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Editor In chief – Dr. Janmejay Singh

Publisher & Founder – Vaibhav Sangam Mishra

Frequency – Quarterly (4 Issue Per year)

ISSN: 2583-6323 (Online)

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**INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKING OF E-COURTS IN INDIA AND ITS NEEDS
& SCOPE IN TODAY'S SCENARIO**

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Received on 1 March 2026, Accepted on 10 March 2026, Published on 11 March 2026

ABSTRACT:

For a nation like India, modernization of the judiciary is probably going to help overcome its issues of a burgeoning backlog, increasing overdue debts, and unprecedented postponements in the disposal of cases. For any justice system to stay successful, effective, and significant, it must keep up with the requests of a modern society and constantly reform its mechanical assembly and methods of functioning. Modernization of the judiciary incorporates the comprehensive computerization of courts and the digitization of administrations. Computerization and digitization of the judiciary in India have been embraced under a few plans and ventures since at least 1990. The e-Courts project is the latest, and apparently, the most ambitious, endeavour to present ICT in the Indian judiciary. It seeks greater standardization in judicial processing, progressive service delivery, and procedure change of legal work, dependent on empirical data. In 1990, the National Informatics Centre (NIC) began the computerization of Indian courts with the Supreme Court of India. Specially designed applications implemented under the COURTIS (Court Information System) project enabled the computerization of routine activities such as filing of cases, generation of cause lists and order sheets, issuance of orders and judgments. For instance, JUDIS (Judgment Information System) provides the complete text of all reported judgments of the court, and COURT NIC makes pending case status information available to litigants and advocates.¹ NIC also initiated the computerization of High Courts along the same lines. The LOBIS (List of Business Information Systems) database digitally generates daily and weekly cause lists for High Courts, and provides up-to-date information about fresh, disposed, and pending cases. It has, most notably,

¹ S Narayan, Documenting Reforms (Macmillan in association with observer Research Foundation 2006) 103, Books (March 20, 2026, 8:00 P.M.),

https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Documenting_Reforms.html?id=W8OYHTqRpoIC&redir_esc=y

eliminated manual cause list generation and helped registries of High Courts streamline their activities.²

The following are the needs and scope of E-Courts in India, which can be referred to as recommendations:

Better data capture: The public access portal of the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) currently disseminates national, state, district and court-wise information about case filing and disposal of cases in lower courts on a monthly basis. It also separately gives data and details of pending cases by senior citizens and women. The NJDG is a powerful database that tries to offer a preview perspective of the case pendency status in India. However, it is equally important to evaluate the working of the e-Courts policy and the differential effects of the implementation of the policy on different kinds of litigants.³ In order to do so, the NJDG must begin by capturing data related to cases under different parameters such as age, socio-economic categories, and education levels. Such granular data is beneficial to assess whether the policy is equitable in its methodology, particularly where the percentage of our population that is digitally literate is just around 6.5%. If the data and information reveal that the e-Courts policy has not met its stated goals, the strategy must be adjusted accordingly. What must be done: Set up a comprehensive data collection and data gathering plan adjusted directly with the objectives of the e-Court policies. Conduct a regular, periodic, and exhaustive strategy analysis exercise to comprehend if the policy has met its targets. Adjust the policy to meet its goals.⁴

Fixed Timelines and accurate budgeting: The course of events for the implementation of Phase II of the e-Courts project was initially estimated to be three years in the Action Plan. However, it was abruptly extended at the budget approval stage to “four years or until the project is finished, whichever is later”. No explanations appear to have been given for extending this period.⁵ Such dubious timelines for completion are incredibly risky and difficult to monitor. It also becomes hard for stakeholders, such as litigants and lawyers, to have any

² K. Pandurangan, E-Justice; Practical Guide for the Bench and the Bar (Universal Law Pub Co. 2009) 93-94, EBC (March 20, 2026, 8:00 P.M.), https://www.ebcwebstore.com/product/e-justice-practical-guide-for-the-bench-and-the-bar?products_id=16823&srsId=AfmBOorwklwA5s3tdfFP1n-K4qKaJRMsq17tsfspIS3i-4IQQLkBO4WZ

³ Hindustan Times, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/waiting-for-justice-27-million-cases-pending-in-courts-4500-benches-empty/story-H0EsAx4gW2EHPRt1ddzIN.html>, (last visited on March 20, 2026).

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ “The National Judicial Data Grid”, <https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/njdgnew/>, (last visited on March 20, 2026).

certainty as to the eventual implementation of the project. An inability to implement the project within the period or spend the designated budget, as has been the situation with the e-Courts policy so far, will likewise bring about a reduction of future allocations for the project and severely affect its implementation. The course of events must be treated with sanctity. The execution of Phase II must be strictly required to be completed within four years, with no extension for uncertain augmentation of the timeline. Future sub-projects and phases must be similarly tied to defined timelines, accompanied by clear responsibility and checking systems. What must be done: Define and strictly adhere to events, accompanied by clear responsibility and monitoring, by way of policy documentation as well as guidelines for stakeholders (e.g., judiciary, NIC, vendors). Future policy documentation must give this information clearly.

Post operational maintenance: In order to ensure continuation and longevity of ICT applications, the maintenance of hardware, the accessibility of specialized labour for support, and a periodic upgrade of obsolete software is imperative. Continued training for judges, judicial officers, and court officers is similarly indispensable, and the way in which this will be ensured must be arranged simultaneously with implementation.⁶ Furthermore, newer courts and court complexes will continue to be added even after the completion of the task time frame, and scaling of the e-Courts approach must be planned to cover these courts, as and when they are organized.⁷ The Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) had strongly pushed for the obligation of post-operational maintenance to be vested with State Governments before the commencement of Phase I of the undertaking. This idea, among others, should be deliberated to assess its reasonableness. Further, training of judges must be innovatively designed to include online training modules to ensure greater standardization of the same.⁸

What must be done: Have a clear, decentralized legacy, maintenance, and upgrade plan for software, hardware, and related frameworks. Design and impart regular training courses for

⁶ Kolade, O.T. & Omodara, O.D., Developing a monitoring and Evaluation Plan of ICT, (2007), pp. 176-181, File Server (March 20, 2026, 8:00 P.M.), <https://fileserv-az.core.ac.uk/download/pdf/268006031.pdf>

⁷ ibid

⁸ S.C. Shalini Seetharam, "E-Courts in India: From policy formulation to implementation", Statis1 (March 20, 2026, 8:00 P.M.), https://static1.squarespace.com/static/551ea026e4b0adba21a8f9df/t/577f38dad482e970d741832a/1467955485181/eCourts+in+India_Vidhi.pdf

judges and court staff on using these systems. Courses should optimize the use of virtual teaching tools to maximize reach.

Data Privacy: With regard to expected norms and worldwide practices of processing of personal information, the e-Courts strategy must be enhanced by data protection rules that set the way in which data assembled, processed, and stored by the e-Courts project will be used.⁹ What must be done: Have clear standards on data protection, which must incorporate consequences of data breach, infringement of privacy, and so forth.

Seamless implementation of technology for justice initiative: Policy clarity is required to ensure data flow between each of the four technologies for Justice Initiative projects (e-Courts, e-Police, e-Prosecution, e-Prisons).¹⁰ This must be done at the earliest to ensure that the advantages of ICT adoption can be augmented by incorporating data across these databases, and ensuring interoperability and compatibility with different parts of the justice delivery system.

What must be done: Design a coordination system to guarantee that the Technology for Justice Initiative is interoperable, compatible, practical, and valuable, which may require designing joint guidelines for the four projects under this initiative.¹¹

CONCLUSION:

The overall research and analysis in this paper are based on different sources, which are authentic and genuine in nature and reliable. I would say this assessment of the e-Courts project from policy formulation to implementation sought to evaluate all aspects of the attempt to computerize the subordinate judiciary, and web-based interlinking of the entire judiciary. ICTs have the power to transform the justice system, as evidenced by the automation of activities such as case filing, scrutiny, registration, case allocation, court diaries, calculation of court fees, issue of certified copies of orders and judgments, and their publication online. However, the progress made in the e-Courts project has been slow, considering the time taken to achieve this level of computerization, and the pending activities that still remain to be completed.

⁹ Paul M. Schwartz, Property, Privacy, and Personal Data, Harvard Law Review, Vol. 117, No. 7, pp. 2056-2128, (March 20, 2026, 8:00 P.M., <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4093335>)

¹⁰ A.P. Kumar, "A comparative analysis of courts across India", Common Cause (March 20, 2026, 8:00 P.M.), http://www.commoncause.in/publication_details.php?id=450

¹¹ ibid

