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E-Court Revolution in India: Evaluation of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project

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ABSTRACT

An outdated, paper-based judicial system cannot deliver justice in letter and spirit to a technically advanced, rapidly growing and fast-moving society. In a century in which technology is involved in everything from the needle to the rocket, the integration of digital technology with the judiciary has become inescapable, and in a vast and developing country like India a digital judiciary is undoubtedly required. Maxims such as 'justice delayed is justice denied' and 'justice must be seen to be done' apply with particular force in India, where the constitutional and district courts lag in delivering prompt, transparent and affordable justice. Responding to this crisis, the Government of India adopted an e-governance vision in 2006 and introduced the e-Courts Mission Mode Project (e-Courts MMP) as one of its components, with the aim of converting India's paper-based judiciary into a digital one. Two decades after the project was approved, that transformation is still incomplete. The e-Courts MMP therefore calls for evaluation and critical appraisal so that its achievements and its failures may be clearly understood. This paper revisits the journey of the e-Courts MMP using the doctrinal method, evaluates its three phases against official data, and flags the challenges that an e-judiciary poses to society.

Keywords: *e-judiciary, e-courts, e-Courts Mission Mode Project, access to justice, information and communication technology, digital transformation of courts*

I. INTRODUCTION

The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2024 ranks India 79th out of 142 countries worldwide and third out of six countries in South Asia.[1] India's rank in civil justice is 107 and in criminal justice 89 out of 142 countries. The India Justice Report 2025 records that, 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, and that eight States and Union Territories spent less than the national average.[2] According to the National Judicial Data Grid, as on 8 June 2026, 1,12,36,389 civil cases and 3,81,45,210 criminal cases were pending in the district courts, along

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[1] WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT, *WJP Rule of Law Index 2024* (2024), https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/downloads/WJPIndex2024.pdf.

[2] INDIA JUSTICE REPORT, *India Justice Report 2025* (2025).

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with 64,26,757 cases in the High Courts and 87,043 cases in the Supreme Court of India.[3] On these measures the Indian judiciary appears to fall short of delivering prompt, transparent and affordable justice. Following the developed nations, India too envisioned e-governance, under which public services are to be delivered economically, promptly and transparently. To make this vision a reality, the Government of India announced an e-governance plan comprising Mission Mode Projects (MMPs), which eventually numbered thirty-one. One of these projects, intended to revamp and transform the Indian judiciary, was the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, approved as part of the National e-Governance Plan in 2006. Integration of ICT with the judiciary is undoubtedly required, and so is the e-Courts MMP. The essential question today, however, is why, even after two decades of the project, so many court complexes in India are not ICT enabled, why litigants still visit courts frequently at the cost of their jobs, businesses and family time, and why many courts in India remain alien to the concept of a digital judiciary.

The Indian judiciary faces chronic vacancies of staff, a persistently low case clearance rate, insufficient budgetary allocation, manpower untrained to work in a digital environment, infrastructural deficits, the absence of a proper legal framework for e-judiciary, procedural irregularities and obstacles in providing free legal aid, among many other challenges. Several of these issues may be addressed through the establishment of e-courts. This paper assesses the e-Courts Mission Mode Project spearheaded by the e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India and flags the challenges faced by the Indian judiciary in transforming traditional courts into ICT enabled digital courts, or e-courts. Paperless courts are no longer a luxury but a necessity, as was realised during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through e-courts, every stage of a case or suit, namely institution, pre-trial proceedings, recording of evidence, interim applications and final adjudication, can be conducted electronically, easily and effectively, without repeated visits to court complexes. This article aims to contribute to the existing knowledge in the area of e-courts and to be of use to law professionals and policy makers, so that India may also have a uniform law for online proceedings.

> "When we speak of integrating technology into judicial process across the country, we are, in effect, addressing the dismantling of geographical constraints, whether they arise from difficult terrain, financial barriers, or sheer distance." - Surya Kant, Chief Justice of India
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> "It is not just about reducing the carbon footprints which is very important in itself but making our processes more efficient, seamless, accountable and it is better to

[3] NATIONAL JUDICIAL DATA GRID, https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/hcnjdg_v2/ (last visited June 8, 2026).

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monitor various stages in the process in the Registry. So, we are continuing with our mission to make our operations completely paperless." - D. Y. Chandrachud, former Chief Justice of India

II. Statement of Research Problem

The e-Courts Mission Mode Project (hereinafter e-Courts MMP) was introduced to revamp the Indian judiciary. Two decades after its approval, however, many courts in many States are not equipped with technology to any significant extent, a few are equipped but do not fully leverage ICT, and only a handful of court complexes, for example those in Delhi and a few High Courts, are fully ICT enabled. During the COVID-19 pandemic the limitations of India's traditional courts became apparent and came within public knowledge. The crucial question at the time of the pandemic (2020-21) was what the e-Courts MMP had achieved in the preceding fifteen years (2006-2020) if courts were not ready to move proceedings online. Six years after the pandemic the question remains relevant, and it is therefore essential to understand why many courts in India still lag behind in delivering an ICT enabled judiciary. This paper revisits the journey of the e-Courts MMP and analyses the challenges that persist in the integration of ICT with the judiciary.

III. Research Objectives

- To throw light on the transformation journey from traditional physical courts to virtual digital courts in India.
- To evaluate the e-Courts Mission Mode Project and to highlight its achievements and failures.
- To investigate the challenges posed to e-courts in India and to explore the prospects of their further development.

IV. Research Questions

- What is the present status of e-courts in India?
- How has the e-Courts Mission Mode Project given impetus to the transformation of the traditional physical judiciary into a modern digital judiciary?
- Are e-courts in India capable of delivering justice?
- What are the challenges and prospects for effectively operationalising e-courts in India?

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V. HYPOTHESIS

- **H1:** Integration of information and communication technology with the judiciary may increase the effective operation of courts in India.
- **H2:** The e-Courts Mission Mode Project has transformed the Indian judiciary and ensured access to justice for every citizen.

VI. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Modernisation of E-Judiciary in India,[4] authored by Dr. K. V. Sreenivasan, provides a comprehensive examination of the current state of India's judiciary and the pressing need for its digital transformation. The book discusses e-filing procedures and post-pandemic court administration. A few areas, however, demand more in-depth analysis, in particular how effectively e-court systems have been implemented across various courts. Sreenivasan's work underscores the critical need for the Indian judiciary to embrace digital transformation. In another book, *Electronic Technology and Civil Procedure: New Paths to Justice from Around the World*,[5] edited by Miklos Kengyel and Zoltan Nemessanyi, the integration of modern information and communication technologies into civil procedural systems is examined comprehensively. The book provides an extensive analysis of the intersection between electronic technology and civil procedure; longitudinal studies assessing how the integration of electronic technologies has evolved over the past decade and its sustained impact on civil justice systems, however, need to be explored further.

Richard Susskind, a leading authority in the area of e-courts, explores the intersection of law and information technology (IT) in *The Future of Law: Facing Challenges of Information Technology*.[6] This book is the most relevant and meaningful for the present study, as Susskind envisions a legal system revolutionised by IT, in which legal services become more accessible, automated and information-driven. The book presents a three-stage evolution of legal services: back-office automation, front-office digitalisation and, lastly, client-facing legal IT solutions. Susskind anticipates the rise of online dispute resolution (ODR) and virtual courts, a concept that has gained traction in modern legal frameworks. He argues that courtrooms should be seen as a service rather than a place, and that IT will help resolve disputes more efficiently. The book does not, however, discuss the psychological impact of remote legal proceedings. In another

[4] K. V. SREENIVASAN, MODERNISATION OF E-JUDICIARY IN INDIA 48-217 (Clever Fox Publishing).
[5] MIKLOS KENGYEL & ZOLTAN NEMESSANYI, ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY AND CIVIL PROCEDURE: NEW PATHS TO JUSTICE FROM AROUND THE WORLD (Springer Netherlands 2012).
[6] RICHARD SUSSKIND, THE FUTURE OF LAW: FACING CHALLENGES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (Oxford Univ. Press 1998).

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book, *Online Courts and the Future of Justice*,[7] Susskind points out the challenges that the traditional judicial set-up faces, such as costly and slow justice, and advocates an online judicial system to meet present societal challenges. He maintains that ignoring information technology may mean commercial suicide for lawyers, since their future depends on their response to IT. The book examines the evolution of online courts, the impact of technology on justice, and the potential future of legal systems in a digital era.

In an article titled *The Rise of Digital Justice: Courtroom Technology, Public Participation and Access to Justice*,[8] Jane Donoghue explores the rise of digital justice in the courtroom, emphasising the implications of technological advances for public participation and access to justice. It references Richard Susskind's work on the future of law and the impact of artificial intelligence (AI), online legal services and digital evidence presentation. A key concern raised is the lack of citizen engagement in the design and implementation of digital justice systems. In its report *Evaluation Study of e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project*,[9] the National Council of Applied Economic Research evaluated the effect of computerisation in district and subordinate courts across the country at the request of the Department of Justice, Government of India. The report identifies the challenges facing courts, which include data entry, lack of connectivity, inadequate technical manpower, insufficient training of officials and application software that is not user-friendly. The report also discusses future directions for the e-Courts project and makes policy suggestions for its next phase.

VII. Evaluation of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project (2006-2026)

Justice must be visible, accessible and prompt. The limitations of a traditional, paper-based, closed-room judiciary impede the effective administration of justice. With the integration of information and communication technology (hereinafter ICT), the traditional judiciary has the potential to overcome these shortcomings. In 2006, as a core component of a broader e-governance vision, the Government of India launched the e-Courts Mission Mode Project to revamp the Indian judiciary. The project was conceptualised on the basis of the *National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology in the Indian Judiciary - 2005*, prepared by the e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India, which had been constituted in 2004 and which functions as the nodal body leading the e-Courts MMP.

[7] Richard Susskind, Online Courts and the Future of Justice (Oxford Univ. Press 2019).
[8] Jane Donoghue, *The Rise of Digital Justice: Courtroom Technology, Public Participation and Access to Justice*, 80(6) Mod. L. Rev. 995 (2017), https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-2230.12300 (last visited Jan. 31, 2025).
[9] National Council of Applied Economic Research, *Evaluation Study of e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project* (2015), https://www.thehinducentre.com/resources/article35245512.ece/binary/Report-of-Evaluation-eCourts.pdf (last visited Feb. 1, 2025).

The project operates through a collaborative structure involving judicial, executive and technical bodies.

The e-Courts MMP, which aims to provide efficient and time-bound citizen-centric services and to automate processes so as to ensure transparency and accessibility, is divided into three phases.

A. Phase I (2007-2015)

Phase I, with a financial outlay of Rs. 935 crore,[10] aimed at computerisation of the district and subordinate courts, laying down the digital bedrock. This phase focused on three foundational pillars of physical infrastructure, namely hardware proliferation, connectivity and site preparation. Computers, printers and scanners were procured and installed in 14,249 courts across the country.[11] Local Area Networks (LAN) were installed for the internal flow of information among the registry, the judge's chamber and the courtroom. Old heritage buildings were renovated to accommodate server rooms, electronic cabling and uninterrupted power supply.[12] The primary objective of this phase was to create a technological ecosystem in which information could be managed, stored and retrieved electronically. The most daunting task of this period was standardising judicial processes across some 14,000 courtrooms. Another major achievement was a unified software for all district courts. The introduction of CIS 1.0 during Phase I was the first step towards data sovereignty for the Indian judiciary; it moved the diary of the court from a physical ledger to a searchable database.[13] CIS allowed for the automated generation of daily cause lists, ensuring transparency about which cases would be heard; case status inquiries, allowing litigants to check the progress of their cases without travelling to court; and judgment and order repositories, creating a searchable database. Phase I also gave a substantial push to training, and sessions were organised for judges, court staff and the bar to familiarise them with computers, software and other devices. Phase I thus achieved a measure of democratisation of information and began a process of de-intermediation, in which information became a public good.[14]

Critics argue that Phase I was essentially hardware-centric rather than litigant-centric. While offices were computerised, the underlying processes remained much the same; the result was merely a digital version of the old bureaucracy.[15] Further, on account of the digital divide, urban courts adapted to the new digital ecosystem far more quickly than rural courts.

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[10] DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE, *Evaluation Report of e-Courts Phase I* (2014).
[11] NATIONAL INFORMATICS CENTRE, *Implementation of e-Courts Project Phase I: A Technical Report* (2013).
[12] Prashant Mali, *Cyber Law and the Indian Judiciary*, 2 INDIAN J.L. & TECH. 45 (2012).
[13] E-COMMITTEE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA, *Manual on Case Information System (CIS) 1.0* (2011).
[14] DAKSH INDIA, *State of Indian Judiciary: A Report on Pendency and ICT* (2014).
[15] ARGHYA SENGUPTA ET AL., OPEN JUSTICE: THE WAY FORWARD 12 (Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy 2016).

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Phase I could not achieve all its targets within the decided timeframe. First, delay occurred because of friction between the State Governments and the High Courts over responsibility for establishing infrastructure and for administration. Secondly, even where computers and other hardware and software were installed, they remained underutilised for want of consistent power supply, adequate knowledge to operate them, and because of resistance within the legal fraternity to the new digital ecosystem. By the time the main computerisation work of Phase I concluded around 2013-14, 13,272 courts had been computerised.[16] Phase I also laid the foundational work for the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG). Even though many targets remained unfinished at the close of Phase I, the virtual revolution during the COVID-19 pandemic would have been impossible without it.

B. Phase II (2015-2023)

Phase II of the e-Courts MMP introduced digital platforms created for real-time data management. This phase aimed at establishing a unified, interconnected ecosystem to enhance transparency and accessibility. The second phase sought to transform the judiciary from a closed courtroom system into a round-the-clock service provider. It enabled litigants and lawyers to access case details at any time, reduced physical visits to court registries and enabled automated compliance monitoring. During this phase the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) was developed, facilitating the smooth exchange of data and documents among courts, police and other stakeholders. In order to bridge the gap between technology and ordinary citizens, new services were launched, including a mobile app, SMS Push and e-Sewa Kendras. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the infrastructure developed during Phases I and II allowed the judiciary to switch immediately to virtual hearings, ensuring that judicial proceedings remained uninterrupted. As with Phase I, Phase II also faced persistent systemic hurdles such as connectivity gaps, the digital divide, limited digital literacy and resistance to change.

C. Phase III (2023-2027)

Phase III, approved by the Union Cabinet in September 2023 with a financial outlay of Rs. 7,210 crore for four years, envisages the transition of Indian courts into digital courts.[17] Under Phase III, over 637.85 crore pages of judicial records have been digitised across courts to ensure faster retrieval, secure storage and seamless digital workflows. Twenty-nine virtual courts have been established to enable the online adjudication of traffic challans. Video conferencing (VC)

[16] DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE, *Status Note on e-Courts* (July 2015).

[17] PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU, MINISTRY OF LAW & JUSTICE, *e-Courts Mission Mode Project* (Mar. 12, 2026), https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2238787 [hereinafter PIB, *e-Courts Mission Mode Project* (Mar. 2026)]. The figures set out in this paragraph are as stated in this release; being cumulative operational data, they are liable to change.

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facilities have been expanded across 3,240 court complexes and 1,272 jails, and courts have conducted over 3.93 crore hearings through video conferencing, facilitating the remote participation of undertrials, witnesses and lawyers. Live streaming of court proceedings is operational in 11 High Courts. E-filing and e-payment systems have been implemented to allow online filing of cases and digital payment of court fees and fines; approximately 1.03 crore cases have been filed through the e-filing platform and the e-payments system has processed court fees worth Rs. 1,234 crore and fines worth Rs. 63 crore. The National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) provides public access to case data and court statistics across the country and has been upgraded with an improved dashboard, functioning as a monitoring tool to identify, manage and reduce pendency. CIS 4.0 has been implemented in all courts, with enhanced usability, privacy safeguards and integration with national platforms such as the NJDG, e-filing, virtual courts and the ICJS. The S3WaaS platform hosts 730 district court websites, ensuring secure and accessible web infrastructure. Real-time digital services have expanded significantly, with 35 lakh daily hits on the e-Courts portal, and more than three crore SMS messages and more than one crore emails were issued in December 2025. The e-Courts Services mobile app (3.5 crore downloads) provides lawyers and litigants with information about case status, cause lists and the like, while the JustIS app (22,090 downloads) is a management tool assisting judges to organise and monitor their judicial business. Forty-eight e-Sewa Kendras are functional across the High Courts and 2,283 across the district courts. The National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP) system has been implemented for the electronic service and tracking of summons and notices using mobile-based and GPS-enabled delivery mechanisms; under NSTEP the courts have processed 6.21 crore e-processes, of which 1.61 crore have been successfully delivered. Digital Courts 2.1 is a customised application for paperless courts with a facility for translation and transcription using AI. It enables judges to access all case-related documents, pleadings and evidence digitally, marking a significant step towards a paperless court ecosystem.

VIII. Present Status of e-Courts in India

In May 2026, at the Conclave on Technology and Judicial Education, Sikkim was declared the first paperless State judiciary in India. In January 2026, the Chief Justice of India, Surya Kant, inaugurated the Kalpetta judicial district in Wayanad, Kerala, as India's first fully paperless district court. Earlier, in September 2022, the then Chief Justice of India, Uday Umesh Lalit, inaugurated thirty-four paperless courts across the thirty districts of Odisha, and in July 2023 fifty further courts in Odisha were made paperless, taking the State's tally to eighty-four. ICT has reached many district and subordinate courts in different States of India. As on March 2026,

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Indian courts had conducted 3.97 crore hearings electronically via video conferencing.[18] A total of 22,411 district and subordinate courts are digitally equipped as part of the centralised e-Courts grid.[19] A total of 730 district courts are hosted on the Secure, Scalable and Sugamya Website as a Service (S3WaaS) infrastructure, ensuring secure, multilingual and accessible access points for users.[20] Out of 25 High Courts, 11 have fully operational live streaming infrastructure, promoting the open court principle. A total of 2,396 e-Sewa Kendras have been established to assist advocates, staff and litigants who face connectivity difficulties. One of the most commendable tasks completed under this MMP is the scanning of 660.6 crore pages of judicial records to eliminate physical archives and facilitate easy retrieval of case files. Another achievement of the e-Courts MMP is the successful establishment of virtual adjudication in many district and subordinate courts: a network of 30 virtual courts has electronically processed around 10.13 crore challans.[21] Around 3,240 court complexes and 1,272 correctional homes have video conferencing capabilities, establishing interoperability for virtual hearings. The e-Courts MMP has also addressed a chronic and deep-rooted cause of delay in judicial proceedings, namely fraudulent and delayed service of summons. The National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP) equips bailiffs with a GPS-enabled mobile application, and it has successfully executed 1.61 crore summons with verifiable photographic evidence and a digital signature recorded at the place of service.[22]

IX. Challenges and Prospects for e-Courts in India

E-courts have been shown to transform courtroom dynamics, provide transparency and deliver real-time updates, ultimately making justice easier to access. Despite this progress in digitising the judiciary, the journey towards full digitisation requires sustained effort. Like traditional physical courts, e-courts face ample challenges, though of a different character. The e-Courts Mission Mode Project has the following challenges to overcome.

- **Lack of infrastructure:** Establishing basic infrastructure was the primary target of Phase I of the e-Courts MMP. Official data suggest that Phase I succeeded in providing basic infrastructure to many court complexes; however, while the Supreme Court of India,

[18] PIB, *e-Courts Mission Mode Project* (Mar. 2026), *supra* note 17.
[19] Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Law & Justice, *Strengthening of E-Courts System* (Dec. 11, 2025), https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2202162.
[20] Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Law & Justice, *Modernization of Court Infrastructure* (Mar. 12, 2026), https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2238782 [hereinafter PIB, *Modernization of Court Infrastructure* (Mar. 2026)].
[21] PIB, *Modernization of Court Infrastructure* (Mar. 2026), *supra* note 20.
[22] Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Law & Justice, *Global Best Practices Implemented Under e-Courts Mission Mode Project* (Feb. 5, 2026), https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2223646.

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the High Courts of various States and court complexes in tier-I cities experience seamless integration, district courts and courts in remote areas still face technological hurdles. Infrastructure includes not only computers but also Wi-Fi and broadband connectivity, software, other hardware devices, cabling, computer server rooms, judicial service centres and uninterrupted power supply. Unless these basic facilities are installed in court complexes across India, the e-Courts MMP cannot claim to be a successful mission.

- **Reluctance within the legal fraternity to adapt:** Operating e-courts requires educated, trained and skilled personnel. This includes not only lawyers but also judges, registrars, court staff, clients and litigants. All stakeholders must possess basic digital literacy for the smooth and speedy functioning of e-courts. It has been observed that senior judges and lawyers are reluctant to adapt to the technology and wish to continue with older methods.
- **Digital divide:** Digital illiteracy in India is a deep-rooted problem. The e-Courts MMP had the objective of making justice accessible to all through e-courts; India, however, had approximately 806 million internet users at the start of 2025, which is only 55.3 per cent of the population.[23] Not all internet users are digitally literate, since many use the internet only occasionally, and even regular users often confine themselves to social media platforms. A significant task for the e-Courts MMP is to ensure that every household has at least one smartphone with a proper internet connection.
- **Access to justice:** It was believed that online courts would provide better access to justice, particularly to rural India. It has been found, however, that people living in remote areas are still unable to harness e-justice because they are poor, geographically isolated, and often unlettered and unaware. The e-Courts MMP has achieved comparatively little in ensuring access to justice for all.
- **Privacy of litigants' personal data:** One of the main hurdles facing the e-Courts MMP concerns litigants' personal data. Through e-courts, the entire record relating to a case is available online and is only a click away. The doctrine of practical obscurity has dissolved in the online judiciary, leaving litigants' data vulnerable to those who collect it for ulterior purposes. The e-Courts MMP has not addressed the absence of a clearly designated data fiduciary for judicial records in India. An e-judiciary must not violate the right to privacy at any cost.

[23] CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY, *Workshop and Training Module on E-Courts Services* (Feb. 3, 2025), https://ciet.ncert.gov.in/storage/app/public/files/17/Workshop_and_training_files/ecye/day5.pdf. The underlying figure of 806 million internet users (55.3 per cent penetration) is reported for the start of 2025 in DATAREPORTAL, *Digital 2025: India* (2025).

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- **Uniform law for e-proceedings:** The absence of a robust, uniform legal framework for virtual proceedings, capable of ensuring flawless online procedure and the safety of data and judicial records available online, is a challenge for the e-Courts MMP. Three phases have been undertaken and there is still no uniform statute governing online proceedings.

A. Prospects

- **Clearance rate:** According to data from the Ministry of Law and Justice, the e-Courts MMP has had a significant impact on judicial performance, with a 169 per cent increase in annual case institution and a 207 per cent increase in annual case disposal.[24] A third-party evaluation conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research also found that the e-Courts project has led to an increase in the registration and disposal of cases by the courts covered. A sharp increase in the clearance rate of district courts has been noticed since 2017.
- **Use of AI tools:** The use of AI tools such as SUPACE, SUVAS and PANINI in research, translation and case management has reduced the routine work of judges and enabled them to devote more time to deep and complex questions of law, improving the quality of judicial work. If such tools continue to function, alongside further AI tools, they may substantially strengthen the assistive capacity available to the Indian judiciary.
- **Paperless courts:** The Supreme Court of India has moved substantially towards paperless working, as have the High Court of Delhi and the High Court of Himachal Pradesh at Shimla, among others. Paperless courts reduce carbon footprints and can make procedure less susceptible to corruption, since human intervention is reduced.

X. Conclusion and Suggestions

The e-Courts MMP aims to transform the Indian judicial landscape. The Supreme Court of India, many High Courts and a few district courts are functioning effectively with integrated information and communication technology. The paper's first hypothesis, that integration of ICT with the judiciary may increase the effective operation of courts in India, is therefore only partially proved: only when all courts, including subordinate and remote courts, integrate ICT may we claim to have an e-judiciary. The second hypothesis, that the e-Courts Mission Mode Project has transformed the Indian judiciary and ensured access to justice for every citizen, also stands only partially proved, since the digital divide and gaps in basic infrastructure remain hurdles to ensuring access to justice for all, especially for geographically remote populations.

[24] PIB, *Modernization of Court Infrastructure* (Mar. 2026), *supra* note 20.

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In the near future, by transitioning the subordinate judiciary from a manual, paper-based system to a digitally equipped one, the e-Courts MMP will pave the path for a judiciary that is closely integrated with artificial intelligence. With the launch of Phase III the initiative shifts from mere digitisation to a digital-native, paperless environment. The e-Courts MMP must, however, address the key operational vulnerabilities discussed in the challenges section above. To ensure that the project meets its mandate, targeted reforms are required, and the following suggestions are offered.

- **Enactment of uniform legislation and protocol:** Online proceedings currently operate on administrative orders, ad hoc rules, guidelines and regulations. A uniform statute applicable to all courts is required in order to establish legal certainty and to avoid procedural variation among States. A national judicial data standard should also be formulated to enforce uniform case-type nomenclature, statutory codes, e-summons service, virtual testimony and mandatory data fields across all States.
- **Personnel training:** Basic digital literacy, including e-filing, video conferencing, tracking case status, maintaining virtual court decorum and uploading documents, should be imparted through judicial training. Judges, advocates, clerks, registry staff and other court staff must be trained regularly on evolving technology, machine learning concepts, algorithmic bias and digital forensics. Such training should cover not only basic digital literacy but also a deeper understanding of artificial intelligence.
- **Legal education:** Undergraduate students remain largely traditional in outlook and detached from the functioning of e-courts, even though these young professionals have the capacity to harness the power of e-courts to the fullest. Legal education must therefore build the knowledge and skills needed to engage law students with technological tools.
- **e-Sewa Kendras:** As one-stop facilitation counters, e-Sewa Kendras have served as a bridge between the e-judiciary and parties who have no technical knowledge. They reduce procedural friction and help stakeholders navigate online portals and access the e-judiciary, and should be expanded and adequately staffed.
- **Ensuring privacy:** The e-Courts MMP has not ensured the safety of litigants' personal data uploaded online. There is a need either to formulate comprehensive legislation laying down provisions for the protection of sensitive personal data, the identity of witnesses, trade secrets and contracts, or to amend the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 to this end. There must also be a law governing the use, retention and deletion of such data.

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