

## IT in Judiciary

The judiciary is a system of courts which interpret and apply the law. The role of the courts is to decide cases by determining the relevant facts and the relevant law, and applying the relevant facts to the relevant law. The **Indian Judiciary** administers a *common law system* in which customs, securities and legislation, all codify the law of the land.

Technology has proven its role in enhancing efficiency, improving access, as well as encouraging transparency, accountability, and adherence to timelines in dealing with legal matters.

India has taken a variety of measures to automate processes within the judiciary with an aim to improve efficiency and eliminate the time lost in unproductive work. Some of the initiatives are: easy accessibility to online case records and previous judicial pronouncements, reducing dependency on stenographers by utilising voice recognition software, usage of video conferencing facilities to increase the reach of courts, case management systems, e-registry of court, automated preparation of cause-lists, phasing out physical records through e-filing and e-submission of documents, etc.

### Judicial applications of IT

In 1990 a project named COURTS (Court Information System) was launched for the benefit of the entire legal community. This project was commissioned for streamlining registries of community. This project was commissioned for streamline registries of various courts, Subsequently, all High Courts have been computerized and Web enabled both locally and nationally through NICNET.

The following applications have been successfully implemented at the Supreme Court and also 18 High Courts in the country. The end result of these applications has been a lot of convenience, improvement and speed of legal service for the litigants who are common people of India.

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**Case Status (<http://www.caswstatus.nic.in>)**

This web site provides Supreme Court's pending and disposed case status information to litigants/advocates on the Internet. Case-status gives the latest information with respect to the status of a case which could stand as Disposed, lower, court details, party and advocate names, date on which last listed, waiting position, subject category along with exact verbatim of the text of the Court's order. Pending case status can be accessed through Case number, title, advocate names and lower court details.

As soon as a case is filed in the court, its case-status is available on the web, giving filing details such as dairy number, date of filing and the like. Litigants can find out whether their cases have been filed in the court or not without contacting the advocates. Case-status also provides all orders pertaining to a case delivered so far by the court. The litigants can maintain their own case files by downloading all order pertaining to a case. Case-status receives hundred of hits every day.

An advocate can download all his cases pending and disposed and maintain his own database.

**Impact**

Response to the 'Case-status' from the public is overwhelming, as pending cases information is available at his/her residence. It avoids the litigants to come all over to Delhi from their place to find out the status of their pending cases. The litigants need not find the status of their pending case cases on phone as is the usual practice. Very authentic information, which contains the latest Order of the court is available to the litigants at their place.

**JUDIS (<http://www.judis.nic.in>)**

This is the Judgment Information System (JUDIS) on CR-ROM consisting of complete text of all reported judgements of Supreme Court of India from 1950 to 2000. The judgements of 2001 onwards are available on the Internet. JUDIS CD is available on a membership basis. It is marketed by NICSI (NIC Services Incorporated), New Delhi.

Judgments can be accessed through party name, advocate, date of judgements, and more importantly, through free text search. Free, text based search enables thusers to retrieve all relevant judgments of a particular subject. Judgments are available on the web site within 24 hours of their delivery in the court.

The judgments of the High Court of Delhi since 1999, the High Court of AP since 1999, the High Court of J and K since 2001, and the High Court of Orissa since 1985 are available on the web.

**Impact**

- An ordinary litigant can find out precedents of a case on his/her own.
- Saves lot of time of judges and advocates in locating precedents.
- Savages lot of space in maintenance of a law library.

It proved to be very useful advocates who cannot afford to have his/her own Law library. As JUDIS CD contains complete text of the judgments, then is no need to refer to any law journal for findings precedents.



### **Cause lists on Internet (<http://casuelists.nic.in>)**

Causelists are schedules of cases to be heard by the courts the following day. The Causelists of Supreme Court and all High Courts are available on NIC web servers in the web site <http://causelists.nic.in>.

Immediately after generation of the causelists, most of the courts cyclostyle the stencils cut from the printers attached to the servers for generating thousands of copies running into a few tasks of pages every day. Due to this, the courts take a lot of time for generation and supply of the causelists to the advocates at their offices or residence. Usually, the advocates receive the cyclostyled copy of a day's causelist not before 8 p.m. Some High Courts copy the casuelists data on a floppy and print thousands of copies. This process costs each High court lakhs of rupees every year. By making the Causelista available on the Internet, the High Court is incurring no expenditure as they are using the already available infrastructure and the software of NIC.

#### **Features**

- Advocates can generate their own causelist consisting of his/her own cases.
- Retrieval can be made through the name of either petitioner or respondent.
- Courtwise list can be generated.
- Judgewise list can be prepared.
- Entire causelist can be printed, if required.
- Case number wise access is possible

#### **Impact**

- Advocates are able to receive the causelists almost immediately after the court hours
- Advocates can generate their own causelists which will contain only their cases, thus making them avoid to go through hundreds of pages to locate their cases.
- As the application is available on the Internet, the litigant public can easily find out whether their cases are coming for hearing or not, without bothering the advocate.
- Some courts are considering the generation of copies of causelists, as most of the advocates are dependent on the internet version of causelists. Thus the courts can save a good amount of money on an annual basis.

### **Daily Orders on Internet (<http://www.dailyorders.nic.in>)**

The daily orders of Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court are available on the Internet. As soon as the orders are signed by the judges, they are made available on the Internet. These orders are only for information of the litigants. Official copy of the signed order has to be obtained only through normal channels. The daily orders of other High Courts are constantly updated. It is an instant hit with the litigants and advocates. The database is maintained by the respective Courts.



This is the easiest way for litigants to get a copy of the latest order delivered in the courts, from their residence/offices. The free text based search enable users to access relevant order of the court on the same subject,. It also helps the users in accessing order without knowing the case number, or party name.

### **Impact**

- Litigants can have access to the signed orders from their own place.
- Enhance confidence in the judicial process.
- Saves lot of time and expenses on travelling to the court to obtain a copy of the order.

### **Applications Implemented in the Supreme Court of India**

Following are some of most important applications implemented in the Supreme Court, which helped the Registry in streamlining its routing activities.

#### **Judicial Wing**

##### **Filing Courter computerization**

Fresh cases are filed only before the computerized filing courters. As the advocates stand in queue for filing cases before the counters, the data entry operator enter preliminary details of the case such as party names, advocate details, etc. required for registration. Filing receipts are generated, court fee and time limitation are calculated automatically and automatic registration takes place, Filing information is immediately available on the Internet.

##### **List of Business Information System (LOBIS)**

This contains pending and disposed cases since 1990. The size of the database is about 5 lakh records. It is near time-critical application as the causelists are to be generated by the computer system by the close of the court's closing hours every day. This application also uses bunching/grouping technique which enabled the registry in bringing down the pendency in the Apex Court.

##### **Court's Order/proceedings Computerization**

This is about computerization of day-to-day orders delivered in the court. The software enables the Court Masters in speeding up the process of typing orders/judgments by providing the preamble, which includes the item no. of the case in the causelist, name of parties, advocate names, High court/lower court details, name of judges before whom cases are listed, date of order and so on, on the screen. The Court Masters need to type only the order part note by them in the courtroom.

##### **Courtncic: Judgement Information System (JUDIS)**

##### **Record room computerization**

This enables track of keeping files and printed records consignment, weeding of files, printed records and their maintenance, movement of files, and tracing of files.



### Statistical reports

Every month it generates 22 pages of statistical reports on institution, and disposal and pendency of variance types of cases in the Supreme Court Of India.

**Web site of Supreme court of India (<http://ss.remecourtofindia.nic.in/>)**

### Causelist on Interest

All the requests inputs about Supreme Court are available in its web site. The causelist is available on the Interest for public use.

### Judicial Sections

All judicial sections are provided with computer systems for updating the case databases pertaining to their sections and minimizing movement of files, apart from generation of notices and dismissal letters Registration of cases, Disposal of cases, and finding status of cases.

### Library information system

SUPLIS-Case indexing. It contains citation information of all reported cases decided by the Supreme Court from 1950 onwards. Cases can be retrieved through case number, party name and subject category. This is available on the Supreme Court's web site.

Current contents. This keeps trace of all legal and judicial articles published in journals subscribed by the library of Supreme Court. This is also available on the Supreme Court's web site cataloguing. This helps maintain details of all books available in the judges' library of Supreme court and supports 'Issue and Return'.

### Administrative Wing

This includes

- Pay roll, inventory control system, personal information system and monitoring or recovery of loans.
- Monitoring of bank guarantor's cases, monitoring of payment to petitioner/respondent for court ordered cases.

### High Courts computerization

NIC took up computerizations of all 18 High Court of India and 10 benches of the High Courts on the lines of the Supreme Court's computerization. It implemented the List of Business information (LOBIS) in all High Courts. All High Courts' Causelists are also available on the Internet. Most of the High Courts have opened query counters along with filing counters for providing case status information to the litigants and advocates.

### Facilities

- All High Courts are provided with computer hardware with back-up facility.
- All court rooms are equipped with terminals and printers.
- All court rooms are connected to LAN.



- Some High Court Judgments and orders are available on Internet.
- Most High Courts have their web sites.
- Causelists are generated automatically.
- Posting of cases to various courts are done by the system.
- Bunching/grouping is done.
- Court fee and time limitations are calculated automatically.
- Noticed are generated.
- Computer based filing counters are opened.
- Filing receipts are generated for reference for advocates.
- Query counters are available.
- JUDIS and COUNTING are available.
- JUDIS and COURTNIC are available.
- All High Courts are connected on NICNET/Internet.
- Day-to-day judgements and order are stored, on computers.
- Most of the High Courts' libraries are computerized.
- Administrative and account applications have been computerized.
- Some of the High Courts have FTDMA/IPA V-sat based Internet connectivity.

#### **Impact**

- Registries' day-to-day work is streamlined.
- Filing process is streamlined.
- Litigants can get cause-status information at query counters.
- Causelists are generated on time and accessible on web.
- Court orders are generated with case.
- Court orders are generated with case.
- Notice are generated without delay.
- New work culture got introduce

#### **District Courts' Computerization**

In 1997, NIC took up the computerization of all 430 district courts in the country on the lines of the High Courts Computerization Project. The basic objective of the project are to:

- Provide transparency of information to the litigants and advocates
- Help the judicial administration streamlining its activates
- Provide judicial and legal database to the District judges.

NIC provides three-level training programmes to the district court official. The three levels are World processing, training on application software package for district courts, and training to district court judges.

All officials have been training on the District Court information SYSTEM developed for the computerization of district courts. This software takes care of all aspects of district court needs.

Subsequently from 2001 pilot district courts in states such as Andhra Pradesh have been provide with a LAN (Local Area Network) in the entire court with 50 nodes. Several online applications such as Cause list generation office automation, A diary Personnel Information System. Payroll,etc (on the lines of high court) have been implemented.

### Impact

Some of the district courts are now able to:

- General causelist.
- Store judgements on computers.
- Generate notices automatically.
- Generate certified copies
- Monitor case flow.
- Assist in caveat matching Post Cases in a transparent manner
- Access Supreme Court judgements.
- Account e-mail and internet.
- Give Case-status information query counters to litigants

### Conclusion

In this case study, we have presented a details view of the efforts of NIC in computerization of the Supreme Court of India, Various High Courts and also the district courts. Various judicial web sites at various levels of Judiciary are also referred. This is a major work successfully implemented and is like to be emulated by Judiciary in other developing courtiers also.