

Chhattisgarh Makes Strides In Caste Diversity in Police and Judiciary

- OBC/SC/ST vacancies more than halved in the Police
- OBC and SC quotas met in subordinate courts
- Majority vacant positions police belong to 'general' category

10th Nov, 2023, Chhattisgarh: The 2022 India Justice Report (IJR), which serves as India's only ranking of states on delivery of justice in the country, was released earlier this year. The report ranked Chhattisgarh at number 9 to place it amongst the top 10 states in justice delivery in the country.

Despite a few scattered improvements between 2008 and 2021, challenges around persistent vacancies and gender diversity in the Police and the Judiciary remain as pressing concerns for efficacious justice delivery.

Ms. Maja Daruwala, Chief Editor, India Justice Report 2022, said, *"As we make efforts toward fulfilling our global commitment of ensuring strong justice institutions and accessible justice for all by 2030, the India Justice Reports provide a much-needed spur to address the deficiencies in the present-day justice system, particularly within the domains of police and judiciary. By sparking an insightful dialogue around the persistent challenges, these insights reiterate the need for both immediate and foundational reforms to our justice delivery systems, which will ultimately pave the way towards a just and equitable society."*

Chhattisgarh police: 'general' category takes a hit, but leaps in diversity as OBCs/STs meet quota

Between 2008 and 2021, vacancies for the 'general' category have doubled with their overall share in the police slashing to half from 52% in 2008 to 21% in 2021. In contrast, the vacancies among OBC/SC/STs have more than halved. In 2008, over half (55%) of the total vacancies were concentrated within OBC and SC categories, while the remaining 45% were among the 'general' category. As of 2021, however, OBCs and STs have met their quotas and SCs have filled nearly all vacancies, resulting in the majority of the positions being vacant in the 'general' category.

Today, Scheduled Tribes (ST) have the strongest share in the state's police force, which has grown significantly from 29% in 2008 to 40% in 2021. The share of Other Backward Classes (OBC) has also grown significantly from 12% to 25% over this period. Even though the share of OBC and ST has increased in the police, the increase has majorly been among the constabulary. The 'general' category continues to occupy the largest share of nearly one-third (32%) among the officers.

At 7%, women's representation amongst the lowest in the country

Only 7% of the total police force comprises women, with a distribution of 9% among officers and 7% among the constabulary. This percentage is one of the lowest in the country. To fulfill its own reservation target of 30%, the Chhattisgarh police must hire an additional 17,320 women.

High court vacancies on the rise, women judges make up only 7% of total HC strength

As of 2022, Chhattisgarh's subordinate courts have 43 vacant positions for judges which is amongst the lowest in the country. This is also a marked improvement compared to 2018, when there were 65 vacancies. Of the total vacant positions, the highest are among the ST(32), while OBC and SC have met their respective quotas. Among caste categories, STs constitute the largest proportion, making up 28% of subordinate court judges.

Contrastingly, High court vacancies for judges have increased from 31% in 2018 to 36% in 2022. While the share of women in subordinate courts has increased slightly from 37% in 2018 to 41% in 2022, their representation in the High court has halved, slashing from 14% to 7% over the same period.

Total vacancies across police, prisons, and judiciary in Chhattisgarh stand at 13,751.

About IJR:

The India Justice Report (IJR) collective was initiated in 2019. Partners include Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS–Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and How India Lives.

The India Justice Report periodically measures and ranks each state's structural and financial capacity to deliver justice. It uses only the latest available government figures to assess the budgets, human resources, infrastructure, workload and diversity across police, judiciary, prisons and legal aid of 18 large and medium sized states with a population of over 1 crore and 7 smaller states. Data for 7 Union Territories (UTs) and 4 states is also provided.

The IJR tracks the rise and falls in capacity and provides timeline comparisons that allow for an understanding of what improvements and shortfalls have been made within each state's own pillars and themes since IJR 2019 and over 5 years. These mark out clear discernible trends and directions.

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