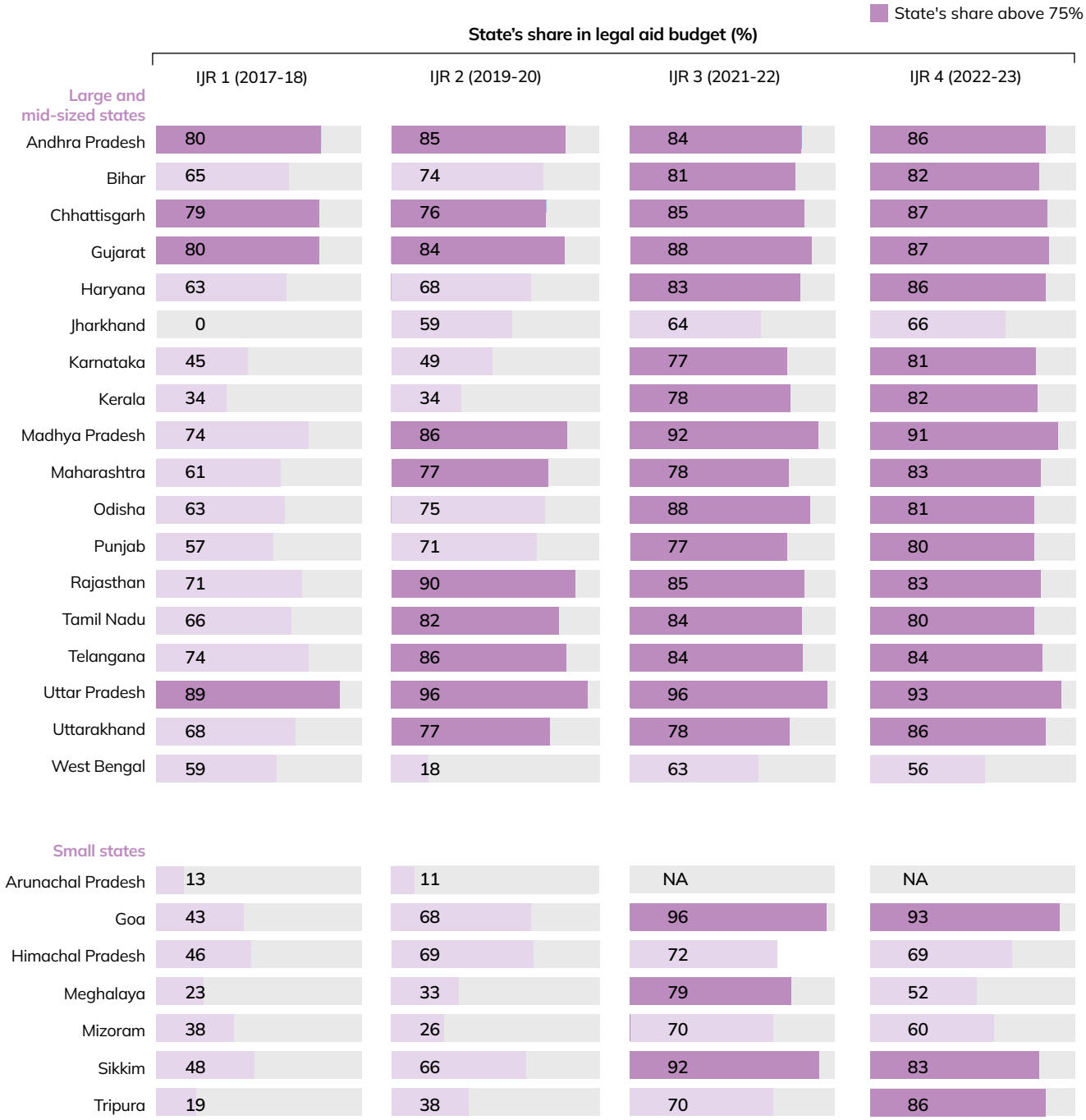
Pillar outpaces growth in state budget
Pillar trails growth in state budget

	Average change in expenditure between 2018-19 and 2022-23 (%)				Difference in spend: pillar vs state (percentage points)		
	Total state	Police	Prisons	Judiciary	Police	Prisons	Judiciary
Large and mid-sized states							
Andhra Pradesh	9.4	7.2	3.9	9.7	-2.1	-5.4	0.4
Bihar	10.7	10.6	15.0	10.1	-0.1	4.3	-0.6
Chhattisgarh	8.5	9.1	14.2	12.0	0.6	5.7	3.5
Gujarat	8.4	6.2	7.3	7.7	-2.2	-1.0	-0.6
Haryana	6.6	8.7	14.7	9.2	2.1	8.1	2.6
Jharkhand	5.2	8.1	11.7	10.5	2.8	6.5	5.2
Karnataka	9.6	13.5	28.0	15.7	3.8	18.4	6.1
Kerala	8.0	6.1	4.2	8.8	-1.8	-3.8	0.9
Madhya Pradesh	8.7	7.2	9.8	11.9	-1.5	1.1	3.1
Maharashtra	12.0	12.6	12.8	14.4	0.6	0.8	2.4
Odisha	12.5	6.4	9.5	15.9	-6.1	-3.1	3.4
Punjab	13.5	8.5	8.2	11.9	-5.0	-5.3	-1.7
Rajasthan	8.4	11.1	9.6	14.5	2.7	1.2	6.1
Tamil Nadu	11.3	10.3	10.8	10.2	-1.0	-0.5	-1.0
Telangana	9.5	10.0	8.5	12.2	0.4	-1.0	2.6
Uttar Pradesh	9.6	13.3	10.7	10.1	3.7	1.1	0.6
Uttarakhand	8.3	5.8	263.1	12.1	-2.5	254.7	3.8
West Bengal	NA	NA	8.1	NA	NA[1]	-1.0	NA[1]
Small states							
Arunachal Pradesh	13.6	9.6	26.7	20.1	-4.0	13.2	6.5
Goa	NA	NA	4.5	NA	NA[1]	NA[2]	NA[1]
Himachal Pradesh	10.5	8.4	11.2	8.1	-2.0	0.8	-2.4
Meghalaya	14.3	10.0	17.2	13.5	-4.3	2.9	-0.7
Mizoram	5.7	7.1	-17.3	13.2	1.4	-23.1	7.4
Sikkim	12.4	13.2	35.1	17.0	0.8	22.8	4.6
Tripura	10.3	6.7	37.9	3.9	-3.6	27.6	-6.4

Note: States arranged in alphabetical order within cluster.
Footnotes: 1. Budget data for 2021-22 and 2022-23 not available. 2. Total expenditure for 2022-23 not available.
Source: Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India

Figure 11: State's share in legal aid budget

A state's legal aid budget comprises two sources: the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) at the Centre and the state itself. Between 2017-18 and 2022-23, the contribution of states to their legal aid budget has progressively increased. In 16 of the 18 large and mid-sized states, and in 3 of the 7 small states, states contributed over 80% towards their total legal aid budgets.

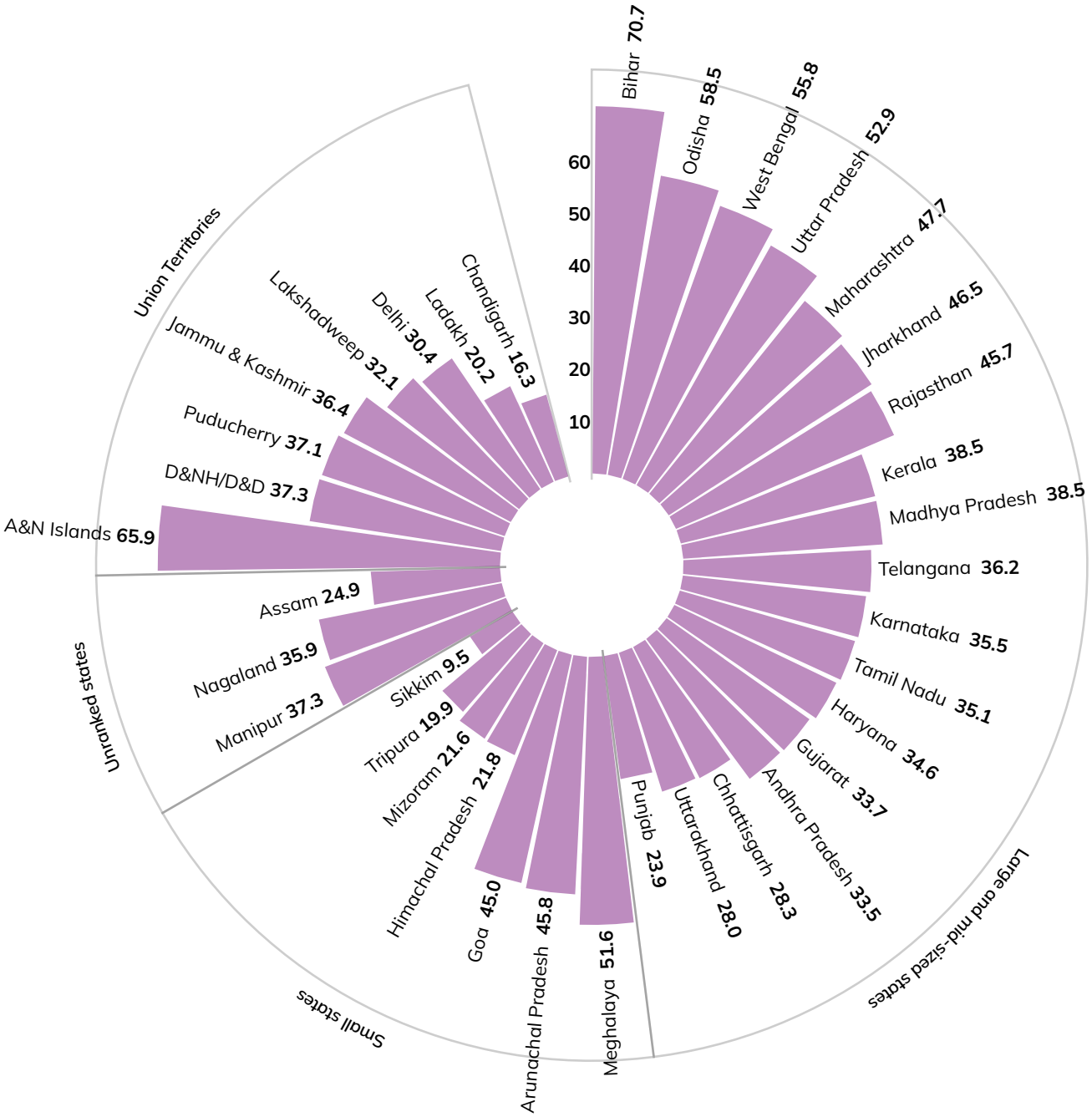


Note: 1. States arranged in respective cluster in alphabetical order.
Source: State budget documents and National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

Figure 12: Cases pending for more than 3 years in subordinate courts

In 22 of the 25 ranked states, cases pending in subordinate courts for above 3 years amount to over 25% of pending cases. In 11 states/UTs, such cases amount to over 45%. Bihar records 71% of such cases, the highest in the country.

Cases pending in subordinate courts for more than 3 years (%, January 2025)

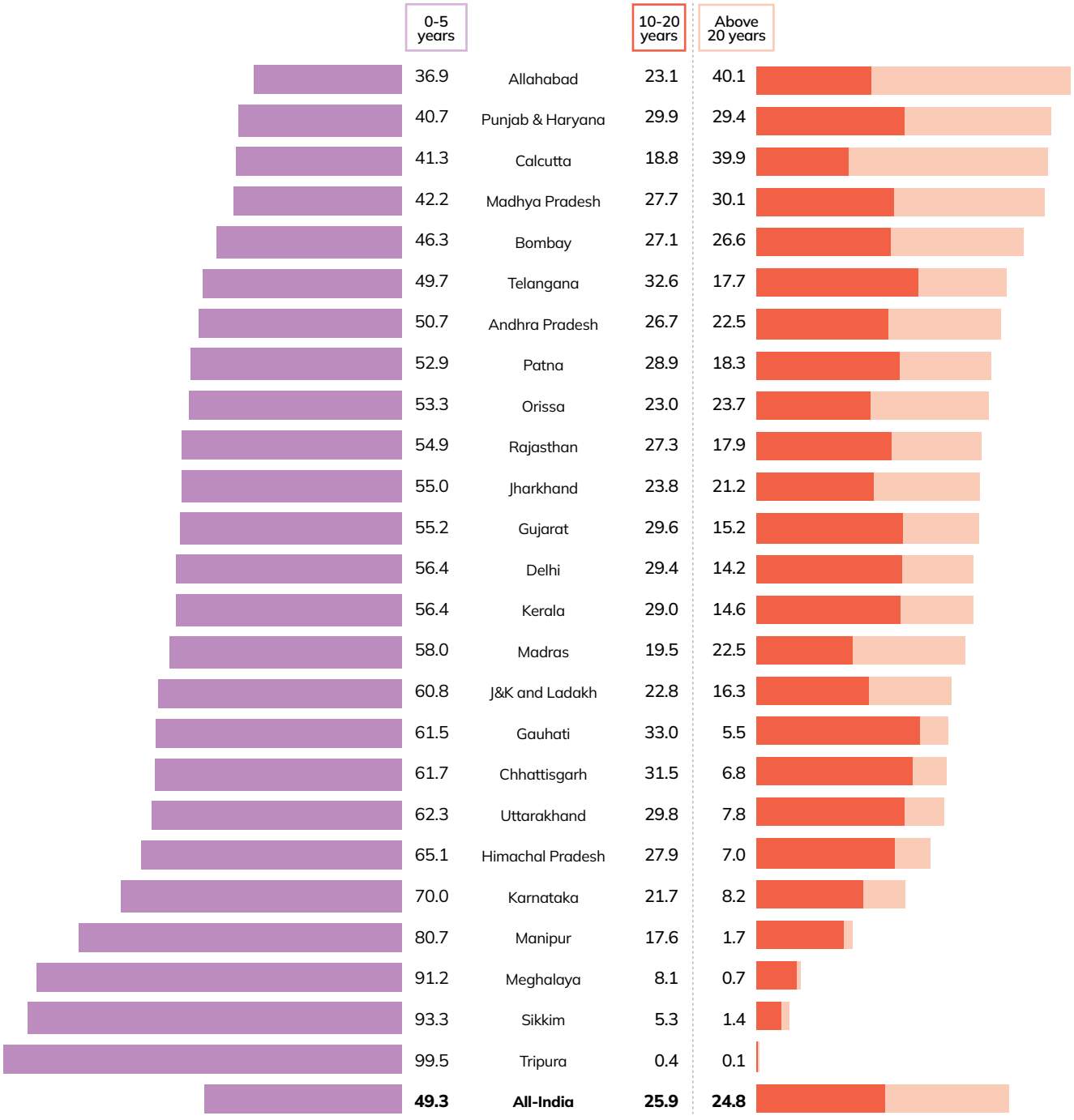


Source: National Judicial Data Grid

Figure 13: Cases pending in High Courts

The pendency levels in High Courts is worse than in subordinate courts. Across all 25 High Courts, the share of cases pending for more than five years stands at 51%. While Tripura, Sikkim and Meghalaya fare the best on this metric, the worse are the High Courts of Allahabad and Punjab & Haryana, where over 60% cases pending for more than five years.

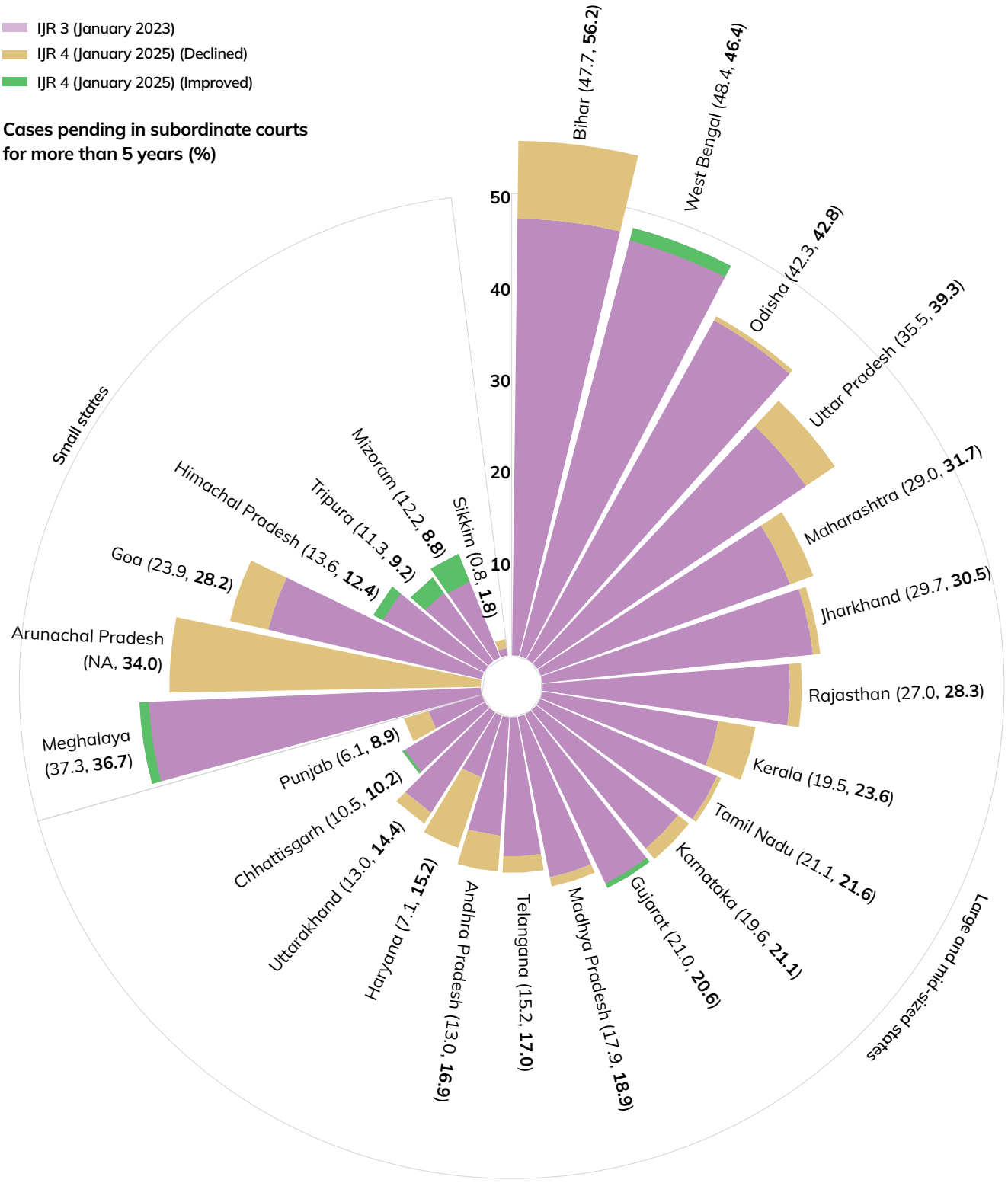
Cases pending in High Court by duration (%, January 1, 2025)



Note: 1. High Courts arranged in ascending order of value for 0-5 years.
Source: National Judicial Data Grid

Figure 14: Cases pending for more than 5 years in subordinate courts

In 16 states/UTs, cases pending in subordinate courts for above 5 years have increased in the last 2 years. In 10 states, such cases amount to over 25% of pending cases. The green and brown bars signify the extent to which the share of cases pending over 5 years in subordinate courts have either reduced or increased in states, compared to IJR 2022.



Note: 1. States arranged in respective cluster in descending order of IJR 4 value. 2. Data for Arunachal Pradesh (small state) not available for IJR 3.
Source: National Judicial Data Grid

List of indicators on preceding improvement page (Pages 15, 20 and 26)

Ranking Diversity

Police

Share of women in police (%, Jan 2023)
Share of women in officers (%, Jan 2023)
SC officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
SC constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
ST officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
ST constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
OBC officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
OBC constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)

Prisons

Women in prison staff (%, Dec 2022)

Judiciary

Women judges (High Court) (%, Feb 2025)
Women judges (sub. Court) (%, Feb 2025)
SC judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)
ST judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)
OBC judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)

Legal aid

Share of women secretaries (%, Mar 2024)
Share of women in panel lawyers (%, Sep 2024)
Women PLVs (%, Sep 2024)

Ranking Human Resources

Police

Constables, vacancy (%, Jan 2023)
Officers, vacancy (%, Jan 2023)
Officers in civil police (%, Jan 2023)
Admin staff vacancy in forensics (%, Jan 2023)
Scientific staff vacancy in forensics (%, Jan 2023)

Prisons

Officers, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Cadre staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Correctional staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Medical staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Medical officers, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Personnel trained (%, 2022)

Judiciary

Population per High Court judge (Feb 2025)
Population per sub. court judge (Jan 2025)
High Court judge vacancy (%, Feb 2025)
Sub. Court judge vacancy (%, Jan 2025)
High Court staff vacancy (%, Jun 2024)

Legal aid

Sanctioned secretaries as % of DLSAs (%, Mar 2024)
DLSA secretary vacancy (%, Mar 2024)
PLVs per lakh population (Number, Sep 2024)

Ranking Intention

Police

Women in total police (%, CY '18-'22)
Women officers in total officers (%, CY '18-'22)
Constable vacancy (%, CY '18-'22)
Officer vacancy (pp, CY '18-'22)
Difference in spend: police vs state (pp, FY '19-'23)

Prisons

Officer vacancy (%, CY '18-'22)
Cadre staff vacancy (%, CY '18-'22)
Share of women in prison staff (%, CY '18-'22)
Inmates per prison officer (%, CY '18-'22)
Inmates per cadre staff (%, CY '18-'22)
Share of undertrial prisoners (pp, CY '18-'22)
Spend per inmate (%, FY '19-'23)
Prison budget used (pp, FY '19-'23)
Difference in spend: prisons vs state (pp, FY '19-'23)

Judiciary

Cases pending (per High Court judge) (%, CY '20-'24)
Cases pending (per sub. court judge) (%, CY '20-'24)
Total cases pending (High Court) (%, CY '20-'24)
Total cases pending (sub. court) (%, CY '20-'24)
Judge vacancy (High Court) (%, CY '20-'24)
Judge vacancy (sub. court) (%, CY '20-'24)
Case clearance rate (High Court) (pp, CY '20-'24)
Case clearance rate (sub. court) (pp, CY '20-'24)
Difference in spend: judiciary vs state (pp, FY '19-'23)

List of indicators on preceding improvement page (Page 14)

Police

Budgets
Modernisation fund used (%, 2021-22)
Spend on police per person (Rs, 2022-23)
Spend on training per personnel (Rs, 2021-22)
Share of training budget in police budget (%, 2021-22)
Training budget utilization (%, 2021-22)

Human Resources
Constables, vacancy (%, Jan 2023)
Officers, vacancy (%, Jan 2023)
Officers in civil police (%, Jan 2023)

Diversity
Share of women in police (%, Jan 2023)
Share of women in officers (%, Jan 2023)
SC officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
SC constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
ST officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
ST constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
OBC officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
OBC constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)

Infrastructure
Population per police station (rural) (Number, Jan 2023)
Population per police station (urban) (Number, Jan 2023)
Area per police station (rural) (Sq km, Jan 2023)
Area per police station (urban) (Sq km, Jan 2023)
Services provided by state's citizen portals (%, 2024)21
Personnel per training institute (Number, Jan 2023)
Police stations with CCTVs (%, Jan 2023)
Police stations with women help desks (%, Jan 2023)

Workload
Population per civil police (Number, Jan 2023)

Prisons

Budgets
Spend per inmate (Rs, 2022-23)
Prison budget utilized (%, 2022-23)

Human Resources
Officers, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Cadre staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Correctional staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Medical staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Medical officers, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Personnel trained (%, 2022)

Diversity
Women in prison staff (%, Dec 2022)

Infrastructure
Prison occupancy (%, Dec 2022)
Jails with V-C facility (%, Dec 2022)
Undertrials detained for 1-3 years (%, Dec 2022)

Workload
Inmates per officer (Number, Dec 2022)
Inmates per cadre staff (Number, Dec 2022)
Inmates per correctional staff (Number, Dec 2022)
Inmates per medical officer (Number, Dec 2022)

Judiciary

Budgets
Per capita spend on judiciary (Rs, 2022-23)

Human Resources
Population per High Court judge (Feb 2025)
Population per sub. court judge (Jan 2025)
High Court judge vacancy (%, Feb 2025)
Sub. Court judge vacancy (%, Jan 2025)
High Court staff vacancy (%, Jun 2024)

Diversity
Women judges (High Court) (%, Feb 2025)
Women judges (sub. Court) (%, Feb 2025)
SC judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)
ST judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)
OBC judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)

Infrastructure
Courthall shortfall (%, Jan 2025)

Workload
Case clearance rate (High Court) (%, 2024)
Case clearance rate (sub. court) (%, 2024)

Legal aid

Budgets
NALSA fund utilized (%, 2022-23)2
State's share in legal aid budget (%, 2022-23)
State legal aid budget utilized (%, 2022-23)

Human Resources
Sanctioned secretaries as % of DLSAs (%, Mar 2024)
DLSA secretary vacancy (%, Mar 2024)
PLVs per lakh population (Number, Sep 2024)

Diversity
Share of women in panel lawyers (%, Sep 2024)
Women PLVs (%, Sep 2024)

Infrastructure
DLSAs as % of state judicial districts (%, Dec 2024)
Villages per legal services clinic (Number, 2023-24)
Legal services clinic per jail (Number, 2023-24)
Presence of front offices in DLSAs (%, Dec 2024)

Workload
PLA cases: Settled as % of received (%, 2023-24)

Projections

Figure 15: India's overcrowded prisons and its overburdened cadre staff

Nationally, prison capacity has lagged inmate population, and this is projected to continue

Figure 15a: Prison capacity

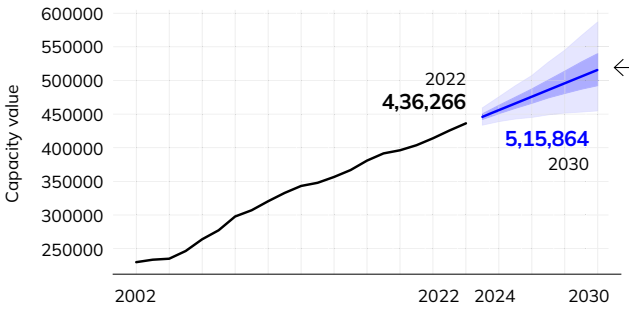
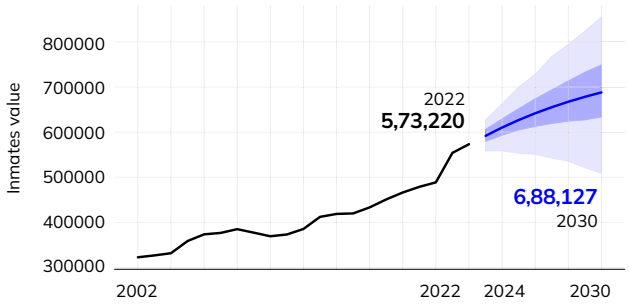


Figure 15b: Prison inmate population



Historical Capacity
Linear Forecast
95% Prediction Interval
50% Prediction Interval

How to read the projection graph:

This graph displays the historical prison capacity (black line) from 2002 to 2022, and forecasts these numbers through 2030 (blue line) using a linear model.

The colored bands around the forecast represent prediction intervals derived from the model's historical accuracy. The dark blue band (inner band) shows the 50% prediction interval, meaning there's a 50% probability that the actual number in any specific future year will fall within this range.

The light blue band (outer band) represents the 95% prediction interval, indicating there's a 95% probability that the actual number will fall somewhere within this wider range.

The bands widen noticeably as the forecast extends further into the future, illustrating that our ability to predict becomes less precise over longer time horizons.

A big reason is high undertrials, which further rose in the covid-19 pandemic, increasing occupancy

Figure 15c: Prison undertrial population

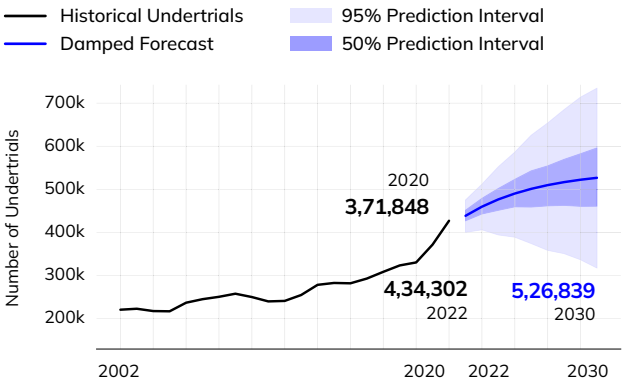
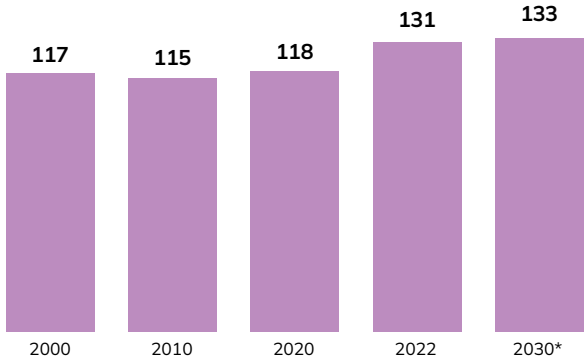


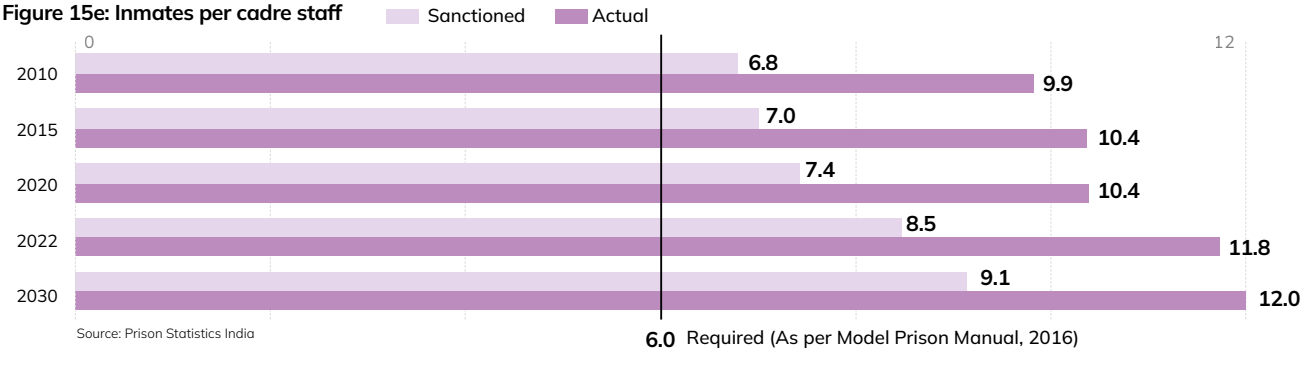
Figure 15d: Prison occupancy (%)



*Calculated using linear forecast projections for capacity and inmates for 2030.

This will increase the workload of the already-overburdened prison cadre staff to nearly twice the levels of what is mandated

Figure 15e: Inmates per cadre staff



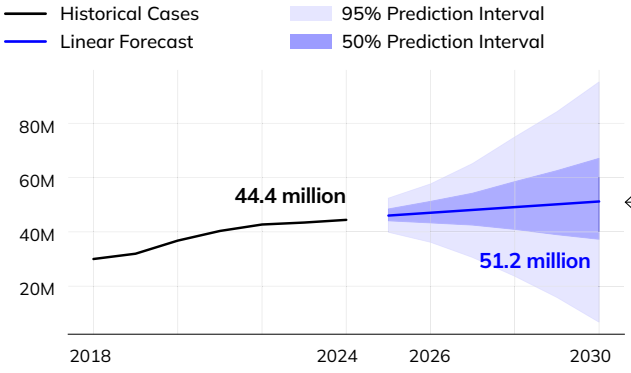
Source: Prison Statistics India

Figure 16: India's overburdened courts and the persistent deficit of judges

Subordinate Courts

16a: Pending cases

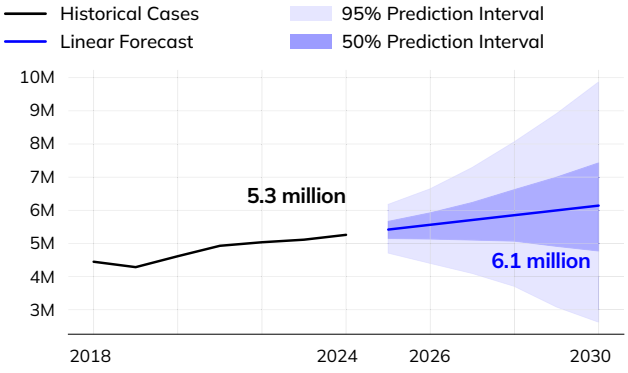
Pendency is projected to increase 15% by 2030.



High Courts

16d: Pending cases

Pendency is projected to increase 17% by 2030.



How to read the projection graph:

This graph displays the historical cases in courts (black line) from 2002 to 2022, and forecasts these numbers through 2030 (blue line) using a linear model.

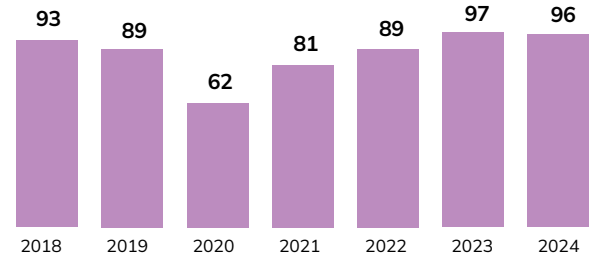
The colored bands around the forecast represent prediction intervals derived from the model's historical accuracy. The dark blue band (inner band) shows the 50% prediction interval, meaning there's a 50% probability that the actual number in any specific future year will fall within this range.

The light blue band (outer band) represents the 95% prediction interval, indicating there's a 95% probability that the actual number will fall somewhere within this wider range.

The bands widen noticeably as the forecast extends further into the future, illustrating that our ability to predict becomes less precise over longer time horizons.

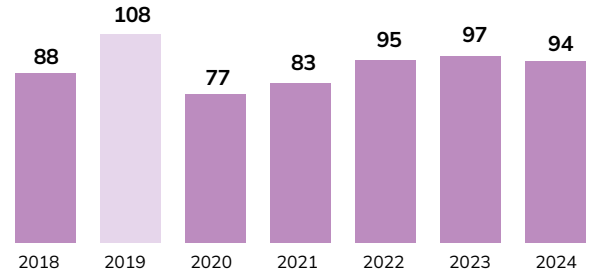
16b: Case clearance rate (%)

CCR has never crossed 100% in the last 7 years, implying mounting pendency.

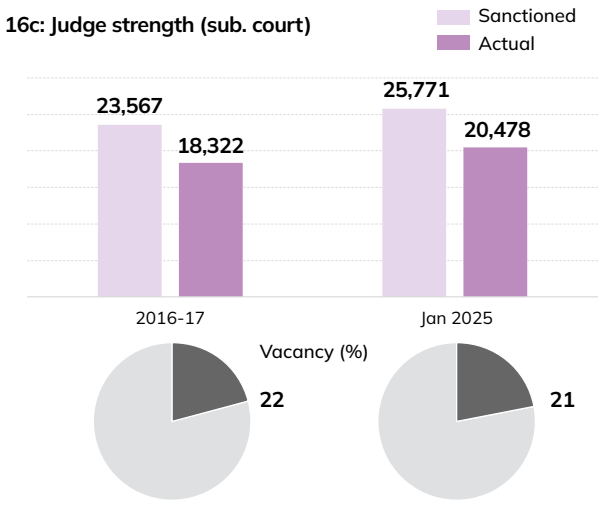


16e: Case clearance rate (%)

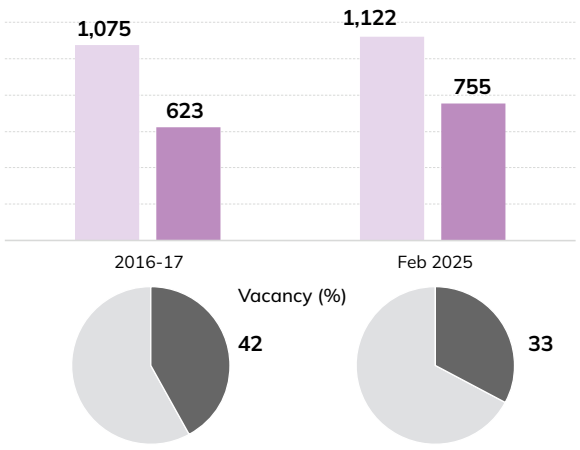
CCR has never crossed 100% except once in the last 7 years, implying mounting pendency



16c: Judge strength (sub. court)



16f: Judge strength (High Court)



Source: National Judicial Data Grid; Department of Justice; Parliament questions

Figure 17: India's improving police-to-population ratio

Nationally, in the 13-year period between 2010 and 2022, both the sanctioned and actual numbers of civil police increased on a year-on-year basis in 10 years. The spike came in 2016, when the sanctioned strength increased by 8.7% and the actual strength by 13.4%.

In general, during this period, police strength has growing faster than India's population, and is projected to maintain this trend. This has the effect of lowering the workload, as measured by the average population per policeperson.

Figure 17a: Civil police: sanctioned

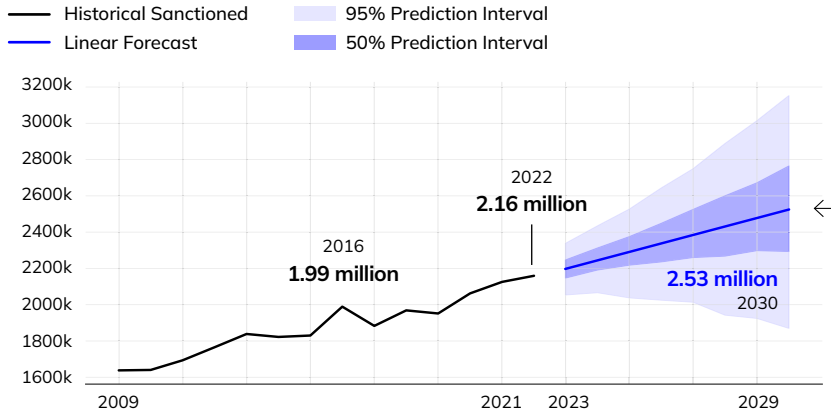
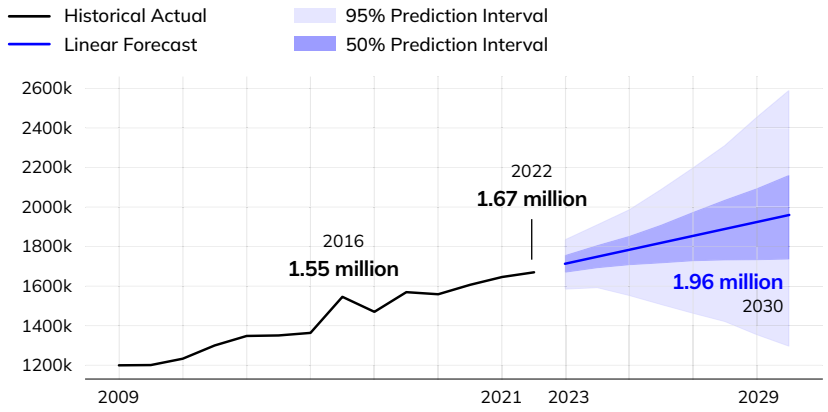


Figure 17b: Civil police: actual



How to read the projection graph

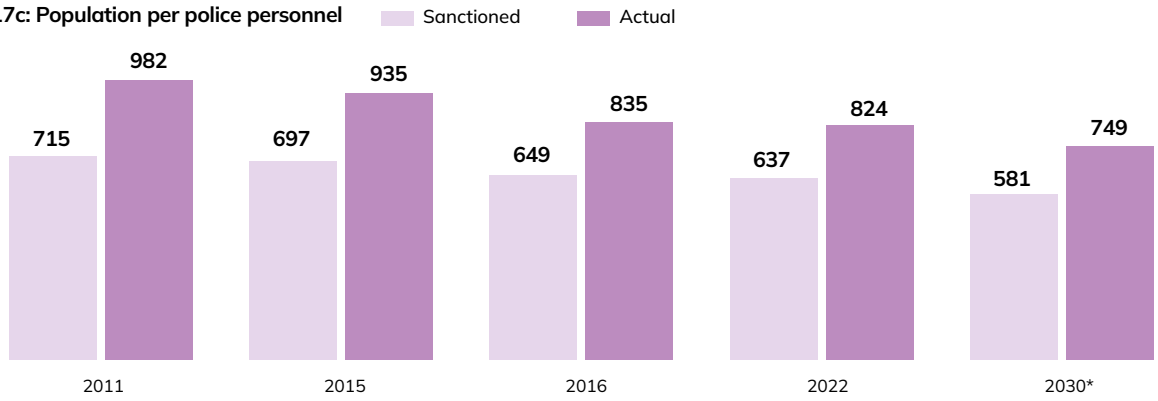
This graph displays the historical civil police population (black line) from 2002 to 2022, and forecasts these numbers through 2030 (blue line) using a linear model.

The colored bands around the forecast represent prediction intervals derived from the model's historical accuracy. The dark blue band (inner band) shows the 50% prediction interval, meaning there's a 50% probability that the actual number in any specific future year will fall within this range.

The light blue band (outer band) represents the 95% prediction interval, indicating there's a 95% probability that the actual number will fall somewhere within this wider range.

The bands widen noticeably as the forecast extends further into the future, illustrating that our ability to predict becomes less precise over longer time horizons.

Figure 17c: Population per police personnel



*Calculated using linear forecast projections for civil policepersons, sanctioned and actual.
Source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

Police

Police Ranking

Color guide

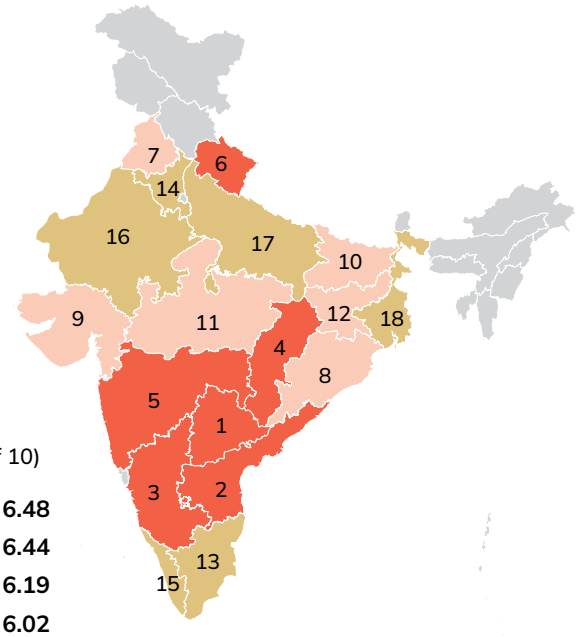
Best | Middle | Worst

Indicators (in IJR 4) **32**

Clusters

I. 18 large and mid-sized states (population above 10 million)

II. 7 small-sized states (population up to 10 million)



Map 9: Large and mid-sized states

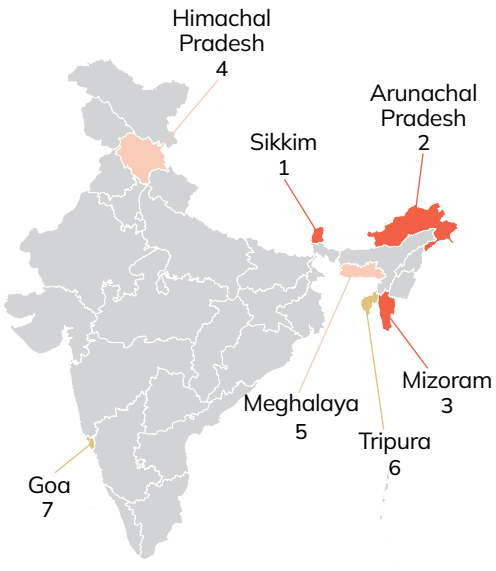
Rank (out of 18)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
11	10	1	1	Telangana	6.48
5	4	3	2	Andhra Pradesh	6.44
6	1	2	3	Karnataka	6.19
10	2	9	4	Chhattisgarh	6.02
4	13	10	5	Maharashtra	5.61
2	7	5	6	Uttarakhand	5.50
3	12	13	7	Punjab	5.26
7	3	4	8	Odisha	5.16
12	8	8	9	Gujarat	5.13
14	11	16	10	Bihar	5.04
15	18	7	11	Madhya Pradesh	5.04
9	6	11	12	Jharkhand	5.01
1	5	6	13	Tamil Nadu	4.95
8	9	12	14	Haryana	4.80
13	14	17	15	Kerala	4.71
17	16	14	16	Rajasthan	4.66
18	15	15	17	Uttar Pradesh	4.26
16	17	18	18	West Bengal	3.36

Map 10: Small states

Rank (out of 7)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
1	1	1	1	Sikkim	6.10
2	4	2	2	Arunachal Pradesh	5.35
7	6	4	3	Mizoram	4.75
6	2	5	4	Himachal Pradesh	4.01
5	3	3	5	Meghalaya	3.83
4	5	7	6	Tripura	3.58
3	7	6	7	Goa	3.38



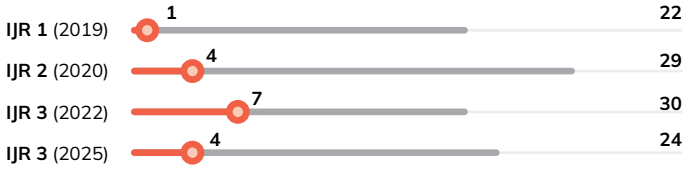
Note: Scores are shown up to 2 decimals. While they both show the same score, Bihar is ranked above Madhya Pradesh on the third decimal (5.040 versus 5.038).

Pushing Expectations

Modernisation fund

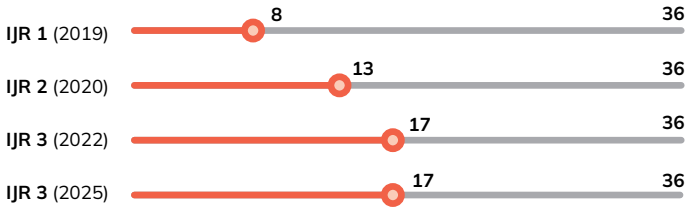
Total states*

Number of states/UTs that utilized at least 90% of their modernisation fund



Women staff

Number of states/UTs where women account for more than 10% of the police force.



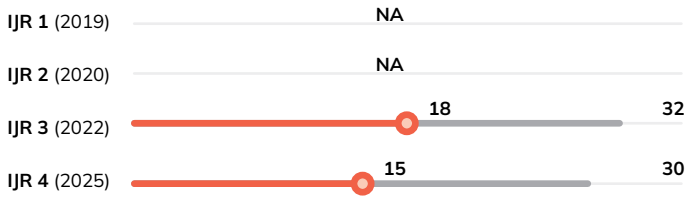
80% of over 2 lakh women in civil police are constables.

SC/ST/OBC quota

Number of states/UTs that have met at least 80% of their declared quotas.

Budgets

Number of states/UTs whose share of training budget in police budget is over 1%

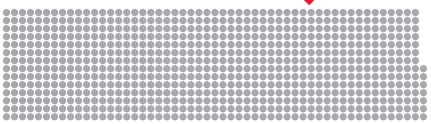


* Number of states/UTs (out of 36) for which data was available.

Rural-Urban Police Stations

All India, between January 2017 and January 2023

Rural police stations ↓ 735



Urban police station ↑ 193

Vacancies in Forensics

Administrative

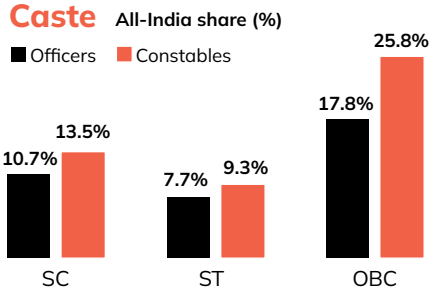
All-India	47%
Highest	89% (Madhya Pradesh)
Lowest	0% (Kerala)

Scientific

All-India	49%
Highest	85% (Telangana)
Lowest	0% (Kerala)

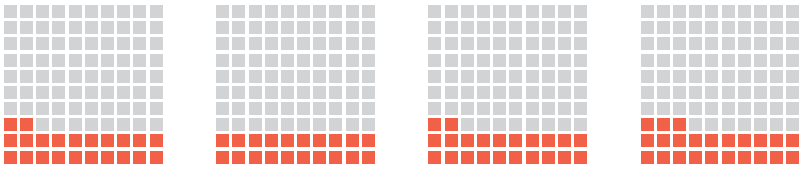
Caste

All-India share (%)



Vacancy in police force

IJR 1: 22% | IJR 2: 20% | IJR 3: 22% | IJR 4: 23%



Increase in both constables and officer vacancies: 13 states

Highest decline in vacancies: Karnataka from 10.8% in IJR 3 to 1.2% in IJR 4.

Highest increase in vacancies: Tamil Nadu from 9.1% in IJR 3 to 28% in IJR 4.

CHAPTER 1

Beyond the Badge: Why Capacity Fails Policing

Introduction

In 2024, southern states occupy the top three slots. Telangana retains its top position in police capacity amongst the large states; Karnataka comes in third while Andhra Pradesh moves to second position. At first and second positions, a decade after their bifurcation, Telangana and Andhra steadily maintain top positions. Outperforming others, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, and Bihar have leapfrogged over many to enter the first ten positions by filling capacity deficits across infrastructure, human resources and budgets.

While Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Uttarakhand have consistently been amongst the top ten states between 2019 and 2025, Tamil Nadu has declined steadily from being number one in 2019, fifth in 2020, sixth in 2022, to thirteenth in 2025, a drop of seven rungs. Contributing factors include a decline in services provided by its citizen portal; a drop in the already low share of police stations with women help desks[1] and the number of police stations with at least one CCTV camera than the national average of 83 per cent.

Since 2022, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Rajasthan remain the laggards, unable to rise up from the three last places. Nevertheless, each demonstrates improvements in some areas of capacity. Rajasthan improved utilisation of its modernisation fund, spent more on training per personnel, and increased CCTV coverage. Uttar Pradesh, though reporting a marginal drop in the proportion of women and SC, ST, and OBC officers, increased its expenditure on training. West Bengal improved the services offered on its citizen portal, marginally reduced constable vacancies, and improved representation of SCs, STs and OBCs in the constabulary. Nevertheless, decreases in the utilisation of modernisation funds and expenditure on training, and large vacancies within the forensic staff have kept it at the bottom.

Infrastructure

- Population per police station (rural) (Number, Jan 2023)
- Population per police station (urban) (Number, Jan 2023)
- Area per police station (rural) (Sq km, Jan 2023)
- Area per police station (urban) (Sq km, Jan 2023)
- Services provided by state's citizen portals (%, 2024)
- Personnel per training institute (Number, Jan 2023)
- Police stations with CCTVs (%, Jan 2023)
- Police stations with women help desks (%, Jan 2023)

Police stations and CCTVs: In 2020, as a measure of police accountability, the Supreme Court in the Paramvir Singh Saini case[2] passed a series of very specific directions detailing the installation of CCTV cameras inside all police stations. The Court required audio-visual,

1 Tamil Nadu has 222 exclusively women police stations, more than any other state.
2 The Supreme Court in *Paramvir Singh Saini v Baljit Singh [Special Leave Petition (Criminal) No.3543 of 2020]* vide order dated 2 December 2020. Available at: https://api.sci.gov.in/supremecourt/2020/13346/13346_2020_33_1501_24909_Judgement_02-Dec-2020.pdf

night-vision cameras, equipped with 12 to 18 months' storage capacity, to be installed in 14 different places in all police stations, including at entry points and corridors, all lockups, inside inspector and sub-inspector rooms, and in the back. The installation of CCTVs of the quality and scope required by the Court necessitates specific funds and technological preparation on the part of police departments. Despite the Court's directions requiring multiple cameras, the Data on Police Organisations (DoPO) restricts itself to providing only the number of police stations equipped with one or more CCTVs.[3]

As of January 2023, nationally, 83 per cent or 14,865 of 17,849 police stations reported having at least one CCTV, which is a 10 percentage point[4] increase from 73 per cent in January 2022. Only four states (Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal) and four UTs (Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, and Ladakh) reported having at least one CCTV in all their police stations; fourteen states/UTs[5] show improvements between January 2022 and 2023, while eleven[6] show a decline in coverage. Telangana, which had reported full coverage in 2022 declined to 89 per cent in 2023. Only fourteen states had 90-99 per cent coverage.[7] At the other end of the spectrum, Manipur's coverage was limited to just 4 per cent while Lakshadweep and Puducherry had no CCTV coverage in their police stations.

Women's help desks: Acknowledging the challenges faced by women when approaching the police with complaints, particularly those of gender-based violence, the Ministry of Home Affairs has issued numerous comprehensive advisories to states including the need to establish dedicated Women's Help Desks (WHD) within police stations to provide support and assistance to women complainants and victims. These underline the importance of easy access and appropriate response as crucial to addressing gender-based violence. In 2021, the central government also sanctioned Rs. 107.49 crore for setting up and strengthening these mechanisms in every police station.[8]

Nationwide, the presence of women's help desks in police stations has grown steadily from 59 per cent in 2021[9] to 78 per cent in 2023.[10] Altogether, fifteen states/UTs record improvements.[11] The largest increases have been in Meghalaya, Bihar, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh. With 91 per cent now reporting the presence of women's help desks as against 87 per cent, urban police stations fare better than rural stations.

22 per cent of police stations are still without exclusive women's help desks. Five states/UTs—Jharkhand, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Tamil Nadu—have less than 60 per cent police stations equipped with help desks.

An assessment[12] of the impact of access to and the response of women's help desks helps to establish the impact of such mechanisms in improving police responsiveness and efficiency. An independent evaluation of women's help desks set up in 180 police stations in 12 of Madhya Pradesh's 52 districts found that between May 2019 and October 2020, police stations with carefully appointed and well-trained staff at the help desks registered three times more reported complaints of Domestic Incidents Reports (pertaining to domestic violence cases) and 14 per cent more First Information Reports in cases of crimes against women, than those with no help desks or special training. This increased registration reflects growing confidence in reporting crimes and raises the chances that factors causing the crime are addressed, and can help reduce crime in the long run.

3 Data on Police Organizations, 2023, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Table 6.1.6, p.192. Available at: https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/1716639795_d6fce11ed56a985b635c.pdf
4 The difference between two percentages that highlights an increase or decrease.
5 Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chandigarh, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Sikkim, and Uttarakhand
6 Assam, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Kerala, Odisha, Punjab, Telangana, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh
7 Assam, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Sikkim
8 Ministry of Home Affairs, Women Safety Division, 10 January 2020. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/advisory_21052021_0_1.pdf
9 Data on Police Organizations, 2021, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Table 6.2.3, p.204. Available at: https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/DoPO%202021.pdf
10 Data on Police Organizations, 2022, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Table 6.2.3, p.203. Available at: https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/20230111050403064114 6DataonPoliceOrganizations.pdf
11 Bihar, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, and Telangana
12 "Policing in patriarchy: An experimental evaluation of reforms to improve police responsiveness to women in India." Science, Volume 377, Issue 6602, July 2022. Available at: https://www.science.org/doi/epdf/10.1126/science.abm7387

Guidelines for women's help desks[13] require that there be at least one woman police officer, ideally of a rank not below head constable, with additional female personnel, to staff the desk, depending on the station's needs. Ideally the facility should also be backed by a network of external support providers, including legal professionals, psychologists, and NGOs. The existence and effectiveness of these desks is significantly challenged by the overall low representation of women within the police force.

Illustratively, women account for 24 per cent of Bihar's police but only 11 per cent are at the Sub-Inspector (SI), Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) or head constable level required to operate a women's help desk. Inevitably then there is a shortfall in human resources available for Bihar's 1,021 police stations. Similarly, Tamil Nadu, which boasts the highest number of women's police stations in the country (222), lags behind in ensuring the presence of women's help desks in all stations. Only 34 per cent of its police stations currently have dedicated help desks.

Population per police station: Well-equipped and easily accessible police stations are the basic building blocks of the state's duty to provide good policing. Police stations are the first ports of call for the public and a primary gateway to the criminal justice system for people affected by crime or violence. Determining the required number of police stations and their locations is based on topography, population density, the crime profiles of various jurisdictions, and also on financial and human resource availability.

In 1981, the National Police Commission provided a foundational framework for determining numbers and areas a police station should serve. Shifts in population, emergence of new crime trends, including cybercrime and organised crime, and better means of communications have necessitated a re-evaluation of traditional policing models and a reallocation of resources, potentially requiring specialised units and a revised distribution of personnel. These evolving considerations have motivated many states to develop their own guidelines for police station placement, incorporating the principles outlined by the 1981 National Police Commission, while also addressing their unique needs and challenges. While advancements in policing have occurred since then, the core principles of accessibility, responsiveness, and community engagement remain paramount for effective policing in any context.

Trends between 2017 and 2023 indicate that both urban and rural police stations are having to serve rising numbers of people over larger areas. On average, a rural police station that served 83,000 people in January 2017, now serves close to a lakh population in 2023. In urban spaces, the surge has been from 74,000 to over 93,000.[14] At the same time, the number of rural police stations has declined by 735, while urban ones have increased by 193.

Five states (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal) with a high proportion of rural population show a reduction in the number of rural police stations. Consequently, among them population served per police station has increased substantially, posing challenges of accessibility. Conversely, ten states/UTs[15] have increased their rural police stations, with Tamil Nadu adding 100 and Rajasthan 52.

Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh post the largest increases in the number of urban police stations. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka report the largest reductions.

The numbers of people served by an urban police station vary vastly between 8,500 in a small state like Arunachal to 2.8 lakh in Gujarat. As of January 2023, in nine states/UTs, a police station on average served more than a lakh urban population. In Kerala, Maharashtra, and Gujarat, on average a police station served more than 2 lakh people. Only in Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh did a police station serve less than 20,000 people in the urban areas.

Area per police station: The reduction in the number of rural police stations results in existing ones having to

13 Ministry of Home Affairs, Women Safety Division, 10 January 2020. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/WHDGuidelines_03082020_0.PDF

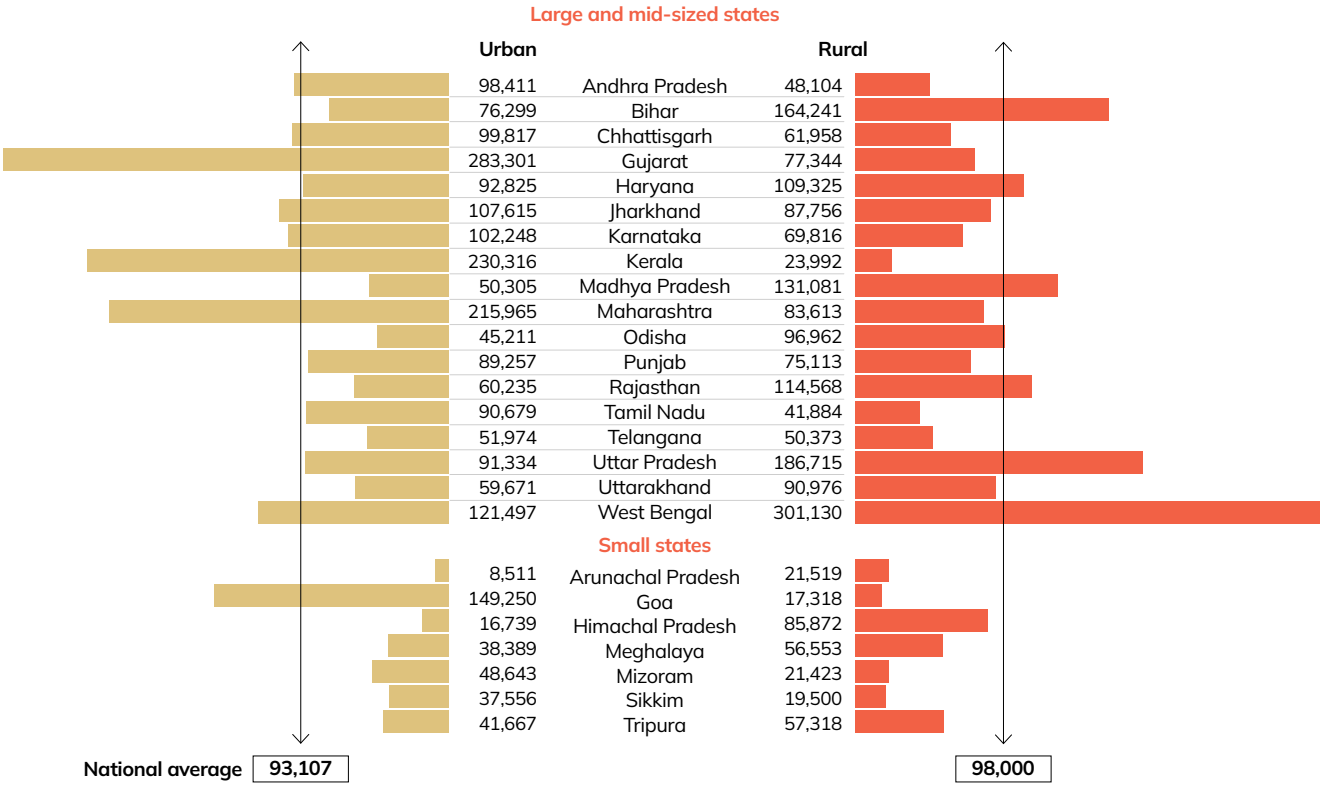
14 2017 population figures are based on the Census 2011. Available at: https://censusindia.gov.in/census.website/data/census-tables. The 2023 population figures are based on: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, "Population projection for India and states (2011 to 2036) for July 2020," in *Report of the Technical Group on Population Projections, November 2019*. Available at: https://main.mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/Population%20Projection%20Report%202011-2036%20-%20upload_compressed_0.pdf

15 Chhattisgarh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu

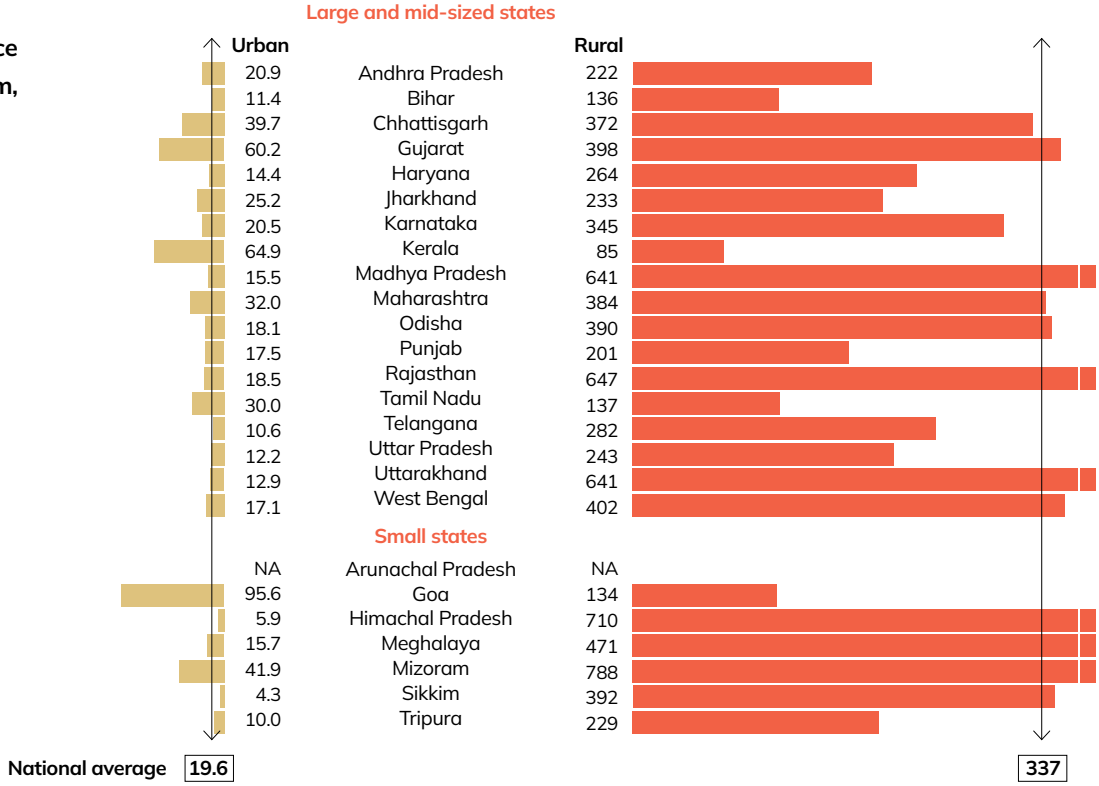
Figure 18: Police stations: The rural-urban divide

Policing machinery continues to be more concentrated in urban areas. Between 2017 and 2023, the number of rural police stations declined while urban ones increased. The graph below shows population and areas covered by police stations in both settings.

Population per police station (Persons, Jan 2023)



Area per police station (Sq km, Jan 2023)



Note: Census 2011 does not give rural/urban area break-up for Arunachal Pradesh.
Source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

cover more than twice the 150 sq. km area recommended by the National Police Commission.[16] As of January 2023, each rural police station in the country on average served more than 300 sq. km, an increase of 8 per cent since January 2017. In twenty five states/UTs, the area covered by a rural police station vastly exceeds the 1981 benchmark. Assam, at 821 sq. km per rural police station, is nearly nine times in excess of the benchmark; in Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Rajasthan rural stations cover more than 600 sq. km.

In contrast to the growing increase in areas covered by rural police stations, the 5,229 urban police stations cover 19.6 sq. km. Goa, with just 8 police stations, averages a coverage of 96 sq. km and Sikkim with 9 averages 4.3 sq. km.

Services provided by State Citizen Portals: State Citizen Portals are designed to enhance citizen interaction with law enforcement agencies by providing a convenient and accessible online platform for various services. They are required to offer nine key services: Online FIR Registration; Complaint Registration; Status Tracking; Police Station Locator; Missing Person Reporting; Lost and Found Items; Traffic-Related Services; Cybercrime Reporting; and Antecedent Verification. These online services are designed to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency in police-citizen interactions, making law enforcement more accessible and citizen-friendly.[17]

Two checks in May and August 2024 of the content and accessibility of the state portals recorded a mixed picture. On content, no state portal offered the complete suite of mandated services. Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh stand out for providing 90 per cent of the services. Elsewhere content gaps remain a significant challenge.

While fourteen states/UTs,[18] including Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Sikkim and West Bengal, demonstrated significant content improvements in 2024, ten states/UTs[19] fared worse than they had in 2022. Bihar lacks a dedicated citizen portal and instead offers some services through its police website. Twelve states/UTs, including Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Meghalaya, have shown no improvement in content since 2020.[20]

Even where content was available, accessibility issues persisted across several states. Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, and Manipur, with low service provision and worsening accessibility exemplify these challenges. While states like Andhra Pradesh and Delhi displayed most services, technical glitches at login and problems during sign-up hindered access.

State citizen portals have varying levels of functionality and service offerings. Significant improvements are needed in areas like service completeness, accessibility, and user-friendliness across the board. However, some demonstrate best practices and innovative approaches:

1. Assam offers a wide range of verification/ registration forms (employees, domestic workers, senior citizens, passports) and displays detailed statistics on service requests.
2. Gujarat and Sikkim maintain well-updated and user-friendly websites.
3. Kerala and Odisha provide comprehensive details of arrested persons on their portals.[21]
4. Goa and Lakshadweep go beyond their mandate, and offer services specific to their coastal locations, such as coastal security initiatives and helplines.
5. Haryana addresses a unique social challenge and features a 'Special Cell for the Protection of Run-away Couples'.

16 Government of India, *Seventh Report of the National Police Commission, May 1981*, Chapter L: Organisation and structure of police p.4.
17 Under the SMART Policing initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs advises states to provide services to citizens online through the state citizen portal: https://digitalpolice.gov.in/
18 Bihar, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Ladakh, Mizoram, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal
19 Assam, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu
20 Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Mizoram, and Nagaland
21 This is in compliance with Section 37 of the Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita 2023. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-04/250884_2_english_01042024.pdf

Figure 19: Training institutes: comparative workloads between 2020 and 2023

	Total police, sanctioned			Number of training institutes			Personnel (per training institute) (Lower, the better)		
	Jan 2020	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	Jan 2020	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	Jan 2020	Jan 2022	Jan 2023
Largest increase in number of training institutes									
Telangana	78,369	82,617	**86,058**	6	6	**33**	13,062	13,770	**2,608**
Andhra Pradesh	73,894	1,06,074	**1,06,368**	4	4	**23**	18,474	26,519	**4,625**
Kerala	62,571	61,474	**61,692**	2	3	**11**	31,286	20,491	**5,608**
Largest declines in number of training institutes									
Tamil Nadu	1,24,950	1,31,606	**1,32,462**	23	24	**9**	5,433	5,484	**14,718**
Madhya Pradesh	1,30,984	1,25,319	**1,25,381**	18	18	**10**	7,277	6,962	**12,538**
Karnataka	1,04,599	1,10,667	**1,11,426**	14	14	**12**	7,471	7,905	**9,286**
West Bengal	1,53,069	1,58,198	**1,65,069**	10	16	**10**	15,307	9,887	**16,507**

Source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

Personnel per training institute: Police training facilities in India encompass multiple institutions, each with a specific focus. At the national level Central Training Institutions, like the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad, provide training to IPS officers across various ranks and departments.

State Police Training Academies cater to the specific needs of state police cadres, offering both basic and in-service training programmes for personnel from sub-inspectors to senior ranks. District Police Training Colleges/Schools primarily focus on providing foundational training to newly recruited constables and other subordinate officers within the area.

Specialised Training Centres hone specific skills and expertise in areas such as counter-terrorism, cybercrime investigation, traffic management, and forensic science. Training at the Regional Training Centres is tailored to the specific needs of the region, such as the mountainous or coastal areas.

Between 2020 and 2023 the number of training institutes across the country has increased from 203 to 236. These state-based institutes cater to the training needs of approximately 22 lakh total police[22] personnel. In twenty one states/ UTs there was no change in the number of training institutes, though their sanctioned strength had increased by 3 per cent. Nationwide, as of January 2023, on average, each facility serves just under 12,000 personnel, a slightly lower workload than in 2022.

Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Telangana have increased their training facilities and reduced workloads considerably. By contrast the number of training facilities in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Madhya Pradesh has gone down, with consequent increases in workloads. A number of factors, including resource optimisation, cost-effectiveness, administrative streamlining, and a focus on specialised training may explain the reduction of training facilities.

Forensics: Forensics refers to the application of scientific principles and techniques to investigate crimes and

22 The total police force includes civil police, District Armed Reserve (DAR), Special Armed Police Battalion, and Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB).

analyse evidence that might be presented in a court of law. It includes scientifically validated evidence that validate proofs in disputed matters. Available data on forensic capacity has until very recently been fragmented. The latest Data on Police Organisations, published in 2023 for the first time, includes limited data on available forensic infrastructure and human resources.

The world over, forensic units are required to function independently of police establishments. However, in India state forensic units are funded as part of police budgets and often supervised by senior police officers.

It is important to note that in the Indian context too, public authorities and independent organisations have recommended that the administration of forensic labs must be made independent of the police.

India has 711 forensic facilities, categorised into State Forensic Laboratory (SFSL), Regional Forensic Laboratories (RFSLs), and District Mobile Forensic Units (DMFUs). They are mandated to receive, examine, analyse, and present findings in the form of scientific reports to the police and the courts. Each is expected to be equipped and staffed according to norms developed by the BPR&D.[23]

In each, staff is divided into two major sections: administrative, consisting of directors, additional directors, joint directors, deputy directors, and assistant directors; and scientific, made up of scientific officers, laboratory assistants, and laboratory attendants.

Work norms specify that all Central Forensic Science Laboratories (CFSLs), SFSLs, and RFSLs have all the following divisions: Biology, Serology, DNA, Toxicology, Chemistry, Liquor, Narcotics, Explosives, Ballistics, Physics, Questioned Documents, Photography, and Psychology. As new technological advancements, like cyber forensics and Ribonucleic Acid (RNA)-based analysis emerge, inevitably forensic analysis will require ever-more specialised staff and equipment.

States on their own decide on the sanctioned strengths of their labs. Taken together, the total sanctioned administrative and scientific staff strength across various ranks and categories in FSLs[24] is 7,997, of which nearly 50 per cent lies vacant. According to a 2023 report, 3.6 lakh cases were pending in various forensic laboratories across 26 states.[25]

Scientific staff account for just one-third of the sanctioned staff. DMFUs, who are first responders at the scene of a crime and responsible for crime scene processing, have the least numbers of scientific staff sanctioned to them. Nationally, there are just 341 scientific staff personnel across 582 units. Across all forensic laboratories, Telangana (91%), Bihar (85%), and Uttarakhand (80%) register the highest vacancies among scientific staff.

The function of administrative staff is typically to assist FSLs with their budgets, infrastructure, and quality management. The highest vacancies in these areas lie in Sikkim (100%), Madhya Pradesh (89%), Bihar (79%), and Karnataka (60%). Two UTs (Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Ladakh) already with low sanctioned strengths of 4 and 6, respectively, registered 100 per cent vacancies in both categories.

Though its sanctioned administrative and scientific staff strength (140) is just a small fraction of other large states, like Maharashtra (1,732), Uttar Pradesh (981) and Bihar (477), Kerala is the only state that recorded no vacancies at the administrative staff level and 4 per cent vacancies among scientific staff, the lowest in the country.

Human Resources

- Constables, vacancy (%, Jan 2023)
- Officers, vacancy (%, Jan 2023)
- Officers in civil police (%, Jan 2023)
- Admin staff vacancy in forensics (%, Jan 2023) NEW
- Scientific staff vacancy in forensics (%, Jan 2023) NEW

Official data on police strength in India is presented through two key figures: 'sanctioned strength' and 'actual strength.' Sanctioned strength represents the authorised

23 Bureau of Police Research and Development, *Revised Work Norms Forensic Science Laboratories and Government Examiners of Questioned Documents 2002*. Available at: http://dfs.nic.in/pdfs/worknorms2002.pdf

24 *India Justice Report* assesses the staff in state-based laboratories, which include state forensic laboratories, regional laboratories, and District Mobile Forensic Units.

25 Project 39A, Forensic Science India Report, p. 32. Available at: https://www.project39a.com/fsir-report

number of personnel allocated by police departments for each rank, while actual strength reflects the number of personnel currently in service. A significant gap often exists between these figures.

As of January 2023, the total sanctioned strength of civil police[26] across India stood at 21 lakh, of which 16.66 lakh were constables and the rest were officers (from Assistant Sub-Inspectors [ASI] to Director-General of Police [DGP]). However, the actual strength of the police force, encompassing both constabulary and officers, was just over 16 lakh, indicating a shortfall of 23 per cent. This gap has marginally increased over the previous year and reflects a persistent trend observed over the past decade.

A notable trend is the consistent increase in sanctioned strength across states, indicating a growing commitment to expanding police departments. Between 2017 and 2023, the sanctioned strength of the civil police nationally increased by 8.5 per cent. This upward trend continued between January 2022 and 2023, with a 1.5 per cent increase. All states, with the exception of Punjab and Sikkim, increased their sanctioned strength during this period. This increase, amounting to over 33,000 personnel (18,000 constables and 11,000 officers) was primarily driven by significant growth in states like Haryana, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

Nationally, the overall police vacancy rate has remained stagnant at around 21-23 per cent. As of January 2023, officer vacancies stand at 28 per cent and constabulary at 21 per cent. This indicates that recruitment processes are not keeping pace with the growing demand for police personnel, despite efforts to expand police departments.

Behind these national trends lie state-level variations.

Constable vacancies: At the constabulary level, there continue to be wide variations in shortfall across states. West Bengal with a shortfall of 41 per cent and Uttarakhand with 0.6 per cent define the extremes. Only nine states record shortfalls below 10 per cent;[27] elsewhere the gap ranges from 13 per cent to 39 per cent. The five-year trend from 2017 to 2023 indicates that shortfalls in twenty three states/UTs[28] have increased, while eleven[29] states show a reduction.

Figure 20: States with highest increase in sanctioned strength of civil police

	Total civil police, sanctioned		Increase between Jan 2022 and Jan 2023	
	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	Numbers	%
West Bengal	121,012	127,727	6,715	5.6
Uttar Pradesh	377,295	383,588	6,293	1.7
Haryana	73,056	77,284	4,228	5.8
Jammu & Kashmir	52,809	56,287	3,478	6.6
Telangana	69,539	72,911	3,372	4.9
Odisha	43,448	45,913	2,465	5.7
Chhattisgarh	51,003	52,431	1,428	2.8
Bihar	117,914	119,270	1,356	1.2
Rajasthan	93,729	94,696	967	1.0
Gujarat	96,391	97,253	862	0.9

Source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

26 Figures for civil police include the District Armed Reserve (DAR).
27 Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand
28 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Tripura
29 Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Manipur, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand

Between 2022 and 2023, the sharpest increase in shortfalls was in Odisha, from 13 per cent to 22 per cent, followed by Haryana which rose from 32 per cent to almost 40 per cent. Uttarakhand, on the other hand, closed the vacancy gap from 6.3 per cent to just 0.6 per cent. Uttarakhand's low constable vacancy level is attributable to the 9 per cent reduction in sanctioned strength from over 14,000 to just over 12,000.

Shortfall levels are impacted by changes in sanctioned strength. For instance, over the five years between 2017 and 2023, Tamil Nadu's sanctioned strength declined by nearly 10 per cent in the first three years and then went up by 6 per cent. Throughout this time the actual strength of constables on the ground never managed to keep pace, and the shortfalls fluctuated from -7 per cent to 11 per cent, and in 2023 fell to 4 per cent.

Officer vacancies: As with the constabulary, officer vacancies are impacted by fluctuations in sanctioned strength and vary widely across states. Various levels of shortfall at different ranks disturb the so-called desirable 'teeth-to-tail ratio,'[30] and adversely impact investigative and managerial capabilities.

Between January 2017 and 2023, sanctioned officer strength across the country increased by 64,000, but the actual strength rose by just 44,000. Vacancies continued to range between 32-28 per cent. In other words, over a five-year period, one officer was missing for every three or four officers.

Between 2022 and 2023 shortfall averages remained around 28 per cent. The largest gaps were at the Inspector (25%), SI (33%) and ASI (24.5%) levels—staff responsible for investigation. At the Deputy Superintendent (Dy. SP) level, which also carries a supervisory function, nearly one in five officers was missing.

In January 2023, fifteen states had significantly reduced their officer vacancy levels,[31] but twenty states/UTs had increased these levels compared to the previous year.[32] Seven states/UTs[33] had vacancy levels of over 35 per cent, with Rajasthan recording the highest at 52 per cent, an increase from 46 per cent in 2022. Tripura (45%), Bihar (45%), Uttar Pradesh (42%), Lakshadweep (41%), and Puducherry (40%) followed close behind. Vacancies increased most in Tamil Nadu where they rose from 9 per cent to 28 per cent, and in Uttarakhand where they grew nearly three-fold, from 7 per cent in January 2022 to 20 per cent.

Population per civil police: As of January 2023, the nationwide police-to-population ratio remained the same as in 2022, with one police person (combined civil and district armed police) serving 831 people. Eleven states/UTs reported an improvement over 2022. Nevertheless, in seven states/UTs[34] one police person serves more than 1,000 people. With the exception of the small UT of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (1:1911), Bihar continues to have the worst ratio, with one police person serving 1,522 people, although this is an improvement from 1,695 in 2022. Odisha and West Bengal also lag significantly, with one police person serving 1,298 and 1,277 people, respectively.

Fourteen states/UTs,[35] including six small states/UTs,

Others

The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) which categorises personnel by rank, includes an 'Others if any' column, encompassing a diverse group of contractual staff employed to perform specific ancillary tasks outside of operational police work. Their numbers have risen from 38,000 in 2020 to 81,000 in 2022 and stands at 77,000 as of January 2023.

Twelve states/UTs[36] report no personnel classified as 'others,' while in other states, their numbers range from just 2 in Sikkim to 30,000 in Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh collectively account for 65 per cent of all personnel in this category.

Excluding 'others' from the count of the civil police workforce worsens the nationwide police-to-population ratio from 1:831 to 1:871.

30 'Teeth-to-tail ratio' refers to the proportion of frontline operational officers like Dy. SP, Inspectors compared to supporting personnel like head constables and constables.
31 Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, and Uttar Pradesh
32 Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Mizoram, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal
33 Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh
34 Assam, Bihar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, and West Bengal
35 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Delhi, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura
36 Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana

It also impacts state-level ratios, illustratively, in Andhra Pradesh, where 37 per cent of the civil police force is categorised as 'others,' the ratio deteriorates sharply from 1:668 to 1:1,053. The inclusion of 15,000 women in the Grama Mahila Samrakshana Karyadarsi,[37] who appear to have functions that support traditional police work but are categorised as 'others', also skews Andhra Pradesh police's gender profile by adding an artificial surge to the numbers of policewomen. Exclusion of this category reduces the share of women in Andhra's police from 22 per cent to 4 per cent.

have ratios that range from 122 in Andaman & Nicobar Islands to 467 in Tripura. Punjab with one police person for every 504 people retained its position as having the best ratio amongst the 18 large and mid-sized states.

Budgets

- Spend on police per person (Rs, 2022-23)
- Share of training budget in police budget (%, 2021-22)
- Training budget utilization (%, 2021-22)
- Spend on training per personnel (Rs, 2021-22)
- Modernisation fund used (%, 2021-22)

Spend on police per person: Across all states, police budgets continue to capture the lion's share of the total budget allocation to the judiciary, police, prisons, and legal aid. This sub-system also enjoys the highest spend per capita. This has grown steadily. Nationally, in 2015-16 the average spend on a police person was Rs 823; in 2022-23 it had grown to Rs 1,275.

Upwards of 90 per cent of the police budget is earmarked for recurring expenses such as salaries and pensions, as well as general costs such as maintenance and functioning of vehicles and other allowances. As of FY 2022-23, per capita spends on police range from Rs. 774 in Bihar to Rs. 10,910 in Lakshadweep. Eleven states and UTs[38] spend in the range of Rs. 5,000-Rs. 10,000. Two states (Meghalaya and Tripura) spend Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 5,000. Eight[39] spend between Rs. 1,500 and Rs. 3,000; and 6 spend less than Rs. 1,000.[40]

Except for Assam which reports a reduction in per capita spend, all states increased their spend by between Rs. 86 (Madhya Pradesh) to Rs. 2,063 (Arunachal Pradesh). Four states/UTs record no expenditure data.[41]

Expenditure on training: Nationally, in 2021-22, only 1.25 per cent of the total police budget was allocated to training. Even then, only two UTs (Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Chandigarh) could utilise 100 per cent of their allocated budgets. In general, small states allocate and utilise more than the larger jurisdictions. Yet, even the highest allocations range between 2 per cent to nearly 3 per cent and come from Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, and Mizoram. Thirteen states/UTs[42] allocated between 1 to 2 per cent, while eight apportioned 0.75-1 per cent.[43]

Bihar, an outlier, in a massive jump from 1.42 per cent, allocated 5.49 per cent to training. However, the state's inability to utilise no more than 35 per cent of this allocation negated the effects of the increase.

In six states/UTs the allocation for training has been shown as '0:' these are Kerala, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.

37 The Grama Mahila Samrakshana Karyadarsi were created via a government order dated 2019. Later, in 2021, an amendment renamed them the 'Mahila Police'. Details available on *India Justice Report 2023*, p.36. Available at: https://indiajusticereport.org/files/IJR%202022_Full_Report.pdf
38 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Delhi, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Sikkim
39 Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Punjab, Telangana, and Uttarakhand
40 Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan
41 Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Puducherry, and West Bengal
42 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Manipur, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Tripura
43 Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Maharashtra, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand

Figure 21: Police training budget

Between 2020-21 and 2021-22 allocations for training increased nearly 9%. Utilisation went from 84 to 73 % and the national average spend per police personnel decreased from Rs 9,000 to Rs 8,000

	Police training budget (Rs crore)		Share of training budget in total police budget (%)		Training budget utilisation (%)		Change		
Large and mid-sized states	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22	Budget	Share	Utilisation
Andhra Pradesh	57.2	53.5	1.04	0.84	99.5	89.7	↓	↓	↓
Bihar	142.2	605.0	1.42	5.69	71.8	34.8	↑	↑	↓
Chhattisgarh	62.5	59.5	1.28	1.19	53.5	82.6	↓	↓	↑
Gujarat	52.5	48.9	0.98	0.86	100.0	98.7	↓	↓	↓
Haryana	43.1	48.6	0.86	0.84	95.8	95.8	↑	↓	↑
Jharkhand	46.0	53.4	0.92	1.01	89.2	91.6	↑	↑	↑
Karnataka	85.1	86.5	1.23	1.20	90.2	96.9	↑	↓	↑
Kerala	NA[1]	NA[1]	NA1	NA1	NA[1]	NA[1]			
Madhya Pradesh	184.2	197.2	2.47	2.46	87.9	80.6	↑	↓	↓
Maharashtra	159.9	141.0	0.94	0.77	84.2	92.6	↓	↓	↑
Odisha	49.5	54.0	1.20	1.16	85.7	81.1	↑	↓	↓
Punjab	78.7	76.4	1.23	1.03	87.0	94.0	↓	↓	↑
Rajasthan	127.0	144.4	1.92	1.92	100.0	95.1	↑	↑	↓
Tamil Nadu	157.7	NA1	NA1	NA1	NA[1]	NA[1]			
Telangana	193.5	68.0	2.66	1.17	91.2	89.5	↓	↓	↓
Uttar Pradesh	283.5	293.7	1.04	0.97	55.6	58.2	↑	↓	↑
Uttarakhand	16.8	17.8	0.82	0.76	63.9	92.5	↑	↓	↑
West Bengal	4.8	3.7	0.04	0.03	61.3	34.2	↓	↓	↓
Small states									
Arunachal Pradesh	55.1	26.5	5.39	1.96	96.4	99.9	↓	↓	↑
Goa	2.3	2.7	0.35	0.35	94.3	91.7	↑	↓	↓
Himachal Pradesh	0.7	0.5	0.05	0.03	89.2	97.9	↓	↓	↑
Meghalaya	6.5	6.6	0.61	0.57	96.8	91.0	↑	↓	↓
Mizoram	18.3	18.7	2.58	2.77	89.5	87.1	↑	↑	↓
Sikkim	4.8	4.6	0.96	0.88	85.1	95.8	↓	↓	↑
Tripura	15.0	19.0	0.92	1.03	99.5	97.9	↑	↑	↓
Total	**2,253.1**	**2,447.8**	1.26	1.25	84.0	73.0	↑	↓	↓

1. BPR&D shows police training budget and spend as blank.
Source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

Modernisation funds: Since 1969-70, states have been eligible for conditional financial aid from the central government to modernise their police forces. This aid, primarily intended for capital expenditures like acquiring arms, cutting-edge equipment, and training aids, is provided on a matching basis, with the central government contributing either 60 per cent or 90 per cent.[44] While the total centre-plus-state allocation for modernisation peaked at Rs. 2,049 crore in 2016-17, it declined by 41 per cent to Rs. 1,210 crore in 2021-22.

Over just one year, the central government's share of the modernisation grant to states and UTs witnessed a considerable drop, from Rs. 683 crore in 2020-21 to Rs. 562 crore in 2021-22. Twelve states/UTs received no modernisation funds in 2021-22,[45] while others, such

44 Category 'A' states (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and the eight North Eastern states including Sikkim) receive a 90:10 (Centre:State) funding ratio, while Category 'B' states (the remaining states) receive a 60:40 ratio. UTs get 100% central assistance. Ministry of Home Affairs, *Guidelines for implementation of "Assistance to States and Union Territories for Modernisation of Police (ASUMP)"*, 8 August 2022. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-11/ATTACHMENTAGuidelinesschemeASUMP_06102022%5B1%5D.pdf

45 Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Delhi, Jharkhand, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Sikkim, and Uttarakhand

as Haryana, Tamil Nadu, and Goa, received grants but reported zero expenditure. Amongst the large states, West Bengal emerged as the leading recipient of central funds, receiving Rs. 150 crore and contributing a substantial Rs. 434 crore towards modernisation. By contrast Maharashtra received Rs. 3.5 crore and contributed Rs. 3.2 crore.

The utilisation of modernisation funds remains a concern. In 2021-22 most states spent less than 50 per cent of the combined amount. Only six states/UTs (Puducherry, Nagaland, Karnataka, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and Meghalaya) achieved utilisation rates above 75 per cent. West Bengal which received and allocated the most to police modernisation could spend only 32 per cent of the funds, a decrease of 10 percentage points over the year before. In contrast, Karnataka with a modest Rs.54 crore could utilise nearly 99 per cent: the same as the year before.

Diversity

- Share of women in police (%, Jan 2023)
- Share of women in officers (%, Jan 2023)
- SC officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
- SC constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
- ST officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
- ST constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
- OBC officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
- OBC constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)

Gender: The national benchmark for women's representation in the police is 33 per cent, as advised by the central government in 2009.[46] While many states align their quotas with 33 per cent, many set their own quotas, which range from 10 per cent in Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya to 35 per cent in Bihar. In December 2023, five states had no reservations for women at all. [47]

As of January 2023, the overall representation of women in the police (the civil police, District Armed Reserve [DAR], Special Armed Police Battalion, and Indian Reserve Battalion [IRB]) across all states and UTs stood at only 12.3 per cent, a modest rise from 11.7 per cent in January 2022. Disaggregated, women make up 14 per cent of the civil police and DAR, but constitute only 5 per cent of the Special Armed Police Battalion and IRB.

Among the large and mid-sized states, Bihar, at 24 per cent, now leads in women's representation in the police, surpassing Andhra Pradesh (22%).[48] Bihar also recorded the highest growth, from 21 per cent in 2022 to 24 per cent in 2023. Conversely, nine states/UTs,[49] including Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal, saw declines, and seventeen states/UTs still report women's representation below 10 per cent.[50]

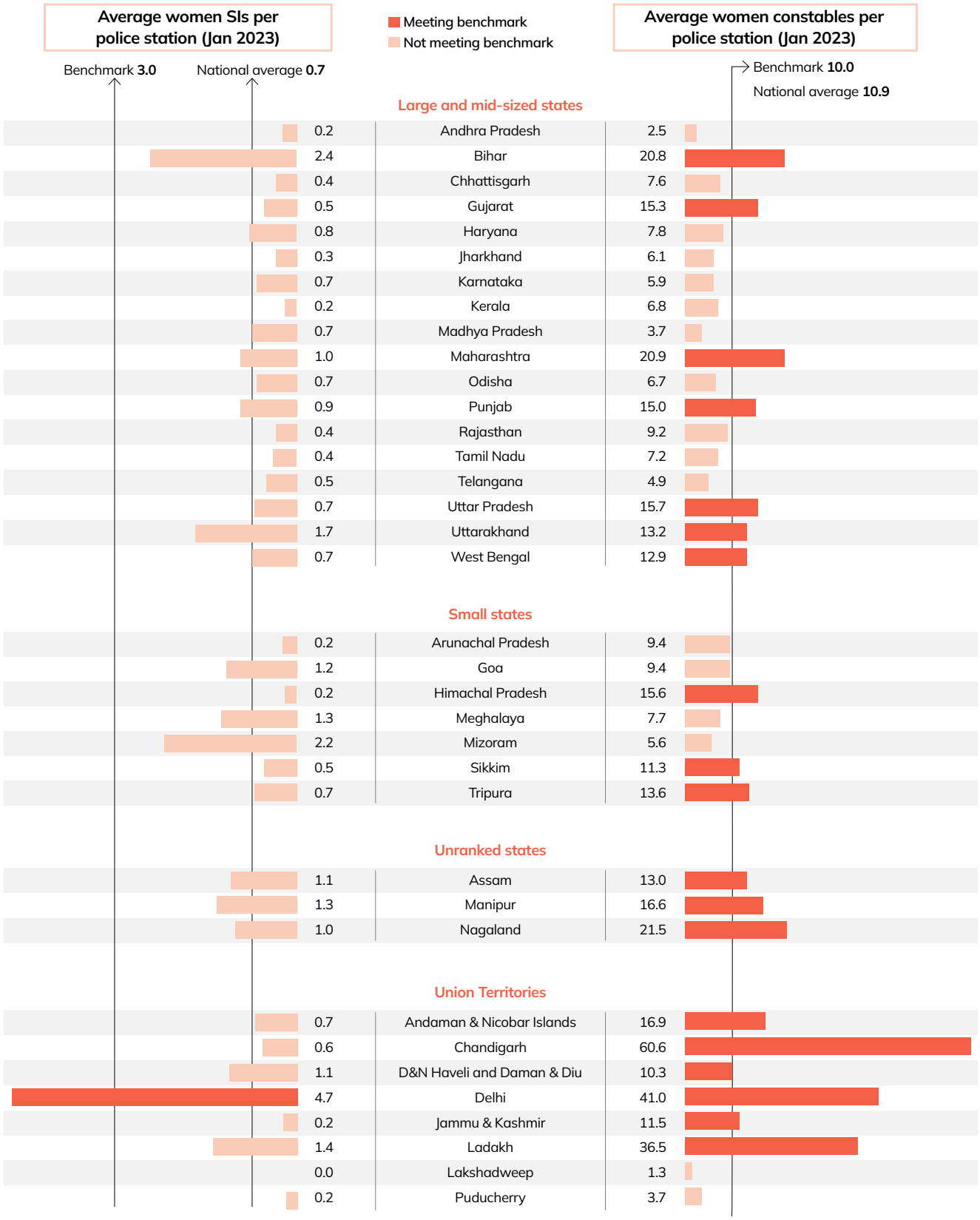
Constables make up 80 per cent of all police personnel while officers account for 15 per cent. This proportion is reflected in women's representation as well. Women's representation is poorer at the officer-level ranks. Nationally, there are 25,282 or 8 per cent women officers. Of all these women, 52 per cent are sub-inspectors, followed by 25 per cent as ASIs. At the constabulary level, women account for 13 per cent. Illustratively, 88 per cent of Bihar's 24 per cent women police are concentrated at the constabulary level, while only 12 per cent hold officer positions. In Maharashtra 93 per cent of women police, who overall make up 19 per cent of the Maharashtra Police, serve as constables.

Caste[51]: Representation of under-represented caste groups is both a statutory requirement and a democratic priority when policing a society as varied as India. Each state sets its statutory quotas approximately in line with its population mix. Official figures capture only the numbers of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Castes (OBCs) present in six ranks: Deputy Superintendent, Inspector, Sub-

46 Ministry of Home Affairs, Women Safety - II Section, Crimes against women, Advisory F. No.15011/48/2009 -SC/ST-W, 9 September 2009. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-09/AdCrimeAgnstWomen170909%5B1%5D.pdf
47 Goa, Kerala, Ladakh, Manipur, and Mizoram
48 Refer to the box on 'Others' for more details.
49 Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal
50 Assam, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Puducherry, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, and West Bengal
51 Figures as of January 2023.

Figure 22: Policewomen: still too few

Multiple MHA advisories have recommended three women Sub-Inspectors (SI) and 10 women constables in each police station. With little change over 2022, except Delhi, no state/UT meets this benchmark for SIs.



Note: States/Union Territories arranged in alphabetical order within category.
Source: Data on Police Organizations, 2022, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

inspector, Assistant Sub-inspector, Head Constable, and Constable.[52] As of January 2023, Karnataka stands out as the only state to consistently achieve its targets across all three reserved groups, both at the officer and the constabulary levels.

Scheduled Castes: Nationally, fulfilling Scheduled Caste (SC) quotas lags behind meeting the Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) quotas. At the officer level, only five states[53] successfully achieved their SC targets, in contrast to the 7 states that met ST targets[54] and nine that met OBC targets.[55]

Only four states (Gujarat, Manipur, Karnataka, and Himachal Pradesh) met their SC quotas at both officer and constabulary levels. Goa is the only other state to meet its target at the officer ranks. Sikkim, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Kerala met their quotas only at the constabulary level. Twelve states/UTs,[56] however, recorded significant shortfalls in SC officer representation, ranging between 20 per cent and 40 per cent. Uttar Pradesh (61%), Rajasthan (52%), Tripura (47%), and Bihar (42%) faced the largest deficits in SC officer appointments.

At the constabulary level, eleven states[57] successfully met their SC quotas. While twenty states/UTs[58] recorded an increase in SC representation, only Chhattisgarh (4%) and Jharkhand (6%) have shortfalls below 10 per cent. At the other end of the spectrum, Haryana (31%), Goa (57%), and Assam (71%) exhibit the most significant quota deficits.

Scheduled Tribes: Several states have made significant strides in improving Scheduled Tribe (ST) representation within their police forces, with Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, and Karnataka demonstrating good performance by meeting their ST targets across both officer and constabulary ranks. Notably, Madhya Pradesh has significantly reduced its officer-level shortfall from a substantial 44 per cent in 2017 to a mere 4 per cent in 2023, mirroring Kerala's impressive progress in decreasing vacancies from 44 per cent to 14 per cent during the same period.

Despite these positive trends, challenges persist. Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Tripura exhibit the highest shortfalls among ST officers. Punjab has a 25 per cent quota for STs; it records only 3 ST officers, equivalent to a 0.11 per cent representation or a shortfall of 99.8 per cent.[59] Furthermore, eight states/UTs[60] continue to grapple with a significant shortfall (20-40%) at the officer level. In contrast, seven states, including Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Bihar, have exceeded their quota of ST officers.

At the constabulary level, ten states/UTs have fulfilled their quotas.[61] However, despite high reservation percentages, Arunachal Pradesh (29%), Manipur (43%), Sikkim (25%) and Tripura (28%) still exhibit substantial deficits. This disparity is further highlighted by Nagaland, which, despite a 100 per cent reservation for STs, still records a 31 per cent shortfall. And Assam, with a 15 per cent reservation, demonstrates a concerning 71 per cent shortfall.

While some states, such as Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh, have consistently striven to reduce these gaps in meeting their quotas between 2017 and 2023, others, including West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, have witnessed gaps exceeding 50 per cent. Furthermore, between January 2022 and January 2023, twelve states/UTs[62] registered an increase in ST constable vacancies, with Telangana experiencing the most significant rise,

52 Bureau of Police Research an]d Development, *Data on Police Organisation*. Available at: https://bprd.nic.in/page/data_on_police_organization_dopo
53 Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, and Manipur
54 Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, and Ladakh
55 Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana
56 Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal
57 Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Punjab, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand
58 Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal
59 Table 3.1.7, p. 82; Bureau of Police Research and Development, *Data on Police Organisation* as of 1 January 2023. Available at: https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/1716639795_d6fce11ed56a985b635c.pdf
60 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Odisha, and Telangana
61 Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand
62 Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Telangana, and Tripura

Figure 23: SC/ST/OBC representation

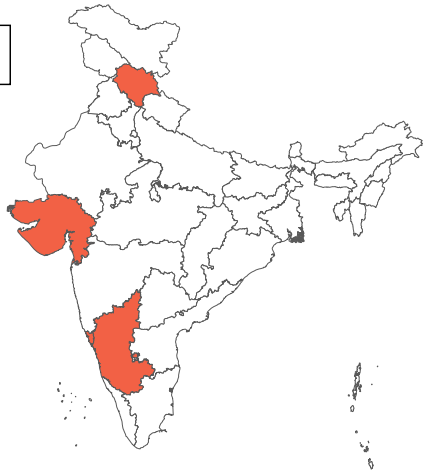
Number of states that meet each quota as of January 2023.

Scheduled Caste (SC)

SC officers

4

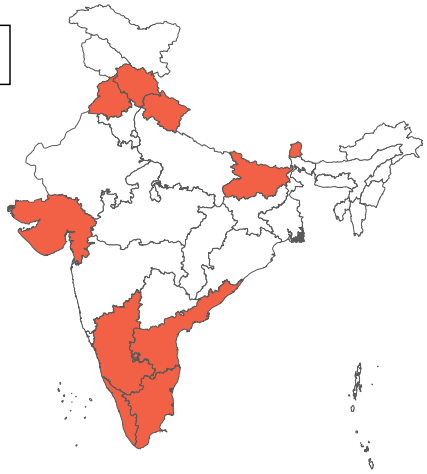
Goa
Gujarat
Himachal Pradesh
Karnataka



SC constables

10

Andhra Pradesh
Bihar
Gujarat
Himachal Pradesh
Karnataka
Kerala
Punjab
Sikkim
Tamil Nadu
Uttarakhand

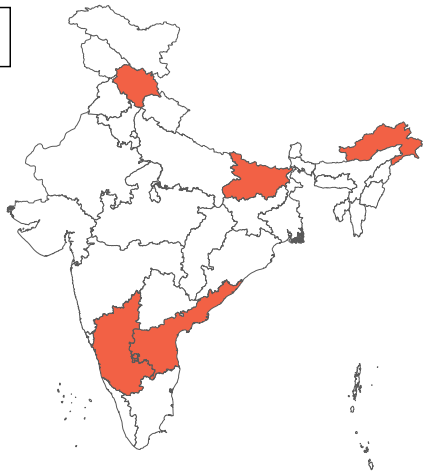


Scheduled Tribe (ST)

ST officers

5

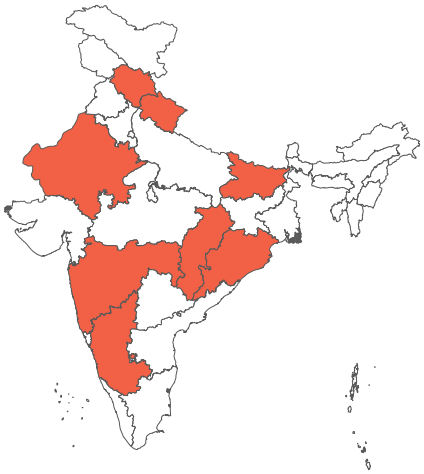
Andhra Pradesh
Arunachal Pradesh
Bihar
Himachal Pradesh
Karnataka



ST constables

8

Bihar
Chhattisgarh
Himachal Pradesh
Karnataka
Maharashtra
Odisha
Rajasthan
Uttarakhand

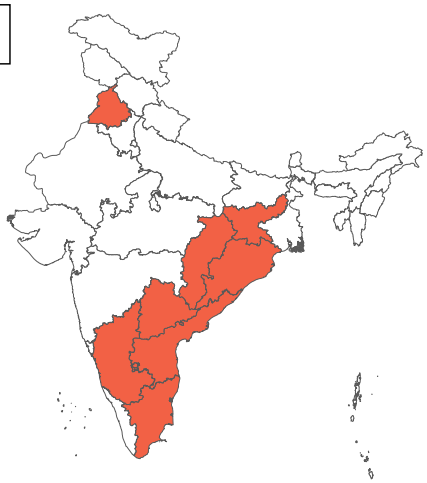


Other Backward Classes (OBC)

OBC officers

9

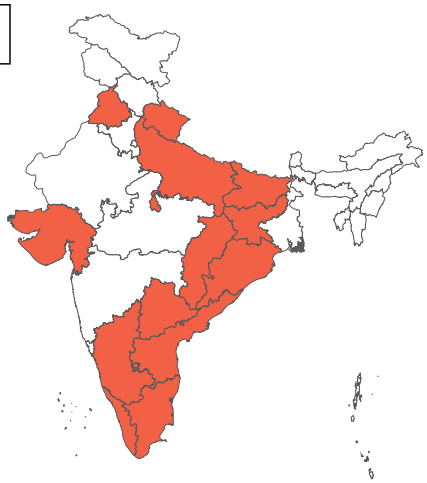
Andhra Pradesh
Chhattisgarh
Jharkhand
Karnataka
Odisha
Puducherry
Punjab
Tamil Nadu
Telangana



OBC constables

13

Andhra Pradesh
Bihar
Chhattisgarh
Gujarat
Jharkhand
Karnataka
Kerala
Odisha
Punjab
Tamil Nadu
Telangana
Uttar Pradesh
Uttarakhand



Source: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

jumping from fulfilling its quota to having a gap of 15 per cent.

Other Backward Classes: Nine states/UTs[63] among those with quotas[64] for Other Backward Classes (OBC) at the officer level have successfully met their targets. Tamil Nadu, Sikkim, and Kerala have over 40 per cent reservation for OBCs; in this instance, Tamil Nadu has exceeded its quota but Kerala and Sikkim have shortfalls of 7 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively.

Seven states[65] still grapple with vacancies ranging from 25 per cent to 40 per cent for OBC officers. Between January 2022 and January 2023, Maharashtra (where vacancies in this group rose markedly from 2% to 35%) and Madhya Pradesh (15% to 35%) recorded the highest increases in shortfalls. The largest vacancies among officers were observed in Manipur (94%), Rajasthan (74%), Himachal Pradesh (70%), Goa (67%), and West Bengal (63%). These five states have consistently recorded vacancies exceeding 60 per cent between January 2017 and 2023, indicating a persistent challenge in adequately representing OBCs within their officer ranks.

At the constabulary level, fifteen states/UTs[66] (out of 28 with quotas) met their state quotas. On the other hand, in January 2023, Goa, Assam, Manipur, and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands recorded the largest shortfalls, consistently exceeding 60 per cent since January 2020.

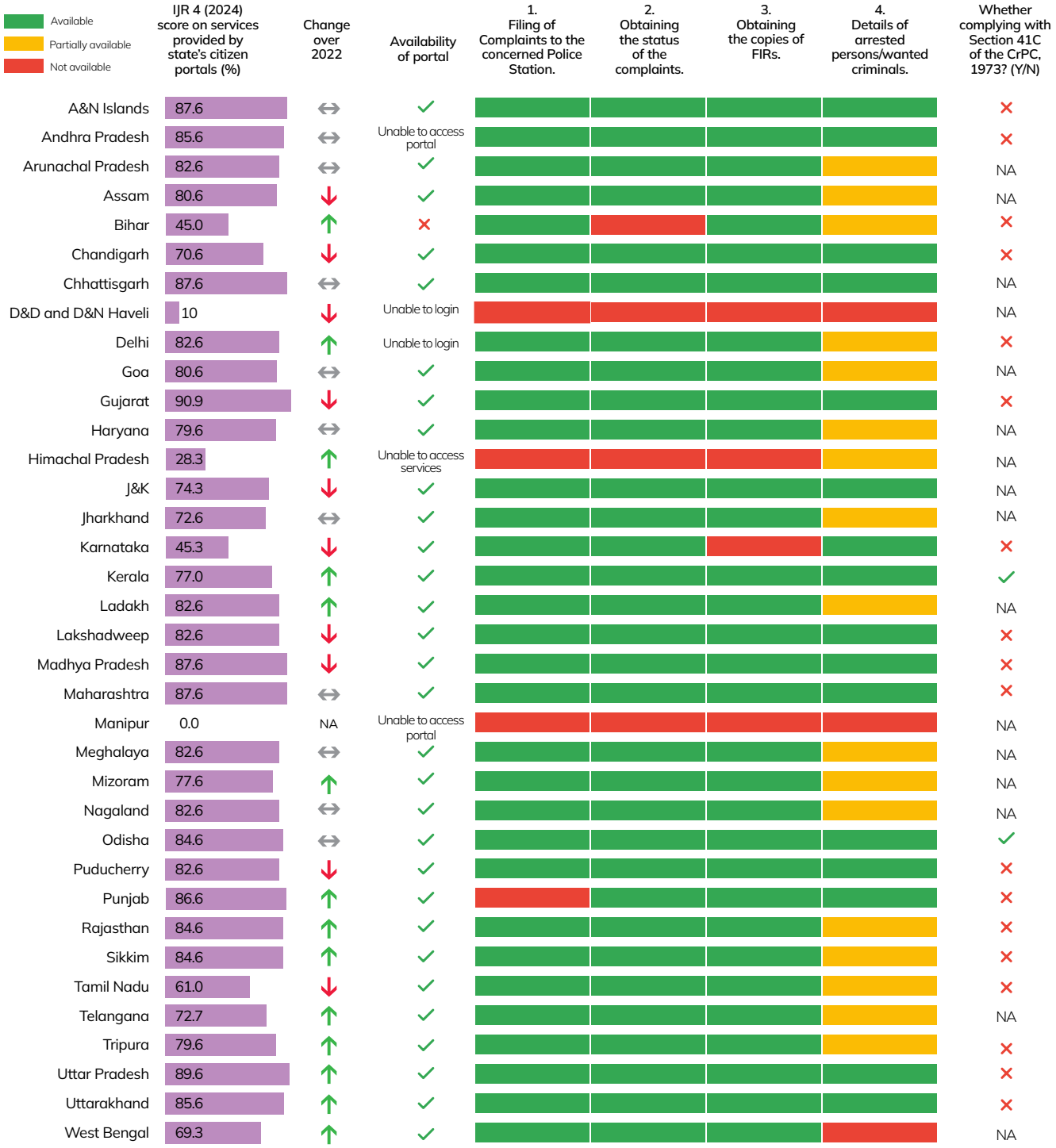
Notably, some states exhibit an uneven distribution of OBC representation across officer and constable ranks. In Bihar, OBC constables exceed the prescribed quota but the state posts a 32 per cent shortfall among officers. Similarly, despite exceeding its quota for OBC constables, Uttar Pradesh records a 31 per cent vacancy at the officer level. These disparities highlight the need for a more balanced and inclusive approach to OBC representation within the police forces across all ranks.

Devyani Srivastava, National Law School of India University;
Radhika Jha, Common Cause;
Valay Singh, India Justice Report;
Nayanika Singhal, India Justice Report

63 Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana
64 Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura record no reservation for OBCs. Table 3.1.8, p. 83; Bureau of Police Research and Development, *Data on Police Organisation* as of 1 January 2023. Available at: https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/1716639795_d6fce11ed56a985b635c.pdf
65 Gujarat, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh
66 Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand

Figure 24: Status of state citizen portals

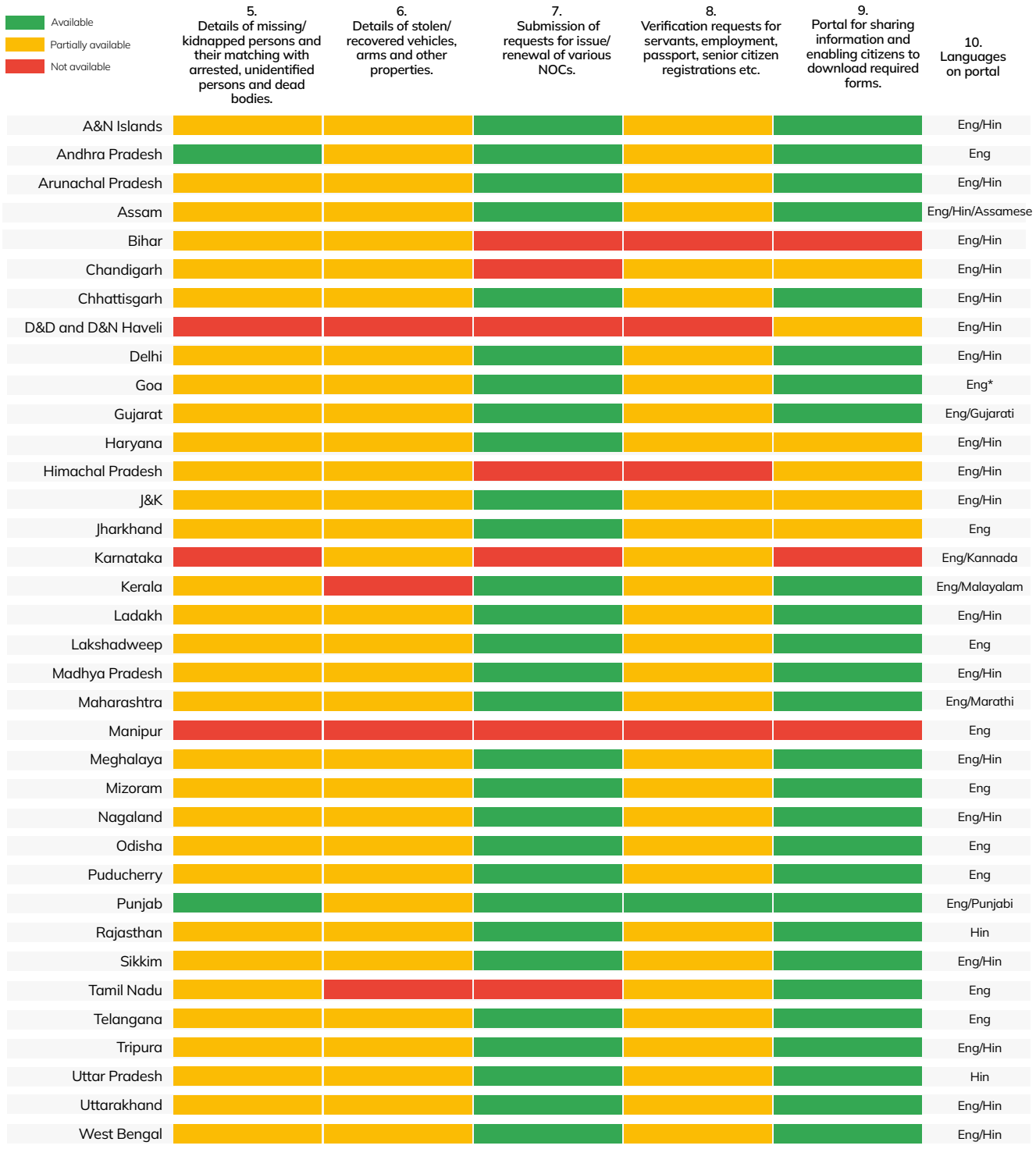
IJR continues to track the status of State Citizen Portals in 2024. Sikkim showed the most improvement between 2022 and 2024. Manipur continued to provide no services. Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh provided maximum services.



NOTE:
Section 41C encourages public oversight of arrest practices by requiring that certain information be made available to the people in general. Specifically, Section 41C of the CrPC sets out the following three mandatory requirements: 1) State governments must establish Police Control Rooms (PCRs) at the state level and in each district7; 2) State governments must ensure that notice boards outside each district PCR display: a) names and addresses of arrested persons and b) the name(s) and designation(s) of the officers who made the arrests; and 3) the Police Control Room at the State Police Headquarters must regularly collect the details of arrested persons and the nature of the offence with which they are charged, and maintain a database for the information of the general public.

Figure 24: Status of state citizen portals (contd.)

IJR continues to track the status of State Citizen Portals in 2024. Sikkim showed the most improvement between 2022 and 2024. Manipur continued to provide no services. Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh provided maximum services.



NOTE:
* Plus inbuilt Google translation option, including international languages.

Table 3: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Best
Middle
Worst

	Rank in cluster						Budgets	
Theme								
Indicator					IJR 3 Score (out of 10)	Indicators improved on (out of 25)[1]	Spend on police per person (Rs, 2022-23)	Share of training budget in police budget (%, 2021-22)
Scoring guide							Higher, the better	Higher, the better
	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025				
National average							**1,275**	**1.25**
Large and mid-sized states								
Andhra Pradesh	5	4	3	2	6.44	11	1,246	0.84
Bihar	14	11	16	10	5.04	19	774	5.69
Chhattisgarh	10	2	9	4	6.02	17	1,581	1.19
Gujarat	12	8	8	9	5.13	11	898	0.86
Haryana	8	9	12	14	4.80	11	1,908	0.84
Jharkhand	9	6	11	12	5.01	10	1,598	1.01
Karnataka	6	1	2	3	6.19	17	1,261	1.20
Kerala	13	14	17	15	4.71	16	1,197	NA[3]
Madhya Pradesh	15	18	7	11	5.04	9	902	2.46
Maharashtra	4	13	10	5	5.61	14	1,588	0.77
Odisha	7	3	4	8	5.16	15	873	1.16
Punjab	3	12	13	7	5.26	15	2,604	1.03
Rajasthan	17	16	14	16	4.66	13	978	1.92
Tamil Nadu	1	5	6	13	4.95	10	1,260	NA[3]
Telangana	11	10	1	1	6.48	12	2,212	1.17
Uttar Pradesh	18	15	15	17	4.26	12	1,136	0.97
Uttarakhand	2	7	5	6	5.50	14	1,847	0.76
West Bengal	16	17	18	18	3.36	13	NA[2]	0.03
Small states								
Arunachal Pradesh	2	4	2	2	5.35	7	8,615	1.96
Goa	3	7	6	7	3.38	8	NA[2]	0.35
Himachal Pradesh	6	2	5	4	4.01	18	2,168	0.03
Meghalaya	5	3	3	5	3.83	14	3,143	0.57
Mizoram	7	6	4	3	4.75	9	5,700	2.77
Sikkim	1	1	1	1	6.10	13	7,656	0.88
Tripura	4	5	7	6	3.58	8	3,856	1.03
Unranked states								
Assam	Not ranked					15	1,458	0.84
Manipur	Not ranked					11	6,659	1.60
Nagaland	Not ranked					10	8,794	0.00
Union Territories								
A&N Islands	Not ranked					10	10,266	1.00
Chandigarh	Not ranked					9	5,902	0.10
DNH & DD	Not ranked					4	1,086	NA[3]
Delhi	Not ranked					12	5,561	2.00
Jammu & Kashmir	Not ranked					8	NA[2]	1.05
Ladakh	Not ranked					11	7,169	NA[3]
Lakshadweep	Not ranked					3	10,910	NA[3]
Puducherry	Not ranked					6	NA[2]	NA[3]

Data sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Union Budget documents; Digital Police Portal, Ministry of Home Affairs; National Commission on Population; Open Budgets India.

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1. Count of indicators on which a state has improved over IJR 3. Only non-trend indicators present in both IJR 3 and IJR 4 have been considered. For indicators with benchmarks, if a state met the benchmark, it was marked as an improvement even if its value declined within the benchmark. If a state didn't meet the benchmark but its value improved, it was marked as an improvement. Where an indicator value was not available for one or both years, that indicator was not considered. **2.** Budget data for 2022-23 not available. **3.** BPR&D shows 0 police training budget.

Table 3: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Theme		Budgets			Human Resources	
Indicator		Training budget utilization (%, 2021-22)	Spend on training per personnel (Rs, 2021-22)	Modernisation fund used (%, 2021-22)	Constables, vacancy (%, Jan 2023)	Officers, vacancy (%, Jan 2023)
Scoring guide		Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better
National average		**73.0**	**8,343**	**47**	**21.4**	**28.1**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		89.7	5,450	NA[5]	21.0	10.4
Bihar		34.8	20,530	NA[5]	23.3	44.7
Chhattisgarh		82.6	7,614	46	21.0	27.8
Gujarat		98.7	5,476	52	29.0	24.2
Haryana		95.8	7,779	NA[6]	38.9	17.8
Jharkhand		91.6	7,896	NA[5]	25.9	33.9
Karnataka		96.9	8,224	99	5.7	1.2
Kerala		NA[4]	NA[4]	57	5.7	16.4
Madhya Pradesh		80.6	15,235	48	12.9	19.3
Maharashtra		92.6	7,578	66	29.1	21.3
Odisha		81.1	7,875	48	21.9	23.6
Punjab		94.0	9,722	44	12.6	23.4
Rajasthan		95.1	14,409	70	8.4	51.8
Tamil Nadu		NA[4]	NA[4]	NA[6]	4.4	28.0
Telangana		89.5	9,849	92	30.4	13.0
Uttar Pradesh		58.2	5,383	81	28.3	41.7
Uttarakhand		92.5	7,727	NA[5]	0.6	19.6
West Bengal		34.2	125	32	40.7	27.3
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		99.9	22,167	NA[5]	28.0	37.0
Goa		91.7	3,103	NA[6]	18.6	28.9
Himachal Pradesh		97.9	257	18	2.1	14.6
Meghalaya		91.0	4,278	77	14.4	12.3
Mizoram		87.1	22,169	NA[5]	38.2	27.2
Sikkim		95.8	7,617	NA[5]	-0.5	-20.1
Tripura		97.9	8,115	35	25.6	45.4
Unranked states						
Assam		80.4	4,784	22	9.3	26.9
Manipur		88.4	10,517	13	13.8	19.0
Nagaland		100.0	24	100	2.9	2.2
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		100.0	10,208	70	16.1	26.3
Chandigarh		100.0	931	NA[5]	17.3	15.4
DNH & DD		NA[4]	NA[4]	NA[5]	23.6	30.1
Delhi		99.8	28,614	NA[5]	14.8	8.0
Jammu & Kashmir		80.1	10,102	32	10.3	27.5
Ladakh		NA[4]	NA[4]	NA[5]	23.4	-46.2
Lakshadweep		NA[4]	NA[4]	NA[5]	19.7	40.7
Puducherry		NA[4]	NA[4]	249	26.8	40.0

Data sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Union Budget documents; Digital Police Portal, Ministry of Home Affairs; National Commission on Population; Open Budgets India.

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4. BPR&D shows police training budget and spend as blank. **5.** No modernisation grant received. **6.** Modernisation grant received but no spending

Table 3: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

● Best in cluster
● Worst in cluster

	Theme	Human Resources			Diversity	
	Indicator	Officers in civil police (%, Jan 2023)	NEW Admin staff vacancy in forensics (%, Jan 2023)	NEW Scientific staff vacancy in forensics (%, Jan 2023)	Share of women in police (%, Jan 2023)	Share of women in officers (%, Jan 2023)
	Scoring guide	Higher, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better
National average		**17.0**	**46.6**	**49.1**	**12.3**	**8.0**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		11.2	40.0	40.5	21.5	5.2
Bihar		25.6	78.2	85.4	23.7 ●	12.6
Chhattisgarh		12.6	0.0 ●	53.7	7.6	9.3
Gujarat		18.2	45.5	52.5	16.7	10.0
Haryana		17.2	28.6	73.5	9.2	12.2
Jharkhand		25.6	48.8	20.2	7.4	3.7
Karnataka		17.6	59.5	32.1	8.9	6.1
Kerala		10.4	0.0 ●	3.7 ●	8.3	2.7 ●
Madhya Pradesh		20.0	88.9 ●	63.6	7.1 ●	9.2
Maharashtra		19.0	53.7	28.4	18.7	6.8
Odisha		24.0	16.0	51.0	11.0	14.2
Punjab		11.5	29.4	70.9	11.1	8.5
Rajasthan		11.5	35.0	52.4	10.9	7.5
Tamil Nadu		9.6 ●	31.3	19.9	20.7	20.1 ●
Telangana		17.3	7.7	91.0 ●	8.7	7.6
Uttar Pradesh		14.2	18.8	66.3	10.5	4.6
Uttarakhand		14.9	25.0	79.6	12.2	10.2
West Bengal		29.5 ●	58.8	69.8	9.6	4.2
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		13.2 ●	0.0 ●	28.6 ●	11.3	6.5
Goa		16.9	NA[7]	NA[7]	10.8	16.3
Himachal Pradesh		14.9	26.1	32.9	14.5 ●	5.5 ●
Meghalaya		16.2	33.3	55.6 ●	5.8	8.9
Mizoram		27.9 ●	11.1	50.0	8.2	18.2 ●
Sikkim		24.5	100.0 ●	43.8	8.2	6.4
Tripura		14.5	0.0 ●	41.9	5.7 ●	6.0
Unranked states						
Assam		14.7	77.3	57.4	6.7	7.5
Manipur		19.6	50.0	70.9	6.5	5.3
Nagaland		18.7	0.0	83.3	10.2	11.2
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		10.7	100.0	100.0	12.9	14.8
Chandigarh		12.9	NA[8]	NA[8]	22.5	8.4
DNH & DD		10.9	NA[8]	NA[8]	9.1	9.0
Delhi		21.3	NA[9]	NA[9]	14.8	11.3
Jammu & Kashmir		17.7	70.0	58.4	5.4	2.2
Ladakh		20.3	100.0	100.0	29.6	6.2
Lakshadweep		6.3	NA[8]	NA[8]	10.3	0.0
Puducherry		14.4	NA[10]	NA[10]	8.3	5.0

Data sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Union Budget documents; Digital Police Portal, Ministry of Home Affairs; National Commission on Population; Open Budgets India.

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7. Data not available for regional forensic science laboratories (FSL) and forensic unit/district mobile forensic units (DMFUs). **8.** BPR&D shows 0 sanctioned and actual **9.** Sanctioned data not provided for forensic unit/DMFU.
10. Data not provided for various ranks in state FSL.

Table 3: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Theme		Diversity				
Indicator		SC officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)	SC constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)	ST officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)	ST constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)	OBC officers, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)
Scoring guide		Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better
National average		**NA**	**NA**	**NA**	**NA**	**NA**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		90	103	107	89	135
Bihar		58	103	136	245	68
Chhattisgarh		97	96	70	113	121
Gujarat		131	111	95	79	75
Haryana		86	69	NA[14]	NA[14]	86
Jharkhand		69	94	54	83	118
Karnataka		119	119	193	173	141
Kerala		75	101	86	97	93
Madhya Pradesh		90	81	96	71	65
Maharashtra		78	87	86	107	65
Odisha		83	81	70	106	140
Punjab		84	114	0.1	0.02	155
Rajasthan		48	86	56	111	26
Tamil Nadu		82	125	48	99	118
Telangana		89	86	80	85	146
Uttar Pradesh		39	79	12	63	69
Uttarakhand		61	102	82	134	66
West Bengal		64	78	50	89	38
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		NA[11]	NA[11]	181	71	NA[16]
Goa		109	43	74	46	33
Himachal Pradesh		100	104	126	161	38
Meghalaya		NA[12]	NA[12]	81	85	NA12
Mizoram		NA[11]	NA[11]	NA[14]	NA[14]	NA[16]
Sikkim		88	154	86	75	90
Tripura		53	76	46	72	NA[16]
Unranked states						
Assam		62	29	61	29	73
Manipur		152	107	51	57	6
Nagaland		NA[11]	NA[11]	67	69	NA[16]
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		NA[11]	NA[11]	71	91	28
Chandigarh		48	85	NA[15]	NA[15]	53
DNH & DD		NA[13]	NA[13]	NA[13]	NA[13]	NA[13]
Delhi		90	89	111	92	20
Jammu & Kashmir		30	39	45	61	NA[12]
Ladakh		31.8	0	306	162	NA[16]
Lakshadweep		NA[11]	NA[11]	77	177	NA[16]
Puducherry		65	68	0	5	127

Data sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Union Budget documents; Digital Police Portal, Ministry of Home Affairs; National Commission on Population; Open Budgets India.

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11. BPR&D shows 0% SC reservation. **12.** No specific reservation approved. **13.** Combined reservation data not available. **14**. BPR&D shows 0% ST reservation.
15. ST reservation figure not available. **16.** BPR&D shows 0% OBC reservation.

Table 3: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Theme		Diversity	Infrastructure			
Indicator		OBC constables, actual to reserved ratio (%, Jan 2023)	Population per police station (rural) (Number, Jan 2023)	Population per police station (urban) (Number, Jan 2023)	Area per police station (rural) (Sq km, Jan 2023)	Area per police station (urban) (Sq km, Jan 2023)
Scoring guide		Higher, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better
National average		**NA**	**98,000**	**93,107**	**337**	**19.6**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		167	48,104	98,411	222	20.9
Bihar		143	164,241	76,299	136	11.4
Chhattisgarh		158	61,958	99,817	372	39.7
Gujarat		114	77,344	283,301	398	60.2
Haryana		70	109,325	92,825	264	14.4
Jharkhand		136	87,756	107,615	233	25.2
Karnataka		140	69,816	102,248	345	20.5
Kerala		106	23,992	230,316	85	64.9
Madhya Pradesh		88	131,081	50,305	641	15.5
Maharashtra		81	83,613	215,965	384	32.0
Odisha		188	96,962	45,211	390	18.1
Punjab		161	75,113	89,257	201	17.5
Rajasthan		74	114,568	60,235	647	18.5
Tamil Nadu		126	41,884	90,679	137	30.0
Telangana		133	50,373	51,974	282	10.6
Uttar Pradesh		129	186,715	91,334	243	12.2
Uttarakhand		101	90,976	59,671	641	12.9
West Bengal		63	301,130	121,497	402	17.1
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		NA[16]	21,519	8,511	NA[19]	NA[19]
Goa		27	17,318	149,250	134	95.6
Himachal Pradesh		82	85,872	16,739	710	5.9
Meghalaya		NA[12]	56,553	38,389	471	15.7
Mizoram		NA[16]	21,423	48,643	788	41.9
Sikkim		63	19,500	37,556	392	4.3
Tripura		NA[16]	57,318	41,667	229	10.0
Unranked states						
Assam		30	320,809	25,145	821	5.7
Manipur		9	36,300	61,471	369	10.6
Nagaland		NA[16]	22,830	53,842	308	12.8
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		31	12,500	59,333	456	12.6
Chandigarh		97	NA[17]	76,875	NA[17]	6.8
DNH & DD		NA[13]	237,000	342,000	508	31.4
Delhi		108	NA[17]	117,492	NA[17]	6.4
Jammu & Kashmir		NA[12]	60,961	74,179	NA[20]	NA[20]
Ladakh		NA[16]	29,571	46,500	NA[20]	NA[20]
Lakshadweep		NA[16]	111	NA[18]	1	NA[18]
Puducherry		130	30,688	82,500	21	11.0

Data sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Union Budget documents; Digital Police Portal, Ministry of Home Affairs; National Commission on Population; Open Budgets India.

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12. No specific reservation approved. **13.** Combined reservation data not available. **16.** BPR&D shows 0% OBC reservation. **17.** BPR&D shows 0 sanctioned and actual rural police stations. **18.** BPR&D shows 0 sanctioned and actual urban police stations. **19.** Census 2011 does not give rural/urban area break-up. **20.** Disaggregated data for rural and urban areas for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh not available.

Table 3: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Theme		Infrastructure				Workload
Indicator		Services provided by state's citizen portals (%, 2024)[21]	Personnel per training institute (Number, Jan 2023)	Police stations with CCTVs (%, Jan 2023)	Police stations with women help desks (%, Jan 2023)	Population per civil police (Number, Jan 2023)
Scoring guide		Higher, the better	Lower, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Lower, the better
National average		**NA**	**11,537**	**83.3**	**78.1**	**843**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		85.6	4,625	58.3	82.3	668
Bihar		45.0	36,088	100.0	83.3	1,522
Chhattisgarh		87.6	6,678	94.3	99.8	760
Gujarat		90.9	24,689	81.0	84.1	1,024
Haryana		79.6	21,953	97.1	61.4	568
Jharkhand		72.6	13,809	21.5	42.6	908
Karnataka		45.3	9,286	99.2	99.1	763
Kerala		77.0	5,608	92.6	95.0	775
Madhya Pradesh		87.6	12,538	98.0	82.0	1,059
Maharashtra		87.6	19,414	90.8	78.1	810
Odisha		84.6	5,808	87.0	100.0	1,298
Punjab		86.6	14,221	97.2	100.0	504
Rajasthan		84.6	10,311	90.6	92.9	1,031
Tamil Nadu		61.0	14,718	68.4	34.3	710
Telangana		72.7	2,608	88.9	88.9	725
Uttar Pradesh		89.6	38,882	82.8	85.6	889
Uttarakhand		85.6	5,604	100.0	98.8	729
West Bengal		69.3	16,507	100.0	100.0	1,277
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		82.6	15,298	100.0	70.9	268
Goa		80.6	10,806	97.8	73.3	281
Himachal Pradesh		28.3	9,604	90.1	91.4	605
Meghalaya		82.6	4,210	87.7	59.3	397
Mizoram		77.6	11,302	97.8	88.9	400
Sikkim		84.6	6,857	96.7	93.3	241
Tripura		79.6	7,421	88.0	100.0	467
Unranked states						
Assam		80.6	20,442	96.7	60.1	1,156
Manipur		0	35,100	4.4	63.3	212
Nagaland		82.6	6,677	98.9	32.2	279
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		87.6	5,078	100.0	95.8	122
Chandigarh		70.6	7,013	100.0	94.7	306
DNH & DD		10	1,396	100.0	100.0	1,911
Delhi		82.6	13,465	87.6	88.0	300
Jammu & Kashmir		74.3	13,526	32.4	60.0	281
Ladakh		82.6	NA[22]	100.0	100.0	152
Lakshadweep		82.6	NA[22]	0.0	56.3	274
Puducherry		82.6	4,462	0.0	60.0	884

Data sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Union Budget documents; Digital Police Portal, Ministry of Home Affairs; National Commission on Population; Open Budgets India.

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21. Quantitative assessment of state police citizen portals on 10 counts: whether they include each of the 9 services listed by the Ministry of Home Affairs and whether the portal was available in a state language (other than English).
22. BPR&D shows 0 training institutes.

Table 3: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Trends

Theme		Women in total police (%, CY '18-'22)	Women officers in total officers (%, CY '18-'22)	Constable vacancy (%, CY '18-'22)	Officer vacancy (pp, CY '18-'22)	Difference in spend: police vs state (pp, FY '19-'23)
Indicator						
Scoring guide		Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Higher, the better
National average		**37.1**	**13.1**	**13.3**	**7.8**	**0.44**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		280.2 ●	9.8	39.0	-1.3	-2.14
Bihar		51.2	287.7 ●	-32.4	-15.7	-0.11
Chhattisgarh		30.2	71.7	27.7	-7.6	0.64
Gujarat		45.6	21.3	49.6	16.3	-2.17
Haryana		24.0	52.6	83.5	-34.8	2.14
Jharkhand		14.4	8.8	62.4	41.5	2.84
Karnataka		15.3	5.6	-73.8 ●	-95.0 ●	3.82 ●
Kerala		-5.4 ●	-22.2	32.7	-63.9	-1.85
Madhya Pradesh		35.4	3.0	7.6	-60.1	-1.53
Maharashtra		44.0	14.8	219.8	2.5	0.59
Odisha		13.7	41.0	320.7 ●	-20.8	-6.14 ●
Punjab		34.0	20.7	100.1	16.9	-5.04
Rajasthan		16.7	40.3	9.0	37.0	2.68
Tamil Nadu		18.5	-7.2	-63.3	93.7	-0.95
Telangana		109.2	121.9	-15.8	-38.2	0.41
Uttar Pradesh		44.0	92.3	-15.3	387.9 ●	3.74
Uttarakhand		5.9	-39.5 ●	-68.8	264.0	-2.55
West Bengal		22.0	9.8	-2.9	-13.2	NA[25]
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		48.7 ●	27.8	24.8	19.9	-4.02
Goa		7.6	1.3	76.5 ●	-24.1	NA[25]
Himachal Pradesh		12.1	24.3	-49.9	-25.6	-2.05
Meghalaya		17.6	45.3 ●	14.4	206.9 ●	-4.27 ●
Mizoram		19.2	-9.6	55.7	48.3	1.40 ●
Sikkim		-24.1	16.3	-100.0 ●	-48.6 ●	0.82
Tripura		11.7	-10.4 ●	36.4	39.6	-3.62
Unranked states						
Assam		7.5	93.8	-57.2	31.5	-7.29
Manipur		-13.9	-28.2	-36.8	-36.1	-0.21
Nagaland		107.6	108.7	2.9	-35.7	-0.54
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		14.1	39.9	106.1	116.2	-17.55
Chandigarh		66.9	64.2	51.6	97.3	8.83
DNH & DD		-30.7	-44.5	27.2	-12.1	-13.25
Delhi		28.2	16.8	37.7	-3.8	2.06
Jammu & Kashmir		NA[23]	NA[23]	NA[23]	NA[23]	NA[23]
Ladakh		NA[23]	NA[23]	NA[23]	NA[23]	NA[23]
Lakshadweep		-6.8	NA[24]	31.8	-26.7	3.35
Puducherry		7.7	-11.8	20.1	-13.9	NA[25]

● Best in cluster
● Worst in cluster

Data sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Union Budget documents; Digital Police Portal, Ministry of Home Affairs; National Commission on Population; Open Budgets India.

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23. For trend indicators, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are excluded as their data was not available separately for 5 years. **24.** No women officers in Year 1 and Year 5. **25.** Budget data for 2021-22 and 2022-23 not available.

Prisons

Prisons Ranking

Color guide

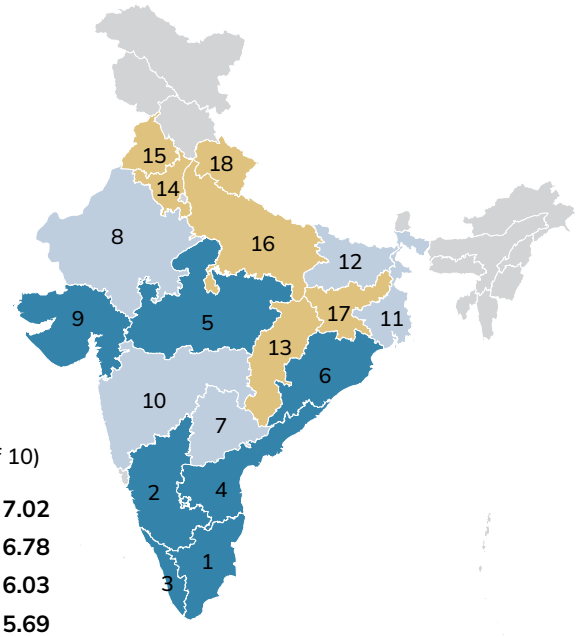
Best | Middle | Worst

Indicators (in IJR 4) **28**

Clusters

I. 18 large and mid-sized states (population above 10 million)

II. 7 small-sized states (population up to 10 million)



Map 11: Large and mid-sized states

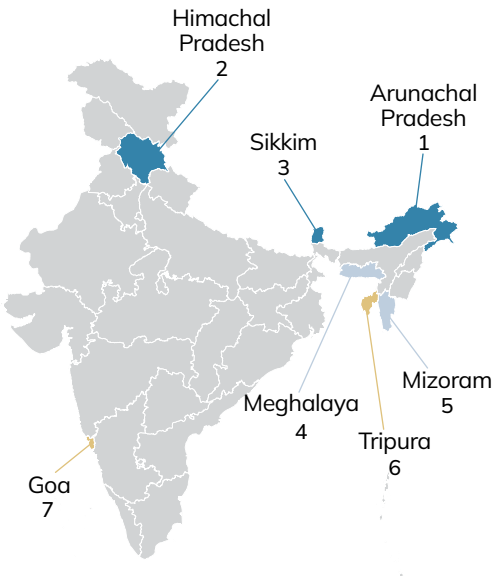
Rank (out of 18)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
10	6	1	1	Tamil Nadu	7.02
3	14	2	2	Karnataka	6.78
1	5	4	3	Kerala	6.03
15	7	5	4	Andhra Pradesh	5.69
7	8	7	5	Madhya Pradesh	5.37
5	9	11	6	Odisha	5.34
13	2	3	7	Telangana	5.32
12	1	8	8	Rajasthan	5.27
9	10	6	9	Gujarat	5.26
2	4	10	10	Maharashtra	5.17
4	12	13	11	West Bengal	4.68
6	3	9	12	Bihar	4.68
8	11	12	13	Chhattisgarh	4.54
11	16	16	14	Haryana	3.96
16	13	15	15	Punjab	3.91
14	17	17	16	Uttar Pradesh	3.84
18	15	14	17	Jharkhand	3.81
17	18	18	18	Uttarakhand	2.58

Map 12: Small states

Rank (out of 7)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
3	3	1	1	Arunachal Pradesh	6.01
6	1	2	2	Himachal Pradesh	5.52
7	6	4	3	Sikkim	4.38
2	5	6	4	Meghalaya	3.94
4	7	3	5	Mizoram	3.29
5	2	5	6	Tripura	3.28
1	4	7	7	Goa	2.95

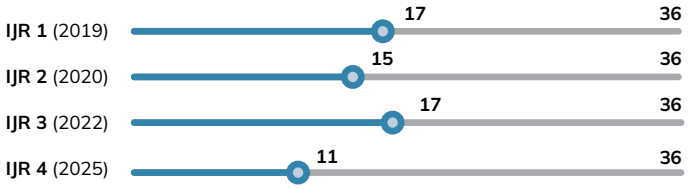


Note: Scores are shown up to 2 decimals. While they both show the same score, West Bengal is ranked above Bihar on the fourth decimal (4.6860 versus 4.6858).

Pushing Expectations

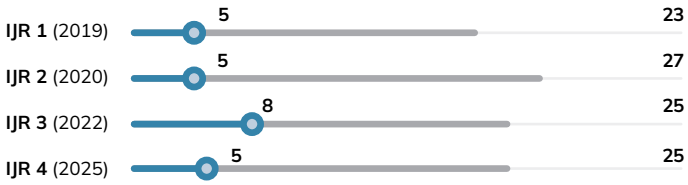
Overcrowding

Number of states/UTs where prison occupancy was below 100%.



Correctional staff

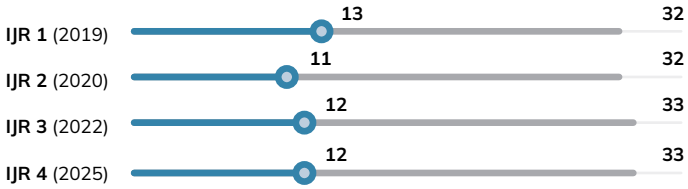
Number of states/UTs where the correctional staff vacancy was below 20%.



6 states/UTs (Tamil Nadu, Nagaland, Bihar, Odisha, Jammu & Kashmir, Chandigarh) met the 1:200 benchmark.

Medical officer

Number of states/UTs where the medical officer vacancy was below 20%.

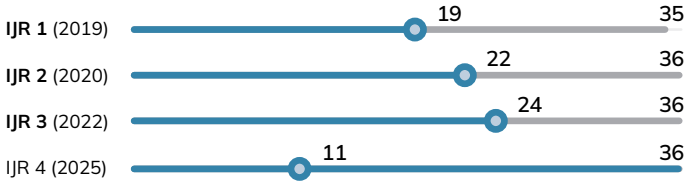


5 states/UTs (Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Delhi, Meghalaya and A&N Islands) met the 1:300 benchmark.

Women medical officers: 9 states/UTs (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, J&K, Kerala, Manipur, Odisha, Telangana & Tamil Nadu) met the 1:300 benchmark.

Spending on inmates

Number of states/UTs that spent, on average, more than ₹30,000 a year— ₹2,500 a month—per inmate on food, clothing, medical, vocational and welfare activities.



18 states spent less than Rs 100 per inmate per day. Maharashtra spent Rs 47.

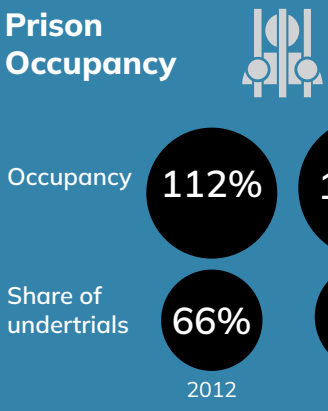
* Number of states/UTs (out of 36) for which data was available.

National Workload

Inmates per...

	Benchmark	Actual
Cadre staff	6	12
Correctional staff	200	699
Doctors	300	775
Psychologist/psychiatrist	500	22,928

Prison Occupancy



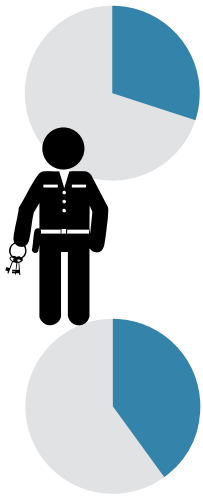
55% of all prisons were **overcrowded.**

89 prisons had over **250% occupancy.**

12 over **400%.**

Vacancies

30% of the prison staff positions were vacant nationally.



Jharkhand had above 60% vacancies in both officer and cadre staff levels.

CHAPTER 2

Growing Concerns and Challenges

Introduction

The landscape of prison reforms—from enhancing administrative capacity, to easing overcrowding, to pressing for better living conditions, to investigating deaths in prison, safeguarding women and the children living with them, and creating facilities or services conducive to rehabilitation—is littered with hundreds of ongoing directions from the Supreme Court, and High Courts and is evidenced in central and state government guidance and directions.[1]

Nevertheless, in the absence of clear policy prescriptions backed by statute which unequivocally turn the ideology of incarceration from retribution to reform and rehabilitation, little has changed.

Despite several states having adopted the 2016 Model Prison Manual, on ground, the ability to pivot penal philosophy successfully toward rehabilitative processes is marred by impossible overcrowding, financial shortfalls, capacity shortages, dilapidated infrastructure, broken systems of accountability, old embedded systems dominated by security concerns, and mindsets unchanged through newer orientations. In effect the overall culture and everyday practice continues to be guided by the 130-year-old Prisons Act 1894. Meanwhile the Model Prisons Act 2023 a draft suggested by the Centre awaits uptake by states that have the legislative competence to enact laws relating to prisons.

This report adds three new parameters on overcrowding and workload. It also projects what the prison population is likely to be against space available by 2030. The decadal trend between 2012 and 2022 points to worrisome upward shifts in prison populations in several areas. The total number of people incarcerated has gone up from 3.8 lakh to 5.7 lakh[2]; national occupancy rates have spiked from 112 per cent to 131 per cent; and undertrials who made up 66 per cent are now 76 per cent. Despite liberal bail provisions and urgings by the High Courts and the Supreme Court, undertrial prisoners are spending more time inside. At the end of 2012, 18 per cent spent 1-3 years in prison; by the end of 2022, 22 per cent were spending the same amount of time in detention. These trends suggest ongoing challenges for the future.

The five southern states continued to occupy the first four ranks in 2025 with Kerala and Andhra Pradesh moving up one place each, while Telangana slipped to seventh place. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka retained the top two spots. Madhya Pradesh bags the fifth place for the first time and jumping seven ranks Odisha reaches the sixth position. Several states slid in rank including Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh, with Gujarat slipping three ranks to ninth. Among the small states, Arunachal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh retained first and second place; Meghalaya gained two places while Mizoram dropped as many; and Goa's single jail remained at the bottom in seventh place.

Many factors contribute to shifts in ranking. Illustratively, Odisha's rank recorded the largest shift upward from eleventh to sixth. Over the five years between 2018 to 2022 it reduced officer vacancies from 46 per cent to 14 per cent even as it increased its sanctioned strength. Available capacity increased 18 per cent bringing occupancy rates down from 91 per cent to 83 per cent. While the state's spend per inmate remains amongst the

1 See "Selected Recommendations & Guidelines on 'Capacity' by Prison Reform Committees in India." Available at: https://indiajusticereport.org/files/IJR_Recommendation_for_Prison_Reforms_in_India.pdf

2 India uses a number system that differs from the international number system. This report presents numbers in the Indian system that uses units such as *lakhs* and *crores*, and places commas at different intervals that differ from than the international system. Some examples of equivalents of the international number system vs. the Indian number system: One hundred thousand (100,000) = 1 lakh (1,00,000); one million (1,000,000) = 10 lakh (10,00,000); ten million (10,000,000) = 1 crore (1,00,00,000).

What is the Model Prison Manual?

To achieve more efficaciously the overall objective of prisons in terms of the reformation and rehabilitation of offenders" the BPR&D in 2016 prepared the Model Prison Manual for the Superintendence and Management of Prisons in India. Patterned on the internationally adopted United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).[3] The Model Manual provides a comprehensive restatement of minimum standards regarding prison conditions and specifies rules for the treatment of prisoners, firmly based on respect for human rights and designed to assist in their rehabilitation and integration into society once more. Prompted by the Ministry of Home Affairs to affirm these new directions, several states have renamed their prisons 'correctional facilities'. In mid-March 2023, the Minister of State for Home Affairs informed Parliament that 18 states and all the Union Territories (UTs) had confirmed the adoption of Model Prison Manual 2016.

In 2023, with the intention of replacing the antiquated Prisons Act 1894 and the Prisoners Act 1900, the Ministry of Home Affairs finalised the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023.[4]

The new Act is aimed to formally shift policy on incarceration from retributive to rehabilitative and reformative, and includes essential provisions on creating schemes for vocational training, education and welfare of prisoners, basic induction training, as well as periodic in-service training for prison staff. It also aims to bring in the use of technology in prison administration through integrating databases under the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) umbrella. The boost for technology also comes in the form of measures to improve the safety and security of prisoners and prisons, which include biometrics, CCTV systems, scanning and detection devices and video conferencing facilities. It also provides for separate accommodation for women and transgender prisoners, and establishing Board of Visitors (BoVs) and Undertrial Review Committees (UTRCs) in every district.

However, as prisons are a state subject; this Act is only a 'guiding document' for states. The responsibility of prison management lies solely with state governments. It therefore remains to be seen how many states will actually adopt the new provisions in this legislation.

lowest, its overall sanctioned budget has increased by 41 per cent. Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, which have the highest number of vacancies among officers, also report high occupancy rates. Karnataka's shift from 14th position in IJR 2020 to second in 2022 can be attributed to improvements in training personnel and high gender diversity among its staff. It has also made consistent efforts over the five years (2018-2022) to improve staff vacancy levels. Tamil Nadu with lower vacancy levels than Karnataka has trained a lower proportion of its staff and has a lower percentage of women in its prison administration. However, with a less than 100 per cent occupancy, higher spends per inmate, and considerably fewer unfilled positions across the board, the state retains the top position.

19 states and all 8 UTs have adopted the Model Prison Manual as of July 2024.[5] States/UTs that have amended their prison manuals to reflect some provisions of the Model Prison Manual 2016 include Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Tripura, and Uttarakhand.

Infrastructure

- Prison occupancy (%, Dec 2022)
- Jails with V-C facility (%, Dec 2022)
- Undertrials detained for 1-3 years (%, Dec 2022)
- Share of jails with 150-250% occupancy (%, Dec 2022) NEW
- Share of jails with 250% and more occupancy (%, Dec 2022) NEW

Occupancy Rates: Overcrowding is a near-universal characteristic of Indian prisons, and it is steadily

3 Bureau of Police Research & Development, Model Prison Manual for the Superintendence and Management of Prisons in India 2003. Available at: https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:ap:5386b0cd-017c-414a-a4c0-deae350ba73f
4 Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Advisory No. V-17013/22/2023-PR. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/advisory_10112023.pdf
5 Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1030 dated 31 July 2024. Available at: https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/265/AU1030_1rfBIh.pdf?source=pqars

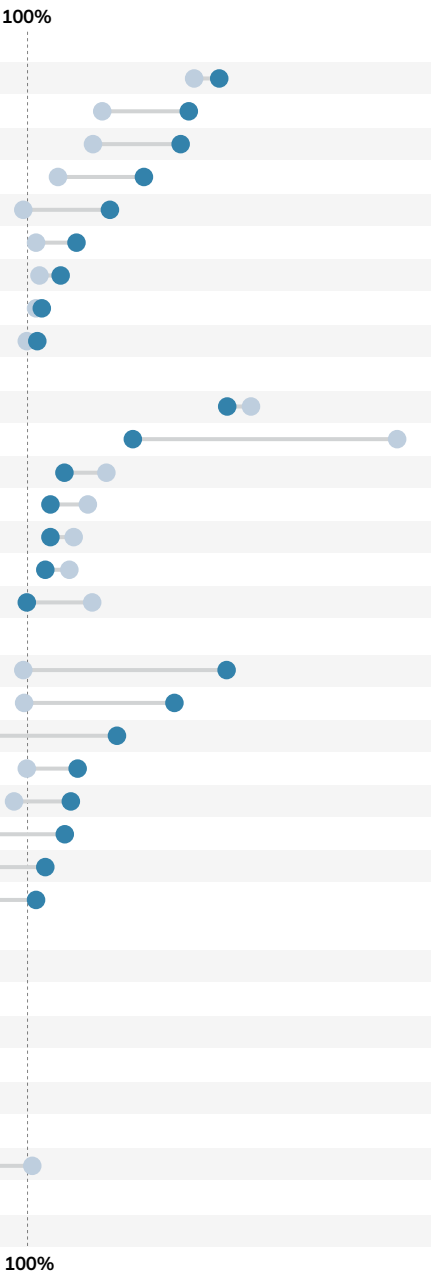
increasing. In 2020, 48 per cent of the country's prisons were overcrowded; in 2022 it was 55 per cent.

In 2022, twelve prisons[6] recorded occupancy rates of over 400 per cent. Uttar Pradesh's Muradabad District Prison, for instance, recorded the highest occupancy at 497 per cent, followed closely by Kandi Sub-Jail in West Bengal with 477 per cent occupancy and Maharashtra's Thane Central Prison with 401 per cent. Across the country, 91 prisons recorded 250 per cent occupancy rates and above, and 259 had occupancy rates of 150-250 per cent.

Figure 25: Occupancy rate in Indian prisons

Between 2012 and 2022, only two large states had no overcrowding and 6 states became overcrowded. Uttarakhand almost doubled its occupancy. In 16 states and UTs overcrowded jails remained overcrowded.

States	Cluster	Prison occupancy (%) Dec 2012	Dec 2022
Above 100% in both periods, and increased			
Uttar Pradesh	Large and mid-sized states	169	180
Meghalaya	Small states	131	167
Madhya Pradesh	Large and mid-sized states	128	164
Sikkim	Small states	114	149
West Bengal	Large and mid-sized states	101	134
Assam	Unranked states	104	121
Himachal Pradesh	Small states	106	114
Kerala	Large and mid-sized states	104	106
Karnataka	Large and mid-sized states	100	104
Above 100% in both periods, but decreased			
Delhi	Union Territories	194	184
Chhattisgarh	Large and mid-sized states	253	145
Punjab	Large and mid-sized states	133	116
Jharkhand	Large and mid-sized states	125	111
Goa	Small states	120	109
Rajasthan	Large and mid-sized states	117	107
Arunachal Pradesh	Small states	127	101
Crossed 100% during this decadal period			
Uttarakhand	Large and mid-sized states	99	183
Maharashtra	Large and mid-sized states	99	161
Bihar	Large and mid-sized states	81	136
Haryana	Large and mid-sized states	100	122
Gujarat	Large and mid-sized states	95	118
Mizoram	Small states	65	116
Chandigarh	Union Territories	73	107
D&NH and Daman & Diu	Union Territories	34	104
Below 100%, but increased			
Odisha	Large and mid-sized states	71	83
Puducherry	Union Territories	68	78
Tamil Nadu	Large and mid-sized states	60	77
Nagaland	Unranked states	27	31
Lakshadweep	Union Territories	0	9
Below 100%, and decreased			
A&N Islands	Union Territories	102	81
Manipur	Unranked states	75	67
Tripura	Small states	68	50



Note: States/Union Territories arranged in descending order of prison occupancy for December 2022 within category. Following states are not shown as their administrative status changed during this decadal period and comparable 2012 figures were not available for them: Andhra Pradesh (84% occupancy in December 2022), Telangana (81%), Jammu & Kashmir (146%) and Ladakh (19%).

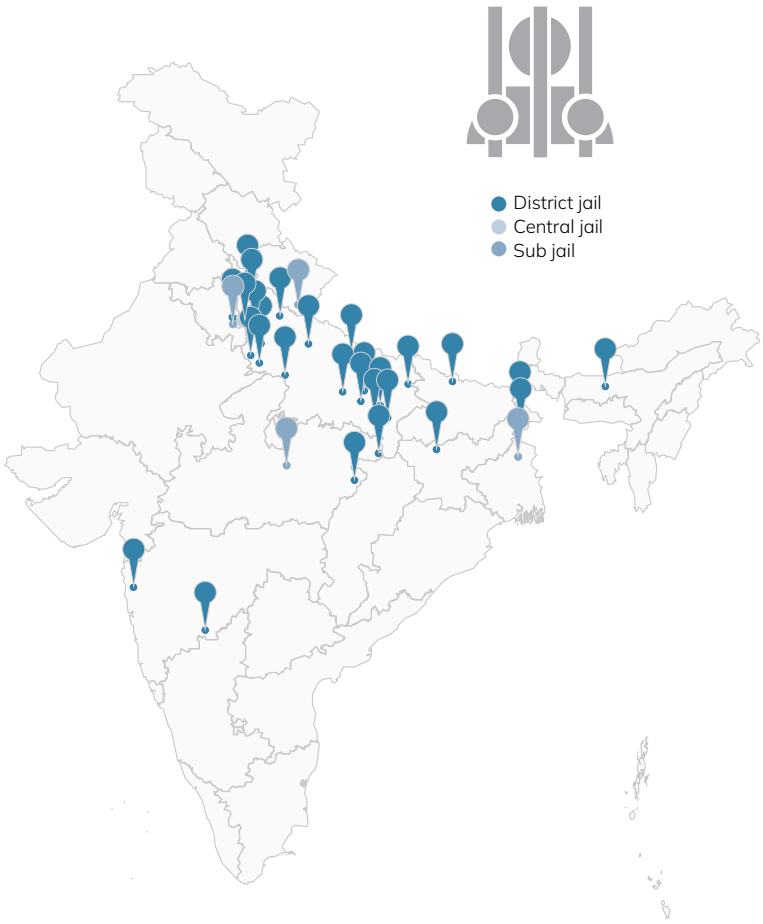
Source: Prison Statistics India

6 In Uttar Pradesh, Moradabad District Prison, Gyanpur District Prison, Saharanpur District Prison and Sultanpur District Prison; in West Bengal, Kandi Sub-jail and Arambag Sub-jail; in Bihar, Jamui District Prison and Patna City Sub-jail; Central Jails No. 4 and No. 1 in Delhi; and Thane Central Prison in Maharashtra.

Figure 26: Locating chronic overcrowding in prisons

Listed below are the 34 prisons whose occupancy rate was above 250% between 2020 and 2022, led by UP. There are more than 85 prisons across India that showed above 200% occupancy in the same period.

		Occupancy rate (%)		
Jail name	Jail type	2020	2021	2022
Assam (1)				
Nalbari	District jail	267	310	318
Bihar (1)				
Sitamarhi	District jail	255	308	316
Delhi (3)				
Central Jail No.1	Central jail	358	440	411
Central Jail No.3	Central jail	278	325	297
Central Jail No.4	Central jail	352	425	467
Jharkhand (1)				
Chatra	District jail	267	328	272
Madhya Pradesh (3)				
Anuppur	District jail	282	283	352
Baidhan	District jail	321	337	360
Rehli	Sub jail	306	309	250
Maharashtra (2)				
Kalayan	District jail	352	361	369
Solapur	District jail	298	300	355
Uttar Pradesh (18)				
Agra	District jail	263	258	279
Aligarh	District jail	291	339	342
Bahraich	District jail	285	295	305
Buland Shahar	District jail	278	298	299
Deoria	District jail	308	327	369
Ghaziabad	District jail	292	309	332
Gyanpur	District jail	299	388	454
Itawa	District jail	286	321	334
Jaunpur	District jail	344	400	381
Mathura	District jail	296	346	337
Muradabad	District jail	472	488	497
Muzaffarnagar	District jail	267	327	332
Pratapgarh	District jail	271	264	298
Raibareli	District jail	271	276	322
Saharanpur	District jail	283	414	405
Shahjahanpur	District jail	265	292	309
Sultanpur	District jail	299	305	403
Varanasi	District jail	290	290	349
Uttarakhand (1)				
Haldwani	Sub jail	394	315	330
West Bengal (3)				
Kandi	Sub jail	394	369	477
Malda	District jail	326	307	298
Raiganj	District jail	268	363	393



Data as of December 31 for each year. Jails arranged in alpbabetical order by state name.
Source: Prison Statistics India

On 31 December 2022, 1,330 of the country's prisons recorded a population of 5.7 lakh. However, over the year, 18.04 lakh people passed through these prisons. The real pressure on prisons has to be measured by this transient population that has to be managed and housed through the year.

Some facilities consistently maintain extraordinarily high levels of overcrowding. Illustratively, in 2022, 28 of 77 prisons in Uttar Pradesh recorded occupancy rates of 250 per cent and above. Between 2020 and 2022, 20 of the state's district prisons consistently recorded occupancy rates above 250 per cent. Muradabad District Prison, for example, had an occupancy rate of 472 per cent in 2020, going up to nearly 500 per cent in 2022, the highest in the country. Similarly, Central Jails No. 1 and 4 in Delhi; Mumbai Central Prison in Maharashtra; Bihar's Jamui District Prison; and Madhya Pradesh's Maihar and Ambah sub-jails have consistently recorded being over capacity, with steady increases in occupancy over the three years.

Since 2021, sixteen states and six UTs have reported an increase in their occupancy rates. The highest increases were in Mizoram (79% to 116%), Chandigarh (80% to 107%) and Himachal Pradesh (75% to 101%). Elsewhere, Sikkim (167% to 149%), Jharkhand (121% to 111%), and Odisha (99% to 83%) registered the largest decreases. Only four small jurisdictions—Andaman and Nicobar,

Alternatives to Incarceration

Depending on the gravity of the offence, judges have at their discretion the power to impose various non-custodial measures on low-risk offenders as an alternative to imprisonment. These must balance rehabilitation of the offender with community safety and well-being. Such measures include fines and compounding, probation, community service orders, release on parole, conditional release on bail, and also house arrest.

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules)[8] emphasise that alternatives to incarceration should be available at pre-trial and sentencing, and includes the early release of sentenced offenders.

The Probation of Offenders Act 1958[9] seeks to minimise incarceration for petty offences by young or first-time offenders and empowers a judge to release them with an admonition or bind them over on conditions of good behaviour. Such orders may require the execution of a bond or sureties or the payment of a fine or compensation. Additionally, they may require the offender to be available in the jurisdiction or remain under supervision for a period of time.

In 2023, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita introduced community service.[10] Earlier, in the absence of standard guidelines judges would occasionally impose community service on offenders as a condition of probation under the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958. However, in the absence of uniform guidelines such orders were rarely applied. In countries across Europe, and in the United States and Japan, the use of probation and community service is common and are seen as cheaper and more effective alternatives to imprisonment.

In India, in the course of investigation and during trial, bail is the most frequently used alternative to incarceration. The well-worn judicial dictum is 'bail not jail'. Moreover, under Section 436A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, an undertrial is entitled to apply for statutory bail if they have served one-half of the maximum period of the prescribed sentence. Under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, this entitlement has been extended to first-time offenders,[11] if they have already undergone detention for a period up to one-third of the maximum period of the prescribed sentence.

7 Table 2.32 in Prison Statistics India provides for the total number of prisoners that were admitted during each year. Available at: https://ncrb.gov.in/table-contents-of-psi-reports.html?year=2022&category=
8 Resolution A/RES/45/110, United Nations General Assembly (44th session; 1989-1990). Available at: https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unga/1991/en/33347
9 Section 3 and 4 of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958. Available at: https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/15408/1/the_probation_of_offenders_act%2C_1958.pdf
10 Section 4 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/250883_english_01042024.pdf
11 Section 479 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/250884_2_english_01042024.pdf

Lakshadweep, Manipur, and Nagaland—showed no overcrowding.

Over the decade (2012 to 2022), overall prison occupancy rates have risen from 112 per cent to 131 per cent. Though on average 18 lakh people[7] pass through the prison system annually, the end-of-year figure shows that the prison population has surged by 49 per cent (from 3.8 lakh to 5.7 lakh). At the same time several states have been increasing capacity to house prisoners, some more successfully than others. For instance, the overall capacity of Chhattisgarh's jails increased by 141 per cent (from 5,850 to 14,143) over the decade. Delhi, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab also record increasing available capacities.

Nationally, however, the 27 per cent increase in prison housing capacity over the decade (from 3.4 lakh to 4.3 lakh) has not kept pace with need. Earlier, seventeen states/UTs had overcrowded prisons, but by 2022, twenty five states were well over capacity. Levels of overcrowding have also escalated. For instance, in 2012 West Bengal averaged a 101 per cent occupancy rate but in 2022 this had increased to 134 per cent; Maharashtra went from 99 per cent to 161 per cent; and Bihar from 81 per cent to 136 per cent. In contrast, Chhattisgarh, while still reporting severe overcrowded conditions at 145 per cent in 2022, recorded the highest decadal drop in occupancy from 253 per cent.

Share of Undertrial Prisoners: Much of the overcrowding is accounted for by the presence of 'undertrials' or prisoners who are awaiting the completion of investigation or trial. Their numbers have only been rising over the decade.

In 2012, undertrials were 66 per cent of total prisoners, but by 2022 their proportion had shot up to 76 per cent. In 2022, 301 of the 1,330 facilities across the country recorded all their prisoners were undertrials, while 609 listed a share between 75-99 per cent. Over 2021, ten states/UTs[12] show an increase in the share of undertrials, with Mizoram registering the highest jump (57% to 66%), followed by Andaman & Nicobar Islands (59% to 67%). In contrast, 21 states/UTs recorded marginal decreases.

In every state/UT, more than half the prison population are undertrials. As an example, 90 per cent of the prisoners in Delhi's prisons are undertrials. Among the large states, at 89 per cent, Bihar reports the largest share of undertrial prisoners, followed by Odisha with 85 per cent. Uttar Pradesh with over 94,000 undertrials, accounted for the highest numbers (nearly 22 per cent) of all undertrials nationwide. Together Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra, make up 42 per cent of all undertrials in the country. At the lowest end of the ranking, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh have 55 per cent and 61 per cent undertrials, respectively, among their prisoners.

Period of Detention: On average undertrials are spending more time than ever before in pre-trial detention. At the end of 2022, 11,448 or 2.6 per cent had spent more than five years in pretrial detention. This is considerably higher than the 5,011 in 2019 and 2,028 in 2012. Worryingly, Uttar Pradesh alone accounted for nearly 40 per cent of the undertrials who had spent more than five years in detention. Nearly 10 per cent of all undertrials in Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya, West Bengal and Rajasthan spent between 3-5 years behind bars. In contrast, only one undertrial in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Ladakh, and Mizoram spent the same amount of time in detention. Chandigarh, Puducherry, Tripura, and Lakshadweep had no undertrials detained for more than five years.

In 2022, nationally, 22 per cent or nearly one in four undertrials spent between 1-3 years incarcerated. In Goa nearly half the undertrial population had spent between 1-3 years in detention. Bihar with the largest share of undertrials, recorded 16 per cent, while Andhra Pradesh recorded the least at 6.6 per cent.

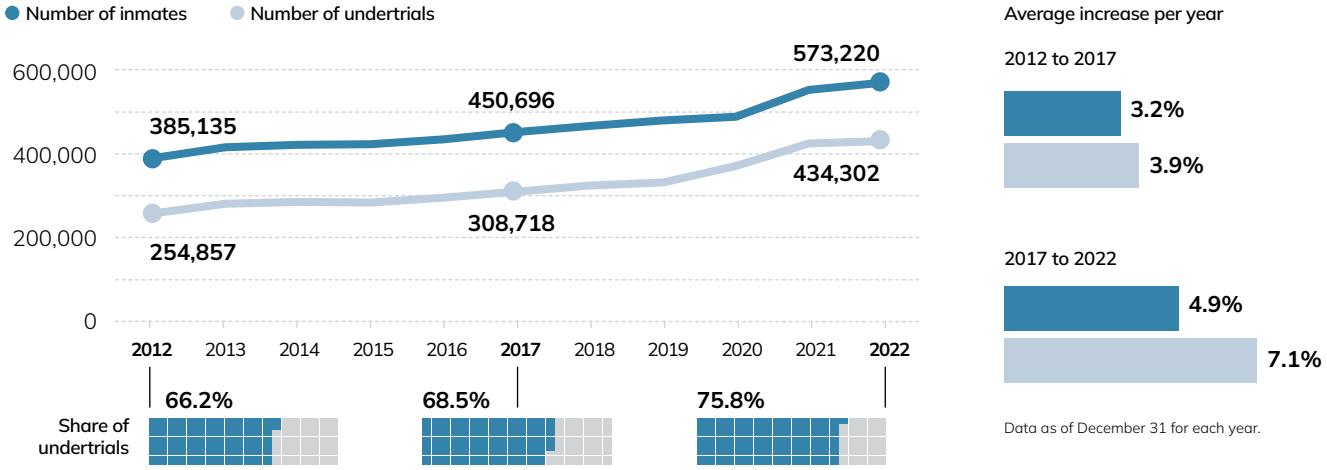
Decadal data shows that the proportion of undertrial population spending 1-3 years has increased in nearly all states and UTs, averaging a jump of 4.14 percentage points nationally. Himachal Pradesh increased most from 17 per cent in 2012 to 37 per cent in 2022. Goa increased from 34 per cent to 46 per cent. Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal went up by 10 percentage points.

12 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Karnataka, Ladakh, Mizoram, Punjab, Tripura and Uttarakhand

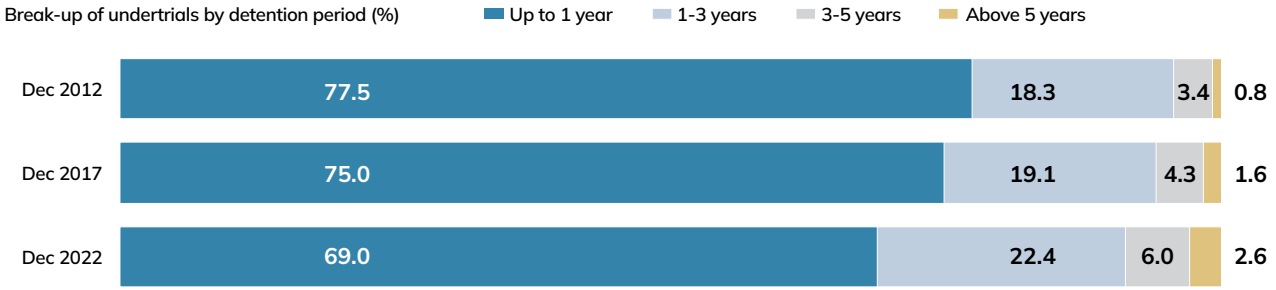
Figure 27: State of Undertrials

More undertrials are spending more time in prisons, awaiting justice. The share of undertrials in detention for 3-5 years has almost doubled over 10 years while the share of those above 5 years has tripled.

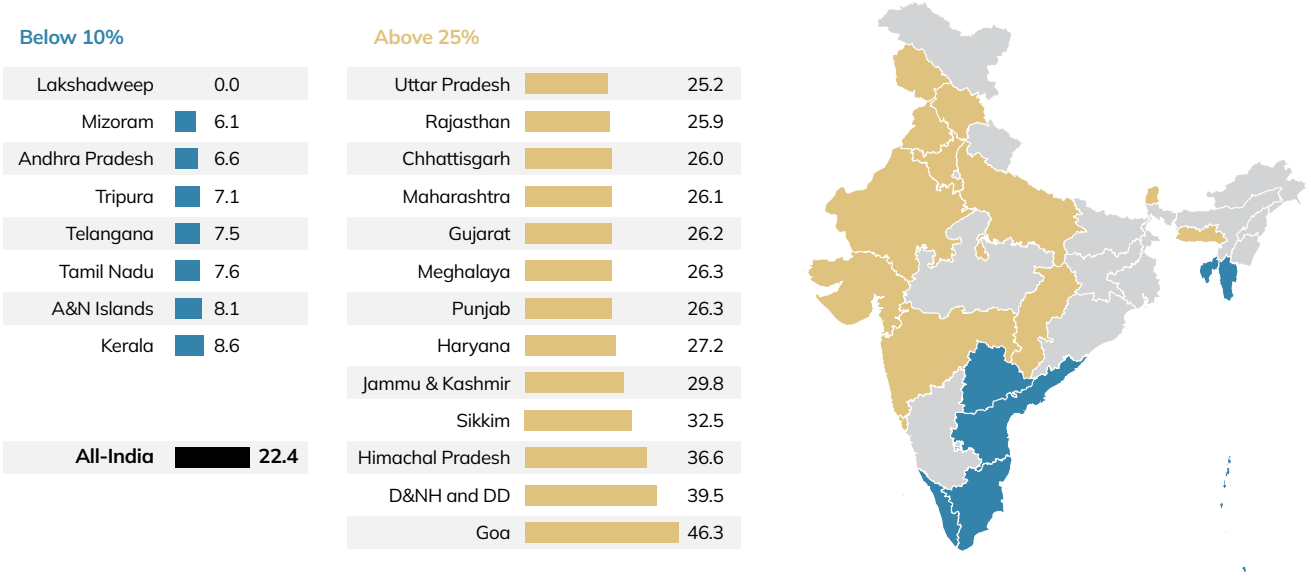
27a. Share of undertrials



27b. Undertrials by detention period



27c. Share of undertrials in prison for 1-3 years (%), Dec 2022



Open Prisons

Open prisons are often spoken of as a means of decongesting prisons and as a humane measure that tends to encourage rehabilitation. Based on trust, the system aims to encourage self-discipline, allowing prisoners to build skills to navigate the world post-release. In 2024, the Supreme Court observed that this could be a solution to tackle overcrowding.[13] Seventeen states have 91 open prisons, with Rajasthan (41) having the most. Convicts eligible to transfer to open prisons must have served the prescribed minimum sentence and be of 'good behaviour'.[14]

Presently, open prisons house just 3 per cent of the total convict population but these can be unevenly spread. PSI 2022 records 4,439 prisoners in open prisons against an available capacity of 6,043.[15] Maharashtra and Rajasthan house 70 per cent (3,092) of the total number of prisoners in open prisons; the remaining 1,347 are spread out across fifteen states.[16] However, seven open prisons in Maharashtra have occupancy rates of more than 100 per cent, with the Nashik Road open prison housing prisoners five times its available capacity of 50. In Rajasthan's 41 open prisons, more than half report being overcrowded. The remaining states utilise only 46 per cent of their available space. Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand report occupancy rates of 20 per cent and less.

The eligibility criteria for transfer vary from state to state. While Kerala transfers convicts after three years of imprisonment, other states do so only after 11 to 12 years.[17] Several states do not accommodate women prisoners in these facilities.

Video Conferencing: Though introduced in 2008,[18] it was in the wake of the pandemic[19] that the use of video conferencing facilities in prisons gained momentum. Coverage by video conferencing has grown from 808 prisons in 2019 to 1,150 prisons in 2022. While 14 states/UTs[20] report 100 per cent coverage of their facilities, seven show a coverage below 70 per cent.[21] Andhra Pradesh records that 70 per cent of its 106 prisons have video coverage while only around 40 per cent of Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur's prisons have that capability. The Model Rules for Video Conferencing for Courts[22] stipulate that video conferencing facilities may be used at all stages of judicial proceedings. While still limited, new data from Prison Statistics India disaggregates the use of video conferencing for remand, trial and 'other'. Data for 2021 indicates that of the 1,322 reported prisons, 607 used video conferencing for remand and trial purposes; 37 used them only for trial purposes; 242 used them just for remand; and 8 prisons stipulated their use for 'other' purposes, possibly for facilitating meetings between family members and lawyers.[23]

13 In *Suhas Chakma versus Union of India & ors [Writ Petition (Civil) No. 1082/2020]* vide order dated 9 May 2024. Available at: https://api.sci.gov.in/supremecourt/2020/19935/19935_2020_3_123_52991_Order_09-May-2024.pdf
14 Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Model Prison Manual, 2016, Chapter XXIII. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/PrisonManual2016.pdf
15 Prison Statistics India, Table 1.9. Available at: https://www.ncrb.gov.in/uploads/nationalcrimerecordsbureau/custom/1701948317Table19-2022.pdf
16 Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand and West Bengal
17 "Are Open Prisons Potentially Rehabilitative?" , The Wire, 26 May 2024. Available at: https://thewire.in/rights/are-open-prisons-potentially-rehabilitative
18 The provision for video conferencing was brought by the 2008 amendment of Section 167(2)(b) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 ('CrPC'). The section stipulates that *no Magistrate shall authorise detention of the accused in custody of the police unless the accused is produced before him in person for the first time and subsequently every time till the accused remains in the custody of the police, but the Magistrate may extend further detention in judicial custody on production of the accused either in person or through the medium of electronic video linkage.*
19 The World Health Organisation declared that the outbreak of the coronavirus disease was a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) on 20th January 2020. The outbreak was declared as a pandemic on 11th March 2020.
On 5th May, 2023, WHO declared an end to the global health emergency. 'WHO Chief declares end to COVID global health emergency', UN News, 5 May 2023. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/05/1136367
20 Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Delhi, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Puducherry, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.
21 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Rajasthan
22 Supreme Court of India, E-committee, Model Rules for Video Conferencing for Courts, Rule 3(i). Available at: https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s388ef51f0bf911e452e8dbb1d807a81ab/uploads/2020/08/2020082629.pdf
23 Prison Statistics India, *Additional Table No. 58 - Purpose-wise Video Conference Facility in Jails*. Available at: https://www.ncrb.gov.in/additional-table-of-psi-reports.html

E-mulaqat for Prisoners

The objective of rehabilitation is well served by ensuring liberal opportunities for frequent contact between prisoners and their loved ones and legal representatives. Drawing attention to Rule 58 of The Nelson Mandela Rules, the Supreme Court in the case Re-Inhuman Conditions in 1382 Prisons v State of Assam[24] emphasised that "...the prisoner should be allowed to communicate with his family and friends at regular intervals and should also be permitted to communicate and consult with a legal adviser of his or her choice."

The severe restrictions necessitated by the onset of the pandemic boosted the use of digital tools such as e-mulaqat to facilitate prisoner contact with loved ones and legal advisors. Nevertheless, its widespread use remains potential.[25] The highest use of e-mulaqat was in Orissa (43%) followed by Himachal Pradesh (42%); between January and December 2022, online visits accounted for just 7 per cent of all visits made. In terms of absolute numbers, Delhi (80,809) recorded the highest number of online visits, followed by Bihar (76,589) and Rajasthan (70,350). Seventeen states/UTs did not record any visits through digital means, and in fact data for 2023 shows a marked decline. Jharkhand, which recorded 6,000 online visits in 2022, recorded only 1,372 in 2023—the highest decline. Maharashtra on the other hand registered the highest jump from 154 to 15,579 visits.

Human Resources and Workload

Human Resources
Officers, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Cadre staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Correctional staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Medical staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Medical officers, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Personnel trained (%, 2022)

Workload
Inmates per officer (Number, Dec 2022)
Inmates per cadre staff (Number, Dec 2022)
Inmates per correctional staff (Number, Dec 2022)
Inmates per medical officer (Number, Dec 2022)
Women inmates per woman medical officer (Dec 2022) NEW

In 2022, most states/UTs had one in 4 posts vacant. Overall, vacancies which were 28 per cent in 2021, rose to 30 per cent the subsequent year. Between 2012 and 2022, overall staff vacancies persisted at between 30 per cent and 40 per cent. Vacancy levels in eighteen states/UTs increased, with Goa, Assam and Sikkim recording the highest increases.[26] Jharkhand, which has consistently recorded vacancies of more than 60 per cent, recorded the highest vacancies in 2022 at 63 per cent. Conversely, Bihar, which reported 80 per cent vacancies in 2012 reduced the proportion to 49 per cent in 2022. Tamil Nadu too brought down its 17 per cent vacancy level to 11 per cent.

At the officer level, eleven states/UTs recorded over 40 per cent vacancies[27] in 2022, with Uttarakhand recording the highest at 69 per cent. Over the decade Uttarakhand has consistently recorded officer vacancies above 65 per cent while Kerala with a similar prisoner population has held levels below 20 per cent.

Vacancies at the cadre staff level (those who work directly with prisoners daily, i.e., warders and prison guards) over the decade, nationally, have hovered at around 28 per cent. In 2022, Jharkhand continued to see vacancies at this level remain above 65 per cent. Only Tamil Nadu

24 Writ Petition (Civil) No. 406/2013
25 Data from e-Prisons for the period 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022. Available at: https://eprisons.nic.in/NPIP/public/ePrisonsLiveVisitorsStatus
26 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chandigarh, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura and West Bengal
27 Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand exemplifies some of the stubborn problems of staffing. Over the decade (2012-2022) the population of its 11 prisons has doubled from 3,535 to 6,858, and overcrowding stands at 183 per cent. Overall staff vacancies, while down from 60 per cent, still stand at 44 per cent. The sanctioned strength of doctors has remained at 10, but vacancies are between 90 to 100 per cent, with no lady doctors reported. Vacancies among all the medical staff, including doctors, have remained above 60 per cent, and at 2022 stands at 68 per cent.

(7%) and Arunachal Pradesh (2%) had vacancies in the single digits. The Model Prison Manual 2016 prescribes a prisoner-to-cadre staff ratio of 1:6.[28] However, actual strengths vary significantly across states. Illustratively, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Goa, and Himachal meet the prescribed ratio, but Bihar (1:19), Assam (1:23), and Jharkhand (1:26) record the most dismal ratios.

Correctional Staff: Despite the policy aspiration to take incarceration from retribution to rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into society, throughout the

In 2022, eleven states/UTs had no sanctioned correctional staff[29] and most states reported vacancies ranging from 20 per cent to 100 per cent. Some states, including Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, and Punjab actually reduced their already-low sanctioned strength, but despite this could not reach that number.

decade, correctional staff (probation officers, social workers and psychologists), so essential to this effort, have either never been sanctioned, or their chronic shortage and onerous work burden have rendered efforts ineffectual. Over the last decade, vacancies among correctional officers have remained at around 45 per cent. The Model Prison Manual, 2016 benchmarks the ratio at one correctional staff for 200 prisoners. In 2022, this ratio averaged three times that nationally, at one officer for 699 prisoners. To meet the benchmark, there need to be 2,866 correctional officers across the country; in reality, there are only 820.

Mental Healthcare of Prisoners

Mental stress is a concomitant of incarceration and is exacerbated by poor conditions. The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, requires mandatory training of all prison medical officers to provide basic and emergency mental healthcare.[30] It also mandates each state government to set up a mental health establishment in the medical wing of at least one prison in the state.[31] Nevertheless, although intensified mental distress and heightened pre-existing mental vulnerability are almost inevitable, the capacity response remains largely absent. No state/UT meets the 2016 Model Prison Manual's benchmark of one psychologist/psychiatrist for 500 prisoners.

By 2022, the sanctioned strength of psychologists/psychiatrists across India's 1,330 prisons was just 69. In reality, the data records the presence of only 25, or one for every 22,929 prisoners. Though strapped authorities often tie up with district health authorities to augment various medical capacities, twenty five states/UTs make no provision at all for a psychologist or psychiatrist within their cohort of correctional staff; and among the eleven states/UTs that do make such provisions, four have no psychologists on their roster. Tamil Nadu with 18,059 prisoners across 142 prisons has 11 psychologists against 15 sanctioned posts. With one for every 1,638 prisoners, this is still the best ratio in the country, though even here availability is only in the central prisons. Maharashtra with a sanctioned capacity of eight psychologists, has just two to service its 64 prisons. Meanwhile the recorded number of prisoners with mental illnesses has jumped from 4,470 in 2012, to 6,522 in 2017, and to 9,084 in 2022.

28 Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Model Prison Manual, 2016, Chapter IV. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/PrisonManual2016.pdf
29 Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Mizoram, Puducherry, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand
30 Section 31(2) of the Mental Healthcare Act 2017 states "The appropriate Government shall, at the minimum, train all medical officers in public healthcare establishments and all medical officers in the prisons or jails to provide basic and emergency mental healthcare."
31 Section 103(6) of the Mental Healthcare Act 2017 states "The appropriate Government shall set up a mental health establishment in the medical wing of at least one prison in each State and Union territory and prisoners with mental illness may ordinarily be referred to and cared for in the said mental health establishment."

Medical Staff: Across the nation and over the decade, the issue of the lack of medical staff— doctors, lab technicians or pharmacists—remains piteous.

Between 2012 and 2022, while the overall sanctioned strength for doctors increased from 1,052 to 1,290, actual strength rose from 618 to only 740. Vacancies remained around 41 per cent. This despite several states having actually decreased their sanctioned strength: Gujarat from 39 to 33; Andhra Pradesh from 38 to 22; Haryana from 38 to 36; and Himachal from 5 to 4. Elsewhere, where sanctioned strength has been increased (e.g., West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand) posts have been hard to fill. Meanwhile, with the exception of Andhra Pradesh which was bifurcated, prison populations everywhere have grown substantially.

The Model Prison Manual benchmarks the prisoner-doctor ratio as 300 prisoners to 1 doctor. In 2022 the national average reality stood at 775 prisoners per doctor. Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Meghalaya were able to meet the benchmark, but nearly all the other states could not. Large states like Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal, had one doctor for more than 1,000 prisoners.

Diversity

Women in prison staff
(%, Dec 2022)

While the number of women prisoners has increased by 40 per cent over the decade (2012-22), the share of female staff has increased from 8 per cent to only 13 per cent. In terms of absolute numbers, in 2022 the overall number of women on the prison staff fell from 8,881 to 8,674, with 90 per cent of them being at the non-gazetted level. A decade earlier women accounted for 5 per cent of officers; in 2022, this share had risen to only 10 per cent.

Of the total, eighteen states have more than 10 per cent women staff;[33] Bihar, Nagaland, and Sikkim, have more than 20 per cent each. Only Mizoram, where the share of women staff jumped from 25 per cent to 34.5 per cent, could meet the 33 per cent benchmark, with Karnataka nearly there with 32.9 per cent; 20 states continue to have less than 10 per cent. While recording marginal increases, women's representation among prison staff in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Punjab remained in single digits. Chandigarh, Goa, Haryana, Tripura, and Uttarakhand consistently recorded having less than 5 per cent women staff.

The Model Prison Manual[32] requires that "only lady doctors attend to women prisoners". This policy imperative remains aspirational: 84 lady doctors were recorded in service in 2022. In the course of that year 87,000 women were admitted to prisons and were incarcerated for a length of time. Bihar with 2,938 women spread across its 58 prisons reported employing 27 lady doctors, the highest in the country. In contrast, nineteen states/UTs report having none; Punjab, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh report having just 1 female doctor; Uttar Pradesh reports 2; Kerala, Odisha, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh record having 5 or less; and only Andhra Pradesh (10) and Bihar (27) go into double digits.]

While the NCRB's Prisons Statistics India provides the breakup of prison populations by caste, religion and tribe, it does not record disaggregated data on prison staff by social groups. In October 2024, the Supreme Court of India struck down those provisions which were deemed discriminatory. "The manuals/rules suffer from indirect discrimination by using broad terms which act to the disadvantage of the marginalized castes", the judgement noted.[34] In February 2024, the Ministry of Home Affairs noted in an advisory:[35] "It has come to the notice of this Ministry that the Jail Manuals of some States provide for segregation of prisoners on the basis of their caste and religion and they are being assigned

32 Government of India, *Model Prison Manual, 2016*; The Model Prison Manual Chapter 26, Rule 26.25, p. 243. The Manual refers to female doctors as 'lady doctors' and provides for engaging part-time lady doctors from the District Government Hospitals. However, PSI data does not disaggregate full, part-time and contractual medical personnel. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/PrisonManual2016.pdf

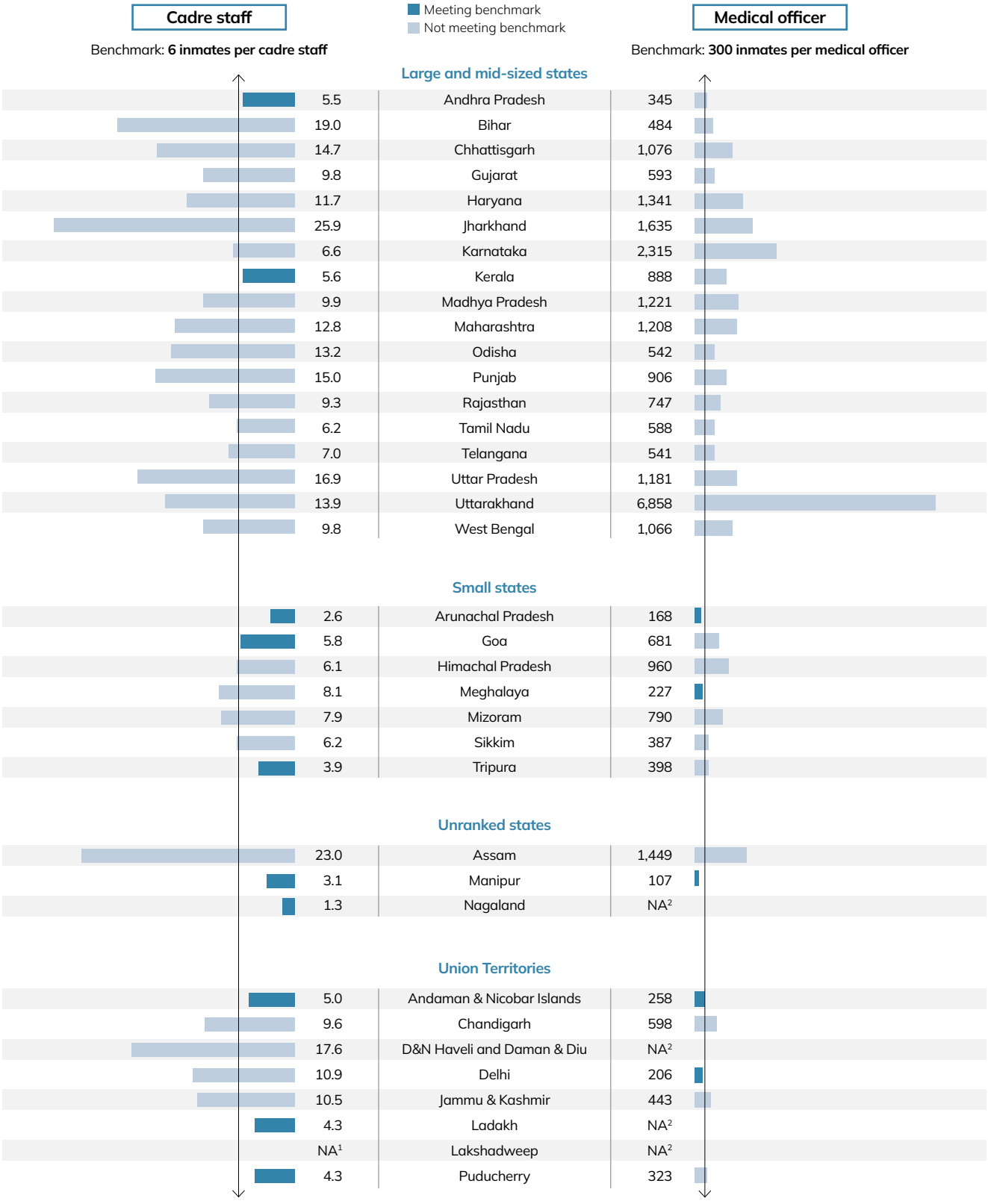
33 Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Mizoram

34 Supreme Court strikes down rules perpetuating caste based segregation and discrimination in prisons; Supreme Court Observer, 25 October 2024. Available at: www.scobserver.in/journal/supreme-court-strikes-down-rules-perpetuating-caste-based-segregation-and-discrimination-in-prison-judgement-summary/

35 Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Advisory No. V-17014/1 /2024-PR. Available at: https://origin1504-mha.nic.in/sites/default/files/2024-09/AdvisoryDiscriminationPrisoners_05092024.pdf

Figure 28: Meeting benchmarks: cadre staff and medical officers

The Model Prisons Manual, 2016 aims to bring uniformity in the administration of prisons and the management of prisoners. Most states have fallen short of meeting the benchmarks as mandated. Among large states, only Andhra Pradesh comes close to meeting the benchmark for medical officers.



1. PSI shows 0 actual cadre staff. 2. PSI shows 0 medical officers.

Note: States/Union Territories arranged in alphabetical order within category.
Source: Prison Statistics India

Inspections and Monitoring of Prisons

Prisons, as inherently closed institutions, are subjected to a variety of mechanisms of scrutiny—by the executive, judiciary, and medical establishments. The 2016 Model Prison Manual categorises inspections as: informal, which should be conducted by every officer in the prison department of the Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) rank: and formal, carried out by inspecting officers as designated by the state government. Inspections are intended to review conditions in prisons, their hygiene, availability of medicines, and medical care.[36] The Prison Statistics India, however, classifies inspections[37] as medical, executive, judicial, Board of Visitors, and others.

Beyond these, prisons at the district and sub-divisional levels are meant to be overseen and visited by their own boards of visitors (BoVs).[38] The composition of these boards varies depending on whether a state has adopted the Model Prison Manual or follows its own older prison act. All BoVs comprise official and non-official members. Under the Model Prison Manual, 2016, official members are drawn from district and sub-divisional administrators including the district judge, executive magistrate, district superintendent of police, chief medical officer, member of the Public Works Department, district education officer, social welfare officer, and employment officer. Non-official members include three members of the legislative assembly one of whom should be a woman, a nominee of the State Human Rights Commission, and two social workers of which one should be a woman.[39] Where the State Prison Act/manual rules, non-official visitors may also be drawn from among members of good standing from the local community, including academics and those from civil society organisations.

Ideally, BoVs as a whole must meet at least once a quarter and at minimum visit each jail once a quarter.[40] A monthly roster must also chalk out a schedule of at least one visit per month by non-official members and 'oftener, if possible.'[41]

PSI data presently captures the total number of visits made[42] in each year in each state without disaggregating by district or prison. Even that presents a dismal picture. At the mandated rate of one visit per quarter, India's 775 districts would require 3,100 visits per year at a minimum. But only 899 visits were made. In the 590 districts of the 18 large and mid-sized states, of 2,360 possible visits only 793 or 34 per cent were made. Only Odisha with 138 per cent visits exceeded the minimum, while ten states/UTs reported no visits.

duties in the prisons accordingly." In the same advisory it urged states to "ensure that their State Prison Manual/ Prison Act should not contain such discriminatory provisions. In case any such provision exists, immediate steps must be taken to amend/remove the discriminatory provision from the Manual/Act. It is reiterated that there should be no caste-based assignment of duties or work in the Prisons."

Budgets

Over the decade, sanctioned budgets for prisons across the country have increased from Rs. 3,275 crore to Rs. 8,725 crore, a 166 per cent increase. In 2022–23, the overall national sanctioned budget rose from Rs. 7,619.2 crore to 8,725 crore, a 14.5 per cent increase from the previous year. All states with the exception of eight[43] showed an increase. Uttarakhand's grew by 1,502 per cent from Rs. 4.6 crore to Rs. 73.7 crore.

Spend per inmate (Rs, 2022-23)

Prison budget utilized (%, 2022-23)

36 Government of India, Model Prison Manual, 2016; The Model Prison Manual Chapter 28, p.270. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/PrisonManual2016.pdf
37 Prison Statistics India, Additional Table 23. Available at: https://ncrb.gov.in/uploads/nationalcrimerecordsbureau/custom/1702033303AdditionalTable23-2022.pdf
38 Government of India, Model Prison Manual, 2016; The Model Prison Manual Chapter 29. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/PrisonManual2016.pdf
39 *Ibid*
40 *Ibid*
41 Government of India, Model Prison Manual, 2016; The Model Prison Manual Chapter 29,Rule 29.10. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/PrisonManual2016.pdf
42 Prison Statistics India, Additional Table 23. Available at: https://ncrb.gov.in/uploads/nationalcrimerecordsbureau/custom/1702033303AdditionalTable23-2022.pdf
43 Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Punjab

Figure 29: Indian Prisons over a Decade

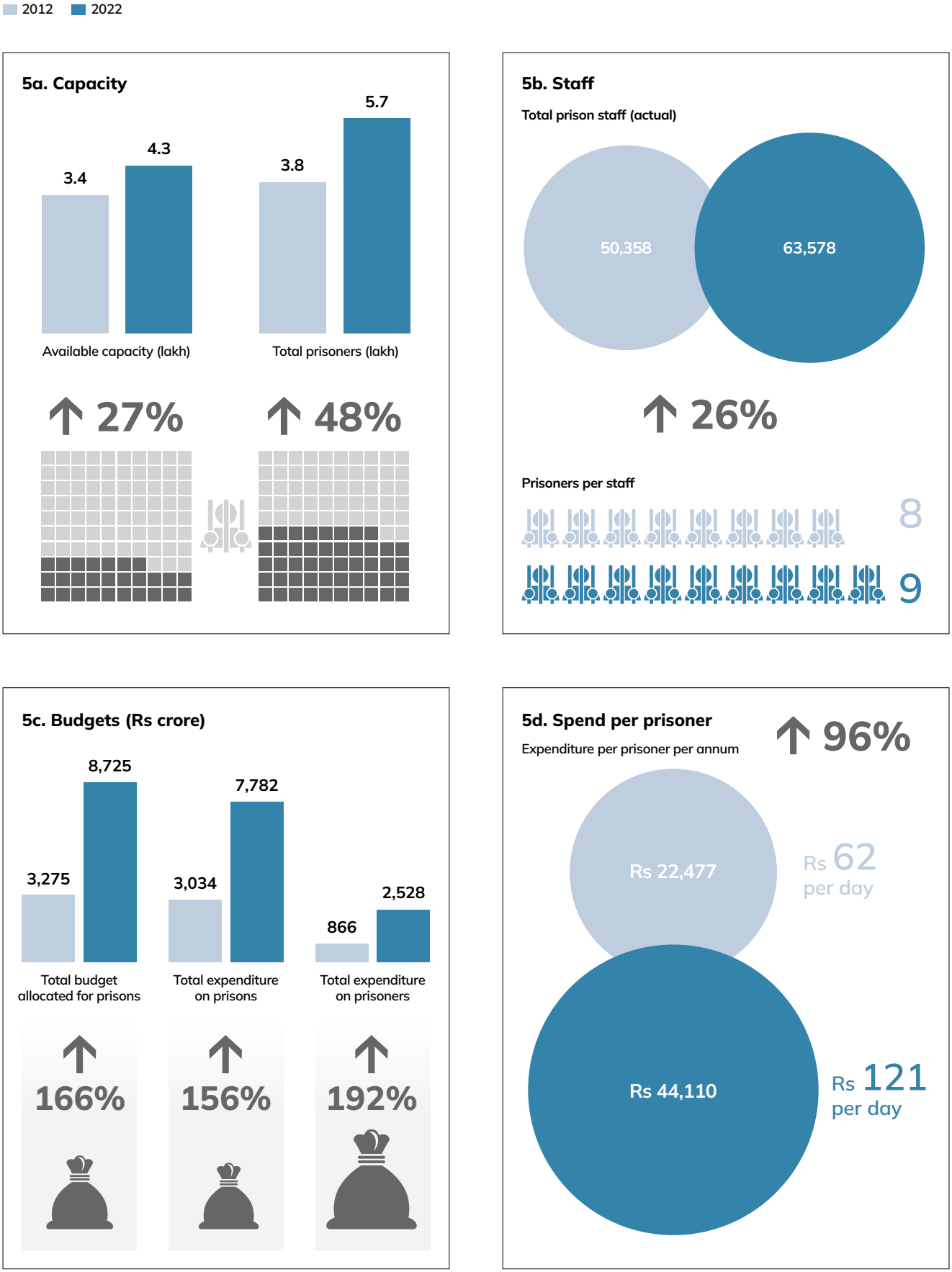
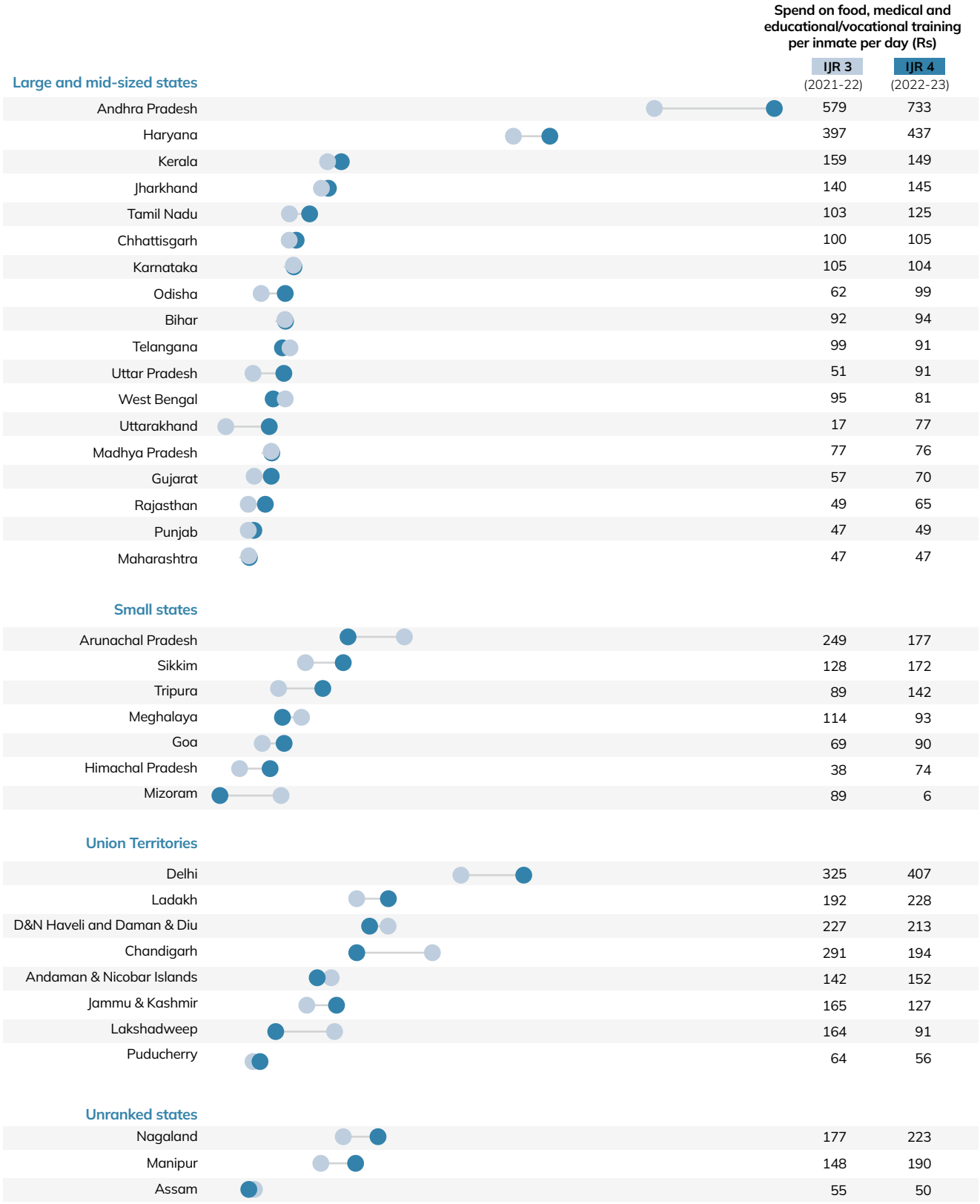


Figure 30: Daily spend per inmate

There is wide state wise disparity in the daily spend per inmate with Andhra Pradesh spending Rs. 733 per inmate per day while Maharashtra only spends Rs. 47.



Note: States/Union Territories arranged in descending order of 2022-23 spend within respective cluster.
Source: Prison Statistics India

Twenty-three states/UTs recorded more than 90 per cent utilisation of allocated budgets, of which six fully utilised their budgets. Amongst the ranked states only Tamil Nadu, Himachal and Arunachal Pradesh could fully utilise their budgets, while Meghalaya, Goa, Sikkim and Tripura's utilisation ranged from 85 per cent to 97 per cent. Mizoram with 10 prisons and a prisoner population of 5,415 could utilise only 15 per cent of its budget.

Spend per inmate: Nationally India spends an average of Rs. 44,109 per annum per prisoner: or Rs 121 per day. Among the states, 16 spent more than the national average, while 20 spent less. The three highest-spending states were Andhra Pradesh (Rs 733), Haryana (Rs 437), and Delhi (Rs. 407). The lowest spends per prisoner per day were Mizoram (Rs. 5), Maharashtra (Rs 47), and Punjab (Rs. 49).

Expenses on prisoners are disaggregated by expenses incurred on food, clothing, medical care, vocational and educational activities, welfare activities and 'others'.[44] Prison Statistics India defines expenses in the 'others'

From Retribution to Rehabilitation

As early as 1920, the Indian Jail Reform Committee accepted that reformation and rehabilitation must be the ultimate objectives of prison administration. More recently, the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Model Prison Manual 2016 also emphasise educational and vocational training programmes as a means of reintegrating prisoners into society as useful members.

Nationally, at the end of 2022, one in four prisoners across the total prison population was illiterate and 40 per cent had studied up to tenth standard. Of the 18 lakh people who entered and exited the Indian prison system in 2022, only 6 per cent were provided any sort of education. All states and UTs, with the exception of Ladakh (20%), Telangana (20%) and Uttar Pradesh (13%), provided education to less than 10 per cent of the prisoners admitted during 2022. Only 10 states managed to provide education to a marginally larger share of prisoners from 2021 with Uttar Pradesh registering the highest increase. Six states consistently recorded no facilities provided to prisoners since 2019.[45]

Most state prison departments report the presence of traditional industries that make products like soap, phenyl, furniture, carpets, textiles, and spices. However, limited budgets, human resources and equipment mean that practical skills to equip inmates for the outside world will often be ad hoc or provided to a limited number of prisoners, mostly convicts, despite the Model Prison Manual suggesting that these be provided to undertrials who volunteer.

Nationally, only 2 per cent of the total population which passed through prisons in 2022 were provided any vocational skill training. No state/UT with the exception of Nagaland (21%), Sikkim (25%) and Chandigarh (37%) could provide skill training to more than 20 per cent of prisoners. Over the last year, Chandigarh recorded the highest increase (20% to 37%) in the share of prisoners provided training. A majority of states and UTs provided training to less than 5 per cent of prisoners. Over the four years, Delhi has shown the largest drop (19% to 5%) in the provision of training, while Chandigarh and Nagaland have recorded the highest increases.

Nevertheless, prisons have undertaken several large and small training and entrepreneurial initiatives that bring in substantial income totalling Rs. 267 crore; state-wise this ranges from Rs. 53 crore in Tamil Nadu to Rs. 1 lakh from Goa's single prison.

44 *Prison Statistics India 2022*, Table 12.4 p 279. Available at: https://ncrb.gov.in/uploads/nationalcrimerecordsbureau/custom/psiyearwise2022/1701613297PSI2022ason01122023.pdf
45 Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Nagaland

Personal Bonds for Release of Undertrial Prisoners

Concerned at the number of undertrials who have been given bail but still remained in prison, in 2021 the Supreme Court of India directed in 'In Re Policy Strategy for Grant of Bail (SMWP(CRIMINAL) NO.-4/2021), the prison authorities and National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) to identify people eligible for release on bail, as well as those who had been granted bail but remained in prison. It also highlighted the term 'indigent person' and urged more bail be given on the basis of personal bonds. Other mechanisms such as the Undertrial Review Committees (UTRCs) and District Legal Service Authorities (DLSAs) are also tasked with regularly reviewing who can be let out of prison under other provisions. Despite these efforts one in three of all incarcerated people in India's overcrowded prisons are 'undertrial' prisoners – people who are awaiting trial.

In many areas, civil society organisations are augmenting these efforts to help prisoners get bail. The Law Foundation, Bihar is one such.

In light of its consistently effective work since 2016, the organisation was given permission to provide socio-legal services in eight prisons around Patna, to more than 6,500 prisoners. Currently, working in five prisons—Model Central Prison Beur (the largest prison in Bihar incarcerating more than 4,500 prisoners), District Prison Ara, Phulwarisharif district prison, Danapur, and Masaudhi Sub-Jails—The Law Foundation helps prisoners reach legal aid services, meet their family members and get released on bail. It focuses on assisting prisoners who cannot furnish cash or sureties or who are destitute, have no immediate family members or financial resources, and for many other reasons are unable to get released. Most of these come from very deprived and backward sections of society such as the Musahars, Nat, Manjhis and Pasi communities who are usually booked under petty offences such as theft and trespassing, or charged under the Bihar Prohibition & Excise Act which prohibits the brewing, possession, transportation and consumption of liquor.

Overworked prison authorities in overcrowded prisons welcome and regularly rely on the Law Foundation to assist in finding family members who can receive a released prisoner, locating the exact address of a migrant, pressing for the release of someone with a serious medical condition, and generally assisting with paperwork involved in applying for bail.

The Law Foundation works together with five convicted prisoners who it has trained as prison paralegal volunteers, three advocates, and three social workers who visit prisons two or three times in a week. Two experienced seniors provide support for the entire work. Over five years they have assisted around 1,500 prisoners, of which nearly 400 have been released from prison. Their overall socio-legal interventions towards custodial populations have been generously supported by the Azim Premji and Lal Foundation.

category as expenditure on sanitation, hygiene and transportation of prisoners from courts and hospitals

Over the last year, spending on prisoners has grown by 20 per cent: of this Rs. 134.98 crore or 2 per cent was used for medical needs; 0.1 per cent on welfare and 0.3 per cent on vocational and educational needs. Nationally, the bulk of expenditure went towards food (17%) and "other expenses". Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Mizoram, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand reported more than 20 per cent spent on food, while Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Punjab spent 5 per cent or less. Seventeen states/UTs[46] spent less than 1 per cent on medical care while Mizoram (13%) and Punjab (9.5%) spent the most.

46 Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana

While the philosophy of incarceration has, on paper, moved from retributive to rehabilitative, fiscally rehabilitation seems a distant dream. Overall, only 0.13 per cent of total expenditure was used for vocational and educational facilities and only 0.27 per cent was spent on welfare activities. Chandigarh spent 10.6 per cent on vocational and educational facilities, the highest nationally; and West Bengal spent 3.5 per cent on welfare activities. Thirteen states[47] record no expenditure on either vocational, educational or welfare activities in 2022.

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Nayanika Singhal, India Justice Report;
Valay Singh, India Justice Report

47 Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Bihar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Goa, Lakshadweep, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh

Table 4: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

● Best in cluster
● Worst in cluster

Best
Middle
Worst

	Rank in cluster				IJR 4 Score (out of 10)	Indicators improved on (out of 16)[1]		Budgets	
Theme								Budgets	
Indicator								Spend per inmate (Rs, 2022-23)	Prison budget utilized (%, 2022-23)
Scoring guide								Higher, the better	Higher, the better
	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2022					
National average								**44,110**	**89.2**
Large and mid-sized states									
Andhra Pradesh	15	7	5	4	5.69	9		267,673 ●	84.9
Bihar	6	3	9	12	4.686	10		34,198	71.4 ●
Chhattisgarh	8	11	12	13	4.54	6		38,468	85.8
Gujarat	9	10	6	9	5.26	4		25,682	99.1
Haryana	11	16	16	14	3.96	4		159,636	96.4
Jharkhand	18	15	14	17	3.81	11		52,903	94.8
Karnataka	3	14	2	2	6.78	3		37,808	98.2
Kerala	1	5	4	3	6.03	3		54,317	91.4
Madhya Pradesh	7	8	7	5	5.37	6		27,865	94.6
Maharashtra	2	4	10	10	5.17	5		17,219 ●	86.2
Odisha	5	9	11	6	5.34	11		36,109	89.9
Punjab	16	13	15	15	3.91	6		17,821	90.9
Rajasthan	12	1	8	8	5.27	9		23,772	95.8
Tamil Nadu	10	6	1	1	7.02	6		45,602	100.0 ●
Telangana	13	2	3	7	5.32	8		33,277	89.6
Uttar Pradesh	14	17	17	16	3.84	9		33,151	86.4
Uttarakhand	17	18	18	18	2.58	7		28,011	90.5
West Bengal	4	12	13	11	4.686	7		29,494	92.6
Small states									
Arunachal Pradesh	3	3	1	1	6.01	10		64,776 ●	100.0 ●
Goa	1	4	7	7	2.95	6		32,746	84.8
Himachal Pradesh	6	1	2	2	5.52	12		27,039	100.0 ●
Meghalaya	2	5	6	4	3.94	8		33,949	97.2
Mizoram	4	7	3	5	3.29	6		2,025 ●	15.0 ●
Sikkim	7	6	4	3	4.38	7		62,791	88.9
Tripura	5	2	5	6	3.28	6		52,010	89.1
Unranked states									
Assam	Not ranked					2		18,254	77.5
Manipur	Not ranked					8		69,357	94.6
Nagaland	Not ranked					5		81,450	94.7
Union Territories									
A&N Islands	Not ranked					11		55,426	99.1
Chandigarh	Not ranked					6		70,879	100.0
DNH & DD	Not ranked					7		77,841	100.0
Delhi	Not ranked					5		148,602	91.9
Jammu & Kashmir	Not ranked					1		46,312	80.5
Ladakh	Not ranked					6		83,333	100.0
Lakshadweep	Not ranked					2		33,333	0.0
Puducherry	Not ranked					5		20,433	92.2

Data sources: Prison Statistics India (PSI), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Open Budgets India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs.

Common notes: i. States arranged by clusters in alphabetical order. ii. A&N Islands: Andaman & Nicobar Islands. iii. D&NH/D&D: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. iv. New indicators in IJR 4 highlighted in yellow. v. pp: percentage points (the difference between two percentages). vi. NA: Not available. vii. CY: Calendar year; FY: Financial year.

1. Count of indicators on which a state has improved over IJR 3. Only non-trend indicators present in both IJR 3 and IJR 4 have been considered. For indicators with benchmarks, if a state met the benchmark, it was marked as an improvement even if its value declined within the benchmark. If a state didn't meet the benchmark but its value improved, it was marked as an improvement. Where an indicator value was not available for one or both years, that indicator was not considered.

Table 4: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Theme		Human Resources				
Indicator		Officers, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)	Cadre staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)	Correctional staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)	Medical staff, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)	Medical officers, vacancy (%, Dec 2022)
Scoring guide		Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better
National average		**28.1**	**28.0**	**44.1**	**40.5**	**42.6**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		20.6	27.9	NA[3]	21.7	4.5
Bihar		28.6	44.9	48.7	42.7	42.2
Chhattisgarh		65.6	30.6	49.5	52.6	58.7
Gujarat		42.5	37.6	44.4	28.6	15.2
Haryana		34.6	30.5	100.0	50.5	47.2
Jharkhand		68.2	64.8	33.3	55.8	75.5
Karnataka		10.8	23.8	20.7	63.8	74.1
Kerala		9.2	17.8	7.1	25.5	16.7
Madhya Pradesh		43.0	12.2	28.9	35.6	31.0
Maharashtra		25.9	10.5	46.5	30.0	22.7
Odisha		14.2	23.7	44.7	51.1	62.8
Punjab		28.8	40.7	100.0	27.3	19.0
Rajasthan		36.4	25.0	87.5	17.8	15.4
Tamil Nadu		11.4	7.2	19.6	12.4	25.6
Telangana		8.8	18.8	0.0	58.5	47.8
Uttar Pradesh		25.4	29.9	NA[3]	54.2	34.8
Uttarakhand		69.0	39.0	NA[3]	62.5	90.0
West Bengal		20.5	21.8	30.4	65.1	73.5
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		37.5	2.3	NA[3]	10.0	0.0
Goa		29.6	34.3	100.0	84.6	83.3
Himachal Pradesh		27.3	19.3	61.5	60.9	25.0
Meghalaya		42.1	26.6	100.0	5.0	0.0
Mizoram		21.2	22.6	NA[3]	-8.3	33.3
Sikkim		51.9	59.5	NA[3]	28.6	50.0
Tripura		68.8	54.7	100.0	28.6	0.0
Unranked states						
Assam		30.9	42.9	10.5	45.9	74.2
Manipur		47.8	10.0	NA[3]	27.5	11.1
Nagaland		15.8	5.6	66.7	20.0	NA[5]
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		33.3	39.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Chandigarh		10.0	20.5	50.0	14.3	0.0
DNH & DD		-200.0	37.5	NA[3]	NA[4]	NA[5]
Delhi		33.9	18.5	59.5	17.9	30.8
Jammu & Kashmir		68.5	45.2	69.2	43.6	40.0
Ladakh		80.0	77.4	NA[3]	85.7	100.0
Lakshadweep		NA[2]	NA[2]	NA[3]	NA[4]	NA[5]
Puducherry		16.7	21.9	NA[3]	0.0	0.0

Data sources: Prison Statistics India (PSI), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Open Budgets India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs.

Common notes: i. States arranged by clusters in alphabetical order. ii. A&N Islands: Andaman & Nicobar Islands. iii. D&NH/D&D: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. iv. New indicators in IJR 4 highlighted in yellow. v. pp: percentage points (the difference between two percentages). vi. NA: Not available. vii. CY: Calendar year; FY: Financial year.

2. PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual officers and cadre staff. **3.** PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual correctional staff. **4.** PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual medical staff.
5. PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual medical officers.

Table 4: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

● Best in cluster
● Worst in cluster

Theme		Human Resources	Diversity	Infrastructure		
	Indicator	Personnel trained (%, 2022)	Women in prison staff (%, Dec 2022)	Prison occupancy (%, Dec 2022)	Jails with V-C facility (%, Dec 2022)	Undertrials detained for 1-3 years (%, Dec 2022)
	Scoring guide	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Lower, the better	Higher, the better	Lower, the better
National average		**20.7**	**13.6**	**131**	**86**	**22.4**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		28.2	8.4	84	72	6.6 ●
Bihar		13.2	22.2	136	100 ●	16.0
Chhattisgarh		0.8 ●	11.1	145	100 ●	26.0
Gujarat		14.5	7.3	118	88	26.2
Haryana		46.5	1.8 ●	122	100 ●	27.2 ●
Jharkhand		1.9	9.4	111	94	21.8
Karnataka		66.4 ●	32.9 ●	104	93	24.3
Kerala		28.2	8.25	106	96	8.6
Madhya Pradesh		26.0	17.8	164	92	23.7
Maharashtra		11.6	15.4	161	88	26.1
Odisha		9.8	12.9	83	90	21.0
Punjab		9.3	8.6	116	88	26.3
Rajasthan		24.5	19.6	107	63 ●	25.9
Tamil Nadu		6.7	13.8	77 ●	89	7.6
Telangana		29.3	6.6	81	86	7.5
Uttar Pradesh		19.8	10.8	180	92	25.2
Uttarakhand		2.3	3.0	183 ●	100 ●	24.0
West Bengal		11.7	10.9	134	100 ●	24.3
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		5.2	18.6	101	100 ●	12.5
Goa		20.5 ●	1.2 ●	109	100 ●	46.3 ●
Himachal Pradesh		13.2	8.7	114	100 ●	36.6
Meghalaya		12.6	16.1	167 ●	100 ●	26.3
Mizoram		5.2	34.5 ●	116	40 ●	6.1 ●
Sikkim		0.0 ●	25.3	149	100 ●	32.5
Tripura		0.5	4.4	50 ●	93	7.1
Unranked states						
Assam		12.9	12.9	121	97	15.5
Manipur		3.1	12.7	67	40	10.5
Nagaland		6.6	23.8	31	42	17.5
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		7.0	7.0	81	25	8.1
Chandigarh		32.1	4.9	107	100	18.3
DNH & DD		0.0	6.3	104	100	39.5
Delhi		48.4	11.5	184	100	22.1
Jammu & Kashmir		4.0	6.2	146	93	29.8
Ladakh		0.0	8.3	19	50	15.4
Lakshadweep		NA[6]	NA[7]	9	0	0.0
Puducherry		0.0	0.0	78	100	12.4

Data sources: Prison Statistics India (PSI), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Open Budgets India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs.

Common notes: i. States arranged by clusters in alphabetical order. ii. A&N Islands: Andaman & Nicobar Islands. iii. D&NH/D&D: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. iv. New indicators in IJR 4 highlighted in yellow. v. pp: percentage points (the difference between two percentages). vi. NA: Not available. vii. CY: Calendar year; FY: Financial year.

6. PSI shows 0 actual and trained staff. **7.** PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual total staff.

Table 4: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

● Best in cluster
● Worst in cluster

	Theme	Infrastructure		Workload			
	Indicator	NEW Share of jails with 150-250% occupancy (%, Dec 2022)	NEW Share of jails with 250% and more occupancy (%, Dec 2022)	Inmates per officer (Number, Dec 2022)	Inmates per cadre staff (Number, Dec 2022)	Inmates per correctional staff (Number, Dec 2022)	Inmates per medical officer (Number, Dec 2022)
	Scoring guide	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better
National average		**20.1**	**7.0**	**108**	**11.8**	**699**	**775**
Large and mid-sized states							
Andhra Pradesh		2.5	0.0 ●	29	5.5 ●	NA[9]	345 ●
Bihar		25.4	11.9	253	19.0	240	484
Chhattisgarh		33.3	9.1	273	14.7	445	1,076
Gujarat		25.0	0.0 ●	64	9.8	3,322	593
Haryana		25.0	0.0 ●	172	11.7	NA[10]	1,341
Jharkhand		21.9	3.1	409 ●	25.9 ●	9,808	1,635
Karnataka		10.2	0.0 ●	49	6.6	704	2,315
Kerala		42.1 ●	0.0 ●	40	5.6	342	888
Madhya Pradesh		40.2	12.1	205	9.9	828	1,221
Maharashtra		15.6	20.3	84	12.8	411	1,208
Odisha		2.2 ●	0.0 ●	67	13.2	213 ●	542
Punjab		23.1	0.0 ●	193	15.0	NA[10]	906
Rajasthan		15.8	2.7	119	9.3	24,659 ●	747
Tamil Nadu		3.5	0.0 ●	22 ●	6.2	219	588
Telangana		10.8	0.0 ●	40	7.0	6,497	541
Uttar Pradesh		36.4	36.4 ●	241	16.9	NA[9]	1,181
Uttarakhand		27.3	27.3	361	13.9	NA[9]	6,858 ●
West Bengal		40.0	16.7	142	9.8	600	1,066
Small states							
Arunachal Pradesh		0.0 ●	0.0 ●	34	2.6 ●	NA[9]	168 ●
Goa		0.0 ●	0.0 ●	40	5.8	NA[10]	681
Himachal Pradesh		12.5	0.0 ●	99	6.1	576 ●	960 ●
Meghalaya		40.0	20.0 ●	126	8.1 ●	NA[10]	227
Mizoram		20.0	0.0 ●	66	7.9	NA[9]	790
Sikkim		50.0 ●	0.0 ●	32 ●	6.2	NA[9]	387
Tripura		7.1	0.0 ●	133 ●	3.9	NA[10]	398
Unranked states							
Assam		29.0	3.2	107	23.0	682	1,449
Manipur		0.0	0.0	26	3.1	NA[9]	107
Nagaland		0.0	0.0	15	1.3	469	NA[11]
Union Territories							
A&N Islands		0.0	0.0	52	5.0	258	258
Chandigarh		0.0	0.0	133	9.6	171	598
DNH & DD		0.0	0.0	44	17.6	NA[9]	NA[11]
Delhi		15.0	15.0	63	10.9	1,088	206
Jammu & Kashmir		42.9	7.1	354	10.5	332	443
Ladakh		0.0	0.0	30	4.3	NA[9]	NA[12]
Lakshadweep		0.0	0.0	NA[8]	NA[8]	NA[9]	NA[11]
Puducherry		0.0	0.0	36	4.3	NA[9]	323

Data sources: Prison Statistics India (PSI), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Open Budgets India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs.

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8. PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual officers and cadre staff. **9.** PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual correctional staff.
10. PSI shows 0 correctional staff. **11.** PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual medical officer. **12.** PSI shows 0 actual medical officer.

Table 4: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

● Best in cluster
● Worst in cluster

Theme	Workload	Trends			
Indicator	NEW Women inmates per woman medical officer (Dec 2022)	Officer vacancy (%, CY '18-'22)	Cadre staff vacancy (%, CY '18-'22)	Share of women in prison staff (%, CY '18-'22)	Inmates per prison officer (%, CY '18-'22)
Scoring guide	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Higher, the better	Lower, the better
National average	**283**	**-14.7**	**-17.5**	**67.3**	**1.2**
Large and mid-sized states					
Andhra Pradesh	39 ●	-27.3	37.2	10.0	-3.0
Bihar	109	-55.0	19.0	17.1	5.9
Chhattisgarh	951	4.2	122.7	0.9	2.8
Gujarat	NA[13]	-6.8	18.8	18.0	-8.7
Haryana	NA[13]	2.1	59.0	-66.2 ●	7.4
Jharkhand	NA[13]	6.6	0.8	-9.8	7.9
Karnataka	309	-53.0	14.7	50.0	-14.6 ●
Kerala	68	9.2	108.9	-32.5	1.4
Madhya Pradesh	956	25.5	-36.1	22.3	8.8
Maharashtra	319	14.1	71.6	3.9	5.9
Odisha	168	-69.3 ●	362.4 ●	5.3	3.5
Punjab	1,560	-30.1	41.8	24.9	0.5
Rajasthan	694	-26.5	-25.3	16.9	0.0
Tamil Nadu	86	-10.7	-56.3 ●	21.4	3.4
Telangana	186	677.9 ●	0.8	-0.2	5.1
Uttar Pradesh	2,405 ●	-34.0	-34.8	86.3 ●	-2.3
Uttarakhand	NA[13]	-0.6	28.9	-27.7	11.7 ●
West Bengal	356	47.8	-21.5	26.5	5.1
Small states					
Arunachal Pradesh	NA[13]	-14.3	2.3	4.4	11.9
Goa	NA[13]	100.0	42.7 ●	-26.5	16.1
Himachal Pradesh	NA[13]	27.3	-41.8 ●	-2.8	3.1 ●
Meghalaya	NA[13]	166.7	21.4	-5.1	15.4
Mizoram	NA[13]	-43.9 ●	-9.1	44.5 ●	4.2
Sikkim	NA[13]	107.4	-3.2	9.6	5.0
Tripura	NA[13]	255.2 ●	39.2	-39.3 ●	21.6 ●
Unranked states					
Assam	NA[13]	201.8	81.4	8.3	13.8
Manipur	25	-2.4	150.6	1.9	-1.6
Nagaland	NA[13]	255.3	5.6	2.1	8.6
Union Territories					
A&N Islands	NA[13]	0.0	54.5	-28.7	1.5
Chandigarh	NA[13]	-85.7	-57.9	-39.5	-10.6
DNH & DD	NA[14]	NA[15]	62.5	-50.0	33.1
Delhi	168	-42.9	-50.4	-4.9	-2.8
Jammu & Kashmir	71	NA[16]	NA[16]	NA[16]	NA[16]
Ladakh	NA[14]	NA[16]	NA[16]	NA[16]	NA[16]
Lakshadweep	NA[14]	NA[17]	NA[17]	NA[17]	NA[17]
Puducherry	NA[13]	100.0	-30.0	-100.0	1.0

Data sources: Prison Statistics India (PSI), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Open Budgets India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs.

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13. PSI shows 0 women medical officers. **14.** PSI shows 0 women medical officers and 0 women inmates. **15.** Officer count exceeds sanctioned count in both year 1 and year 5.
16. For trend indicators, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are excluded as their data was not available separately for 5 years.
17. PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual total staff for all 5 years considered for trend indicators.

Table 4: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Theme	Trends				
Indicator	Inmates per cadre staff (%, CY '18-'22)	Share of undertrial prisoners (pp, CY '18-'22)	Spend per inmate (%, FY '19-'23)	Prison budget used (pp, FY '19-'23)	Difference in spend: prisons vs state (pp, FY '19-'23)
Scoring guide	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better
National average	**2.3**	**1.45**	**13.0**	**-0.25**	**NA**
Large and mid-sized states					
Andhra Pradesh	-2.3	0.71	9.1	0.40	-5.44 🔴
Bihar	13.6 🔴	0.84	1.1	-3.12	4.32
Chhattisgarh	3.1	1.34	3.2	0.02	5.71
Gujarat	8.0	0.54	4.8	0.21	-1.04
Haryana	11.9	2.94	9.4	2.40	8.07
Jharkhand	2.0	0.19	12.8	0.40	6.51
Karnataka	-7.8 🟢	1.54	8.3	4.26 🟢	18.36
Kerala	4.0	0.14	3.1	0.29	-3.79
Madhya Pradesh	-0.4	0.01 🟢	5.7	-0.77	1.11
Maharashtra	4.9	1.49	1.8	-1.68	0.81
Odisha	7.2	1.76	10.5	1.28	-3.06
Punjab	7.8	3.90 🔴	5.9	-0.66	-5.30
Rajasthan	-2.1	1.28	10.7	2.62	1.17
Tamil Nadu	5.4	0.92	7.6	1.47	-0.48
Telangana	4.7	0.86	3.1	-3.57 🔴	-1.02
Uttar Pradesh	1.1	1.21	9.7	-0.79	1.14
Uttarakhand	10.9	2.81	58.6 🟢	-0.82	254.71 🟢
West Bengal	3.6	2.20	-6.8 🔴	-1.21	-0.96
Small states					
Arunachal Pradesh	8.6	-0.64	16.2	0.00	13.15
Goa	14.5 🔴	4.75 🔴	-3.3	0.20	NA[18]
Himachal Pradesh	0.8 🟢	2.20	10.9	0.00	0.77
Meghalaya	7.1	-3.11 🟢	44.6 🟢	10.20 🟢	2.90
Mizoram	13.1	2.69	-15.3 🔴	-16.74 🔴	-23.05 🔴
Sikkim	6.6	3.16	11.9	3.29	22.76
Tripura	9.4	3.46	10.0	-8.93	27.57 🟢
Unranked states					
Assam	14.7	2.60	-8.0	0.39	0.66
Manipur	7.6	-3.04	14.1	-0.57	4.66
Nagaland	4.1	-0.53	4.7	-0.93	3.78
Union Territories					
A&N Islands	15.7	3.75	19.5	-0.18	-18.47
Chandigarh	-0.3	3.42	14.4	0.00	9.51
DNH & DD	29.6	1.74	12.4	0.00	-14.43
Delhi	-2.7	1.94	7.9	-0.764	NA[18]
Jammu & Kashmir	NA[16]	NA[16]	NA[16]	NA[16]	NA[16]
Ladakh	NA[16]	NA[16]	NA[16]	NA[16]	NA[16]
Lakshadweep	NA[17]	0.00	-27.3	-2.50	NA[18]
Puducherry	4.6	-0.89	-4.1	-0.79	NA[18]

Data sources: Prison Statistics India (PSI), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB); Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Open Budgets India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs.

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16. For trend indicators, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are excluded as their data was not available separately for 5 years.
17. PSI shows 0 sanctioned and actual total staff for all 5 years considered for trend indicators. **18.** Total expenditure for 2022-23 not available.

Judiciary

Judiciary Ranking

Color guide

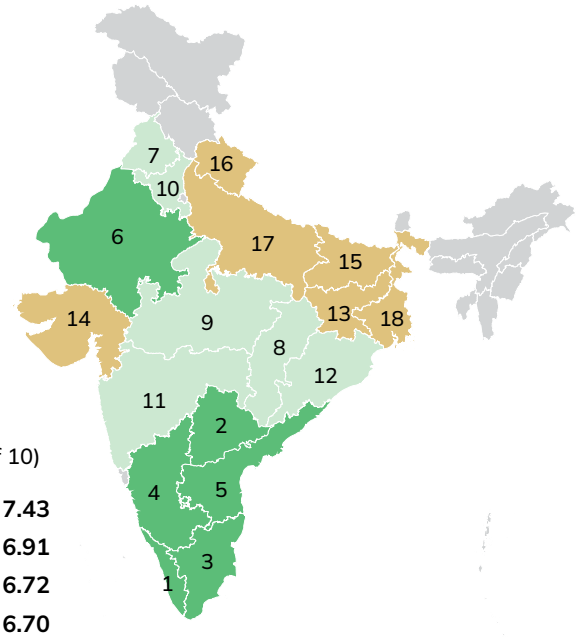
Best | Middle | Worst

Indicators (in IJR 4) **25**

Clusters

I. 18 large and mid-sized states (population above 10 million)

II. 7 small-sized states (population up to 10 million)



Map 13: Large and mid-sized states

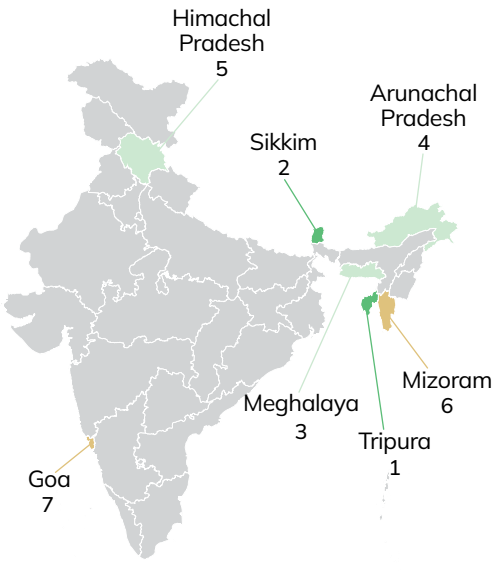
Rank (out of 18)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
5	3	4	1	Kerala	7.43
11	6	5	2	Telangana	6.91
1	1	1	3	Tamil Nadu	6.72
16	12	2	4	Karnataka	6.70
13	14	11	5	Andhra Pradesh	6.68
8	10	17	6	Rajasthan	5.89
2	2	3	7	Punjab	5.48
12	4	6	8	Chhattisgarh	5.39
6	11	10	9	Madhya Pradesh	5.25
3	7	14	10	Haryana	4.98
4	5	12	11	Maharashtra	4.94
9	15	13	12	Odisha	4.93
14	9	7	13	Jharkhand	4.80
7	8	9	14	Gujarat	4.65
18	18	16	15	Bihar	4.35
15	13	8	16	Uttarakhand	3.97
17	17	15	17	Uttar Pradesh	3.56
10	16	18	18	West Bengal	2.45

Map 14: Small states

Rank (out of 7)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
6	6	2	1	Tripura	5.32
1	1	1	2	Sikkim	5.07
4	7	5	3	Meghalaya	4.59
7	5	4	4	Arunachal Pradesh	3.86
3	2	6	5	Himachal Pradesh	3.75
5	3	3	6	Mizoram	3.64
2	4	7	7	Goa	2.86



Pushing Expectations

Total states*

Judge vacancy: High Courts

Number of High Courts where judge vacancy is below 20%.

IJR 1 (2019)	1	25
IJR 2 (2020)	2	25
IJR 3 (2022)	5	25
IJR 4 (2025)	6	25

Judge vacancy: Subordinate courts

Number of states and UTs where judge vacancy in subordinate courts is below 20%.

IJR 1 (2019)	16	36
IJR 2 (2020)	19	36
IJR 3 (2022)	15	35
IJR 4 (2025)	16	35

Budgets

Number of states and UTs where the increase in spending by the judiciary exceeded the increase in the overall state expenditure.

IJR 1 (2019)	7	29
IJR 2 (2020)	11	29
IJR 3 (2022)	22	34
IJR 4 (2025)	19	31

Case clearance rate

Number of states/UTs with case clearance rate above 100% in both High Court and subordinate court levels (excludes states that share a High Court)

IJR 1 (2019)	2	23
IJR 2 (2020)	2	23
IJR 3 (2022)	3	23
IJR 4 (2025)	4	23

Caste diversity

States/UTs that meet at least 80% of their both SC and ST quotas.

IJR 1 (2019)	NA	
IJR 2 (2020)	NA	
IJR 3 (2022)	2	28
IJR 4 (2025)	6	28

* Number of states/UTs (out of 36) for which data was available.

Pendency

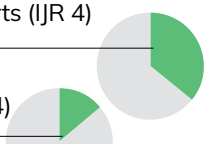
- **17 large states with more than 25% cases pending for more than 3 years at the subordinate court level.**
- **In 22 states/UTs, the share of cases pending for more than 5 years went up from IJR 3 at the subordinate court level.**
- **In 15 states and UTs, the share of cases pending for more than 5 years went up from IJR 3 at the High Court level.**

Women

Share of women in courts

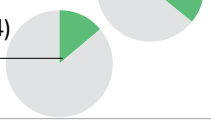
Subordinate courts (IJR 4)

38%



High courts (IJR 4)

14%



Sanctioned counts

Change in sanctioned strength (IJR 1 to 4)

a. Subordinate courts

Sanctioned strengths decreased in AP, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana and Goa

b. High Courts

Sanctioned strength fell in Tripura, AP and Telangana

CHAPTER 3

Rising Workloads & Capacity Conundrums

Introduction

At the end of 2024, a persistent lack of capacity continued to hamper the delivery of justice. Measured against sanctioned judge strength, court hall shortages continue to be around 15 per cent, per capita expenditure on the judiciary improved slightly, subordinate courts improved their average case clearance rates while the high courts' clearance rates deteriorated slightly, and gender diversity showed a welcome if slow uptick.

Nevertheless, pending cases at the end of 2024 reached 5 crore.[1] Between 2020 and 2024, pending cases have risen by almost 20 per cent. Meanwhile, judge vacancies at the high courts and district courts have changed little and continue to now hover around 33 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively. Staff vacancies essential to providing administrative support increased slightly to around 27 per cent.

Two new indicators measure the share of cases pending for more than three years: as of January 2025, at both the high court and district court levels more than one in every two cases was pending for more than three years.

Shuttling across the top five positions in the past few years, this year Kerala climbed to first place among the large and mid-sized states, replacing Tamil Nadu which fell to third. Showing consistent improvements in capacity since 2019 when the first IJR was published, Telangana rose to second place while Karnataka slipped by three ranks to fifth. Significant improvements were seen in some states. Andhra Pradesh, previously at eleventh, climbed seven places. Rajasthan, at seventeenth in 2022, made the highest upward jump, climbing eleven places to sixth rank. Its improvements can be attributed to increased per capita spend, significant reductions in judge vacancies at the High Court, improved population per judge ratios, and better case clearances.

Punjab, which has earlier consistently ranked amongst the top five states, slipped four places from third to seventh. Although its per capita spend and case clearance rates improved, causative factors include significant increases in vacancies among High Court judges (from 22% to 40%) and the rise in court staff shortages to around 35 per cent. The biggest fall was among the states was Uttarakhand, which fell eight places to sixteenth position.

While fluctuating capacity-wise in the years in between, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and West Bengal have all dropped in rank since 2019.

Among the seven small states, Tripura and Sikkim interchanged their rankings to come in first and second, respectively, while Meghalaya, at third place, continued its rise from seventh in 2020 and fifth in 2022.

Per capita spends in the top three small states continued to increase, there were no vacancies among High Court judges, and women's representation at the lower courts remained high with nearly one in two judges being female. Goa, which has been unable to fill the large vacancies at its high court and district courts along with low staff levels, continued to be in last place.

1 This figure comprises both criminal and civil cases pending at the subordinate courts and the high courts.

Human Resources

Population per High Court judge (Feb 2025)
Population per sub. court judge (Jan 2025)
High Court judge vacancy (%, Feb 2025)
Sub. Court judge vacancy (%, Jan 2025)
High Court staff vacancy (%, Jun 2024)

In January 2025, the actual number of sitting judges, including those of the Supreme Court, stood at 21,285, an increase of almost 6 per cent from 2022 but well below the present sanctioned strength of 26,927. Based on the 2011 census and sanctioned strengths, a Rajya Sabha response puts the judge-to-population ratio at 21 judges to a million (10 lakh).[2] Based on population projections of March 2025,[3] the actual strength of the bench stands at 15 judges per 10 lakh population. If the sanctioned strength were met, the judge-to-population ratio would still be only 19 judges per 10 lakh population—well below the 1987 Law Commission recommendation of 50 judges per 10 lakh population.[4]

High Courts: Between 2016-17 and 2025, the overall sanctioned strength of high court judges fell from 1,136 to 1,122. Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh increased their sanctioned strength by 8, Guwahati and Odisha by 6 each, and Himachal Pradesh by 4. Tripura reduced its sanctioned strength by 1 while Andhra Pradesh and Telangana also reduced their sanctioned strengths. All other states show no change. Overall, vacancies against sanctioned strength fell from 42 per cent to 33 per cent.

Over the same period vacancies rose in four high courts—Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh. In 2025, sixteen out of 25 high courts[6] had one in four judges missing. In five—Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab & Haryana, Odisha, and Allahabad—vacancies exceeded 40 per cent, with Allahabad touching 51 per cent. Only Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Tripura could boast a full complement of judges. In the last three years (2022-25) very little of significance has changed. Only twelve[7] high courts could reduce their vacancy levels, four[8] show no change, and nine high courts[9] vacancy levels have actually increased.

High Court Staff: With little change over the years, high court staff vacancies continue to average around 25 per cent. In 2025, staff vacancies in 13 high courts[10] remained between 20 per cent to just below 50 per cent. In Gujarat over the years staff shortage almost doubled

Judges per lakh population

The High Courts of Sikkim, Tripura and Meghalaya are the only high court that work with a full complement of judges.

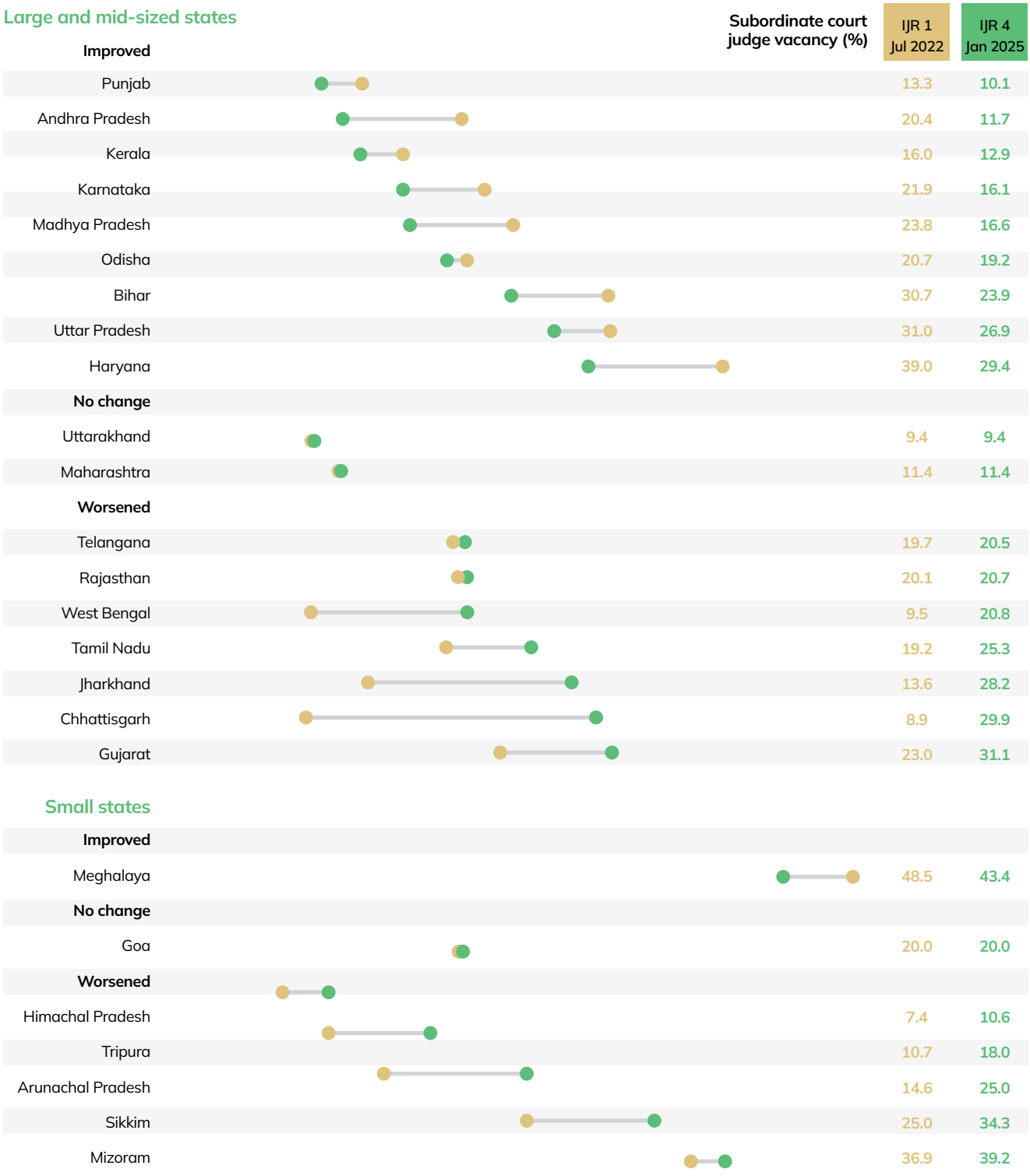
Measured by population, India averages one high court judge for 18.7 lakh population and one subordinate court judge for 69,000 people. In only eight high courts,[5] does one High Court judge serve less than 10 lakh people. Everywhere else it is between 12 lakh (Madras High Court) to 38 lakh (Patna High Court) people.

At the subordinate court level, Mizoram has the most favourable judge-to-population ratio, with one judge for every 28,022 people. Among the larger states, Punjab performs relatively well, with one judge for every 43,046 people. This contrasts with states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh among others, where the ratio exceeds 70,000 people per judge. In West Bengal, the ratio is one judge for every 100,000 people.

2 Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2043, dated 12 December 2024. Available at: https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/266/AU2043_z04FVP.pdf?source=pqars
3 Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Population Projection for India and States (2011 to 2036) for July 2020 in *Report of the Technical Group on Population Projections, November 2019*. Available at: https://main.mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/Population%20Projection%20Report%202011-2036%20-%20upload_compressed_0.pdf
4 Law Commission of India, 120th Report: *Manpower Planning in India: A Judicial Blueprint, 1987*. Available at: https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ca0daec69b5adc880fb464895726dbdf/uploads/2022/08/2022080852.pdf
5 High Courts of Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Tripura
6 High Courts of Allahabad, Bombay, Calcutta, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Patna, Punjab & Haryana, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Uttarakhand
7 High Courts of Bombay, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Manipur, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Tripura, and Uttarakhand
8 High Courts of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, and Sikkim
9 High Courts of Bombay, Calcutta, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Manipur, Odisha, Patna, Punjab & Haryana, Rajasthan, and Telangana
10 High Courts Allahabad, Bombay, Calcutta, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Guwahati, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Patna, Punjab & Haryana, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Uttarakhand

Figure 31: Vacancy levels in subordinate courts

Over the past three years, only 11 large and mid sized states could improve or retain their vacancy levels in subordinate courts. In Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and West Bengal vacancies have more than doubled during the same period. This continues against the backdrop of an ever increasing caseload.



States arranged in ascending order of vacancy (best to worst) in their respective segment.
Source: Lok Sabha, Unstarred Question No. 2116; Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 433

to 47 per cent. Only Andhra Pradesh, which set up its new High Court in 2019, reduced its vacancies quite dramatically from 51 per cent in 2022 to 18 per cent in 2025.

Subordinate Courts: The vast majority of cases begin and end at the lower courts. Yet, the total sanctioned strength of judges at these courts stands at 25,771, an average of 18 judges per 10 lakh population.

Between 2016-17 and 2025, overall sanctioned strength of the lower court judges increased by just 3,224. Barring Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Telangana, all states increased their sanctioned judge strength. Uttar Pradesh saw the largest increase, going from 2,557 to 3,700. Goa reduced both its sanctioned strength and actual bench strength thereby exacerbating its courts' capacity deficits significantly.

The actual number of judges on the bench paints a grimmer picture. Currently, 20,478 district court judges serve 1.4 billion people. This averages approximately 15 judges per 10 lakh people.

Goa, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal highlight the disparities among the states. Goa, with 25 district court judges per 10 lakh population, Sikkim with 33 judges and Delhi with 36 judges have the best judge-to-population ratios, while states like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal lag well behind with only 10 judges per 10 lakh population.

High levels of vacancy continue to dog the district judiciary. Between 2018-19 and 2025, overall judicial vacancies in the subordinate courts have hovered between 21 per cent and 22 per cent, and vacancy levels in eighteen states/UTs[11] have climbed steadily. The increases in vacancies were worst in Sikkim (from 17% in 2018-19 to 34% in 2025), followed by Chhattisgarh (14% to 30%), West Bengal (7% to 21%), and Mizoram (28% to 39%). Maharashtra and Rajasthan, two states with a high number of pending cases, also had an increasing number of vacancies.

Over the past three years, between 2022 and 2025 seventeen states/UTs[12] have managed to reduce their district judge vacancies, while vacancies increased in twelve states,[13] and remained the same in six.[14]

Yet, in 2025 only Chandigarh and Lakshadweep recorded no vacancies. Thirteen states/UTs[15] struggled with vacancies of between 25 per cent and 35 per cent, while only Assam and Uttarakhand managed to keep their rates below 10 per cent. Several states continue to record alarming rates: namely, Meghalaya (43%), Mizoram (39%), Ladakh (35%), and Sikkim (34%).

Infrastructure

Courthall shortfall
(%, Jan 2025)

Court hall shortages influence judge appointments. While there have been consistent efforts to build more halls for the subordinate courts, a 15 per cent shortfall persists, relative to the sanctioned strength of judges. With sanctioned positions increasing by 1,140, between 2022 and 2025, and court halls by only 1,031, the same shortfall continues.

As of 2025, there are 22,045 court halls available for the sitting 20,478 judges. However, if all 25,771 sanctioned positions were filled, the same 15 per cent shortfall would exist.

11 Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, West Bengal, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands
12 Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh
13 Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, West Bengal, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands
14 Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Goa, Maharashtra, Nagaland, and Uttarakhand
15 Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Ladakh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh

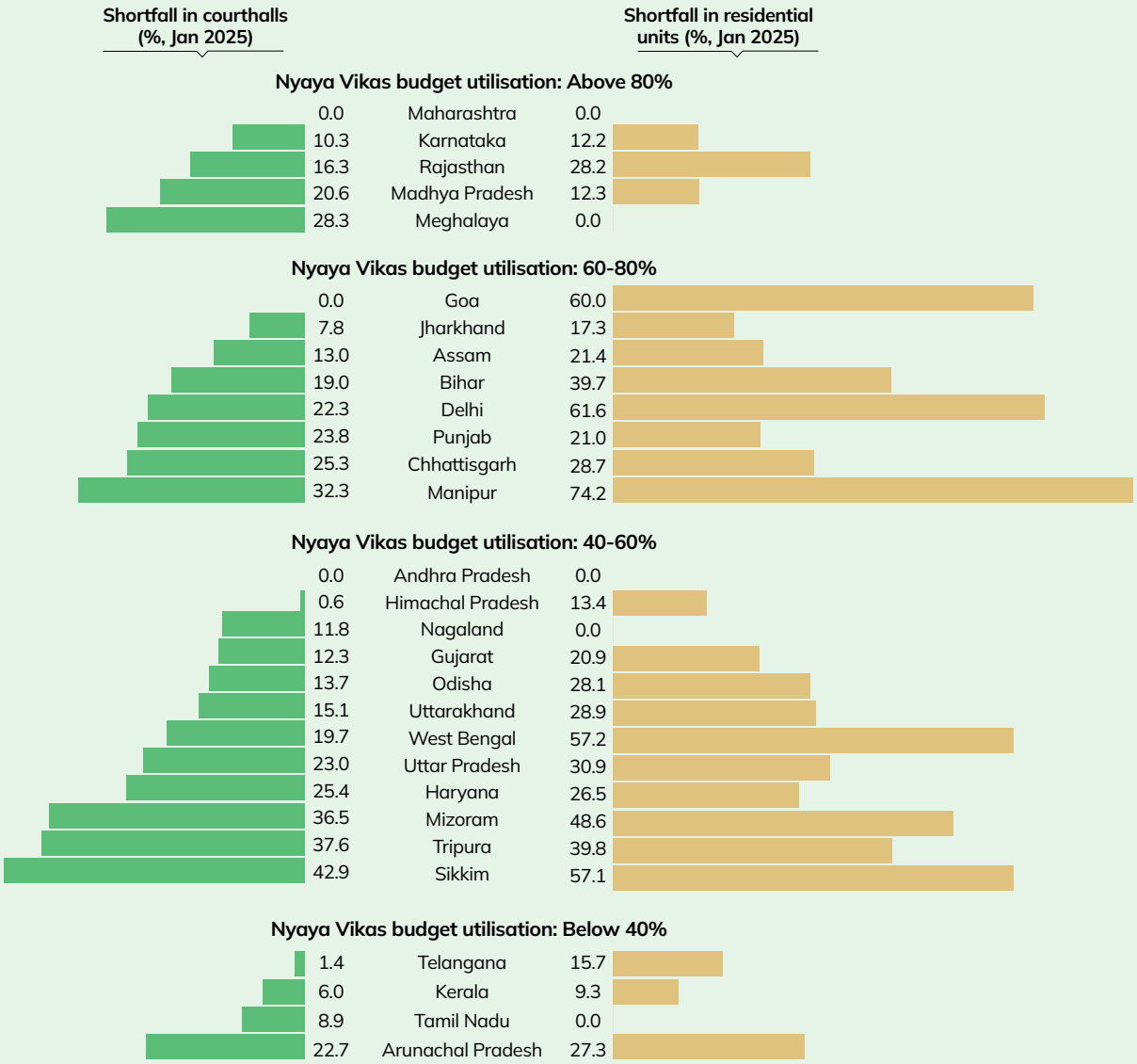
Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Judicial Infrastructure

While the responsibility of developing judicial infrastructure rests with state governments, the central government has been releasing funds under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities since 1993-94, to be used for improving physical infrastructure including court buildings, residential accommodation for judicial officers, lawyers' halls, digital computer rooms, and toilet complexes. The scheme has been extended to 2025-26 with a total financial outlay of Rs. 9,000 crore, with the centre's share at Rs. 5,307 crore.[16]

The Nyaya Vikas online monitoring system uses geotagging to capture data on physical and financial progress of projects under the Scheme. Through appointed nodal officers and surveyors, all the states upload data/information relating to ongoing and completed projects so that progress in judicial infrastructural projects can be effectively monitored.[17]

Figure 32: Nyaya Vikas Budget Utilisation

Despite persistent infrastructural deficits in subordinate courts throughout the country, utilisation of the Nyaya Vikas budget remains subpar



1. Graphic shows all states and Delhi, arranged in ascending order of courthall shortfall within respective category. 2. Budget utilisation is average for three years (2021-22 to 2023-24).
Source: Department of Justice and Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 794

16 Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 843, dated 26 July 2024. Available at: https://sansad.in/getFile/loksabhaquestions/annex/182/AU843_CTC1Jh.pdf?source=pqals
17 Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India; Nyaya Vikas Portal. Available at: https://bhuvan-nyayavikas.nrsc.gov.in/

In 2025, barring ten states/UTs,[18] all recorded a shortfall in their court halls. Among the large states, Haryana and Chhattisgarh had a deficit of one in every four court halls. Between 2022 and 2025, nineteen states/UTs[19] managed to reduce the gap between sanctioned strength and the required number of court halls, with Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh showing significant improvements. Conversely, eleven states/UTs[20] still face deficits of over 25 per cent, and only three states and one UT have sufficient court halls in 2025.[21]

When comparing court halls to sitting judges, eleven states/UTs record shortfalls[22] ranging from one in Lakshadweep to 110 in Punjab. Between 2022 and 2025, most states increased their court hall numbers, with Uttar Pradesh adding 136, while Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Goa, and Puducherry saw a decrease.

Diversity

Women judges (High Court) (%, Feb 2025)
Women judges (sub. Court) (%, Feb 2025)
SC judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)
ST judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)
OBC judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)

Gender diversity: Women make up 37.4 per cent of all judges,[23] 14 per cent at the high courts and 38 per cent in the lower courts. Between 2022 and 2025, gender diversity increased by just 1 per cent at the High Courts and 3 per cent at the lower courts. Overall, of the 21,253 judges at the high court and district court levels, there are just under 8000 women: 106 in the high courts and 7852 at the district court level. The glass ceiling remains firmly in place. Gujarat is the only state to have more women at its high court (25%) than in its subordinate courts (20%) since 2022. The high courts of Meghalaya, Tripura, and Uttarakhand record no women on their benches, but register a high share of women in their subordinate courts.

Policy prescriptions suggest the incremental inclusion of women to an aspirational minimum of 33 per cent. Between 2016-17 and 2025, the majority of states showed a marked improvement in the share of women subordinate court judges.

Nagaland improved the most from 20 per cent to 63 per cent, followed by Mizoram (21% to 51%) and Arunachal Pradesh (no women to 33%). Although recording a drop, Sikkim (65% to 48%) and Meghalaya (74% to 61%) have consistently registered a high share of women judges. Among the large states, Rajasthan (27% to 42%) and Bihar (12% to 27%) show the most improvement. The subordinate courts of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu are the only jurisdictions that record no women judges.

By February 2025, twenty seven states/UTs had met or exceeded the 33 per cent mark at the district courts, with steady increases each year. Seven states had 50 per cent or more women on their benches.

In 2025, at the high court level, Sikkim and Telangana had the highest share of women judges at 33 per cent, with Telangana having made significant progress since 2018. Seven high courts[25] had 20 per cent or more women judges, while nine had less than 10 per cent.[26] Meghalaya, Tripura, and Uttarakhand high courts have had no women judges since 2018; in contrast, in 2025, Manipur (25%) and Bihar (2.9%) have women judges for the first time since 2018.

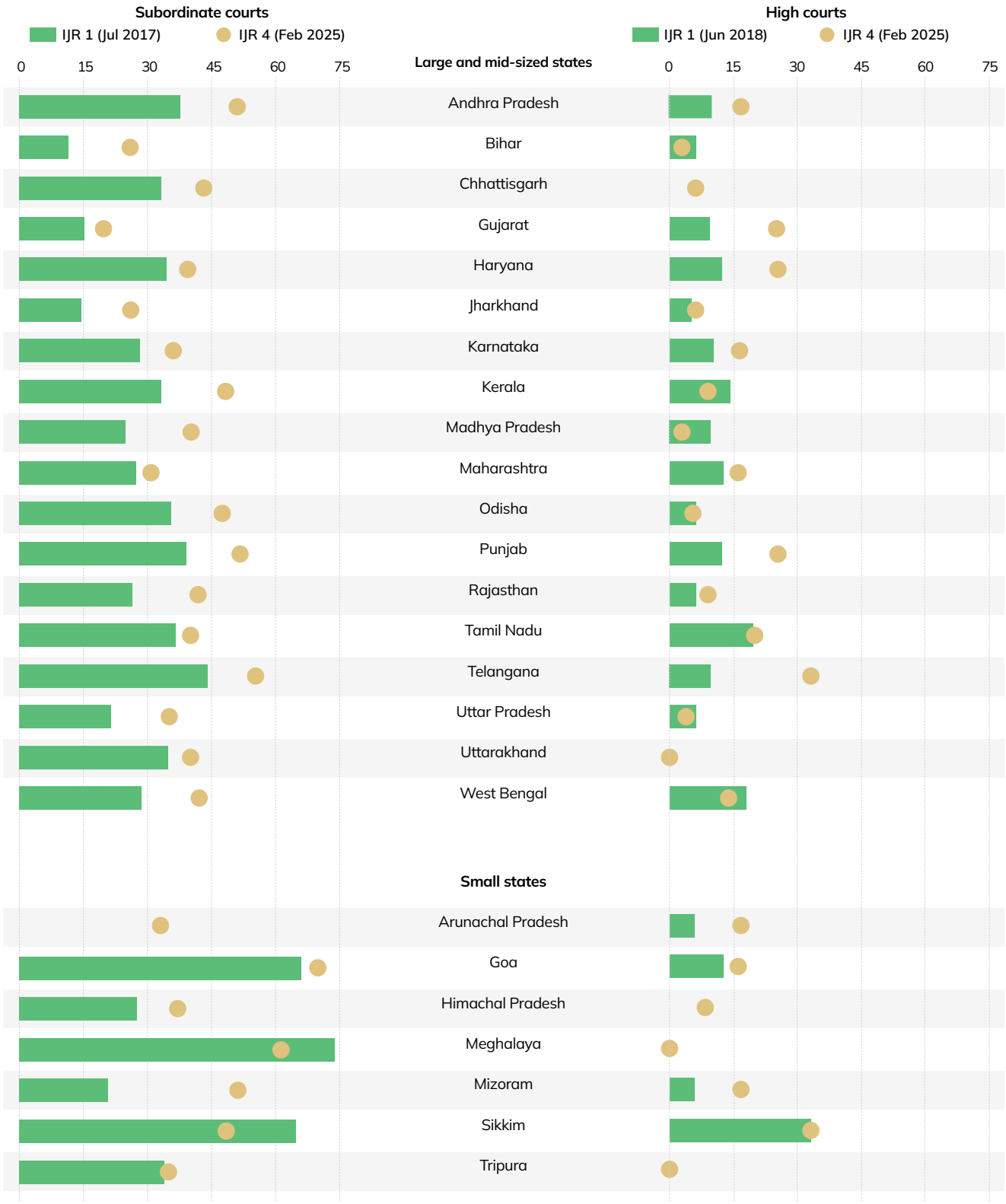
Caste diversity:[27] Laws and policies across states prescribe reservations in public institutions based on gender and caste and, more recently, for persons

18 Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana
19 Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand
20 Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, and Tripura
21 Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh, Goa and Maharashtra
22 Assam, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Punjab, Sikkim, Tripura, and Uttarakhand
23 At the high court and district court levels. The latest data for women judges at the subordinate court level is from Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2354 dated 20 March 2025. Available at https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/267/AU2354_GpF5iE.pdf?source=pqars.
24 Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab and Telangana
25 Delhi, Gujarat, Madras, Manipur, Punjab, Sikkim, and Telangana
26 High courts of Allahabad, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan
27 The 2025 figures for SC, ST and OBC subordinate court judges are from the the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2354 dated 20 March 2025. Available at : https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/267/AU2354_GpF5iE.pdf?source=pqars

Figure 33: Women in judiciary

While the share of women in subordinate courts has risen consistently in all states, the growth in the High Courts hasn't been the same. No state except Telangana and Sikkim has more than 30% women judges in the High Courts, Uttarakhand reported not having a single one.

Share of women judges (%)



Note: Data for IJR 1 for June 2018 for High Court judges and July 2017 for subordinate court judges. Data for IJR 4 for Feb 2025 for High Court and subordinate court judges.
Source: Department of justice and Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2354 dated 20 March 2025.

with disabilities. Caste-based reservations vary from state- to-state, but state-wise data on caste diversity in the high courts remains unavailable. However, parliamentary responses to caste diversity at the high courts state that, of 698 high court judges appointed since 2018, 22 are from the Scheduled Castes (SCs), 15 belong to the Scheduled Tribes (STs), 87 to the Other Backward Classes (OBC), and 37 are from the Minority Communities.[28]

At the district court level, no state/UT except Karnataka could fully meet all its SC, ST and OBC quotas. Ten states/UTs[29] met their OBC quotas; notably, at 50 per cent, Tamil Nadu has the second-highest percentage of reservation in this category, and has fulfilled its quota completely.

Telangana fulfilled its quotas for OBCs and STs. Ladakh (588%), Chandigarh (148%) Andhra Pradesh (111%), Karnataka (110%), and Assam (100%) met and exceeded their SC quotas.

Telangana, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand met their ST quotas while Gujarat and Odisha could only fill 2 per cent. West Bengal, despite having reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs, could not meet any of its quotas.

Budgets

Per capita spend on judiciary (Rs, 2022-23)

Both central and state governments contribute to budgets for the judiciary. The lion's share comes from state budgets while the centre's finances go towards special Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) like the e-courts project.[30] In 2022-23 no state spent more than 1 per cent of its budget on the judiciary. On average, all states' expenditure taken together was 0.59 per cent, ranging from 0.17 per cent (Arunachal Pradesh) to 0.88 per cent (Punjab).

Between financial years 2019-20 and 2022-23, the increase in expenditure on the judiciary in nineteen states/UTs[31] kept pace with the increase in overall state expenditure. Chandigarh and Mizoram showed the biggest improvements, with increases of 10.26 and 7.42 percentage points, respectively. But in twelve states/UTs,[32] expenditure on the judiciary lagged: Nagaland (-7.70 percentage points), Tripura (-6.39 percentage points), and Himachal Pradesh (-2.39 percentage points) recorded the widest gaps between increases in their state and judiciary expenditures.

When measuring this on a per capita basis, in 2022-23, the overall national spend on the judiciary averaged Rs. 182 per capita, an increase of Rs. 63 since 2017-18. Eight states/UTs[33] spent less than the national average. Sikkim which already had a high per capita spend at Rs. 496 in 2017-18, doubled it to Rs. 966 in 2022-23. This is nearly eight times what Uttar Pradesh spent (Rs. 125) in 2022-23 and more than nine times what Bihar spent (Rs. 101).

Sikkim's increase was also the highest for this period. Delhi on the other hand, spent the most (Rs. 544) in 2017-18 and increased its spend by nearly 50 per cent (Rs. 236 to Rs. 780) in 2022-23. Tripura (from Rs. 304 to Rs. 336) and Bihar (from Rs. 67 to Rs. 101) only increased their spend by Rs. 32 and Rs. 34, respectively—the lowest increases in this period. Nagaland is the only state that recorded a decline in per capita spend, from Rs. 223 to Rs. 204.

Workload

Cases pending (above 3 years) (High Court) (%, Jan 2025) NEW

Cases pending (above 3 years) (sub. court) (%, Jan 2025) NEW

Case clearance rate (High Court) (%, 2024)

Case clearance rate (sub. court) (%, 2024)

Historically, the judiciary has grappled with pendency and delays. Various law commission reports have reiterated

28 Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1075 dated 13 February 2025. Available at: https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/267/AU1075_Q9lwa5.pdf?source=pqars
29 Andhra Pradesh, , Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Puducherry, Punjab, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana
30 Suresh Nileena (2022). *Explained: How The Union Budget Funds India's Justice System, IndiaSpend*, 22 February 2022. Available at: https://www.indiaspend.com/explainers/how-the-union-budget-funds-indias-justice-system-804821
31 Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand
32 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Assam, Bihar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Delhi, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Tripura
33 Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh

the need for systemic judicial reforms to address the swelling workload. The 14th Law Commission report in 1958 addressed procedural delays emphasising the need for streamlining processes, particularly at the trial court level; the 120th report in 1987 advocated for a substantial increase in the number of judges; the 230th report in 2009 recommended court vacations be reduced at all levels and pushed for the use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and in 2016, a report by the Supreme Court's Centre for Research and Planning concluded that by 2040 there would be 40,000-80,000 judges in the district courts. Yet, arrears persist.

Of the 5.1 crore cases pending across high courts and district courts in January 2025, 12 per cent have been pending for more than ten years and 22 per cent for five to ten years. On average, 61 per cent and 46 per cent are pending for more than three years at both levels. In addition to these, 82,000 matters are pending in the Supreme Court.[34]

At the high court level, Uttar Pradesh records 4.5 lakh cases pending for more than ten years, followed by Maharashtra (1.7 lakh) and Madhya Pradesh (1.4 lakh). In all the high courts, with the exception of Karnataka, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Tripura, one in every two matters has been pending for more than three years; in the Allahabad High Court this applies to 71 per cent of all matters.

In the district courts of twenty six states/UTs, one in three cases has been pending for more than three years. In this, Bihar with 71 per cent pending cases, is the highest. Six states/UTs—Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Bihar, Meghalaya, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal—have more than 50 per cent cases pending for more than three years. Only Sikkim has less than 10 per cent such cases.

Seven states and UTs[35] have more than 10 per cent matters pending for more than ten years. Bihar, at 22 per cent, has the largest proportion, followed closely by West Bengal with 20 per cent. Seven states/UTs though have managed to keep pending cases down to less than 1 per cent,[36] while twenty three states it has ranged between 1.5 per cent to 9 per cent.[37]

Case clearance rates: The case clearance rate (CCR), or the number of cases disposed of in a year, measured against the number initiated that year is a standard metric used to determine the rate at which cases are cleared.[38] A CCR of more than 100 per cent results in a reduction in backlog. Nationally at the end of 2024, the high courts achieved a case clearance rate of 94 per cent—about the same as in 2022. Of the 25 high courts,[39] ten recorded clearance rates of over 100 per cent. Seven of these (Jharkhand, Tripura, Punjab & Haryana, Madras, Telangana, Odisha, and West Bengal) achieved this rate for the third year in a row. Between 2017 and 2024, the high courts of Bombay, Delhi, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan could never

Cases per judge

The average workload per judge has significantly increased as case pendencies have risen. At the end of 2024, most high courts, apart from Sikkim, Tripura, and Meghalaya, averaged over 1,000 cases per judge, with Allahabad and Madhya Pradesh high court judges' workloads amounting to an astonishing 15,000 cases each.

At the district court level, the average workload rose to 2,200 cases per judge, with substantial state variations. Twenty-eight states/UTs saw an average of 500-plus cases per judge, with Karnataka judges managing nearly 1,750, Kerala judges managing 3,800, and Uttar Pradesh judges 4,300. Only seven states/UTs maintained workloads below 300 cases per judge.

Over the past five years (2020-24), high court judge caseloads increased in thirteen courts; only Bihar, Meghalaya, and Puducherry managed to reduce district court judge workloads.

34 *January 2025: Pendency increases by over 2600 compared to last January*, Supreme Court Observer, 6 February 2025. Available at: https://www.scobserver.in/journal/january-2025-pendency-increases-by-over-2600-compared-to-last-january/
35 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Meghalaya, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal
36 Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Ladakh, Mizoram, Punjab, and Sikkim
37 Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, and Uttarakhand
38 DAKSH, *Deconstructing Delay: Analysis of Delays in High Courts and Subordinate Courts*. Available at: https://www.dakshindia.org/Daksh_Justice_in_India/19_chapter_01.xhtml
39 High courts of Andhra Pradesh, Calcutta, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madras, Orissa, Punjab & Haryana, Telangana, and Tripura

reach 100 per cent clearance. Andhra Pradesh cleared 100 per cent for the first time in 2024. The High Courts of Allahabad and Uttarakhand, which had registered 102 per cent and 110 per cent, respectively, in 2017, dropped to the lowest case clearance rates of 78 per cent and 75 per cent, respectively, in 2024.

Looking at the five-year period (2020-24), fifteen high courts steadily improved their CCRs.[40] The greatest improvements were in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. In contrast, the CCRs in evelen high courts'[41] declined, with Manipur and Sikkim falling the most.

At an overall CCR of 96 per cent district courts had almost the same case clearance rates as the high courts—which was a significant increase from 89 per cent in 2022. Over the five-year period, at the district court level, the CCRs of 23 states/UTs[42] have risen while they fell in11 states.[43]

In 2024, eighteen states/UTs[44] recorded case clearances of over 100 per cent at the district court level, twice the number (9) in 2022. The Andaman & Nicobar Islands registered the highest CCR of 153 per cent followed by Kerala (113%) and Haryana (112%). Mizoram (61%), West Bengal (64%) and Delhi (78%) recorded the lowest rates. Three states (Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan) managed a 100 per cent CCR for the first time since 2017, while eight states[45] have been unable to achieve this in any year since 2017.

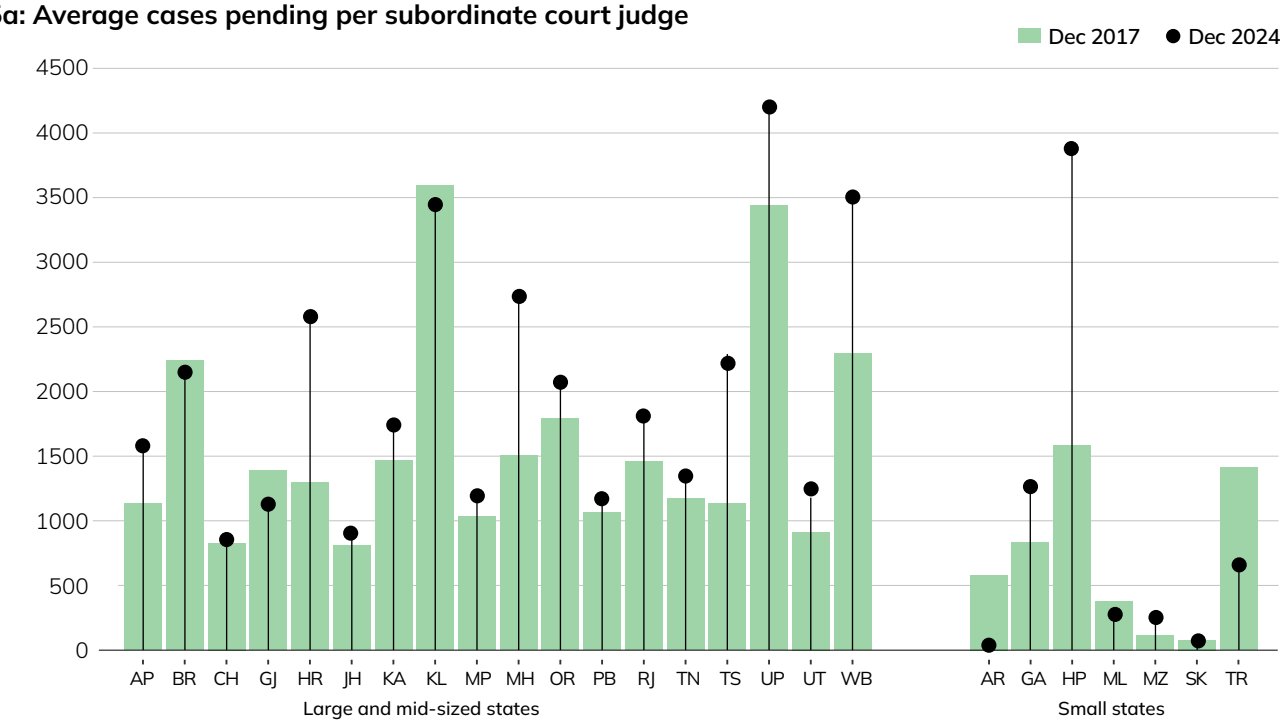
Leah Verghese, DAKSH;
Jyotika Randhawa, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy;
Nayanika Singhal, India Justice Report;
Sarab Lamba, India Justice Report

40 High courts of Andhra Pradesh, Bombay, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gauhati, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Patna, Punjab & Haryana, and Telangana
41 High courts of Allahabad, Calcutta, Karnataka, Manipur, Meghalaya, Orissa, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, and Uttarakhand
42 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Kerala, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh
43 Assam, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal
44 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, and Uttarakhand
45 Bihar, Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh

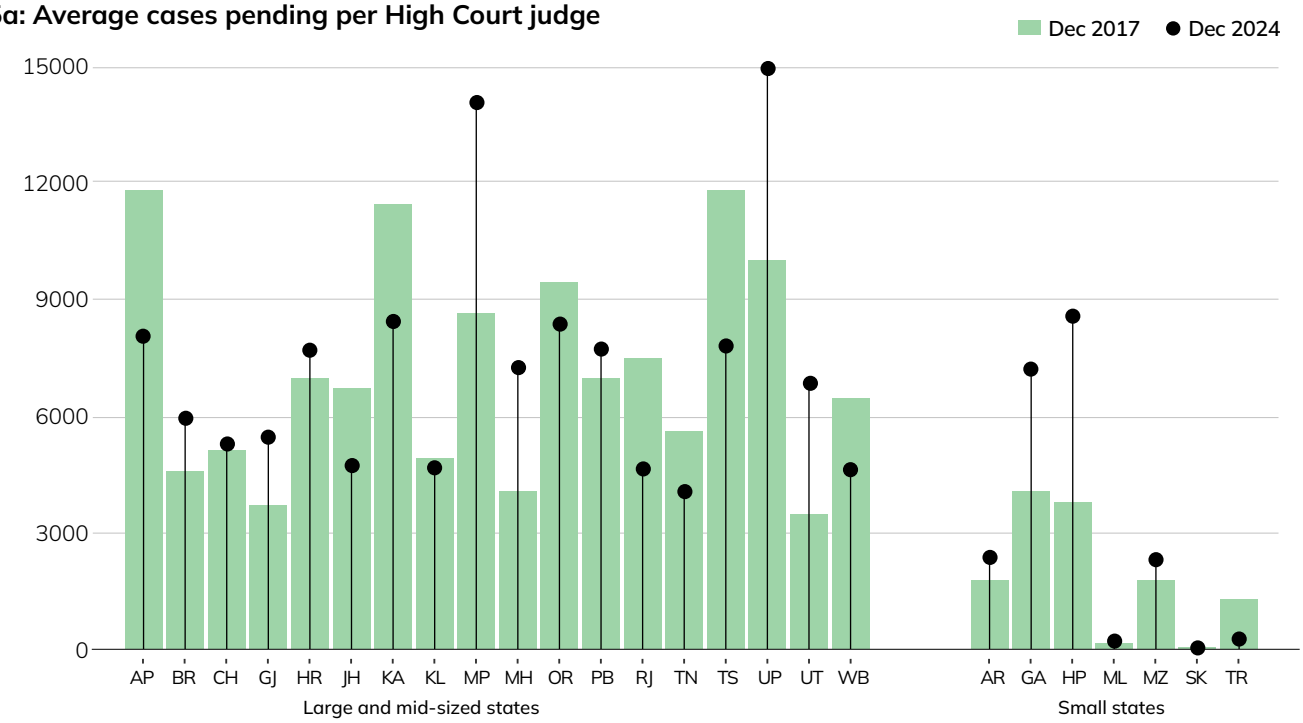
Figure 34: Cases pending per judge

Since 2017 cases pending per judge in subordinate courts has increased in most large and mid sized states except Bihar, Gujarat and Kerala. In High Courts, MP, UP and Uttarakhand have seen the largest increase.

5a: Average cases pending per subordinate court judge



5a: Average cases pending per High Court judge



Note: States that share a High Court have been assigned the same value.
Source: National Judicial Data Grid

Table 5: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

● Best in cluster
● Worst in cluster

Best
Middle
Worst

	Rank in cluster								
Theme							Budgets		Human Resources
Indicator							Per capita spend on judiciary (Rs, 2022-23)		Population per High Court judge (Feb 2025)
Scoring guide							Higher, the better		Lower, the better
	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2025	IJR 4 Score (out of 10)	Indicators improved on (out of 14)[1]			
National average							**182**		**1,871,954**
Large and mid-sized states									
Andhra Pradesh	13	14	11	5	6.68	10	187		1,784,133
Bihar	18	18	16	15	4.35	10	101	●	3,836,147 ●
Chhattisgarh	12	4	6	8	5.39	8	135		1,929,188
Gujarat	7	8	9	14	4.65	7	177		2,288,344
Haryana	3	7	14	10	4.98	9	337		1,241,431
Jharkhand	14	9	7	13	4.80	7	154		2,528,813
Karnataka	16	12	2	4	6.70	10	203		1,398,735 ●
Kerala	5	3	4	1	7.43	11	313		802,933
Madhya Pradesh	6	11	10	9	5.25	11	158		2,686,091
Maharashtra	4	5	12	11	4.94	6	250		1,931,956
Odisha	9	15	13	12	4.93	9	184		2,603,167
Punjab	2	2	3	7	5.48	9	343	●	1,241,431
Rajasthan	8	10	17	6	5.89	11	197		2,508,182
Tamil Nadu	1	1	1	3	6.72	9	214		1,215,954
Telangana	11	6	5	2	6.91	8	238		1,281,800
Uttar Pradesh	17	17	15	17	3.56	8	125		3,043,899
Uttarakhand	15	13	8	16	3.97	7	265		1,484,250
West Bengal	10	16	18	18	2.45	2	NA[2]		2,335,977
Small states									
Arunachal Pradesh	7	5	4	4	3.86	5	280		1,729,458
Goa	2	4	7	7	2.86	7	NA[2]		1,931,956 ●
Himachal Pradesh	3	2	6	5	3.75	7	379		628,500
Meghalaya	4	7	5	3	4.59	8	246	●	852,500
Mizoram	5	3	3	6	3.64	4	458		1,729,458
Sikkim	1	1	1	2	5.07	6	966	●	234,000 ●
Tripura	6	6	2	1	5.32	7	336		844,400
Unranked states									
Assam	Not ranked					11	118		1,729,458
Manipur	Not ranked					9	236		820,500
Nagaland	Not ranked					5	204		1,729,458
Union Territories									
A&N Islands	Not ranked					4	498		2,335,977
Chandigarh	Not ranked					7	746		1,241,431
DNH & DD	Not ranked					5	62		1,931,956
Delhi	Not ranked					10	780		582,789
Jammu & Kashmir	Not ranked					8	235		940,133
Ladakh	Not ranked					8	332		940,133
Lakshadweep	Not ranked					10	356		802,933
Puducherry	Not ranked					8	NA[2]		1,215,954

Data sources: National Commission on Population, 2019; Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India for 2022-2023, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs; Department of Justice; Parliamentary questions; Supreme Court Annual Report (Volume 2 - High Courts) 2023-2024; National Judicial Data Grid

Common notes: i. States arranged by clusters in alphabetical order. ii. A&N Islands: Andaman & Nicobar Islands. iii. D&NH/D&D: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. iii. New indicators in IJR 4 highlighted in yellow. iv. Sub. court: subordinate court. v. pp: percentage points (the difference between two percentages). vi. NA: Not available. vii. CY: Calendar year; FY: Financial year. viii. SC: Scheduled castes; ST: Scheduled tribes; OBC: Other backward classes. ix. States and UTs that share a High Court have been assigned identical values for High Court indicators. These are Assam, Arunachal Pradesh Mizoram and Nagaland; Kerala and Lakshadweep; Maharashtra, Goa, D&N Haveli & Daman & Diu; Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh; Tamil Nadu and Puducherry; West Bengal and Andaman & Nicobar Islands; Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

1. Count of indicators on which a state has improved over IJR 3. Only non-trend indicators present in both IJR 3 and IJR 4 have been considered. For indicators with benchmarks, if a state met the benchmark, it was marked as an improvement even if its value declined within the benchmark. If a state didn't meet the benchmark but its value improved, it was marked as an improvement. Where an indicator value was not available for one or both years, that indicator was not considered. **2.** Budget data for 2022-23 not available.

Table 5: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Theme		Human Resources				Diversity
Indicator		Population per sub. court judge (Jan 2025)	High Court judge vacancy (%, Feb 2025)	Sub. Court judge vacancy (%, Jan 2025)	High Court staff vacancy (%, Jun 2024)	Women judges (High Court) (%, Feb 2025)
Scoring guide		Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Higher, the better
National average		**69,017**	**32.7**	**20.5**	**26.5**	**14.0**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		94,901	18.9	11.7	18.0	16.7
Bihar		84,915	35.8	23.9	39.8	2.9
Chhattisgarh		66,381	27.3	29.9	22.1	6.3
Gujarat		61,795	38.5	31.1 🔴	46.6 🔴	25.0
Haryana		56,145	40.0	29.4	35.4	25.5
Jharkhand		79,962	36.0	28.2	22.1	6.3
Karnataka		59,392	21.0	16.1	16.6	16.3
Kerala		67,660	4.3 🟢	12.9	4.1 🟢	8.9
Madhya Pradesh		52,388	37.7	16.6	18.1	3.0
Maharashtra		66,152	27.7	11.4	26.1	16.2
Odisha		55,716	45.5	19.2	35.1	5.6
Punjab	🟢	43,046	40.0	10.1	35.4	25.5
Rajasthan		63,087	34.0	20.7	30.9	9.1
Tamil Nadu		75,579	13.3	25.3	17.2	20.0
Telangana		86,413	28.6	20.5	23.8	33.3 🟢
Uttar Pradesh		88,930	50.6 🔴	26.9	19.4	3.8
Uttarakhand		43,978	27.3	9.4 🟢	22.0	0.0 🔴
West Bengal	🔴	114,334	40.3	20.8	33.4	14.0
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		48,182	20.0	25.0	9.8 🟢	16.7
Goa		39,775	27.7	20.0	26.1 🔴	16.2
Himachal Pradesh		47,138	29.4 🔴	10.6 🟢	14.9	8.3
Meghalaya	🔴	60,893	0.0 🟢	43.4 🔴	12.2	0.0 🔴
Mizoram	🟢	28,022	20.0	39.2	9.8	16.7
Sikkim		30,522	0.0 🟢	34.3	15.3	33.3 🟢
Tripura		38,734	0.0 🟢	18.0	11.4	0.0
Unranked states						
Assam		78,920	20.0	4.9	9.8	16.7
Manipur		66,980	20.0	21.0	21.4	25.0
Nagaland		94,750	20.0	29.4	9.8	16.7
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		NA[3]	40.3	NA[3]	33.4	14.0
Chandigarh		41,833	40.0	0.0	35.4	25.5
DNH & DD		241,333	27.7	14.3	26.1	16.2
Delhi		27,579	36.7	10.5	40.6	23.7
Jammu & Kashmir		49,455	40.0	13.4	25.1	13.3
Ladakh		27,636	40.0	35.3	25.1	13.3
Lakshadweep		17,250	4.3	0.0	4.1	8.9
Puducherry		66,154	13.3	27.8	17.2	20.0

Data sources: National Commission on Population, 2019; Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India for 2022-2023, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs; Department of Justice; Parliamentary questions; Supreme Court Annual Report (Volume 2 - High Courts) 2023-2024; National Judicial Data Grid

Common notes: i. States arranged by clusters in alphabetical order. ii. A&N Islands: Andaman & Nicobar Islands. iii. D&NH/D&D: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. iii. New indicators in IJR 3 highlighted in yellow. iv. Sub. court: subordinate court. v. pp: percentage points (the difference between two percentages). vi. NA: Not available. vii. CY: Calendar year; FY: Financial year. viii. SC: Scheduled castes; ST: Scheduled tribes; OBC: Other backward classes. ix. States and UTs that share a High Court have been assigned identical values for High Court indicators. These are Assam, Arunachal Pradesh Mizoram and Nagaland; Kerala and Lakshadweep; Maharashtra, Goa, D&N Haveli & Daman & Diu; Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh; Tamil Nadu and Puducherry; West Bengal and Andaman & Nicobar Islands; Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

3. Subordinate court judge data available is combined with that of West Bengal.

Table 5: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

● Best in cluster
● Worst in cluster

	Theme	Diversity				Infrastructure	Workload
	Indicator	Women judges (sub. Court) (%, Feb 2025)	SC judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)	ST judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)	OBC judges, actual to reserved (sub. court) (%, Feb 2025)	Courthall shortfall (%, Jan 2025)	NEW Cases pending (above 3 years) (High Court) (%, Jan 2025)
	Scoring guide	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better
National average		**38.3**	**NA**	**NA**	**NA**	**14.5**	**61.1**
Large and mid-sized states							
Andhra Pradesh		50.9	111 ●	83	138	-3.0	61.9
Bihar		26.6	74	84	60	19.0	55.4
Chhattisgarh		43.7	92	60	97	25.3	53.8
Gujarat		20.8 ●	97	2	47	12.3	57.0
Haryana		40.7	60	NA[8]	40	25.4 ●	67.3
Jharkhand		26.5	21	16	16	7.8	53.4
Karnataka		37.0	110	116	168 ●	10.3	42.7 ●
Kerala		48.8	84	16	112	6.0	58.5
Madhya Pradesh		40.6	82	58	112	20.6	66.1
Maharashtra		30.8	80	5	120	-11.0 ●	63.7
Odisha		47.7	18	2	64	13.7	57.3
Punjab		51.9	92	0	104	23.8	67.3
Rajasthan		42.4	69	62	76	16.3	58.0
Tamil Nadu		40.8	86	73	113	8.9	51.5
Telangana		55.3 ●	81	119 ●	123	1.4	64.8
Uttar Pradesh		35.5	69	53	86	23.0	71.0 ●
Uttarakhand		40.7	81	101	89	15.1	52.4
West Bengal		42.4	NA[4] ●	NA[4] ●	0 ●	19.7	66.7
Small states							
Arunachal Pradesh		33.3 ●	NA[5]	91 ●	NA[11]	22.7	52.0
Goa		70.0 ●	0 ●	33 ●	15 ●	0.0 ●	63.7 ●
Himachal Pradesh		37.5	56	78	40	0.6	53.3
Meghalaya		60.7	NA[6]	64	NA[13]	28.3	16.5
Mizoram		51.1	NA[5]	NA[9]	NA[12]	36.5	52.0
Sikkim		47.8	0 ●	60	100 ●	42.9 ●	12.9
Tripura		35.8	57 ●	53	NA[12]	37.6	2.7 ●
Unranked states							
Assam		49.0	100	70	0	13.0	52.0
Manipur		42.9	0	73	47	32.3	31.7
Nagaland		62.5	NA[5]	0	0	11.8	52.0
Union Territories							
A&N Islands		0.0	NA[7]	NA[10]	NA[14]	NA[16]	66.7
Chandigarh		43.3	148	NA[8]	62	-3.3	67.3
DNH & DD		0.0	0	0	NA[15]	57.1	63.7
Delhi		44.6	51	34	0	22.3	56.1
Jammu & Kashmir		36.6	87	101	NA[15]	36.6	50.2
Ladakh		27.3	588	92	NA[12]	35.3	50.2
Lakshadweep		25.0	NA[5]	56	NA[12]	25.0	58.5
Puducherry		30.8	52	0	168	5.6	51.5

Data sources: National Commission on Population, 2019; Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India for 2022-2023, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs; Department of Justice; Parliamentary questions; Supreme Court Annual Report (Volume 2 - High Courts) 2023-2024; National Judicial Data Grid

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4. Source data shows 0 SC and ST judges. **5.** No SC reservation and no SC Judges. **6.** No specific reservation approved for SCs. **7.** SC reservation data not available.
8. No ST reservation and no ST Judges. **9.** No ST reservation. 10. No ST judges. **11.** No OBC reservation. **12.** No OBC reservation and no OBC Judges. **13.** No specific reservation approved for OBCs.
14. No OBC judges. **15.** No OBC category given. **16**. Data on sanctioned judges not available.

Table 5: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

	Theme		Workload			Trends		
	Indicator	NEW Cases pending (above 3 years) (sub. court) (%, Jan 2025)	Case clearance rate (High Court) (%, 2024)	Case clearance rate (sub. court) (%, 2024)	Cases pending (per High Court judge) (pp, CY '20-'24)	Cases pending (per sub. court judge) (pp, CY '20-'24)	Total cases pending (High Court) (pp, CY '20-'24)
	Scoring guide	Lower, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Higher, the better
National average		**46.4**	**94**	**96**	**0.9**	**5.6**	**3.0**
Large and mid-sized states							
Andhra Pradesh		33.5	104	96	-10.6	8.6	4.8
Bihar		70.7 🔴	96	95	3.4	-1.3 🟢	3.8
Chhattisgarh		28.3	113	100	3.3	4.4	4.1
Gujarat		33.7	95	103	3.3	0.2	6.0
Haryana		34.6	107	112	2.7	8.8	2.0
Jharkhand		46.5	129 🟢	103	1.6	5.2	-2.3
Karnataka		35.5	88	94	-4.7	5.0	2.5
Kerala		38.5	103	113 🟢	-4.3	-0.6	1.0
Madhya Pradesh		38.5	88	101	6.3	6.5	5.3
Maharashtra		47.7	83	87	9.4	7.1	8.9 🔴
Odisha		58.5	101	93	-1.5	2.6	0.8
Punjab		23.9 🟢	107	103	2.7	2.5	2.0
Rajasthan		45.7	86	104	-8.6	2.4	-4.4 🟢
Tamil Nadu		35.1	105	100	-4.4	5.1	-2.5
Telangana		36.2	102	96	-11.5 🟢	4.8	2.3
Uttar Pradesh		52.9	78	97	10.6	7.6	4.3
Uttarakhand		28.0	75 🔴	101	13.7 🔴	8.0	8.8
West Bengal		55.8	100	64 🔴	-2.4	10.0 🔴	-2.6
Small states							
Arunachal Pradesh		45.8	91	113 🟢	2.6	NA[17]	7.1
Goa		45.0	83 🔴	108	9.4 🔴	3.2	8.9
Himachal Pradesh		21.8	92	91	8.4	15.8 🔴	14.1 🔴
Meghalaya		51.6 🔴	92	107	-6.0	-1.3 🟢	6.1
Mizoram		21.6	91	61 🔴	2.6	9.6	7.1
Sikkim		9.5 🟢	86	103	-2.0	1.6	-1.3
Tripura		19.9	111 🟢	101	-24.7 🟢	2.9	-16.8 🟢
Unranked states							
Assam		24.9	91	84	2.6	8.9	7.1
Manipur		37.3	79	103	13.4	3.6	14.0
Nagaland		35.9	91	90	2.6	6.4	7.1
Union Territories							
A&N Islands		65.9	100	153	-2.4	NA[18]	-2.6
Chandigarh		16.3	107	81	2.7	13.3	2.0
DNH & DD		37.3	83	88	9.4	7.5	8.9
Delhi		30.4	90	78	9.0	7.6	7.4
Jammu & Kashmir		36.4	95	90	-18.2	NA[19]	-10.5
Ladakh		20.2	95	93	-18.2	NA[19]	-10.5
Lakshadweep		32.1	103	93	-4.3	NA[17]	1.0
Puducherry		37.1	105	108	-4.4	-10.3	-2.5

Data sources: National Commission on Population, 2019; Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India for 2022-2023, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs; Department of Justice; Parliamentary questions; Supreme Court Annual Report (Volume 2 - High Courts) 2023-2024; National Judicial Data Grid

Common notes: i. States arranged by clusters in alphabetical order. ii. A&N Islands: Andaman & Nicobar Islands. iii. D&NH/D&D: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. iii. New indicators in IJR 3 highlighted in yellow. iv. Sub. court: subordinate court. v. pp: percentage points (the difference between two percentages). vi. NA: Not available. vii. CY: Calendar year; FY: Financial year. viii. SC: Scheduled castes; ST: Scheduled tribes; OBC: Other backward classes. ix. States and UTs that share a High Court have been assigned identical values for High Court indicators. These are Assam, Arunachal Pradesh Mizoram and Nagaland; Kerala and Lakshadweep; Maharashtra, Goa, D&N Haveli & Daman & Diu; Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh; Tamil Nadu and Puducherry; West Bengal and Andaman & Nicobar Islands; Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

17. Data not available on National Judicial Data Grid. **18.** Latest subordinate court judge data available is combined with that of West Bengal. Hence, not computed.
19. Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are not included in this indicator as their 5-year data was not available separately.

Table 5: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Theme		Trends					
Indicator		Total cases pending (sub. court) (pp, CY '20-'24)	Judge vacancy (High Court) (%, CY '20-'24)	Judge vacancy (sub. court) (%, CY '20-'24)	Case clearance rate (High Court) (pp, CY '20-'24)	Case clearance rate (sub. court) (pp, CY '20-'24)	Difference in spend: judiciary vs state (pp, FY '19-'23)
Scoring guide		Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better
National average		**7.3**	**-11.1**	**1.1**	**0.87**	**1.43**	**1.20**
Large and mid-sized states							
Andhra Pradesh		9.5	-60.7	-26.6	9.83	1.11	0.36
Bihar		4.3	-34.5	-7.9	2.00	4.40	-0.63
Chhattisgarh		7.7	-20.9	52.8	5.20	1.02	3.55
Gujarat		-0.1	-16.4	28.2	2.73	-0.29	-0.64
Haryana		11.6	12.4	-18.5	3.96	5.78	2.56
Jharkhand		6.7	20.0	45.4	3.79	0.74	5.23
Karnataka		5.8	-25.7	-23.7	-1.17	-0.90	6.10
Kerala		2.4	-82.1	2.1	1.82	3.54	0.86
Madhya Pradesh		7.1	-10.1	-18.5	1.50	2.50	3.14
Maharashtra		7.1	0.6	0.0	0.11	0.56	2.44
Odisha		4.3	2.3	-5.9	-2.69	4.83	3.36
Punjab		6.7	12.4	-29.6	3.96	1.89	-1.67
Rajasthan		5.7	-35.2	56.3	-0.01	2.14	6.13
Tamil Nadu		3.9	-52.2	31.7	1.21	0.74	-1.03
Telangana		10.6	-34.2	1.4	7.62	3.01	2.65
Uttar Pradesh		8.4	39.3	-7.1	-3.35	3.24	0.56
Uttarakhand		12.1	125.0	-33.6	-3.59	-3.81	3.79
West Bengal		8.8	-14.9	119.9	-2.05	-5.08	NA[22]
Small states							
Arunachal Pradesh		NA[17]	47.7	13.9	1.61	NA[17]	6.49
Goa		1.4	0.6	0.0	0.11	4.38	NA[22]
Himachal Pradesh		17.0	2.0	32.7	6.14	-0.15	-2.39
Meghalaya		1.2	-100.0	-12.2	-1.61	4.34	-0.73
Mizoram		9.3	47.7	19.4	1.61	-2.70	7.42
Sikkim		5.3	NA[20]	71.4	-4.99	0.86	4.60
Tripura		5.3	-100.0	-5.9	-0.53	-0.08	-6.39
Unranked states							
Assam		11.2	47.7	-57.3	1.61	-2.51	-4.80
Manipur		8.3	300.0	-37.1	-10.19	1.08	3.00
Nagaland		5.5	47.7	38.7	1.61	-1.34	-7.70
Union Territories							
A&N Islands		-0.7	-14.9	NA[21]	-2.05	12.38	-9.68
Chandigarh		13.7	12.4	-100.0	3.96	-2.05	10.26
DNH & DD		7.5	0.6	0.0	0.11	-3.49	-12.41
Delhi		10.5	-19.0	-44.2	0.63	0.28	-1.61
Jammu & Kashmir		NA[19]	14.9	-3.6	3.84	0.64	NA[19]
Ladakh		NA[19]	14.9	-29.4	3.84	1.70	NA[19]
Lakshadweep		NA[17]	-82.1	NA[20]	1.82	NA[17]	2.29
Puducherry		-1.0	-52.2	-51.9	1.21	3.51	NA[22]

Data sources: National Commission on Population, 2019; Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India for 2022-2023, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs; Department of Justice; Parliamentary questions; Supreme Court Annual Report (Volume 2 - High Courts) 2023-2024; National Judicial Data Grid

Common notes: i. States arranged by clusters in alphabetical order. ii. A&N Islands: Andaman & Nicobar Islands. iii. D&NH/D&D: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. iii. New indicators in IJR 3 highlighted in yellow. iv. Sub. court: subordinate court. v. pp: percentage points (the difference between two percentages). vi. NA: Not available. vii. CY: Calendar year; FY: Financial year. viii. SC: Scheduled castes; ST: Scheduled tribes; OBC: Other backward classes. ix. States and UTs that share a High Court have been assigned identical values for High Court indicators. These are Assam, Arunachal Pradesh Mizoram and Nagaland; Kerala and Lakshadweep; Maharashtra, Goa, D&N Haveli & Daman & Diu; Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh; Tamil Nadu and Puducherry; West Bengal and Andaman & Nicobar Islands; Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

17. Data not available on National Judicial Data Grid. **18.** Latest subordinate court judge data available is combined with that of West Bengal. Hence, not computed. **19.** Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are not included in this indicator as their 5-year data was not available separately. **20**. Zero vacancy in both year 1 and year 5 of the trend period. **21.** Data shows 0 sanctioned subordinate court judges for last 4 years. **22.** Budget data for 2021-22 and 2022-23 not available.

Legal Aid

Legal Aid Ranking

Color guide

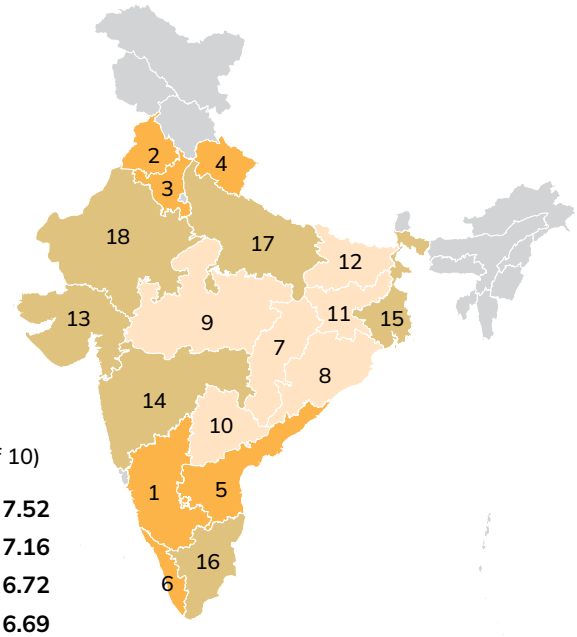
Best | Middle | Worst

Indicators (in IJR 4) **17**

Clusters

I. 18 large and mid-sized states (population above 10 million)

II. 7 small-sized states (population up to 10 million)



Map 15: Large and mid-sized states

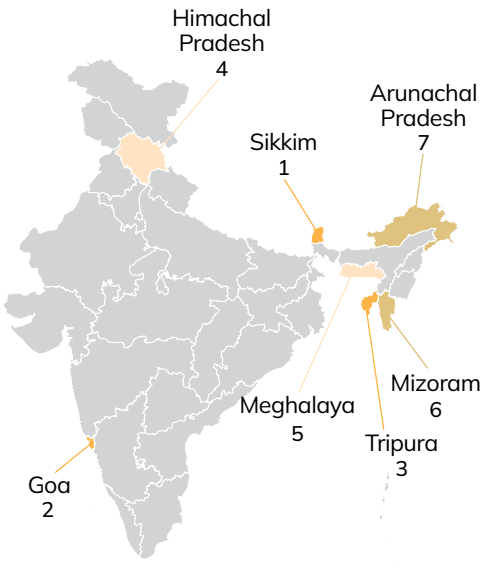
Rank (out of 18)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
7	16	2	1	Karnataka	7.52
3	3	9	2	Punjab	7.16
2	5	4	3	Haryana	6.72
17	10	8	4	Uttarakhand	6.69
10	14	13	5	Andhra Pradesh	6.51
1	7	6	6	Kerala	6.50
8	15	11	7	Chhattisgarh	6.41
15	8	10	8	Odisha	6.31
9	12	14	9	Madhya Pradesh	6.09
4	6	5	10	Telangana	6.00
14	4	1	11	Jharkhand	5.70
16	2	16	12	Bihar	5.54
6	9	3	13	Gujarat	5.28
5	1	7	14	Maharashtra	4.81
13	17	15	15	West Bengal	4.50
12	11	12	16	Tamil Nadu	4.27
18	18	18	17	Uttar Pradesh	4.05
11	13	17	18	Rajasthan	3.75

Map 16: Small states

Rank (out of 7)

IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	NEW IJR 4 2025	State	Score (out of 10)
4	3	1	1	Sikkim	5.38
1	1	2	2	Goa	5.35
5	2	4	3	Tripura	4.59
3	6	5	4	Himachal Pradesh	4.34
6	5	3	5	Meghalaya	3.78
2	4	6	6	Mizoram	3.69
7	7	7	7	Arunachal Pradesh	2.53

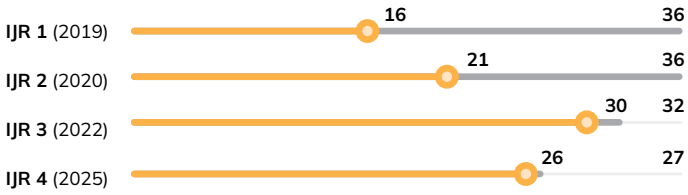


Pushing Expectations

Total states*

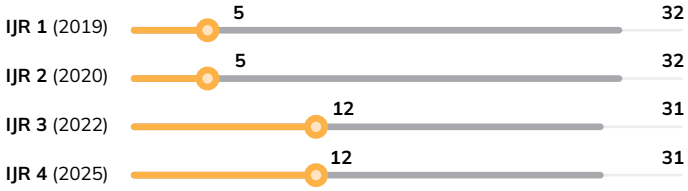
State budgets

Number of states/UTs contributing above 50% to their legal aid budget.



Rural coverage

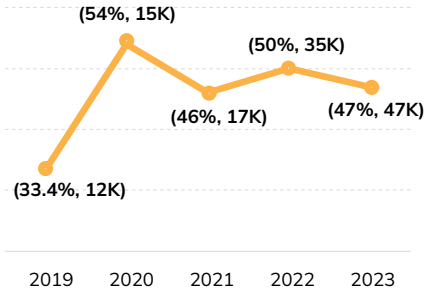
Number of states/UTs where the average number of villages covered by a legal aid clinic is less than 150.



* Number of states/UTs (out of 36) for which data was available.

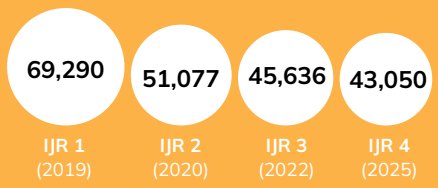
Undertrials

Share of UTPs released on UTRC recommendations



Paralegal volunteers

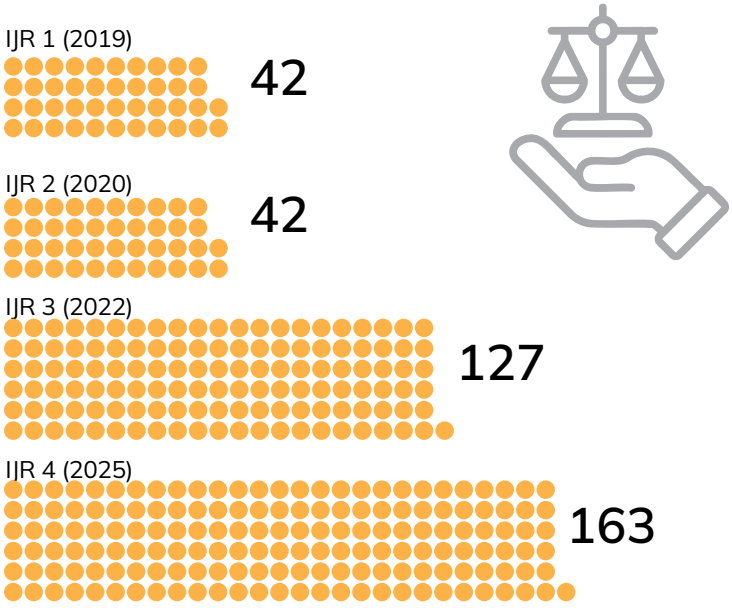
Number of PLVs



The number of PLVs decreased by 38% between IJR 1 and 4. Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, and Punjab show the largest drops.

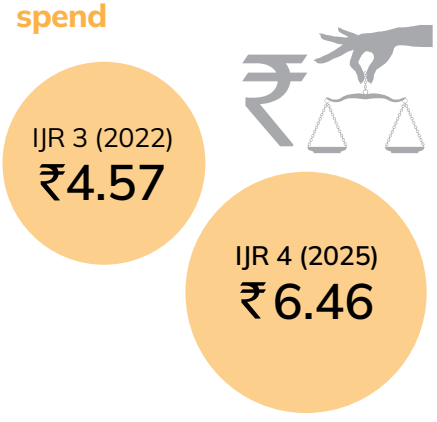
Legal services clinics

National average number of villages serviced by one legal service clinic



In Jharkhand, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, one clinic serves more than 800 villages.

National per capita spend



CHAPTER 4

Legal Aid for the Poor or Poor Legal Aid?

Introduction

The concept of legal aid—the provision of free legal services to those who cannot afford them— holds immense significance in ensuring access to justice for all. The Legal Services Authorities Act of 1987 established a comprehensive framework for state-funded free legal aid delivery: representation, advice and counselling, dispute resolution, and spreading awareness through a network of legal services institutions (LSIs) at the national, state, district, and sub-divisional levels.

Several years' efforts to deliver a slate of services in campaign mode have helped raise awareness and significantly increased the number of beneficiaries. Between April 2023 and March 2024, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) records reaching 15.5 lakh beneficiaries up from 12 lakh in 2019.[1]

This is a promising development. Other positives include increased financial allocations from both Centre and state, steady disposals at Lok Adalats, increased efforts to provide targeted services through an emphasis on mediation, a small increase in jail-based legal clinics, a newly minted system of Legal Aid Defense Counsels (LADCs), and greater gender diversity among legal aid functionaries and providers.

However, concerns remain about optimal utilisation of funds, uneven human resource deployment and consequential means of monitoring the quality of representation, and other service delivery vehicles. The introduction of a national toll-free helpline and online systems of single-window access signals a shift to reach out through newer means of communication "to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen". Nevertheless, the significant shrinkage in community-based legal aid services like village legal clinics and paralegal volunteers continues to raise concerns about the system's ability to reach the most vulnerable and marginalised populations and deliver on a real-time basis.

Major Five-Year Trends

Over five years (2017-2023) the overall legal aid budget has increased with states increasingly taking the lead in funding. Gender diversity is improving gradually. Jail-based legal services, including clinics, jail-visiting lawyers and Legal Aid Defense Counsels (LADCs), have expanded access to representation for accused persons/ prisoners. However, a significant decline in the number of empanelled lawyers and, particularly, paralegal volunteers has limited the availability of local community-level legal services.

The fourth IJR adds four new indicators: per capita spend on legal aid, case clearance rates for pre-litigation and court-referred adjudication at Lok Adalats organised by State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA) and gender diversity amongst District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) secretaries.

Karnataka's impressive ascent in legal aid rankings, from sixteenth in 2020 to second in 2022, continued, propelling it to first place in 2025. This achievement can be

1 Section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, enumerates those who can avail free legal aid as: members of Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes; victims of trafficking; women; children; persons in custody; persons with disability; victims of mass disasters, ethnic violence or atrocity; industrial workmen and those whose annual income is less than Rs. 9,000 or such other higher amount as may be prescribed by the State Government. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/the-legal-services-authorities-act-1987

attributed to several factors, including steady increases in state budget allocations and utilisation, improved diversity among legal aid providers, a robust network of community-based paralegal volunteers, well-staffed front offices, and a complete absence of vacancies at the secretary level. Uttarakhand at fourth place has also shown a consistent upward movement between 2020 and 2025, while Andhra Pradesh recorded the highest rise from thirteenth to fifth. Punjab, which had ranked third since 2019, fell to ninth in 2022, climbed seven places to second in 2025.

Jharkhand, which had occupied first place in 2022 fell ten places to eleventh; Gujarat, third in 2022, fell ten places to thirteenth; and Maharashtra too fell seven spots from seventh to fourteenth. Common contributing factors included diminished budget utilisation despite better overall allocations, and reduced village clinic and paralegal services.

Between 2019 and 2025, only Uttarakhand has shown a steady rise in rank while Rajasthan has declined steadily. Most states have zigzagged in rank, with Kerala, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh showing the most noticeable fluctuations.

There is less fluctuation amongst the small states. Sikkim and Goa retained their positions as the two top-performing states. Tripura and Himachal Pradesh climbed up one spot to third and the fourth places, respectively, while Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal at fifth, sixth and seventh place brought up the tail end.

Human Resources

Sanctioned secretaries as % of DLSAs (%, Mar 2024)

DLSA secretary vacancy (%, Mar 2024)

PLVs per lakh population (Number, Sep 2024)

Equitable delivery of legal aid and services across relies on 'legal aid providers' being available in all districts and sub-divisions. Legal service institutions require adequate human resources. These include empanelled lawyers, remand and retainer lawyers, and the recently constituted Legal Aid Defense Counsels (LADCs). In addition, locally based paralegal volunteers are deployed as a bridge to connect the community to legal services institutions.

The Legal Service Authorities Act, 1987 mandates states set up a District Legal Service Authority (DLSA) in every district to coordinate the delivery of legal services. Each such authority has to have a full-time district-level member secretary to oversee its functioning.[2] The SLSA in consultation with the Chairman of the concerned DLSA is responsible for appointing state and district-level secretaries to head legal services institutions (LSIs) at these levels.

Vacancies among full-time secretaries: As of December 2024, there were 709 DLSAs and 2,376 Taluka Legal Service Committees (TLSCs) across the country.[3] District-level bodies are chaired by the senior-most district and sessions judge in the district. A judicial officer is assigned as member-secretary[4] and 'human resources'[5] includes panel lawyers, LADCs, pro bono counsels, para-legal volunteers, mediators, and counsellors.[6]

Though 586 judicial districts make up the 25 ranked states, NALSA records the existence of 615 DLSAs: Arunachal Pradesh records 25 DLSAs serving 7 districts; Mizoram has 8 DLSAs for 2 districts; Telangana 34 DLSAs for 33 districts; Sikkim 6 DLSAs for 4 districts; and West Bengal 23 DLSAs for 22 districts.

However, despite an emphasis on appointing full-time secretaries for each DLSA[7] there are only 582 sanctioned posts for these 615 authorities. Maharashtra records more sanctioned posts than DLSAs (37/34), while others like Uttar Pradesh (71/74), Kerala (13/14), Sikkim (2/6), Arunachal Pradesh (5/25), and Mizoram (0/8) have fewer sanctioned posts than there are DLSAs.

2 Section 9 of the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/the-legal-services-authorities-act-1987
3 Data as per RTI response from National Legal Services Authority.
4 Section 9(2) of the Legal Service Authorities Act 1987
5 National Legal Service Authority, *Manual for District Legal Service Authorities 2023, Part B - Resources & Infrastructure of DLSAs*. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/library/manual-for-district-legal-services-authorities-2023
6 *Ibid*
7 Guidelines issued by the National Legal Services Authority for State Legal Services Authorities, District Legal Services Authorities, Taluk Legal Services Committees and High Court Legal Services Committees. (In light of the discussions of the working groups held at the National Judicial Academy on 17-19 December 2011). Available at: https://cgslsa.gov.in/Guideline/General%20Guidelines%20for%20SLSA,%20DLSA,%20TLSC.pdf

Sanctioned posts, whether more or less, do not always translate into positions being filled. Overall, the deficit of secretaries stands at 34 but is an improvement on 2022 when it stood at 73. Sikkim has continued to function without any secretaries in its DLSAs since 2019, while vacancies in Tamil Nadu have jumped to 50 per cent from 9.4 per cent in 2022.

Four states—Andhra Pradesh (8%), Bihar (3%), Kerala (23%), and Odisha (13%)—that had earlier recorded no vacancies saw an increase. In contrast, at 73 per cent in 2022, Meghalaya reduced its vacancies to 45 per cent and Tripura from 60 per cent to 13 per cent.

Lawyers: NALSA mandates that every legal services institution empanel lawyers with at least three years of experience.

Determining the optimal number of lawyers to empanel in each state and district is a complex process. It involves careful consideration of various factors by the DLSA, in close consultation with the SLSA and NALSA. These factors include the estimated caseload, availability of both central and state funding, density and geographic spread of population in the region, prevalent types of legal cases, performance of existing panel lawyers, and availability of qualified legal professionals.

Empanelled lawyers may either function as retainer lawyers, jail-visiting lawyers, or remand lawyers, LSIs may also maintain separate panels for different case types and assist at Lok Adalats. Recognising the critical importance of early legal intervention, 6,715 lawyers currently serve as remand lawyers across the country.[8]

In September 2024, 41,553 lawyers were empanelled nationwide. This is a 17 per cent decrease from 2022 and a 35 per cent decrease from 2019 numbers.[9] A possible reason for this reduction is the shift to the public-defender model, i.e., the Legal Aid Defence Counsel System.

Looked at state-wise, the numbers indicate uneven distribution. Illustratively, in September 2024, Tamil Nadu with 32 districts had 4,247 panel lawyers, the highest in the country; Maharashtra with 34 districts had 3,401; while Madhya Pradesh with 50 districts and Uttar Pradesh with 74 districts—a larger number of administrative areas—recorded just 1,593 and 1,871 panel lawyers, respectively. Presently the data does not indicate their geographic deployment.

Legal aid lawyers are required to be trained from time to time and Monitoring and Mentoring Committees operate at various levels to evaluate performance and oversee progress in legal aid cases. The overarching objective is to guarantee adequate legal representation for all eligible beneficiaries while effectively utilising available resources.

Paralegal volunteers: Despite increased funding and better-targeted services, the legal aid system faces a critical threat to one of its core functions: providing communities with readily available legal resources for dispute resolution and awareness-raising. While a steady increase in the number of 'beneficiaries' suggests an expanding demand for their services, paralegal volunteers (PLVs) embedded within the community and tasked with providing these very services are dwindling, particularly in rural communities.

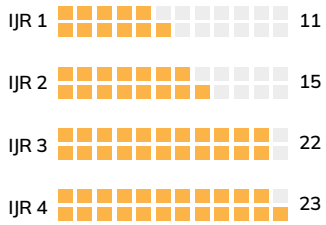
Regulations require that every district authority has at least 50 PLVs. Across 709 DLSAs, that would require 35,450. In 2019 there were in fact 69,290 on the books. As of September 2024, there were 43,050[10] a drop of 38 per cent. Seven states[11] recorded a drop of more than 60 per cent, with Himachal Pradesh (a fall of 97 per cent), Goa (81 per cent), Tamil Nadu (73 per cent) falling most. Only five states and Union Territories (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chandigarh, Karnataka, and Puducherry) saw an increase in PLVs. Consequently, nationally, the ratio of six paralegals per lakh population dropped to three. Worse still, only 14,691 of the PLVs are recorded as being 'deployed'[12] in police stations, front offices, prisons, juvenile justice boards, and child welfare centres. Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra alone account for 43 per cent of the total deployed. Karnataka reports over 5,000 on the roster, yet records only 11 as being 'deployed'.

8 Data as per RTI response from National Legal Services Authority
9 *Ibid*
10 *Ibid*
11 Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram. Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Tripura
12 NALSA Statistical Information of Para-legal Volunteers, April 2023 to March 2024. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/statistics/para-legal-volunteers-report/para-legal-volunteers-report-april-2023-to-march-2024

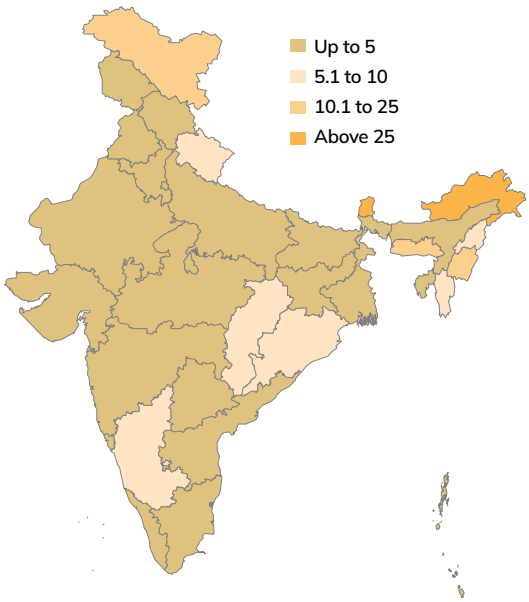
Figure 35: PLVs per lakh population

Despite the NALSA benchmark of 50 active PLVs per DLSA, their distribution remains inadequate. 30 of 36 states and Union Territories reduced the number of PLVs between 2022 and 2024.

2a. Number of states/UTs with less than 5 PLVs per lakh population



2b. State-wise PLVs per lakh population in September 2024



2b. State-wise PLVs per lakh population across 4 IJRs

	PLVs per lakh population				Direction of change over previous IJR		
	IJR 1 Jan 2019	IJR 2 Mar 2020	IJR 3 June 2022	IJR 4 Sep 2024			
A & N Islands	25.22	25.22	0.00	4.70	↔	↓	↑
Andhra Pradesh	4.66	4.08	3.54	3.13	↓	↓	↓
Arunachal Pradesh	76.97	79.76	110.79	143.34	↑	↑	↑
Assam	2.65	3.20	2.82	2.85	↑	↓	↑
Bihar	4.20	3.21	3.56	3.13	↓	↑	↓
Chandigarh	2.94	2.70	3.12	3.06	↓	↑	↓
Chhattisgarh	13.80	8.38	4.86	5.28	↓	↓	↑
Delhi	7.63	4.21	5.27	2.63	↓	↑	↓
DNH & DD	NA	NA	3.42	2.80			↓
Goa	13.64	5.18	3.77	2.34	↓	↓	↓
Gujarat	4.83	4.82	3.98	4.02	↓	↓	↑
Haryana	6.10	4.93	4.38	3.71	↓	↓	↓
Himachal Pradesh	84.29	3.72	4.95	2.62	↓	↑	↓
Jammu & Kashmir	4.46	4.18	4.08	4.01	↓	↓	↓
Jharkhand	4.12	7.30	4.71	1.71	↑	↓	↓
Karnataka	4.86	3.16	6.31	7.59	↓	↑	↑
Kerala	7.37	7.37	4.88	4.18	↔	↓	↓
Ladakh	NA	NA	11.37	13.58			↑
Lakshadweep	69.80	69.80	82.35	43.48	↔	↑	↓
Madhya Pradesh	8.66	5.62	2.90	3.26	↓	↓	↑
Maharashtra	4.49	4.60	2.77	2.55	↑	↓	↓
Manipur	31.62	23.72	11.71	22.69	↓	↓	↑
Meghalaya	14.32	8.51	10.76	10.27	↓	↑	↓
Mizoram	28.71	18.08	7.25	5.20	↓	↓	↓
Nagaland	8.34	7.33	8.50	5.19	↓	↑	↓
Odisha	11.86	5.30	5.98	5.22	↓	↑	↓
Puducherry	21.31	26.80	25.25	24.12	↑	↓	↓
Punjab	7.22	5.42	3.78	2.66	↓	↓	↓
Rajasthan	6.12	1.80	1.81	1.81	↓	↑	↔
Sikkim	70.26	29.62	28.70	32.09	↓	↓	↑
Tamil Nadu	5.35	3.69	1.43	1.38	↓	↓	↓
Telangana	7.47	8.01	5.32	3.06	↑	↓	↓
Tripura	13.45	12.02	4.62	4.52	↓	↓	↓
Uttar Pradesh	1.55	1.04	1.23	1.08	↓	↑	↓
Uttarakhand	9.39	7.30	6.23	5.66	↓	↓	↓
West Bengal	2.02	2.02	1.30	1.13	↔	↓	↓

States arranged in alphabetical order.
Source: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

These community-based legal resources were intended as a bridge to fill the awareness and access gaps between the formal legal system and the most marginalised. Several factors have contributed to the decline in this paralegal scheme.

Inadequate support and recognition severely undermine the motivation of paralegal volunteers. Even those driven by social responsibility often feel isolated and undervalued due to a lack of essential resources, proper training, and meaningful recognition. This is compounded by the absence of tangible benefits like steady career advancement, professional development, or sometimes even basic remuneration. Heavy and varied caseloads, complex legal procedures, absent support mechanisms, inadequate training, and lack of regular breaks contribute to burnout and attrition. Competing demands on time and energy, alongside a changing social landscape, further challenge volunteer dedication. These oft-documented issues threaten the foundation of community-level legal aid, leaving vulnerable populations without essential services and facing exacerbating inequalities.

Diversity

Women DLSA secretaries (%, Mar 31, 2024) NEW
Share of women in panel lawyers (%, Sep 2024)
Women PLVs (%, Sep 2024)

The legal services sub-system boasts a significantly higher level of gender diversity than other components of the justice delivery system, such as police, prisons, or the judiciary. In March 2024, 31 per cent of member secretaries in DLSAs were women.[13] In seven states women made up 60 per cent.[14] Only four states—Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Rajasthan—have no women in that post.

Despite an overall decline in the number of panel lawyers over five years, the proportion of women has steadily increased[15] from 18 per cent in 2018 to 28 per cent in 2024. States like Meghalaya (63%), Mizoram (61%), Nagaland (55%), and Goa (51%) have gone beyond achieving gender parity.

Similarly, the reduction in paralegal numbers has not impacted the percentage of women: women's representation has grown to 42 per cent from 36 per cent in 2019.[16] Fifteen states/UTs[17] have less than 40 per cent women, while the rest, with between 40 to 85 per cent, bring up the national average.

Since 2022, states have started collecting data on transgender paralegal volunteers. A sharp decline in their numbers between 2022 and 2024 highlights significant challenges in their recruitment and retention. Nationally, the numbers have dropped by more than 76 per cent from 587 to 139, and Maharashtra which earlier had 183 shows only 7 in 2024. While Karnataka (33) and Uttar Pradesh (31) currently have the highest number of transgender paralegals, seventeen states and UTs[18] report none.

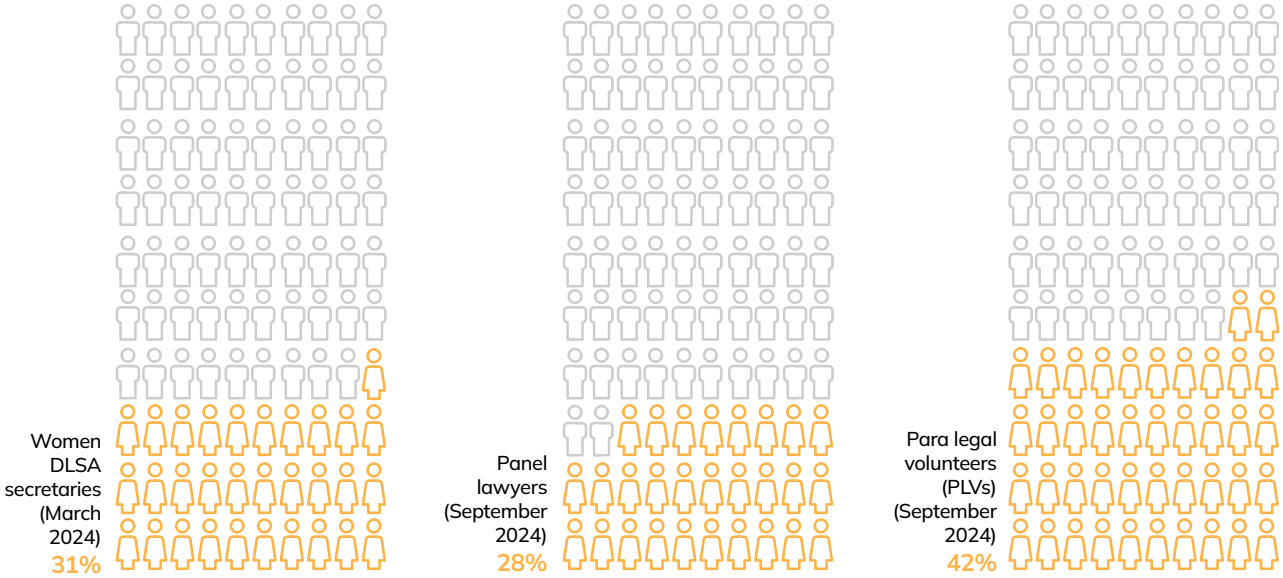
The Case for Caste Data

Effective last-mile service delivery, particularly to marginalised communities, often depends on representation—individuals who understand the community's specific needs and context. The government's failure to collect caste data creates a critical blind spot, preventing accurate assessment of service reach and the impact of representation. This data gap hinders targeted interventions, risks perpetuating inequalities, and undermines inclusive justice delivery. Without this information, it is impossible to evaluate programme effectiveness or design equitable services, ultimately jeopardising the goal of reaching everyone in need.

13 In the absence of any national compilation of the current number of sanctioned and actual full-time secretaries state-wise in 31 March 2024, IJR assessed this relying on Right to Information requests to State Legal Service Authorities (SLSAs). This figure excludes data for Gujarat and Tamil Nadu as the states did not provide this data.
14 Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, and West Bengal
15 Data as per the RTI response from National Legal Services Authority
16 *Ibid*
17 Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh
18 Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Goa, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, and Uttarakhand

Figure 36: Women in the legal aid system

The average share of women DLSA secretaries is below that of women judges in district judiciary. Nearly 1 in every three panel lawyers is a woman and nearly 1 in every two PLV is a woman.



Source: RTI to State Legal Services Authorities and National Legal Services Authority

Infrastructure

DLSAs as % of state judicial districts (%, Dec 2024)
Villages per legal services clinic (Number, 2023-24)
Legal services clinic per jail (Number, 2023-24)
Presence of front offices in DLSAs (%, Dec 2024)

Legal services clinics: Legal services clinics in villages, envisioned as the legal equivalent of primary health centres, with a broad mandate to provide first-point legal advice and assistance, and to liaison with government offices, are facing critical operational crises. NALSA regulations[19] mandate clinics in every village or 'cluster of villages', with District Legal Service Authorities (DLSAs) determining their number and location based on local needs and barriers to access.[20] With the exception of Chandigarh, Nagaland, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, all other geographies register varying degrees of downsizing between 2017 and 2024—illustratively, Chhattisgarh from 281 to just one; Jharkhand from 375 to 27 and Telangana from 260 to 23. This stark decline in clinic numbers paints a dismal picture. From 14,161 clinics serving an average of 42 villages each in 2017-18, the number has plummeted to just 3,659 by March 2024, indicating that each clinic now serves a staggering 163 villages.

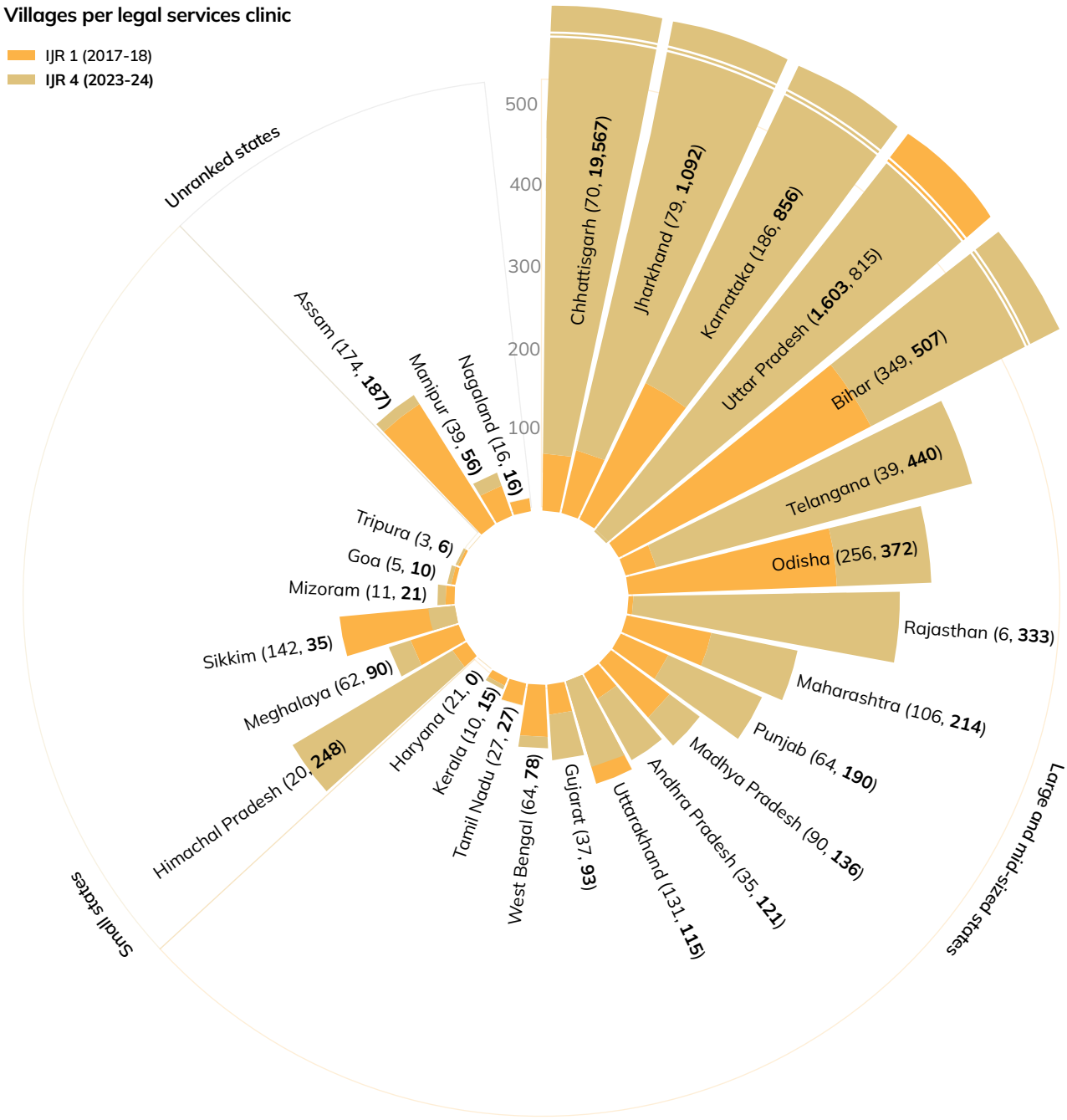
The reach of legal services clinics is uneven across the country. In fifteen states/UTs,[21] one clinic serves more than a hundred villages: in Madhya Pradesh one serves 136 villages; in Maharashtra it is 214; in Rajasthan, 333; and in Telangana one serves 440 villages. Karnataka (856 villages per clinic), Jharkhand (1,092 villages per clinic) and Chhattisgarh (20,000 villages per clinic) have even more abysmal ratios. Two states (Haryana and Arunachal Pradesh) and two UTs (Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands) do not have a single legal service clinic. In only six states and UTs does a legal services clinic cover fewer than 10 villages.[22]

19 National Legal Services Authority (Legal Services Clinics) Regulations, 2011. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/regulations/national-legal-services-authority-legal-services-clinics-regulations-2011
20 *Ibid*
21 Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand
22 Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Delhi, Goa, Puducherry, and Tripura

The workload, distances and probable under-resourcing of these clinics makes it practically impossible for them to provide effective, timely assistance to populations in villages. This undermines the core function of these clinics as accessible points of contact for vulnerable populations, particularly those facing geographical and social barriers.

Figure 37: Villages per legal aid clinic

NALSA's 2011 regulations require a clinic to "serve a village or a cluster of villages". Between 2017 and 2024, the national average of villages per clinic has increased four times from 42 to 163. In some states, this number is more than 500 villages per legal aid clinic.



Note: 1. States arranged within cluster in descending order of values for IJR 4. 2. Arunachal Pradesh (small state) has villages but the data shows no legal service clinics in villages. Likewise, for Haryana, for 2023-24.

Source: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

In contrast to the declining trend in community outreach, 2024 saw a focussed effort to improve legal aid for India's 5.7 lakh prison population, 76 per cent of whom are undertrials. NALSA's 2022 regulations emphasised the need for district authorities to establish legal aid clinics in every prison to ensure sustained representation. Staffed by jail-visiting lawyers and PLVs (both community and convict), these clinics identify prisoners eligible for release via Under Trial Review Committees and provide advice, counselling, and representation. As of March 2024, NALSA reports 1,215 clinics across 1,330 prisons. Twenty states/UTs lack a clinic in every jail.[23] Conversely, seven states/UTs have more clinics than prisons. Gujarat leads with 63 clinics in 32 prisons, followed by Haryana (22 clinics in 20 prisons) and Chhattisgarh (34 clinics in 33 prisons). Among the smaller states, Arunachal Pradesh has more clinics than prisons (4 clinics for 2 prisons), while Meghalaya, Goa, and Sikkim have clinics in every prison.

Front offices: Front offices are essential for facilitating easy access to legal advice. Every Legal Services Institution (LSI) is mandated to establish a front office in a prominent and accessible location,[24] either within their office or near the courts. These offices, staffed by retainer lawyers and paralegal volunteers, serve as one-stop centres for legal aid seekers.[25] They provide legal advice, information about cases, and details on the various legal services offered by the institution.

As of 2024, nearly all states and UTs had established front offices in all their District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs). However, nine states/UTs[26] reported fewer front offices than DLSAs, indicating potential gaps in access to legal services at the district level. Data on front offices is limited to enumerating their presence at the district level but does not include information on available human resources and infrastructure.

Workload

Lok Adalats: Lok Adalats, another important mandate of India's legal aid system, are informal people's courts

PLA cases: Settled as % of received (%, 2023-24)

SLSA LAs: Pre-litigation cases disposed (%, 2023-24) NEW

SLSA LAs: Pending cases disposed (%, 2023-24) NEW

aimed at amicable dispute resolution. These forums are designed to reduce court backlogs, promote speedy justice, and foster a culture of amicable settlement. Section 19 of the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987 requires every LSI to organise Lok Adalats periodically. Lok Adalats can be conducted by the SLSA, DLSAs as well as by Taluk Legal Service Committees (TLSCs).

Lok Adalats come in various forms, including National Lok Adalats held periodically nationwide, Permanent Lok Adalats established for specific purposes (like public utility disputes), Mega Lok Adalats for mass settlements, Mobile Lok Adalats reaching remote areas, Daily Lok Adalats for continuous access, and Continuous Lok Adalats operating over extended periods. Not limited to a specific subject matter, Lok Adalats can address a wide range of cases, encompassing pre-litigation disputes and pending court cases (civil, criminal, matrimonial, consumer, etc.), and often focus on specific themes during National Lok Adalats (such as consumer disputes or bank recovery cases). The specific types of cases handled can vary depending on the type of Lok Adalat and the objectives of the organising authority.

Akin to court hearings Lok Adalats are nevertheless intended to be more informal, less procedurally heavy, and focused on early amicable settlement. Their benches consist of serving or retired judges[27] and awards are deemed equivalent to the decree of a civil court.[28] While Lok Adalats have shown promise in resolving disputes, their effectiveness varies significantly across states, with some achieving high disposal rates while others struggle to clear even a fraction of the cases brought before them. This report examines the performance of Lok Adalats

23 Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, and West Bengal
24 Section 4, NALSA (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/regulations/national-legal-services-authority-free-and-competent-legal-services-regulations-2010
25 Para 3(1), NALSA Front Office Guidelines
26 Arunachal Pradesh, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal
27 Section 19(2) Legal Services Authorities Act 1987
28 Section 21 Legal Services Authorities Act 1987

organised by SLSAs across India, focusing on intake and disposal rates in pre-litigation matters and court-ordered adjudication in pending cases.[29]

Between April 2023 and March 2024, 9,865 Adalats organised by SLSAs in various states took up 22.5 lakh matters. Pre-litigation cases accounted for just 20 per cent and the remaining were court-ordered. Five states—Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana—accounted for nearly 80 per cent of all Adalats. Twelve states/UTs did not organise any at all.[30]

Six states/UTs—Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Delhi, and Kerala—took up more than a lakh cases each, while Uttar Pradesh alone took up 10 lakh cases over that period.

Nationally, only 54 per cent cases were disposed of. Clearance rates at the state level were uneven. Illustratively, Telangana and Delhi could clear more than 90 per cent of the cases they took up and Uttar Pradesh, with over 10 lakh cases, could clear 40 per cent; Kerala with just over a lakh cases could clear only 24 per cent, while Tamil Nadu with 1.9 lakh cases cleared only 18 per cent. Jharkhand, and Haryana, with caseloads of less than 40,000, cleared over 70 per cent. Large states that took up relatively few cases recorded very low clearance rates—Gujarat with 11,000 matters cleared 2 per cent; Rajasthan with 40,000 cleared 3 per cent; and Maharashtra with 6,000 cases cleared 9 per cent.

National and State Lok Adalats

Historically, National Lok Adalats, organised periodically by NALSA, significantly outperform State Legal Services Authority (SLSA) Lok Adalats. In 2023-24, National Lok Adalats disposed of a total of 9.7 crore cases, with 8 crore (86 per cent) of the total caseload at the pre-litigation stage.

Permanent Lok Adalats: The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, mandates the establishment of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) in every state.[31] These specialised bodies were conceived to provide a compulsory pre-litigation dispute resolution mechanism for consumers facing issues with public utility services such as transport, postal, and telecommunication services.[32] PLAs aim to offer a swift and accessible platform for resolving consumer grievances, reducing the burden on courts, and promoting amicable settlements between consumers and service providers.

In 2023-24, sixteen states/UTs did not have established Permanent Lok Adalats,[33] an increase from twelve in 2019-20. States like West Bengal, Sikkim, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh have notably lacked active PLAs since 2019, highlighting a significant gap in access to this crucial form of dispute resolution for consumers in these regions. As of 2023-24, 350 functional PLAs disposed of 2,32,763 cases across 33,020 sittings, with the total value of settlements being about Rs. 504 crore (Rs.5.04 billion). This is an increase from 2021-22, when Lok Adalats disposed of 1,18,136 cases across 29,153 sittings.

States with operational PLAs, however, registered low disposal rates. Only eight states cleared more than 65 per cent of the cases they received.[34] Delhi cleared 96 per cent, the highest, followed closely by Chandigarh with 95 per cent, and Chhattisgarh with 91 per cent. Gujarat, which had cleared all the cases it received in 2021-22, recorded no functional PLA. Maharashtra's disposal record of 36 per cent dropped to 21 per cent. Nevertheless, despite low clearance, fifteen states recorded an improvement in clearing cases—Madhya Pradesh, which cleared 35 per cent cases in 2021-22, disposed of 88 per cent in 2023-24; Tripura improved from 28 per cent to 67 per cent.

29 Pre-litigation matters are disputes have not been brought before any court and are likely to be filed before the court, or a case at the pre-litigative stage.
30 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Karnataka, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and West Bengal
31 Section 22-B of the Legal Services Authority Act, 1987. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/the-legal-services-authorities-act-1987
32 Section 22B–22E of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987: 'State Authority shall, by notification, establish Permanent Lok Adalats at such places and for exercising such jurisdiction in respect of one or more public utility services and for such areas as maybe specified in the notification'.
33 Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry, Sikkim and West Bengal.
34 Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Tripura

Figure 38: Performance of Lok Adalats

The table shows the number of pre-litigation cases disposed by Lok Adalats in 2023-2024. Nationally, 52% pre-litigation cases were disposed of by all Lok Adalats.

	National Lok Adalats (2023-24)		SLSA Lok Adalats (2023-24)			Total LAs: Pre-litigation cases disposed (%)[1]	SLSA LAs: Pre-litigation in cases taken up (%)[2]
	Pre- litigation cases taken up	Pre- litigation cases disposed	Pre- litigation cases taken up	Pre- litigation cases disposed	Total cases taken up		
Large and mid-sized states							
Andhra Pradesh	125,351	36,922	42	42	3,511	29.5	1.2
Bihar	2,555,075	250,863	0	0	0	9.8	0.0
Chhattisgarh	2,156,881	1,806,194	0	0	0	83.7	0.0
Gujarat	2,695,957	1,069,689	11,272	205	11,311	39.5	1.8
Haryana	528,716	436,642	0	0	37,733	82.6	0.0
Jharkhand	3,189,262	3,025,018	23,803	21,255	39,685	94.8	53.6
Karnataka	11,637,416	10,385,530	0	0	0	89.2	0.0
Kerala	210,416	30,185	67,318	14,250	108,894	16.0	13.1
Madhya Pradesh	2,888,005	382,090	48,452	44,379	60,425	14.5	73.4
Maharashtra	52,591,823	2,857,213	464	27	6,432	5.4	0.4
Odisha	413,614	22,056	0	0	284,068	5.3	0.0
Punjab	798,440	524,575	0	0	6,133	65.7	0.0
Rajasthan	16,986,960	14,912,789	1,933	353	40,751	87.8	0.9
Tamil Nadu	180,013	64,519	126,530	15,306	196,315	26.0	7.8
Telangana	14,322,549	14,291,356	81,264	75,979	177,182	99.7	42.9
Uttar Pradesh	41,489,456	30,291,826	54,062	39,572	1,020,023	73.0	3.9
Uttarakhand	71,515	51,635	0	0	37,193	72.2	0.0
West Bengal	338,362	55,576	0	0	0	16.4	0.0
Small states							
Arunachal Pradesh	5,687	659	0	0	0	11.6	0.0
Goa	8,471	227	41	1	1,109	2.7	0.1
Himachal Pradesh	49,588	12,342	0	0	2,968	24.9	0.0
Meghalaya	3,357	609	0	0	0	18.1	0.0
Mizoram	10,891	3,977	259	88	273	36.5	32.2
Sikkim	161	81	1,009	697	1,111	66.5	62.7
Tripura	22,949	2,805	226	29	39,021	12.2	0.1
Unranked states							
Assam	801,708	87,379	0	0	0	10.9	0.0
Manipur	386	291	0	0	0	75.4	0.0
Nagaland	3,242	759	0	0	0	23.4	0.0
Union Territories							
A&N Islands	5,187	545	0	0	0	10.5	0.0
Chandigarh	21,182	113	4,685	1,413	5,455	5.9	25.9
DNH & DD	34,367	11,008	0	0	0	32.0	0.0
Delhi	45,458	1,410	5,131	4,933	131,178	12.5	3.8
Jammu & Kashmir	238,292	141,584	982	214	31,572	59.3	0.7
Ladakh	1,596	620	0	0	0	38.8	0.0
Lakshadweep	79	33	2	1	2	42.0	50.0
Puducherry	14,014	908	10,764	486	10,770	5.6	4.5
All India	**154,446,426**	**80,760,028**	**438,239**	**219,230**	**2,253,115**	**52.3**	**9.7**

Notes: 1. NLAs + SLSA LAs: Share of pre-litigation cases in disposed cases. 2. SLSA LAs: Pre-litigation cases disposed as % of total cases taken up
Source: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

Victim Compensation

Compensation is awarded to women victims of crime by the state government, often through Legal Services Institutions (LSIs),[35] to help them recover from trauma, provide some measure of financial assistance, and to promote a sense of justice. Despite some states demonstrating significant progress, the overall picture of victim compensation remains concerning. While Delhi, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh led the way in awarding compensation, collectively awarding 46 per cent of the nationwide total, states with high crime rates, such as Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, awarded relatively low amounts. Uttar Pradesh, for instance, with over 4 lakh applications registered having awarded Rs. 1.85 crore in compensation. This was significantly lower than Andhra Pradesh, which awarded Rs. 4.19 crore despite a similar number of applications.

The disparity in the rate of disposal of applications across states is also a major concern. Eleven states/UTs[36] had a disposal rate below 70 per cent, with Tamil Nadu and Kerala recording particularly low rates, of 33 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively. Puducherry, a small union territory, did not decide any of the 17 cases it received.

While LSIs determine the compensation amount, actual disbursal relies on state government funding,[37] which can be subject to significant delays. Inconsistencies in procedural requirements, varying limitation periods for filing applications, and disparities in compensation amounts across states further hinder the development of a robust system of victim compensation.[38]

Budgets

Both the Centre, through the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), and state governments contribute to legal services budgets. NALSA, under the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987,[39] disburses grants to State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs), which in turn allocate funds to District, Taluk and the High Court Legal Service Committees. The NALSA fund supports various activities, including legal representation, honorariums for panel lawyers and paralegals, and conducting Lok Adalats, mediation and legal awareness programmes,[40] while state funds primarily cover administrative expenses, staff salaries, and infrastructure.

- NALSA fund utilized (%, 2022-23)
- State's share in legal aid budget (%, 2022-23)
- State legal aid budget utilized (%, 2022-23)
- Per capita spend on legal aid (Rs, 2022-23) NEW

NALSA Caps on Expenditure

NALSA's guidelines[41] stipulate that legal service authorities cannot utilise funds for employing outsourced and ministerial staff; hiring and purchasing vehicles; and expenses in connection with victim compensation, among other things. It also prescribes ceilings for expenditure:

a) Legal aid and advice: **50 per cent**

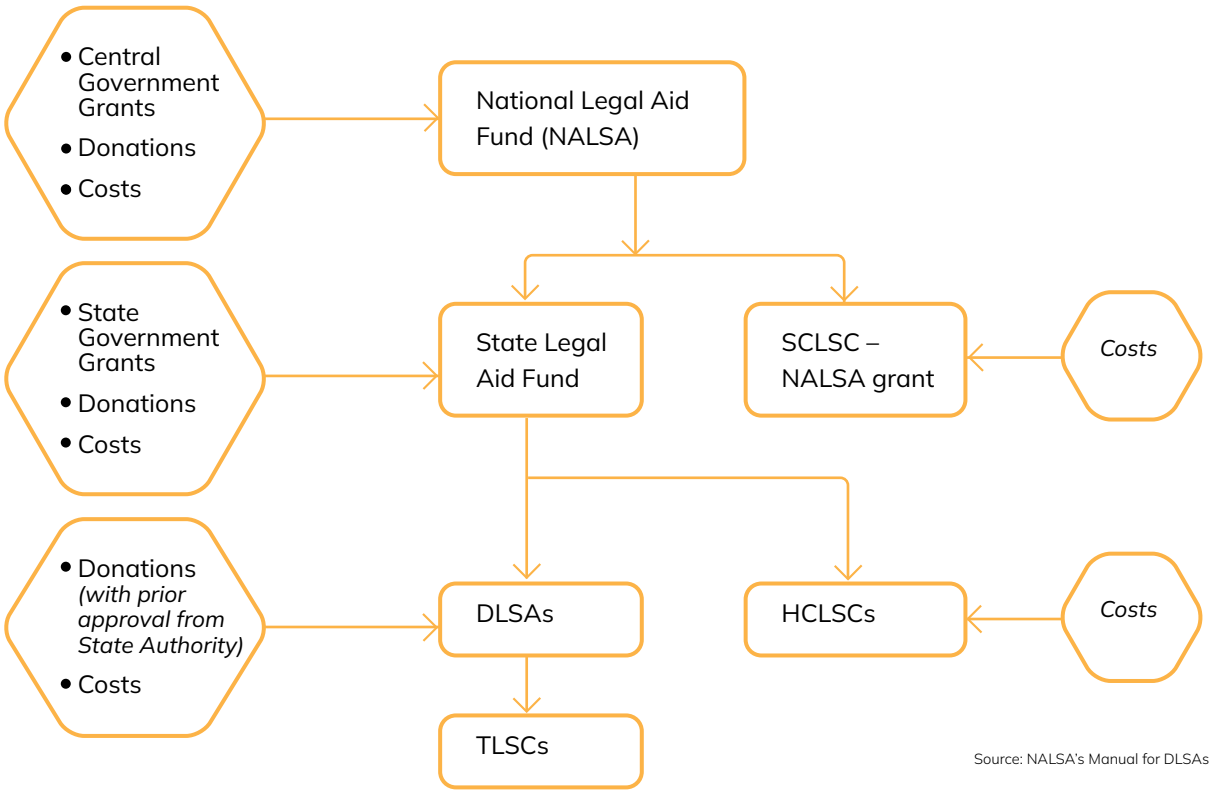
b) Alternative dispute resolution and mediation: **25 per cent**

c) Awareness and outreach programmes and others: **25 per cent**

The three-year trend indicates positive developments, with marked increases in allocations from both the central and state governments. Between 2020-23, NALSA's overall allocation increased by 77 per cent to Rs. 175.4 from Rs. 99 crore. At the same time, state funds climbed by 33 per cent to Rs. 866 crore from Rs. 722 crore.

35 NALSA's Compensation Scheme for Women Victims/Survivors of Sexual Assault/other Crimes 2018. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/preventive-strategic-legal-services-schemes/nalsa-s-compensation-scheme-for-women-victims-survivors-of-sexual-assault-other-crimes-2018
36 Bihar, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal
37 Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 4454 dated 28th March, 2023. Available at: https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1928928/1/AU4454.pdf
38 Abhishek Kumar, An Analysis of Victim Compensation Schemes in India, Economic and Political Weekly. Available at: https://www.epw.in/journal/2020/45/commentary/analysis-victim-compensation-schemes-india.html
39 Section 15(2)(a) of the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987
40 Section 10(2) and Section 11B of Legal Services Authorities Act 1987
41 National Legal Service Authority, Manual for District Legal Service Authorities 2023, Part B - Resources & Infrastructure of DLSAs. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/library/manual-for-district-legal-services-authorities-2023

Figure 39: Flow of Funds



Source: NALSA's Manual for DLSAs 2023

The proportion of contribution also changed significantly. Everywhere NALSA's contribution diminished while states' contributions increased. Between 2020 and 2023, nineteen states saw over 80 per cent of their total legal aid budget coming from state governments.[42] Illustratively, the Madhya Pradesh government contributed 91 per cent of its Rs. 79 crore budget, with only 9 per cent coming from NALSA. Bihar's government contributed 82 per cent to its total legal aid budget of Rs. 43 crore.

Five years previously, six states/UTs including Jharkhand and Assam had provided no funds toward legal aid, while Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura contributed less than 20 per cent.[43] However, as of 2022-2023, all states/UTs contributed towards their legal aid budgets.

State fund allocation as well as utilisation has generally improved over the past three years. Utilisation increased from 72 per cent to 80 per cent between 2020 and 2023, with seventeen states exceeding 85 per cent utilisation.[44] Six states (Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tripura, and Telangana) utilised more than their allocated state funds, while Uttarakhand utilised a little over half.

In contrast, utilisation of NALSA funds has declined significantly. In 2022-2023, states utilised only 59 per cent of the overall allocation from NALSA, a sharp drop from 76 per cent in the previous year. No state could utilise the entire allocation, and nine utilised less than 50 per cent.[45] With the exception of five states (Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Haryana, Kerala, and Punjab), all recorded a decrease in NALSA fund utilisation.

Despite an increase in budgets, given its broad mandate encompassing legal awareness and representation for a significant portion of the population (potentially 80%), the system for ensuring free legal aid remains severely

42 Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand
43 India Justice Report, 2019. Available at: https://indiajusticereport.org/files/IJR_2019_Full_Report154ef5.pdf
44 Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, and West Bengal
45 Arunachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh

underfunded and stretched. The national per capita spending averages just Rs. 6.[46] Sikkim spends the most at Rs 109, followed by Tripura (Rs. 59), Mizoram (Rs. 36), and Goa (Rs. 32). Sixteen states,[47] including a majority of the large states, spent less than Rs. 10.

Addressing the Issue of Under-trial Detention: Exploring Four Key Mechanisms

The issue of excessive under-trial detention has been a longstanding cause of disquiet. Over the past five years (2018-22) jail overcrowding has increased from 118 per cent to 131 per cent; of these, the number of undertrial prisoners, who make up 76 per cent, has increased steadily and the time they spend incarcerated has lengthened: 22 per cent of undertrials spent 1-3 years in prisons nationally in 2022.[48]

Beyond regular exhortations that arrest must be a measure of last resort, that liberty is paramount, and that bail not jail is the golden rule, government and judiciary have from time to time come up with specific mechanisms to ameliorate the situation. These include the Legal Aid Defence Counsel System (LADCS), the Support to Poor Prisoners Scheme, measures to streamline the transmission of bail orders, and the establishment of Under-Trial Review Committees (UTRCs). While legal aid services is not the only solution to tackle overcrowding in prisons, it is critical in ensuring every prisoner is guaranteed their right to legal representation.

Legal Aid Defence Counsel System (LADCS): Newly established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, the Legal Aid Defence Counsel System (LADCS) differs from the traditional system of appointing a legal aid lawyer from a floating pool of empanelled counsels. Instead, it establishes a team of full-time state- appointed lawyers, with staff and dedicated premises in districts, to provide legal assistance to indigent accused persons throughout the legal process, from pre-trial hearings to appeals. Core principles of the LADCS include ensuring accessibility, providing quality representation by qualified and experienced lawyers, maintaining the independence of defense counsel, and establishing mechanisms for accountability. Piloted in 2019 in 13 districts,[49] the scheme was extended in 2024 to 613 districts across the country, with an allocation of Rs. 200 crore in 2025-26.

Support to Poor Prisoners Scheme: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) introduced the 'Support to Poor Prisoners Scheme' in the Union Budget 2023-24, allocating an annual fund of Rs. 20 crore to provide financial assistance to indigent prisoners unable to pay fines or secure bail.[50] The scheme targets both undertrial and convicted prisoners, with maximum assistance of Rs. 40,000 and Rs. 25,000, respectively, per case. Implemented through the National Crime Records Bureau, the scheme empowers District-level Empowered Committees to assess the eligibility of candidates and determine the amount of support required. Still brand new, its impact remains to be seen. However, in a 2024 advisory, the MHA, noting that several states were yet to comply with provisions of the scheme, including setting up district committees and opening bank accounts, urged states to "take urgent steps" to comply in a time-bound manner.[51]

Transmitting Bail Orders: Continuing its constant oversight of prisons, in 2023 the Supreme Court[52] addressed a critical flaw in the criminal justice system: despite being granted bail, many prisoners remained incarcerated because of bureaucratic hurdles, slow communication between courts and prisons, and a lack of clear timelines for order implementation. To significantly reduce the time between the granting bail and the actual release of a prisoner, the Court issued seven specific directives including measures such as: direct electronic transmission of bail orders to

46 Per capita expenditure on legal aid is a measure of the average amount spent by each person on free legal aid and assistance. It is calculated by dividing total expenditure out of the state legal aid fund and the NALSA fund by the total population in a state.

47 Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

48 Data from *Prison Statistics India*. Available at: https://www.ncrb.gov.in/prison-statistics-india.html

49 LADC adopted at the 17th All India Meet, 2019. NALSA Legal Aid Defence Counsel Scheme, 2022. The scheme provides that LADCs are mandated to provide legal services—representation and conducting trials—from the early stages of criminal justice till the appellate stage. It also mandates that their scope of work includes miscellaneous work in all criminal courts such as Sessions, Special and Magistrate Courts, including executive courts. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/guidelines/legal-aid-defense-counsel-system-2

50 Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Advisory No. V-17013/26/2023-PR dated 9 February 2024. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-09/poorprisoners_20022024.pdf

51 Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Advisory No. V-17013/26/2023-PR dated 9 February 2024. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/poorprisoners_20022024.pdf

52 The Supreme Court in the case In Re Policy Strategy in Grant of Bail [*Suo Motu Writ Petition (Cr) No. 4/2021*] vide its order dated 31 January 2023 laid down seven directions to avoid delays in the release of prisoners after securing bail. Available at: https://api.sci.gov.in/supremecourt/2021/26546/26546_2021_2_23_41396_Order_31-Jan-2023.pdf

prison authorities, establishing clear timelines for order implementation, improving communication channels between courts, prisons, and legal aid organisations, and instituting regular monitoring and supervision mechanisms to ensure compliance. NALSA's SOP on categories of prisoners considered eligible for release by Under Trial Review Committees (UTRCs) includes "prisoners granted bail by the court, but (who) have not been able to furnish sureties".[53] NALSA records that 5,067 prisoners were identified for review by UTRCs between April and December 2024, of which only 2,333 or 56 per cent were actually released.[54]

Undertrial Review Committees (UTRCs): As far back as 2015, the Court emphasised in another case the need for states to establish Under Trial Review Committees (UTRCs).[55] Initially focussed on specific categories of prisoners, over time their scope has expanded to encompass 14 categories of cases eligible for review and release on bail. While the frequency of UTRC meetings has evolved from quarterly to monthly, and even weekly during the pandemic, and back again to quarterly since April 2024, the consistent challenge remains the low release rates despite the high number of recommendations. Data between 2019 and 2023 reveals significant variations in performance across states. The committees have recommended the release of almost 2.5 lakh prisoners across the country, taking the median rate of release to 47 per cent. Uttar Pradesh, recorded the highest median value of 80 per cent, followed by Tamil Nadu with 71 per cent and Himachal Pradesh with 62 per cent. In absolute numbers, Maharashtra (36,859) registered the highest number of prisoners recommended for release between 2019 and 2023, followed by Rajasthan (25,408), Uttar Pradesh (19,142), and Punjab (17,775).[56]

In 2024 NALSA released the Framework and Schedule for Quarterly Meetings of Under Trial Review Committees which streamlined the functioning of UTRCs. A perusal of this report's data shows that between April and December 2024, it recommended the release of 20,858 prisoners out of the total 41,331 that were eligible. Uttar Pradesh released the most in this period (2,435) followed by Maharashtra (1,882,) and Kerala (1,677).[57]

Each of these mechanisms has the potential to positively impact the rights of undertrials and reduce the burden on prison administration. However the effective functioning of each mechanism and its ability to achieve the overarching goal of reducing under-trial detention and promoting a more just and equitable criminal justice system is hampered significantly by common challenges of inadequate funding, resource constraints, administrative overload, lack of coordination between agencies, inability to reach out to beneficiaries, disparities in levels of implementation across states, and the lack of consistent monitoring and accountability for non-compliance.

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Nupur, Centre for Social Justice;
Nayanika Singhal, India Justice Report;
Sarab Lamba, India Justice Report

53 NALSA's Standard Operating Procedure for Undertrial Review Committees. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/guidelines/standard-operating-procedure-sop-guidelines-for-utrcs
54 NALSA's Functioning of the Under Trial Review Committees (April to June; July to September and October to December and during 2024). Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/statistics/under-trial-prisoner-report
55 The Supreme Court in the case *In Re Inhuman Conditions in 1382 Prisons [Writ Petition (Civil) No. 406/2013]* vide order dated 24 April 2015. Available at: https://api.sci.gov.in/jonew/ropor/rop/all/271943.pdf
56 Figures from a RTI response from the National Legal Service Authority.
57 NALSA's Functioning of the Under Trial Review Committees (April to June; July to September and October to December & During the year 2024). Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/statistics/under-trial-prisoner-report

Table 6: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Best
Middle
Worst

	Rank in cluster				IJR 4 Score (out of 10)	Indicators improved on (out of 13)[1]		Budgets	
Theme									
Indicator								NALSA fund utilized (%, 2022-23)[2]	State's share in legal aid budget (%, 2022-23)
Scoring guide								Higher, the better	Higher, the better
	IJR 1 2019	IJR 2 2020	IJR 3 2022	IJR 4 2022					
National average								**59.0**	**83.2**
Large and mid-sized states									
Andhra Pradesh	10	14	13	5	6.51		7	88.6	86.1
Bihar	16	2	16	12	5.54		8	57.2	82.2
Chhattisgarh	8	15	11	7	6.41		10	69.1	86.5
Gujarat	6	9	3	13	5.28		8	69.5	87.3
Haryana	2	5	4	3	6.72		11	82.5	85.7
Jharkhand	14	4	1	11	5.70		9	62.8	66.4
Karnataka	7	16	2	1	7.52		9	63.9	80.8
Kerala	1	7	6	6	6.50		9	84.0	82.0
Madhya Pradesh	9	12	14	9	6.09		9	37.1	91.5
Maharashtra	5	1	7	14	4.81		8	29.1	83.3
Odisha	15	8	10	8	6.31		6	43.4	80.5
Punjab	3	3	9	2	7.16		9	110.4 ●	80.4
Rajasthan	11	13	17	18	3.75		8	66.4	83.2
Tamil Nadu	12	11	12	16	4.27		5	57.9	80.2
Telangana	4	6	5	10	6.00		6	60.9	84.0
Uttar Pradesh	18	18	18	17	4.05		8	18.7 ●	93.4 ●
Uttarakhand	17	10	8	4	6.69		9	66.2	85.7
West Bengal	13	17	15	15	4.50		4	75.7	55.8 ●
Small states									
Arunachal Pradesh	7	7	7	7	2.53		7	48.6 ●	NA[3]
Goa	1	1	2	2	5.35		8	73.3	92.6 ●
Himachal Pradesh	3	6	5	4	4.34		8	73.4	69.4
Meghalaya	6	5	3	5	3.78		7	29.6 ●	51.8 ●
Mizoram	2	4	6	6	3.69		7	56.4	60.4
Sikkim	4	3	1	1	5.38		7	36.6	82.5
Tripura	5	2	4	3	4.59		9	47.8	85.9
Unranked states									
Assam	Not ranked						8	56.4	71.8
Manipur	Not ranked						4	62.6	69.2
Nagaland	Not ranked						7	39.8	21.2
Union Territories									
A&N Islands	Not ranked						5	NA[3]	NA[3]
Chandigarh	Not ranked						6	NA[3]	NA[3]
DNH & DD	Not ranked						4	NA[3]	NA[3]
Delhi	Not ranked						6	NA[3]	NA[3]
Jammu & Kashmir	Not ranked						5	54.3	NA[3]
Ladakh	Not ranked						5	NA[3]	NA[3]
Lakshadweep	Not ranked						2	NA[3]	NA[3]
Puducherry	Not ranked						5	NA[3]	NA[3]

Data sources: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA); Primary Census Abstract, Census 2011; Prison Statistics India (PSI), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB); National Commission on Population; State budget documents.

Abbreviations: DLSA: District Legal Services Authority; LA: Lok Adalat; PLA: Permanent Lok Adalat; PLV: Para-Legal Volunteer; SLSA: State Legal Services Authority.

Common notes: i. States arranged by clusters in alphabetical order. ii. A&N Islands: Andaman & Nicobar Islands. iii. D&NH/D&D: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. iii. New indicators in IJR 4 highlighted in yellow. iv. pp: percentage points (the difference between two percentages). v. NA: Not available. vi. CY: Calendar year; FY: Financial year.

1. Count of indicators on which a state has improved over IJR 3. Only non-trend indicators present in both IJR 3 and IJR 4 have been considered. For indicators with benchmarks, if a state met the benchmark, it was marked as an improvement even if its value declined within the benchmark. If a state didn't meet the benchmark but its value improved, it was marked as an improvement. Where an indicator value was not available for one or both years, that indicator was not considered. **2.** Total funds allocated includes pending balance of the previous year. **3.** Budget data not available.

Table 6: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Theme		Budgets		Human Resources		
			NEW			
Indicator		State legal aid budget utilized (%, 2022-23)	Per capita spend on legal aid (Rs, 2022-23)	Sanctioned secretaries as % of DLSAs (%, Mar 2024)	DLSA secretary vacancy (%, Mar 2024)	PLVs per lakh population (Number, Sep 2024)
Scoring guide		Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Lower, the better	Higher, the better
National average		**86**	**6.3**	**93**	**5.8**	**3.1**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		122	8.1	100	7.7	3.1
Bihar		86	3.5	100	2.7	3.1
Chhattisgarh		77	12.7	100	0.0	5.3
Gujarat		78	7.6	100	0.0	4.0
Haryana		90	16.0	100	0.0	3.7
Jharkhand		120	5.6	100	0.0	1.7
Karnataka		99.97	6.9	100	0.0	7.6
Kerala		75	10.2	93	23.1	4.2
Madhya Pradesh		86	8.3	100	2.0	3.3
Maharashtra		92	3.8	109	0.0	2.6
Odisha		88	6.8	100	13.3	5.2
Punjab		93	10.5	100	0.0	2.7
Rajasthan		147	8.5	100	0.0	1.8
Tamil Nadu		84	4.3	100	50.0	1.4
Telangana		104	8.4	100	0.0	3.1
Uttar Pradesh		60	4.4	96	0.0	1.1
Uttarakhand		52	12.1	100	0.0	5.7
West Bengal		97	1.9	100	0.0	1.1
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		NA[3]	NA[3]	20	0.0	143.3
Goa		75	31.6	100	0.0	2.3
Himachal Pradesh		123	19.8	100	0.0	2.6
Meghalaya		66	8.3	100	45.5	10.3
Mizoram		99	36.4	0	NA[5]	5.2
Sikkim		89	109.2	33	100.0	32.1
Tripura		106	59.0	100	12.5	4.5
Unranked states						
Assam		68	5.0	NA[4]	NA[4]	2.8
Manipur		55	11.6	NA[4]	NA[4]	22.7
Nagaland		97	8.3	0	NA[5]	5.2
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		NA[3]	NA[3]	NA[4]	NA[4]	4.7
Chandigarh		NA[3]	NA[3]	NA[4]	NA[4]	3.1
DNH & DD		NA[3]	NA[3]	NA[4]	NA[4]	2.8
Delhi		NA[3]	NA[3]	NA[4]	NA[4]	2.6
Jammu & Kashmir		NA[3]	NA[3]	NA[4]	NA[4]	4.0
Ladakh		NA[3]	NA[3]	NA[4]	NA[4]	13.6
Lakshadweep		NA[3]	NA[3]	NA[4]	NA[4]	43.5
Puducherry		NA[3]	NA[3]	NA[4]	NA[4]	24.1

Data sources: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA); Primary Census Abstract, Census 2011; Prison Statistics India (PSI), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB); National Commission on Population; State budget documents.

Abbreviations: DLSA: District Legal Services Authority; LA: Lok Adalat; PLA: Permanent Lok Adalat; PLV: Para-Legal Volunteer; SLSA: State Legal Services Authority.

Common notes: i. States arranged by clusters in alphabetical order. ii. A&N Islands: Andaman & Nicobar Islands. iii. D&NH/D&D: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. iii. New indicators in IJR 4 highlighted in yellow. iv. pp: percentage points (the difference between two percentages). v. NA: Not available. vi. CY: Calendar year; FY: Financial year.

3. Budget data not available. **4.** Data not available for DLSA secretaries. **5.** Data shows 0 DLSA secretaries sanctioned and appointed.

Table 6: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Theme		Diversity			Infrastructure	
Indicator		NEW Women DLSA secretaries (%, Mar 2024)	Share of women in panel lawyers (%, Sep 2024)	Women PLVs (%, Sep 2024)	DLSAs as % of state judicial districts (%, Dec 2024)	Villages per legal services clinic (Number, 2023-24)
Scoring guide		Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Lower, the better
National average		**30.6**	**27.9**	**41.6**	**106**	**163.3**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		50.0	20.7	33.6	100	121.5
Bihar		22.2	18.1	29.3	100	507.4
Chhattisgarh		43.5	22.2	37.8	100	19567.0
Gujarat		NA[6]	26.9	46.4	100	93.4
Haryana		27.3	28.3	40.2	100	NA[9]
Jharkhand		25.0	15.7	32.4	100	1092.3
Karnataka		20.0	43.8	59.0	100	856.2
Kerala		60.0	48.6	63.3	100	15.4
Madhya Pradesh		18.0	15.6	37.7	102	136.3
Maharashtra		13.5	34.5	40.8	100	214.4
Odisha		69.2	14.2	38.5	100	372.5
Punjab		63.6	24.3	38.7	100	190.1
Rajasthan		0.0	NA[7]	26.7	100	332.8
Tamil Nadu		NA[6]	23.6	46.9	100	27.1
Telangana		23.5	18.1	44.0	103	440.3
Uttar Pradesh		15.5	14.6	28.4	100	815.1
Uttarakhand		30.8	32.5	53.1	100	114.9
West Bengal		65.2	25.0	38.4	105	78.2
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		40.0	26.1	40.6	357	NA[9]
Goa		100.0	50.5	78.4	100	10.0
Himachal Pradesh		72.7	26.5	44.2	100	248.4
Meghalaya		83.3	62.6	41.5	100	89.7
Mizoram		NA[5]	61.4	29.2	400	21.3
Sikkim		NA[5]	44.7	75.8	150	35.4
Tripura		57.1	30.4	27.0	100	6.5
Unranked states						
Assam		NA[4]	37.2	37.1	100	186.6
Manipur		NA[4]	39.4	40.0	100	55.9
Nagaland		NA[5]	55.0	31.6	100	15.7
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		NA[4]	37.5	63.2	NA[8]	NA[9]
Chandigarh		NA[4]	24.5	52.6	NA[8]	0.4
DNH & DD		NA[4]	34.5	71.1	NA[8]	4.4
Delhi		NA[4]	35.5	53.1	109	1.0
Jammu & Kashmir		NA[4]	32.9	39.8	100	66.7
Ladakh		NA[4]	42.9	85.4	NA[8]	NA[10]
Lakshadweep		NA[4]	10.0	73.3	NA[8]	NA[9]
Puducherry		NA[4]	31.7	42.6	NA[8]	1.6

Data sources: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA); Primary Census Abstract, Census 2011; Prison Statistics India (PSI), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB); National Commission on Population; State budget documents.

Abbreviations: DLSA: District Legal Services Authority; LA: Lok Adalat; PLA: Permanent Lok Adalat; PLV: Para-Legal Volunteer; SLSA: State Legal Services Authority.

Common notes: i. States arranged by clusters in alphabetical order. ii. A&N Islands: Andaman & Nicobar Islands. iii. D&NH/D&D: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. iii. New indicators in IJR 4 highlighted in yellow. iv. pp: percentage points (the difference between two percentages). v. NA: Not available. vi. CY: Calendar year; FY: Financial year.

4. Data not available for DLSA secretaries. **5.** Data shows 0 DLSA secretaries sanctioned and appointed. **6.** Data on women secretaries not available. **7.** Data shows no panel lawyers. **8.** Data shows DLSA but no judicial district. **9.** States/UTs have villages but no legal service clinics in villages. **10.** Data for villages not available.

Table 6: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best in cluster
Worst in cluster

Theme		Infrastructure		Workload		
					NEW	NEW
Indicator		Legal services clinic per jail (Number, 2023-24)	Presence of front offices in DLSAs (%, Dec 2024)	PLA cases: Settled as % of received (%, 2023-24)	SLSA LAs: Pre-litigation cases disposed (%, 2023-24)	SLSA LAs: Pending cases disposed (%, 2023-24)
Scoring guide		Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better
National average		**0.91**	**94**	**64.9**	**50.0**	**54.4**
Large and mid-sized states						
Andhra Pradesh		0.78	100	40.2	100.0	51.4
Bihar		1.00	100	NA[12]	NA[13]	NA[14]
Chhattisgarh		1.03	100	90.9	NA[13]	NA[14]
Gujarat		1.97	100	0.0	1.8	100.0
Haryana		1.10	100	86.7	NA[13]	77.4
Jharkhand		0.91	100	66.5	89.3	78.5
Karnataka		0.93	100	26.9	NA[13]	NA[14]
Kerala		0.95	100	6.4	21.2	28.8
Madhya Pradesh		0.94	98	87.6	91.6	38.6
Maharashtra		0.92	100	21.3	5.8	9.3
Odisha		0.95	100	44.1	NA[13]	86.0
Punjab		0.96	100	67.2	NA[13]	37.0
Rajasthan		0.68	100	37.3	18.3	1.8
Tamil Nadu		0.88	100	54.8	12.1	27.9
Telangana		0.95	32	49.7	93.5	99.9
Uttar Pradesh		1.00	96	13.8	73.2	38.5
Uttarakhand		1.09	100	42.6	NA[13]	46.8
West Bengal		0.70	96	NA[12]	NA[13]	NA[14]
Small states						
Arunachal Pradesh		2.00	68	NA[12]	NA[13]	NA[14]
Goa		1.00	100	NA[12]	2.4	22.8
Himachal Pradesh		0.88	100	NA[12]	NA[13]	97.0
Meghalaya		1.00	91	NA[12]	NA[13]	NA[14]
Mizoram		1.00	100	NA[12]	34.0	42.9
Sikkim		1.00	67	NA[12]	69.1	85.3
Tripura		0.86	100	67.1	12.8	66.0
Unranked states						
Assam		1.06	100	38.6	NA[13]	NA[14]
Manipur		0.40	89	NA[12]	NA[13]	NA[14]
Nagaland		0.92	100	NA[12]	NA[13]	NA[14]
Union Territories						
A&N Islands		0.00	100	NA[12]	NA[13]	NA[14]
Chandigarh		1.00	100	94.8	30.2	0.0
DNH & DD		1.00	150	NA[12]	NA[13]	NA[14]
Delhi		1.13	100	95.5	96.1	93.8
Jammu & Kashmir		0.71	100	NA[12]	21.8	91.4
Ladakh		0.50	100	NA[12]	NA[13]	NA[14]
Lakshadweep		0.00	NA[11]	NA[12]	50.0	NA[14]
Puducherry		1.00	100	NA[12]	4.5	100.0

Data sources: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA); Primary Census Abstract, Census 2011; Prison Statistics India (PSI), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB); National Commission on Population; State budget documents.

Abbreviations: DLSA: District Legal Services Authority; LA: Lok Adalat; PLA: Permanent Lok Adalat; PLV: Para-Legal Volunteer; SLSA: State Legal Services Authority.

Common notes: i. States arranged by clusters in alphabetical order. ii. A&N Islands: Andaman & Nicobar Islands. iii. D&NH/D&D: Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. iii. New indicators in IJR 4 highlighted in yellow. iv. pp: percentage points (the difference between two percentages). v. NA: Not available. vi. CY: Calendar year; FY: Financial year.

11. Data shows 0 front offices. **12.** Data shows 0 pre-litigation cases received by PLAs. **13**. Data shows 0 pre-litigation cases taken up by SLSAs. **14.** Data shows 0 pending cases taken up by SLSAs.

State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs)

Map 17: SHRC Ranking

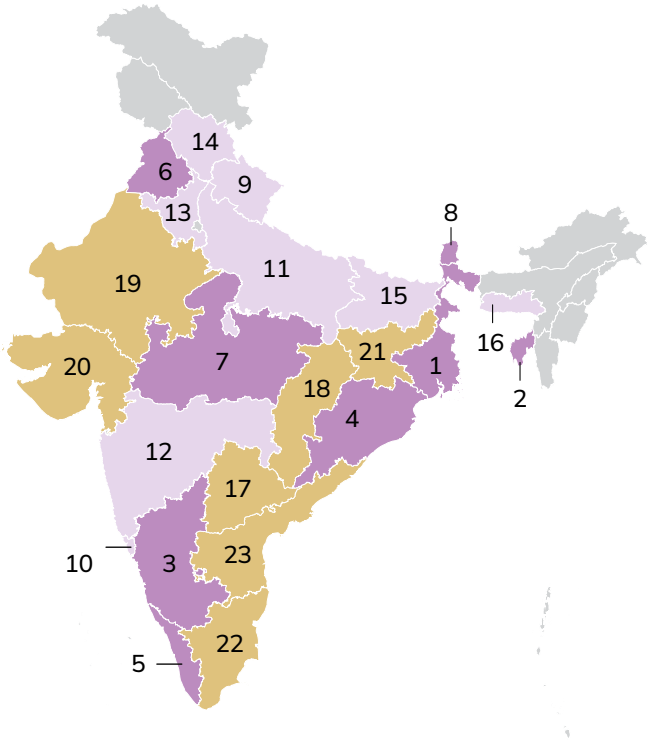
IJR 4 rank	State	Score (out of 10)
1	West Bengal	6.99
2	Tripura	6.09
3	Karnataka	5.89
4	Odisha	5.52
5	Kerala	5.51
6	Punjab	5.47
7	Madhya Pradesh	4.93
8	Sikkim	4.91
9	Uttarakhand	4.48
10	Goa	4.34
11	Uttar Pradesh	4.32
12	Maharashtra	3.96
13	Haryana	3.86
14	Himachal Pradesh	3.53
15	Bihar	3.41
16	Meghalaya	3.40
17	Telangana	3.24
18	Chhattisgarh	3.16
19	Rajasthan	2.94
20	Gujarat	2.74
21	Jharkhand	2.42
22	Tamil Nadu	2.15
23	Andhra Pradesh	2.08

Indicators

9

Color guide

- Best (Ranks 1 to 8)
- Middle (Ranks 9 to 16)
- Worst (Ranks 17 to 23)



Pushing Expectations

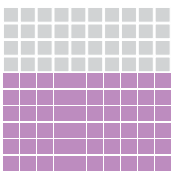
Vacancy

Commissions with less than 20% staff vacancy

IJR 3 (2020-21) — **7/23 commissions**

IJR 4 (2023-24) — **8/23 commissions**

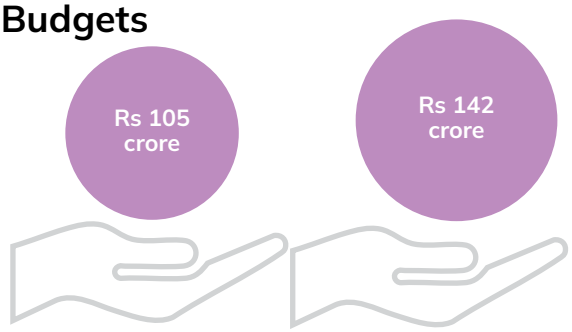
Uttar Pradesh has had more than **60%** staff missing since 2020-21.



Suo Moto Action

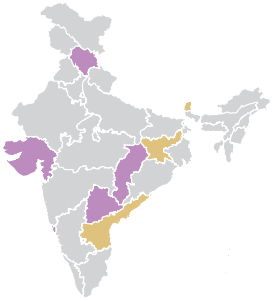
Only 4% of the total **cases are initiated suo moto.**

Budgets

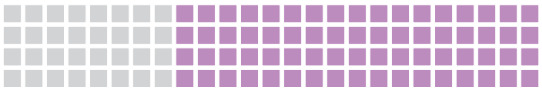


Investigation Wings

Jharkhand, Sikkim and Andhra Pradesh **do not have separate investigation wings.**



Goa, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and Telangana had over **60% vacancy in their investigation wings.**



Leadership

Haryana, Jharkhand and Telangana had **no chairperson and no members.**

Chhattisgarh has been headed by **an acting chairperson** since 2018.

Women

No commission has a woman chairperson and **only five have women in their executive staff.**

CHAPTER 5

Constrained by Capacity Deficits

Introduction

In the 1990s, international discourse increasingly emphasised the importance of realising human rights at the local level. The international community, led by the United Nations, recognized that strong, in-country institutions were essential for promoting and protecting human rights. To this end, the UN advocated for the establishment of in-country institutions that could address violations, promote widespread awareness, and ensure local enforcement of international human rights standards.

Central to this effort was the adoption of the Paris Principles at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. They emphasise that effective local institutions, national and state, are crucial for sustaining progress and ensuring that human rights protections are embedded within individual countries. The principles also set a minimum standards framework for human rights institutions that will ensure they are robust, independent, capable of spreading human rights awareness widely and in particular ensuring accountability for violations.

India responded to this international movement by establishing the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA) in 1993. Building on this, 28 State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs) were also set up, most recently in Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh in 2022 and Mizoram in 2024.

SHRCs were set up to be front line soldiers who effectively defend human rights and spread its culture into the population at large. As quasi-judicial bodies, they have a very wide-ranging mandate and powers[1]. An SHRC can act on an individual petition, a direction of any court, or of its own volition to look into allegations of violation, abetment and even negligence in prevention of a violation by any agent of the state. It can intervene in matters pending before a court, visit any jail or other state institution where people are detained to study the living conditions of inmates. It can review laws and recommend measures for the effective implementation of human rights as well as review the factors that inhibit their enjoyment and recommend remedial measures. In addition SHRCs are required to spread the culture of human rights through promoting human rights literacy, research and collaborations with civil society organisations.[2]

From the outset however, these institutions have been chronically disabled by a lack of financial and human resources. Vacancies in key positions—such as chairpersons, members, secretaries, and investigating staff, along with mismatches in budgets all undermine their ability to function. Illustratively, in Jharkhand, while, between 2018-19 to 2022-23, the budget rose significantly by 36 per cent, for years the Commission has functioned with only an acting chairperson and just a part time-secretary. In 2023-24 it could dispose of zero cases.

Assessing the capacity of SHRCs, the IJR finds considerable movements in rank. Changes in ranking were positively influenced by the provision of fuller and more timely information. For instance, Tamil Nadu provided responses to 4 out of 9 questions while West Bengal, Karnataka, Goa, Tripura provided responses for all.

1 Section 12 Protection of the Human Rights Act. Available at: https://nhrc.nic.in/sites/default/files/PHRAct_2021_0.pdf
2 Chapter 3 of the Protection of the Human Rights Act. Available at: https://nhrc.nic.in/sites/default/files/PHRAct_2021_0.pdf

The latest assessment adds two new parameters—investigative staff and its gender breakup. Lack of data on other important diversity metrics precludes assessment of key inclusivity factors such as disability, caste and religion.

Within the limits of these parameters, West Bengal's SHRC has risen from the very bottom to first rank due to full complement of executive staff, increased gender diversity, particularly among the executive and investigative staff, being one of the five Commissions[3] with women in the executive staff; higher case disposal and better budget utilisation. In relative terms the capacity of other SHRCs has diminished and contributed to the state's extraordinary ascent. However, it is concerning that more than half of its investigative wing is missing. Elsewhere, critical staff shortages, missing gender diversity and worsening budget utilisations contributed to drops.

Out of 23 SHRCs for which comparable data was available, Karnataka, Kerala and Tripura remained within the top-five, Goa, meanwhile lost its fourth place, dropping to tenth due to reduced budget utilisation and increased levels of vacancy. Karnataka lost its first place due to 50% vacancies in the executive staff, lower budget utilisation among other factors. Punjab on the other hand improved from fifteenth in 2022 to sixth place this year by raising the share of women staff, reducing executive staff vacancies, increasing the average case clearance rates and improving the utilisation of funds.

Human Resources

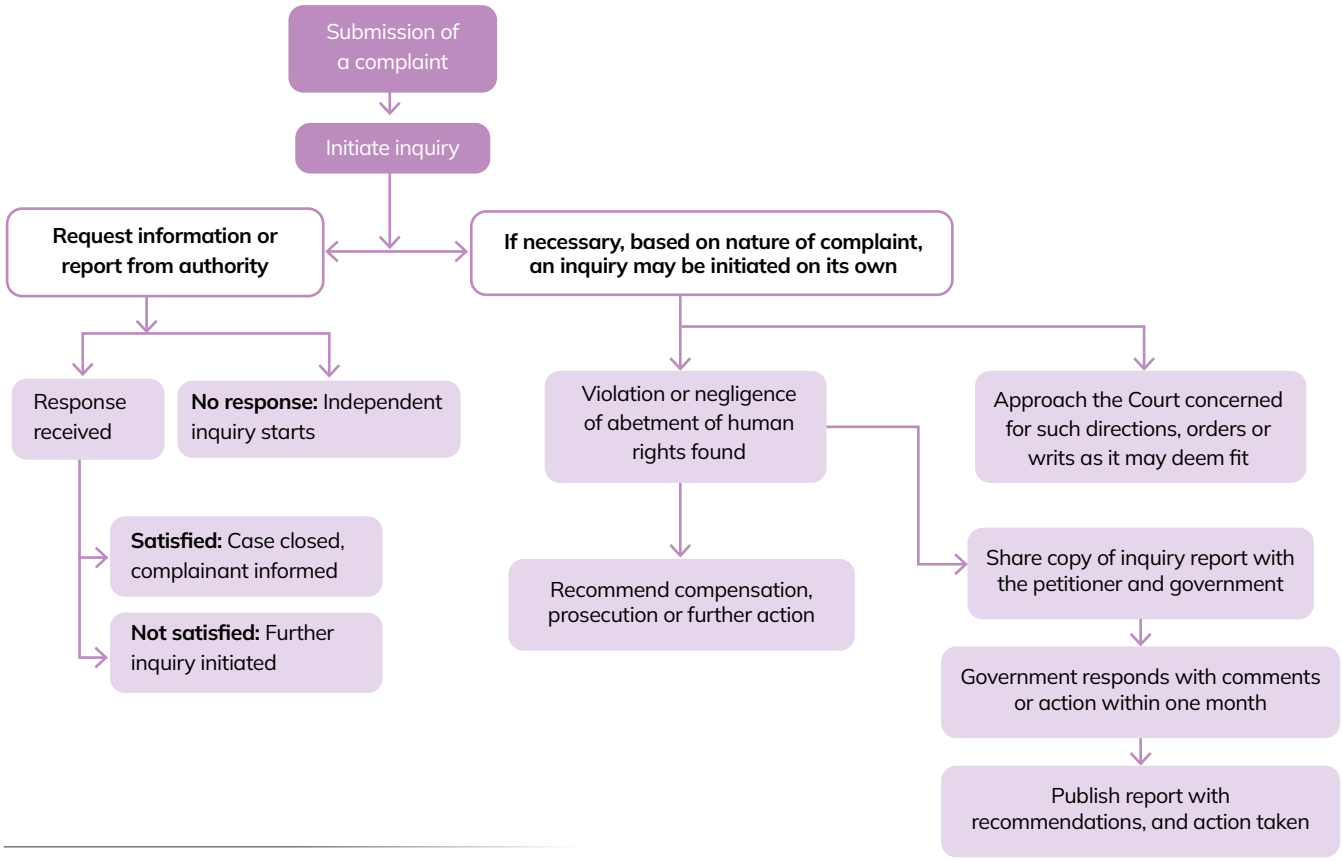
SHRC total staff vacancy (%, 2023-24)

SHRC executive staff vacancy (%, Mar 24)

SHRC investigation wing vacancy (%, 2023-24) NEW

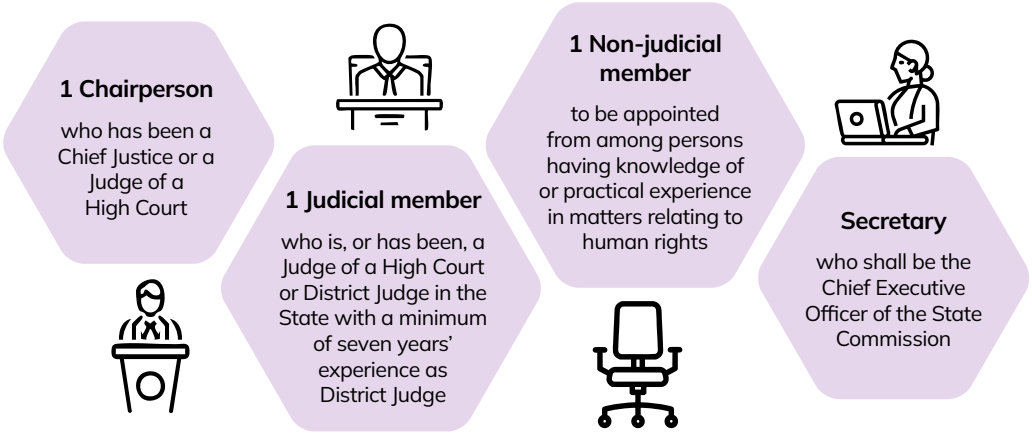
The working of an SHRC can be divided into three distinct wings: those that deal with adjudication, support the administration and undertake investigation. Deficiency in any affects the ability of the whole.

Figure 40: Procedure after a Complaint is received



3 In addition to West Bengal, Goa, Kerala, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh reported at least one woman in the executive staff.

Figure 41: Composition of State Human Rights Commissions (as per Section 21 PHRA)



The Chairperson and two members form the adjudicating body with the power to evaluate/dismiss complaints, issue summons, directions and recommendations for compliance. The Secretary is the chief executive officer responsible for the overall administration and day to day functioning. An officer not below the rank of Inspector General of Police heads up investigation.

SHRCs since they take up cases against public servants are required to be designed to be independent of possible influences of the state. Commissioners are drawn from the judiciary or from amongst "persons having knowledge or practical experience in matters relating to human rights."[4] However they do not have their own cadre/staff. Staff, including secretaries, registrar and the investigative wing are exclusively drawn or seconded from other departments of the state governments. To an extent the selection is dependent on the state government's ability or willingness 'to make available' police and investigative staff as necessary to the commission[5].

Executive staff: For purposes of ranking, commissioners and the secretary are included within executive staff. Over the years, human rights commissions have been working with fewer and fewer crucial executive staff. Between 2022-23 and 2023-24, twenty-one commissions had a chairperson while three had members acting as chairs. This has come down to only fifteen having full time chairpersons. Four commissions—Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka and Telangana—had neither chair nor acting chair. Five—Chhattisgarh, Goa, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Sikkim—were functioning under acting chairs. In addition to no chair, Haryana, Jharkhand, and Telangana also had both members missing. Chhattisgarh has been working under the leadership of an acting chairperson since 2018.

Members too have declined from 38 to 33. Eleven SHRCs[8] had one out of two or both members missing. Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha worked without secretaries/CEOs.

Delayed Hearings

Jharkhand's Commission has continuously operated under a "severe staff crunch"[6]. Between 2018-22, it functioned with its single member doubling as acting chairperson and a part-time secretary. In 2023 the commission reported no commissioners, a single secretary in place and no investigative staff. This forced it to suspend all adjudication.

Though it received 921 cases none were disposed of due to "hearing delayed since chairperson, members and eight other staff positions are vacant"[7].

4 Section 21(2) of the Protection of the Human Rights Act. Available at: https://nhrc.nic.in/sites/default/files/PHRAct_2021_0.pdf
5 Section 27(1) of Protection of the Human Rights Act. Available at: https://nhrc.nic.in/sites/default/files/PHRAct_2021_0.pdf
6 From Jharkhand State Human Rights Commission, annual report 2021-22 received through RTI application filed by IJR
7 Response from RTI reply received from Jharkhand human rights commission on caseload
8 Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur, Punjab, Sikkim, Telangana

Headless

Only ten SHRCs[9] had a full complement of commissioners and secretaries and between 2022 and 2024 overall vacancies at the level of senior most functionaries have increased from 17% to 27%.]

Staff vacancy: In 21 states for which the data is available, between 2021 and 2024, when taken together, administrative staff—stenographers, data operators, accountants and secretaries—vacancies nearly halved from 43 per cent to 26 per cent. At 2024 figures, eleven commissions[10] showed reduced staff vacancies. Nevertheless reductions were not uniform. Meanwhile, vacancies in Chhattisgarh (62 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (61 per cent) remained above 60 per cent and in Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Gujarat it remained above 50 per cent. Since 2020-21, Madhya Pradesh's staff vacancy has doubled from 12.4 per cent to 30 per cent. Only Sikkim and Kerala had more staff than sanctioned.

Investigative Wing: The effectiveness of SHRCs relies heavily on its ability to independently investigate rights violations. This requires investigative staff. Statutorily the wing is to be headed by an officer "not below the rank of inspector general of police"[11]. Other necessary staff include a Superintendent of Police (SP), Additional Superintendent (ASP) or Deputy Superintendent (Dy. SP) and Inspector.

Sanctioned investigative staff vary from state to state. In 2023-24 in eighteen states that provided information[12] vacancies against sanctioned stood at 35 per cent. Seven—Assam, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal—functioned with vacancy over 50 per cent. Three—Jharkhand, Sikkim and Andhra Pradesh—report having no separate investigative wing at all.

Odisha, exemplifies the mismatch between capacity and workload. Of the 13 personnel in the investigative wing, seven are constables, the remaining six who are mandated to investigate are as follows: 1 IG, 1 SP, 1 DySPs and 2 Inspectors. In 2023-24, the SHRC disposed of 4,223 cases, of which 58 per cent were dismissed in limine (right at the outset). Assuming that even 50 per cent of the remaining 1756 cases required some level of investigation it would mean a workload of 878 for six staff, or 148 cases per staff to handle over the year.

The Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) highlighted concerns about actual or perceived conflicts of interest when engaging police officers to investigate human rights violations, especially those cases involving the police such as custodial torture and encounters.[13]

Workload

Average case clearance rate
(%, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24)

SHRC's receive cases directly from aggrieved individuals, can initiate matters of its own volition and also deal with matters transferred from NHRC. Cases can be disposed of right at the outset for want of jurisdiction, or because the complaint obviously does not reveal any basis for inquiry into a human rights violation or because of long delay in bringing them to the commission[14]. Commissions do not entertain matters that are sub-judice, or are pending before another commission, nor allegations against someone who is not a public servant nor where a matter has already been covered by a judicial verdict or an earlier decision of the state commission.

Once accepted the complaint will go on to seeking responses from the state, investigation and decision. This can include a broad range of recommendations and/or compensation.

9 Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal
10 Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Telangana, Tripura, Odisha, Uttarakhand
11 Section 27(b) of the Protection of the Human Rights Act. Available at: https://nhrc.nic.in/sites/default/files/PHRAct_2021_0.pdf
12 Some states have included the number of constables, stenographer and drivers in their responses, however disaggregated data is not provided by every state.
13 GANHRI, Report and Recommendations of the Session of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA), pg. 30, 20-24 March 2023, available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/nhri/ganhri/SCA-Report-First-Session-2023-EN.pdf
14 Section 36 of the Protection of the Human Rights Act. Available at: https://nhrc.nic.in/sites/default/files/PHRAct_2021_0.pdf

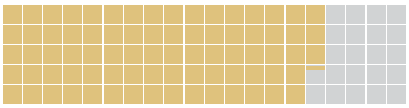
Figure 42: Complaints received by NHRC and SHRCs

Prisoners who are denied of their lawful rights or subjected to cruelty can approach and file complaints with Magistrates, Prison Authorities and Human Rights Commissions. Prison Statistics captures the numbers of complaints received and disposed of by the National Human Rights Commission and State Human Rights Commissions.

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

418 Complaints received	327 Complaints disposed off	257 Complaints pending

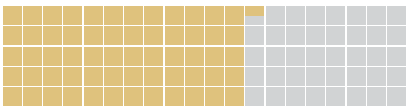
Case clearance rate: Disposed to received
78.2%



State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs)

503 Complaints received	304 Complaints disposed off	379 Complaints pending

Case clearance rate: Disposed to received
60.4%



Annual reports where they exist or are not up to date, do not provide standardised disaggregated information on how cases are processed: how many are received and disposed of right at the outset without further action, what stage a case is at or how long each matter has been pending before final resolution or what the accumulation of matters has been over the years.

RTI responses have also been uneven: most commissions provided information on cases received and disposed; a majority gave information on cases disposed of right at the outset without further consideration and also about cases initiated by the commission itself. Only a few like Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tripura and Uttarakhand provided complete disaggregated data by year.

Workload assessment takes account of all cases received and disposed of in that year. Looked at over the last three years (2021-2024) cases received across commissions have diminished slightly but hover around 1.1 lakh. The cases received in Maharashtra, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh doubled. In 2023-24, altogether twenty-two Commissions received 1,09,136 complaints.[15] Uttar Pradesh's Commission that historically receives the highest number of cases, received 31,000 in 2024. Sikkim, with just 5 cases recorded the lowest.

Case clearance rates[16] were not even. In 2023-24 the average case clearance rate was 83 per cent. Indicating an effort at clearing the backlog, between 2021 and 2024, seven commissions[17] improved their case clearance rate while sixteen[18] decreased theirs. Maharashtra and Manipur recorded the highest case clearance rates—259 per cent and 198 per cent respectively, followed by Andhra Pradesh (119 per cent). On the other hand Jharkhand and Telangana couldn't clear any cases because there were no adjudicators and there was no investigative wing or severe shortages.

Disposals

The overall high case clearance rate is deceptive as at all commissions the majority of cases appear to be dismissed in limine. In limine complaints are rejected outright because they are interpreted as not falling under the mandate of PHRA and are said to be disposed of 'in limine'.

On average, the commissions cleared 82.5 per cent of the cases they received in the three year period between 2021 and 2024.[19] Odisha (204 per cent), Maharashtra (131 per cent) and Goa (101 per cent) could dispose

15 Of the 25 Commissions, Gujarat, Kerala and Meghalaya did not provide data on cases received and disposed of in 2023-2024. Gujarat SHRC does not maintain caseload data separately; Kerala provided data till March 2023 and Meghalaya did not respond to the RTI Application
16 Case clearance rate is the number of cases disposed in a year, measured against the number filed in that year.
17 Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Maharashtra, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal
18 Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan , Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand
19 Of the 25 Commissions, 18 provided data on case clearance rate for the years 2021 to 2024. Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Kerala and Meghalaya did not provide caseload data for all the three years.

of most of the cases received in this period. Three commissions - Tamil Nadu (29 per cent), Telangana (49 per cent) and Sikkim (59 per cent) recorded an average case clearance rate lower than 60 per cent.

Of the 12 states that provided disaggregated information[20] overall case clearance rates averaged 80 per cent. Of these 51% were disposed of at the outset.

Illustratively, in 2022-23, twelve SHRCs together disposed of just over 50% of all complaints this way. Illustratively, of the 5,579 cases disposed of by West Bengal 93 per cent were disposed of right at the threshold without further consideration. That left 7 per cent for further action. In 2022-23 Tamil Nadu records disposing of just 16 per cent received. Of these 91 per cent were disposed of in limine. No SHRC indicates the process by which in limine decisions are arrived at.

Only a fraction of cases ever get taken up for further action. Here the pathway to resolution is frequently hampered for lack of investigative staff or no investigative staff and delays and therefore an accumulation of cases year after year become unavoidable.

Suo moto: In its function as watchdog, SHRC's have the power to initiate inquiries into human rights violation of its own volition without needing to wait for any complaint. This power to intervene proactively is particularly valuable to check pattern and practice of commonly occurring abuse or where victims, often due to fear or other circumstances, may not file formal complaints.

Figure 43: Cases disposed of in limine in proportion to total cases disposed of in 2022-23

More than half of all complaints were disposed at the very outset due to procedural or substantive reasons.

	Cases received in 2022-23	Cases disposed of in 2022-23	Case clearance rate (%)	Disposed of In limine	In limine disposal (%, 2022-23)
West Bengal	5,755	5,579	96.9	5,205	93.3
Tamil Nadu	15,374	2,456	16.0	2,244	91.4
Maharashtra	5,643	6,767	119.9	4,977	73.6
Karnataka	4,674	3,925	84.0	2,595	66.1
Tripura	71	69	97.2	34	49.3
Punjab	10,759	9,718	90.3	4,719	48.6
Uttarakhand	2,360	1,659	70.3	519	31.3
Himachal Pradesh	300	250	83.3	65	26.0
Odisha	3,220	7610[a]	236.3	1,277	16.8
Assam	3,192	2,271	97.4	73	3.2
Haryana	2,491	2,678	107.5	2	0.1
Sikkim	3	2	66.7	0	NA
Total	**53,842**	**42,984**	**79.8**	**21,710**	**50.5**

a Includes cases from previous years
Source: Data based on RTI responses from State Human Rights Commissions

20 IJR requested information on the nature of disposals - in limine, orders for compensation and orders for further action - by the Commissions

Transparency

Section 28 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, requires SHRCs to submit an annual report to the State Government. The government in turn has a duty to put these reports before the assembly. All too often reports are delayed in their making or though submitted are not tabled before the house for inordinately long periods. As of now, no state has released its FY 2023-2024 annual report, and the 2022-2023 reports of just three states—Maharashtra, Sikkim, and Goa are publicly available. RTI responses are at best partial and the functionality of many websites limited.

In the absence of year on year detailed disaggregated data neither real workloads, nor how long cases take to traverse the commission and more importantly patterns of rights violations are hard to assess accurately. Most commissions do not publish up to date 5 years information. Those who recorded how many cases were dismissed at the outset do not record reasons for such dismissal. Manipur's 2021 annual report mentions reasons but is outdated. Rajasthan, Goa, Gujarat and Kerala do not record cases initiated suo moto separately. Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab and Gujarat helpfully record cases received district wise. Others, like Maharashtra, Punjab, and Haryana categorise cases by complainant or nature of violation eg. children, women, ST/SC, rape, slavery, unlawful detention. Haryana's 2021-22 annual report also details the investigation officer, the date of submission of the report, its completion and whether the allegation has been proved or not.

In 2023-24 commissions initiated 1,923 cases suo motu, an increase of 878 cases over 2022. Madhya Pradesh initiated the highest number at 1,373 or 14 per cent of its total cases.

Diversity

SHRC total women staff (%, 2023-24)
Share of women in executive staff (%, March 2024)
Share of women in investigation wing (%, 2023-24) NEW

SHRCs do not document gender, caste, religious or disability diversities nor state them on their websites or annual reports. The Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the Global Alliances National Human Rights Institution (GANHRI) recommends that at least 20 per cent of Human Rights Institutions comprise women and 24 per cent belong to minority groups. To align with this, in 2019 The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, was amended to ensure that at least one of the five members of the NHRC is a woman. The amendment does not extend to SHRC's.

Overall, in 2024 women held just 10 per cent of all executive staff positions—a slight increase from 7 per cent in 2022. There were no women chairpersons; Kerala, Punjab and West Bengal, had one female member each; and Assam, Goa, Manipur, and Uttar Pradesh had a woman as secretary.

Women are clustered at the lower administrative echelons and make up 22 per cent of the total personnel. This is a 5 percentage point increase over 2022. Only six[21] out of twenty states have more than 30 per cent, while eleven[22] have less than 20 per cent. At 50 per cent Goa has the highest percentage of women, followed by Karnataka at 44 per cent. Andhra Pradesh has only 7 per cent.

Budget and Expenditure

Budget utilised (%, 2022-23)
Average budget utilised (%, 2018-2023) NEW

SHRC's funds are usually either sourced from the Home or Law and Justice Ministries of each state. In FY 2022-2023 the total sum allotted amounted to Rs. 142 crore

21 Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Meghalaya, Maharashtra and Sikkim
22 Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab and West Bengal

an increase of about 40%. The NHRC allocation for the same year stood at Rs. 70 crore.[23] Taken cumulatively, in 5 years the total allocation rose from Rs. 99 crore in 2018-19 to Rs. 142 crore in 2022-2023. However, this was a decrease from Rs. 155 crore or 8% from the year before. Over 5 years between 2018-19 and 2022-23 budgets for three states—Manipur (813 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (625 per cent) and Maharashtra (147 per cent) increased substantially.

Over the same five years on average, overall budget utilisation is 82 per cent. Eleven[24] utilised between 70%-90%. Rajasthan could utilise only 61% and Meghalaya only 21%. Four commissions—Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh—utilised available funds fully.

In 2022-23, on average, SHRCs utilised 88 per cent of their budgets—an increase from 67 per cent in 2021-22. Six commissions[25] utilised their entire budget, while the commissions of Chhattisgarh (116.67 per cent) and Kerala (101.72 per cent) utilised over and above its allocated funds. The majority utilised more than 90 per cent. However, Goa (59 per cent), Manipur (62 per cent) and Uttarakhand (50 per cent), recorded the least utilisation.

The bulk of available funds goes toward administrative expenditures such as salaries and infrastructure, rents and travel. Responses of 13 SHRCs signal that very small amounts are expended on mandated functions[26] for which these commissions were set up, for example visits to jails and other institutions where people are detained [See Box]. While Karnataka recorded a spend on activities of Rs 13 lakhs. West Bengal with a large constituency recorded Rs. 30,000 on all activities while Jharkhand with no commissioners or staff also spent Rs. 30,000. Additionally, not a single SHRC records undertaking research studies on any human rights topic.

One key issue is that SHRCs either do not maintain adequate data or fail to respond to inquiries regarding their activities. Poor data recording practices and a complete reluctance to share information have made it difficult to assess SHRC performance.

Figure 44: Share of women in investigative staff in 2023-24

Most women in SHRCs are clustered among lower echelons, and very few are present among the investigative staff.

Commissions	Share of women in investigation wing (%, 2023-24)
Andhra Pradesh	Wing not established
Bihar	0.00
Chhattisgarh	33.33
Goa	0.00
Gujarat	0.00
Haryana	0.00
Himachal Pradesh	0.00
Jharkhand	Wing not established
Karnataka	47.37
Kerala	0.00
Madhya Pradesh	22.22
Maharashtra	Data not provided
Meghalaya	0.00
Odisha	33.33
Punjab	17.65
Rajasthan	Data not provided
Sikkim	No separate investigation wing
Tamil Nadu	Data not provided
Telangana	0.00
Tripura	40.00
Uttar Pradesh	Data not provided
Uttarakhand	20.00
West Bengal	42.86

Maja Daruwala, India Justice Report;
Nayanika Singhal, India Justice Report;
Nidha Parveen, India Justice Report

23 National Human Rights Commission, Annual Budgets 2022-2023. Available at: https://nhrc.nic.in/activities/annual-budgets
24 Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, West Bengal
25 Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal
26 Section 12 of the Protection of Human Rights Act mandates Commissions to undertake research, promote human rights awareness and literacy and visit jails and other custodial institutions under the control of the State Government in addition to inquiring into complaints of rights violations.

Figure 45: Visits to jails & other institutions made in 2023-24

SHRCs have the mandate to visit prisons and other institutions to ensure the well -being of inmates, however, IJR finds that too few visits were were made. Some SHRCs didn't record visits to even a single prison.

	Chairperson and Members			
Commissions	31st March 2023	31st March 2024	Visits to jails & other institutions during 2023-24	Number of prisons and other institutions[27]
Andhra Pradesh	3	3	0	25
Assam	2	3	6	34
Haryana	3	0	15	28
Himachal Pradesh	3	2	16	13
Jharkhand	1	0	On hold[28]	38
Madhya Pradesh	3	3	0	73
Odisha	2	3	6	24
Punjab	2	2	7	23
Sikkim	2	2	0	4
Tamil Nadu	3	3	20	34
Telangana	3	0	0	15
Tripura	3	3	0	7
West Bengal	3	3	10	35
Total	**33**	**27**	**80**	**353**

27 Prisons here include figures for Central and District Prisons in the state as provided in the Prisons Statistics India 2022, Table 1.1, Types of Jails in the country as on 31st December 2022; available at: https://www.ncrb.gov.in/uploads/nationalcrimerecordsbureau/custom/1701946366Table11-2022.pdf
'Other Institutions' include Observation Homes, Special Homes and Places of Safety under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015. Data is as per Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2628 dated 4 August 2023, available at: https://sansad.in/getFile/loksabhaquestions/annex/1712/AU2628.pdf?source=pqals

28 Jharkhand SHRC provided that functions of the Commission were on hold as posts of Chairperson and members are vacant.

Figure 46: Accessing SHRCs

India Justice Report assessed (but did not rank) the user-friendliness of SHRC websites. The websites were checked twice between July and December 2024. Except for Karnataka, no state offered a complete bouquet of services to its citizens.

Yes/Available Not available

State Commission	Commission established on	Functional Website	Complaint Facilities					Proactive Disclosures under Section 4, Right to Information Act
			Local language	Link to HRCNet	Guidelines/ FAQs on filing offline cases	Status of cases (online and offline)	Availability of orders and judgements	
Assam	1996	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	NA
Andhra Pradesh	2021	No website						
Arunachal	2023	No website						
Bihar	2008	Yes	Yes (Hindi)	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	NA
Chhattisgarh	2001	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	NA
Goa	2011	Yes	Yes (Konkani)	NA	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Gujarat	2006	Yes	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Haryana	2012	Yes	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Himachal Pradesh	2020*	Yes	NA	NA	NA	Yes	NA	NA
Jharkhand	2010	No website						
Karnataka	2007	Yes	Yes (Kannada)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kerala	1998	Yes	Yes (Malayalam)	NA	Yes	NA	Yes	NA
Madhya Pradesh	1995	Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes
Maharashtra	2,001	Yes	Yes (Marathi and Hindi)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA
Manipur	2018	No website						
Meghalaya	2016	No website						
Odisha	2000	Yes	Yes (Odia)	NA	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Punjab	1997	Yes	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Rajasthan	1999	Yes	Yes (Only Hindi)	NA	Yes (Only in Hindi)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sikkim	2008	Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tamil Nadu	1997	Yes	Yes (Tamil)	NA	Yes	NA	NA	Yes
Telangana	2019	No website						
Tripura	2016	Yes	Yes (Hindi, English, Bengali)	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes
Uttar Pradesh	1996	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	Yes
Uttarakhand	2013	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	Yes
West Bengal	1995	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	NA	Yes	Yes

* Reconstituted
Source: Websites of the SHRCs

Table 7: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Best (Ranks 1 to 8) Middle (Ranks 9 to 16) Worst (Ranks 17 to 23)

			Human Resources			Workload
Theme						
Indicator			SHRC total staff vacancy (%, 2023-24)	SHRC executive staff vacancy (%, Mar 2024)	SHRC investigation wing vacancy (%, 2023-24)	Average CCR rate (%, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24)
Scoring guide			Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Lower, the better	Higher, the better
	IJR 4 Rank	IJR 4 Score				
Andhra Pradesh	23	**2.08**	NA[1]	0.0	NA[3]	84.1
Bihar	15	**3.41**	17.8	50.0	25.0	NA[5]
Chhattisgarh	18	**3.16**	62.2	75.0	77.8	88.3
Goa	10	**4.34**	37.5	25.0	100.0	100.9
Gujarat	20	**2.74**	52.0	25.0	78.6	NA[6]
Haryana	13	**3.86**	7.0	75.0	10.5	85.1
Himachal Pradesh	14	**3.53**	35.9	25.0	60.0	81.1
Jharkhand	21	**2.42**	52.0	75.0	NA[3]	NA[5]
Karnataka	3	**5.89**	23.4	50.0	36.7	82.5
Kerala	5	**5.51**	-17.3	25.0	0.0	NA[5]
Madhya Pradesh	7	**4.93**	30.2	50.0	33.3	84.2
Maharashtra	12	**3.96**	7.4	0.0	NA[2]	131.3
Meghalaya	16	**3.40**	3.1	0.0	0.0	NA[5]
Odisha	4	**5.52**	29.0	25.0	11.8	204.0
Punjab	6	**5.47**	NA[2]	25.0	-13.3	84.1
Rajasthan	19	**2.94**	59.4	0.0	12.5	67.5
Sikkim	8	**4.91**	-183.3	50.0	NA[4]	58.6
Tamil Nadu	22	**2.15**	NA[2]	0.0	NA[2]	28.8
Telangana	17	**3.24**	14.7	75.0	64.3	49.0
Tripura	2	**6.09**	27.6	0.0	44.4	93.4
Uttar Pradesh	11	**4.32**	61.0	0.0	25.0	79.2
Uttarakhand	9	**4.48**	20.0	0.0	16.7	71.1
West Bengal	1	**6.99**	25.5	0.0	56.3	84.4

Notes: **1.** Data not available with SHRC. **2.** Data not provided (RTI + website). **3.** Wing not established. **4.** No separate investigation wing. **5.** Complete data not provided by state. **6.** Data not maintained by SHRC. **7.** Data not maintained by SHRC. 8. AP SHRC, Kurnool constituted w.e.f. 21.03.2021.

Source: RTI applications filed by the India Justice Report team

Table 7: Indicator-wise data, state scores and ranks

Theme	Diversity			Budget	
Indicator	SHRC women staff (%, 2023-24)	Share of women in executive staff (%, March 2024)	Share of women in investigation wing (%, 2023-24)	Budget utilised (%, 2022-23)	Average budget utilised (%, FY '18-'23)
Scoring guide	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better	Higher, the better
Andhra Pradesh	7.1	0.0	NA[3]	NA[7]	NA[8]
Bihar	16.9	0.0	0.0	100	93
Chhattisgarh	10.8	0.0	33.3	117	97
Goa	50.0	33.3	0.0	59	71
Gujarat	16.7	0.0	0.0	81	91
Haryana	17.8	0.0	0.0	97	98
Himachal Pradesh	8.0	0.0	0.0	94	74
Jharkhand	16.7	0.0	NA[3]	87	89
Karnataka	43.5	0.0	47.4	93	87
Kerala	41.0	33.3	0.0	102	86
Madhya Pradesh	14.9	0.0	22.2	100	100
Maharashtra	36.0	0.0	NA[2]	74	76
Meghalaya	38.7	0.0	0.0	91	21
Odisha	18.4	0.0	33.3	81	84
Punjab	11.8	33.3	17.6	99	95
Rajasthan	NA[2]	0.0	NA[2]	67	61
Sikkim	35.3	0.0	NA[4]	82	82
Tamil Nadu	NA[2]	0.0	NA[2]	100	103
Telangana	23.5	0.0	0.0	90	95
Tripura	28.6	0.0	40.0	98	81
Uttar Pradesh	NA[2]	25.0	NA[2]	100	100
Uttarakhand	27.3	0.0	20.0	50	80
West Bengal	18.6	25.0	42.9	100	72

Notes: **1.** Data not available with SHRC. **2.** Data not provided (RTI + website). **3.** Wing not established. **4.** No separate investigation wing. **5.** Complete data not provided by state. **6.** Data not maintained by SHRC. **7.** Data not maintained by SHRC. 8. AP SHRC, Kurnool constituted w.e.f. 21.03.2021.

Source: RTI applications filed by the India Justice Report team

Other Sections

- Mediation
- Data Disabled
- Impact of BNSS on Capacity
- Recommendations
- Methodology

CHAPTER 6

A Potent Tool for Judicial Reform

As the Indian justice system struggles to be people-centric, it often grapples with the stark reality of delayed case resolution. Burdened by an estimated backlog of over 5.2 crore cases nationwide, of which more than 1.5 crore are civil in nature, swift and effective mechanisms for dispute resolution have become a compelling necessity.[1] One such mechanism is mediation.

Within this context, mediation centres attached to courts (often referred to as court-annexed mediation centres) offer a beacon of hope. By providing a platform for parties to reach settlements outside the formal adversarial process whilst still under overall judicial supervision, these centres have the potential to be one more arrow in the quiver of reform to lighten the judicial burden and, more importantly, to improve access to justice.

The Evolution of Mediation in India

Mediation is often considered a recent, exotic transplant into the formal justice system of India when, in fact, grounded in traditions of local conflict resolution, it has been an intrinsic part of India's history. One of the most enduring indigenous dispute resolution mechanisms in the country has been the Panchayat system at the community level. This comprised five respected elders of the village (referred to as Panch Parmeshwars) who attempted to bring about an amicable settlement of local disputes or at least impose a settlement acceptable to the disputants and the community. With colonial emphasis on formal justice delivery systems, the Panchayat system was allowed to wane significantly.

Post-independence, the concept of mediation was first recognised under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. However, it was only 40 years later that alternate dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms were promoted under The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1996 also recognised and promoted conciliation, particularly in commercial and civil matters. Considering their similar characteristics, the terms mediation and conciliation have been used interchangeably over the years. However, in recent times, mediation has become the more widely accepted one.

Faced with an ever-mounting judicial backlog, in 1995-96 the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, Hon'ble Justice A.M. Ahmadi, invited delegates of the Institute for the Study and Development of Legal Systems (ISDLS), a San-Francisco-based institution, to a joint Indo-US study to examine the issue. The group suggested certain legislative and structural reforms for improving the state of judicial arrears. This was followed by the introduction of the Code of Civil Procedure (CPC) (Amendment) Act, 1999 which amended Section 89 of the CPC. It empowered courts to refer suitable disputes to ADR

1 National Judicial Data Grid Dashboard, 13 February 2025, Available at: https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/njdgnew/?p=main/pend_dashboard

Most recently, the Mediation Act of 2023 represents an important step in institutionalising and formalising the mediation framework. Among its key provisions, it establishes enforceability of mediated settlements by giving them the status of a decree of court. Focusing on accessibility, online mediation platforms have been established to enhance reach, particularly for rural populations.

Community mediation too has been introduced to encourage resolution of disputes "likely to affect peace, harmony and tranquility amongst the residents or families of any area or locality." To ensure time-bound and swift resolution, mediation under the Act must be completed within 120 days, extendable by not more than 60 days.[3]

mechanisms with the parties' consent. A committee chaired by Justice M. Jagannadha Rao drafted the Civil Procedure Alternative Dispute Resolution and Mediation Rules, 2003, providing a framework for court-referred mediation practices. Based on this, most high courts adopted their own mediation rules. Operationalisation, however, remained stymied on account of the lack of systematic institutional structures and personnel for implementation.

In 2005, bolstering its applicability, the Supreme Court in the case of Salem Advocate Bar Association v Union of India[2] iterated that courts must refer suitable cases to ADR mechanisms, including mediation. Subsequently, the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC) was constituted by the apex court to oversee effective implementation of mediation and conciliation across the country.

Over time, mediation found its way into sector-specific laws as well. The Companies Act, 2013 provides for a 'Mediation and Conciliation Panel' to be maintained by the central government, while the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 enables mediation cells to be attached to District and State Commissions. These mediations are completely voluntary, based on party autonomy and consent.

Mandatory mediation was introduced for the first time in 2018 through an amendment in the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 that required Pre-Institution Mediation and Settlement (PIMS) for commercial disputes above Rs. 3 lakh.

Mediation: What is it?

Mediation is a method of dispute resolution whereby an independent external person, the mediator, facilitates parties to a dispute to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution. The mediator is no adjudicator and has no decision-making power. Rooted in the principles of party autonomy and consent, mediation prioritises consensus-driven resolutions over protracted litigation. It aligns with traditional Indian dispute resolution practices and emphasises a restorative approach.

There are typically three paths to initiate mediation:

1. **Voluntary, by parties:** When the parties to a contract have a mediation clause in the contract or voluntarily choose to initiate the process post-dispute (private mediation)

2. **Court-referred (post-institution):** Where the court refers the parties for mediation either under Section 89 of the Civil Procedure Code, 1908 or under sector-specific laws (such as Section 37 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019)

3. **Statutory mandates (pre-litigation):** When certain statutes mandate pre-institution mediation as under Section 12A of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015

What kinds of cases come to mediation?

Mediation is gaining popularity worldwide as a more-efficient, cost-effective alternative to traditional litigation,

2 Salem Advocate Bar Association v Union of India, 2005 (6) SCC 344.
3 Section 18, The Mediation Act, 2023.

and is recognised for its ability to address a wide range of disputes. Commonly mediated cases in the Indian context include matrimonial and other family disputes, along with other civil, commercial, property, labour, tenancy, and consumer disputes. Criminal cases that are compoundable (such as cheque 'bounce' cases) can also be referred for mediation.

An Overview of Court-Annexed Mediation Centres

While there are multiple venues for mediation, the present emphasis is on mediation integrated within the judicial framework, i.e., court-annexed mediation. When the court sees that there are elements of possible settlement in a dispute, it may refer the parties for mediation to a court- annexed mediation centre (CAMC). The CAMC then appoints a mediator from its panel to facilitate mediation between the parties. The court may also refer to a mediator chosen by the parties or selected by the court.

Benefits of Mediation

Time Efficiency: Court processes typically involve serving notices to several parties, adjudication around interim applications, presentation of witnesses, and hearing third- party evidence of various kinds including forensic and expert evidence. Adjournments are frequent and endemic. Appeals against interim and final orders are common. The inevitability of delay hard-wired into the process is illustrated in the disposition time of civil cases, where currently more than 19 lakh civil cases are pending before the district and high courts for more than 10 years.[4] Outcomes meanwhile remain uncertain. Mediation cases on the other hand, being based on willingness to settle matters by mutual consent, are usually resolved swiftly. Additionally, a set of satellite cases often also get settled once the main case has been successfully mediated.

Cost-Effectiveness: Court-annexed mediation is free of cost for parties, and if successful, the court fee is refunded. Thus, mediation cuts down on legal fees and all associated expenses. It is beneficial for those with deep pockets as well. A settlement, even when mediation is protracted, will free up long tied-up financial resources.

Satisfaction and Sustainability: Stripped of the confrontational aspects inherent in the traditionally adversarial context of court cases, because the parties themselves help shape outcomes, successful mediations often help preserve valuable business and personal relationships. For the most part, settlements reached through mediation are rarely challenged.

Accessibility for Vulnerable Populations: Mediation centres provide for less intimidating spaces, do not subject parties to a public trial, and are free of cost, thus being particularly valuable to people of limited means.

The first court-annexed mediation centre was set up in 2005 at the Madras High Court, when Justice Markandey Katju, then Chief Justice of the High Court set up the Tamil Nadu Mediation and Conciliation Centre as official part of the court system. A few lawyers were trained, and judges began referring mediation cases. Despite limited resources, it soon gathered momentum and its success was palpable. One case that spread awareness of its potential and of the process involved, related to workers' unions and banks who had been fighting for 12 years over sharing the proceeds from the sale of a wound-up company. Mediation brought the dispute to settlement within three months. The amount involved was Rs 50 crore, and 2,196 workers and their families benefitted. The case caught the attention of then President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam who paid a visit to the Centre.

The second such centre was the Samadhan Mediation Centre set up in 2006, as a joint initiative of the bar and bench of the Delhi High Court.

Today, there are CAMCs at the Supreme Court, most high courts, and at the district level, which are supervised by the State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs), which ensures judicial oversight.

4 National Judicial Data Grid Dashboard, 11 February 2025. Available at: https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/njdgnew/?p=main/pend_dashboard.

Challenges to the Growth of Mediation

Despite mediation brimming with potential, its growth in India has been gradual and modest, even after two decades of its statutory recognition. There are key issues at both the supply and demand ends. This is reflected through the uneven distribution of mediation facilities, inadequate supply of mediators, and lack of public awareness. While the new Act provides for a structured framework via the establishment of specialised mediation institutions, mediation service providers, and the central Mediation Council of India, long delays in ramping-up available manpower could leave the potential of this powerful mechanism untapped to the detriment of both, the overburdened courts and waiting users.

Some key challenges:

1. Fragmented Policy Framework, Disparate Rules and Uneven Implementation: Until the enactment of the Mediation Act, 2023, mediation lacked a cohesive legislative framework. Without uniform regulations or oversight, its growth was fragmented and inconsistent across jurisdictions. In the absence of the envisaged National Mediation Council proposed under the Act, the rules differ from state to state as mediation in every state is under the aegis of the respective SLSA and relies heavily on the capacity and ability of the individual state to oversee and promote mediation.

2. Cultural Resistance and Lack of Awareness: There is a deeply ingrained belief in the authority of formal court judgments, leading to a preference for 'authoritative' adjudication over negotiated settlements. Despite having a long history of community dispute resolution, mediation in the modern sense has not been effectively integrated within these traditional Panchayati systems to leverage their reach and acceptance. In the absence of any record of mediation in the National Judicial Data Grid or their assessment reports, judges within the formal framework also appear to have little incentive to refer cases for mediation.[5] Additionally, lawyers often view mediation as a threat to their income, reducing their willingness to suggest or actively engage in mediation.

3. Government's Reluctance: Despite the government being the biggest litigant,[6] the Mediation Act excludes from its ambit all non-commercial disputes (such as those related to the service and employment of public servants) where the government is a party. Even where commercial disputes are involved, officials appear reluctant to opt for mediation, which could have beneficial outcomes for the government, but the necessary compromise may open them later to questions and actions by administrative and financial oversight bodies.

4. Inadequate Infrastructure and Human Resources: The number of mediation centres is currently inadequate to handle the large number of potential cases that can be referred to them. As of December 2024, there are approximately **1,600 mediation centres** under the aegis of State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs) across all states and UTs.[7] However, their geographic distribution is fairly uneven. Maharashtra alone has about one-third of these centres, while states like Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana have fewer than 30 per state.

The number of mediators too is inadequate. There are nearly **20,000** mediators nationwide,[8] but this does not capture the significant state-level disparities. Maharashtra leads with nearly 5,000 mediators, followed by Madhya Pradesh with around 2,400, while states like Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Rajasthan have a significantly lower cohort, in the range of 240-340.

While most mediators are lawyers (11,158 nationwide), the number of 'any other mediators' who would presumably be technical experts or professionals is abysmally low, with only Maharashtra, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh having notable numbers.

The deployment of judges as mediators reveals a deeper picture of resource shortfall: most states deploy less than 50 per cent of the available cadre. As a result, deployed mediators necessarily have large workloads, and delays once again emerge as a problem in a process designed to tackle the very issue.

5 Deepika Kinhal, Apoorva, *Mandatory Mediation in India-Resolving to Resolve*, 2021. Available at: https://vidhilegalpolicy.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Mandatory-Mediation-in-India-Resolving-to-Resolve.pdf

6 As of July 2024, there are 6,98,904 cases pending in various courts in the country in which the central government is a party. 'CJI terms govts as biggest litigants, says docket explosion due to executive, legislature,' *Economic Times*, 30 April 2022. Available at: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/cji-terms-govts-as-biggest-litigants-says-docket-explosion-due-to-executive-legislature/articleshow/91203374.cms?from=mdr.

7 NALSA, *Settlement through Mediation Report - April 2024-December 2024*. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/statistics/settlement-through-mediation-report/settlement-through-mediation-report-april-2024-to-december-2024

8 NALSA, *Settlement through Mediation Report- April 2024- December 2024*. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/statistics/settlement-through-mediation-report/settlement-through-mediation-report-april-2024-to-december-2024

5. Training of Mediators: In the absence of robust training institutions and regularly scheduled training opportunities, the capacity of mediators adds to the challenge. Currently, the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC) prescribes a 40-hour mandatory training course for mediators. Retired judges, judicial officers, or legal practitioners with at least 10 years' experience, and experts or other professionals with 15 years' experience are eligible for training under the MCPC mandate. This criterion excludes a sizable potential population of young mediators. The new Mediation Act, 2023 has done away with the age restrictions, recognising that young mediators must be allowed to enter the system and be trained; hopefully the court-annexed mediation will also do away with this restriction.

By April 2023, nearly 12,000 mediators had been trained by the MCPC nationwide.[9] Of these, over 7,500 are advocates while judicial officers account for nearly 4,000; in contrast there is only a meagre proportion of experts (365), social workers, and others (103).[10]

Illustratively, though MCPC records training 99 judicial officers in Delhi, not a single judicial officer is recorded as being available for mediation.[11] Similarly, despite 972 trained mediators in Rajasthan, only about 340 of them are available.[12] This mismatch between trained and available personnel builds a strong case for expanding the eligibility criteria, as a sizable portion of trained judicial officers and senior lawyers are not available to be deployed in the mediator pool, possibly due to the multiple other functions they fulfill.

6. Appointment of Mediators: While the Mediation Act provides for parties to choose their mediators, the rules adopted by most high courts list the procedures for appointment in a court-referred mediation. While these rules do provide for a mediator be appointed through consent by the parties initially, the common practice is to make the reference to the court-annexed mediation centre. Here, based on the roster and general suitability, the mediator is appointed from a panel available with the mediation centre. In such cases, the parties cannot select the mediator of their choice, and have to rely on the court- appointed mediator, who may or may not have the technical or subject-matter expertise for the particular case.

In most high courts, retired judges, legal practitioners with 15 years of experience at the Bar, experts or other professionals with 15 years' experience, bureaucrats, senior executives or expert mediation institutions recognised by that high court are eligible for empanellment. A few high courts have relaxed the experience-eligibility criterion for lawyers: the Punjab and Haryana High Court for example, has reduced it to five years' experience, while the Delhi and Tamil Nadu High Courts have reduced it to ten years.

7. Insufficient Resources: Poor remuneration also impacts the spread of mediation. Currently, funds from NALSA and state governments are disbursed to the SLSAs for mediation-related expenditure. The FY 2023-24 guidelines place a ceiling of 25 per cent on expenditure out of the National Legal Aid Fund for alternative dispute resolution and mediation.

Though mediators are required to have substantial experience, the typical honorarium for each successful mediation is Rs. 5,000, and is Rs. 2,500[13] for an unsuccessful mediation, though some states have slightly higher allocations.

8. The Mandating Muddle: After the 2018 amendment in the Commercial Courts Act, all commercial disputes above Rs. 3 lakh mandatorily go for pre-institution mediation. There are demands for expanding this to other kinds of cases as well. However, critics argue that the element of compulsion goes against the fundamental principle of dispute resolution involving the consent of parties, and point to its poor performance, underwhelming success rate, and the fact that it can be, and is perhaps being,

9 *Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee, MCPC Trained Mediators 2023*. Available at: https://mcpc.nic.in/pdfs/MCPC%20Trained%20Mediators%202023.pdf
10 *Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee, MCPC Trained Mediators 2023*. Available at: https://mcpc.nic.in/pdfs/MCPC%20Trained%20Mediators%202023.pdf
11 NALSA, *Settlement through Mediation Report- April 2024- December 2024.* Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/statistics/settlement-through-mediation-report/settlement-through-mediation-report-april-2024-to-december-2024
12 *NALSA, Settlement through Mediation Report- April 2024- December 2024*. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/statistics/settlement-through-mediation-report/settlement-through-mediation-report-april-2024-to-december-2024
13 Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee, *Important Resolutions and Decisions by MCPC*. Available at: https://mcpc.nic.in/pdfs/16022022_01.pdf

Inconsistent Success Rates

The success rate of court-referred mediation varies widely across regions and types of cases. This has spawned skepticism about its value and has discouraged its broader adoption. The national average for settlement of cases via mediation centres under the various SLSAs was about 22 per cent in both 2022-23 and 2023-24. In 2023-24, 14 states/UTs had rates above this national average, led by Sikkim (46.9%) and Jharkhand (42.2%).[14]

In the Bangalore Mediation Centre, an initiative of the High Court of Karnataka, 60,042 cases were taken up for mediation between 1 January 2007 and 30 September 2020, of which 38,961 (65%) cases were settled.[15]

While success rates are recorded on the basis of number of cases received and settled every year, data on time taken from referral to resolution is not recorded. Publicly available documentation of both time and costs involved in reaching outcomes is vital to providing a firm basis on which to base a comparison between mediation and court case resolution, and to present a strong argument for the former's expanded use. These figures also do not capture the fact that several cases are non-starters, where parties refuse mediation or exit after the preliminary process. An analysis that looks at the ratio of cases actually mediated to outcomes would give a more accurate estimation of the value of mediation.

used to create more delays by one or other of the parties who may benefit from lengthening the process.

Another argument here that goes back to the fundamentally voluntary nature of mediation is that, rather than relying on a mediator from the roster who is foisted on them, better results would obtain when parties are allowed to choose mediators they trust and have faith in. This points to the need for encouraging a mix of private mediation on a professional basis, while keeping the court-mediation system for those who would avail of it.

These factors collectively explain why, despite its recognised potential, mediation in India is yet to achieve the transformative impact seen in other countries.

Institutional Support and Policy Recommendations

Much of mediation's future success will rely on financial, infrastructural and human resource adequacy and a unified national strategy.

1. Promoting mediation and increasing trust building: The success of mediation lies in systematically integrating it into the justice system. The judiciary is a lead partner but not the controller of mediation. Success will depend on developing mediation as a full-fledged avenue for professional practice, which means the supply of good work and a reasonable income. Some of this work should come from the courts. Enhanced capacity and expertise should flow from business, individuals, and government too.

The early operationalising of the Mediation Council of India, working in close collaboration with the parties involved, is a must. The judiciary's role is crucial in integrating mediation as an inherent part of its court management and showcasing its effectiveness as a valuable alternative to litigation. Illustratively, instead of relying solely on a judge's decision to refer a case for mediation, a more structured approach would require adoption of Standard Operating Procedures to help identify and refer suitable cases for mediation and the introduction of clear guidelines outlining the ideal timing for such referrals. Presently, backlogs are treated as a burden, whereas they are treasure troves for mediators.

A system to identify cases awaiting trial for years that are suitable for mediation, which are then sent to professional mediators would help with the backlog, far more than merely appointing more judges when delays are endemic, and decisions are always open to appeal.

14 Data is based on an RTI reply received from NALSA.
15 Karnataka Mediation Centre, High Court of Karnataka. Available at: https://nyayadegula.kar.nic.in/court_annex.html

International Perspective

International momentum for mediation gained ground around 1976, when a conference in honour of US legal philosopher Roscoe Pound, analysed issues in the justice system and examined ways it could be reformed. It unveiled the idea of a multi-courthouse where varied means of dispute resolution could go beyond being exclusively adversarial. In the years that followed, a strong concern for better court management and judicial administration drove the idea of alternate dispute resolution including mediation in the US. Over the years many jurisdictions have adopted mandatory mediation programmes for settlement of certain types of disputes.

In 2008, the European Union (EU) directed guidance to EU Member States to make mediation mandatory, provided the parties' right to access justice was not infringed. Recently, mandatory mediation has been introduced in the UK for small claims.

Singapore too has a robust court-annexed mediation model, with mandatory certification, standard processes, and dedicated funding. Under Italy's opt-out model for certain kinds of disputes, the parties must attend a mediation session to explore the possibility of settlement and are incentivised to take this route. If there appears to be no chance of a settlement, then either party can opt out after the first session.

Promoting virtual mediation platforms and innovative outreach methods, like mobile mediation vans, can also expand access in underserved areas.

2. Well-trained and adequate cadre of mediators: The Mediation Council of India can help the cause by prioritising rigourous training and accreditation programmes that incorporate ethical considerations like confidentiality and impartiality, and provide for accreditation after mandatory apprenticeships. Publicly accessible databases of accredited mediators would establish public assurance of quality. This must also be fortified with regular quality assessments and audits of mediations, along with maintaining a record of the time taken for every mediation.

3. Incentivising mediators: Adequately remunerating mediators is vital to ensure that a larger, more qualified cadre is attracted to mediation. Judges are inherently reluctant to put a price on justice delivery lest it be seen as privileging or privatising justice. Instead, parties could be asked to pay reasonable fees and allowed to choose a mediator from a panel graded by qualification and experience, depending on the nature of the case, its monetary value, and the skill and seniority of the mediator. An exemption for fees must be made for people eligible for free legal aid under Section 12 of the Legal Services Act, 1987.

Many contend that the establishment of an All-India Mediation Service, which would train, grade, and deploy mediators across government institutions, judicial bodies, and even within government departments, holds significant potential.

4. Expanding the scope of mediation: The Mediation Act provides for a list of categories of cases like land acquisition and direct or indirect taxation, that are excluded from the ambit of mediation. Revision of the list would expand the issues amenable for mediation. For concerns regarding mediation in disputes where the government is a party, checks can be put in place. Illustratively, a high-level committee chaired by a retired judge could validate a settlement made by an officer or send it back for review in case the settlement is found to be unreasonable. What is crucial is that the final approval of the committee provide legal immunity to the officer, except in cases of actual corruption under Section 13 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

Conclusion

The true potential of mediation still remains untapped. Mediation is more than a mechanism for reducing judicial delays; it is a pathway towards inclusive, community-

driven dispute resolution. As India grapples with complex challenges in justice delivery, the backlog of cases can be reimagined as a treasure trove of matters that can be settled through mediation. Strengthening mediation centres represents a critical step towards reducing delays in the justice delivery system. By addressing capacity limitations and bolstering public trust and confidence in the process, India can harness the transformative potential of mediation to deliver accessible, swift, and fair justice.

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CHAPTER 7

Data Disabled: Series II

Access to justice for persons with disabilities in India is recognised under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (the Disabilities Act) that mandates the provision of accessible physical and digital infrastructure (including documents, court-hearing facilities, filing systems, and file referral/retrieval processes), reservation in employment, and disability trainings and sensitisation of different staff in the justice system to persons with disabilities.[1] The Disabilities Act, aligned with the Principles of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), aims to promote equal rights and opportunities for those with disabilities. Under other Acts, such as the Legal Service Authorities Act, 1987, access to justice for persons with disabilities is guaranteed through the provision of free legal services. Thus, definitive mandates have been designed to ensure an inclusive and accessible justice system (comprising the judiciary, legal aid, police, and prisons) for persons with disabilities in India.

Accessibility of and, thereof, inclusion in the justice system for persons with disabilities is guaranteed through the provision of:

a. Accessible physical and digital infrastructure in the justice system: The Disabilities Act and rules read with the Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for Barrier-Free Built Environment for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Persons, 2021 ('Harmonised Guidelines')[2] require all establishments, public and private, to provide easy access for persons with disabilities by having, among other things, ramps, lifts, disabled-friendly toilets, transportation, and ICT. Particularly related to the justice system, police stations and prisons have to comply with the *Accessibility Guidelines for MHA-Specific Built Infrastructures & Associated Services for Police Stations, and Prisons & Disaster Mitigation Centres 2021* (the MHA Guidelines).[3] More recent guidelines such as the *Supreme Court Accessibility Report, 2023*,[4] the *Model Prison Manual, 2016*,[5] and the *Supreme Court of India's Handbook Concerning Persons with Disabilities*,[6] are also efforts towards increasing access to justice for persons with disabilities, as well as making the justice system more inclusive to them.

At present, accessibility of the justice system is scattered across two different rules: *The Harmonised Guidelines* applies to judicial and legal aid systems, while prisons and police stations are expected to comply with the *MHA Guidelines.* However, the Supreme Court held that the recommendatory/persuasive nature of the sectoral accessibility guidelines listed under Rule 15 to be *ultra vires* the Disability Act in the recent *Rajive Raturi* v. *Union of India* judgement (8 November 2024). The Court directed the central/union government to segregate the mandatory accessibility rules from the guidelines to ensure stricter compliance with the accessibility standards envisaged in the Act. Once this has been effected, a uniform set of accessibility compliances may cover all establishments.

1 Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, Section 12. Available at: https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/content/page/acts
2 Government of India, Ministry of Urban Development, Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for Barrier-Free Built Environment for Persons With Disabilities and Elderly Persons,2021. Available at: https://divyangjan.depwd.gov.in/content/upload/uploadfiles/files/HG2021_MOHUAN%20%281%29_merged.pdf.
3 Ministry of Home Affairs, Accessibility Guidelines for MHA-Specific Built Infrastructures & Associated Services for Police Stations, and Prisons & Disaster Mitigation Centres 2021 (the MHA Guidelines), Available at: https://divyangjan.depwd.gov.in/content/upload/uploadfiles/Annex_2.pdf
4 Committee on Accessibility, Supreme Court of India, A Court for All: Paving the way for Greater Accessibility in the Supreme Court for Persons with Disabilities, Women & Senior Citizens, 2023. Available at: https://main.sci.gov.in/pdf/LU/06112023_140650.pdf
5 Government of India, The Model Prison Manual, 2016. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-12/ModelPrisonMan2003_14112022%5B1%5D.pdf
6 Supreme Court of India, Handbook Concerning Persons with Disabilities. Available at: https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3e58aea67b01fa747687f038dfde066f6/uploads/2024/09/20240930824409118.pdf

b. Employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the justice system: The Disabilities Act mandates a 4 per cent reservation in government posts for persons with benchmark disabilities.[7]

> A "person with benchmark disability" is an individual with at least 40 per cent impairment in a recognised disability. This definition applies to both disabilities that lack measurable criteria and those with specific definitions, as certified by the relevant authority.

Disabilities recognised for reservation under Section 34 include: (a) blindness and low vision; (b) deafness and difficulty in hearing; (c) locomotor disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy-cured, dwarfism, acid-attack victims, and muscular dystrophy; (d) autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disability, and mental illness; and (e) multiple disabilities from amongst persons under clauses (a) to (d).

Rule 9 of the Disabilities Rules also requires establishments to maintain records of employees with disabilities.

c. Coordinated justice system responses for the inclusion of persons with disabilities: The Disabilities Act obligates appropriate governments to mandate training on disability rights in all courses for the training of public officials such as police officers and judges.[8] Instances of inclusion, such as those by the judiciary in setting up Accessibility Committees and Special Courts, are small steps towards providing meaningful inclusion to enable the participation of persons with disabilities across the justice system.

Positive measures automatically translate into greater and positive justice-seeking behaviours by those with disabilities. However, nearly a decade later, these mandates remain in letter, as the justice system in India remains broadly inaccessible to persons with disabilities and implementation continues to be unclear.

> The lack of data tracking the implementation of positive affirmations for persons with disabilities is evidence of the extent to which these mandates have been implemented to ensure access to justice in practice.

Data offers the basis to drive systemic accountability through collective action. In the realm of human rights, data is a key lever to assess the extent of marginalisation and discrimination, to identify and remove barriers, and to promote substantive equality for all, including persons with disabilities.[9] The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was the first international instrument to mandate data collection and disaggregation on persons with disabilities, and its dissemination to ensure their 'visibilisation' in policymaking decisions.[10] However, this provision is not reflected in India's Disabilities Act. This article dwells on the mandates for inclusion within the Disabilities Act, data collection practices within the justice system, some opportunities for collection and maintenance, and best practices for inclusion.

The rule '*What doesn't get measured, doesn't get done*' is a well-known principle in governance. In the following paragraphs, we point out that across the four core pillars of justice, very little is being measured from an access-to-justice lens for persons with disabilities' point of view.

Where is the data?

Methodology

This essay is based on an independent study to identify the availability of data on access to justice for persons with disabilities. The larger study employed both primary

7 Section 34, Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Available at: https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/content/page/acts
8 Section 47, Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Available at: https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/content/page/acts
9 United Nations General Assembly, Statistics and data collection under article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities , Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/G2139630-Accesible.pdf
10 United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2007. Available at: https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-articles

Data Point	Data Source	Limitation of Data/ Source
Inmates suffering from mental illness	*Prison Statistics India*	Does not cover all disabilities under the Disabilities Act
Psychiatrists/ psychologists in prisons	*Prison Statistics India*	
Specially-abled judicial officers in the subordinate judiciary	Department of Justice Dashboard[11]	Inconsistent and inaccurate data
Legal aid beneficiaries who are disabled	NALSA website	

and secondary research methodologies. A total of **41 data points** were evaluated across four key categories: human resources, users, accessibility, and system responses across four pillars (police, prisons, judiciary, and legal aid). To validate the findings from secondary desk research, Right to Information (RTI) requests were submitted to various departments across states and UTs. This essay draws on findings from the secondary research focused on mandates and data related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the justice system.

Comprehensive, consistent and publicly accessible data was available only against four data points, with some of them posing additional limitations. For the other data points, data was found to be non-existent, incomplete, or sporadic.

Police

A lack of awareness and sensitisation about disabilities leaves the police system inadequately equipped to respond to persons with disabilities. There are no comprehensive datasets to assess how access to justice is furthered for persons with disabilities in the police system under the disability laws. Access to justice for persons with disabilities can be delivered only when there is intention for inclusion and documentation of inclusive practices. However, the police system (for the most part) fails to deliver on both fronts.

No comprehensive data is published on crimes against persons with disabilities, despite Section 92 of the Disabilities Act criminalising various offences committed against persons with disabilities. The NCRB maintains a record of rape/sexual assault on women with mental or physical disabilities (under Section 376[l] of the Indian Penal Code [IPC]). However, the NCRB data is a hyper-focused datapoint that does not provide a holistic picture of the crimes against persons with disabilities. Given that Section 92 of the Disabilities Act criminalises various offences committed against persons with disabilities, a centralised record on such crimes can be maintained, similar to other special legislations such as the SC/ST Atrocities Prevention Act. The Draft National Policy on Persons with Disabilities 2021 also called for the data capture of cases filed by persons with disabilities and maintenance of disability-segregated data by the NCRB as crucial measures to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities.[12]

Effective support for persons with disabilities approaching law-enforcement personnel requires the personnel to be well-trained and sensitised. However, there have been several reported instances of police mistreatment and violence against the disabled. The MHA Guidelines and mandates under the Disabilities Act require that police personnel recording complaints be disability sensitised.[13] Available data on police training on disability rights is

11 https://dashboard.doj.gov.in/sanctiondata/working_strength
12 Government of India ,Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities ,Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Draft National Policy for Persons with Disabilities. Available at: https://socwelfare.py.gov.in/sites/default/files/ministry-social-justice-and-empowerment.pdf
13 Ministry of Home Affairs, Accessibility Guidelines for MHA-Specific Built Infrastructures & Associated Services for Police Stations, and Prisons & Disaster Mitigation Centres 2021 (the MHA Guidelines),Clause 8.5.1. Available at: https://divyangjan.depwd.gov.in/content/upload/uploadfiles/Annex_2.pdf

sporadic.[14] The paucity of data either reflects the lack of training on disability rights or inadequate data-recording methods that leaves the effectiveness of the trainings open to interpretation. Nonetheless, there have been some initiatives from within the police force to enhance access to the system.

Disha Divyang Suraksha Programme

The Disha Divyang Suraksha (DDS) initiative by the Visakhapatnam City Police empowers visually-impaired and hearing-impaired individuals to file police complaints. Key features include Braille scripts being made available in police stations and allowing visually impaired individuals to easily submit complaints which are then transcribed by experts. Additionally, visually challenged individuals can file verbal complaints via a dedicated mobile number, with audio recordings converted into formal FIRs. For those who are hearing or speech-impaired, the DDS enables complaint-recording in sign language, either through video or in person, with trained experts transcribing these recordings into text.

Proviso 2 of Section 34(1) of the Disabilities Act allows the appropriate government to exempt government establishments from complying with the 4 per cent reservation mandate in consideration of the type of work carried out (by government establishments). The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has exempted all categories of posts under the Indian Police Service (IPS) and the Indian Railway Protection Force Services (IRPF) and all categories of police posts in Delhi, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Daman & Diu, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli by virtue of this proviso.[15] Hence, 32 states have a mandate to comply with the 4 per cent reservation in state police forces and uniformity in the recruitment of disabled persons as per state police rules. RTI responses reveal that some states[16] do have disabled personnel in their force, however the unavailability of public information hinders an analysis of the positions/ cadres and disabilities that are represented in the police force.

Systemic attitudinal barriers obstruct the employment of individuals with disabilities within the police force. The list of posts identified as suitable for persons with benchmark disabilities by the Ministry of Social Justice[17] does not include a single police post. However, there are numerous positions within the police force that can be held by persons with specific disabilities. A petition filed in the Supreme Court challenging the exemption given to IPS, IRPFS, and DANIPS has identified 650 posts within the police department, where disabled persons could be appointed.[18] Similarly, Nagaland has identified certain posts, such as Deputy Superintendent of Police, Inspector, and Sub-inspector as suitable for acid-attack victims and leprosy-cured persons (both recognised disabilities under the Act). These highlight the potential for inclusive hiring practices in the police force.

Prisons

The prison system presents complex systemic issues that affect those with disabilities in more than just exclusionary ways. The prison system by its very nature of being set up to hand out 'punishments' views disability as a weakness. In prisons there is no room for weakness – as prisoners need to play a game of survival. Data on disability in the prison system is hard to come and, where available, provide very little information on the conditions of prisoners with disabilities. This is owing to the prison structure, attitudes of the staff, and the invisible opportunities for data collection.

Prison Statistics of India reported **9,084 mentally ill prisoners** in different jails as of December 2022.[19] This number does not provide a disaggregated picture of prisoners with disabilities, based on the different categories of disabilities defined under the Disabilities Act. The Prisons Act, 1894,[20] *Model Prison Manual,*

14 The 'Latest Updates' section of the Kerala Police Training College indicates that a session on 'Awareness Programme on Rights of Persons with Disabilities' was conducted. However, there is no data on the number of attendees or the number of sessions conducted.
15 Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Notification dated 18th August 2021. Available at: https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3e58aea67b01fa747687f038dfde066f6/uploads/2023/10/20231030140518957 8.pdf
16 RTI responses from the Office of the Dy. Superintendent of Police HQ Kishtwar (Jammu & Kashmir) and the 1st Bn DAP, New Police Line, Kingsway Camp (Delhi) stated that there were 3 and 5 police officers with disability in their respective forces.
17 Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, List of Posts Identified suitable for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities notified on 04.01.2021. Available at: https://divyangjan.depwd.gov.in/content/upload/uploadfiles/files/224370.pdf
18 LiveLaw. Supreme Court seeks details of entry-level posts, job profiles, IPS, DANIPS, IRPFS, disabled persons inclusion (2025, March 29). Available at: https://www.livelaw.in/top-stories/supreme-court-seeks-details-entry-level-posts-job-profiles-ips-danips-irpfs-disabled-persons-inclusion-227822?infinitescroll=1
19 Prison Statistics India, 2022. Available at: https://www.ncrb.gov.in/uploads/nationalcrimerecordsbureau/custom/psiyearwise2022/1701613297PSI2022ason01122023.pdf
20 Prisons Act, 1894, Section 24. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/Prisons_act1894.pdf

2016, and the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023,[21] along with the *Prison Rules/Manual* of 22 states[22] and 6[23] UTs have a general mandate on recording the health status of prisoners upon admission which typically would include their physical and mental status. However, the rules do not explicitly define 'health status' or indicate that information about disabilities is to be captured under health status.

How disability is defined in prisons

At the state level, the *Prison Rules/Manuals* require the status of disabled prisoners to be captured in the form of their health status, disability status, and status of mental illness and lunacy. The Prison Manuals of Goa, Delhi, and Uttarakhand have a chapter on differently-abled prisoners in their *Prison Rules/Manuals* and require medical officers to examine prisoners for any disabilities, and record the disability status on admission. The definition of disability within this chapter includes only four disabilities (blindness, low vision, hearing impairment, and loco-motor disability) as opposed to 21 disabilities defined by the Disabilities Act. Additionally, six states[a] and one UT[b] have imposed a mandate to maintain records on mentally ill/lunatic prisoners. Such a mandate limits application to mental illness and does not capture other disabilities. Additionally, the prison system does not account for prisoners who acquire a disability after entering prison. **The non-availability of health data on prisoners who enter jail with a disability and those who acquire a disability within the prison, limits the assessment/audit of the facilities required and accommodations available for prisoners with disabilities within the prison system.**

a Assam, Haryana, Karnataka. Meghalaya, Nagaland and Odisha
b Ladakh.

The absence of data on prisoners with disabilities renders the assessment of their accessibility and support requirements difficult. Accessibility for prisoners with disabilities may be enabled through equipping prison buildings and toilets with ramps as mandated under the Disabilities Act, or by providing reasonable accommodations for prisoners with accessible devices such as wheelchairs, stretchers, prosthetics, orthotics, and special beds. The *Model Prison Manual*[24] and *Prison Rules/Manuals* of 6[25] states and 4[26] UTs specify that prosthetics or orthotics such as artificial limbs, glass eyes, crutches, trusses, and other prosthetic devices, need to be provided to prisoners with disabilities. Moreover, 6[27] states and 2[28] UTs mandate that special beds be provided to prisoners with disabilities.

Medical aid in the form of human resources plays a critical role in supporting those with disabilities in prison. Unfortunately, the prison system is too short-staffed to adequately respond to the needs of prisoners. Mental health issues are commonplace, with most incidences stemming from incarceration. The NCRB maintains data on psychologists and psychiatrists within jails. However, prisoners with other types of disabilities may require additional specialised personnel or disability-sensitive staff to address their unique needs. The *MHA Guidelines* recommend the appointment of a designated officer for disability-inclusion within prisons,[29] yet, there is no information indicating its implementation in any prison in India.

Prison programmes, such as those that offer recreation and rehabilitation, form an integral part of the system response for prisoners. Ten states[30] and five UTs[31] in their prison rules provide for some form of after-care or training programmes for persons with disabilities. Two states and one UT,[32] in their prison rules, mandate market linkages post-release, specifically for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, to ensure sustained livelihood opportunities. Recreational facilities within prisons provide opportunities for physical fitness and social interaction to reduce mental stress among prisoners.[33] Section 8.6.6. of the Accessibility Guidelines

21 Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023, Section 21. Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-12/ModelPrisonsCorrectionalServicesAct_20122024.pdf
22 Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal.
23 Chandigarh, , Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Puducherry.
24 Model Prison Manual, 2016, Rule 4.07.4 (b). Available at: https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-12/PrisonManualA2016_20122024.pdf
25 Goa, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttarakhand
26 Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Ladakh, Puducherry
27 Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Karnataka, Telangana and Uttarakhand.
28 Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Delhi
29 Ministry of Home Affairs, Accessibility Guidelines for MHA-Specific Built Infrastructures & Associated Services for Police Stations, and Prisons & Disaster Mitigation Centres 2021 (the MHA Guidelines), Clause 8.5.1 Available at: https://divyangjan.depwd.gov.in/content/upload/uploadfiles/Annex_2.pdf
30 Bihar, Goa, and Haryana, Karnataka, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura,Uttarakhand
31 D&D and DNH , Delhi, J&K, Ladakh, Puducherry
32 Delhi, Goa, and Uttarakhand.
33 For example: See http://prisons.tn.gov.in/amenities.htm#:~:text=Recreation%20%3A,and%20badminton%2C%20tennicoit%2C%20music.

for MHA calls for prisons to provide accessible reading material for those with visual disabilities.

Inclusive Prison Manuals

The *Prison Rules* of **Delhi, Goa and Uttarakhand** have a separate chapter on differently abled prisoners: besides capturing the disability status of their prisoners, the *Prison Rules* outline more inclusive facilities for prisoners with disabilities. The MHA Accessibility Guidelines[c] and the Training Manual of the Basic Course for Prison Officers 2017 recommend special training sessions for staff engaged with prisoners with disabilities, as well as the presence of staff trained in sign language and Braille, but only these three states have specifically adopted these into their respective rules. Over and above medical and rehabilitation facilities, Goa, Delhi, and Uttarakhand's prison rules mandate the provision of education, sport, and recreation activities without discrimination to those with disabilities, and specifically mention accommodations within prison libraries for them. The prison rules for other states are either outdated or the revised versions have not yet accounted for inclusion of disabilities. Modifying or overturning existing prison rules to reflect protections accorded by the Disabilities Act and MHA Guidelines is vital to ensure that the most vulnerable prisoners within prisons are left denied their basic considerations.

c Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. (2021), Accessibility guidelines for MHA specific built infrastructures & associated services for police stations, prisons & disaster mitigation centres under Accessible India Campaign (AIC) 2021, Clause 8.5.13.

Judiciary

Compared to other pillars, the judiciary has made significant strides in improving access to justice for persons with disabilities. In 2023, the Supreme Court published an Accessibility Report[34] outlining the challenges faced by vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities in accessing the Court, with suggestions to improve its physical and functional accessibility. Individual high courts have also taken steps to enhance access to justice for the disabled, either independently or in response to recommendations by the Supreme Court.

Accessibility Committees

To enhance accessibility for disabled litigants and lawyers, the E-Committee of the Supreme Court published the Standard Operating Procedure for Preparing Accessible Court Documents [SOP],[d] urging high courts and district courts to set up "Accessibility Committees" to provide "sustained institutional attention" to addressing accessibility barriers. The SOP recommended that Accessibility Committees publish their composition and contact details on court websites, along with quarterly data on requests for accessible filings, reasonable accommodations and the number of resolved requests. As of 30 June 2024, 17 high courts in the country had set up Accessibility Committees.

Information on Accessibility Committees published on high court website	**14 HCs**
Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir	
High courts publishing details of Members of the Committee	**12 HCs**
Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir	
High courts publishing contact information of the Committee	**8 HCs**
Chandigarh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh	
High courts publishing quarterly data	**1 HC**
Delhi	

d Supreme Court of India, Standard operating procedure for preparing accessible court documents (SOP), 2023. Available at: .https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec059e740b84bb48a64dde2506156629/uploads/2024/04/2024041956.pdf

Despite these initiatives, the judiciary lacks a systematic approach to tracking facilities for persons with disabilities. While it handles a substantial number of cases involving

34 Committee on Accessibility, Supreme Court of India, A Court for All: Paving the way for Greater Accessibility in the Supreme Court for Persons with Disabilities, Women & Senior Citizens, 2023. Available at: https://main.sci.gov.in/pdf/LU/06112023_140650.pdf

persons with disabilities, these cases are not being documented. The National Judicial Grid tracks data on cases filed by women and senior citizens,[35] but leaves out persons with disabilities. The tracking of disability status will enable the judicial system to adequately respond to the needs of persons with disabilities approaching the system, such as the provision of reasonable accommodations they might require.

Courts have an obligation to make their premises disabled-friendly for its users, including litigants, lawyers, and judges. Besides the mandate under the Disabilities Act and Rules, Section 12 of the Act also mandates that persons with disabilities exercise their right to access courts without discrimination. The *State of the Judiciary* report mentions that high courts have made efforts to make their areas disabled-friendly,[36] but has not published any data on this. Isolated information on the presence of ramps in various high courts can be traced to sources such as *Judges Profiles* (Manipur High Court),[37] and annual reports of the high courts. **Kerala High Court is the only high court in the country that maintains information on the number of accessible ramps, lifts, and disabled-friendly toilets on its premises.**

Accessibility section on the website of the Kerala High Court

While accessibility measures are provided for disabled persons as a group, reasonable accommodations ensure individual access to justice.[e] Reasonable accommodations may take the form of providing wheelchairs, sign language interpreters, or any other individual accommodation that assures equality or non-discrimination.

e Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General Comment No. 2 (2014) on Article 9: Accessibility (United Nations, 2014). Available at : https://www.ohchr.org/en/.

In all, 24-25 high courts (i.e., all except for the Andhra Pradesh High Court) in their Video Conferencing Rules have a provision for a sign language expert in case the person has a speech/hearing impairment. The *Supreme Court Social Justice Committee Report, 2022,* had stated that no court in the country has a sign language interpreter.[38] Since then, there have been instances where sign language interpreters have been appointed at the Supreme Court, Delhi High Court, and Karnataka High Court, but there is no data on requests that have been submitted. Capturing this data would help ensure that persons with disabilities receive necessary support for effective communication in the courts.

Good Practices in High Courts

Prioritisation of cases involving persons with disabilities	High Court of Manipur[f] High Court of Punjab and Haryana[g]
Public information on facilities for the disabled	Kerala High Court
Accessible online forms for advocates with disabilities for requesting accessibility facilities	Allahabad High Court[h]

f High Court of Manipur, Listing notice, May 6, 2019. Available at : https://hcmimphal.nic.in/Documents/Listing%20Notice060519.pdf

g Punjab and Haryana High Court, Notice dated 19.04.2024. Available at : https://highcourtchd.gov.in/sub_pages/left_menu/publish/announce/announce_pdf/disab_notc_19042024_3a820.pdf

h Allahabad High Court. Accessibility. Available at : https://www2.allahabadhighcourt.in/accessibility/

The scarcity of data on persons with disabilities in the judiciary also extends to their representation in judicial posts. There is no information on high court judges with disabilities, apart from an elevation order[39] by the Supreme Court which indicates that there is at least one sitting judge with a disability (in the Gujarat High Court). The subordinate judiciary presents a different picture. The Department of Justice dashboard[40] on the working strength of the judiciary provides a state-wise breakup of specially-abled judicial officers, but the numbers provided show discrepancies, as pointed out in IJR 3. The break-up also does not reflect the kind of disabilities represented

35 https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/hcnjdgnew/?p=main/index&state_code=9~13
36 Supreme Court of India. The State of the Judiciary Report, 2023. Available at: https://main.sci.gov.in/pdf/CRP/12012024_112431.pdf
37 High Court of Manipur. Chief Justice Profile.Available at: https://hcmimphal.nic.in/CJ%20Profile.html
38 Supreme Court of India, Report Of The Sub-Committee On Recommended Action For Marginalised Sections Of The Society, 2022. Available at: https://districts.ecourts.gov.in/sites/default/files/Social_Justice_Committee_Report.pdf
39 Supreme Court of India, Resolution dated 02nd March 2023 reg appointment of advocates as judges in the High Court of Gujarat. Available at: https://main.sci.gov.in/pdf/Collegium/02032023_132119.pdf
40 https://dashboard.doj.gov.in/sanctiondata/working_strength

Special Courts

The Disabilities Act also provides for designated special courts in every district to enable speedy trials.[i] The state government may also appoint special public prosecutors to conduct cases in these courts.[j] The states of Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal do not have special courts, and consequently, special public prosecutors as well.[k] Despite the formation of special courts in 34 states/UTs, there is no data on their functioning, the number of cases filed, categories of offenses committed, or number of cases disposed of. Publishing data (like the Fast-Track Special Cases dashboard for POCSO cases)[l] promotes accountability and enables a state-wise assessment of the performance of special courts.

i Section 84, Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Available at: https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/content/page/acts
j Section 85(1), Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Available at: https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/content/page/acts
k Supreme Court of India, WPC No. 29329/2021: Seema Girija Lal & Anr. v. Union of India & Ors. Available at : https://www.livelaw.in/pdf_upload/2932920212024-04-22-535740.pdf https://www.livelaw.in/pdf_upload/2932920212024-04-22-535740.pdf
l https://doj.gov.in/fast-track-special-court-ftscs/

in the judiciary. A recent parliamentary question revealed that there are 136 'specially abled' judges nationwide in the subordinate judiciary.[41] However, as data collection and tracking are already in place, the next step must be to prioritise the accurate publication of this information.

Nevertheless, there have been legislative and executive efforts to make the subordinate judiciary more inclusive for persons with disabilities. The central government has identified the posts of **judges and magistrates** as jobs suitable for certain categories of persons with disabilities, such as those with **visual impairments, orthopaedic impairments, specific learning disabilities, and multiple disabilities** involving the other disabilities mentioned. However, this excludes certain categories of benchmark disabilities for which reservation may be extended under Section 34 of the Disabilities Act, such as auditory impairments, cerebral palsy, acid attack victims, etc.

The Judicial Services Rules of Arunachal Pradesh,[42] Goa,[43] Maharashtra, Mizoram,[44] and Sikkim do not mention any reservations for persons with disabilities. Some states provide reservations only for orthopedically challenged persons,[45] while others have reservations for people with visual and hearing disabilities along with those with locomotor disabilities.[46]

To effectively understand needs of litigants with disabilities, judges should undergo comprehensive training and sensitisation. In recognition of this, Section 47(1) of the Disabilities Act requires the government to provide training on disability rights to judges, among other public officials. The National Judicial Academy routinely organises training sessions and workshops for high court judges on a wide range of topics such as commercial laws, counter-terrorism laws, etc., yet workshops on the Disabilities Act and general disability sensitisation are glaringly absent from its calendar.[47] Imparting necessary training for judges is essential to equip them to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities within the judicial system.

Legal Aid

Persons with disabilities are one category of persons entitled to free legal services under the Legal Services Authority Act 1987.[48] Consequently, a large number of persons with disabilities approach legal aid clinics. The Act also vests NALSA with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the legal aid scheme at periodic intervals.[49] In compliance with the mandate, *Statistical Snapshots*,[50] *Annual Reports*,[51] and quarterly reports on beneficiaries[52] published by NALSA list the number of disabled beneficiaries of the legal aid scheme. Further, some State Legal Services Authorities, including Delhi[53] and Rajasthan,[54] also maintain similar

41 Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2354 dated 20 March 2025. Available at : https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/267/AU2354_GpF5iE.pdf?source=pqars
42 Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh Judicial Services Rules, 2006. Available at: https://ghcitanagar.gov.in/Rules/Subordinatecourt/APJudlSRules.pdf
43 Government of Goa, Goa Judicial Services Rules 2013. Available at: https://hcbombayatgoa.nic.in/download/The_Goa_Judicial_Service_Rules_2013.pdf
44 Government of Mizoram, Mizoram Judicial Services Rules, 2006. Available at: https://mpsc.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/files/mjs-rules.pdf
45 Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh.
46 Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Orissa, Puducherry Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh.
47 https://nja.gov.in/concluded_programmes.html
48 Section 12 of The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/the-legal-services-authorities-act-1987
49 Section 4(i) of The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/the-legal-services-authorities-act-1987
50 NALSA, Statistical Information, Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/library/statistical-snapshot
51 NALSA, Annual Reports. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/library/annual-reports
52 NALSA, Statistical Information about Legal Services Beneficiaries, April 2024 to June 2024. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/statistics/legal-service-beneficiaries-report/legal-service-beneficiaries-april-2024-to-june-2024
53 Delhi State Legal Services Authority. Statistics. Available at: https://dslsa.org/statistics/
54 Rajasthan Legal Services Authority. Legal aid. Available at: https://rlsa.gov.in/legal-aid.html

data on their websites. Data for shows that **11,591** persons with **disabilities** approached the legal aid system in between April 2023 and March 2024.[55] However, the absence of consolidated data on other aspects of the legal aid system impedes the assessment of whether it is sufficiently equipped to handle the large volume of disabled individuals seeking legal aid. For instance, it is unclear whether legal aid clinics and DLSA offices are equipped with accessibility features such as ramps, lifts, disability-friendly toilets, and other reasonable accommodations such as sign language interpreters.

Under Section 10(6) of the National Legal Services Authority (Legal Services Clinics) Regulations, 2011, PLVs are mandated to conduct awareness camps for beneficiaries under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Further, the NALSA (Legal Services to the Mental Illness and Mentally Disabled Persons) Scheme, 2015[56] and the Legal Services for Differently Abled Child Scheme, 2021[57] also contain provisions for spreading awareness about the schemes to beneficiaries. Some SLSAs, such as Chhattisgarh, publish data on the number of disabled beneficiaries of its outreach programmes.[58] A state-wise breakdown of beneficiaries along the lines of the Chhattisgarh SLSA would significantly enhance ability to assess the impact of these initiatives and identify areas for improvement.

Training programmes for PLVs, panelled lawyers, and staff on persons with disabilities are also crucial for fair and sensitive treatment of those with disabilities. The National Legal Services Authority (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010 and the National Legal Services Authority (Legal Services Clinic) Regulations, 2011 mandate general training for lawyers and PLVs, but they lack specific requirements for disability-focused training. Nearly a decade after the enactment of the Disabilities Act, the *Supreme Court Accessibility Report* has also underscored the need for regular training for legal services committee staff to effectively address and support the needs of persons with disabilities. Given that the PLVs and lawyers serve a significant number of disabled beneficiaries, it is vital to develop their awareness and sensitivity to the specific needs of this segment of the population.

Conclusion

The forthcoming revised Rules formulated in response to the *Rajive Raturi v. Union of India* judgement is expected to herald a new era towards making public places accessible for persons with disability. Still, the consistent lack of data across various components of the justice system on persons with disabilities urges the case for better data collection and public reporting of such data to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of the Disabilities Act and UNCRPD. Public reporting of disability-disaggregated data across the judiciary, police, prisons, and legal systems on dimensions of infrastructural accessibility, representation by participation, reasonable accommodations, and awareness-building will help to baseline access to justice for persons with disabilities and evolve metrics to measure progress in the future.

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Website: https://www.pacta.in/

55 https://nalsa.gov.in/statistics/legal-service-beneficiaries-report/legal-service-beneficiaries-april-2023-to-march-2024
56 NALSA, Legal Services to the Mental Illness and Mentally Disabled Persons Scheme, 2015. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/preventive-strategic-legal-services-schemes/nalsa-legal-services-to-the-mentally-ill-and-mentally-disabled-persons-scheme-2015
57 NALSA, Legal services for differently abled child scheme, 2021. Available at: https://nalsa.gov.in/acts-rules/preventive-strategic-legal-services-schemes/legal-services-for-differently-abled-children-scheme-2021
58 Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority. CGSLSA May 2024 monthly activity report, 2024. Available at: https://cgslsa.gov.in/Statistical_Information/CGSLSA%20May-2024%20MONTHLY%20ACTIVITY%20REPORT.pdf

CHAPTER 8

Impact of the New Criminal Laws on Capacity

From 1st July 2024, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) were implemented to replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure(CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act (IEA) respectively. While retaining a significant portion of their precursors, they introduce certain new provisions. Following are some key changes that have the potential to impact the capacity of the criminal justice system.

Prisons

Sentencing: The BNS introduces 13 new offences. It increases sentences for 33 offences and doubles or more than doubles sentences in 13. It also introduces mandatory minimum punishments for 23 offences. These could have a direct impact on prison capacity.

Maximum period of detention for undertrials: Under Section 436A CrPC only undertrial prisoners charged with offences punishable with death were excluded from the right to be released on bail upon completion of one half of the maximum period of detention. Section 479 BNSS now expands this exclusion to cover offences that attract life-imprisonment as well. This takes the number of offences that constrain this right to bail from 12 to 78.

First time offenders: Section 479 of the BNSS also creates a provision for first time offenders to be granted bail if they have undergone detention for up to one-third of the maximum period of imprisonment specified for such offence. However, if an investigation, inquiry or trial in more than one offence is pending against a person, they are not eligible to be released on such bail.

Plea bargaining: Introduced in 2006 in India, plea bargaining allows accused persons in specific circumstances to plead guilty to a lesser charge or to a reduced sentence. For first time offenders opting for plea bargaining, where minimum punishment is prescribed, the Court may impose a sentence equal to one-fourth of the minimum punishment as compared to the earlier one half under the CrPC. Where the punishment is extendable and no minimum punishment is prescribed, one-sixth of the prescribed punishment can be imposed, decreasing it from the previous one-fourth standard.

Community Service: Community service as a form of punishment has been introduced for the first time for 6 minor offences.

Police

Use of Technology and Forensics in Investigation: BNSS mandates audio video recording of search and seizure operations by the police. For offences which are punishable by seven years or more, collection of forensic evidence and video recording the same has been made obligatory.

Judiciary

Towards speedier resolution: The BNSS provides timelines for different stages of investigation and trial. It states that the courts may not grant more than 2 adjournments during the course of the trial, even when circumstances are beyond the control of the parties.

Offences against women and children: For such offences the investigation is to be completed in 60 days from the date of recording of the FIR and trial must be completed within 60 days of filing of the chargesheet.

Technology measures: Summons can now be served electronically, and all trials and inquiries can be held in the electronic mode as well.

Directorate of Prosecution

The BNSS allows State Governments to establish District level Directorate of Prosecution in addition to the existing State Directorate of Prosecution.

Timeline for Investigation and Trial

Police

- **Preliminary enquiry:** to be completed in 14 days
- **Supply of copy of police report and other documents to the victim and accused:** within 14 days
- **Inform victim about the status of investigation:** 90 days

Judiciary

- **Framing of charges:** within 60 days of first hearing of charge
- **Filing of discharge applications:** within 60 days of date of supply of copy of documents
- **Commitment of a case for trial:** within 90 days of date of taking cognisance
- **Pronouncement of judgment:** within 30-45 days of completion of arguments

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Recommendations

1. Ensure **24*7 legal guidance and representation** is available at all police stations and courts at first instance. **Increase presence of paralegal volunteers** in the community

2. Fully implement the Supreme Court's Paramvir Singh Saini judgement, mandating every police station to be **equipped with stipulated CCTV cameras** to check abuse

3. Fill **vacancies** on an urgent footing

4. Prioritise increased **resources at the level of first responders**

5. Increase **diversity of caste, gender and the specially abled** across subsystems

6. Give training pride of place and prioritise human and financial **resources in all training facilities**

7. Ensure compliance with **UTRC's guidelines of the categories of prisoners** to be considered for release and **review the performance** of the committees

8. SHRCs must be **fully resourced and reach out to the community** proactively

9. **Promote mediation** as an effective tool for dispute resolution and **strengthen the infrastructure and human resources** needed for the same

10. **Release timely, validated and comprehensive data** on different aspects of the justice system, including on persons with disabilities, to ensure targeted policy recommendations

11. **Designate the justice delivery system as an essential service** and enhance, enlarge and equip it as a first responder able to provide effective justice delivery at all times

CHAPTER 9

Methodology

Measurements—by allowing us to study, compare, assess, and draw conclusions about growth—assist us in making policy decisions. The assessment of attributes through assignment of numbers is at the core of all scientific inferences. With the 2025 edition of India Justice Report, we continue to map the scope of improvements as well as stagnancies in justice capacity across states through four core pillars of the justice system, namely the police, judiciary, prisons and legal aid and a standalone pillar: state human rights commission. As with the previous three editions, new indicators have been added with an aim to deepen and broaden our assessments and a handful have been refined, bringing the total number of indicators to 102.

This IJR assesses the capacity and performance of State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs) separately and not as part of the overall ranking of a state.

All pillars are measured on the basis of six themes: budget, infrastructure, human resource, workload, diversity and trends (or intention to improve).

Step 1: Outline

Data indicators of four pillars:

	Pillars	Total Indicators	New Indicators
1.	Police	32	2
2.	Prisons	28	3
3.	Judiciary	25	2
4.	Legal Aid	17	4
	Total	102	11

The indicators across the pillars cover the following themes:

1. Infrastructure
2. Human Resources
3. Diversity (Gender, SC/ST/OBC)
4. Budgets
5. Workload
6. Trends (Change over last five years)

Each theme represents a precondition necessary for the functioning of a pillar. Budgets measure the funds received, utilised, and spent per functionary or per capita; infrastructure, the basic physical resources available; human resources looks into personnel sanctioned and available on the ground; workload is the weight of service delivery upon a function or a functionary within a particular sub-system; and diversity assesses how representative these systems are of the populations they are set up to serve. A sixth theme, 'trends', is used where possible to assess whether there has been improvement or deterioration over five years in a particular theme. This too is taken account of when arriving at the overall ranking.

Step 2: Clustering

The vast variations across India in terms of both demography and geography make comparisons difficult. For example, the police capacity in a state like Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh is incomparable to that of Goa or Sikkim. To undertake fair comparisons between states, the report divides states and UTs into four clusters:

Cluster I (ranked)
Eighteen large and mid-sized states or states with a population of 10 million and above.

Cluster II (ranked)
Seven small-sized states with a population of up to 10 million, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, and Tripura.

Cluster III (not ranked)
Data for 8 UTs is provided but they are not ranked. These include Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (DNH & DD), Jammu & Kashmir[1], Ladakh, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry.

Cluster IV (not ranked)
Three states where the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 (AFSPA) is in force, namely Manipur, Assam and Nagaland. The report provides data on these but does not rank them.

Step 3: Filtering

All indicators are chosen based on government data availability and comparability across states. Benchmarks are taken from hard laws, policy pronouncements and Supreme Court judgements, wherever available. Government recommendations are also used.

Comptroller and Auditor General of Accounts (CAG) documents were preferred over state budget documents due to the uneven availability of budget documents and variations in the way each records budget heads. However, for legal aid, state budget documents were used because the budgetary data was not available in CAG documents.

New Indicators

This year, IJR added 11 new indicators across four pillars.

Police: Two new indicators have been added to the police pillar to assess the human resource capacity of forensic laboratories: administrative staff vacancy and scientific staff vacancy. In 2023, BPR&D for the first time provided the staff strengths for forensic labs in DoPO.

Prisons: Two existing indicators in the Prisons pillar—'Share of jails with 100% & more occupancy (%, 2021)' and 'Share of jails with 150% & more occupancy (%, 2021)'—were revised to: 'Share of jails with occupancy between 150%-250% (%, Dec 2022)' and 'Share of jails with 250% or more occupancy (%, Dec 2022)'. Additionally, a new indicator was introduced: 'Number of female inmates per female medical officers (persons, Dec 2022)'.

Judiciary: Two indicators: Cases pending (5-10 years) (high court and subordinate courts) were refined to Cases pending for more than 3 years (%, High courts and subordinate courts) (Jan 1, 2025).

Legal aid: Four new indicators have been added. Per capita spend on legal aid (Rs, 2022-23), Share of

Pillar/theme	Date/Period	Source	Pillar/theme	Date/Period	Source
Police	1 January 2023	Data on Police Organisations 2023	Legal Aid	FY 2022-23, March 2024, September 2024, December 2024, 2023-24.	National Legal Services Authority, States' Finance Departments
Prisons	31st December 2022	Prisons Statistics India 2022.	Population Figures	March 2022, March 2023	National Commission on Population 2019
Judiciary	FY (2022-23), June 2024, December 2024, January 2025, February 2025,	National Judicial Data Grid, Supreme Court, Court News, Department of Justice, Parliamentary Questions	Budget Figures	2022-23	Comptroller and Auditor General

1 In the earlier report, Jammu & Kashmir was included in Cluster IV. Since August 2019, it has become a Union Territory, hence shifted to Cluster III. Either way, as a UT or AFSPA state it is not ranked. Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu were two different UTs. The merger of these two UTs took place in 2019. The data for these two UTs is merged wherever used.

	Pillar	Indicator Name	Theme
1	Police	Admin staff vacancy in forensics (%, Jan 2023)	Human resource
2	Police	Scientific staff vacancy in forensics (%, Jan 2023)	Human resource
3	Prisons	Share of jails with occupancy between 150%-250% (%, Dec 2022)	Infrastructure
4	Prisons	Share of jails with 250% or more occupancy (%, Dec 2022)	Infrastructure
5	Prisons	Female inmates per female medical officers (persons, Dec 2022)	Workload
6	Judiciary	Cases pending for more than 3 years (%, High courts) (Jan 1, 2025)	Workload
7	Judiciary	Cases pending for more than 3 years (%, Sub. courts) (Jan 1, 2025)	Workload
8	Legal aid	Per capita spend on legal aid (Rs, 2022-23)	Budgets
9	Legal aid	Women DLSA secretaries (Mar 31, 2024)	Diversity
10	Legal aid	SLSA LAs: Pre-litigation cases disposed (%, 2023-24)	Workload
11	Legal aid	SLSA LAs: Pending cases disposed (%, 2023-24)	Workload

women in DLSA secretaries (%, March 2024), Disposal of Pre-litigation cases in SLSA Lok Adalats (%, 2023-24), Disposal of Pending cases in SLSA Lok Adalats (%, 2023-24).

State Citizen Portals

These state-wise portals are expected to offer nine basic services. They were assessed for accessibility, language and completeness of services. The compliance of the state citizen portal[2] was assessed by checking these nine services twice from May 2024 to August 2024 to evaluate improvements in the working of the portals. One mark was given for the portal being available in more than one language; and one mark was given per service for completeness of content. Where a service was disaggregated into various sub-parts that mark was also subdivided. Illustratively, if the service sought to provide details on stolen/ recovered vehicles, arms and other properties, each of the three sub-categories was allocated a maximum score of 0.3. Partial marks were therefore still accorded to 'incomplete' services.

State Human Rights Commissions

In order to collect data related to the existing 25 SHRCs, 136 RTI applications were filed, as the complete data for SHRCs has neither been collected nor published, or proactively disclosed to the public. The performance on each of the nine indicators was calculated using the same methods as in Step 4 and 5. Assam, Nagaland and Manipur are excluded from ranking due to the presence of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). Jammu & Kashmir is excluded since after the enactment of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 the SHRC was disbanded. The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 provides for the establishment, powers and functions of the SHRCs, and has been used as the benchmark to assess their performance. International standards set up under the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and the Paris Principles have also been referred to.

Step 4: Scoring Method

As with IJR 2019, 2020 and 2022, raw data was rebased on a common scale so that every indicator could be scored on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest or

2 The SMART Policing initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs advises states to provide services to citizens online through the state citizen portal. https://digitalpolice.gov.in/

least desirable status, and 10 indicating the highest or best score. The scores in-between were calibrated to show where a state stood in relation to the best and the lowest.

Where a state met or exceeded a universal benchmark in an indicator (for example, a maximum of 6 prison inmates per cadre staff), or a standard set by the state in an indicator (for example, the sanctioned number to measure vacancies), it received a score of 10. In cases where there were no benchmarks available, a state received a 'top' score of 10. This does not mean that the state has reached an ideal capacity, merely that it is best in class. The scores of every indicator were aggregated and averaged to arrive at a pillar score, also scored on a scale of 1 to 10.

Averages were arrived at using geometric mean because the method is less prone to distortion by extreme outlying figures. Thus, for each pillar every state got a score out of 10, and a rank in its cluster. The pillar scores were then averaged to arrive at the overall score, also out of 10.

Step 5: Scoring and Ranking

For each cluster, the report applied the methodology outlined in Step 4 to every indicator in the pillar.

For states whose values were missing for certain indicators due to an unavoidable reason—for example, in a state where there is no reservation for Scheduled Tribes—the number of indicators was reduced. Certain states have not received the grant for modernisation fund, the number of indicators in such states has also been accordingly reduced while working out their scores.

Step 6: Uniformity in Indicator Counts Across Themes and Weights

Each indicator and pillar has been assigned equal weightage so as not to privilege any one aspect over another. The study avoids subjectivity by giving any one element higher or lower weightage, since every data point influences the whole outcome.

Step 7: Data Checks

The data was checked down to source data at two points in time: after the preliminary set of rankings was generated, and after the final set of rankings was generated (in other words, before web and print outputs). A third round of checking was carried out on the final outputs.

Other Points

Rounding off decimals

The report looked at decimals through the ease of reading the data. Where the numbers were large, it did not include decimals and where they were small and the variance was in fractions, decimals were included—one or two places as needed.

Use of percentage points

The report uses percentage points as a unit of measurement for the trend or change indicators. This is calculated as the difference between two percentages to highlight an increase or decrease.

Union Territories and states

UTs and AFSPA states are not ranked as already mentioned in Step 2. As of August 2019, the state of Jammu & Kashmir was reorganized into two Union Territories: Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh. Separate data for these two UTs is not available for trend indicators, hence these two are not included in trend indicators. Similarly, the UTs of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu were merged on 26 January 2020. Separate data for these two is combined.

Geometric mean over arithmetic mean

In a scenario where a state scores high or low in a pillar because it is doing extremely well or extremely poorly in a handful of variables, the geometric mean tends to normalize outliers i.e. extreme variables, better.

Shared court jurisdictions

For states that share court jurisdictions, the report used the same data where justifiable. For example, population per high court judge was combined for Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh since the two states and the UT are serviced by the same high court.

Strengths and limitations

Ranking of states on the basis of justice capacity is an unprecedented exercise in the context of our country with an aim to bring together disparate and hitherto siloed information. The capacity of 7 small states and 18 large states to deliver justice is once again ranked in this year's India Justice Report. We examine the systems more thoroughly with each report and, as usual, only use the most accurate official data. The processing of so much data enables the precise location of potential intervention and remediation sites. Not only that, but even internal gaps caused by unequal data availability indicate how urgent it is to establish reliable, consistent, timely, and publicly accessible data systems across the country that facilitate collaborative internal planning for success in the future.

The report benefits from ongoing assessments and recommendations from government organisations, judges, retired DGPs, police, and other experts in various sub-systems because it is a partnership between numerous specialised civil society groups. The inclusion of thus many different viewpoints confirms the selection of indicators and rating.

The report is a purely quantitative exercise on selected aspects of the justice system. Its assessment is often limited by the unavailability and paucity of data and its inconsistencies. It does not aspire to capture the views of the duty holder or functionary and stakeholder that relate to the qualitative performance and functioning of each sub-system as perception studies and surveys do. Nevertheless, the assessment of the structures involved in the administration of justice point to levels of service and response. The data delineation here is also a necessary supplement to other qualitative studies and helps indicate possible solutions to many entrenched problems. We hope that the report will encourage others to strive to go deeper in evaluating the structure of the justice delivery system holistically and in ever more detail.

Glossary

POLICE

BUDGETS

1. Modernisation fund used

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Central + State Expenditure on Modernisation}}{\text{Central+State allocation on Modernisation}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2021-2022 (Revised)
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023

2. Spend on police per person (Rs.)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Police Expenditure}}{\text{State Population}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2022-2023 (police expenditure) | March 2023 (state population)
Sources: Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; National Commission on Population 2019

3. Spend on training per personnel (Rs.)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Training Expenditure}}{\text{Total Police}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2021-2022 (Revised)
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023

4. Share of training budget in police budget (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Training budget}}{\text{Police budget}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2021-2022 (Revised)
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023

5. Training budget utilisation (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Training budget utilised}}{\text{Total Training budget}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2021-2022 (Revised)
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023

HUMAN RESOURCES

6. Constable Vacancies (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual Constabulary}}{\text{Sanctioned Constables}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 1 January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: Includes civil police and District Armed Reserve police (DAR). Constabulary includes constables and head constables.

7. Officer Vacancies (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual officer strength}}{\text{Sanctioned officer strength}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 1 January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: Includes civil police and District Armed Reserve police (DAR). Officers comprise DGP/Spl DGP + Addl. DGP + IGP + DIG + AIGP/SSP/SP/COMN + Addl.SP/ Dy. COMN + ASP/DY.SP./Asstt. COMN + Inspector/RI + SI/RSI + ASI/ARSI.

8. Officer in Civil Police (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Officers in civil police}}{\text{Total civil police}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 1 January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: Includes civil police and District Armed Reserve police (DAR). Officers comprise DGP/Spl DGP + Addl. DGP + IGP + DIG + AIGP/SSP/SP/COMN + Addl.SP/ Dy. COMN + ASP/DY.SP./Asstt. COMN + Inspector/RI + SI/RSI + ASI/ARSI.

9. Administrative staff vacancy in forensic laboratories (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual administrative staff}}{\text{Sanctioned administrative staff}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: Administrative staff includes administrative posts in state and regional laboratories and district mobile forensic units (DMFUs).

10. Scientific staff vacancy in forensic laboratories (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual scientific staff}}{\text{Sanctioned scientific staff}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: Scientific staff includes

administrative posts in state and regional laboratories and district mobile forensic units (DMFUs).

DIVERSITY

11. Share of women in police (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Women in police}}{\text{Total police}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 1 January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: This indicator includes women in Civil, District Armed Reserve (DAR), Special Armed Police Battalion and Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB)

12. Share of women in officers (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Women police officers}}{\text{Total police officers}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 1 January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: This indicator includes women in Civil, District Armed Reserve (DAR), Special Armed Police Battalion and Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB).
Officers comprise DGP/Spl DGP + Addl. DGP + IGP + DIG + AIGP/SSP/SP/COMN + Addl.SP/Dy. COMN + ASP/DY.SP./Asstt. COMN + Inspector/RI + SI/RSI + ASI/ARSI.

13. SC officers, actual to reserved ratio (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Actual Scheduled Caste (SC) officers}}{\text{(Sanctioned officer posts* SC Reservation)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 1 January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations (DoPO), Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: DoPO records data on SCs for six ranks = ASP/DY.SP./ Asstt. COMN + Inspector/RI + SI/RSI + ASI/ ARSI + Head Constables + Constables. It does not disaggregate it by Civil/DAR/ Special Armed or IRB.

14. SC constables, actual to reserved ratio (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Actual Scheduled Caste (SC) constables}}{\text{(Sanctioned constable posts* SC Reservation)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 1 January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: Constables include constables and head constables.

15. ST officers, actual to reserved ratio (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Actual Scheduled Tribe (ST) officers}}{\text{(Sanctioned officer posts* ST Reservation)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 1 January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: DoPO records data on STs for six ranks - ASP/DY.SP./ Asstt. COMN + Inspector/RI + SI/RSI + ASI/ ARSI +Head Constables + Constables. It does not disaggregate it by Civil/DAR/ Special Armed or IRB.

16. ST constables, actual to reserved ratio (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Actual Scheduled Tribe (ST) constables}}{\text{(Sanctioned constable posts* ST Reservation)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 1 January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: Constables include constables and head constables.

17. OBC officers, actual to reserved ratio (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Actual Other Backward Classes (OBC) officers}}{\text{(Sanctioned officer posts* OBC Reservation)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 1 January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: DoPO records data on OBCs for six ranks - ASP/DY.SP./ Asstt. COMN + Inspector/RI + SI/RSI + ASI/ ARSI +Head Constables + Constables. It does not disaggregate it by Civil/DAR/ Special Armed or IRB.

18. OBC constables, actual to reserved ratio (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Actual Other Backward Classes (OBC) constables}}{\text{(Sanctioned constable posts* OBC Reservation)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 1 January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: Constables include constables and head constables.

INFRASTRUCTURE

19. Population per police station (rural) (persons)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Rural population}}{\text{Rural police stations}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: March 2023 (state rural population) | January 2023 (rural police stations)
Sources: National Commission on Population, 2019; Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023

20. Population per police station (urban) (persons)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Urban population}}{\text{Urban police stations}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: March 2023 (state urban population) | January 2023 (urban police stations)
Sources: National Commission on Population, 2019; Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023

21. Area per police station (rural) (sq km)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Rural area (sq km)}}{\text{Rural police stations}}$$

Benchmark: 150 sq km or less (National Police Commission report 1981)
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 2011 (rural area) | January 2023 (rural police stations)
Sources: Census 2011; Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023

22. Area per police station (urban) (sq km)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Urban area (sq km)}}{\text{Urban police stations}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 2011 (urban area) | January 2023 (urban police stations)
Sources: Census 2011; Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023

23. Services provided by state citizen portals (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Service provided by state portal (out of 10)}}{\text{Total 9+1 (language) services}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2024
Sources: https://digitalpolice.gov.in/
Notes: Quantitative assessment of state police citizen portals on 10 counts: whether they include each of the 9 services listed by the Ministry of Home Affairs and whether the portal was available in a state language (other than English).

24. Police personnel per training institute (number)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Sanctioned total police}}{\text{Number of training institutes}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023

25. Share of police stations with CCTVs (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Police stations with CCTVs}}{\text{Total police stations}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023

26. Share of police stations with women help desks (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Police stations with women help desks}}{\text{Total police stations}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: January 2023
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023

WORKLOAD

27. Population per civil police (persons)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{State population}}{\text{Total civil police}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: March 2023 (state population) | January 2023 (total civil police)
Sources: National Commission on Population, 2019, Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), January 2023
Notes: Includes civil police and District Armed Reserve police (DAR).

TRENDS

28. Women in total police (%)

Women in total police (%) (Xn): Women in police/Total police *100

Share of women in police (%)	
2018	X1
2022	X5

Formula:
Women in total police (%): (X5 x1)/X1*100
Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2018 to 2022
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)
Notes: Women in police and total police includes civil, District Armed Reserve (DAR), special armed police battalion and Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) for all ranks.

29. Women officers in total police officers (%)

Women officers in police (%) (Xn): Women officers in police /Total police officers*100

Share of women officers in police officers (%)	
2018	X1
2022	X5

Formula:
Women officers in total police officers (%): (X5 x1)/X1*100
Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2018 to 2022
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)
Notes: Women in police and total police includes civil, District Armed Reserve (DAR), special armed police battalion and Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) for all ranks.

30. Constable vacancies (%)

Constable vacancies (%)= Xn

	Constable vacancies (%)	Change in constable vacancies (pp)
2018	X1	
2022	X5	(X5 x1)/X1*100

Formula:
Constable vacancies (%): (X5 x1)/X1*100
Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2018 to 2022
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)
Notes: Includes civil police and District Armed Reserve police (DAR). Constabulary includes head constables

31. Officer vacancies (%)

Officer vacancies (%)= Xn

	Officer vacancies (%)	Change in constable vacancies (pp)
2018	X1	
2022	X5	(X5 x1)/X1*100

Formula:
Officer vacancies (%): (X5 x1)/X1*100

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2018 to 2022
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)
Notes: Includes civil police and District Armed Reserve police (DAR). Officers comprise DGP/Spl DGP + Addl. DGP + IGP + DIG + AIGP/SSP/SP/COMN + Addl.SP/ Dy. COMN + ASP/DY.SP./Asstt. COMN + Inspector/RI + SI/RSI + ASI/ARSI.

32. Difference in spend: police vs state (percentage points)

Police expenditure (PE)= Xn
State expenditure (SE)= Yn
Police expenditure (Xn)

2016-17	X1	
2017-18	X2	((X2/ X1)-1)*100 = ax
2018-19	X3	((X3/X2)-1)*100 = bx
2019-20	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = cx
2020-21	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = dx
2021-22	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = ex

State expenditure (Yn)

2016-17	Y1	
2017-18	Y2	((Y2/ Y1)-1)*100 = ay
2018-19	Y3	((Y3/Y2)-1)*100 = by
2019-20	Y4	((Y4/Y3)-1) *100 = cy
2020-21	Y5	((Y5/Y4)-1) *100 = dy
2021-22	Y6	((Y6/Y5)-1) *100 = ey

Formula:
Difference in spend: police vs **state (percentage points):** 5 year Average(ax,bx..ex)-5 year Average (ay,by..ey)

Benchmark: Greater than zero
Scoring guide: Higer, the better
Period/Date: Financial year 2017-2018 to 2021-2022
Sources: Data on Police Organizations, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

PRISONS

BUDGETS

1. Spend per inmate (Rs)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Prison expenditure}}{\text{Total inmates}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2022-2023
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022

2. Prison budget utilised (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Prison expenditure}}{\text{Prison budget}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2022-2023
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022

HUMAN RESOURCES

3. Officer vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual prison officers}}{\text{Sanctioned prison officer}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022
Notes: Officers comprise the following ranks: DG/ADDL.DG/IG + DIG + AIG+ Superintendent + Deputy Superintendent + Assistant Superintendent + Jailor + Deputy Jailor + Assistant Jailor + Others.

4. Cadre staff vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual cadre staff}}{\text{Sanctioned cadre staff}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022
Notes: Cadre comprise the following ranks: Head Warders + Head Matrons + Warders + Matrons + Others.

5. Correctional staff vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual correctional staff}}{\text{Sanctioned correctional staff}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022
Notes: Correctional staff comprise the following: Probation Officer/ Welfare Officer + Psychologists/ Psychiatrists + Social Worker/ Others.

6. Medical staff vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual medical staff}}{\text{Sanctioned medical staff}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022
Notes: Medical staff comprises Resident Medical Officer/ Medical Officer + Pharmacists + Lab Technician/ Lab Attendant + Others.

7. Medical officer vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual medical officers}}{\text{Sanctioned medical officers}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022

8. Personnel Trained (%)
Formula:
Prison staff trained
———————————————* 100
Actual prison staff

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022

DIVERSITY

9. Women in prison staff (%)
Formula:
Women prison staff
———————————————* 100
Total prison staff

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022

INFRASTRUCTURE

10. Prison occupancy (%)
Formula:
Inmate population
———————————————* 100
Total available prison capacity

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022

11. Share of jails with occupancy between 150% - 250% (%)
Formula:
Jails with occupancy between 150%-250%
———————————————* 100
Total jails

Benchmark: below 100%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Additional Table no. 57, Prison Statistics India, 2022

12. Share of jails with occupancy above 250% (%)
Formula:
Jails with occupancy above 250%
———————————————* 100
Total jails

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Additional Table no. 57, Prison Statistics India, 2022

13. Jails with Video-conferencing facilities (%)
Formula:
Jails with V-C facility
——————————————— * 100
Total jails

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022

14. Undertrials detained for 1-3 years (%)
Formula:
Undertrials detained for 1-3 years
——————————————— * 100
Total undertrials

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022

WORKLOAD

15. Inmate per officer (persons)
Formula:
Inmate population
———————————————
Actual officers

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022
Notes: Officer comprises Superintendent + Deputy Superintendent + Assistant Superintendent + Jailor + Deputy Jailor + Assistant Jailor + Other Officers.

16. Inmate per cadre staff (persons)
Formula:
Inmate population
———————————————
Actual cadre staff

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022
Notes: Cadre staff comprises Head Warder/ Head Matron + Warder/ Matron + Others.

17. Inmate per correctional staff (persons)
Formula:
Inmate population
———————————————
Actual correctional staff

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022
Notes: Correctional staff comprises Probation officer/ Welfare Officer + Psychologists/ Psychiatrists + Social Worker/ Others.

18. Inmate per medical officer (persons)
Formula:
Inmate population
———————————————
Actual medical officer

Benchmark: 300 inmates per medical officer
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022

19. Number of female inmates per female medical officers (persons)
Formula:
Number of female inmates at the end of the year
———————————————
Total female medical officers

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 31 December 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India, 2022

TRENDS

20. Officer vacancy (%)
Officer vacancy (%): Xn

2018	X1	
2022	X5	(X5 x1)/X1*100

Formula:
Officer vacancy (%):
(X5 x1)/X1*100

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2018 to 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India
Notes: Officers comprise the following ranks: DG/ADDL.DG/IG + DIG + AIG+ Superintendent + Deputy Superintendent + Assistant Superintendent + Jailor +

Deputy Jailor + Assistant Jailor + Others.

21. Cadre staff vacancy (%)

Cadre staff vacancies (%) = Xn

2018	X1	
2022	X5	(X5 x1)/X1*100

Formula:
Cadre staff vacancy (%): (X5 x1)/X1*100

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2018 to 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India
Notes: Cadre comprise the following ranks: Head Warders + Head Matrons + Warders + Matrons + Others.

22. Share of women in prison staff (%)

Share of women prisoners (%)= Xn

2018	X1	
2022	X5	(X5 x1)/X1*100

Formula:
Share of women in prison staff (%): (X5 x1)/X1*100

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2018 to 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India

23. Inmates per prison officer (%)

Inmates per prison officer = Xn

2018	X1	
2022	X5	(X5 x1)/X1*100

Formula:
Inmates per prison officer (%):
(X5 x1)/X1*100

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2018 to 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India
Notes: Officer comprises Superintendent + Deputy Superintendent + Assistant Superintendent + Jailor + Deputy Jailor + Assistant Jailor + Other Officers.

24. Inmates per cadre staff (%)

Inmates per cadre staff = Xn

2017	X1	
2018	X2	((X2/ X1)-1)*100 = a
2019	X3	((X3/X2)-1)*100 = b
2020	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2021	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2022	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

Formula:
Inmates per cadre staff (%): 5 year Average(a,b,c,d,e)

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2018 to 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India
Notes: Cadre comprise the following ranks: Head Warders + Head Matrons + Warders + Matrons + Others.

25. Share of undertrial prisoners (percentage points)

Share of UTPs (%) (Xn): Number of UTPs/ Total inmate population*100

2017	X1	
2018	X2	((X2/ X1)-1)*100 = a
2019	X3	((X3/X2)-1)*100 = b
2020	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2021	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2022	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

Formula:
Share of undertrial prisoners (percentage points): 5 year Average (a,b,c,d,e)

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2018 to 2022
Sources: Prison Statistics India

26. Spend per inmate (%)

Spend per inmate= Xn

2018-19	X1	
2019-20	X2	((X2/ X1)-1)*100 = a
2020-21	X3	((X3/X2)-1)*100 = b
2021-22	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2022-23	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2022	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

Formula: Spend per inmate (%): 5 year Average(a,b,c,d,e)

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: Financial year 2018-2019 to 2022-2023
Sources: Prison Statistics India

27. Prison budget used (percentage points)

Prison budget utilised= Xn

2017-18	X1	
2018-19	X2	((X2/ X1)-1)*100 = a
2019-20	X3	((X3/X2)-1)*100 = b
2020-21	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2021-22	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2022-23	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

Formula: Prison budget used (percentage points): 5 year Average(a,b,c,d,e)

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: Financial year 2018-2019 to 2022-2023
Sources: Prison Statistics India

28. Difference in spend: prisons vs state (percentage points)

Prison expenditure (PE) = Xn
State expenditure (SE) = Yn

Prison expenditure (Xn)

2016-17	X1	
2017-18	X2	((X2/ X1)-1)*100 = a
2018-19	X3	((X3/X2)-1)*100 = b
2019-20	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2020-21	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2021-22	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

State expenditure (Yn)

2016-17	Y1	
2017-18	Y2	((Y2/ Y1)-1)*100 = a
2018-19	Y3	((Y3/Y2)-1)*100 = b
2019-20	Y4	((Y4/Y3)-1) *100 = c
2020-21	Y5	((Y5/Y4)-1) *100 = d
2021-22	Y6	((Y6/Y5)-1) *100 = e

Formula: Difference in spend: prisons vs state (percentage points): 5 year Average(ax,bx..ex)-5 year Average (ay,by..ey)

Benchmark: Greater than zero
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: Financial year 2017-2018 to 2021-2022
Sources: Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Open Budgets India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs; Prison Statistics India.

JUDICIARY

BUDGETS

1. Per capita spend on judiciary (Rs.)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Judiciary Expenditure}}{\text{State Population}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: March 2023 (population) | 2022-2023 (judiciary expenditure)
Sources: National Commission on Population, 2019; Combined Finance and Revenue Accounts of the Union and State Governments in India for 2022-2023, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Finance Division of Ministry of Home Affairs

HUMAN RESOURCES

2. Population per High Court judge (persons)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{State Population}}{\text{High Court judges}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: February 2025 (population) | February 2025 (High Court judges)
Source: National Commission on Population, 2019; Department of Justice, February 2025
Notes: Population of states and UTs that share a High Court have been combined, and hence they share the same value. These are Kerala and Lakshadweep; West Bengal and Andaman & Nicobar Islands; Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh; Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh; Maharashtra, Goa, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu; Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

3. Population per subordinate court judge (persons)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{State Population}}{\text{Subordinate court judges}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: January 2025 (population) | 30 January 2025 (subordinate court judges)
Source: National Commission on Population, 2019; Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 433 (sub court vacancies)

4. High Court judge vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Working High Court judges}}{\text{Sanctioned High Court judges}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: February 2025
Source: Department of Justice

5. Subordinate court judge vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Working subordinate court judges}}{\text{Sanctioned subordinate court judges}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 30 January 2025
Source: Parliamentary Question - Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 433

6. High Court staff vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Working High Court staff}}{\text{Sanctioned High Court staff}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 2023-2024
Source: Supreme Court Annual Report (Volume 2 - High Courts) 2023-2024

DIVERSITY

7. Women judges (High Court) (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Women High Court judges}}{\text{Total High Court judges}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 1 February 2025
Source: Department of Justice

8. Women judges (subordinate court) (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Women subordinate court judges}}{\text{Total subordinate court judges}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: February 2025
Sources: Parliamentary Question - Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2354

9. SC judges, actual to reserved (subordinate courts) (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Actual Scheduled Caste (SC) judges}}{\text{(Sanctioned subordinate court judges* SC reservation)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: February 2025
Source: Parliamentary Question-Rajya Sabha, Unstarred Question No. 1075

10. ST judges, actual to reserved (subordinate courts) (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Actual Scheduled Tribe (ST) judges}}{\text{(Sanctioned subordinate court judges * ST reservation)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: February 2025
Source: Parliamentary Question- Rajya Sabha, Unstarred Question No. 1075

11. OBC judges, actual to reserved (subordinate courts) (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Actual Other Backward Classes (OBC) judges}}{\text{(Sanctioned subordinate court judges* OBC reservation)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: February 2025
Source: Parliamentary Question - Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2354

INFRASTRUCTURE

12. Courthall shortfall (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Number of courthalls}}{\text{Sanctioned subordinate court judges}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 30 January 2025
Source: Parliamentary Question - Lok

Sabha Unstarred Question No 794 (court halls) and Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 433 (sub court vacancies)

WORKLOAD

13. Cases pending for more than 3 years (High Court) (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Cases pending for more than 3 years in High Courts}}{\text{Total cases pending in High Courts}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: January 1, 2025
Source: National Judicial Data Grid
Notes: Cases include both civil and criminal cases

14. Cases pending for more than 3 years (subordinate courts) (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Cases pending for more than 3 years in sub courts}}{\text{Total cases pending in sub courts}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: January 1, 2025
Source: National Judicial Data Grid
Notes: Cases include both civil and criminal cases

15. Case clearance rate (High Court) (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{High Court cases disposed}}{\text{High Court cases filed}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: December 2024
Data source: National Judicial Data Grid
Notes: Cases include both civil and criminal cases

16. Case clearance rate (subordinate court) (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Subordinate court cases disposed}}{\text{Subordinate court cases filed}} -*100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: December 2024
Data source: National Judicial Data Grid
Notes: Cases include both civil and criminal cases

TRENDS

17. Cases pending (per High Court judge) (percentage points)

Cases pending (High Court judge): Xn

2018	X1	
2019	X2	((X2/ X1)-1) *100 = a
2020	X3	((X3/X2)-1) *100 = b
2021	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2022	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2023	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

Formula:
Cases pending (per High Court judge) (%): 5 year Average(a,b,c,d,e)

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/date: Calendar year 2019 - 2023
Data source:
Notes: Cases include both civil and criminal cases

18. Cases pending (per sub court judge) (percentage points)

2018	Cases pending (per sub court judge) – X1	
2019	X2	((X2/ X1)-1) *100 = a
2020	X3	((X3/X2)-1) *100 = b
2021	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2022	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2023	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

Formula:
Cases pending (per sub court judge) (%): 5 year Average(a,b,c,d,e)

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/date: Calendar year 2019 - 2023
Source: National Judicial Data Grid
Notes: Cases include both civil and criminal cases

19. Total cases pending (High Court) (percentage points)

Formula:
High Court cases (civil+criminal)= Xn

2018	X1	
2019	X2	((X2/ X1)-1) *100 = a
2020	X3	((X3/X2)-1) *100 = b
2021	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2022	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2023	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

Formula:
Total cases pending (High Court) (%): 5 year Average(a,b,c,d,e)

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/date: Calendar year 2019 - 2023
Source: National Judicial Data Grid
Notes: Cases include both civil and criminal cases

20. Total cases pending (subordinate court) (percentage points)

Sub court cases (civil+criminal)=Xn

2018	X1	
2019	X2	((X2/ X1)-1) *100 = a
2020	X3	((X3/X2)-1) *100 = b
2021	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2022	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2023	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

Formula:
Total cases pending (subordinate court) (%):5 year Average(a,b,c,d,e)

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/date: Calendar year 2019 - 2023
Source: National Judicial Data Grid
Notes: Cases include both civil and criminal cases

21. High Court judge vacancy (%)

High court judge vacancies (%): Xn

2019	X1	
2023	X5	(X5 x1)/X1*100

Formula:
High Court judge vacancy (%) : (X5 x1)/ X1*100

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2019 to 2023
Sources: Department of Justice

22. Subordinate court judge vacancy (%)

Sub court judge vacancies (%): Xn

2019	X1	
2023	X5	(X5 x1)/X1*100

Formula:
Subordinate court judge vacancy (%):(X5 x1)/X1*100

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2019 to 2023
Sources: Department of Justice

23. Case clearance rate (High Court) (percentage points)

Case clearance rate (Xn)=

$$\frac{\text{High Court cases disposed (civil + criminal)}}{\text{High Court cases filed (civil + criminal)}} * 100$$

2018	X1	
2019	X2	((X2/ X1)-1)*100 = a
2020	X3	((X3/X2)-1)*100 = b
2021	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2022	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2023	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

Formula:
Case clearance rate (High Court) (percentage points): 5 year Average(a,b,c,d,e)
Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2019 to 2023
Sources: National Judicial Data Grid
Notes: Cases include both civil and criminal cases

24. Case clearance rate (subordinate court) (percentage points)

Case clearance rate (Xn)=

$$\frac{\text{Sub court cases disposed (civil + criminal)}}{\text{Sub court cases filed (civil + criminal)}} * 100$$

2018	X1	
2019	X2	((X2/ X1)-1)*100 = a
2020	X3	((X3/X2)-1)*100 = b
2021	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2022	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2023	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

Formula:
Case clearance rate (subordinate court) (percentage points): 5 year Average(a,b,c,d,e)

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: Calendar year 2019 to 2023
Sources: National Judicial Data Grid
Notes: Cases include both civil and criminal cases

25. Difference in spend: judiciary vs state (percentage points)

Judiciary expenditure (JE) = Xn
State expenditure (SE) = Yn

2017-18	X1	
2018-19	X2	((X2/ X1)-1)*100 = a
2019-20	X3	((X3/X2)-1)*100 = b
2020-21	X4	((X4/X3)-1) *100 = c
2021-22	X5	((X5/X4)-1) *100 = d
2022-23	X6	((X6/X5)-1) *100 = e

5 year Average(a,b,c,d,e)

2017-18	Y1	
2018-19	Y2	((Y2/ Y1)-1)*100 = a
2019-20	Y3	((Y3/Y2)-1)*100 = b
2020-21	Y4	((Y4/Y3)-1) *100 = c
2021-22	Y5	((Y5/Y4)-1) *100 = d
2022-23	Y6	((Y6/Y5)-1) *100 = e

5 year Average(a,b,c,d,e)

Formula:
Difference in spend: judiciary vs state (percentage points): 5 year Average (a,b,c,d,e)-5 year Average (a,b,c,d,e)

Benchmark: Greater than zero
Scoring guide: Higer, the better
Period/Date: Financial year 2017-2018 to 2022-2023

LEGAL AID

BUDGETS

1. NALSA fund utilised (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{NALSA funds utilised}}{\text{NALSA funds carried forward + received this year}} *100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2022-2023
Data source: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

2. State's share in legal aid budget (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Allocation by state for legal aid (BE)}}{\text{(Allocation by state + Allocation by NALSA)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2022-2023
Data source: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA); State budget documents

3. State legal aid budget utilised (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Expenditure by state for legal aid (AE)}}{\text{Allocation by state (BE)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2022-2023
Data source: State budget documents

4. Per capita spend on legal aid (Rs.)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Expenditure by state from state and NALSA budget}}{\text{State Population}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: March 2023 (population) | 2022-2023 (state expenditure and NALSA Fund expenditure)

HUMAN RESOURCES

5. DLSA secretary vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual DLSA secretaries}}{\text{Sanctioned DLSA secretaries}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: March 2024
Data source: RTI to State Legal Services Authorities
Note: DLSA is District Legal Services Authority

6. PLVs per lakh population (persons)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Para legal volunteers (PLVs)}}{\text{State population}}$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: March 2024 (Population); September 2024 (PLVs)
Data source: National Commission on Population, 2019; RTI response from National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

7. Sanctioned secretaries as % of DLSAs (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Sanctioned DLSA secretaries}}{\text{Total DLSAs}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: March 2024 (Sanctioned DLSA secretaries) | December 2024 (No. of DLSAs)
Data source: RTI to State Legal Services Authorities and National Legal Services Authority
Note: DLSA is District Legal Services Authority

DIVERSITY

8. Women in DLSA secretaries (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Women DLSA secretaries}}{\text{Total DLSA Secretaries appointed}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: March 2024
Sources: RTI to State Legal Services Authorities
Note: DLSA is District Legal Services Authority

9. Women panel lawyers (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Women panel lawyers}}{\text{Total panel lawyers}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: September 2024
Sources: RTI to National Legal Services Authority

10. Women PLVs (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Women para legal volunteers}}{\text{Total para legal volunteers}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: September 2024
Sources: RTI to National Legal Services Authority

INFRASTRUCTURE

11. DLSA as % of state judicial districts (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total DLSAs}}{\text{Judicial districts}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: December 2024 (No. of DLSAs) | March 2023 (judicial districts)
Sources: RTI to National Legal Services Authority and State Profile Document
Note: DLSA is District Legal Services Authority

12. Presence of front offices in DLSA (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total front offices in DLSAs}}{\text{Total DLSAs}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: December 2024
Sources: RTI to National Legal Services Authority
Note: DLSA is District Legal Services Authority

13. Legal service clinic per jail (number)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Legal service clinics in jails}}{\text{Total jails}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 1 per jail
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2023-2024 (legal service clinics) | December 2022 (total jails)
Sources: RTI to National Legal Services Authority

14. Villages per legal service clinic (number)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Inhabited villages}}{\text{Legal service clinics in villages}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2023-2024 (legal service clinics) | December 2022 (total jails)
Sources: RTI to National Legal Services Authority

WORKLOAD

15. PLA cases: settled as % of received (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Cases settled by Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs)}}{\text{Cases received by Permanent Lok Adalats}} *100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2023-2024
Data source: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

16. Disposal of pre-litigation cases in SLSA Lok Adalats (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Pre-litigation cases disposed of in the year}}{\text{Pre-litigation cases taken up in the year}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2023-2024
Data source: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

17. Disposal of pending cases in SLSA Lok Adalats (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Pending cases disposed of in the year}}{\text{Pending cases taken up in the year}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2023-2024
Data source: National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS (SHRC)

BUDGETS

1. Budget utilised (%)
Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Expenditure by SHRC}}{\text{Allocation to SHRC}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2022-2023
Data source: RTI to SHRCs

HUMAN RESOURCES

2. SHRC total staff vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual staff}}{\text{Sanctioned staff}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 2023-2024
Data source: RTI to SHRCs

3. SHRC executive staff vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual executive staff}}{\text{Sanctioned executive staff}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: March 2024
Data source: RTI to SHRCs
Note: Executive staff includes the Chairperson, two members and secretary

4. SHRC investigation wing vacancy (%)

Formula:

$$100 - \left(\frac{\text{Actual staff in investigative wing}}{\text{Sanctioned staff in investigative wing}} * 100\right)$$

Benchmark: 0%
Scoring guide: Lower, the better
Period/Date: 2023-2024
Data source: RTI to SHRCs

DIVERSITY

5. SHRC total women staff (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Women staff}}{\text{Total SHRC staff}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2023-2024
Sources: RTI to SHRCs

6. Share of women in executive staff (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Women executive staff}}{\text{Total executive staff}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: March 2024
Sources: RTI to SHRCs
Note: Executive staff includes the Chairperson, two members and secretary

7. Share of women in investigation wing (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Women in investigation wing}}{\text{Total staff in investigation wing}} * 100$$

Benchmark: Not available
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: 2023-2024
Sources: RTI to SHRCs

TRENDS

8. Average case clearance rate (%)

$$\frac{\text{For case clearance rate Cases disposed by SHRC in a year}}{\text{Cases filed/received by SHRC in a year}} * 100 = Xn$$

2021-2022	CCR = X1
2022-2023	X2
2023-2024	X3

Formula:
Average case clearance rate (%): 3 year Average(a,b,c)

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: Three years 2021-2024
Sources: RTI to SHRCs

9. Average budget utilised (%)

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total budget expenditure by SHRC (2018-23)}}{\text{Total budget allocation by SHRC (2018-23)}} * 100$$

Benchmark: 100%
Scoring guide: Higher, the better
Period/Date: Financial years 2018-2023
Sources: RTI to SHRCs

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About India Justice Report 2025

The India Justice Report (IJR) 2025 is India's first and only comprehensive quantitative index which uses government data to rank the capacity of 'pillars' of the formal justice system. First published in 2019, it continues to track improvements and persisting deficits in each state's structural and financial capacity to deliver justice based on quantitative measurements of budgets, human resources, infrastructure, workload, and diversity across police, judiciary, prisons, legal aid, and Human Rights Commissions for all 36 states and UTs. The IJR is a collaborative effort undertaken in partnership with DAKSH, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Common Cause, Centre for Social Justice, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and TISS-Prayas.

Visit https://indiajusticereport.org for the main report, data explorer and more.

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