**High Vacancy and Resource Crunch Overwhelm State Human Rights Commissions, reveals IJR 2025**

**Encouraging news:**

* West Bengal only state to meet full executive staffing norms
* Goa, Kerala and Punjab had over 30% women among their executive staff
* Goa, Maharashtra, Odisha and Tripura SHRCs cleared over 90% of the complaints

**Gaps persist:**

* Jharkhand, Sikkim and Andhra Pradesh Commissions reported no investigative wings
* 16 SHRCs had over 25% vacancies in staff.
* Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim and Telangana Commissions had no chairperson

**April 15, 2025, New Delhi**: The State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs) function sub-optimally, impacted by high vacancies and resources shortages. Out of the 23 SHRCs, on which information was available, only West Bengal’s SHRC has met staffing norms at the executive level, besides outperforming other SHRCs on gender diversity among the investigative staff, utilising available funds fully, and clearing over 85% of all complaints. This was revealed by the India Justice Report (IJR) 2025, India’s only ranking of states on delivery of justice in the country (see annexure -1).

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 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*.”

**SHRCs:**

IJR assessed the capacity of SHRCs to deliver to mandate based on RTI responses, annual reports and publicly available information available for the years 2023 and 2024. The capacity metrics include shortages among executive and investigative staff, gender diversity, disposal of cases and effective budget utilisation.

**This year’s ranking:**

| **States** | **Rank 2025** |
| --- | --- |
| West Bengal | 1 |
| Tripura | 2 |
| Karnataka | 3 |
| Odisha | 4 |
| Kerala | 5 |
| Punjab | 6 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 7 |
| Sikkim | 8 |
| Uttarakhand | 9 |
| Goa | 10 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 11 |
| Maharashtra | 12 |
| Haryana | 13 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 14 |
| Bihar | 15 |
| Meghalaya | 16 |
| Telangana | 17 |
| Chhattisgarh | 18 |
| Rajasthan | 19 |
| Gujarat | 20 |
| Jharkhand | 21 |
| Tamil Nadu | 22 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 23 |

**Composition of SHRC**

An SHRC operates through three key wings—adjudication, administration, and investigation—each essential for its effective functioning. The adjudicating body comprises a chairperson and two members. A secretary, serving as the chief executive officer, oversees overall administration. The investigation wing is led by an officer not below the rank of Inspector General of Police.

**High vacancy across SHRCs**

In 2023-24, most state human rights commissions had worked with less than required executive staff. Vacancies in key positions- chairpersons, members, secretaries -- stood at 31%. Four commissions - Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka and Telangana - had neither a chairperson nor an acting chairperson. Haryana, Jharkhand, and Telangana also did not have any members. Chhattisgarh, Goa, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Sikkim functioned under acting chairpersons. Over 50% SHRCs had one out of two or both members missing. Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha worked without secretaries/CEOs.

Overall staff vacancies across 21 SHRCs stood at 26%. Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Gujarat Commissions had 1 in every two staff missing, while Sikkim and Kerala had more staff than sanctioned.

**Investigative Staff**

The effectiveness of SHRCs relies heavily on its ability to independently investigate rights violations. This requires investigative staff. In 2023-24 in 18 states that provided information, investigative vacancies against sanctioned stood at 35%. Seven - Assam, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal - functioned with vacancy over 50 per cent and Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Sikkim with no separate investigative wing at all.

**Workload**

In 2023-24, 22 SHRCs received a total of 1,09,136 complaints with an average case clearance rate of 83 per cent. Uttar Pradesh received the highest number of complaints of 31000, while Sikkim recorded the lowest with just five complaints. Between 2021 and 2024, Maharashtra and Manipur recorded the highest case clearance rates—259 per cent and 198 per cent respectively, followed by Andhra Pradesh (119%). Jharkhand and Telangana couldn’t clear any complaints because there were no adjudicators and investigative wing.

## SHRCs have the power to initiate inquiries into human rights violation of its own volition, and of the Commissions that responded, 1,923 complaints were initiated suo motu in 2023-24. **Madhya Pradesh initiated the highest number at 1,373 or 14% of its total complaints.**

## The overall high case clearance rate is deceptive as at all commissions the majority of complaints appear to be dismissed *in limine*. *In limine* complaints are rejected outright because they are interpreted as not falling under the mandate of the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), and are said to be *disposed of ‘in limine’.* Most SHRCs disposed of more than half of the complaints *in limine* at the outset. Illustratively, of the 2456 complaints disposed of by Tamil Nadu in 2022-23, 90% were rejected at the outset. Uttarakhand, on the other hand, disposed of only 31% *in limine* of all complaints cleared.

**Complaints disposed of in limine in proportion to total complaints disposed of in 2022-23**

| State | Complaints Received in 2022-23 | Complaints Disposed of in 2022-23 | Disposed of In limine | Share of complaints disposed of In limine (%, 2022-23) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| West Bengal | 5755 | 5579 | 5205 | 93.30 |
| Tamil Nadu | 15374 | 2456 | 2244 | 91.37 |
| Maharashtra | 5643 | 6767 | 4977 | 73.55 |
| Karnataka | 4674 | 3925 | 2595 | 66.11 |
| Tripura | 71 | 69 | 34 | 49.28 |
| Punjab | 10759 | 9718 | 4719 | 48.56 |
| Uttarakhand | 2360 | 1659 | 519 | 31.28 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 300 | 250 | 65 | 26.00 |
| Odisha | 3220 | 7610[[1]](#footnote-0) | 1277 | 16.78 |
| Haryana | 2491 | 2678 | 2 | 0.07 |
| Sikkim | 3 | 2 | NIL | NA |
| **TOTAL** | **53842** | **42984** | **21710** | **50.51** |

**Budgets**

In FY 2022-2023 , the 23 SHRCs received a total budget of Rs. 142 crore. The NHRC allocation for the same year stood at Rs. 70 crore. **Twenty states recorded a per capita spend lower than Rs. 5 and the national average stood at a meagre Rs. 0.9.**

In 2022-23, six commissions utilized their budgets fully, while Chhattisgarh (117%) and Kerala (102%) exceeded their allocated funds. Elsewhere, Goa (59%), Manipur (62%), and Uttarakhand (50%) recorded the lowest budget utilisation rates. On average, over the five years (2018-2023), 82% of the total budgets were utilised across SHRCs, with four states—Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh—fully utilizing their funds.

**Transparency**

The assessment of the capacity of SHRCs was based on RTI responses. Data on how many complaints were received, disposed of, and pending was piecemeal with several states providing partial or no data*.* For instance, Tamil Nadu provided responses to 4 out of 9 and Bihar provided responses to 5 questions while West Bengal, Karnataka, Goa, Tripura provided responses for all.

The report also assessed the user-friendliness of their websites and found that 4 commissions— Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Telangana—did not have a functioning website. 8 did not provide guidelines for citizens on how to file complaints and only 11 uploaded proactive disclosures under Section 4 of the RTI Act. See table below:

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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Table- 1

| **States/UTs** |  **total staff vacancy (%, 2023-24)** | **Executive staff vacancy (%, Mar'24)** | **Investigation Wing Vacancy (%, 2023-24)** | **SHRC Total women staff (%, 2023-24)** | **Share of women in Executive Staff (%, Mar’24)** | **Share of Women in Investigation Wing (%, 2023-24)** | **Average CCR Rate (%, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24)** | **Budget Utilized (%, 2022-23)** | **Average Budget Utilized (%, 2018-2023)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Andhra Pradesh** | *Data not available with SHRC* | 0.00 | *Wing not established* | 7.14 | 0.00 | *Wing not established* | 84.08 | *Not provided by SHRC* | *AP SHRC, constituted w.e.f. 21.03.2021.* |
| **Bihar** | 17.82 | 50.00 | 25.00 | 16.87 | 0.00 | 0.00 | *No response from state for 2022-23* | 100.00 | 92.842 |
| **Chhattisgarh** | 62.24 | 75.00 | 77.78 | 10.81 | 0.00 | 33.33 | 88.30 | 116.67 | 97.001 |
| **Goa** | 37.50 | 25.00 | 100.00 | 50.00 | 33.33 | 0.00 | 100.94 | 58.79 | 70.90 |
| **Gujarat** | 52.00 | 25.00 | 78.57 | 16.67 | 0.00 | 0.00 | *Data not maintained* | 80.67 | 91.07 |
| **Haryana** | 6.96 | 75.00 | 10.53 | 17.76 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 85.07 | 96.72 | 97.72 |
| **Himachal Pradesh** | 35.90 | 25.00 | 60.00 | 8.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 81.07 | 94.19 | 73.50 |
| **Jharkhand** | 52.00 | 75.00 | *Wing not established* | 16.67 | 0.00 | *Wing not established* | *No response from state for 2022-23* | 86.63 | 89.15 |
| **Karnataka** | 23.42 | 50.00 | 36.67 | 43.53 | 0.00 | 47.37 | 82.51 | 92.82 | 86.81 |
| **Kerala** | -17.31 | 25.00 | 0.00 | 40.98 | 33.33 | 0.00 | *No data from state for 2023-24* | 101.72 | 86.31 |
| **Madhya Pradesh** | 30.19 | 50.00 | 33.33 | 14.86 | 0.00 | 22.22 | 84.24 | 100.00 | 100.00 |
| **Maharashtra** | 7.4 | 0.00 | *Need Actual staff numbers* | 36.00 | 0.00 | *Need Actual staff in IW - cannot calculate women* | 131.33 | 74.49 | 76.12 |
| **Meghalaya** | 3.13 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 38.71 | 0.00 | 0.00 | *No response from state for 2021-2024* | 90.67 | 21.41 |
| **Odisha** | 28.99 | 25.00 | 11.76 | 18.37 | 0.00 | 33.33 | 204.00 | 81.42 | 84.29 |
| **Punjab** | *Data not provided (RTI + website)* | 25.00 | -13.33 | 11.76 | 33.33 | 17.65 | 84.05 | 99.37 | 95.45 |
| **Rajasthan** | 59.42 | 0.00 | 12.50 | *Data not provided (RTI + website)* | 0.00 | *Data not provided (RTI + website)* | 67.52 | 66.96 | 61.05 |
| **Sikkim** | -183.33 | 50.00 | *No separate Investigation Wing* | 35.29 | 0.00 | *No separate Investigation Wing* | 58.63 | 81.74 | 82.35 |
| **Tamil Nadu** | *Awaited* | 0.00 | *Awaited* | *Awaited* | 0.00 | *Awaited* | 28.82 | 100.00 | 102.64 |
| **Telangana** | 14.74 | 75.00 | 64.29 | 23.46 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 49.00 | 89.74 | 95.12 |
| **Tripura** | 27.59 | 0.00 | 44.44 | 28.57 | 0.00 | 40.00 | 93.39 | 97.84 | 81.41 |
| **Uttar Pradesh** | 60.98 | 0.00 | 25.00 | *Data not provided (RTI + website)* | 25.00 | *Data not provided (RTI + website)* | 79.20 | 100.00 | 100.00 |
| **Uttarakhand** | 20.00 | 0.00 | 16.67 | 27.27 | 0.00 | 20.00 | 71.14 | 49.77 | 79.996 |
| **West Bengal** | 25.53 | 0.00 | 56.25 | 18.57 | 25.00 | 42.86 | 84.43 | 100.00 | 71.84 |

**ANNEXURE I: OVERALL NATIONAL FINDINGS**

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

| **States** | **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:**

| **States** | **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 from40 % to nil.
* **Legal aid:** Arunachal Pradesh for DLSA secretaries from 100% to nil
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| ***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.
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| ***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.
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| ***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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| ***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.  |
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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. Includes complaints from previous years [↑](#footnote-ref-0)