**Maharashtra spends the third lowest on legal aid among large states, reveals India Justice Report 2025**

***Some encouraging improvements:***

* Maharashtra climbed up 2 spots to the 10th position in the overall ranking of states
* It rose up the ranks in Police, from the 10th to the 5th spot this year with increased per capita spend and improved CCTV coverage in police stations
* The state has no shortfall in courthalls in the district courts and among the lowest vacancies in the district judiciary.

***Persistent lacunae:***

* Maharashtra spends just Rs. 3.8 per capita on legal aid, making it the state with the third lowest spend
* It has the second lowest case clearance rate in district courts (87%), and has never had 100% clearance rate in the past 8 years
* 20% of the State’s prisons have an occupancy of more than 250%, it spends the lowest per inmate (Rs.17219 annually) among all the large sized states

**15 April, Mumbai:** The 2025 India Justice Report (IJR), India’s only ranking of states on delivery of justice in the country, released today, ranks Maharashtra 10th overall (2022:12th), with it dropping to the 14th position in Legal Aid (2022:7th) while rising to the 5th spot in Police (2022:10th) among the 18 Large and Mid-sized states (with populations of over one crore each).

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*.”

**Maharashtra’s Ranks: Pillar Wise**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **IJR 4** | **IJR 3** |
| **OVERALL** | **10** | 12 |
| **POLICE** | **5** | 10 |
| **PRISONS** | **10** | 10 |
| **JUDICIARY** | **11** | 12 |
| **LEGAL AID**  | **14** | 7 |

**Legal Aid in Maharashtra: Decline in Performance**

Whilethe state has increased its legal aid budget over the years, with a per capita spend of Rs. 3.8 on legal aid (2022-2023), it still has one of the lowest share among large states, surpassing only Bihar and West Bengal.

The community based legal services continue to decline with reduction in both the number of paralegal volunteers as well as legal service clinics in villages.

With 59 legal service clinics spread between 64 jails, legal aid services to prisoners are inadequate. This is exacerbated by the fact that the average occupancy rate of the state’s prisons is 161%, with 20% of the prisons having occupancy above 250%, and 80% of the prisoners being undertrials.

**Encouraging Rise in Capacity of Maha Police**

The per capita spend on Police increased from Rs. 1234 (2020-21) to Rs. 1588 (2022-23). In compliance with the Paramvir Singh Saini judgement,[[1]](#footnote-1) there has been a substantial increase in the share of police stations with at least one CCTV camera (from 57% in 2022 to 91% in 2023). However, there was a reduction in the share of police stations with women help desks (from 89% in 2022 to 78% in 2023) as well as utilisation of modernisation funds for police. While the overall vacancies at the officer level have reduced to 21%, there has been a substantial rise in the vacancies in positions reserved for OBC officers (2% to 35%).

**Judiciary: Slow Uptick**

Despite having the lowest vacancies in district court judges (11%), Maharashtra has among the lowest case clearance rate in district courts (87%) leading to 48% of its cases pending for more than 3 years before the district courts.

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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1. AIR 2021 SUPREME COURT 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)