

1. Courts Must Adopt Technology Faster

Context:

- After the Kerala and Bombay High Courts' successful use of a video-conferencing app to live-stream proceedings, courts in India, including the lower courts, need to roll this out on a war footing.
- The Covid-19 outbreak and the concomitant Social Distancing requirements make this an Imperative.

Why Technology Adoption is Imperative?

- There are nearly **3.2 crore cases pending in the Lower Courts**.
- In addition the **average number of video calls made in 25 states was just 2,400**, with some states having made just double-digit video calls.
- Besides the slow pace of adoption of technology by the judiciary is significant impact on efficiency and transparency of their Functioning Also.

National e-Governance Plan:

- The National e-Governance Plan had envisaged e-Courts as a mission-mode project in 2006 monitored and funded by Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India for the District Courts across the country.

Overall Objectives:

- To provide **efficient & time-bound citizen centric services** delivery as detailed in e-Court Project Litigant's Charter.
- To develop, install & implement decision support systems in courts.
- To automate the processes to provide transparency in accessibility of information to its stakeholders.
- To enhance **judicial productivity, both qualitatively & quantitatively, to make the justice delivery system affordable, accessible, cost effective, predictable, reliable and transparent.**

The specific objectives of the Project include

- To make whole judicial system ICT enabled by putting in place adequate and modern hardware and connectivity
- Automation of workflow management in all courts
- Electronic movement of records from taluka/trial to appeal courts.

- **Installation of video conferencing (VC) facility** and recording of witness through Video Conferencing
- **Connecting all courts in the country to the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) through WAN** and additional Redundant Connectivity
- Citizen centric facilities such as electronic filing, e-payment and use of mobile applications in all courts
- Touch screen based kiosks in each court complex, full computerisation of State and district level judicial and service academies and centres.

Citizen Services Offered:

- Search the current status and the history of a Case using CNR number of the Case / Case Registration Number / Party Name / Advocate Name etc.
- Search and View court orders using Party name / case number / Court number / Order date.
- Search and view Cause list of a court

Conclusion:

- The judiciary should treat the Covid-19 outbreak as an opportunity to reorient itself on tech-adoption.
- It can perhaps begin with making video-conferencing and live-streaming of proceedings compulsory for most cases.

Source: Financial Express