**Karnataka: Only State to Meet Quotas in Both Police and Judiciary,**

**Retains top position among 18 States in the India Justice Report 2025**

***Some encouraging improvements:***

* At just 1.2%, Karnataka police has the lowest officer level vacancy among all large states
* Only state to meet reservation quotas for SC, ST and OBCs in both police and judiciary
* Highest number of paralegal volunteers in the country

***Persistent lacunae:***

* 80% of the inmates in the state’s prisons are undertrials, highest since 2015
* Substantially dropped legal service clinics in villages from 157 to now 32
* Karnataka police remains male dominant with only roughly 9% women in police and a mere 6% at the officer level

**15 April, Bengaluru:** The 2025 India Justice Report (IJR), India’s only ranking of states on delivery of justice in the country, released today, ranks Karnataka 1st overall among the 18 Large and Mid-sized states (with population of over one crore each), retaining its position from last the edition. The state ranked 1st in Legal Aid (rising from 2nd in 2022) and retained its 2nd spot in Prisons.

In the overall rankings, it was followed by Andhra Pradesh, climbing from fifth in 2022 to second, Telangana (2022 ranking: 3rd), and Kerala (2022 ranking: 6th). Sikkim (2022: 1st), topped among the seven Small States (with populations less than one crore each), 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*.”

**Karnataka’s Ranks: Pillar Wise**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **IJR 4** | **IJR 3** |
| **OVERALL** | **1** | 1 |
| **POLICE** | **3** | 2 |
| **PRISONS** | **2** | 2 |
| **JUDICIARY** | **4** | 2 |
| **LEGAL AID**  | **1** | 2 |

**Legal Aid: Karnataka Breaking the National Trend of Decline in Paralegal Volunteers**

Karnataka ranked first in legal aid this year. While, nationwide, the number of paralegal volunteers has been reducing over the years, Karnataka increased its number of paralegal volunteers per lakh population from 4.9 in Jan 2019 to 7.59 in September 2024, making it the highest in the country. It also has the highest share of women in panel lawyers (44%). However, it reduced its number of legal service clinics in villages from 174 clinics in 2021-2022 to just 32 in 2023-24.

**Police: Lowest Officer Level Vacancy**

Karnataka increased its per capita spend on Police from Rs. 943 in 2020-21 to Rs. 1261 in 2022-2023.

Between 2022 and 2023, it also halved its constable level vacancy from 12% to 6%, and officer vacancy from 11% to 1%, making it the state with the lowest officer-level vacancy among all large states. Additionally, it is the only state which fulfills the SC, ST and OBC quotas at both the officer and constabulary level. 99% of all police stations in the state have women help desks. Further, it also has the highest utilisation of modernisation funds (98.5%) in the country.

**Prisons: Highest Share of Women in Prison Staff Nationally**

With 33% women in prison staff, the state’s prisons have the highest share nationally. It has also improved on video conferencing facilities in prisons from 68% in 2021 to 93% in 2022. However, the vacancy among medical officers (74%) and medical staff (64%) in prisons is quite high.

**Judiciary: Fills all positions reserved for SC, ST and OBC judges in the district judiciary**

The state reduced its vacancy among judges in the district courts from 22% in 2022 to 16% in 2025. There are now 37% women judges in the district courts of Karnataka. The High Court also reduced its staff vacancy from 26% to 17%.

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 |

***VACANCIES:***

Nationally, vacancies in the justice system are at:

**Police**: 21% (Constables); 28% (Officers)

**Prisons**: 28% (Officers), 28% (Cadre Staff), 44% (Correctional Staff), 40% (Medical Staff), 43% (Medical Officers)

**Judiciary**: 33% (High Court Judges), 21% (district Court Judges), 27% (High Court Staff)

**Legal aid**: 6% (DLSA Secretary)

**Improvements:**

**Police:** Bihar in constabulary from 30% to 23%, and Karnataka among officers from 11% to 1.2%

**Prisons:** Madhya Pradesh from 72% to 31% among medical officers and Uttar Pradesh from 36% to 25% among officers

**Judiciary:** Puducherry among district Court judges from 58% to 28%, and Tripura among High Court judges from 40 % to nil.

**Legal aid:** Arunachal Pradesh for DLSA secretaries from 100% to nil

***DIVERSITY***

***SC/ST/OBC Representation:***

Share in **Police**: **OBC**: 31%, **SC**: 17%, **ST**: 11%

Share in **Judiciary**: OBC: 25.6%, **SC**: 14%, **ST**: 5%

Karnataka remains the only state to consistently meet its quota for SC, ST and OBC positions, both among Police officers and the constabulary.

***WOMEN IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM: CHANGE OVER 5 YEARS OF THE INDIA JUSTICE REPORT***

**Police:**

The overall share of women in the police has increased from 7.28% in 2016 to 12.32% in 2022.

In the same period, at the officer level it has increased from 5.5% to 7.9%

Number of women in IPS ranks in 2022: 960

15 states/UTs still have less than 10% women in police

**Judiciary:**

The overall share of women judges in district judiciary has increased from 30% in 2017 to 38.3% in 2025

Among the High Court judges the growth is from 11.4% in 2018 to 14% in 2025

**Legal Aid:**

Share of women in panel lawyers has increased from 18% in 2018 to 28% in 2024

Share of women paralegal volunteers has grown from 36% in 2019 to 42% in 2024

***WORKLOAD***

**Judiciary: Pending cases**: Barring Karnataka, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Tripura, **1 in every two cases pending for more than three years in all High Courts**. At the district courts, Andaman & Nicobar, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal record **over 40% of all cases pending for over three years**.

**Police:**Population per civil police: Nationally, 1 civil police personnel is available for 831 persons

**Prisons:**Medical Officers: India has only 740 medical officers for its over 573,220 prison inmates. This averages to one doctor for 775 inmates. There are only 25 psychologists/psychiatrists available across all prisons.

***INFRASTRUCTURE***

**CCTVs:** About 17% of police stations do not have a single CCTV. Nearly three in 10 police stations do not have women help desks.

**Occupancy:** 56% (724 prisons) run above 100% capacity, with about 20% (262 prisons) recording occupancy rates between 150%-250%. **176 prisons in the country record occupancy rate of more than 200%**

**Under-trials:** With the exception of Arunachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, the undertrial population of all states and Union Territories exceeds 60%. Delhi has the highest share of undertrials with 91% undertrial population in its prisons.

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| ***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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