

**9 out of Ten Inmates Undertrials in Delhi’s Prisons**

***Some encouraging improvements:***

* 2% of the police budgets were allocated towards training - above the national average of 1.25%
* Recorded an 11% shortfall among district court judges - one of the lowest in the country.
* 100% prisons equipped with video conferencing facilities
* There was one legal aid clinic for each village - the best ratio in the country.

***Persistent lacunae:***

* 91% of the prison population consisted of undertrials
* Delhi’s district courts could only achieve 78% case clearance rates in 2024
* 3 of its 16 prisons consistently recorded above 250% occupancy rates between 2020 and 2022.

**15 April, New Delhi:** The 2025 India Justice Report (IJR), India’s only ranking of states on delivery of justice in the country, released today, assesses the performance of Delhi. Delhi's justice system serves a population comparable to several large states, however it did not lend itself to fair comparisons with states because of its unique status as the National Capital Region. Power between Delhi government and the Union government is shared, the police department is administered by the union Ministry of Home Affairs while the subordinate courts are managed by the government of Delhi. It is neither a full-fledged state nor quite a Union Territory. At the same time, states with similar population levels have large hinterlands and rural habitations which Delhi— with its city-state look—does not.

In the new rankings published by IJR 2025, the top overall position was retained by Karnataka, followed by Andhra Pradesh, climbing from fifth in 2022 to second, Telangana (2022 ranking: 3rd), and Kerala (2022 ranking: 6th). Among the seven small states (with populations less than one crore each), Sikkim (2022: 1st) ranked first, followed by Himachal Pradesh (2022: 6th) and Arunachal Pradesh (2022: 2nd).

The India Justice Report (IJR) was first initiated by Tata Trusts, with the first ever ranking published in 2019. This is the fourth edition of the report, in collaboration with partners including the Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS–Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, and How India Lives, IJR’s data partner.

Through a rigorous 24-month quantitative research, the IJR 2025, similar to the previous three, has tracked the performance of states in **capacitating their Justice delivery structures** to effectively deliver mandated services. Based on the latest official statistics from authoritative government sources, it brings together otherwise siloed data on the **four pillars of Justice delivery – Police, Judiciary, Prisons, and Legal Aid**. Each pillar was analysed through the prism of budgets, human resources, workload, diversity, infrastructure, and trends (intention to improve over a five-year period), against the state’s own declared standards and benchmarks. This edition also separately assesses the capacity of the 25 State Human Rights Commissions (*see SHRC brief for more*) and consists of essays on mediation and access to justice for persons with disabilities.

Discussing the India Justice Report, **Justice (Retd.) Madan B. Lokur** commented, “*The punishing process of accessing justice begins with the very first encounter an individual has with the system. With our failure to properly equip and train frontline justice providers—police stations, legal aid actors including paralegal volunteers and district courts—we fracture public trust. These institutions are intended to embody our commitment to equal justice. The strength of our entire justice framework rests on these critical first points of contact. The fourth edition of the India Justice Report points out that improvements remain few and far between in the absence of adequate attention given to resources. Alas, the burden continues to remain on the individual seeking justice, and not the state to provide it*.”

**Ms. Maja Daruwala, Chief Editor, India Justice Report**, highlighted, “*As India moves forward into a hundred years of being a democratic, rule of law nation, the promise of rule of law and equal rights will remain hollow unless underwritten by a reformed justice system. Reform is not optional. It is urgent. A well-resourced responsive justice system is a constitutional imperative that must be experienced as an everyday reality available to every citizen*.”

**Prisons**

Delhi’s prisons have consistently recorded over 170% occupancy rates since 2012. In 2022, 15% of its prisons recorded occupancy rates of over 250%. Occupancy rates in three have consistently been over 250% since 2020. There was an overall staff shortfall[[1]](#footnote-0) of 27% and stand the highest among correctional staff (60%) and prison officers (34%). There were 90 doctors for 18,000 prisons, averaging 206 prisoners per doctor.

**Increasing pendency in courts**

Delhi’s district courts have one of the lowest (11%) vacancies at the bench and women account for 45%. As of 1st January 2025, there were 14 lakh cases pending at the district court level. 1 in every 5 cases was pending for more than 5 years and 2% were pending for more than 10 years. Each district court judge had an average workload of 2,023 cases in 2024 - an increase from 1,551 in 2017 - and lower than the national average of 2,200. It could achieve a case clearance rate (CCR) of 78% in 2024 - one of the lowest in the country. Between 2017 and 2024, Delhi has achieved a 100% CCR only once in 2023.

**Police**

In January 2023, vacancies in the constabulary stood at 15%, decreasing from 20% in January 2022. Among officers, in the same period, vacancies have increased to 8% from 2%. Delhi records the highest expenditures per personnel (Rs. 28,614) on training in the country. It allocated 2% of its total police budget towards training - above the national average of 1.25%. Women also accounted for 15% in the overall force and 11% among officers - a share above the national averages of 12% and 8% respectively. The UT also recorded 88% of its police stations with at least one CCTV and 88% with women helpdesks.

**Legal Aid**

In 2024, Delhi had 99 legal aid clinics for 103 villages - averaging to one clinic for every village - the best ratio in the country. It records more than half (56%) women among its paralegal volunteers and 36% among panel lawyers. The UT recorded a 94% disposal of prelitigation and pending cases taken up by Lok Adalats organised by the SLSA - the highest in the country.

The IJR 2025 has reiterated both immediate and foundational corrections. It has flagged urgent filling of vacancies and increased representation. To effect irreversible change, it has exhorted that Justice delivery be designated as an essential service.

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**Sources:**

1. Police: *Data on Police Organisation 2023,* Bureau of Police Research and Development
2. *Prisons: Prison Statistics India 2022,* National Crime Records Bureau
3. Judiciary: 2024 & 2025- National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), Court News, Supreme Court of India; eCourts Services; Websites and annual reports of High Courts, Department of Justice
4. Legal aid: 2024, Statistics from National Legal Services Authority

**ANNEXURE I:**

**OVERALL NATIONAL FINDINGS: AT A GLANCE**

**The ranking of the 18 large-and mid-sized states is:**

| **State** | **Rank 2025** | **Rank 2022** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Karnataka | 1 | 1 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 2 | 5 |
| Telangana | 3 | 3 |
| Kerala | 4 | 6 |
| Tamil Nadu | 5 | 2 |
| Chhattisgarh | 6 | 9 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 7 | 8 |
| Odisha | 8 | 11 |
| Punjab | 9 | 10 |
| Maharashtra | 10 | 12 |
| Gujarat | 11 | 4 |
| Haryana | 12 | 13 |
| Bihar | 13 | 16 |
| Rajasthan | 14 | 15 |
| Jharkhand | 15 | 7 |
| Uttarakhand | 16 | 14 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 17 | 18 |
| West Bengal | 18 | 17 |

**The ranking of the seven small states is:**

| **State** | **Rank 2025** | **Rank 2022** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sikkim | 1 | 1 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 2 | 6 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 3 | 2 |
| Tripura | 4 | 3 |
| Meghalaya | 5 | 4 |
| Mizoram | 6 | 5 |
| Goa | 7 | 7 |











| ***BUDGETS FOR JUSTICE AT A GLANCE***  **Legal Aid:** The national per capita spend on legal aid, is a meagre Rs 6 per annum  **Prisons:** The national per capita spend on prisons is Rs. 57. In 2022-23, the national average spend per prisoner has increased to Rs 44,110 from Rs 38,028 in 2021-22 Andhra Pradesh records the highest annual spend on a prisoner at Rs.2,67,673.  **Judiciary:** The national per capita spend on judiciary stands at Rs. 182. No state spends more than one per cent of its total annual expenditure on the Judiciary.    **Police:** The national per capita spend on police is at Rs. 1,275 which is the highest among the four pillars. |
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1. Overall staff includes officers, cadre staff, correctional staff, medical staff and medical officers [↑](#footnote-ref-0)