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If we look at the current Indian scenario, if we look at the lower courts, there are about 4.5 crore cases pending at district or taluka courts in India of which about 1.1 Cr are civil cases and 3.4 are criminal cases. There are about 81K pending cases with the Supreme court and about 62L cases pending with various high courts, as per the data published by National Judicial Data Grid. This means a total of about 5+ crore cases pending all across.
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All is not lost. I have been fortunate enough to work closely on the recent vision for e-Courts, via PUCAR initiative (<https://www.pucar.org/>) to help transform the case resolution process to reduce the pendency. The last six months have been an eye opener to this Judicial world and it is really heartening to see that there are a lot of good things being proposed and also in-action to revamp the system. This blog (<https://notes.agami.in/p/transforming-dispute-resolution-who>) by Supriya, Co-founder Agami (<https://agami.in/about/>) gives an interesting perspective to the problem statement and expectations going forward.

There is lot of work happening towards refinement of Judicial system and addressing the backlogs. For example this Action Plan 2024 by Mumbai High Court.
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My intention here, however, is not to harp about the current problems or also the e-Courts initiatives. My intention here is to explore different scenarios of what happens once the Judicial system undergoes transformation, and reaches the stage of open APIs, data interoperability, access to data (consent based), and most importantly a play for eco-system innovations to happen.

So let's put on our imagination hat and start thinking of enhancements to the Judicial system. You could wear yours and who knows, you would end up with a startup executing them. Do note that one, the enhancements could be categorized into process/tool enhancements that are to strengthen the current system or could be categorized into those that are a bit more disruptive in nature and essentially re-imagine the system. This could lead to lot more innovations and also helps bring in ecosystem play. And second, the following are just imaginations and have not been evaluated from a legal possibility perspective. But then again, the idea is that in future, many of the current legal limitations will go away as the system evolves

1. Digitization and data interoperability will lead to an internal system benefit when it comes to appealing a case in a higher court. Instead of worrying about carrying a whole bunch of paperwork, and then re-filing the case, it would be as easy as sharing the earlier CNR (Case Name Record) number and cloning it to create a new case instance for the higher court. All earlier recorded data, documents, evidence, statements, transcripts etc, all available digitally at the click of a button.
2. There are numerous instances when there is a need to quickly check if the person/organization has any pending cases against him/them. With open APIs and consent based data access, it would be easy for anyone to do these kinds of checks, using say a person's Aadhar. Since the access will be consent based and for specific duration (similar to the way DigiLocker works), so that any person at random will not be able to query data. In most cases, it will be in the individual's interest to provide consent, to be able to avail relevant services. For certain agencies like courts, police etc. consent may not be required. The possible scenarios are
 - a) Candidate verification during election nomination
 - b) Police verification during passport application/renewal
 - c) Tenant verification during signing of home agreement
 - d) Employee background check by different organizations
3. Advocates and Judges rely on precedents when arguing and pronouncing judgement. LLMs trained on historical cases and judgement can help both Advocates and Judges to search similar cases faster and hence work faster.
4. While the LLM engine can help advocates and judges as per previous point, it can also help litigants. Before filing a case, litigants can also query the LLM on the possible outcomes of their cases and what can be done to strengthen it or would an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) work better for them.
5. Advocate leader board displaying ratings from people for an Advocate along with remarks. Unlike today, this will allow a litigant to select an Advocate based on public rating and feedback, similar to the way we chose holiday destinations, mode of travel, resorts, restaurants and even doctors. The advocate leader board would not just be useful for litigants, for the advocates themselves, for it will be a clear matrix of their performance and hence can be a referral point for their promotions and allocations to different courts.
6. On similar grounds a Judge leader-board could become a performance metric for them. Also while today litigants or Advocates have no choice to pick a judge, but who knows in future, with system opening up and leader board data available, it may be possible to request for a judge to be allocated.
7. In a future world, even Courts may have their own ratings and may be allowed to pick up cases without limitations of jurisdictions or litigants may be able to pick up courts, just like today we can go to any hospital of choice for our treatment. Courts may be able to operate pan India.
8. Another leader-board can be for Litigant and it can help with an interesting scenario. When discussing with an IT Team member from Kerala High Court's CMS team, he was sharing that there is a significant portion of cases today that are frivolous, and take up time of the courts to at least go through them, sometimes do the admission hearing and then reject the case. A dashboard will allow the court to know if the person logging the case is someone who has known to log such frivolous cases and how to handle it.
9. Plug & Play systems that could allow different levels of integration like using some features of the platform backend and creating a custom front end like custom e-filing module, or using entire module of the e-Court platform (with embedding or deep linking)
10. Applications can be build for say Advocates that play into the core system and alongside provide add-on features of say a CRM, and an AI bot that helps them and their paralegals to do historical searches, create case filings, pleadings and closure statements using generative AI.

11. Private courier agencies could register for summons delivery and help provide more options and also help speed up the delivery and acknowledgement process.

12. Just like startups today use shared office space, there can be spaces that can come up that will provide places from where Advocates, Litigants can attend case hearings virtually.

13. Some specific requirements based scenarios

- a) When buying a second hand vehicle, be able to check if that vehicle was part of any legal case
- b) When renewing a driving license RTO is able to verify if the person was ever involved in an accident case and convicted and what kind of offense it was, and then either deny renewal or suspension for certain a duration.
- c) On similar lines an insurance agency being able to find such details to decide if insure the person or not and if yes, then what kind of premium to charge
- d) When giving loan to a person/agency, the ability to verify if the person/agency has defaulted for payments in the past, resulting in cheque bounce case being logged against them
- e) A person's CIBIL (credit score) being impacted when he/she defaults on any payment and there is a legal case against him/her
- f) When buying a property, be able to not only check for clear title, but also if there is or was any litigation against the property
- g) Person's character check could happen probably at the time of matrimony.

These are just some sample scenarios that came to my mind with little bit of deliberation. Am sure there will be a lot more possibilities and scenarios possible, which we are not even able to imagine today, because tomorrow is yet to come.

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