



Evaluation Study of eCourts Integrated Mission Mode Project

Project Commissioned by
Department of Justice
Ministry of Law and Justice
Govt. of India

National Council of Applied Economic Research

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This NCAER study in association with Department of Justice was carried out by a team led by Sohini Paul (Project Leader), consisting of Vivekanand Dasgupta (external consultant) and supported by Vibhas Puri, Swati Kandwal, Khushwinder Kaur, Yashpal and Shivang Garg. The field survey was carried out by field team from NCAER. The report was edited by Renu Gupta.

PREFACE

Evaluation Study of eCourts Integrated Mission Mode Project

The application of information in India is spreading over the past few decades. This has set the stage for the computerisation of courts at the district level to increase transparency and efficiency in India's judicial system. The eCourts Integrated Mission Mode Project is one of the National e-Governance projects being implemented in district/subordinate Courts in India. The project was approved in 2010. The main objective of eCourts is to provide services to all key stakeholders, including the judiciary, district and subordinate courts, and citizens, litigants, and lawyers through ICT enablement of all district and subordinate courts. In district and subordinate courts automation of the case management workflow has been completed through the use of appropriate hardware and software. Citizens, including lawyers and litigants, have benefited through this project. Citizens can avail of the eCourt services through the Judicial Service Centre at a court complex.

NCAER was requested to carry out an assessment study to evaluate the effect of computerisation in district and subordinate courts across the country by the Department of Justice, Government of India. The study covered five High Courts that represent five geographical regions in India, 100 court complexes, and 300 district and subordinate courts covering 1,936 respondents at the HC and district/subordinate court levels. The High Courts were selected on the basis of an infrastructure index and the geographic location of all High Courts.

The NCAER assessment study has found that the eCourts project has created awareness about computerisation among courts and about the application software, namely, Case Information System, among the important stakeholders; the project has achieved more than 90 percent in ICT deployment in terms of asset creation; the eCourts project is able to save time in the work process through computerisation. The

findings are important for the adoption of appropriate policies in the next phase of the eCourts project.

I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Anita Kaul, Secretary, and Mr. Atul Kaushik, Joint Secretary, Department of Justice for their support and encouragement. My appreciation goes to the central project co-ordinators and the associated teams in five High Courts and Mr. S. P. Singh, Director, Department of Justice, for providing the necessary information to assess the performance of the computerisation of courts. I would also like to thank the members of the eCommittee, Hon'ble Supreme Court of India for their valuable inputs. Finally, I am grateful to Mr. R. Venkatesan for his valuable contribution to the report.

In the end, I would like to thank the NCAER research team leader, Dr Sohini Paul and the NCAER team for this important work.

Shekhar Shah
Director-General, NCAER

February 10, 2015

Abbreviations

C	
CBT	Computer-Based Training
CCEA	Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs
CD	Compact Disc
CIS	Case Information System
CPC	Central Project Co-ordinator
CSR	Computer Server Room
D	
DG SET	Diesel Generator Set
DSC	Digital Signature
DVD	Digital Video Disc
G	
G2B	Government-to-Business
G2C	Government-to-Citizen
G2G	Government-to-Government
GoI	Government of India
H	
HC	High Court
HW	Hardware
I	
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
J	
JSC	Judicial Service Centre
K	
KSWAN	Karnataka State Wide Area Network
L	
LAN	Local Area Network
LMS	Legal Management System
M	
MMP	Mission Mode Project
N	
NCAER	National Council of Applied Economic Research
NeGP	National eGovernance Programme
NIC	National Informatics Centre
NJDG	National Judicial Data Grid
O	
OS	Operating System
P	

PO	Purchase Order
PoP	Point of Presence
S	
SC	Supreme Court
SMS	Short Message Service
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SWAN	State Wide Area Network
U	
UPS	Uninterrupted Power Supply
V	
VPN	Virtual Private Network
W	
WAN	Wide Area Network

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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The eCourts Integrated Mission Mode Project is one of the National e-Governance projects being implemented in District/Subordinate Courts across the country. The eCourts project has been conceptualised based on the *“National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology in the Indian Judiciary -2005”* prepared by the eCommittee of the Supreme Court of India. The eCommittee was formed in 2004 to draw up an action plan for ICT enablement of the Judiciary under the chairmanship (Chief-cum-adhoc Chairman) of the Chief Justice of India. The Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the eCourts project, i.e., computerisation of the Indian Judiciary on 8 February, 2007. The current version of the Project was approved in September 2010. The project is being implemented by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

eCourts, an integrated MMP, have been initiated with the objective of providing services to all key stakeholders including the Judiciary, the District and Subordinate Courts and Citizens/ Litigants/ Lawyers/ Advocates through ICT enablement of all district and subordinate courts in the country, by providing computer hardware, local area network (LAN), Internet connectivity and installation of standard application software at each court complex and making the justice delivery system more affordable, accessible, cost-effective, transparent and accountable.

The services provided under the project cater to all key stakeholders including judicial officers, court officials, lawyers and litigants. As in district and subordinate Courts, automation of case management workflow has been completed through the use of application software, which includes automation of different activities such as case filing, scrutiny, registration, case allocation, court proceedings, details of the entry of a case, case disposal & restoration, transfer of cases, pendency data, institution registers and court diaries and calculation of court fees. Citizens, including lawyers and litigants, have also benefitted through this project. Citizens are availing of services through the Judicial Service Centre at a court complex.

The National Judicial Data Grid has been created, which has enabled monitoring of pendency in the lower courts. It has helped in monitoring case pendency and acts as a repository for important case-related information and other key performance indicators for lower courts across the country at any given time.

As on 31 March 2014, 13,227 district and subordinate courts have been computerised in the country against the target of 14,249 courts. The basic infrastructure for ICT enablement consists of various modules such as setting up of LAN and hardware, deployment of the Case Information Software (CIS) application and establishment of WAN/ broadband connectivity.

The Department of Justice has decided to take up an assessment study to find out the impact of computerisation in district and subordinate courts across the country. The study has been conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), India in co-ordination with the Department of Justice, GoI. The main objectives of assessment of the Courts project are to assess ICT deployment of hardware and LAN components; assess the utilisation of hardware and LAN components; assess the Case Information System (CIS) application roll-out and readiness of service delivery; assess ICT training requirements versus the training provided to stakeholders; assess the success of services being delivered under the project; and identify the primary reasons for non-service delivery/service initiation.

The study covers five HCs that represent five geographical regions in India, 100 court complexes and 300 districts and subordinate courts that cover 1,936 respondents at the HC and district/subordinate court levels. High Courts were selected on the basis of the infrastructure index and as per the geographic location of all High Courts, which includes site preparation, hardware installed, LAN installed and software roll-out of High Courts. States were divided into five geographic regions; North, East, West, Central and South. From each region, one High Court was identified. Under each identified High Court, 20 court complexes have been selected. To select the court complexes, each state was divided into five regions, namely, East, West, North, South and Central. Then, the court complex was selected in each region by using a random number generator. In each court complex, three District/ Taluka courts were selected on a random basis. The data collection was conducted based on identified information areas. Six broad categories of questionnaire were developed for each category of respondents: CPCs, Judicial Officers, Court Officials, Lawyers & Litigants, NIC and Vendors. A structured questionnaire was developed for Judicial Officers, Court Officials and Lawyers & Litigants, while semi-structured questionnaires were developed for CPCs, NIC officials and Vendors. For court officials and judicial officers, feedback was collected online; while for lawyers and litigants face-to-face interviews were conducted.

The eCourts project has created awareness about computerisation among courts and about the application software, namely, Case Information System, among the important stakeholders including judicial officers and court officials. The project has achieved more than 90% in ICT deployment in terms of asset creation. However, the degree of usage of the eCourts national portal and the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) among users varies across different court complexes. It depends on connectivity, availability of skilled manpower in the court complexes and computer knowledge and training among the users.

The availability of infrastructure ranges from 59% to 99%. Infrastructure comprising hardware, LAN, DG set, UPS, Internet connectivity and CIS software is available in the premises of almost all the lower courts. However, the level of satisfaction related to infrastructure varies across district courts. The application software, CIS, has become popular with users. Both versions of CIS—Unified National Core version 1.1 and the CIS Pune version—are used. Computerisation in service delivery is observed to varying degrees among the five High Courts, ranging from 11–60%. The highest level of computerisation is observed in the preparation of cause lists, while the lowest level is experienced in the preparation of summons. It is evident that district and taluka courts in Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana perform well in terms of computerisation in the service delivery mechanism, while lower courts in Chhattisgarh and Guwahati lag behind.

Another important contribution of the eCourts project is time saving in the work process through computerisation. Two-fold to twenty-fold less time is required in various aspects of the service delivery mechanism. Time reduction is the highest from the manual to the computerised mode of work in delivery of summons, delivery of decree and issue of copy of judgement or order. The magnitude of decrease in time required is 18-fold, 16-fold and 20-fold, respectively. The important target groups, lawyers and litigants, are not very aware about the eCourts project so far.

Though the eCourts project has laudable objectives and performs considerably well, it also faces several challenges. The major obstacles towards total success of the project are scanty and low quality infrastructure, lack of skilled manpower, limited connectivity (both in electricity and the Internet), lack of computer knowledge among users and inadequate training to users. At this stage, it is crucial to focus on upgrading the infrastructure, enabling the continuous process of data entry, providing hundred percent connectivity in the lower courts, recruiting technical personnel on a permanent basis, providing effective training to all the users along with the extension of eCourts to

the remaining district and taluka courts in the next phase. It would help the project to reach its final goal of providing a transparent and effective judiciary system to the Indian citizen.

Introduction

Chapter 1

Introduction

The world has become increasingly connected through information and communication technology (ICT) in the past few decades, as ICT has become essential to relationships between individuals, businesses and the government. One of the main aims of ICT is to bring about social equity and inclusion, along with increased transparency in the system.

The Indian judiciary has been faced with a huge number of pending cases in district courts, which sets the background for implementation of computerisation in courts. An overview of the Indian Judicial System is provided in Appendix 1 (pp. 151). Over three million cases were pending in High Courts and 26.3 million cases were pending in subordinate courts across the country, with only 14.7 judges available for every million people ^[1]. As on 30 September 2010, a total of 28 million cases were pending in subordinate courts and 4.2 million in High Courts. Approximately 9% of these cases have been pending for over 10 years, 18% for more than five years and 32% cases have been pending for over two years. Preservation and orderly arrangement of records and their retrieval in manual mode has become extremely difficult.

To solve such serious problems and to make the judicial system efficient, efforts to computerise some of its processes have been going on since the 1990s. Faced with limited resources and manpower, ICT leverage for courts may work as a boon in the direction of delivering justice to all in an effective manner.

The eCourts project has been conceptualised on the basis of the *“National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology in the Indian Judiciary -2005”* prepared by the eCommittee of the Supreme Court of India. It is one of the National e-Governance projects being implemented in District/Subordinate Courts across the country and also one of the 31 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) formulated under the national e-governance plan. The eCommittee was formed in 2004 to draw up an action plan for ICT enablement of the Judiciary under the chairmanship (Chief-cum-adhoc Chairman) of the Chief Justice of India. The Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs (CCEA) first approved the eCourts project, i.e., computerisation of

^[1] Brochure of C-DAC & High Court of Delhi.

the Indian judiciary, on 8 February 2007. The current version of the Project was approved in September 2010. The project is being implemented by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

1.1 Objectives of eCourts Project

e-Courts, an integrated MMP, has been initiated with the following objectives:

- To provide services to all key stakeholders including the Judiciary, the District and Subordinate Courts and Citizens/ Litigants/ Lawyers/ Advocates by ICT enablement of all district and subordinate courts in the country, through provision of computer hardware, local area network (LAN), Internet connectivity and installation of standard application software at each court complex and upgrade of the existing ICT infrastructure of the Supreme Court and all High Courts/ Benches^[2].
- To enhance judicial productivity, both quantitatively & qualitatively, and to make the justice delivery system more affordable, accessible, cost-effective, transparent and accountable.

1.2 Project Components^[3]

We describe below the main components of the integrated eCourts project in brief:

- Creation of Computer Room at all the complexes/ site preparation.* A dedicated area for housing the servers and related ICT equipment (computer server room/ CSR) has been set up at each subordinate court complex. A Judicial Service Centre has also been setup in each court complex, as a citizen service interface counter for provision of various services such as case filing and status enquiry.
- Provision of Laptops and Laser Printers to Judicial Officers.* Laptops have been provided to each judicial officer to enable them to work from their chamber, court room and home office in an effective manner. The project aims to enhance the capacity of all judicial officers to supervise and guide the process of computerisation of courts.

^[2] Cabinet Note; approval of eCourts Project.

^[3] National Policy and action plan for implementation of information and communication technology in the Indian Judiciary (E-Committee, Supreme Court of India, New Delhi, 1 August 2005).

- iii. **ICT Training for Judges & their Staff.** ICT training will be imparted to judicial officers and court staff to make them familiar with and proficient in the use of ICT tools.
- iv. **Technical Manpower.** Technical manpower is deployed at all district courts, High Courts, High Court Benches and Supreme Court under the project. The technical manpower provides 'troubleshooting' support and necessary maintenance and training support at the court complex and assistance in the transition from a manual case management system towards an ICT-enabled one.
- v. **Computer Hardware.** To make the subordinate courts ICT-enabled in the country, each court complex has been equipped with the required computer hardware such as desktops, printers, servers and scanners. Each judge and his/ her support staff is provided with four client machines and three printers; common service sections are provided with thin clients and printers, and ICT hardware such as servers and scanners are installed in computer server rooms in each court complex.
- vi. **Communication, Connectivity and Local Area Network**
- Procurement and installation of Local Area Network (LAN) in all court complexes.
 - Internet connectivity for judges/ court complexes.
 - All court complexes are connected under the State Wide Area Network (SWAN) and also provided last mile connectivity from SWAN's Point of Presence (PoP) to the court complexes.
- vii. **Power Back-up.** UPS and DG sets have been provided to create the necessary power back-up facilities for ICT infrastructure in a court complex. UPS provides power back-up to desktops and servers; DG sets are used to provide power back-up to ICT infrastructure in the Computer Server Room and the Judicial Service Centre.
- viii. **Upgrade of ICT Infrastructure of the Supreme Court and High Courts.** The existing ICT infrastructure has been upgraded at the Supreme Court and all High Courts by providing additional servers, client machines, networking equipment, power infrastructure, cabling, etc.
- ix. **Development of Application Software.** Unified National Core version 1.0 of the Case Information Software has been developed and deployed in district and subordinate courts to automate the case management lifecycle and all major processes such as case filing, scrutiny, registration, allocation and court diary/ proceedings. Cause lists, case status, certified copies

of orders and copy of judgments will also be made available for online download or viewing. This is in use in almost all the states.

- x. *Project Management, Project Monitoring and Change Management Consultancy.* To ensure smooth and timely implementation of the project, a monitoring mechanism has been established that assists in change management activities.
- xi. *System Software, Office Tools.* System software such as an Operating System for servers and desktops and office tools has been provided to client machines/ servers.
- xii. *Digital Signature.* Digital signature certificates have been provided to all judicial officers. It enables them to sign the judgement or any electronic official documents digitally when required.
- xiii. *Process Reengineering.* A process re-engineering exercise has been done for case management and other processes.
- xiv. *Creation & Upgrading of Centralised facility for system administration.* A centralised facility has been established for maintaining the Network Operating Centre and central database, managing the judicial data grid and sustaining the dedicated portal for use by the entire judiciary. NIC state data centres will be used to co-locate servers for the judicial data of each High Court and a National Data Centre will be set up in the NIC Data Centre along with one Disaster Recovery site.
- xv. *Video Conferencing in approximately 500 locations.* Video conference connectivity is being established in 500 locations between prisons and district courts to allow virtual interfacing of a judge with witnesses, holding conferences and meetings, production of under-trial prisoners, etc. The facility would need to be installed in the prisons and within the court complex premises.

1.3 Key Stakeholders of eCourts Project

The services that are being provided under the project cater to all key stakeholders including the judiciary, citizens, litigants and lawyers. Some of the services provided to different stakeholders are given below:

*District and Subordinate Courts:*Automation of case management workflow has been completed through the use of application software, which includes automation of activities such as case filing, scrutiny, registration, case allocation, court proceedings, details of the entry of a case, case disposal & restoration, transfer of case, pendency data, institution registers and court diaries and calculation of court fees.

*Citizens/ Litigants/ Lawyers/ Advocates:*Citizens are availing of services through the Judicial Service Centre at a court complex. Some of these services include automated case filing, issue of certified copies of orders and judgements and obtaining case status information.

*Judiciary:*Creation of the National Judicial Data Grid and enabling the monitoring of pendency in the lower courts has been initiated. It helps monitor case pendency and acts as a repository for important case-related information and other key performance indicators for lower courts across the country at any given time.

1.4 Benefits of eCourts Project

The important benefits of the eCourts Project ^[4] are the following:

- Allows electronic monitoring of court-wise case pendency and other key monitoring parameters with reference to courts.
- Greater control over management of cases leads to faster disposal of cases and reduction in pendency.
- Decrease in the time and effort on daily operational activities and a reduction in the movement of stakeholders to courts.
- Efficient and effective service delivery in consonance with access to justice for all, ensuring fast and fair trials.
- Citizen can avail of services at the Judicial Service Centre or access the information through the Web at anytime and from anywhere.

^[4] *Source:* Policy and action plan document Phase II of the eCourts Project (E-Committee, Supreme Court of India New Delhi, 8 January 2014).

1.5 Scope of eCourts Project

The scope of the eCourts project includes computerisation of 14,249 district and subordinate courts in 3,069 court complexes and ICT upgrading of the Supreme Court and High Courts. This project entails ensuring digital interconnectivity between all courts from the district and taluka level to the apex court.

The government has approved the computerisation of 14,249 district and subordinate courts and also the upgrading of the ICT infrastructure of the Supreme Court and the High Courts by March 2014 with a budget of Rs. 935 crore. An Empowered Committee has been constituted under the chairpersonship of the Secretary, Department of Justice to give strategic direction and guidance to the project, which is being implemented by the National Informatics Centre. A project monitoring committee comprising representatives from the e-Committee, Department of Justice and from NIC meets periodically. The Department of Justice conducts a monthly review meeting to monitor the progress of the project. Each High Court has appointed a central project co-ordinator (CPC) to manage the implementation of the project. A steering committee at each High Court oversees the implementation of the project in its jurisdiction. A District Project Monitoring Committee headed by a District Judge has been set up at the district level.

As mentioned, the project was implemented in two phases in 14,249 districts and subordinate courts spread over 3,069 court complexes throughout the country.

- (i) The first phase covered 12,000 courts in 2,100 court complexes by 31 March 2012.
- (ii) The remaining 2,249 courts of 969 court complexes were covered in the second phase by 31 March 2014.

1.6 Current Status of eCourts Project

As on 31 March 2014, 13,227 district and subordinate courts in the country have been computerised against the target of 14,249 courts. The basic infrastructure for ICT enablement consists of various modules such as setting up LAN and hardware, deployment of the Case Information Software (CIS) and the establishment of WAN/ broadband connectivity. The component-wise status of progress is given in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Status of eCourts project

S. No.	Project Module	No. of Completed Courts
1	Sites Ready	14,164
2	LAN PO issued	14,027
3	LAN installed	13,183
4	HW PO issued	14,015
5	HW installed	13,436
6	Software deployed	13,227

Source: Monthly Review Meeting held on 25 March, 2014 at the Department of Justice, Government of India.

Note: Status as on 25/03/2014

1.7 Objectives of Evaluation of eCourts Project

Against such a backdrop, the Department of Justice has decided to carry out assessment studies on the impact of computerisation in district and subordinate courts across the country. The main objectives for the evaluation of the eCourts project are as follows:

- Assessment of the ICT deployment of hardware & LAN components
- Assessment of the utilisation of hardware & LAN components
- Assessment of Case Information System (CIS) application roll-out and readiness of service delivery
- Assessment of ICT training requirements vs. training provided to stakeholders
- Assessment of the success of services being delivered under the project
- Collecting users/stakeholders feedback, based on services accessed through the CIS software
- Finding the primary reasons for non-service delivery/service initiation issues
- Suggesting recommendations for ICT enablement in the remaining courts

We have organised the report in the following manner. Chapter 1 introduces the Indian legal system, the services offered through e-Courts, the need for the assessment study and the objectives of the current study. Chapter 2 outlines the framework for analysis, such as which parts will be covered through a survey, which applications will be covered through the impact assessment and the identification of stakeholders from the perspective of users and providers. It gives the assessment parameters, the methodology used to conduct the primary research and sample design. It gives the sample size and introduces the various stakeholders surveyed. It also outlines the

procedures used to extract and analyse data, the framework used to collect data, the characteristics of the questionnaire and the method of sampling. Chapters 3 to 5 contain the findings from different stakeholders including judicial officers, court officials, lawyers and litigants. We have discussed the status of High Courts based on the assessment parameters selected for the study, the findings of the survey and a comparison of High Courts. The latter part of these chapters includes the findings from each High Court, highlighting areas where the eCourts project is performing or not performing well. Observations and inferences are also discussed in these chapters. The feedback from NIC officials, central project co-ordinators and vendors is reported in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 summarises the overall findings and provides policy suggestions.

Methodology

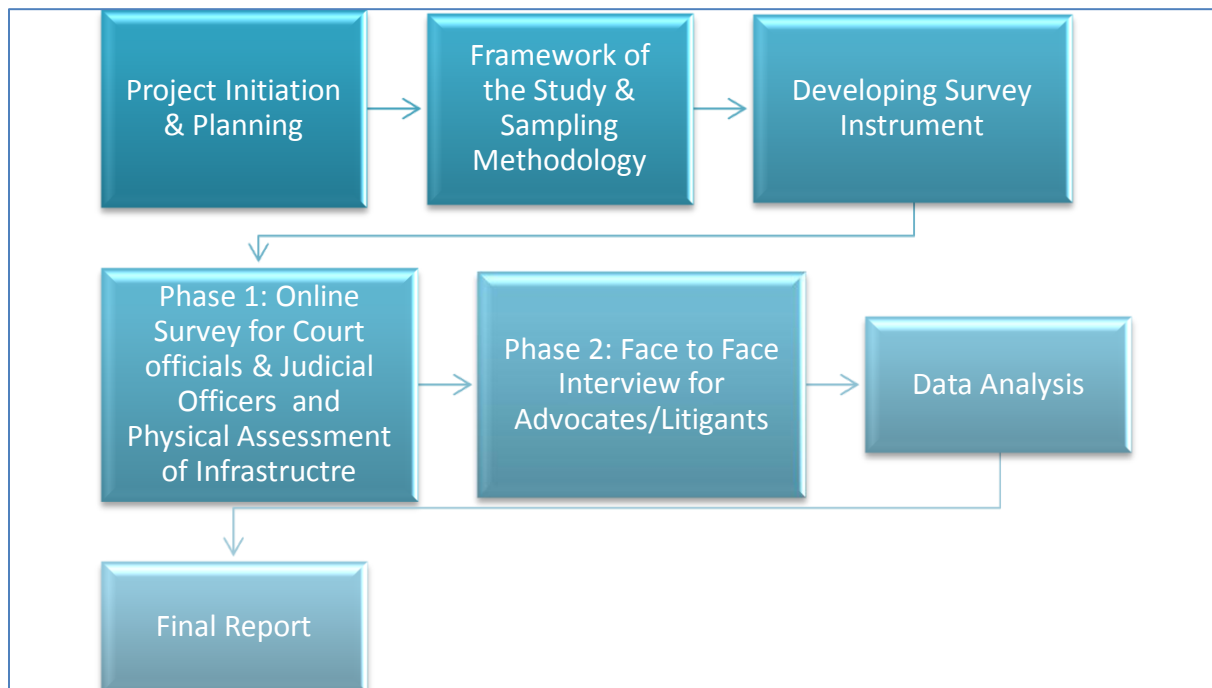
Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 Introduction

At the beginning of the assessment of the eCourts project, we developed the framework of the study and sampling methodology. In the next stage, the survey instrument was developed. Our main aim was to collect important information through primary data. We collected information from different groups of stakeholders. We developed an online survey for judicial officers and court officials, while lawyers and litigants were interviewed through a field survey. We developed structured questionnaires for each group of respondents. Data analysis was done once information was collected and we came up with the major findings. The framework was prepared according to the project requirements after consultation with the Department of Justice and eCommittee, Supreme Court of India and the information areas were identified accordingly. The framework for the assessment study is shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Framework for assessment of the eCourts project



Source: Author's compilation

2.1.1 Identification of stakeholders

The stakeholders were being considered from all relevant layers of the Indian judiciary system.

- **Organisation:**
 - High Courts and Subordinate Courts
- **Monitoring Agency:**
 - Department of Justice, GoI
 - E-Committee, Supreme Court of India
- **Officials:**
 - Judicial Officers
 - Office bearers (Registrar & Central Project Co-ordinator)
 - Court Staff (Court Master, Clerk, ICT Specialist/System Administrator)
- **Beneficiaries**
 - Advocates and Litigants
- **Implementing Agency**
 - NIC

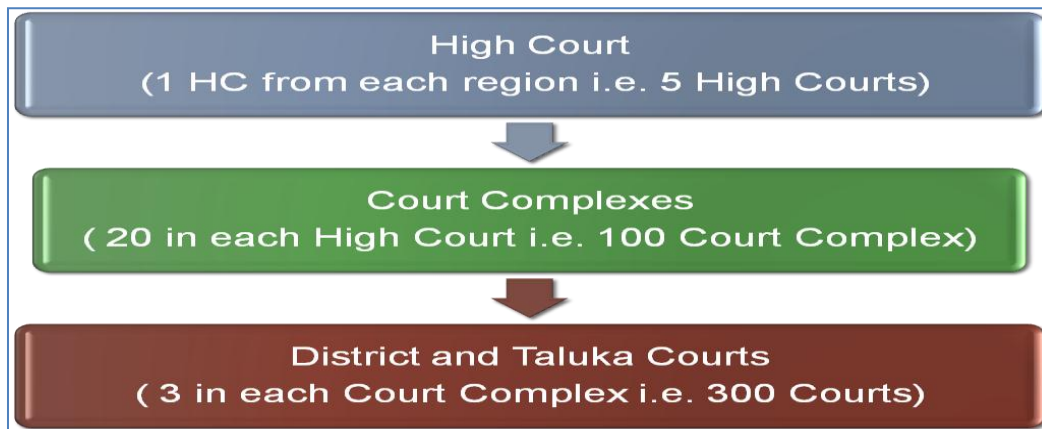
2.1.2 Parameters for assessment

Specific parameters were defined for each type of respondent for this assessment. These were broadly classified as background information of respondents, awareness about the project, usage of the eCourts portal, economic cost (direct & indirect), availability of infrastructure mentioned under the project components, quality of services, problems and challenges, feedback on computerisation of courts and suggestions for further improvements.

2.2 Sampling Methodology

In the study, five High Courts, 20 court complexes from each High Court and three Subordinate Courts from each court complex were identified as the study unit. Figure 2.2 shows how each of these units was chosen.

Figure 2.2: Sample structure



Source: Author's compilation

Identification of sample High Courts was based on the infrastructure index and geographical location. The infrastructure index includes site preparation, hardware installed, LAN installed and software roll-out in High Courts.

Site Preparation: Proportion of court complexes that had completed the site preparation out of the total court complexes in the jurisdiction of High Courts.

Hardware Installed: Proportion of court complexes where hardware had been installed out of the total court complexes in the jurisdiction of High Courts.

LAN Installed: Proportion of court complexes where LAN had been installed out of the total court complexes in the jurisdiction of High Courts.

Software Rollout: Proportion of court complexes where software had been rolled out, out of the total court complexes in the jurisdiction of High Courts.

States were divided into five geographical regions; North, East, West, Central, South. From each region, one High Court was identified (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Selected High Courts

Region	High Courts					
North	Himachal Pradesh	Allahabad	Punjab & Haryana	Jammu & Kashmir	Uttarakhand	
East	Calcutta	Sikkim	Patna	Guwahati	Jharkhand	Odisha
West	Bombay	Gujarat	Rajasthan			
South	Madras	Andhra Pradesh	Kerala	Karnataka		
Central	Madhya Pradesh	Delhi	Chhattisgarh			

Note: The High Courts selected have been highlighted.

Source: Based on sample design

ii. *Identification of Court Complexes:* Under each identified High Court, 20 court complexes have been selected. To select the court complexes, first each state was divided into five regions, namely, East, West, North, South and Central. Then, the court complex was selected in each region by using a random number generator. The list is provided in Appendix 2 (pp. 155).

iii. *Selection of District Court/Taluka Court:* In each court complex, 3 District/ Taluka courts will be selected on a random basis.

Stakeholders have been identified from the three layers, namely, High Courts, Court Complexes and District/Taluka courts (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Classification of stakeholders

S.N.	Level		
1.	Central	NIC Vendors	
2.	High Courts	Project Co-ordinator	CPC
3.	District/ Subordinate Court	Users	Judicial Officer, Court Officials
		Lawyers	
		Litigants	

Source: Based on sample design

The distribution of sample units across three layers of study units are given in Tables 2.3 and 2.4.

Table 2. 3: Coverage of total sample units

S. No.	Level	Units Covered
1.	High Court	5
2.	Court Complex	100
3.	Court	300

Source: Author's calculation

Table 2.4: Distribution of sample units

S. No.	Level	No of Units in HC	Total Units in an HC	Total Units in all selected HCs
1.	High Court	1	1	5
2.	Court Complex	5	20	100
3.	District/Subordinate Court	20	20*5*3	300

Source: Author's calculation

2.3 Sample Size

The study covered a total of five High Courts that represent all geographical regions, 100 court complexes and 300 courts. Three court officials and three judicial officers were identified from each court complex. Court officials include court clerk, an ICT specialist and one court manager. Two lawyers and two litigants were randomly chosen from each of the three courts of a selected court complex. The total proposed sample size proposed was 1,966 and we have covered 1,936. The break-up of samples from each type of respondent from each level is given in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Sample coverage of stake holder

Type of respondent	Proposed sample	Actual covered
Judicial Officer	278	270
Court officials	479	457
Lawyers	600	600
Litigants	600	600
Central Project co-ordinator	5	5
NIC officials	2	2
Vendors	2	2
Total	1966	1936

Source: Author's calculation

2.4 Instruments of Observations

Information was collected through field level observations for primary data collection. Detailed questionnaires were framed. The questionnaires were of two types: structured and semi-structured. Structured questionnaires were used for court officials, judicial officers, lawyers and litigants, whereas semi-structured questionnaires were used for CPCs, NIC officials and vendors. The NCAER field survey team collected primary data and ensured data quality and accuracy. The information areas of study and survey instruments and detail questionnaire for each group of stakeholders are available in Appendix 3 (pp. 159) and Appendix 4 (pp. 161).

The questionnaires were structured to capture the information area derived from the assessment framework. The questions covered the following:

- Awareness of the project
- Structure of information flow
- Mode of service delivery
- Time taken in service delivery
- Satisfaction from service delivery
- How to enhance usage of the CIS application
- How to improve effectiveness of the CIS application
- How to reduce cycle time of key processes
- How to enhance the accuracy, consistency and security of data
- Are there any challenges with the existing process/system?
- Questions related to gaps/problems with existing problems/challenges
- What can be done to overcome the gaps

2.5 Collection of Data

Data was collected through field survey and online survey. To collect data from field, we have conducted pre-testing of questionnaires. We also have trained the skilled field personnel. Data was collected from field in two phases. We will describe below about each step in brief.

2.5.1 Pre-testing of questionnaire

Pre-testing was conducted to refine the questionnaire. It was carried out in District Court Mohali of the Punjab & Haryana High Court. Based on the feedback, survey instruments were modified and refined.

2.5.2 Training of field staff

The NCAER field survey team carried out the primary data collection, i.e., primary survey. A three-layered structure was adopted. At the Central level, the core research team handled the monitoring and operational work; at every High Court level there were supervisors and at the district court/subordinate court level, field investigators were responsible for the data collection. Training of field staff was organised in Delhi on 29–31 May 2013, before the main survey was started.

The primary survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews with lawyers and litigants, and online interviews with court officials and judicial officers. Due to time constraints, both phases of data collection were done simultaneously.

2.5.3 First phase of data collection

This was covered through online questionnaires. The survey instrument was hosted on the website and sent to the respondent. Respondents from the supply side or from the service provider/agency side were taken into account. These included judicial officers posted in the High Court, judicial officers from subordinate courts, court officials (ICT specialists, court master, etc.) and office bearers (CPC and Registrar).

2.5.4 Second phase of data collection

Beneficiary respondents, such as advocates and litigants, were covered in this phase. The survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews. During the survey, the supervisors checked the selection of the eligible sample, ensured that informed consent procedures were pursued and that the questionnaires were completely and accurately filled. The supervisors scrutinised all instruments at the field on a daily basis. Following the usual norm, there was 10 per cent back-checking of the data collected to ensure the quality, validity and reliability of the data.

2.5.5 Selection of respondents

The actual number of respondents surveyed in each High Court and the number of sampling units from which these were drawn followed the sampling plan. Court officials and judicial officers were nominated by the concerned High Court CPCs as per the sampling plan and were interviewed.

Lawyers and litigants were interviewed by visiting identified court complexes. From each court complex, three courts were randomly selected and from that court, lawyers and litigants were randomly chosen.

2.5.6 Reference period

The data collection work started on 1 June and concluded on 8 July for lawyers and litigants, whereas online interviews of judicial officers and court officials were completed by 6 August 2014. It took almost two months for the data collection process.

2.5.7 Monitoring of data collection

To ensure data quality and accuracy of data, field work was monitored by core research team from the NCAER. Field monitoring was done by field supervisors at the district/ subordinate court level. Back-checking and surprise visits were carried out by the NCAER team in all identified High Courts, covering one court complex from each High Court, to monitor the fieldwork.

2.6 Data Entry and Validation

All questionnaires were checked by supervisors in the field prior to leaving each district/subordinate to ensure that they were fully and correctly completed. Priority was given to cross-checking and validation of data on the spot by the evaluation teams, as the supervisors made random checks of schedules on the spot and cross-checked data by repeating the interview. The data collected from respondents through the survey was transferred to pre-coded schedules, which facilitated cross-checking and validation of data. The team regularly participated in interactive discussions to share their observations every evening. Questionnaire data was then double-entered into suitably designed data entry templates and data entry errors identified and corrected systematically until no transcription/entry errors remained. After data entry, the data was cleaned to ensure logical validity. Two-layered telephonic back-checking, 10 per cent in each layer checks, and physical matching was done.

2.7 Data Analysis

An appropriate data analysis framework was designed to analyse the quantitative and qualitative data gathered through the field survey. The qualitative data collected through structured questionnaires was analysed by a team of analysts and the data was quantified. After the master

data sheets had been analysed, tabulation formats were created to prepare the database. The database covered a large number of tables; the descriptive tables were finalised by applying appropriate statistical techniques. The database was interpreted in terms of the objectives and evaluation framework and the report was prepared based on the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative and quantitative data. The focus was on identifying gaps and weak areas in the implementation process and appropriate corrective measures were suggested.

2.8 Limitations of the Study

The study is exploratory and undertaken with limited resources. It used a representative sample with statistical significance, but it was relatively small. While the difference between the status of ICT-enablement in all the courts were found to be statistically significant (in most cases, at a confidence level of 99%), the accuracy of the actual estimate of the difference could be improved by the use of larger samples.

Perspective of Judicial Officers

Chapter 3

Perspective of Judicial Officers

3.1 Introduction

The main objective of the eCourts mission mode project is to provide adequate infrastructure to the district and taluka court complexes. This would help service providers improve the quality of services. Judicial officers are the main group of service providers in the judiciary who use modern equipment along with specialised software to smoothen their work process. It is expected that better quality of infrastructure along with appropriate training to the associated staff would significantly improve the quality of service delivery in the Indian judiciary. Therefore, to assess the performance of the eCourts mission mode project, it is important to get feedback from judicial officers on the following aspects: their awareness of computerisation in court complexes in addition to awareness about different components of computerisation in court rooms, their opinion on the availability and sufficiency of the required infrastructure, computer training on the specialised software, the Case Information System, and the impact of computerisation on different components. It is important to get their suggestions on further modifications of the Case Information System and the specialised software installed. We collected information on all these parameters through structured interviews conducted through an online survey.

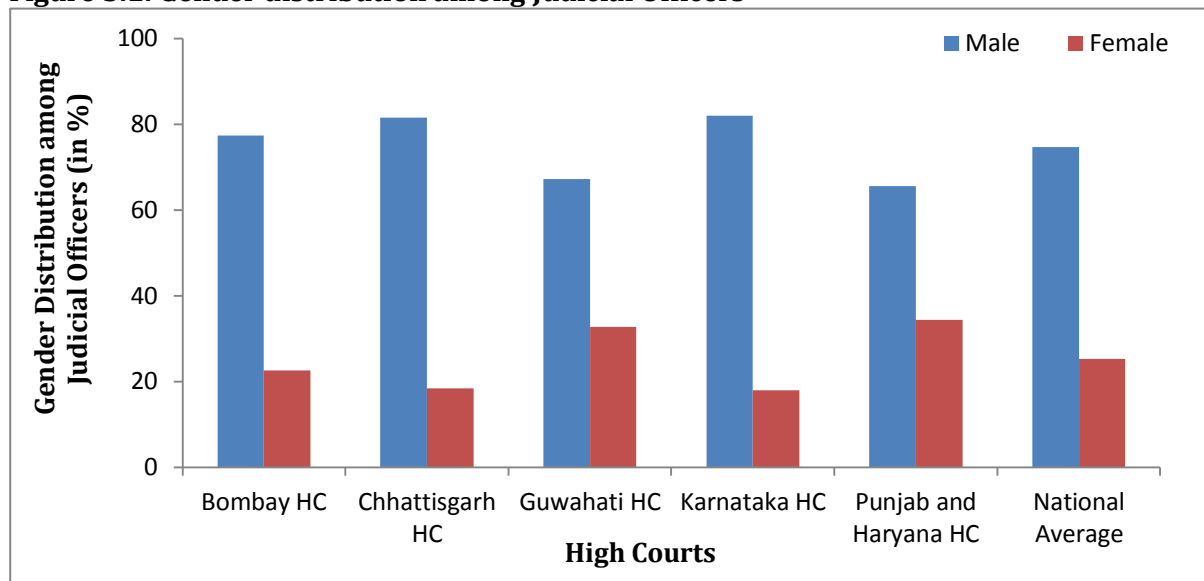
3.2 Background of Judicial Officers

We will briefly discuss the background of judicial officers who responded to our online survey before discussing their detailed feedback on the parameters. As mentioned in the previous chapter, we selected 270 judicial officers spread across district and taluka courts under five High Courts within the scope of the study. We emphasised the following parameters to portray the background of this selected group of respondents: gender, association with a particular court, years of work experience in courts and their level of proficiency in using computers.

3.2.1 Gender distribution

We observe gender disparity among the judicial officers surveyed. On average, only a fourth of the surveyed judicial officers were female (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Gender distribution among Judicial Officers



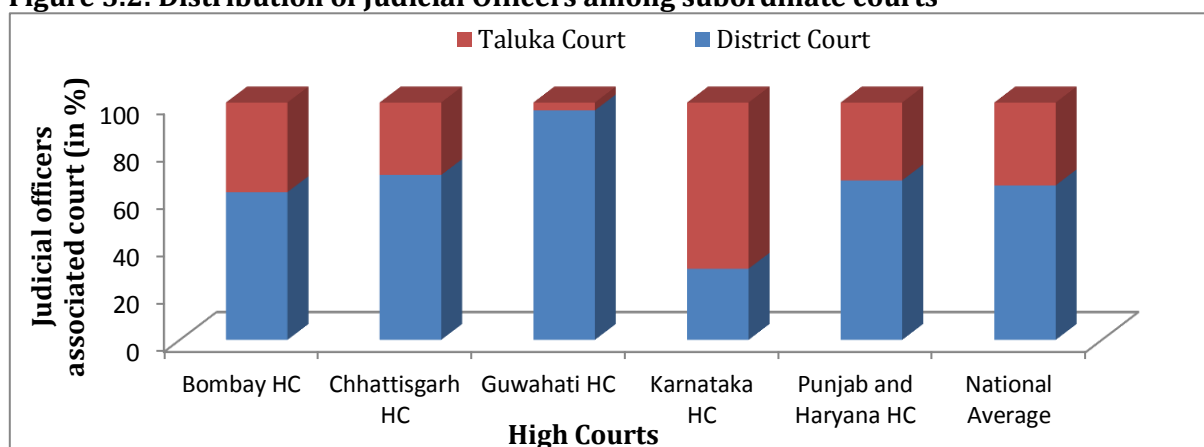
Source: Author's compilation

The highest ratio of female to male judicial officers (around 52 per cent) was observed under the Punjab & Haryana HC followed by the Guwahati and Bombay HCs, where both HCs had ratios above the national average (Figure 3.1). The lowest female to male ratio (around 23 per cent) was observed in the Chhattisgarh HC.

3.2.2 Representation from lower court

As the eCourts project is directed towards lower courts, we selected respondents from two types of subordinate courts: district court or Taluka court. One-third of the surveyed judicial officers (Figure 3.2) were associated with Taluka-level courts across all the High Courts.

Figure 3.2: Distribution of Judicial Officers among subordinate courts



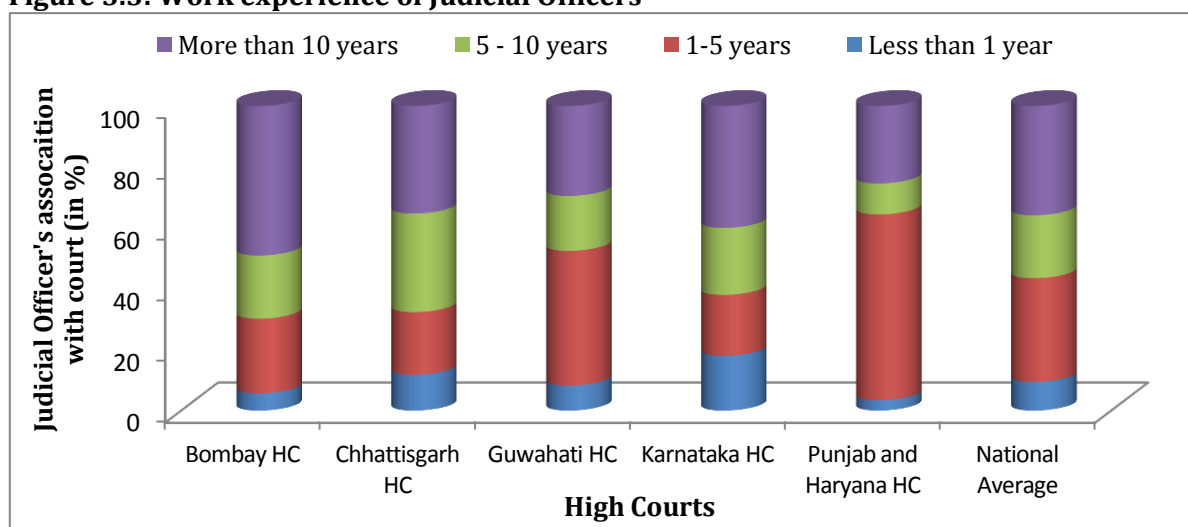
Source: Author's compilation

Survey data revealed that the number of judicial officers associated with district courts was the highest in the Guwahati HC, while under the Karnataka HC the maximum number of judicial officers who responded in the survey was associated with taluka-level courts.

3.2.3 Work experience

On average (Figure 3.3), more than half the judicial officers had served the court for more than five years, and less than 10 per cent of them had been associated with the court for less than one year.

Figure 3.3: Work experience of Judicial Officers

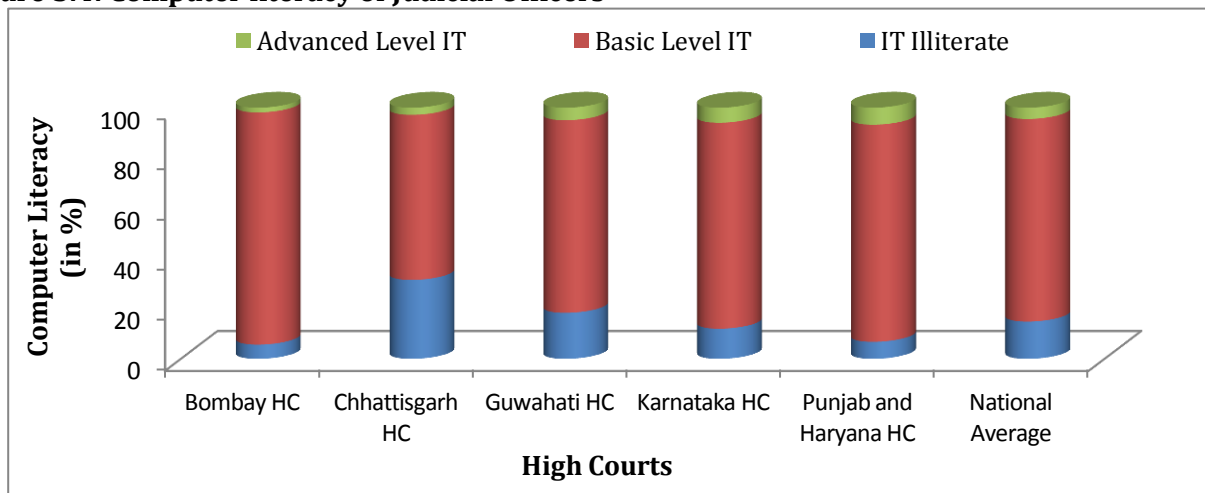


Source: Author's compilation

3.2.4 Knowledge of Computers

Eighty per cent of the respondents have some basic knowledge of computers (Figure 3.4), while 15 per cent did not have any knowledge of computers. A small proportion of them (around 4.5 per cent) possessed advanced proficiency in IT.

Figure 3.4: Computer literacy of Judicial Officers



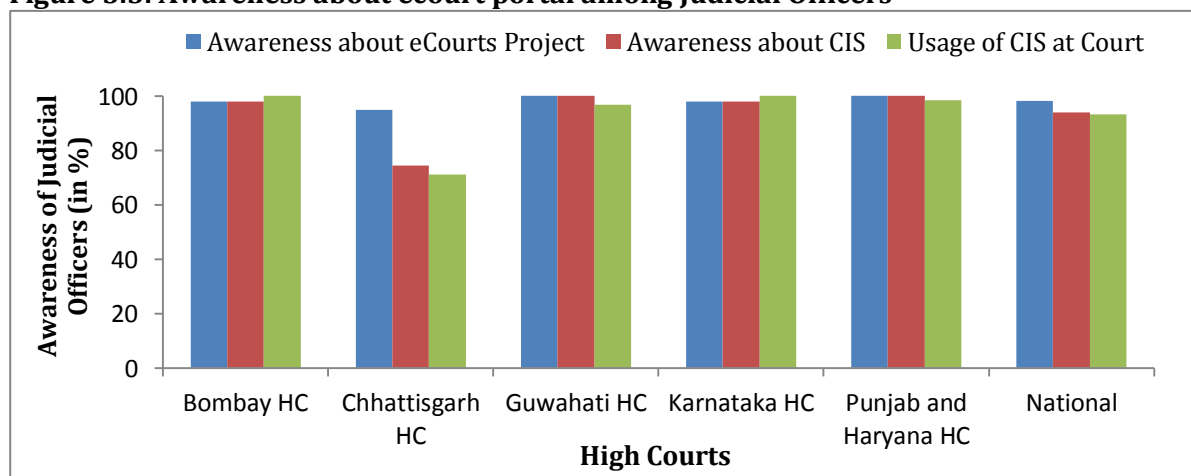
Source: Author's compilation

The lowest level of computer proficiency is observed under the Chhattisgarh HC where around a third of the judicial officers were IT-illiterate. On the other hand, the highest IT literacy among judicial officers was observed in the Bombay and Punjab & Haryana HCs, where more than 90 per cent of the officers were found to have basic knowledge of computers.

3.3 Awareness and Usage of Portal: eCourts Project

Almost all judicial officers (Figure 3.5) were aware about the eCourts project in all HCs. Most of the interviewed judicial officers were also aware of CIS and its use, except in the Chhattisgarh HC where around a third of them did not know about CIS and its usage at court.

Figure 3.5: Awareness about ecourt portal among Judicial Officers

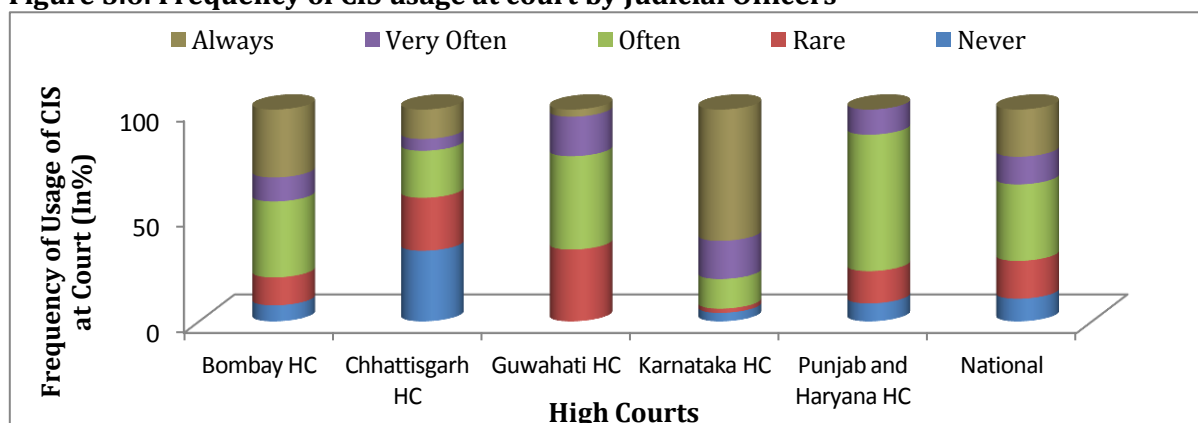


Source: Author's compilation

3.3.1 Frequency of usage of CIS at courts

The survey findings (Figure 3.6) show that less than a fourth of the judicial officers observed that CIS was 'always' used at court, whereas half the judicial officers conveyed that it was used 'often' or 'very often'. Only 10 per cent of all the judicial officers never observed its use at court.

Figure 3.6: Frequency of CIS usage at court by Judicial Officers



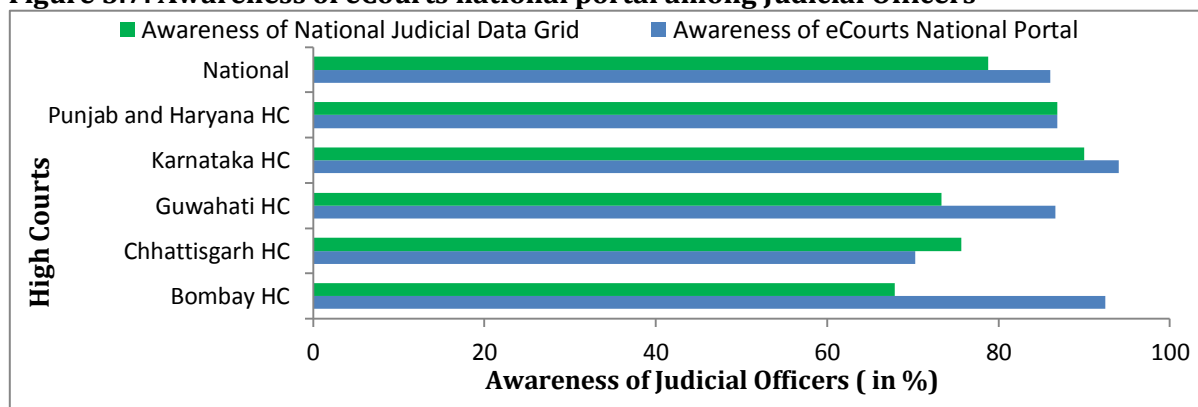
Source: Author's compilation

More than 60 per cent of the judicial officers under the jurisdiction of the Karnataka HC observed that CIS was always used for judicial purposes at court, whereas less than 5 per cent in Guwahati and no officer in the Punjab & Haryana HC said that it was always used at court.

3.3.2 Awareness of eCourts National Portal and NJDG

More than (Figure 3.7) 85 per cent of all judicial officers were aware of the eCourts National portal except in Chhattisgarh where around 30 per cent were not aware of it. The highest awareness regarding the portal was observed in the Karnataka and Bombay HCs.

Figure 3.7: Awareness of eCourts national portal among Judicial Officers



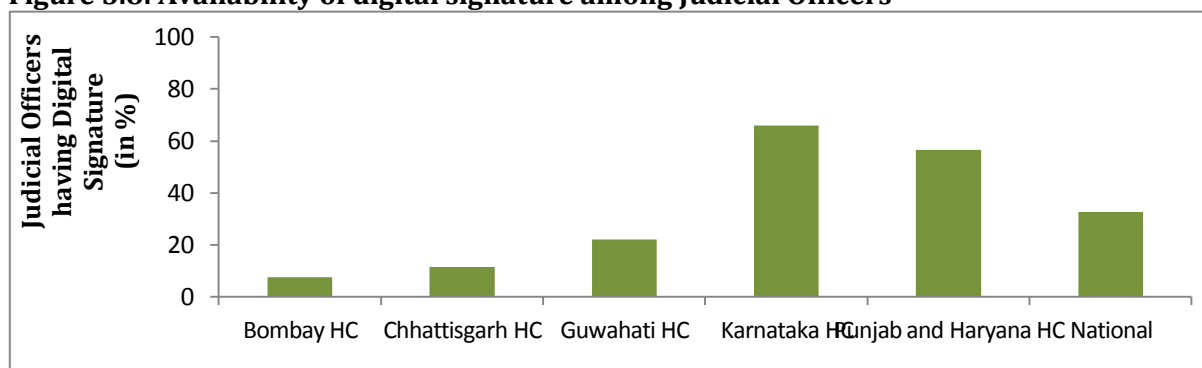
Source: Author's compilation

The survey findings further revealed that the number of judicial officers who were aware of the National Judicial Data Grid was the highest in the Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana HCs, both above the national average. The Bombay HC accounted for the minimum number of judicial officers' awareness about the NJDG.

3.3.3 Provision of digital signature

One-third (Figure 3.8) of all surveyed judicial officers had a digital signature.

Figure 3.8: Availability of digital signature among Judicial Officers



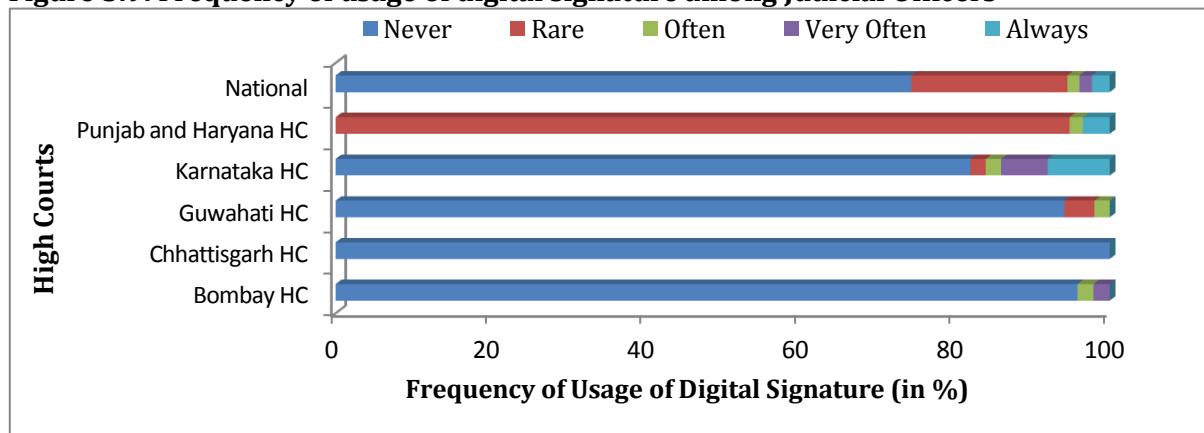
Source: Author's compilation

More than two-third of judicial officers had a digital signature in the Karnataka HC jurisdiction, which was the highest, followed by Punjab & Haryana where more than half of them had it. The lowest was observed in the Bombay and Chhattisgarh HCs, with 7.5 and 11.4 per cent, respectively.

3.3.4 Frequency of usage of digital signature

Around 75 per cent of judicial officers never use their digital signatures and only a fifth of them use it rarely (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9: Frequency of usage of digital signature among Judicial Officers



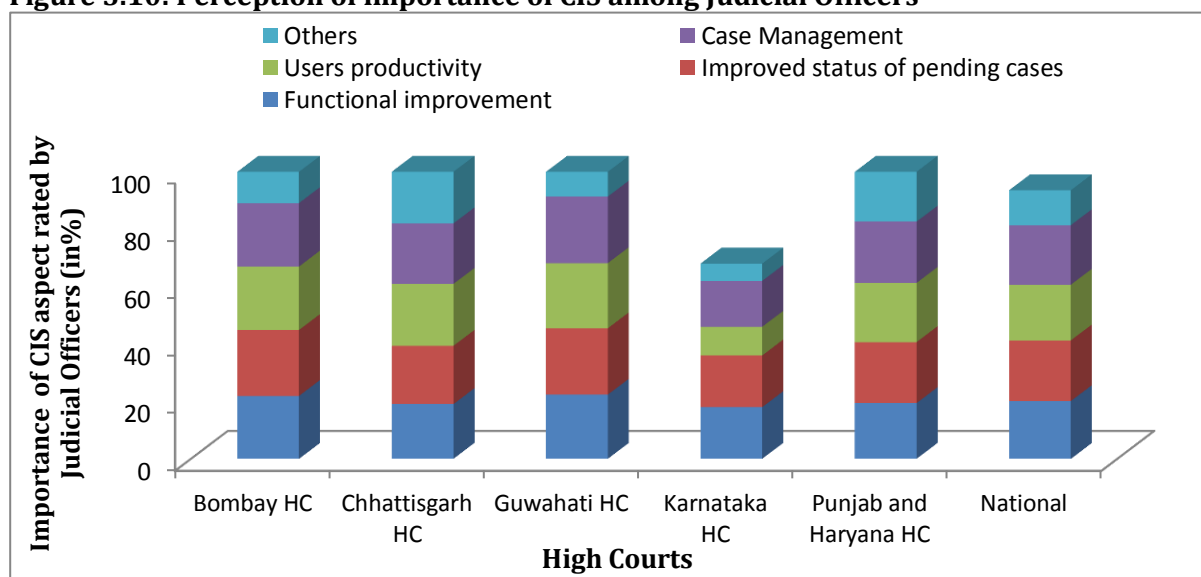
Source: Author's compilation

None of the judicial officers in the jurisdiction of the Chhattisgarh HC were using their digital signature, whereas 95 per cent of judicial officers use their digital signature rarely under the Punjab & Haryana HC.

3.4 Perception about Importance of CIS

The specialised software, CIS, which is the backbone of the eCourts project, is important for various aspects including improvement of the functional mechanism of the judiciary process, reduction in the pendency of cases and improvement in user productivity along with case management procedure. Judicial officers were asked to give their feedback on these parameters. They agreed on the equal importance of all these parameters (Figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10: Perception of importance of CIS among Judicial Officers



Source: Author's compilation

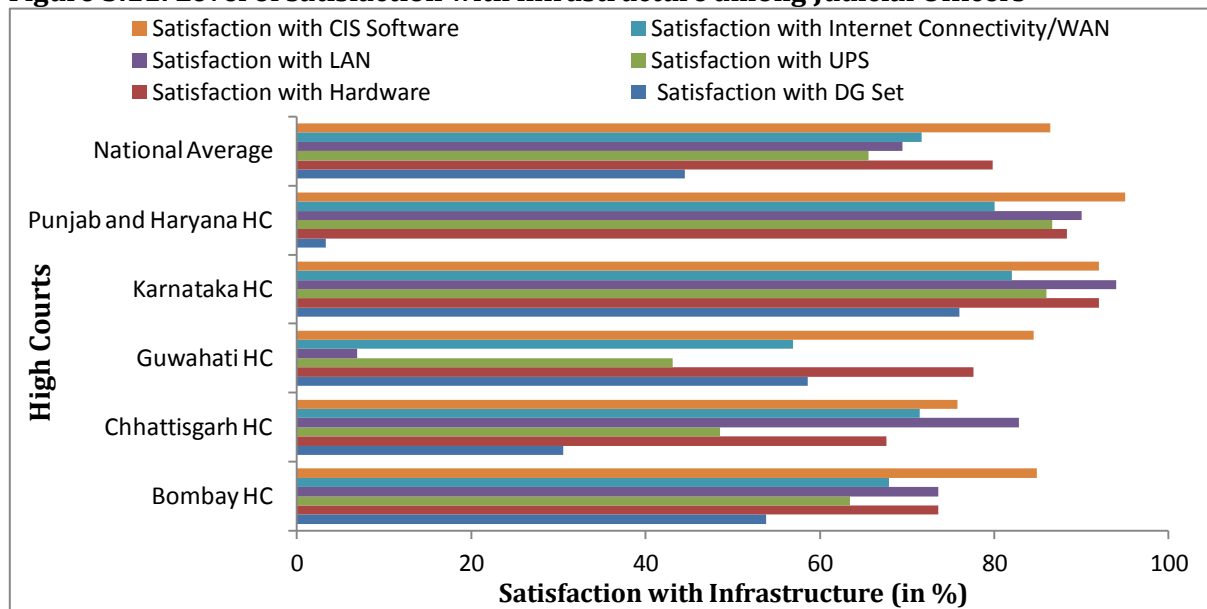
As per the perception of judicial officers, CIS is a useful tool in functional improvement and improves the status of pending cases, user productivity and case management. Across different HCs, all four objectives received around a 20 per cent response, thus establishing a trend consistent with the national figure.

3.5 Capacity Building

3.5.1 Infrastructure

Each of the district and taluka courts under the selected High Courts has been provided with the following infrastructure facilities: hardware, Local Area Network (LAN), diesel generator (DG) set, Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS), Internet connectivity (WAN) and CIS software. We enquired about the level of satisfaction on these six components of infrastructure on a five-point scale: dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, satisfied and highly satisfied. More than 80 per cent of judicial officers (Figure 3.11) were satisfied with the functioning of the CIS application and hardware at courts, while less than half the judicial officers were satisfied with the DG set. Satisfaction with LAN and WAN/Internet connection was observed to be generally less than that with the hardware and software.

Figure 3.11: Level of satisfaction with infrastructure among Judicial Officers

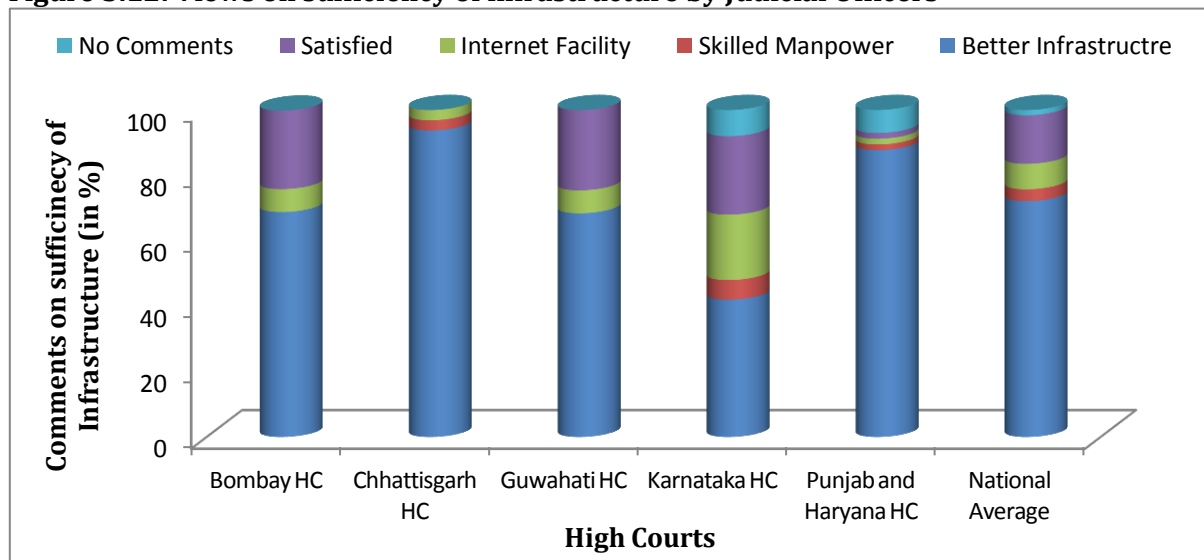


Source: Author's compilation

The survey data also showed that the highest number of judicial officers was satisfied with the functioning of the CIS application, hardware, UPS and LAN under the Punjab & Haryana HC, followed by Karnataka. The least satisfaction related to CIS application and hardware functioning was observed in the Chhattisgarh HC, for LAN functioning in Bombay and for UPS in Guwahati (Figure 3.12). The highest number of Karnataka HC judicial officers found Internet/WAN connection to be satisfactory followed by the Punjab & Haryana HC, while respondents from the Guwahati HC were the least satisfied with Internet connectivity among the five High Courts.

The demand for better infrastructure is the highest in Chhattisgarh followed by the Punjab & Haryana and Guwahati HCs. The deployment of skilled manpower is demanded in Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana HCs. Demand for good Internet facility is the highest in the Karnataka HC.

Figure 3.12: Views on sufficiency of infrastructure by Judicial Officers

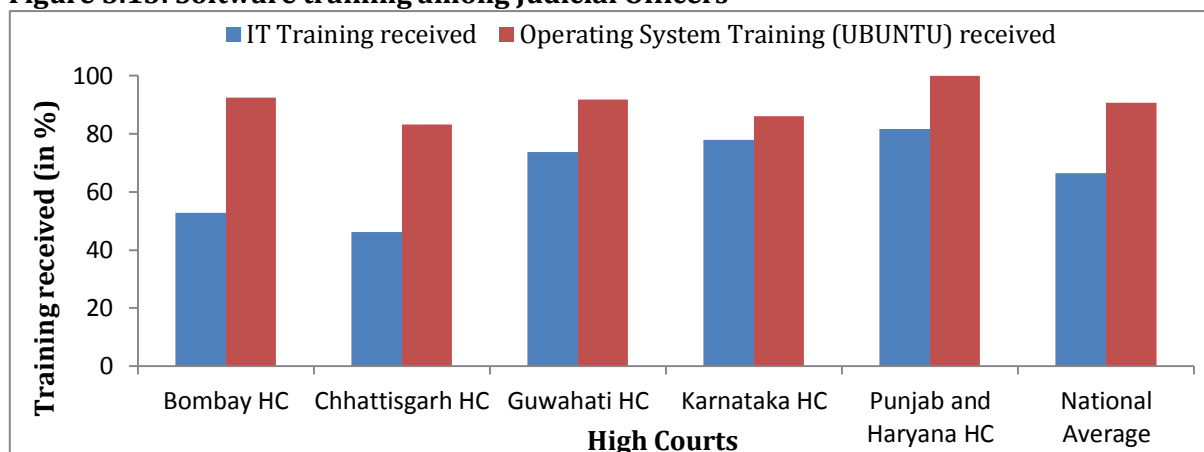


Source: Author's compilation

3.5.2 Software Training

Concerned personnel should be trained to use the software so that the system runs successfully. The survey findings (Figure 3.13) reflect that more than 80 per cent of all judicial officers received training to work on the Ubuntu operating system, while 60 per cent received basic IT training.

Figure 3.13: Software training among Judicial Officers

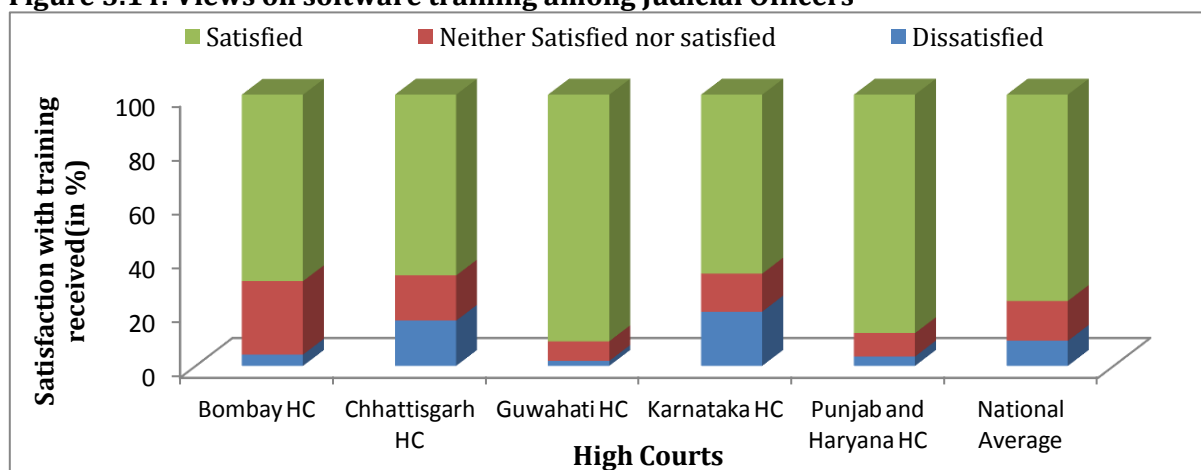


Source: Author's compilation

All judicial officers in Punjab & Haryana HC received operating system training, while 80 per cent of them received basic IT training, which is again the highest among all the High Courts. More than 80 per cent of the officers received Ubuntu training in all the surveyed HCs. The proportion of judicial officers who received basic IT training is the lowest in the Chhattisgarh HC.

It is important to know whether the training received by the judicial officers is sufficient. Seventy-five per cent of judicial officers (Figure 3.14) were satisfied with the training received.

Figure 3.14: Views on software training among Judicial Officers



Source: Author's compilation

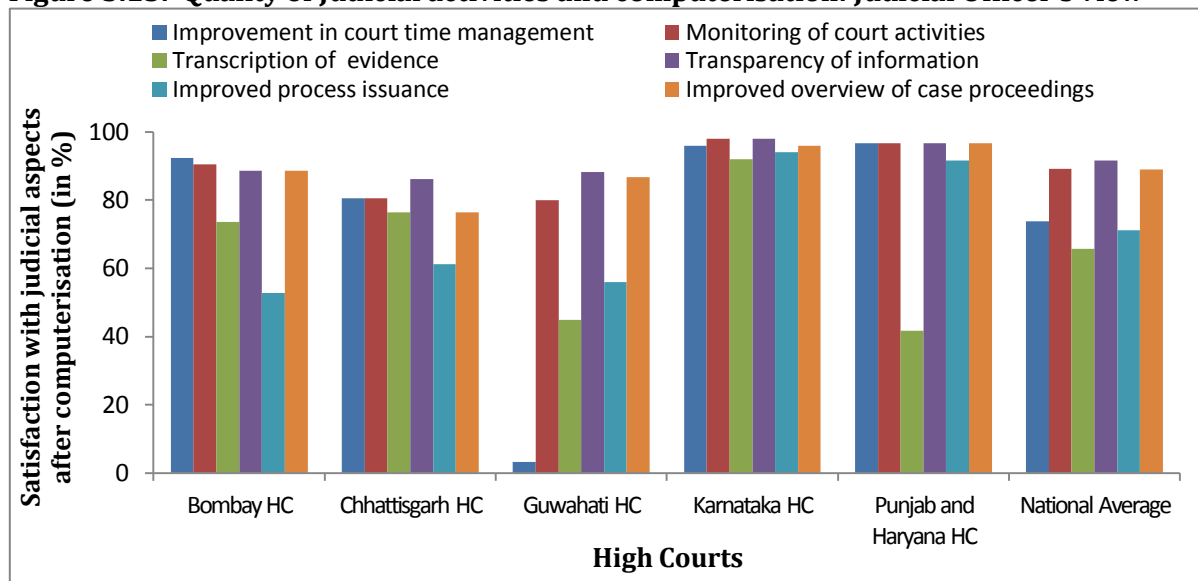
The highest number of judicial officers who were satisfied with their training belonged to the Punjab & Haryana and Guwahati HCs. The maximum number of officers who remained neutral was found in the Bombay HC, while Karnataka HC registered the highest dissatisfaction.

Many judicial officers still feel that comprehensive and rigorous training should be provided. It is important to note that 64 per cent of respondents from the Chhattisgarh HC feel the same, followed by the Bombay and Guwahati HCs.

3.6 Impact of CIS Application

Computerisation of court activities may improve time management in the daily activities of the courts. It also has the potential for a significant positive impact on monitoring court activities, transcription of evidence and transparency of information. More than 80 per cent of all judicial officers (Figure 3.15) were satisfied with the transparency of information, monitoring of court activities and overview of case processing after computerisation, while around 70 per cent of them were satisfied with the court time management, transcription of evidence and improvement in process issuance after computerisation.

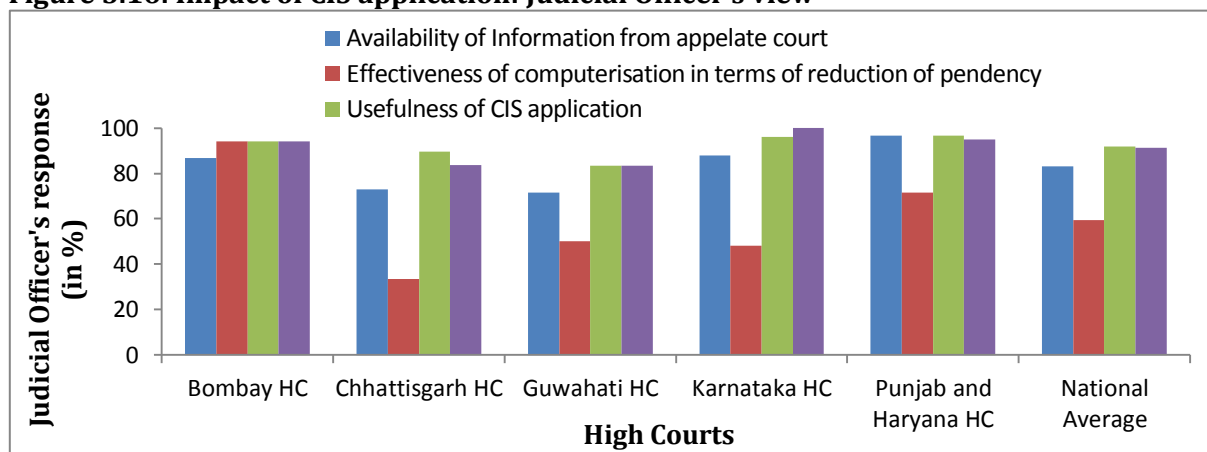
Figure 3.15: Quality of Judicial activities and computerisation: Judicial Officer's view



Source: Author's compilation

Among the surveyed HCs, judicial officers were highly satisfied with all aspects in the jurisdiction of Karnataka HC, followed by the Punjab & Haryana HC. However, in the Punjab & Haryana HC, only 40 per cent of judicial officers were satisfied with the transcription of evidence. Transparency of information and improvement in court time management were two aspects where the officials were highly satisfied, whereas transcription of evidence and process issuance case were the two aspects that officials were least satisfied about.

Figure 3.16: Impact of CIS application: Judicial Officer's view



Source: Author's compilation

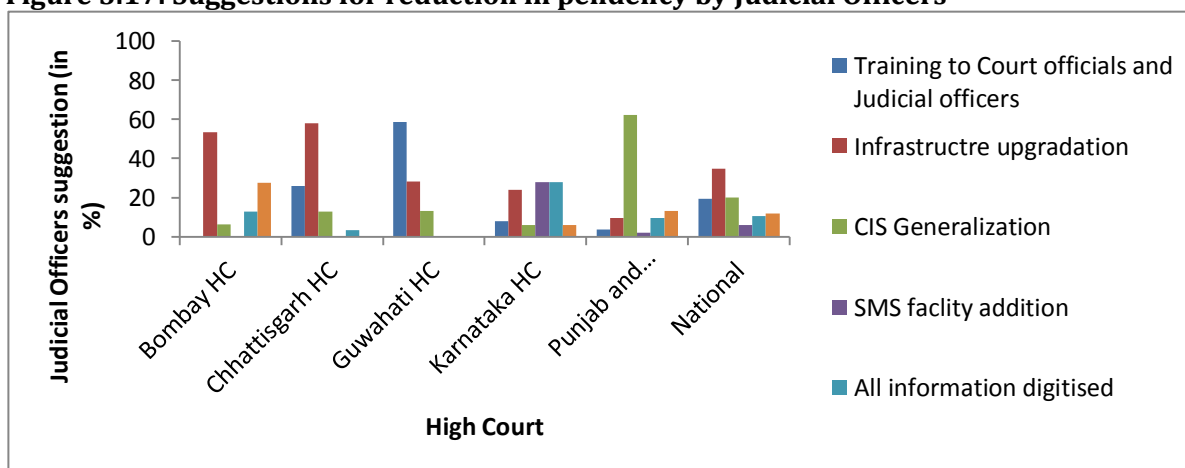
More than 80 per cent of all judicial officers (Figure 3.16) were satisfied with the availability of information from the appellate court, the usefulness of the CIS application and expectations of the

CIS, and 60 per cent of all judicial officers observed that computerisation increased effectiveness in terms of reduction of pendency.

3.7 Recommendations and Policy Suggestions

Judicial officers were asked to provide their suggestions for further improvement to reduce case pendency and overall improvement of the process, along with specific suggestions to make the CIS application more user-friendly. The majority of the judicial officers (Figure 3.17) suggested that the infrastructure should be upgraded and all information digitised, to reduce pendency in the courts. This is in line with one of the long-term goals of the eCourts mission mode project, which is to reduce pendency in cases.

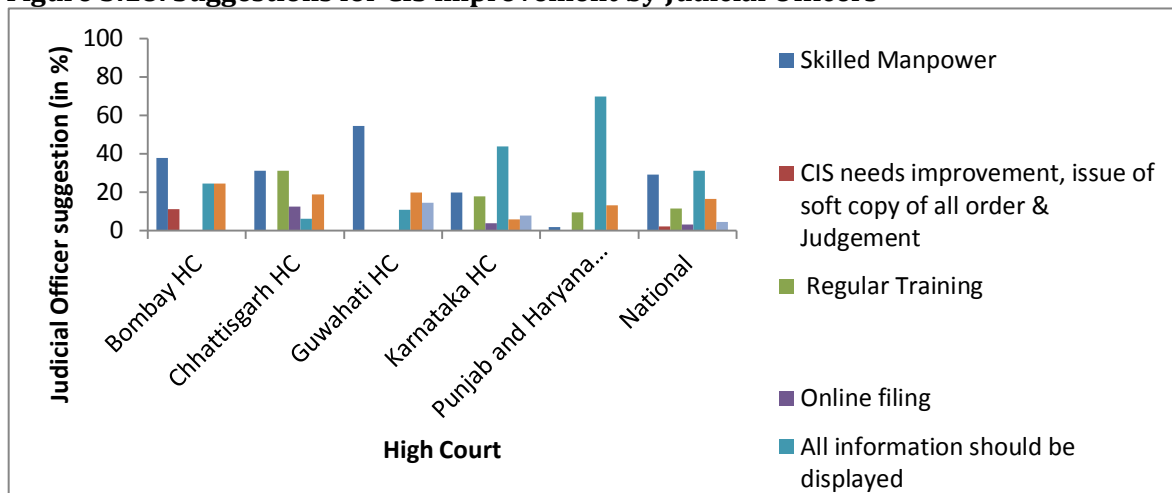
Figure 3.17: Suggestions for reduction in pendency by Judicial Officers



Source: Author's compilation

While a few judicial officers in the Bombay HC pointed out that CIS functions should be improved and soft copies of all orders and judgements should also be provided, most of them opted for the deployment of skilled manpower and infrastructure upgrading. A significant number of respondents in the Punjab & Haryana, Karnataka and Bombay HCs pitched for easy access to case information, while a few wanted online filing to be introduced at the earliest in the Chhattisgarh HC.

Figure 3.18: Suggestions for CIS improvement by Judicial Officers



Source: Author's compilation

More than 40 per cent of all judicial officers (Figure 3.18) wanted additional features in the CIS software. The expectation is similar across all the High Courts with the exception of the Karnataka HC where more judicial officers felt that the display of the required information online can make CIS more useful. Around 35 per cent said that further training should be provided to the court staff to increase the usefulness of the CIS application in all High Courts. Only around 10 per cent advocated online access to case information.

3.8 Conclusion

In summary, lack of manpower is an important bottleneck in the smooth functioning of the system according to this group of stakeholders. They mentioned that “due to lack of efficient staff, the project is not implemented properly”. It was also mentioned that “an assistant should be given to the bench assistant to keep the CIS of the court up-to-date”. The second important concern is providing training to the related officials. Judicial officers in their individual reviews mentioned that “computer education to all the staff should be compulsory”. They also urged intensive training on the CIS application. Improvement in connectivity is another major concern. One of them mentioned that “the CIS application may be connected to the laptops, at least in their chambers.” While there is another opinion on customisation of CIS software based on local needs, “error correction is found to be difficult for the local administration as there is no local access to CIS”. Many of them wanted customisation of user interface based on the state’s need. They also want control over that particular part of the application by the state. Judicial officers similarly suggested developing a program to maintain account branch, property branch, register of

finer and penalties, etc. There are situations where judicial officers do not directly use the application. It was mentioned that “as a judicial officer, I do not directly use CIS. The stenographer and clerk in my court use the application.” In a nutshell, recruitment of manpower, training and customisation of software were their major concerns.

Judicial officers also insisted on the removal of redundant manual processes for which modules have already been prepared in the CIS application. Their recommendations include organising awareness camps for lawyers and litigants.

Perspective of Court Officials

Chapter 4

Perspective of Court Officials

4.1 Introduction

Court officials are end-users of the eCourts project. They play a crucial role as one of the main resources of the judiciary. They directly use all the infrastructure provided by the eCourts project and are trained to run the system efficiently. Court officials mainly work as court clerks, technical personnel or as a court manager. Three hundred court officials were surveyed across the district and taluka courts under the jurisdiction of the five selected High Courts. They gave feedback on their awareness about the eCourts project and usage of the portal, the service delivery mechanism and the availability and adequacy of infrastructure. They were also asked whether court officials receive training. These are the people who deal with the application software, CIS, on a regular basis. Hence, computer training along with training to run the CIS application is crucial for the success of the project and their feedback is important to figure out upgrades of the software in the next phase of the project. This group of stakeholders shared their experience in terms of training received and whether it was sufficient for the transition of the judicial mechanism from a manual to a computerised system. They also gave their feedback on the services provided by vendors. Court officials participated in an online survey and completed the structured questionnaires.

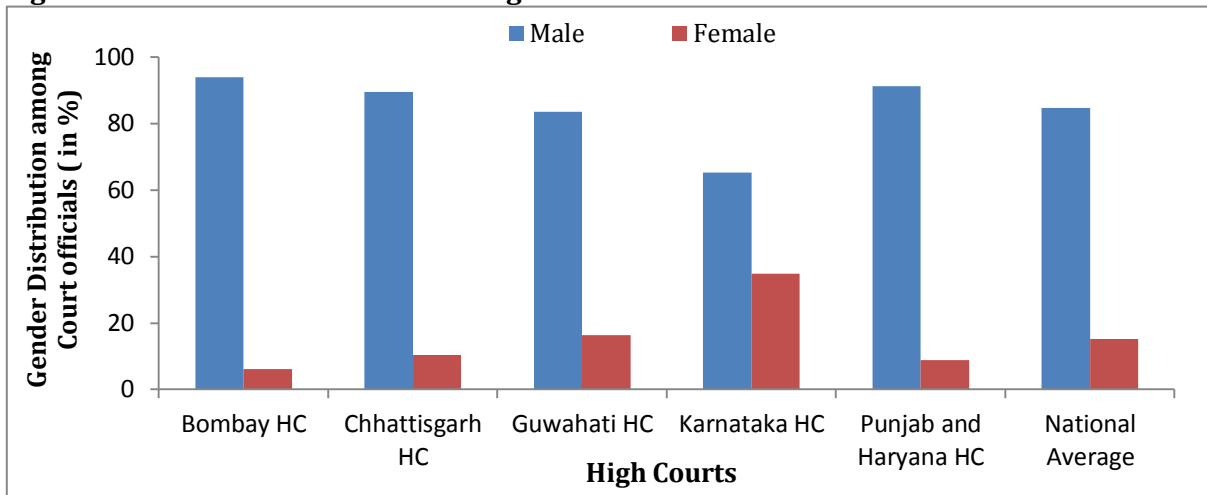
4.2 Background of Court Officials

We will discuss the background of the court officials briefly in the following paragraphs before discussing their detailed feedback on the parameters. The following parameters were considered to depict the background of this group of respondents: gender, association with a particular court, number of years of work experience in courts and their level of proficiency in using computers.

4.2.1 Gender distribution

More than 80 per cent (Figure 4.1) of the surveyed court officials were male.

Figure 4.1: Gender distribution among Court Officials



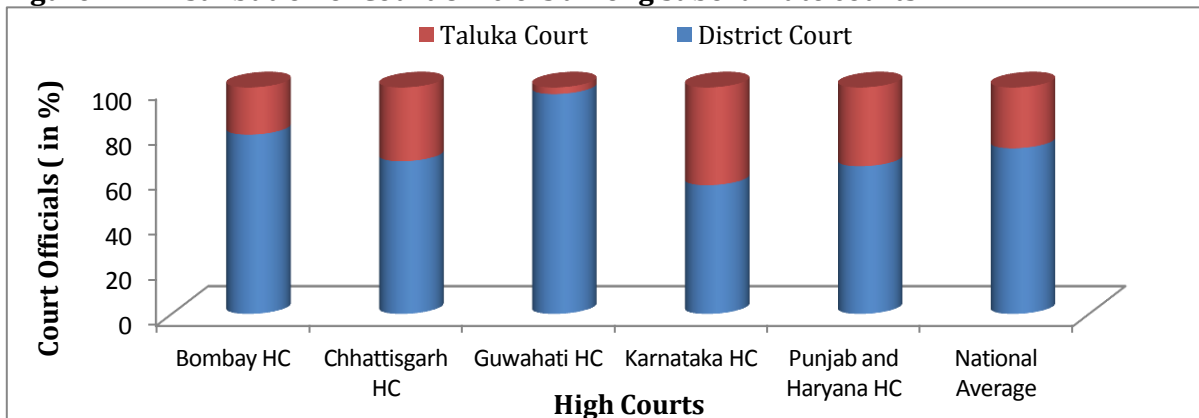
Source: Author's compilation

The number of female court officials was the maximum in the jurisdiction of the Karnataka HC, with a third of the surveyed court officials, whereas the Bombay HC showed the lowest participation of females followed by the Punjab & Haryana and Chhattisgarh HCs. Hence, it can be seen that the gender ratio among employees is skewed in almost all the surveyed HCs.

4.2.2 Representation from district/subordinate court

On average, less than 75 per cent of all court officials (Figure 4.2) were associated with the District Court, while a fourth of them were associated with a Taluka Court.

Figure 4.2: Distribution of Court Officers among subordinate courts



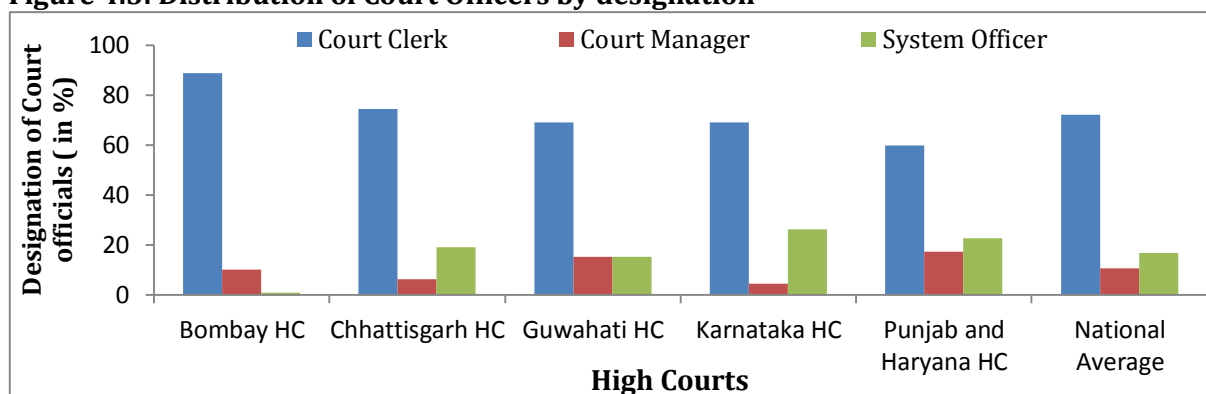
Source: Author's compilation

The Guwahati HC recorded more than 90 per cent of court officials associated with the District Court, which was the highest among all surveyed HCs, whereas the number of officials associated with Taluka Courts was the highest in the Karnataka HC, followed by the Punjab & Haryana HC.

4.2.3 Distribution by designation

Most of the participating court officials (Figure 4.3) were court clerks. The minimum number of system officers was found in the Bombay HC, whereas less than 5 per cent of court officials were court managers in the Karnataka and Chhattisgarh HCs.

Figure 4.3: Distribution of Court Officers by designation



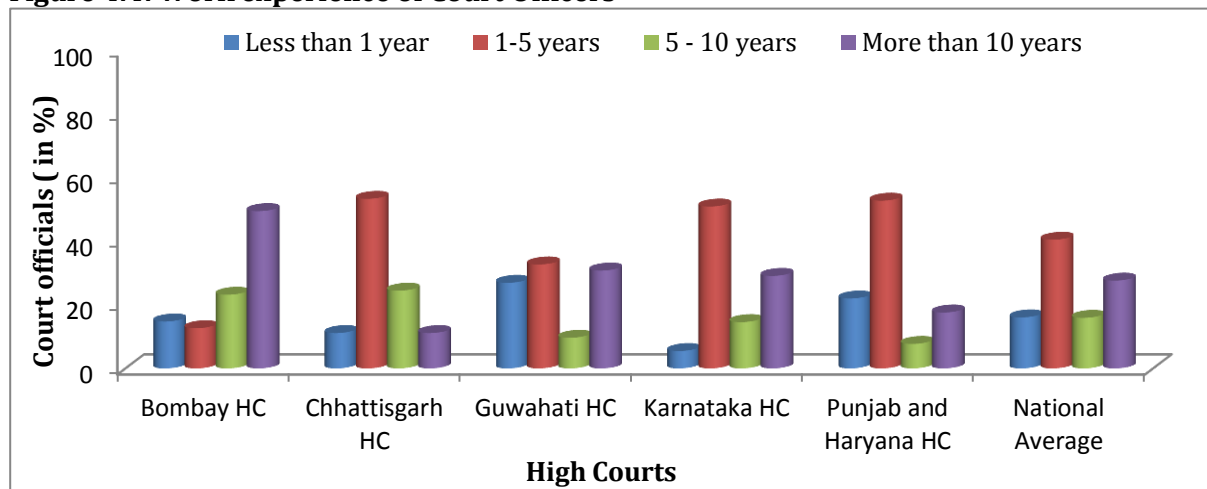
Source: Author's compilation

It can be seen that there is a disproportionately high number of clerks in courts, with only around 15 per cent for technical manpower (System Officers) on average. So, there is a pressing need to hire employees with greater technical acumen to increase the efficiency of the computerisation procedure.

4.2.4 Work experience

The majority of the court officials (Figure 4.4) have worked in the judiciary for more than one year but for less than five years on average.

Figure 4.4: Work experience of Court Officers



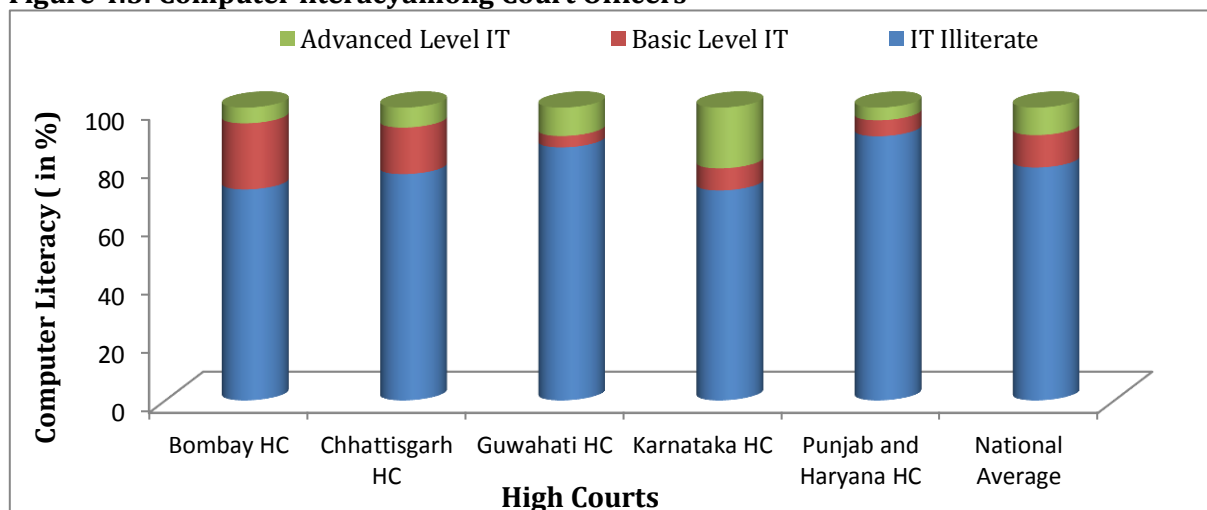
Source: Author's compilation

The Bombay HC had the maximum number of court officials with experience of more than 10 years, whereas most court officials had experience of 1–5 years in the remaining HCs. The Guwahati HC had the maximum number of officials with less than one year of experience.

4.2.5 Knowledge of computer

Around 80 per cent (Figure 4.5) of all court officials did not have any knowledge of computers. On an average, less than 10 per cent of the officials had an advanced level of IT proficiency.

Figure 4.5: Computer literacy among Court Officers



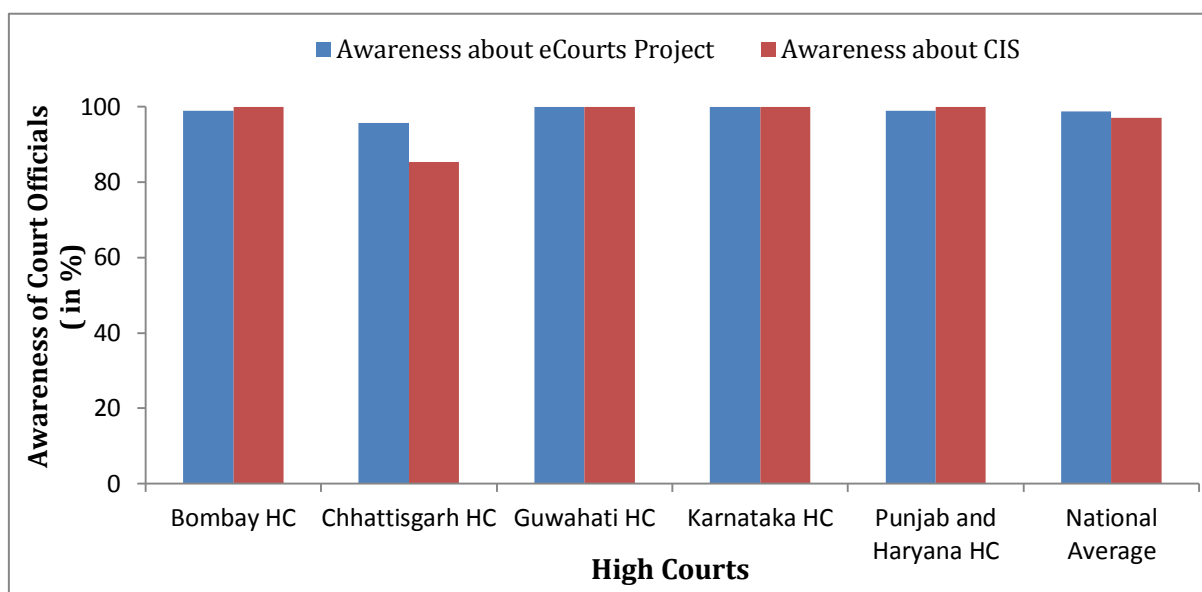
Source: Author's compilation

It was also found that the number of court officials with either a basic or advanced level IT knowledge was the maximum in the Bombay and Karnataka HCs; in the Bombay HC most of them had basic IT proficiency, but in Karnataka they had advanced IT knowledge. The Punjab & Haryana HC had the maximum number (around 90 per cent) of IT-illiterate officials followed by the Guwahati HC. It can be seen that the proportion of employees with any technical knowledge is very low (barely 20 per cent) and, hence, there is a need to hire skilled manpower or provide adequate training to the current staff.

4.3 Awareness and Usage of Portal

Almost all court officials (Figure 4.6) were aware of the eCourts project and the CIS application, except in Chhattisgarh where the level of awareness was lower. Although awareness about eCourts was around 95 per cent in the jurisdiction of the Chhattisgarh HC, awareness among court officials about the CIS application was lower mainly due to partial or non-implementation of the CIS application in some court complexes.

Figure 4.6: Awareness about eCourts project among Court Officials



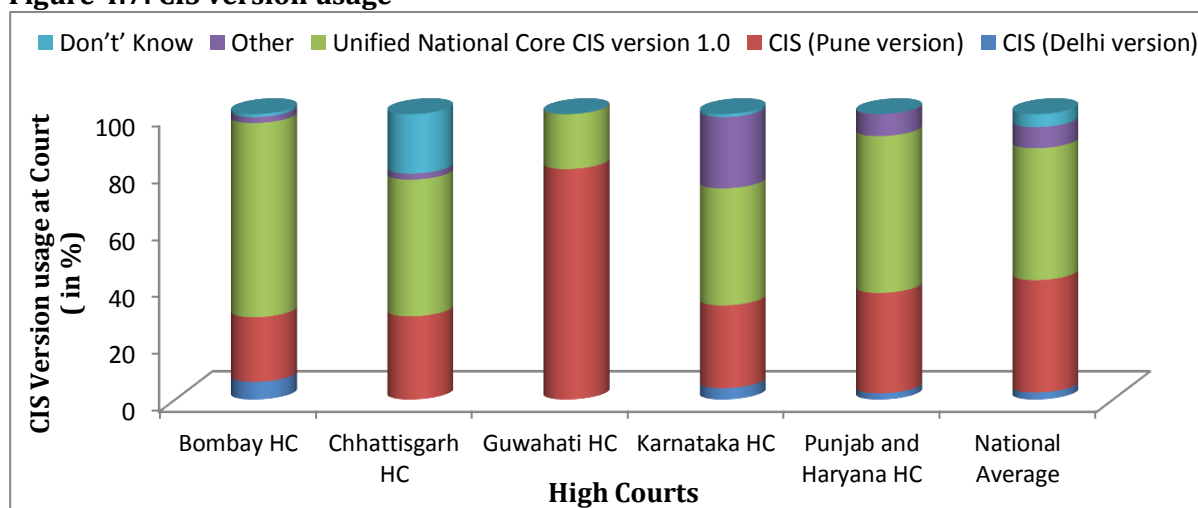
Source: Author's compilation

Awareness programmes and regular training would help officials to keep up with changes in the system.

4.3.1 Types of CIS version usage

Less than half of all court officials (Figure 4.7) were using the Unified National Core version 1.1 of CIS, and more than a third were using CIS (Pune version). Less than 10 per cent of court officials were using any other version of CIS in the five High Courts.

Figure 4.7: CIS version usage



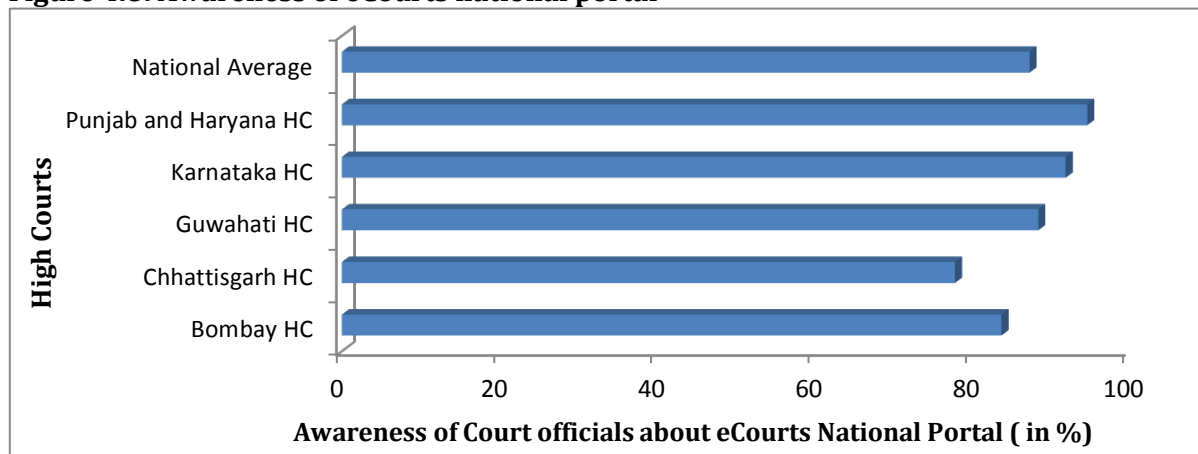
Source: Author's compilation

Less than three-fourths of court officials in the Bombay HC were using the Unified Core CIS version 1.1, which was the highest among all HCs, followed by half the court officials in the Punjab & Haryana HC. The highest number of CIS (Pune version) users was found in the Guwahati HC, while 20 per cent of the court officials in the Karnataka HC reported that they were using some 'other' version of CIS, i.e., Version 1.2. But more than 20 per cent of court officials in the Chhattisgarh HC did not even know which version of CIS they were using at court, displaying a lack of awareness and training among court officials.

4.3.2 Awareness of the eCourts National Portal

More than 80 per cent of all court officials (Figure 4.8) were aware of the eCourts National Portal, the number being greater than 80 per cent in all HCs except Chhattisgarh, which has been the trend so far.

Figure 4.8: Awareness of eCourts national portal

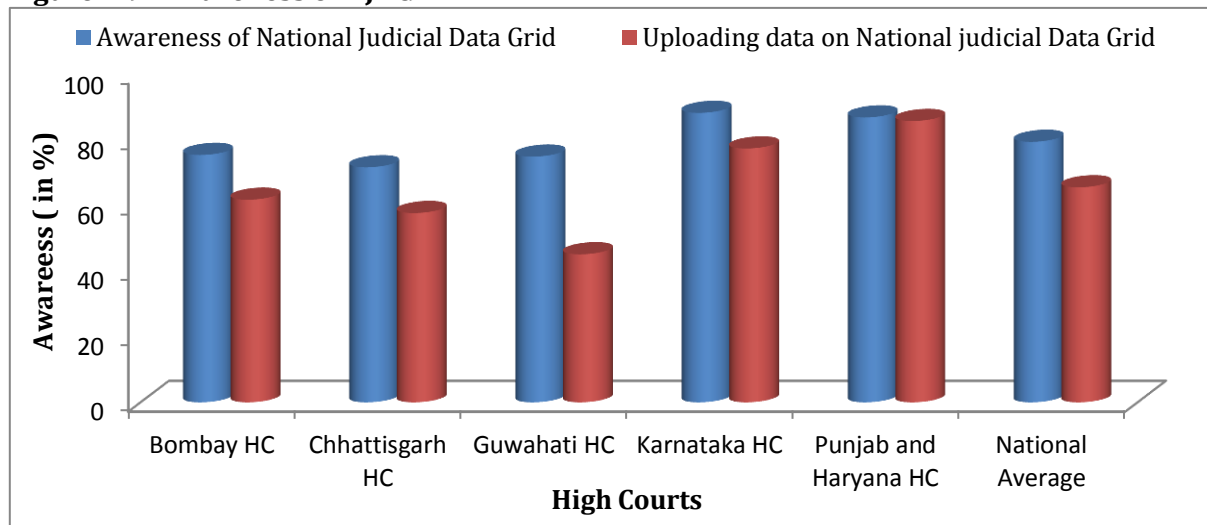


Source: Author's compilation

4.3.3 Awareness of NJDG and frequency of uploading

More than three-fourth of all court officials (Figure 4.9) were aware of the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), and 65 per cent reported that they were uploading data on NJDG.

Figure 4.9: Awareness of NJDG



Source: Author's compilation

The highest level of awareness about the NJDG was observed in the Karnataka HC followed by Punjab & Haryana, and the lowest was observed in the Chhattisgarh HC. The highest number of court officials who upload data on the NJDG was observed in Punjab & Haryana HC followed by the Karnataka HC. It can be therefore observed that a useful piece of infrastructure is not available/equipped for use to about 35 per cent of the employees, thus reducing the overall efficiency of the system.

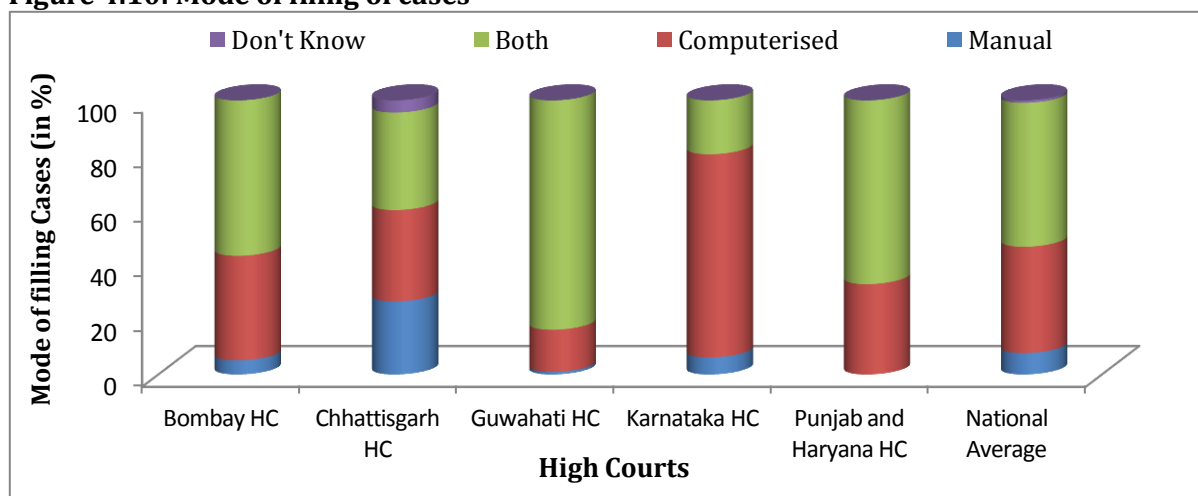
4.4 Mode of Service Delivery

Court officials were asked to inform us, to their awareness, about the system being used to perform a few vital judicial activities in their courts. Their responses were categorised into four qualitative groups: “Exclusively manual”, “Exclusively computerised”, “Both” or “Don’t know”. Courts using both systems for certain activities usually depended on manual channels for the majority of the work.

4.4.1 Filing of cases

More than half the respondents (Figure 4.10) reported that filing of cases was done through both computerised and manual systems, while less than 40 per cent of them said an exclusive computerised system was used.

Figure 4.10: Mode of filing of cases



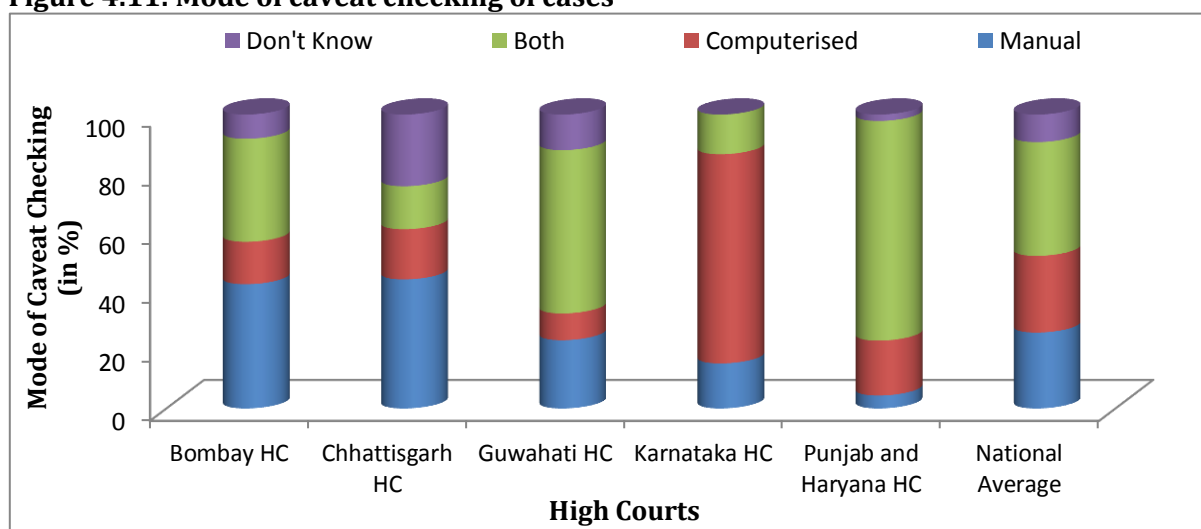
Source: Author's compilation

Around three-fourth of the court officials in the Karnataka HC mentioned that filing of cases was done exclusively through a computerised system, whereas it was the lowest (15 per cent) in the Guwahati HC where the majority of officials used both systems. Hence, the extent of computerisation varies from 15 per cent in Guwahati to 74 per cent in Karnataka; however, the average level was as low as 39 per cent.

4.4.2 Caveat checking of cases

Only a fourth of all court officials (Figure 4.11) reported that caveat checking was done exclusively through a computerised system in court, and just less than 40 per cent reported the use of both manual and computerised, systems. Around 10 per cent of surveyed officials did not know which mode of caveat checking of cases was used in their court.

Figure 4.11: Mode of caveat checking of cases



Source: Author's compilation

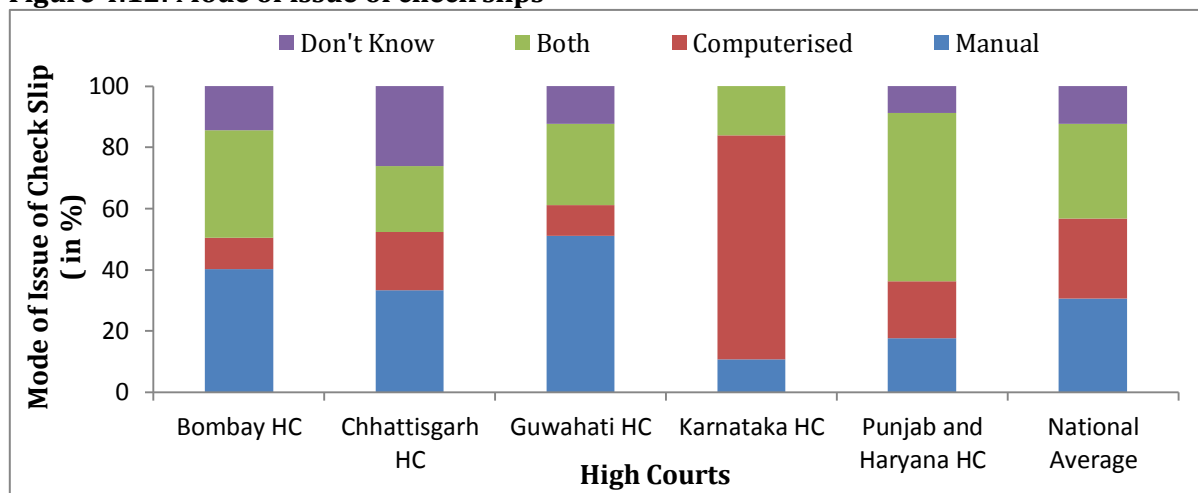
The maximum number of court officials (around 70 per cent) in Karnataka HC observed that caveat checking in court complexes was being done exclusively through a computerised system, whereas the majority in the Bombay and Chhattisgarh HCs observed that an exclusively manual channel was used. More than 20 per cent of court officials in the Chhattisgarh HC did not know which system was used in their court. The computerisation ranged from a paltry 9 per cent in Guwahati to around 71 per cent in Karnataka; however, the overall computerisation under the five High Courts stood at a poor 26 per cent.

4.4.3 Issue of check slips

Check slips were issued (Figure 4.12) exclusively through a manual system according to one-fourth of the court officials, and around 40 per cent reported that it was done via both manual and

computerised systems. Only a fourth of them said that check slips were issued exclusively through a computerised system in the court complex.

Figure 4.12: Mode of issue of check slips



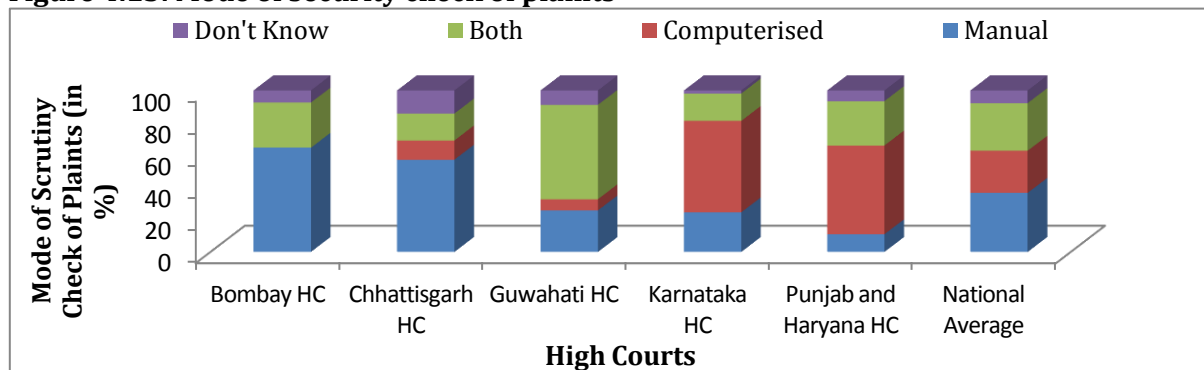
Source: Author's compilation

Karnataka HC officials reported the maximum exclusive usage of a computerised system to issue check slips, whereas the Bombay and Guwahati HCs observed the minimum usage of the same. Guwahati HC officials observed the maximum exclusive usage of the manual system for check slip issue. Once again, computerisation was observed to be the lowest in Guwahati and Chhattisgarh and the highest in Karnataka, with the overall computerisation in all surveyed HCs standing very low at 26 per cent.

4.4.4 Scrutiny check of complaints

A fourth of all court officials (Figure 4.13) responded that scrutiny check of complaints was done exclusively through a computerised system, while more than a fourth of them observed that it was through both manual and computerised systems. The majority of the surveyed officials pointed to an exclusive manual system as the mode for scrutiny check of complaints in court.

Figure 4.13: Mode of security check of plaints



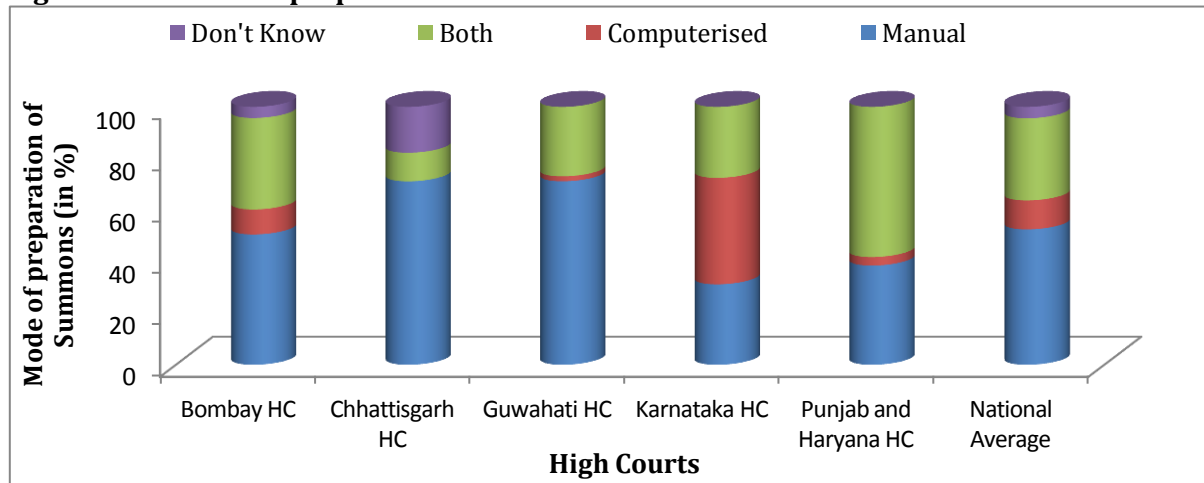
Source: Author's compilation

Court officials in the Bombay HC stated that scrutiny check of plaints was mainly done through a manual system, followed by Chhattisgarh, while the majority of officials in the Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana HCs observed that it was done exclusively through a computerised system. The computerisation in security check of plaints was pegged once again at 26 per cent, with Bombay, Guwahati and Chhattisgarh posting less than 10 per cent use of the same.

4.4.5 Preparation of summons

Around half of all court officials (Figure 4.14) conveyed that summons was prepared manually at court, while 30 per cent of them reported that it was done through both manual and computerised systems. Only 10 per cent of them said that summons were prepared exclusively through a computerised system.

Figure 4.14: Mode of preparation of summons



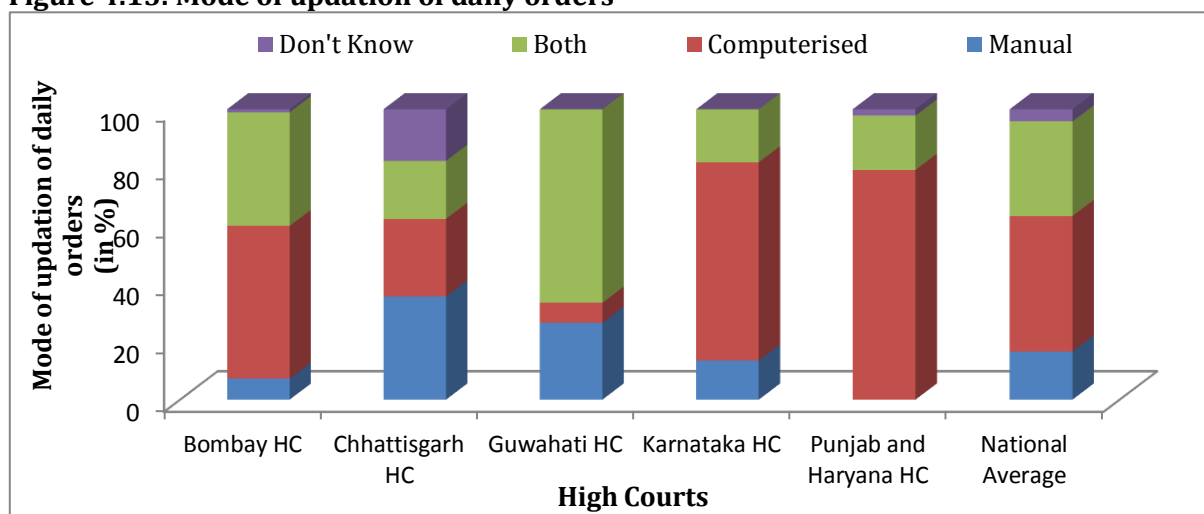
Source: Author's compilation

Around 40 per cent of the court officials in the Karnataka HC jurisdiction reported that summons were prepared exclusively through a computerised system. In contrast, more than half the officials of the Punjab & Haryana HC said that it was done through both manual and computerised systems, followed by the Bombay HC. In the Guwahati and Chhattisgarh HC jurisdictions, the maximum number of court officials observed that it was done exclusively through a manual system. This process had the worst performance among all judicial activities with overall computerisation of around 11 per cent, and Chhattisgarh and Guwahati almost completely dependent on manual channels.

4.4.6 Update of daily orders

Less than half the court officials (Figure 4.15) said that daily orders were updated exclusively through a computerised system, and a third of them pointed out that it was done through both manual and computerised systems.

Figure 4.15: Mode of updation of daily orders



Source: Author's compilation

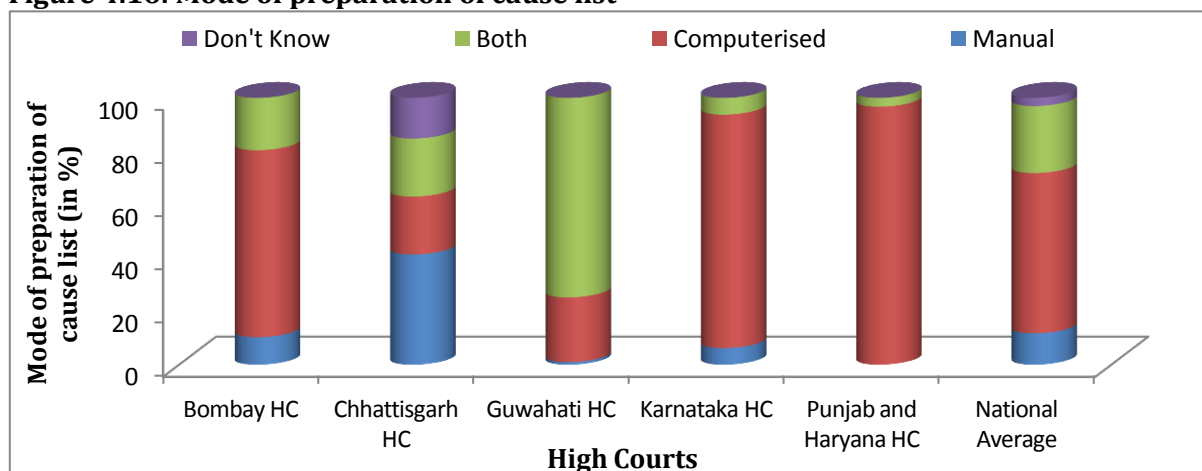
Nearly 80 per cent of court officials in the Punjab & Haryana HC observed that daily orders were updated exclusively through a computerised system in courts, followed by the Karnataka and Bombay HCs. Less than 10 per cent of court officials in the Guwahati HC said that updates took place through a computerised system, which was the lowest among all HCs, followed by the Chhattisgarh HC. It was also observed that nearly 20 per cent of officials in the Chhattisgarh HC were not aware of the channel used in their court. It can be seen that over 46 per cent of officials reported the use of a computerised system to update daily orders, which is one of the highest

computerisation rates among the processes. But there is huge scope for development in Guwahati and Chhattisgarh for the same.

4.4.7 Preparation of Cause List

Based on the survey findings (Figure 4.16) it was seen that, on average, 60 per cent of all court officials reported that the Cause List was prepared exclusively through a computerised system in court complexes and a fourth of the officials observed that it was done through both manual and computerised channels.

Figure 4.16: Mode of preparation of cause list



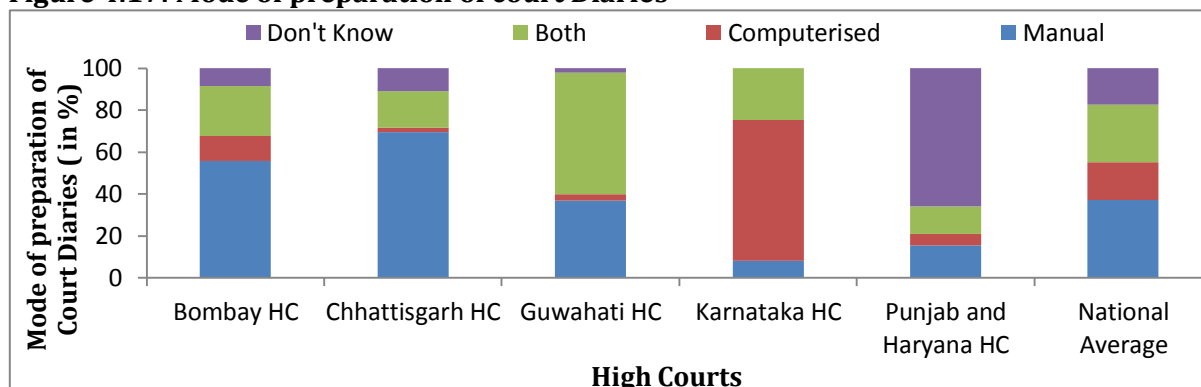
Source: Author's compilation

A high number of officials (40 per cent) in the Chhattisgarh HC observed that the cause list was still prepared exclusively through a manual system, which was the highest among all HCs. No official from Punjab & Haryana HC pointed to a manual mode of preparation, i.e., more than 95 per cent of them reported that it was done exclusively through a computerised system, which was the highest among all HCs, followed by the Karnataka and Bombay HCs. Nearly three-fourth of court officials in the Guwahati HC observed that both manual and computerised systems were being used to prepare cause lists. Computerisation of cause list preparation went as high as 60 per cent in all surveyed HCs on an average, but there is still massive scope for improvement in Chhattisgarh and Guwahati.

4.4.8 Preparation of court diaries

Nearly 40 per cent of all officials (Figure 4.17) responded that court diaries were prepared exclusively through a manual system, while less than 20 per cent observed that it was done exclusively via a computerised system, which shows the low pace of computerisation.

Figure 4.17: Mode of preparation of court Diaries



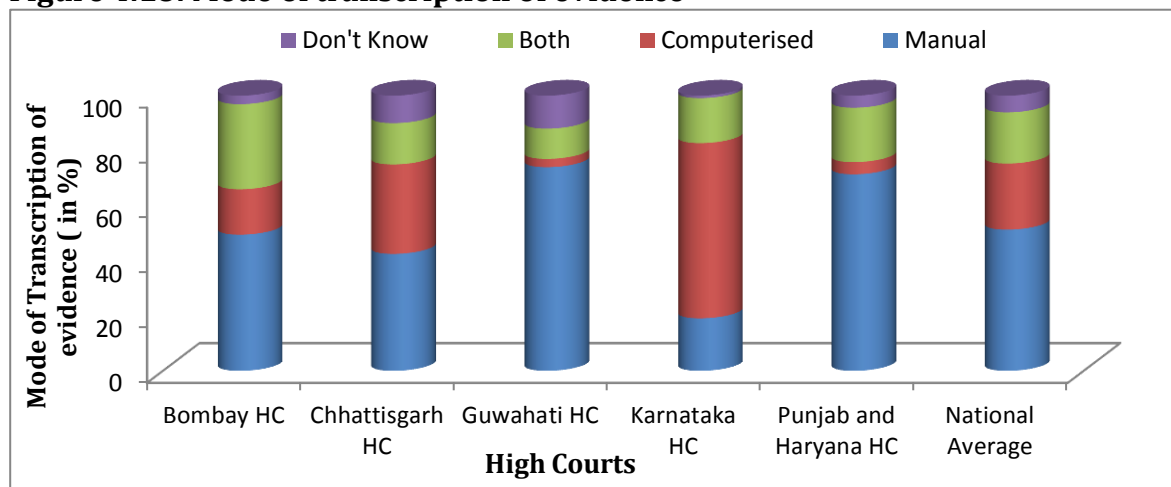
Source: Author's compilation

Nearly 70 per cent of court officials in the Chhattisgarh HC observed that court diaries were prepared exclusively through a manual system, followed by the Bombay HC where more than half the officials observed the same. The majority of Karnataka HC officials conveyed that diaries were prepared exclusively through a computerised system. A very discouraging finding was that more than 65 per cent of court officials in the Punjab & Haryana HC had no knowledge of the mode of preparation of court diaries in court. Overall, a paltry 18 per cent of computerisation was observed, with all states, except Karnataka, performing very poorly on that front.

4.4.9 Transcription of evidence

Half the court officials (Figure 4.18) pointed to the use of an exclusive manual system for the transcription of evidence, whereas only 20 per cent of them observed that it is being done exclusively through a computerised system.

Figure 4.18: Mode of transcription of evidence



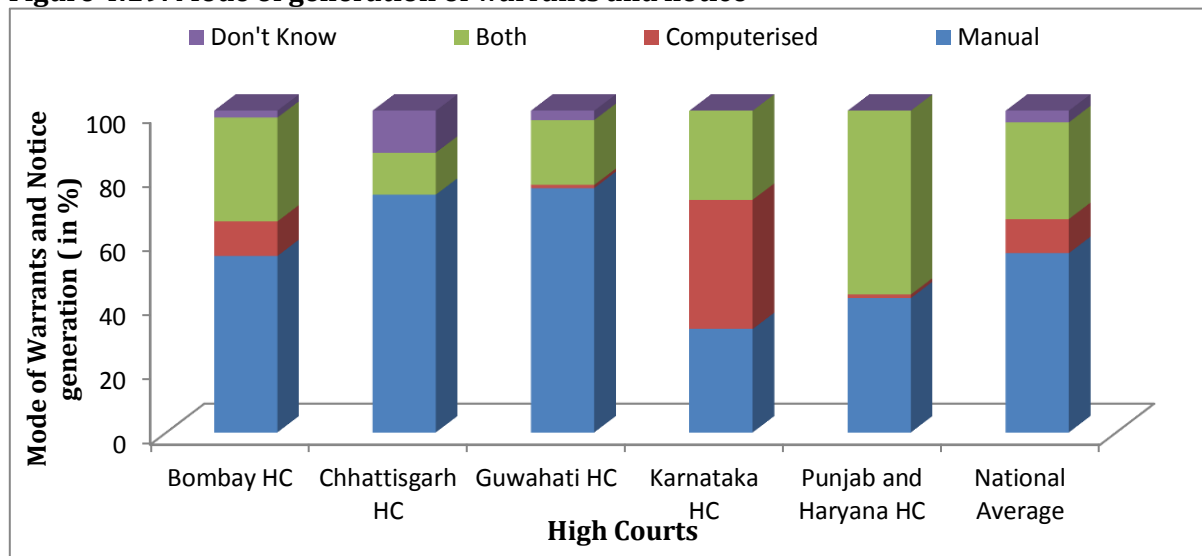
Source: Author's compilation

Over 70 per cent of court officials in the Guwahati and Punjab & Haryana HCs observed that transcription of evidence was done exclusively through a manual system, followed by the Bombay HC with around half the officials stating the same. Nearly 60 per cent of court officials in Karnataka HC observed that it was being done exclusively through a computerised system.

4.4.10 Warrants and notice generation

According to the survey findings (Figure 4.19), more than half the court officials said that warrants and notice were generated manually in court, whereas around 30 per cent of them reported that it was done through both manual and computerised systems. Only 10 per cent of respondents said that warrants and notices were generated exclusively through a computerised system.

Figure 4.19: Mode of generation of warrants and notice



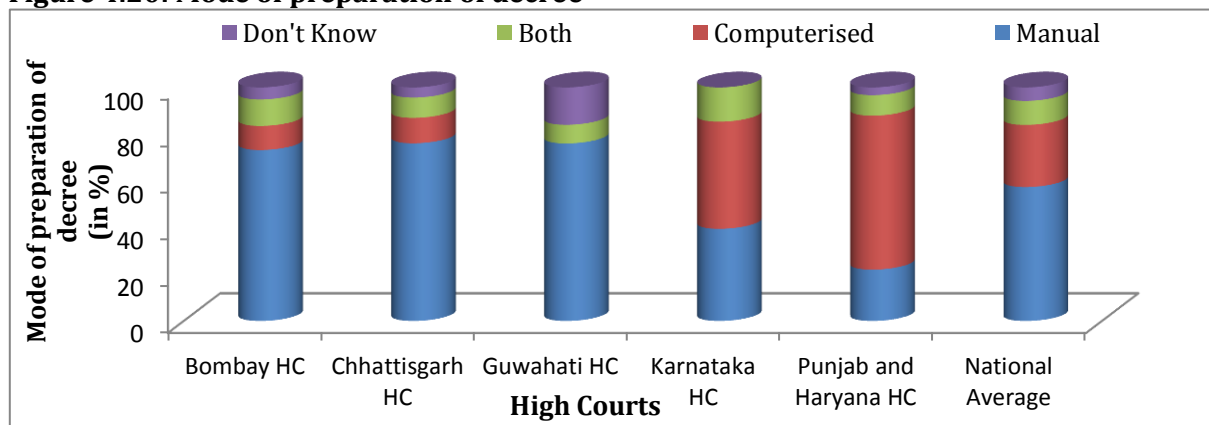
Source: Author's compilation

Exclusive warrants and notice generation through a computerised channel was observed to be the highest (40 per cent) in Karnataka HC, whereas manual generation of the same was found to cover around 75 per cent of all cases in the Guwahati and Chhattisgarh HCs. In the Punjab & Haryana HC, more than half the warrants and notices were generated through both manual and computerised systems. The level of overall computerisation was poor at 10 per cent, with almost zero usage in Chhattisgarh, Guwahati and Punjab & Haryana.

4.4.11 Preparation of decree

Only a fourth of all court officials (Figure 4.20) reported that decrees were prepared exclusively through a computerised system, whereas almost 60 per cent of officials accepted that it was still prepared manually in court complexes.

Figure 4.20: Mode of preparation of decree



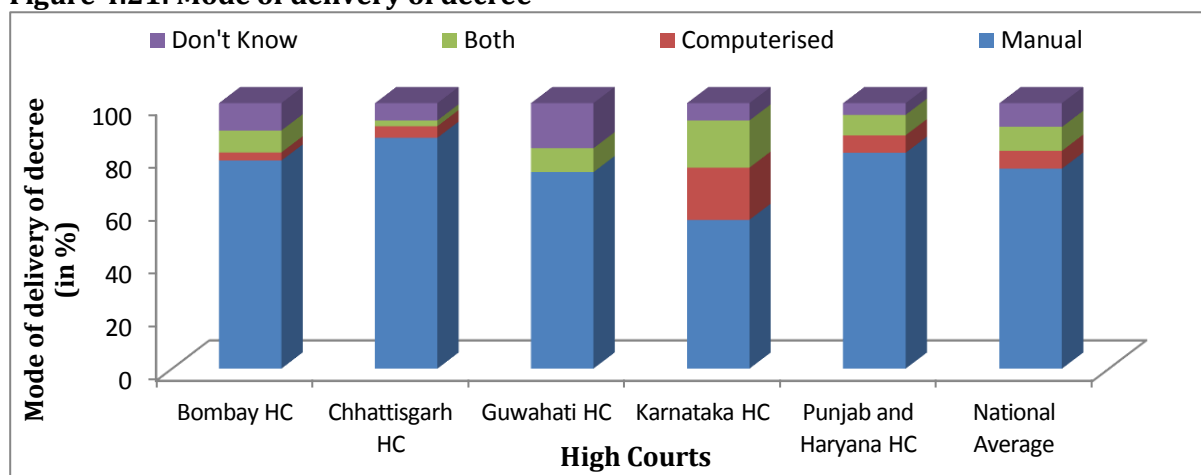
Source: Author's compilation

All HCs had more than 60 per cent of responses in favour of decrees being prepared exclusively via a manual system, with the exception of Punjab & Haryana and Karnataka, where more than 65 and 45 per cent of officials, respectively, observed that the decree was prepared exclusively through a computerised system. The level of computerisation was pegged at around 26 per cent with most of the contribution from the Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana HCs.

4.4.12 Delivery of decree

In all surveyed HCs, more than three-fourth of the respondents stated that decrees were delivered manually at courts, with the exception of the Karnataka HC where the number was closer to half. Only 9 per cent of them observed that it was delivered exclusively through a computerised mechanism (Figure 4.21).

Figure 4.21: Mode of delivery of decree



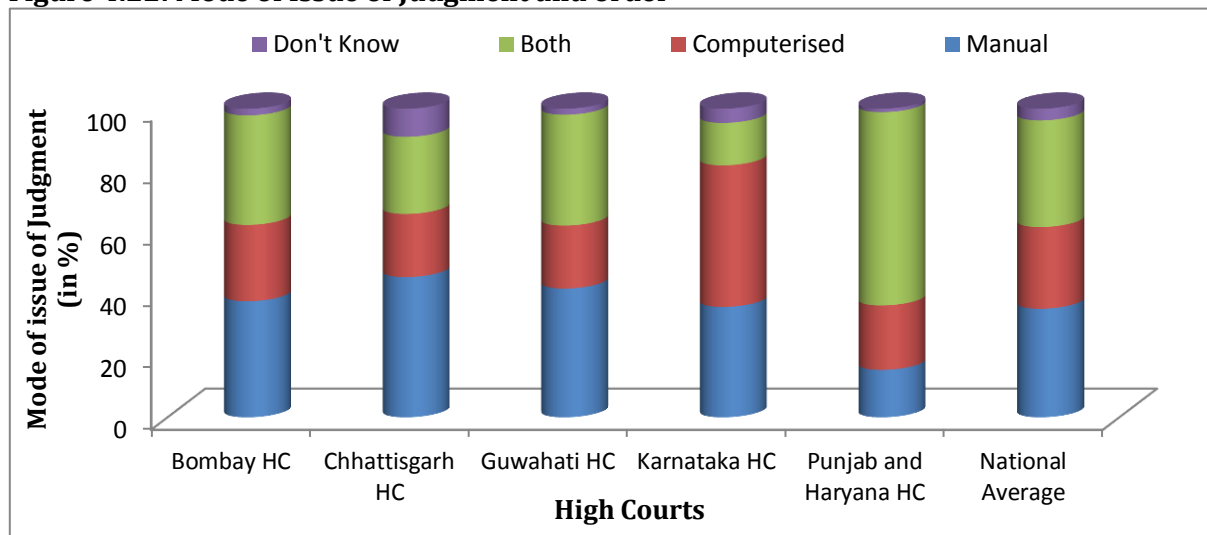
Source: Author's compilation

It was also observed that the majority of court officials reported that decrees were being delivered exclusively through a manual system. Only in the Karnataka HC, around 20 per cent of the officials said that it was delivered exclusively through a computerised system. The level of computerisation was extremely poor at less than 7 per cent, pointing to the urgent need to upgrade the delivery channels along with more infrastructure and better training.

4.4.13 Issue of judgement & order

More than a fourth of all court officials (Figure 4.22) explained that judgements and orders were issued exclusively through a computerised system, whereas around 35 per cent of them said that it was done exclusively through a manual system at the national level.

Figure 4.22: Mode of Issue of Judgment and order



Source: Author's compilation

A high number of respondents (above 35 per cent) said that judgement and orders were issued exclusively through a manual system in all HCs, except in the Punjab & Haryana HC where over 60 per cent responded that they used both systems and the Karnataka HC where over 45 per cent said that they were delivered exclusively through a computerised system. The extent of overall computerisation was pegged at 26 per cent, with all states, except Karnataka, posting similar 20–25 per cent usage of computerised channels to issue judgement and orders.

Throughout this section, the Karnataka and, to an extent, the Punjab & Haryana HCs posted decent usage of computerisation for various judicial processes, while the Chhattisgarh and Guwahati HCs lagged the most in terms of awareness and application of computerised channels. There is a need for intervention in the latter's jurisdiction to improve the efficiency of basic judicial services.

4.5 Infrastructure

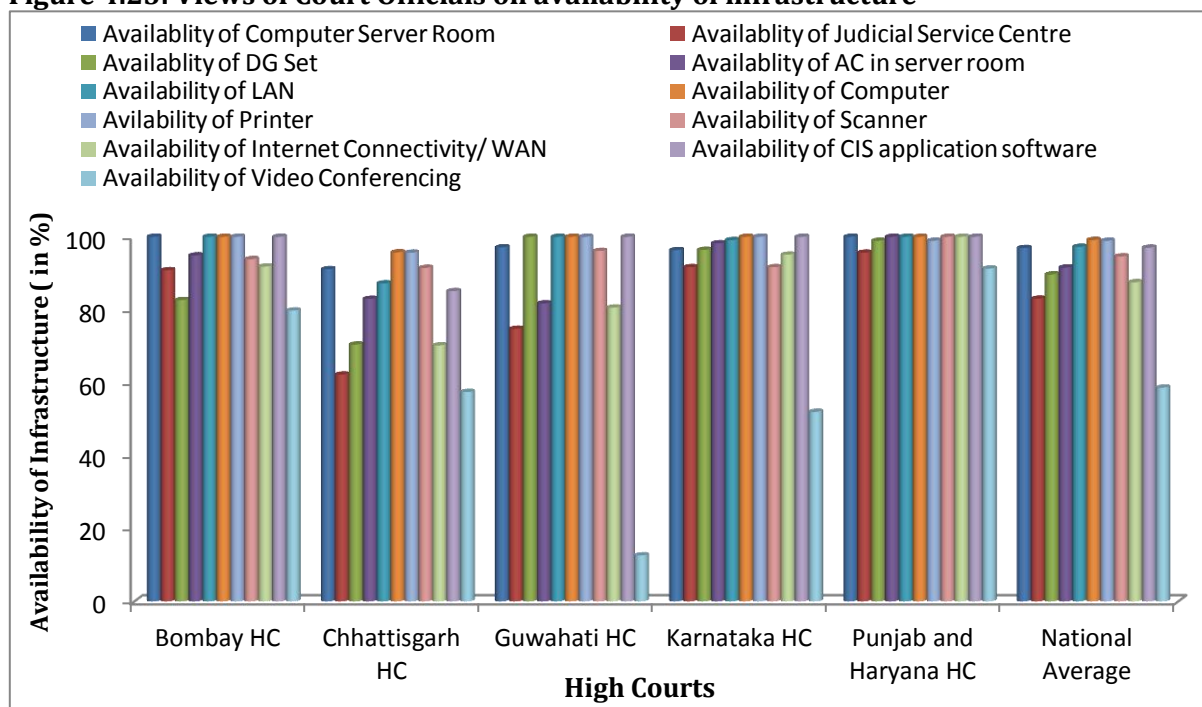
Infrastructure is a major requirement for the success of any computerisation programme, as it plays a pivotal role in the effective implementation of the programme and service delivery.

4.5.1 Availability of infrastructure

More than 80 per cent (Figure 4.23) of all court officials mentioned that there was availability of all infrastructures, except video conferencing, which was only 60 per cent available. Note that video

conferencing is not provided at all the locations under the eCourts project. However, states have provided video conferencing facilities in a few courts.

Figure 4.23: Views of Court Officials on availability of infrastructure



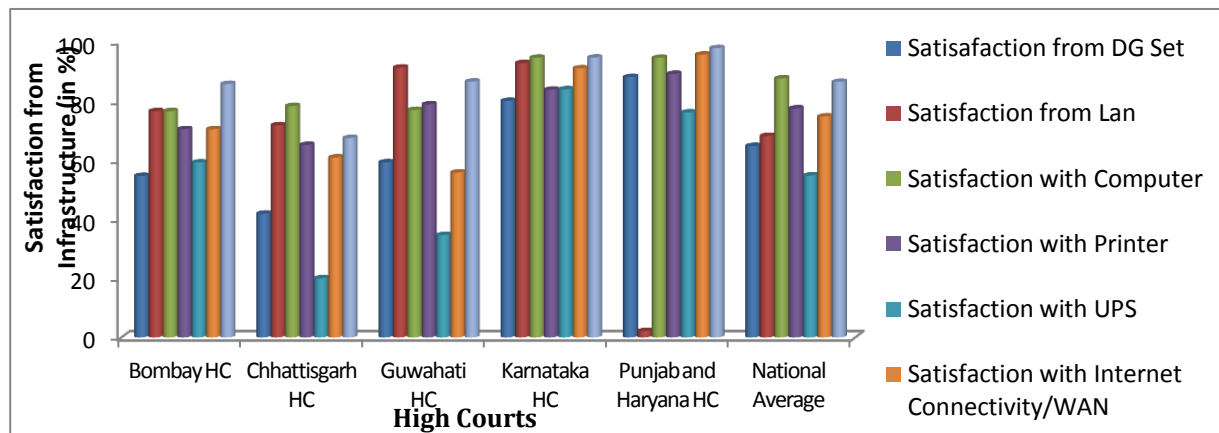
Source: Author's compilation

Basic infrastructure like computers, LAN, printers, server room and CIS software was largely provided in all courts, except Chhattisgarh where it was slightly lower than in the others. The Judicial Service Centre and Wi-Fi connectivity were two services with less availability than others.

4.5.2 Satisfaction with infrastructure

More than 60 per cent of court officials (Figure 4.24) were satisfied with the infrastructure available in courts except for the UPS facility, which more than half the court officials found to be satisfactory.

Figure 4.24: Level of satisfaction with infrastructure among Court Officials



Source: Author's compilation

The Chhattisgarh HC faced problems related to infrastructure with less than 80 per cent satisfaction in all aspects. While LAN connectivity was a huge problem in the Punjab & Haryana HC, Bombay had a considerable DG set problem. Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana have high satisfaction levels, but there is a lot of scope for improvement in the Chhattisgarh, Guwahati and Bombay HCs to improve their infrastructure as they have poor satisfaction levels in almost all aspects, except LAN, computers and software. Hence, there is a need to infuse funds to upgrade the infrastructure.

4.6 Service Delivery Mechanism: Supply Side

One important objective of computerisation in lower courts is to save time in the work process. Therefore, court officials as representatives of supply side were asked how much time it usually takes to complete different activities manually versus the time required to do the same tasks after computerisation. We asked questions about the following services: filing of cases, issue of check slips, caveat checking, scrutiny of check of complaints, preparation of summons, updating of daily orders, preparation of cause list, preparation of court diaries, transcription of evidence, generation of warrants and notices, preparation of decree, delivery of decree and issue of copy of judgements. The responses on each parameter are discussed below.

The survey data (Table 4.1 (a)) revealed that it takes 11 minutes to file a case manually, but computerisation slashes it by half to about 6 minutes on average. For issue of check slip and caveat checking, it took more than 30 minutes, which was reduced slightly by computerisation.

Table 4.1(a): Average time for service delivery (in mins)

S. No.	High Court	Filing of cases		Issue of check slips		Caveat checking for cases	
		Manual	Computerised	Manual	Computerised	Manual	Computerised
1.	Bombay HC	17.31	8.24	121.25	116.96	124.71	116.04
2.	Chhattisgarh HC	8.23	3.36	6.43	2.83	8.85	2.81
3.	Guwahati HC	0.00	7.21	10.04	4.27	13.56	4.98
4.	Karnataka HC	21.17	7.56	12.14	4.22	15.38	4.15
5.	Punjab & Haryana HC Haryana	9.33	2.97	5.72	1.93	11.94	1.86
	National Average	11.21	5.87	31.12	26.04	34.89	25.97

Source: Author's calculation

The Karnataka HC was found to be the most efficient after computerisation in all the above activities, while the Bombay HC took the maximum time. The amount of change that computerisation brings can be clearly observed in the data, and hence it is key for the government to pursue the confluence of technology into courts to speed up the system.

On average, manual preparation of summons consumed over 30 minutes, manual delivery of those summons took 3 days, and manual updates of daily orders and preparation of cause lists took more than 40 minutes. But the time taken for the same activities was reduced drastically when a computerisation system was used. The preparation of summons only took 10 minutes and an hour was sufficient for their delivery, while other processes too consumed only a fifth of their original time.

Table 4.1(b): Average time for service delivery (in mins)

S.No.	High Court	Preparation of summons		Delivery of summons		Update of daily orders		Preparation of cause list	
		M	C	M	C	M	C	M	C
		116.41	15.57	0.00	180.65	125.99	6.96	143.46	9.62
2.	Chhattisgarh	10.00	2.50	2568.20	3.50	17.30	6.00	0.00	3.00
3.	Guwahati	13.25	5.56	404.07	114.34	29.98	12.58	23.27	7.69
4.	Karnataka	15.59	4.70	248.89	5.39	20.35	7.83	26.33	6.71
5.	Punjab & Haryana	22.09	22.09	2296.54	3.42	14.55	6.62	39.16	3.35
	National Average	35.47	10.08	1103.54	61.46	41.64	8.00	46.44	6.07

Note: M=Manual; C=Computerised

Source: Author's calculations

Bombay HC officials took the maximum time to prepare summons, whereas Chhattisgarh officials took the least time manually. In contrast, Chhattisgarh officials took more than five days for the manual delivery of summons, followed by the Punjab & Haryana HC. For manual updates of daily orders and the preparation of cause list, officials of the Bombay HC jurisdiction took the maximum time and officials of Punjab & Haryana did it the fastest.

After computerisation, the time taken has reduced drastically and all these activities can be completed within two hours. Updates of orders and preparation of cause lists now take barely 3–10 minutes in all the HCs.

Table 4.1(c): Average time for service delivery (in mins)

S. No	High Court	Preparation of Court dairies		Transcription of evidence		Warrants and Notice generation	
		Manual	Computerised	Manual	Computerised	Manual	Computerised
		115.88	22.35	134.24	14.62	116.91	21.05
2.	Chhattisgarh	23.36	4.74	26.76	11.95	12.32	2.64
3.	Guwahati	28.62	11.28	27.94	13.19	16.88	7.26
4.	Karnataka	33.02	14.33	28.19	12.04	16.98	5.60
5.	Punjab & Haryana	213.38	20.20	37.54	12.62	9.51	3.04
	National Average	82.85	14.58	50.93	12.88	34.52	7.92

Source: Author's calculation

On average, court officials took more than an hour for the manual preparation of court diaries, whereas it dropped to a fifth of the earlier time after computerisation. In the case of manual transcription of evidence, about one hour was required by officials which dropped to a fourth of the earlier time. The half-hour required for manual generation of warrants and notices was reduced to a fifth of the original time once a computerised system was used.

It was also observed that Bombay HC officials took the maximum time in all three activities, whereas Chhattisgarh officials took the least time after computerisation.

Preparation of decree (Table 10) took more than 45 minutes, delivering the decree took around a day and issue of order and judgement took more than two-and-a-half hours. But after computerisation, the time taken was reduced considerably in the case of preparation of decree and enormously in the case of delivery of decree and issue of order & judgement.

Table 4.1(d): Average time for service delivery (in mins)

S. No.	High Court	Preparation of decree		Delivery of decree		Issue of Order & Judgement	
		Manual	Computerised	Manual	Computerised	Manual	Computerised
		131.67	121.91	130.22	120.08	139.51	9.78
2.	Chhattisgarh	20.17	6.42	0.00	2.93	337.07	8.48
3.	Guwahati	26.20	11.74	156.53	8.79	26.87	9.40
4.	Karnataka	28.72	11.61	19.52	7.41	30.19	9.66
5.	Punjab & Haryana	29.35	6.56	2055.93	6.85	284.35	5.26
	National Average	47.22	31.65	472.44	29.21	163.60	8.52

Source: Author's calculation

It was further observed that Bombay HC officials took the maximum time for manual preparation of decrees, whereas Punjab & Haryana officials had the maximum delay in manually delivering the decree. Also, Chhattisgarh officials recorded the maximum time for the manual issue of judgements and orders.

After computerisation, there was a significant reduction in all HCs except Bombay, which remained the highest in terms of preparation and delivery of decree. The maximum reduction in time was noticed in the Punjab & Haryana HC for all three processes, completing each of them within 7 minutes. Computerisation has led to widespread efficiency in the judicial process, with an unparalleled record of saving time in predominantly manual activities such as preparation and delivery of summons and decrees and generation of warrants, notices and court diaries.

4.7 Capacity Building

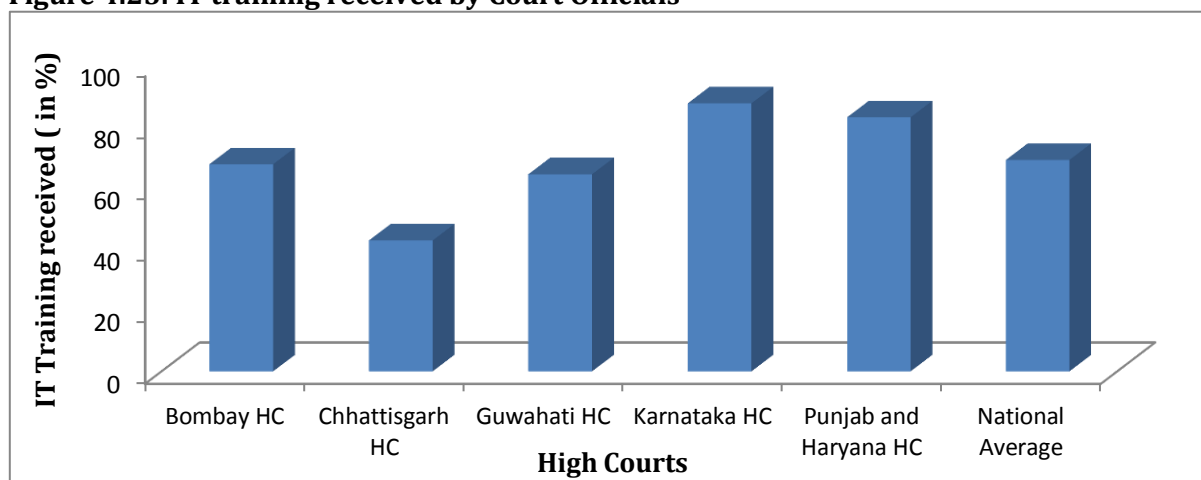
Capacity building in terms of human resources plays a crucial role in the success of a project. Therefore, training of court officials becomes important. They provided detailed feedback on the type of computer training that they have received along with their expectations of computer training.

4.7.1 Training in computers

The survey data (Figure 4.25) reveals that nearly 70 per cent of all court officials received IT training. It was also observed that over 80 per cent of court officials in the Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana HCs received IT training, which was the highest among all the surveyed HCs, whereas the

minimum IT training was received by Chhattisgarh HC officials at just more than 40 per cent. Hence, it is seen that the state of training is very poor in Chhattisgarh and Guwahati and there is an urgent need for improvement.

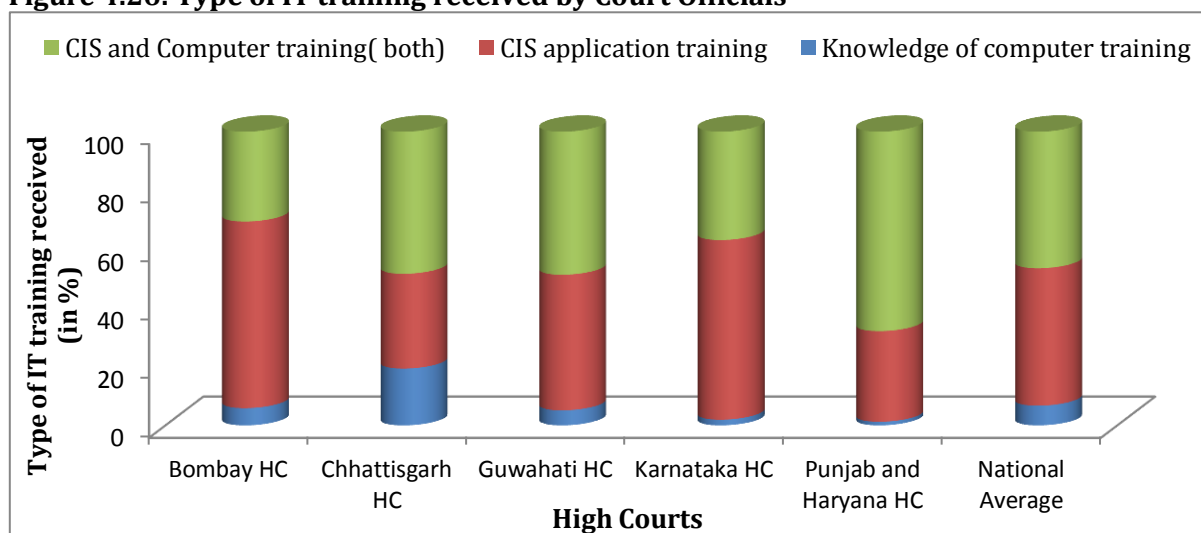
Figure 4.25: IT training received by Court Officials



Source: Author's calculation

More than 45 per cent of court officials (Figure 4.26) received CIS application training and a slightly lower proportion of employees received both types of training, i.e., CIS application-specific and basic IT training.

Figure 4.26: Type of IT training received by Court Officials



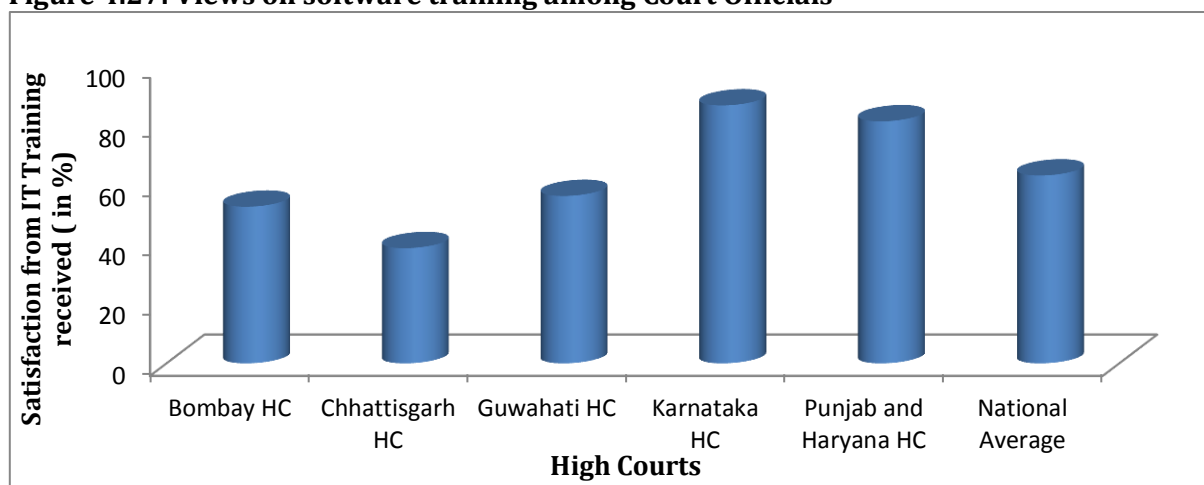
Source: Author's compilation

More computer-intensive training was provided at the Chhattisgarh and Punjab & Haryana HCs, while Karnataka and Bombay had more software-intensive training. The Guwahati HC had an

almost equal leaning towards both forms of training but the number of respondents who were trained for both was very low (around 7 per cent). The government may aim to increase the number of officials who are proficient in the working of both in order to speed up the process and avoid errors.

Officials were also asked about their level of satisfaction with the computer training received. More than 60 per cent (Figure 4.27) were satisfied with the IT training received in all the HCs on average. The Karnataka HC boasted the most satisfied group (at 87 per cent), followed by the Punjab & Haryana HC at 80 per cent satisfaction. The minimum satisfaction was observed in the Chhattisgarh HC where slightly more than one-third stated that they were satisfied with the training provided.

Figure 4.27: Views on software training among Court Officials

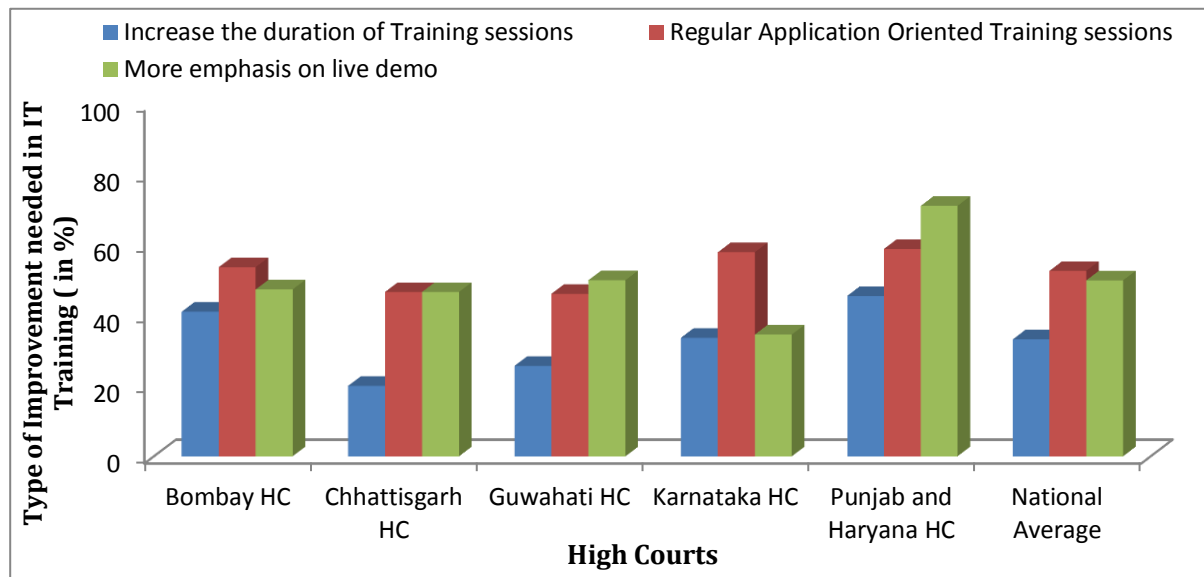


Source: Author's compilation

It can be seen that wide-scale changes are required in the training of court officials, especially in the Chhattisgarh, Bombay and Guwahati HCs. Since Karnataka scores a very high satisfaction rating, the model used in the state could be replicated throughout the country.

The officials provided detailed suggestions about training that can be incorporated in the next phase of the project. According to the survey data (Figure 4.28), around half the court officials noted the need for regular application-oriented training sessions and a greater emphasis on live demonstrations. Both were equally mentioned across all surveyed HCs, thus signifying the need to diversify training methodologies. However, an increase in the duration of training sessions was not as popular among the officials, which is somewhat expected since it would interfere with their work schedule.

Figure 4.28: Suggestions for improvement in IT training: Court Official's view

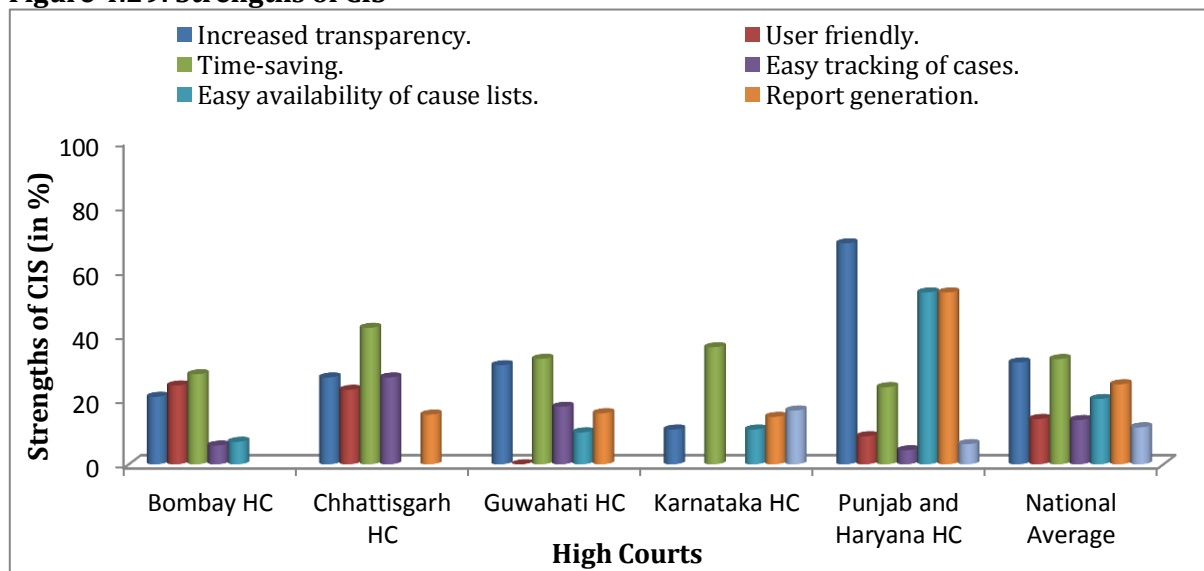


Source: Author's compilation

4.8 Strengths of CIS

According to the respondents (Figure 4.29), CIS applications have various strengths including an increased level of transparency, time savings and easy generation of reports. Several officials felt that cause lists could now be prepared and accessed easily and tracking of cases was easier. Paperless work and its user-friendly design also came up.

Figure 4.29: Strengths of CIS

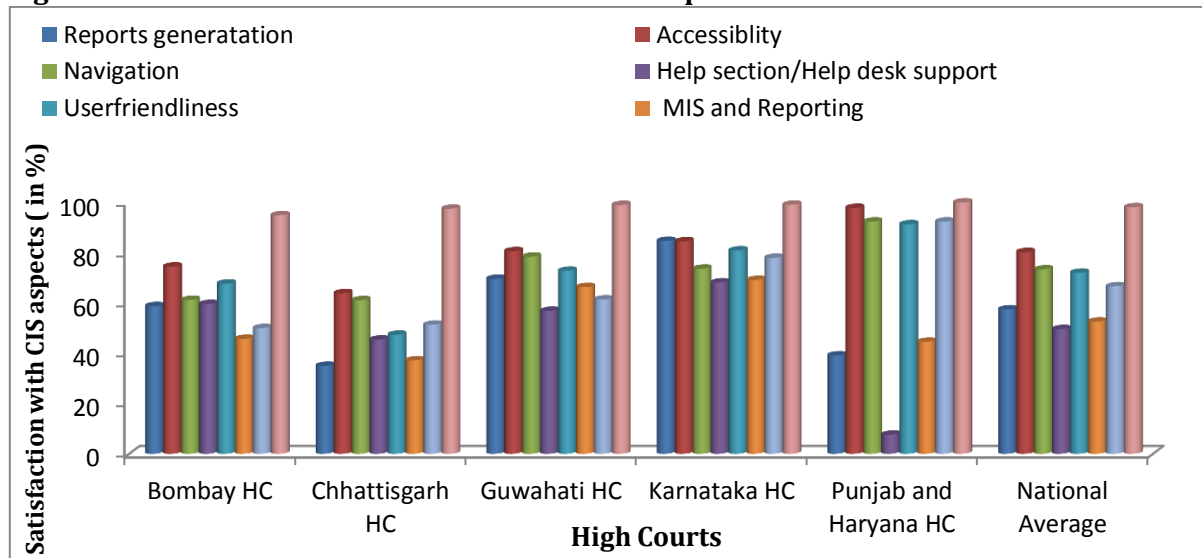


Source: Author's compilation

4.9 Views on Different Aspects of CIS

According to the survey data (Figure 4.29), almost all the court officials found the CIS an effective application. More than 60 per cent of the officials were satisfied with aspects such as accessibility, navigation, user friendliness and problem resolution, whereas only around half the officials found that services like Help desk support and MIS & Reporting satisfactory.

Figure 4.30: Levels of satisfaction with different aspects of CIS



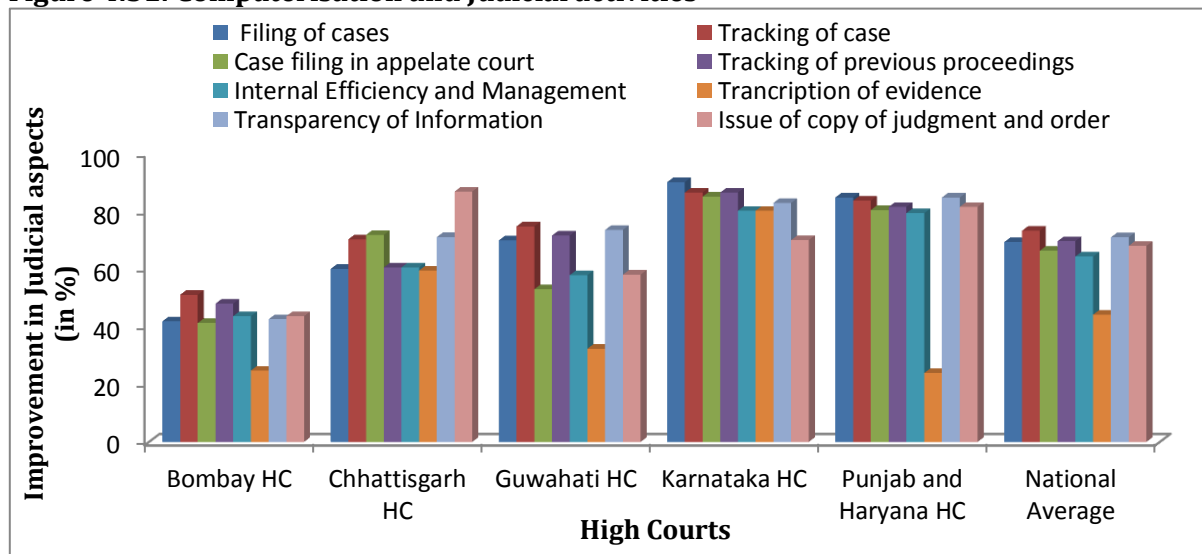
Source: Author's compilation

More than 90 per cent of the officials in all the HCs found the CIS to be an effective application for performing judicial activities. On average, the highest satisfaction on all aspects of CIS was observed in the Karnataka HC, mainly due to the high level of computerisation there. On the other hand, Chhattisgarh HC officials were the least satisfied with various aspects of CIS, which can be explained by the low level of computerisation there.

4.10 Impact of Computerisation on Judiciary Activities

Computerisation has changed the overall scenario of judicial activity by increasing the efficiency of services. According to the survey findings (Figure 4.31), nearly 70 per cent of all court officials observed that aspects of judicial activities, such as filing of cases, tracking of cases, case filing in appellate court, tracking of previous proceedings, internal efficiency & management, transparency of information and issue of judgements and orders, improved due to the introduction of computerisation.

Figure 4.31: Computerisation and Judicial activities

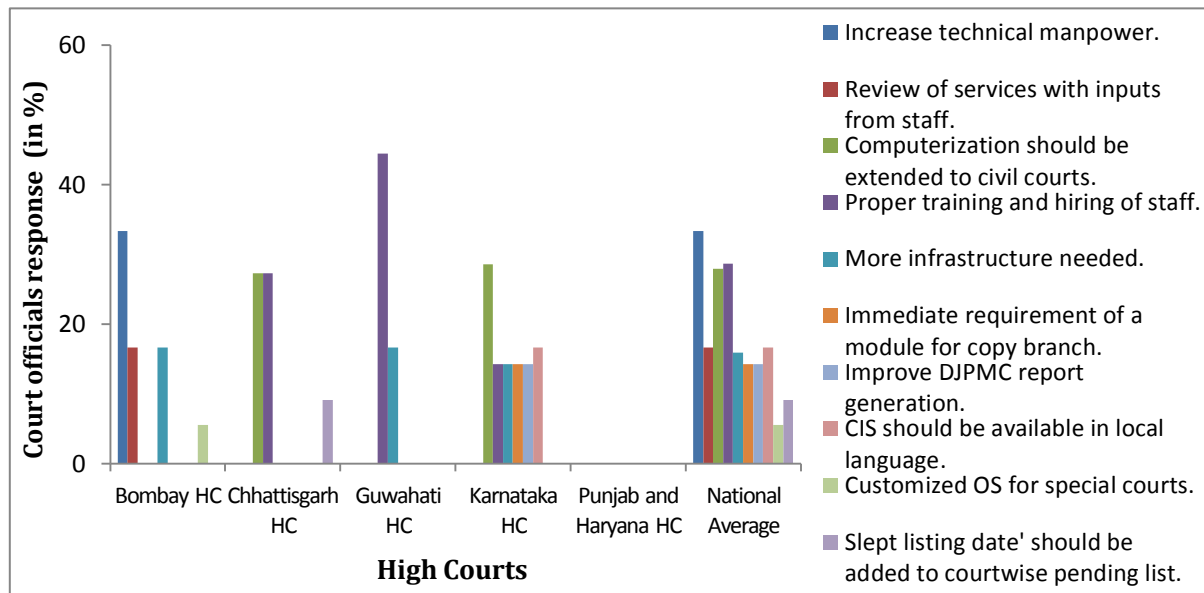


Source: Author's compilation

According to court officials, the least impact of computerisation was in the Bombay HC jurisdiction, where only around 40 per cent of the court officials observed an impact on judicial services and activities after computerisation, whereas the highest impact was witnessed in Karnataka, followed by Punjab & Haryana, which were also the two states with the highest level of computerisation. There was less impact of computerisation on the transcription of evidence across all HCs, especially in the transcription of evidence because this process is still performed manually in courts.

This group of respondents also provided detailed suggestions for further improvement of the system. According to the survey data (Figure4.32), around a third of all court officials believe that employing more trained and technical staff will lead to improvement of judicial aspects. Improvement in the condition of infrastructure, software and review of services with input from staff were some of their other suggestions.

Figure 4.32: Suggestions for improvement of computerisation process in judicial activities



Source: Author's compilation

The court officials were asked for their perceptions on how computerisation in subordinate courts has brought changes in different aspects including the status of pending cases, level of transparency, work load of court officials, distribution of work, stationary and paper costs and communication-related costs. They ranked these on a 5-point scale.

4.10.1 Impact on status of pending cases

More than 40 per cent of all court officials (Table 4.2) observed that the number of pending cases in court reduced after computerisation, with 30% claiming that there is an increase in pendency. The remaining 30 per cent of respondents said that there was no change in the status of pending cases in their court.

Table 4.2: Impact of computerisation on status of pending cases (in %)

S. No.	High Court	Greatly Increased	Increased	No Change	Decreased	Greatly Decreased
1.	Bombay	15.31	12.24	42.86	25.51	4.08
2.	Chhattisgarh	8.33	5.56	47.22	11.11	27.78
3.	Guwahati	3.92	12.75	27.45	28.43	26.47
4.	Karnataka	17.43	6.42	14.68	33.03	28.44
5.	Punjab & Haryana	3.26	57.61	13.04	14.13	11.96
	National Average	9.65	18.92	29.05	22.44	19.75

Source: Author's calculation

The Karnataka and Guwahati HCs led in the number of court officials who claimed that the number of pending cases had reduced after computerisation, whereas Punjab & Haryana had over 60 per cent of officials claiming that the number shot up. Chhattisgarh and Bombay officials maintained a neutral position on this. While the high level of computerisation explains Karnataka's figures, it does not do much for the rest.

4.10.2 Impact on level of transparency

Transparency is an essential component required for achieving justice, and the proponents of computerisation claim that it promotes transparency in information and judicial activities.

According to the survey data (Table 4.3), around 41 per cent of all court officials believe that the level of transparency increased after computerisation, whereas about 38 per cent claimed that the level of transparency had actually decreased in the process. More than a fifth of the respondents observed no change in the level of transparency after the introduction of computerisation.

Table 4.3: Impact of computerisation on level of transparency (in %)

S. No.	High Court	Greatly Increased	Increased	No Change	Decreased	Greatly Decreased
1.	Bombay	28.26	22.83	29.35	15.22	4.35
2.	Chhattisgarh	13.51	0	27.03	21.62	37.84
3.	Guwahati	16.67	21.57	17.65	28.43	14.71
4.	Karnataka	28.83	8.11	18.02	27.03	18.02
5.	Punjab & Haryana	54.35	10.87	10.87	11.96	11.96
	National Average	28.32	12.68	20.58	20.85	17.38

Source: Author's calculation

While the majority of court officials in the Punjab & Haryana and Bombay HCs observed that the level of transparency had increased due to computerisation, the Chhattisgarh, Guwahati and Karnataka HCs leaned towards a decrease in transparency.

4.10.3 Impact on workload of officials

Proponents of computerisation claim that computerising activities such as generation of reports, orders, warrants and court diaries have helped reduce the work load of court officials.

Nearly 45 per cent of all court officials (Table 4.4) observed that their work load decreased after computerisation, while a fourth claimed the opposite. Around 30 per cent of court officials observed no change in their workload.

Table 4.4: Impact of computerisation on work load of officials (in %)

S. No.	High Court	Greatly Increased	Increased	No Change	Decreased	Greatly Decreased
1.	Bombay	21.43	14.29	41.84	18.37	4.08
2.	Chhattisgarh	5.56	16.67	30.56	30.56	16.67
3.	Guwahati	16.67	16.67	36.27	22.55	6.86
4.	Karnataka	11.11	6.48	28.70	34.26	19.44
5.	Punjab & Haryana	6.52	11.96	15.22	14.13	52.17
	National Average	12.26	13.21	30.52	23.97	19.84

Source: Author's calculation

The majority of court officials in the Punjab & Haryana and Karnataka HCs maintained that the workload of officials had decreased in the wake of computerisation, followed by the Chhattisgarh officials. Responses from Guwahati and Karnataka were not clear, with an almost equal division across the three categories, although both HCs registered a slightly higher number of officials claiming an increase than a decrease. It can be seen that the highly computerised Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana HCs saw a decrease in the workload of officials compared to HC jurisdictions with less computerisation such as Guwahati and Bombay.

4.10.4 Impact on distribution of work

According to the survey data (Table 4.5), more than a third of the court officials observed that there was no change in the distribution of work after computerisation. A sizeable number of respondents claimed that distribution of work had deteriorated, while we also had officials who consider that the distribution had improved.

Table 4.5: Impact of computerisation on distribution of work (in %)

S. No.	High Court	Greatly Increased	Increased	No Change	Decreased	Greatly Decreased
1.	Bombay	14.89	9.57	53.19	17.02	5.32
2.	Chhattisgarh	23.68	7.89	36.84	26.32	5.26
3.	Guwahati	4.90	20.59	40.20	26.47	6.86
4.	Karnataka	8.49	9.43	39.62	35.85	6.60
5.	Punjab & Haryana	3.26	55.43	17.39	10.87	13.04
	National Average	11.04	20.58	37.45	23.31	7.42

Source: Author's calculation

One reason why respondents were unhappy with the distribution of work could be that they had to handle a technical job without proper training for the existing staff or the hiring of extra technical professionals.

4.10.5 Impact on stationery costs

More than half of all court officials (Table 4.6) observed that stationery costs reduced after computerisation, while around 20 per cent of them stated the opposite.

Table 4.6: Impact of computerisation on stationery costs (in %)

S. No.	High Court	Greatly Increased	Increased	No Change	Decreased	Greatly Decreased
1.	Bombay	10.64	21.28	41.49	21.28	5.32
2.	Chhattisgarh	5.41	18.92	16.22	37.84	21.62
3.	Guwahati	3.92	15.69	30.39	36.27	13.73
4.	Karnataka	12.26	4.72	25.47	37.74	19.81
5.	Punjab & Haryana	5.49	6.59	9.89	17.58	60.44
	National Average	7.54	13.44	24.69	30.14	24.18

Source: Author's calculation

The majority of the officials said that stationery costs had gone down after the introduction of computerisation, except for the Bombay HC where more than 40 per cent of officials observed no change in stationery costs and a higher number of respondents agreed that there was an increase in stationery costs than those who thought there was a decrease. It is logical to observe a reduction in stationery costs, since departments move to paperless work after computerisation.

4.10.7 Impact on communication costs

Before computerisation, huge costs were incurred on communication because information had to be sent by post or another mode of delivery. With computerisation, data is automatically

consolidated on the server which stores it in the database, hence reducing the communication cost in maintaining data.

According to the survey data (Table 4.7), about half of all court officials observed that communication and other allied costs reduced after computerisation, while less than 20 per cent of respondents claimed the opposite, i.e., it led to an increase in these costs.

Table 4.7: Impact of computerisation on communication costs (in %)

S. No.	High Court	Greatly Increased	Increased	No Change	Decreased	Greatly Decreased
1.	Bombay	10.64	18.09	44.68	20.21	6.38
2.	Chhattisgarh	18.92	2.70	32.43	13.51	32.43
3.	Guwahati	0.98	12.75	35.29	41.18	9.80
4.	Karnataka	17.14	6.67	25.71	37.14	13.33
5.	Punjab & Haryana	4.35	5.43	15.22	16.3	58.70
	National Average	10.41	9.13	30.67	25.67	24.13

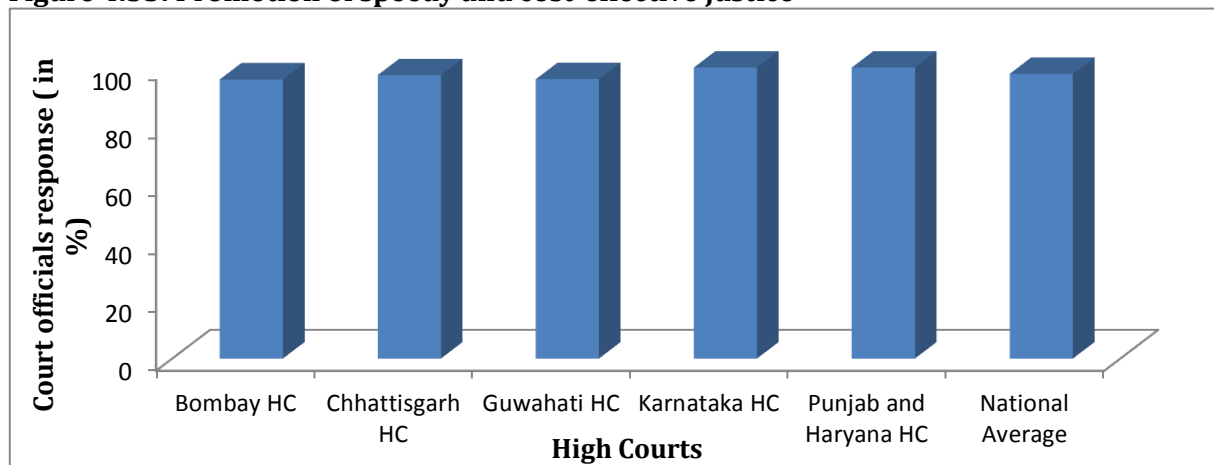
Source: Author's calculation

The Punjab & Haryana HC recorded the highest number of respondents who said that computerisation led to a decrease in communication costs, followed by Karnataka and Guwahati. The majority of court officials in the Bombay HC claimed that there was no change in communication costs. On average, the data leads one to conclude that there was a dip in communication costs on account of computerisation of judicial activities.

4.10.8 Promotion of speedy and cost-effective justice

More than 95 per cent of all officials (Figure 4.33) across all HCs believed that the eCourts project promoted an effective justice mechanism. The highest number of officials agreeing with this was in the Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana HC jurisdictions, which are also the regions with the highest computerisation; this is logical because computerisation has led to faster work and reduced costs.

Figure 4.33: Promotion of speedy and cost-effective justice

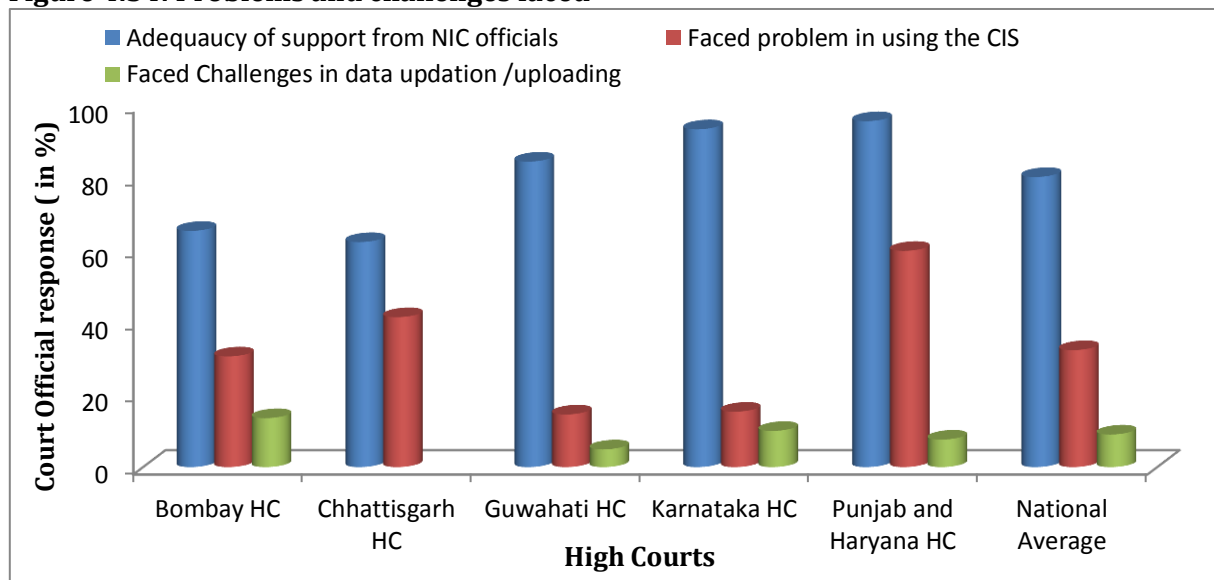


Source: Author's compilation

4.11 Problems and Challenges of e-Courts Project

There are problems and challenges in the functioning of every system. Similarly, the eCourts project has to overcome several major challenges to ensure smooth implementation and effective functioning, including software problems, server problems and inadequate support from NIC officials.

Figure 4.34: Problems and challenges faced



Source: Author's compilation

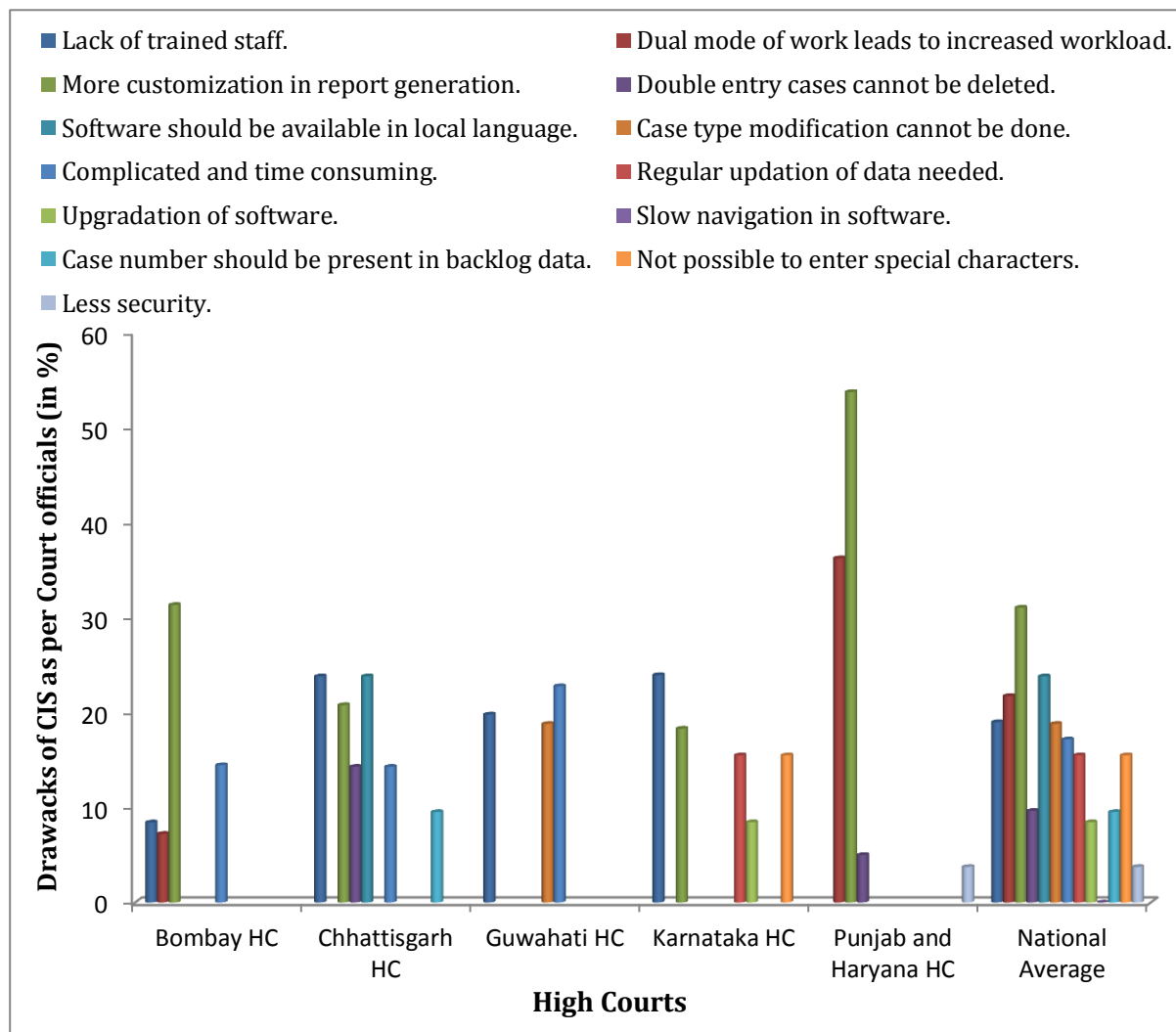
Nearly 80 per cent of all court officials (Figure 4.34) stated that NIC officials provide adequate support, more than a fourth faced problems in using the CIS software and around 10 per cent faced challenges in data updates.

The Punjab & Haryana and Karnataka HCs led the list in adequacy of support from NIC officials, while Bombay and Chhattisgarh were at the bottom. However, Punjab & Haryana also led in the number of officials who faced problems with the CIS application, with Chhattisgarh close behind. This clears up the fact that local factors contribute a lot to the challenges faced by eCourts, since different NIC offices have been providing different quality of service. However, the problems with using the software can be attributed to lack of quality training, which has been a major issue in Chhattisgarh.

4.11.1 Drawbacks of CIS

According to court officials (Figure 4.35), the major drawbacks of the CIS application were the lack of customisation for generating reports and the non-availability of CIS software in the local language, which is used in district and taluka courts for judicial purposes. A lot of respondents were also frustrated with the dual mode of working, i.e., both manual and computerised systems being used at court, and hence wanted full computerisation to be put in place at the earliest. A few other complaints included the lack of a facility to enter special characters, no provision for tracking backlog data using the case number, lack of modifications in case type and non-deletion of double entries. Some of the less frequently mentioned suggestions were increasing data security and upgrades of software.

Figure 4.35: Drawbacks of CIS



Source: Author's compilation

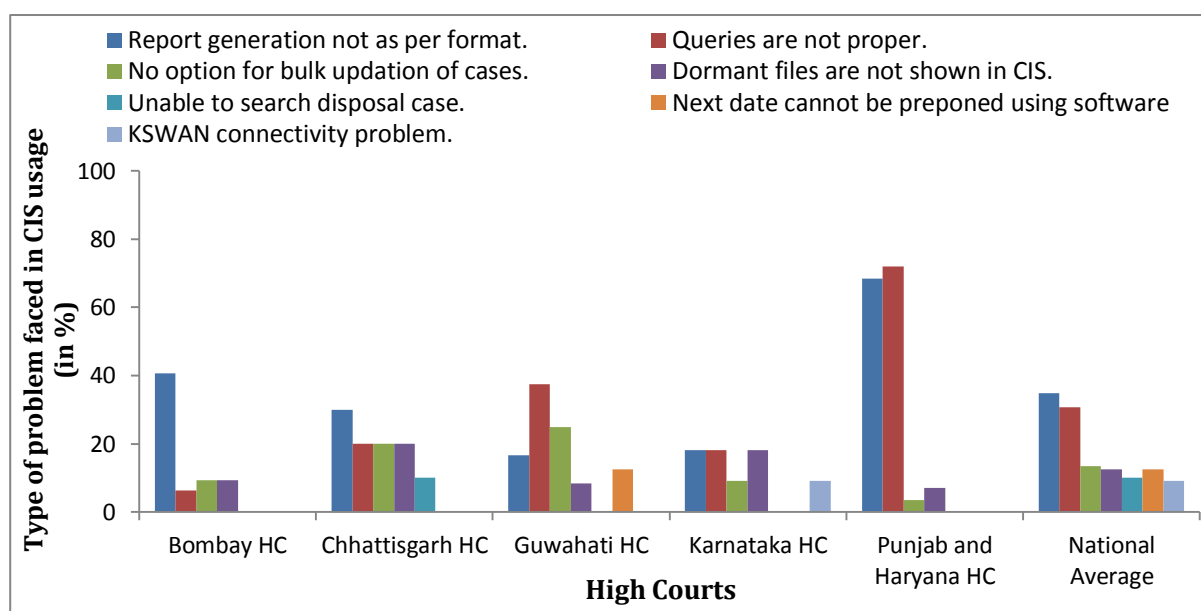
4.11.2 Types of problems with CIS

According to the survey data (Figure 4.36), nearly 65 per cent of officials found that reports generated through CIS were either not as per format or queries were not being listed properly in CIS.

Nearly 69 per cent of Punjab & Haryana HC officials found that report generation was not as per format, while 72 per cent of them responded that queries were not proper. While KSWAN connectivity was an issue for Karnataka HC officials, a considerable number of Guwahati HC officials stated that the next date cannot be brought forward in the existing CIS software. The

survey also found that there were a few problems related to bulk updates of cases and search of disposal cases through CIS in almost all the surveyed HCs.

Figure 4.36: Type of problems faced in CIS usage

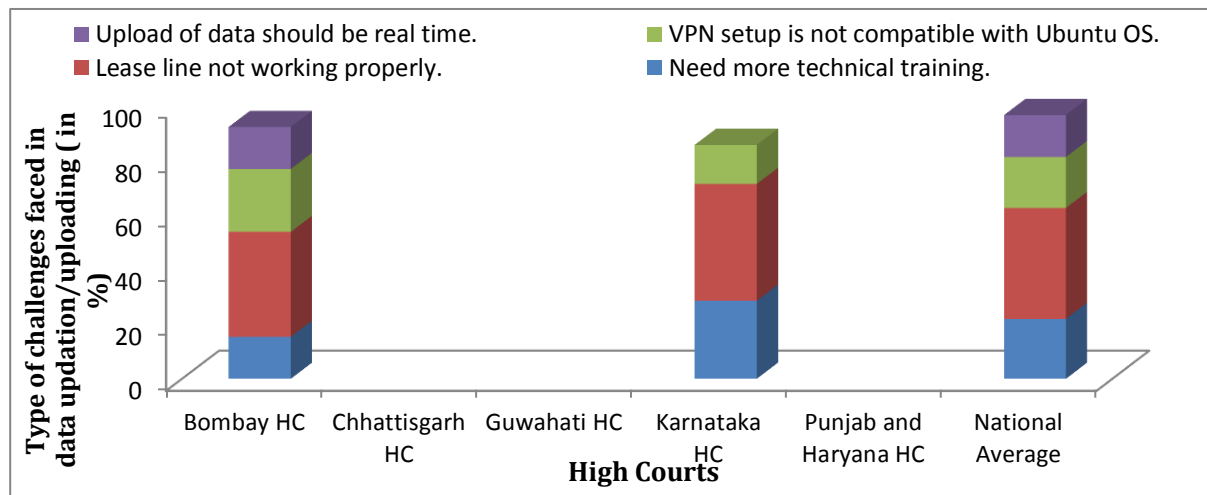


Source: Author's compilation

4.11.3 Challenges in data updates and uploading

Karnataka and Bombay HC officials (Figure 4.37) observed that problems in data updates were due to the lease lines, which do not work properly, and the lack of computer training for officials. Some officials also observed that the VPN (Virtual Private Network) set-up was not compatible with the Ubuntu Operating System. There were no responses from other HC jurisdictions on this.

Figure 4.37: Challenges in data updates/uploading



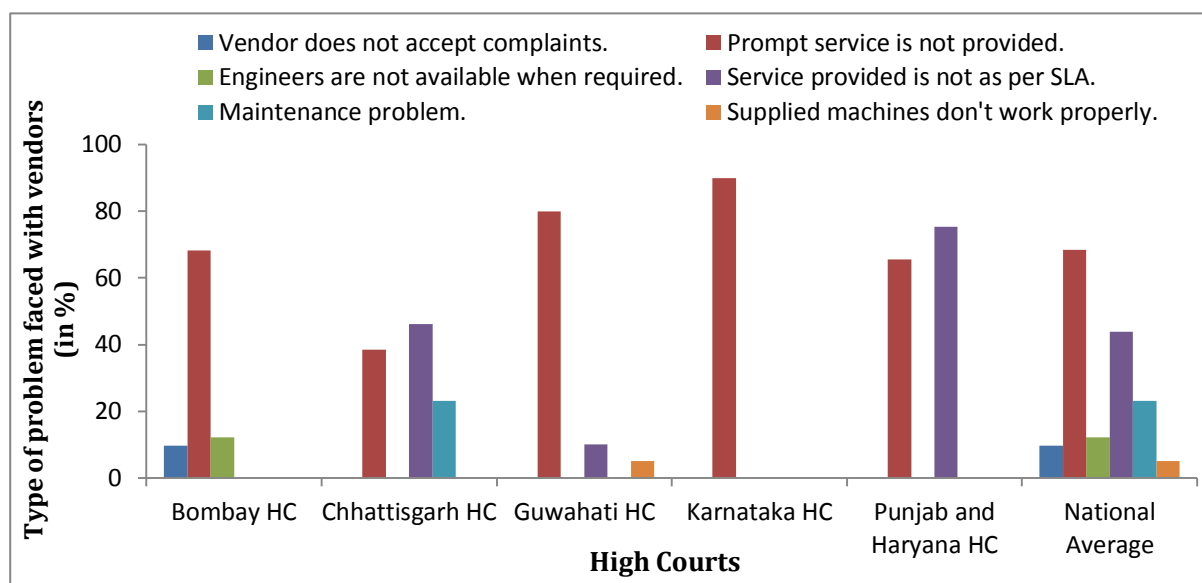
Source: Author's compilation

4.11.4 Problems with vendors related services

Vendors are a critical stakeholder in the project implementation, because they provide essential services such as hardware and software support and LAN and WAN/Internet connection. NIC is the agency that looks after project implementation and they appoint vendors.

Court officials face various problems (Figure 4.39) with vendors such as delays in providing service or the provided service not being in line with the Service Level Agreement (SLA) guidelines. About 70 per cent of the officials found that service was not provided in the time specified in the contracts, while around 40 per cent of them felt that the quality of services provided by vendors was not up to the mark.

Figure 4.38: Major problems with vendors related services

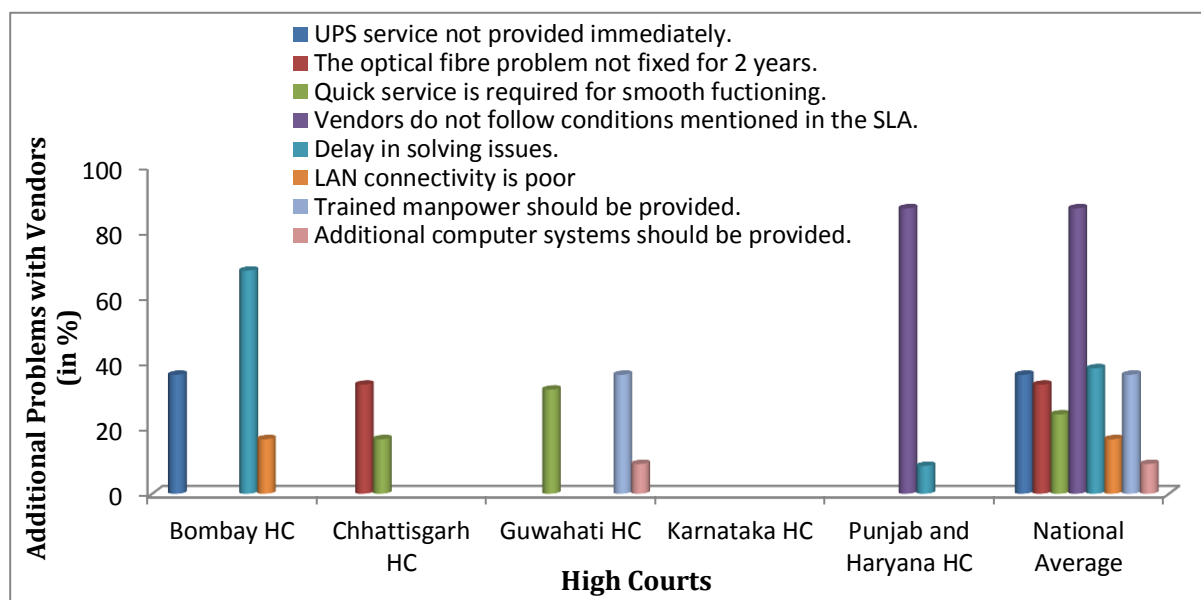


Source: Author's compilation

Delay in service was observed in every surveyed HC, while officials in Chhattisgarh and Punjab & Haryana were very dissatisfied with the quality of service provided by private vendors. Improving the quality of service is the biggest challenge for the eCourts project as there is already a lack of essential infrastructure, and a faulty printer/UPS/software can lead to several complications.

A large number of court officials (Figure 4.39) in the Bombay HC complained about the delay in supplying UPS service and about huge delays by vendors in resolving problems. Chhattisgarh HC officials spoke of their optical fibre problem not getting fixed for two years, while Guwahati HC officials were not satisfied with the quantity of trained manpower provided to them. On the whole, the quality and delay in provision of service from the vendors' side were the main issues plaguing court officials regarding eCourts.

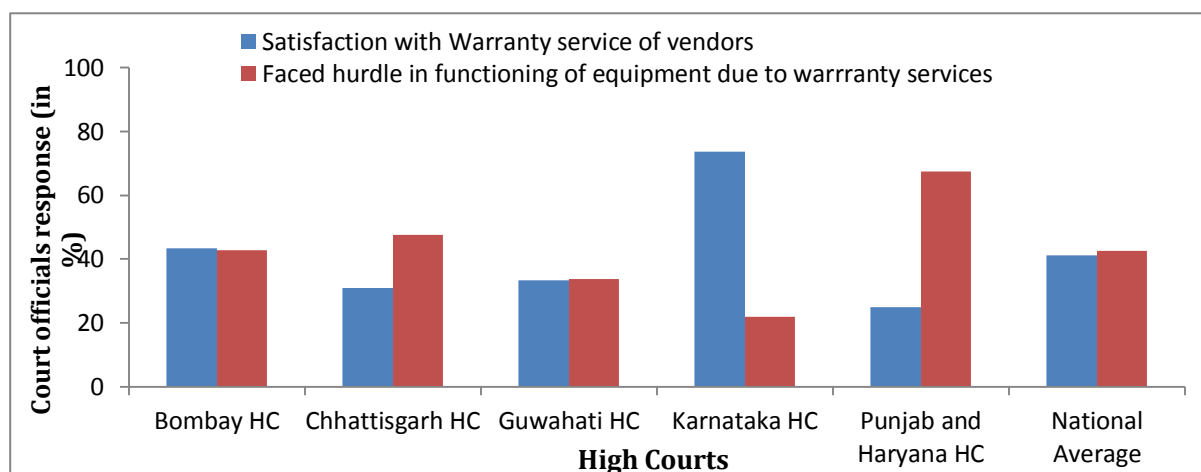
Figure 4.39: Additional problems with vendors related services



Source: Author's compilation

The survey findings (Figure 4.38) show that only 40 per cent of all court officials were satisfied with the warranty service provided by vendors and nearly the same percentage of officials had faced hurdles in the functioning of components due to the warranty service of vendors.

Figure 4.40: Warranty services and vendors



Source: : Author's compilation

The highest rate of satisfaction among court officials with the warranty service of vendors was observed in the Karnataka HC, with nearly 75 per cent, and Karnataka officials were also the ones who faced the fewest hurdles in the functioning of equipment. Apart from Karnataka, all the other HCs had poor satisfaction levels of below 50 per cent, with Chhattisgarh accounting for the lowest

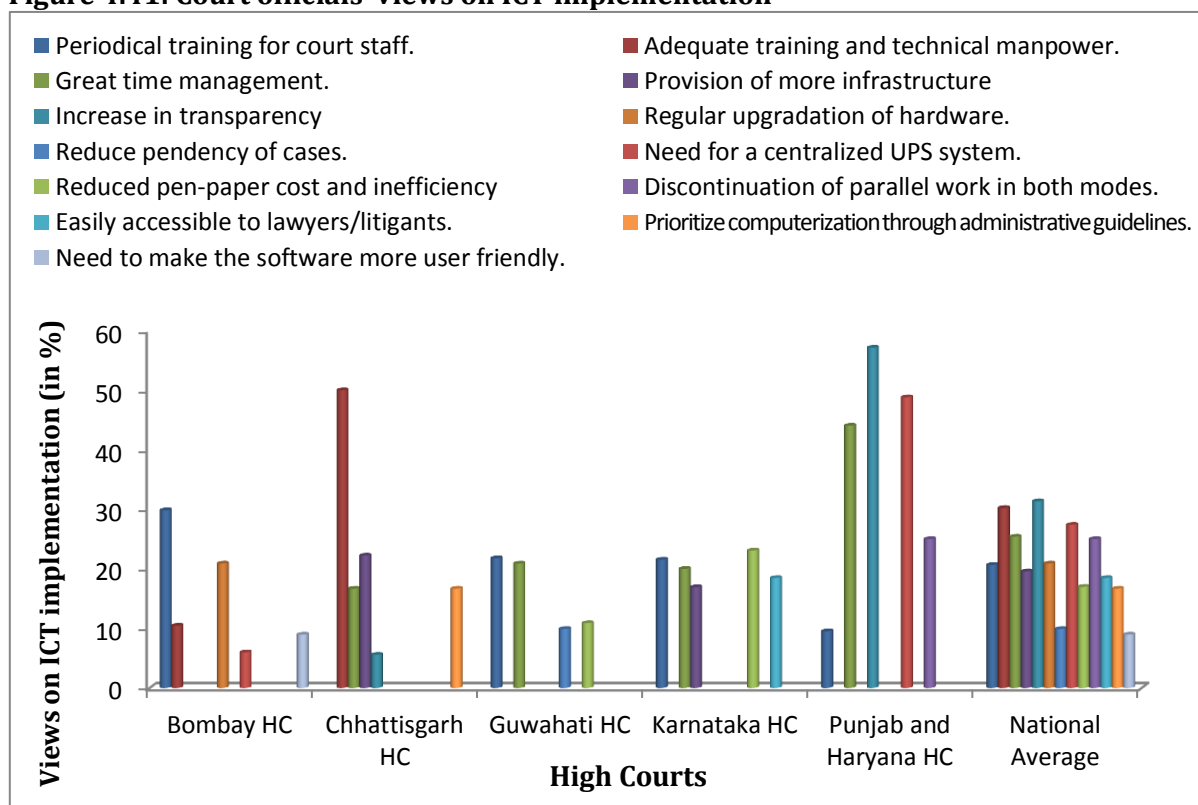
satisfaction rate of 30 per cent. Also, nearly two-third of court officials in the Punjab & Haryana HC faced hurdles in the functioning of equipment.

Thus, it can be concluded that private vendor support has to be increased manifold in places like Chhattisgarh, Guwahati and Punjab & Haryana. A regular feedback channel with court officials about the quality of support being offered to them must also be maintained.

4.12 Views on ICT Implementation

The majority of the court officials (Figure 4.41) felt that for effective ICT implementation, there was a need for adequate technical manpower, periodic training and increasing the level of transparency in the system. This group of stakeholders suggested a centralised power back-up since uninterrupted supply of electricity is absent in district courts. Connectivity is hampered by frequent power cuts. Related officials insisted on improvement in connectivity in terms of uninterrupted power supply. They also recommended that laptops could be provided for official work. Many of them expressed the need to upgrade the hardware. They ask for an adequate number of computers to be supplied in the court complex.

Figure 4.41: Court officials' views on ICT implementation



Source: Author's compilation

4.13 Conclusion

To summarise, many of the court officials strongly suggested discontinuing the parallel mode of working, i.e., the simultaneous use of the manual and computerised modes, because the dual mode reduces the speed of work. They believe that at some point the manual mode should be abolished. A large number of respondents also lauded the time management brought about by the efficient implementation of ICT.

Individual reviews reflected that all the district courts do not have technical person to run the eCourts project. Technical personnel often come from other court complexes on fixed days of the week. Court officials who do not have adequate computer knowledge have to depend on their visits to handle errors or to resolve data-related issues. Therefore, they insist that skilled personnel should be hired on a permanent basis. There are other concerns as well. One of them mentioned, "There should be an option for entering the case number, so that the registration number and the case number do not mismatch". Court personnel also mentioned that personal computers or slim clients could be supplied instead of thin clients. Dot matrix printers should be replaced by copier machines. In summary, their main suggestions include improvement in infrastructure, recruitment of technical manpower, rigorous and continuous training, power back-up, and discontinuation of the parallel mode of work. They also suggested the supply of computers in all related rooms in a court complex beyond courtrooms. It would help integrate the judiciary system which, in turn, would be able to provide services in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Perspective of Lawyers and Litigants

Chapter 5

Perspective of Lawyers and Litigants

5.1 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the status of services delivered at the District and Subordinate Courts along with implemented CIS applications and the effect of computerisation that has been rolled out as an eCourts mission mode project across all District and Subordinate Courts. Feedback from lawyers and litigants gathered from five High Courts is discussed and analysed in different scenarios, based on the assessment parameters selected for the study. The long-term goal of computerisation in the judiciary is to provide efficient and cost-effective services to citizens. Litigants are the proxy for citizens in this particular study. Lawyers play a crucial role since they are the link between the judiciary and litigants in India. Litigants depend on lawyers related to almost all activities in court. Lack of education and the cultural structure of society are responsible for such practices.

5.2 Lawyers' Perspective

We interviewed 600 lawyers from across the subordinate courts of five High Courts. They were chosen at random from the courts and filled the structural questionnaires. Lawyers provided detailed feedback on awareness and usage of the eCourts project, quality of services and effect of computerisation on different judicial activities.

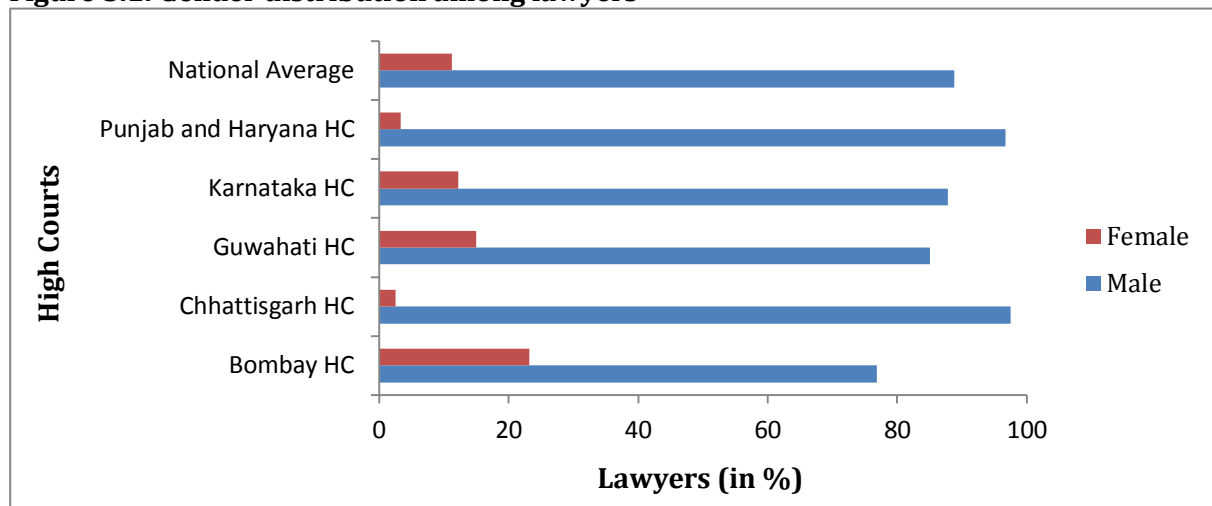
5.2.1 Background of lawyers

We collected information on the following parameters to portray the background of this group of respondents: gender, age, association with a particular court, years of work experience in courts and their level of proficiency in using computers. We will discuss each of these parameters in the following paragraphs.

5.2.1.1 Gender distribution

Approximately 90 per cent (Figure 5.1) of the surveyed lawyers were male, while just more than a tenth was female

Figure 5.1: Gender distribution among lawyers



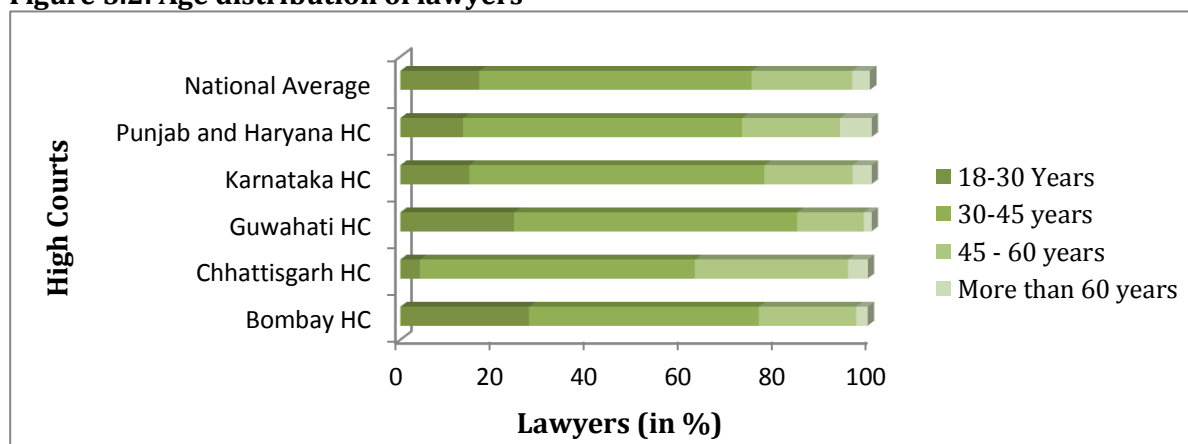
Note: Author's compilation

The only exception was the Bombay HC where female lawyers numbered around a fourth of the total lawyers surveyed. Also, the Chhattisgarh HC showed the lowest level of female representation followed by the Punjab & Haryana HC (Figure 5.1).

5. 2.1.2 Age distribution

We categorised the lawyers into four age groups: 18–30 years, 30–45 years, 45–60 years and more than 60 years. More than half the lawyers (Figure 5.2) in the surveyed High Courts belong to the age group of 30–45 years on average, while less than 5% of the lawyers are above the age of 60.

Figure 5.2: Age distribution of lawyers



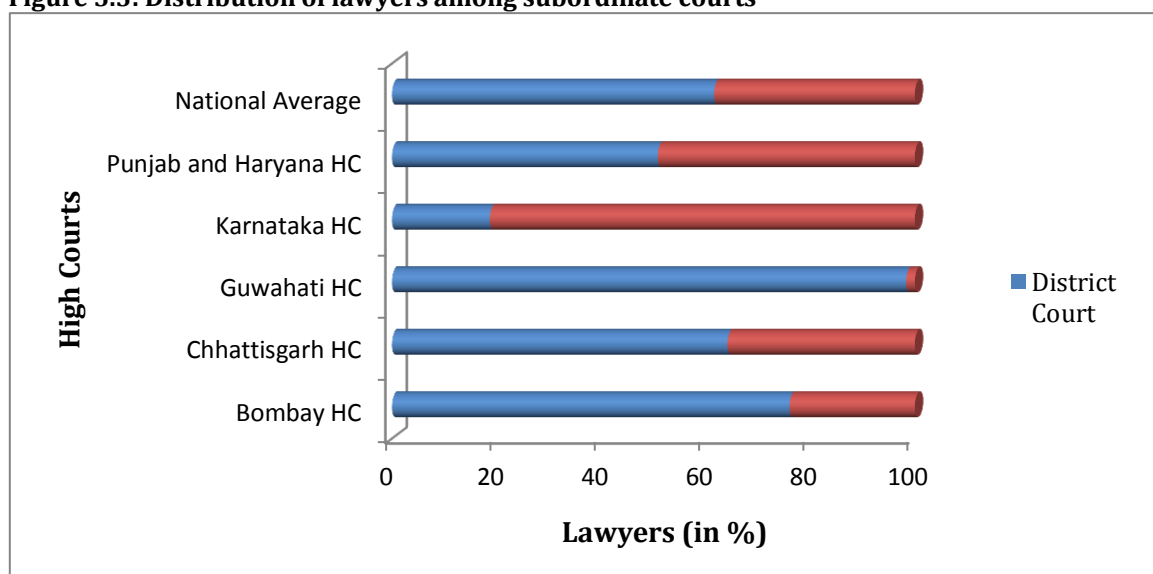
Note: Author's compilation

Among the surveyed HCs, the Bombay HC showed the lowest participation in the 30–45 age group where it is slightly higher than half of the lawyers interviewed. On the other hand, while the Bombay HC observed the highest participation rate in the age group of 18–30, Chhattisgarh had the lowest participation in that age group comprising less than 5 percent of its total respondents.

5. 2.1.3 Representation from district/subordinate court

On average, more than 60 per cent of the lawyers (Figure 5.3) practised law in the district courts among all interviewed lawyers.

Figure 5.3: Distribution of lawyers among subordinate courts



Note: Author's compilation

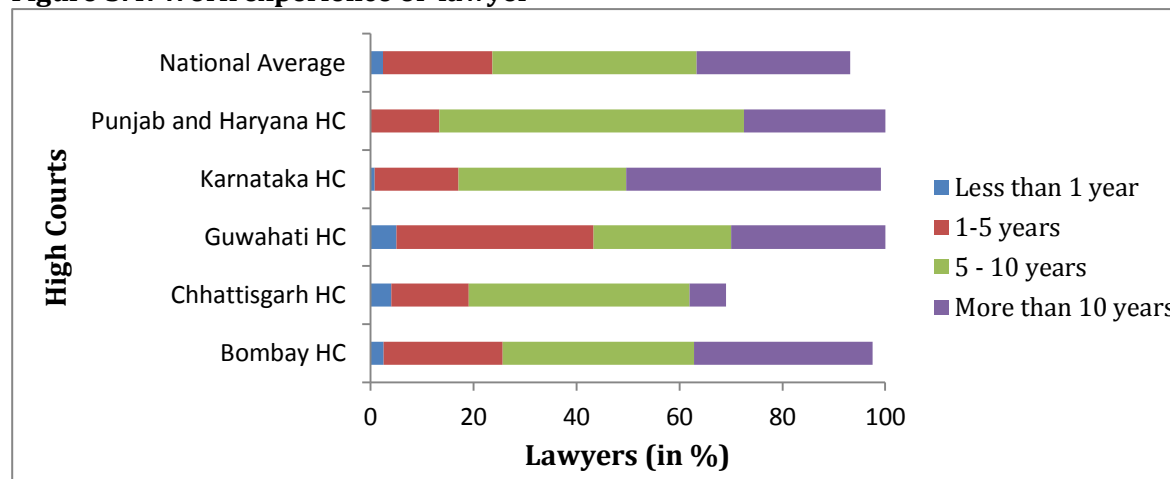
The Guwahati HC showed the highest level of participation in district courts, followed by the Bombay and Chhattisgarh HCs, while the Karnataka HC showed the lowest level of participation. The Karnataka HC had the highest level of lawyer participation in subordinate courts followed by the Punjab & Haryana HC.

5. 2.1.4 Work experience

We defined five groups to report the work experience of the lawyers: less than one year, 1–5 years, 5–10 years and more than 10 years. On average, almost 40 per cent of the lawyers (Figure 5.4) had practised law for “more than five years but less than 10 years”, which is also the most highly represented category. The group with the lowest representation was lawyers with “less than a year of practice”.

Among the surveyed HCs, the Punjab & Haryana HC had the highest number of lawyers with more than 5 years of practice experience, but no lawyers with less than a year of practice. The Karnataka HC had the majority of lawyers (around 50%) practising for more than 10 years, while in the Guwahati HC lawyers with “experience of more than 1 year but less than five years” were the leading demographic.

Figure 5.4: Work experience of lawyer

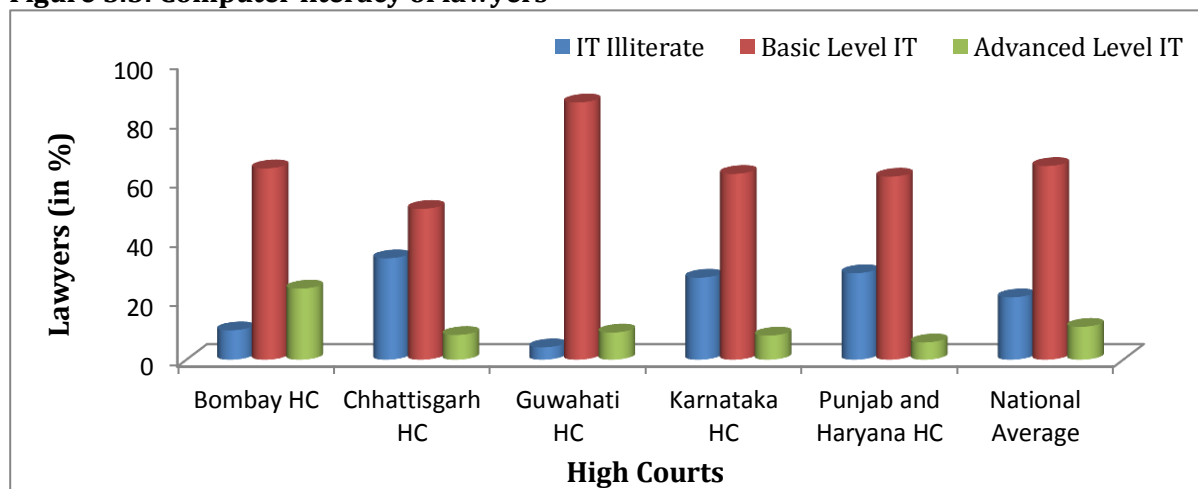


Note: Author's compilation

5. 2.1.5 Knowledge of computers

It was observed during the survey (Figure 5.5) that about 20 per cent of the lawyers, on average, have no computer knowledge at all, and more than 65 per cent of the lawyers have basic computer knowledge. Only a paltry 11 per cent had advanced level IT training among the lawyers interviewed.

Figure 5.5: Computer literacy of lawyers



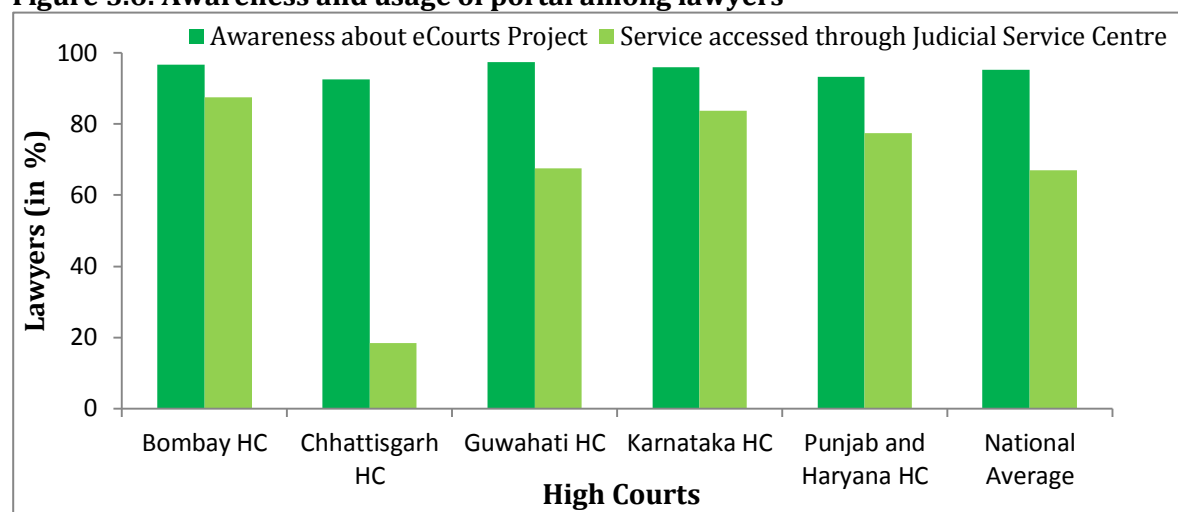
Note: Author's compilation

Among the High Courts surveyed, the percentage of Guwahati HC lawyers with basic computer knowledge was higher than the five-HC average, while the Punjab & Haryana, Karnataka and Bombay HCs were approximately equal to the five-HC average on that parameter. On the whole, lawyers belonging to the Chhattisgarh HC had the least computer knowledge, whereas Bombay HC lawyers had the highest number of lawyers with advanced computer knowledge.

5.2.2 Awareness and usage of portal

It was observed that, on average, more than 95 per cent of the lawyers were aware of the eCourts project and computerisation of courts. The survey data (Figure 5.6) revealed that the number of lawyers who accessed services through the Judicial Service Centre was the highest for the Bombay HC, closely trailed by the Karnataka HC, whereas it was the minimum for Chhattisgarh HC lawyers.

Figure 5.6: Awareness and usage of portal among lawyers



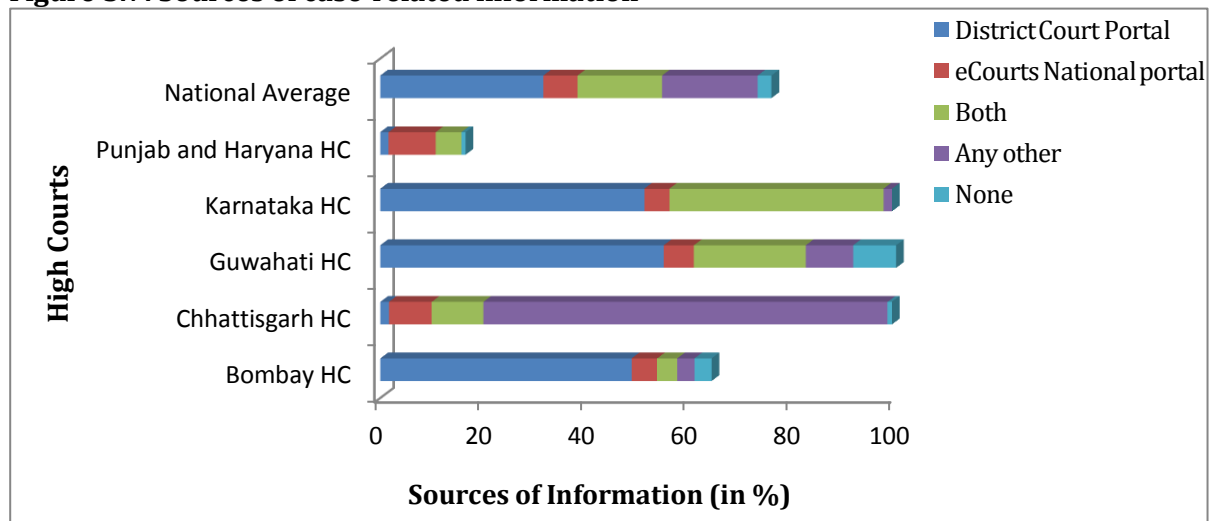
Note: Author's compilation

It was also observed that more than 60 per cent of lawyers from all associated HCs had accessed services through the Judicial Service Centre, with the exception of Chhattisgarh where it was barely 20 per cent.

5.2.2.1 Access of information from portal

Lawyers may access information through the eCourts national portal or the district court portal. They may also get information by other means including through personal visit to courts. Thirty per cent of the lawyers (Figure 5.7) accessed case-related information through the District Court portal, which is the highest among all the sources of case-related information, followed by 18.5 per cent who get information from the court clerk or by personally visiting the court. Sixteen per cent of the lawyers accessed information using both the district court and the eCourts national portal, whereas only a minimal number (2.67 per cent) do not use any of the listed sources to collect case-related information.

Figure 5.7: Sources of case-related information



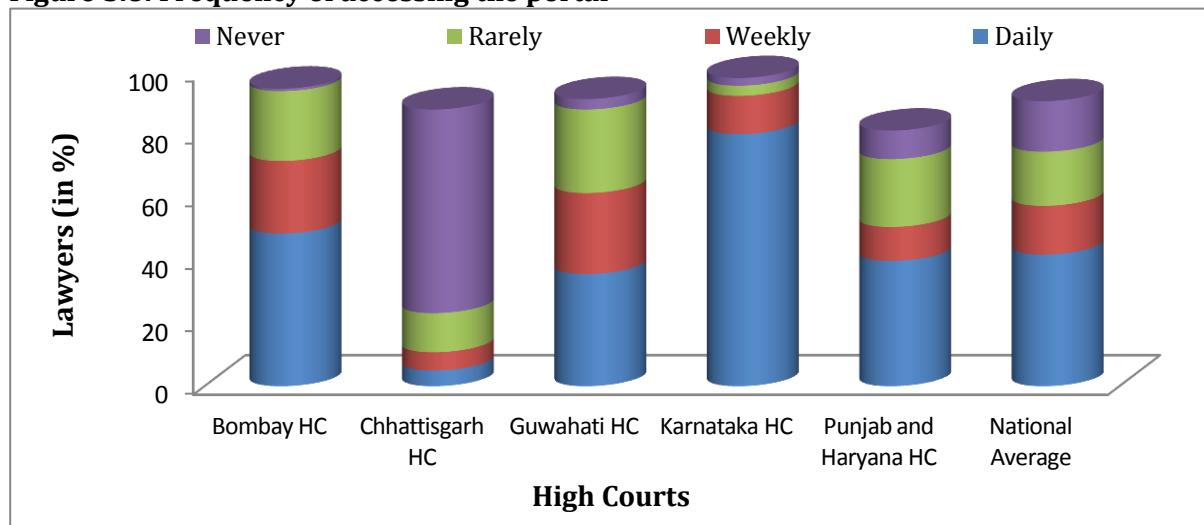
Note: Author's compilation

Among the High Courts surveyed, the Guwahati HC witnessed the highest percentage of lawyers who used the District Court portal, followed by the Karnataka and Bombay HCs, whereas more than 80 per cent of Chhattisgarh lawyers used other sources like visiting the court/clerk to access case-related information. As can be seen, only a few Punjab & Haryana HC lawyers responded to this query.

5.2.2.2 Frequency of accessing the portal

Lawyers were asked how frequently they access the portal. The options were daily, weekly, rarely or never. It is observed that more than 40 per cent of lawyers (Figure 5.8), on average, access the portal on a daily basis among the lawyers who use the portal to access case-related information.

Figure 5.8: Frequency of accessing the portal

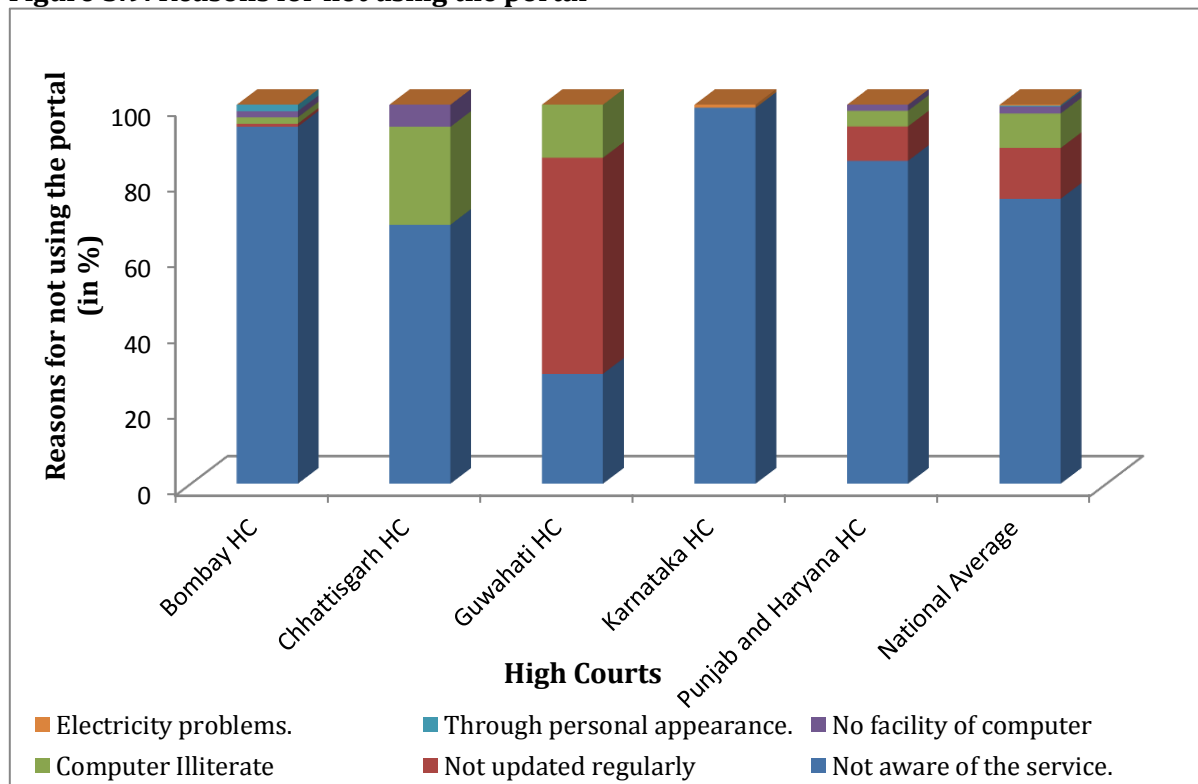


Note: Author's compilation

Among the surveyed High Courts, the Karnataka HC had the highest number of lawyers accessing the portal on a daily basis, whereas the majority of Chhattisgarh lawyers (around 70 per cent) never access the portal to obtain case-related information. It was also observed that lawyers of the Bombay and Punjab & Haryana HCs are close to the five-HC average in terms of accessing the District Court portal for case-related information on a daily basis.

Many lawyers do not use the portal to access case-related information (around 80 per cent), since they were not aware that they could access judicial services through either the eCourts national portal or through the District Court portal.

Figure 5.9: Reasons for not using the portal



Note: Author's compilation

The survey findings (Figure 5.9) revealed that a large number of lawyers in the Bombay, Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana HCs were not aware that case-related information can be accessed online through the District or eCourts portal. Also, a high number (around 60%) of lawyers in the Guwahati HC revealed that information on the portal is not updated on a regular basis. Another highly voiced reason for the lack of portal usage in Chhattisgarh was the lack of any computer knowledge among lawyers.

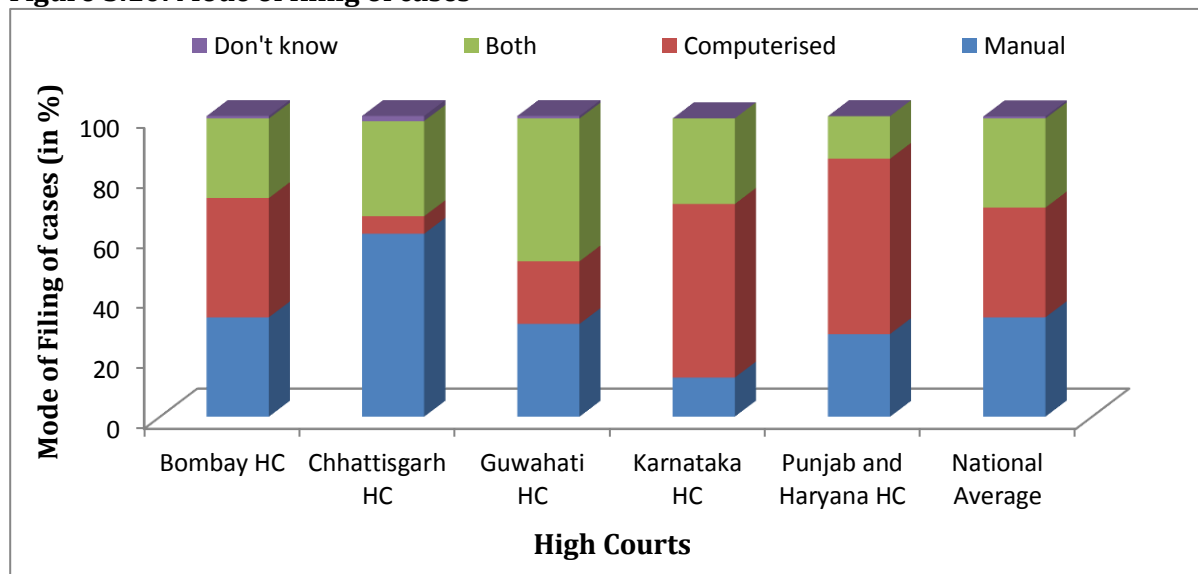
5.2.3 Mode of service delivery

Lawyers were asked about the mode of service delivery for the following services: filing of cases, caveat checking for cases, issue of check slips, case filing information, defects and notification of case scrutiny, case registration confirmation, case allocation information, case status information, process service, service of summons, service of warrants, orders or proceedings and delivery of copy of order and judgements. They were provided with four options: the process is still manual, it has been computerised, both methods are used and they are not aware of it. We will discuss the detailed feedback across five High Courts for each service.

5.2.3.1 Filing of cases

Less than 40 per cent of lawyers (Figure 5.10) reported that their cases were filed exclusively through a computerised system. Manual and computerised system usage responses were almost alike, each, on average, encompassing less than 40 per cent of the total responses.

Figure 5.10: Mode of filing of cases



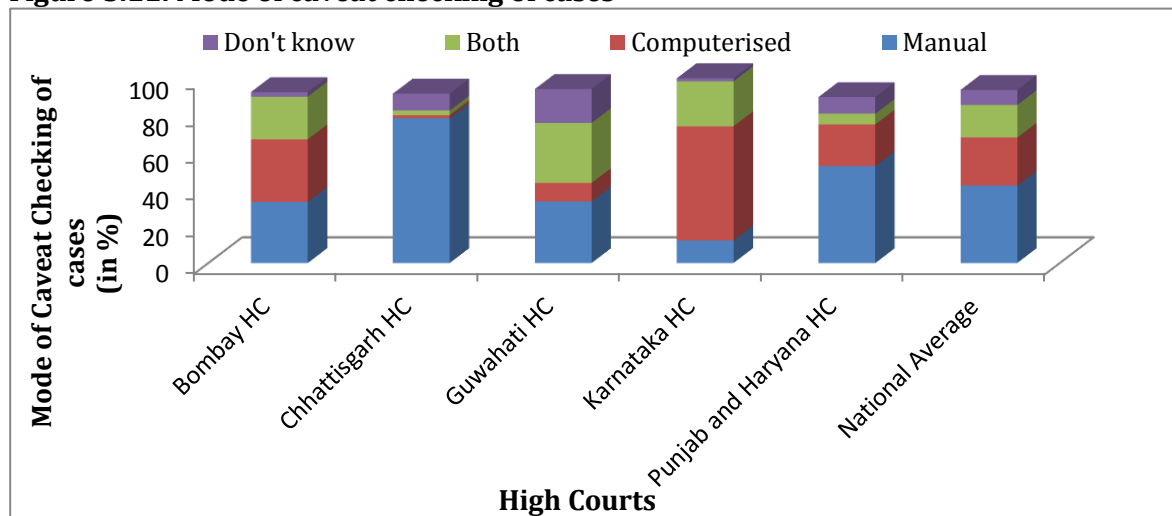
Note: Author's compilation

Among the HCs surveyed, the majority of lawyers in the Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana HCs responded that a computerised mode of filing cases was exclusively used in courts, whereas computerisation was used the least in the Chhattisgarh HC. It is also to be noted that none of surveyed HCs had achieved full computerisation in terms of case filing and a mix of manual and computerised input was still being used. There were also a few lawyers who were not aware of the mode of case filing in their respective courts.

5.2.3.2 Caveat checking of cases

More than 40 per cent of the respondents (Figure 5.11) revealed that caveat checking of cases was being done exclusively through a manual system, followed by a fourth who responded that an exclusively computerised system was used.

Figure 5.11: Mode of caveat checking of cases



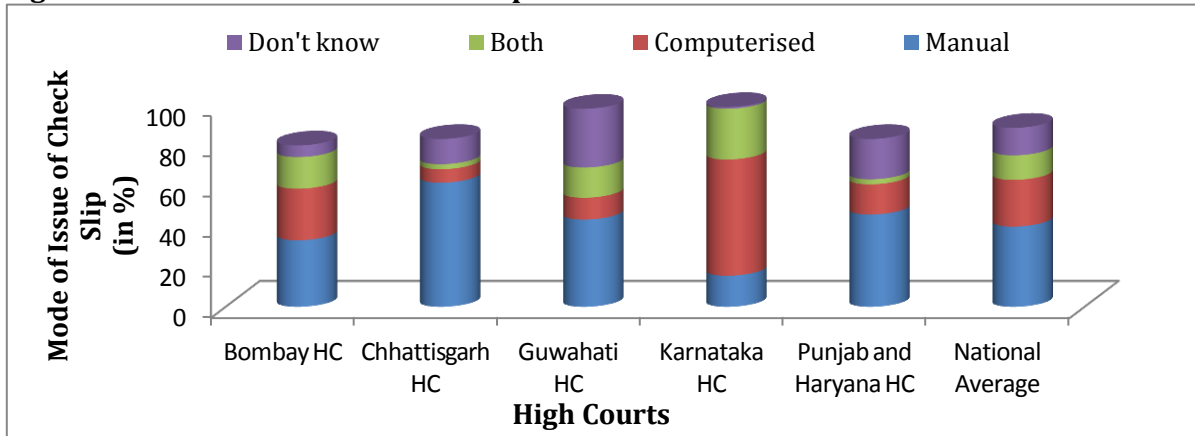
Note: Author's compilation

Among the surveyed HCs, the maximum number of lawyers in the Karnataka HC revealed an exclusively computerised mode of caveat checking followed by the Bombay HC, while more than 80 per cent of Chhattisgarh HC lawyers said that a 'manual only' system was used. Slightly less than 20 per cent of Guwahati HC lawyers were not aware of the mode of caveat checking of cases in their courts.

5.2.3.3 Issue of check slip

Around 40 per cent of lawyers (Figure 5.12) responded that the issue of check slip was being done exclusively through a manual system, whereas a fourth of the lawyers used a 'computerised only' system. On average, about 12 per cent of respondents revealed that both manual and computerised systems were in place for the issue of check slips in their court premises.

Figure 5.12: Mode of Issue of check slip



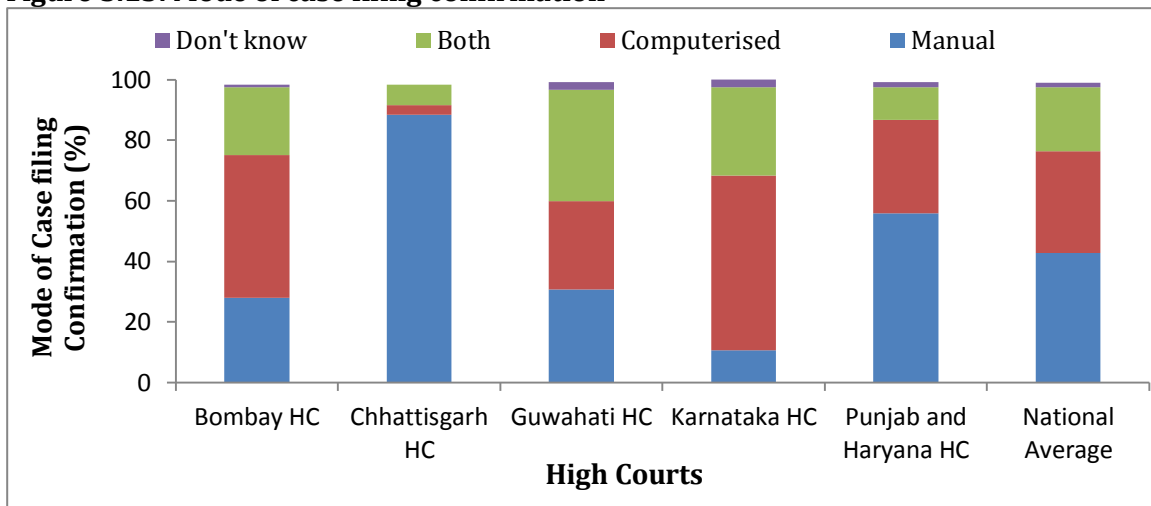
Note: Author's compilation

Among the HCs surveyed, the number of courts issuing check slips exclusively through a computerised system is the highest in the Karnataka HC followed by the Bombay HC, whereas the number of courts issuing the check slips exclusively through a manual system is the highest in the Chhattisgarh HC followed by the Punjab & Haryana HC.

5.2.3.4 Case filing confirmation

On average, more than 40 per cent of the lawyers (Figure 5.13) conveyed that case filing confirmation is done exclusively through a manual system, while a third of them reported that it was done through a computerised system at the court premises.

Figure 5.13: Mode of case filing confirmation



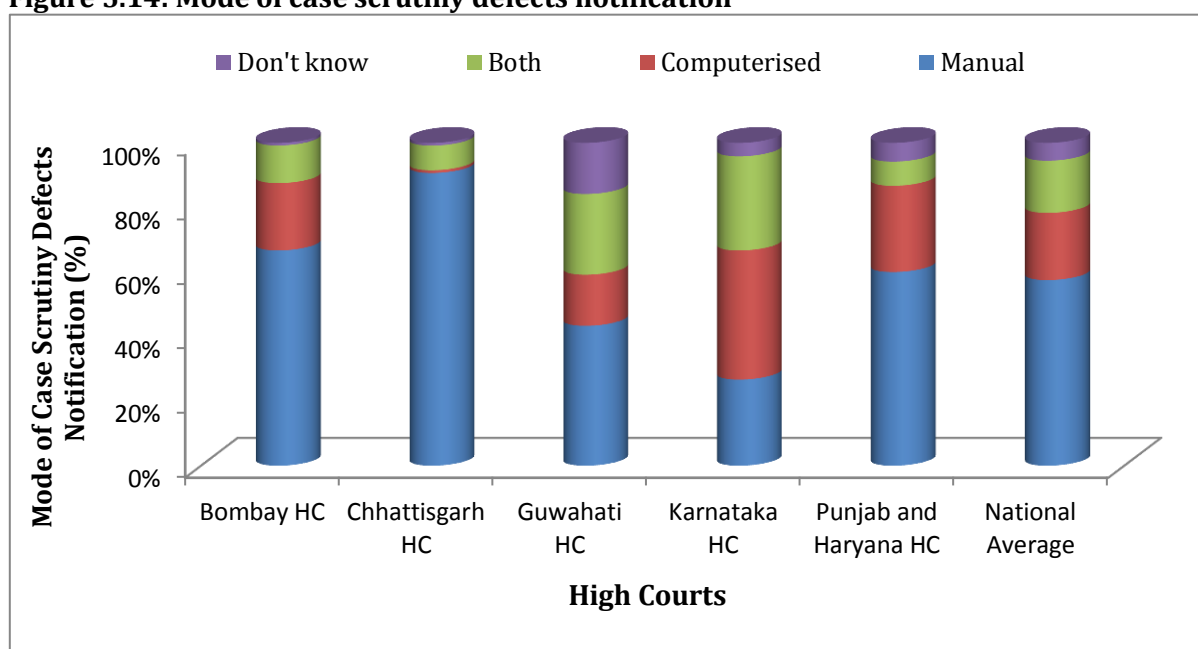
Note: Author's compilation

Among the surveyed HCs, the maximum number of lawyers in the Chhattisgarh HC mentioned that the case filing confirmation is done exclusively through a manual system, whereas a large number of lawyers in the Karnataka HC said that it is done through a computerised mechanism. It was also seen that a third of the lawyers in the Karnataka and Guwahati HCs responded that both systems, i.e., manual and computerised, were being used to give information related to the confirmation of case filing to both litigants and lawyers.

5.2.3.5 Case scrutiny defects notification

More than half the lawyers (Figure 5.14) observed that case scrutiny defects were being informed exclusively through a manual system, while a fifth of them reported that it was done through a computerised system.

Figure 5.14: Mode of case scrutiny defects notification



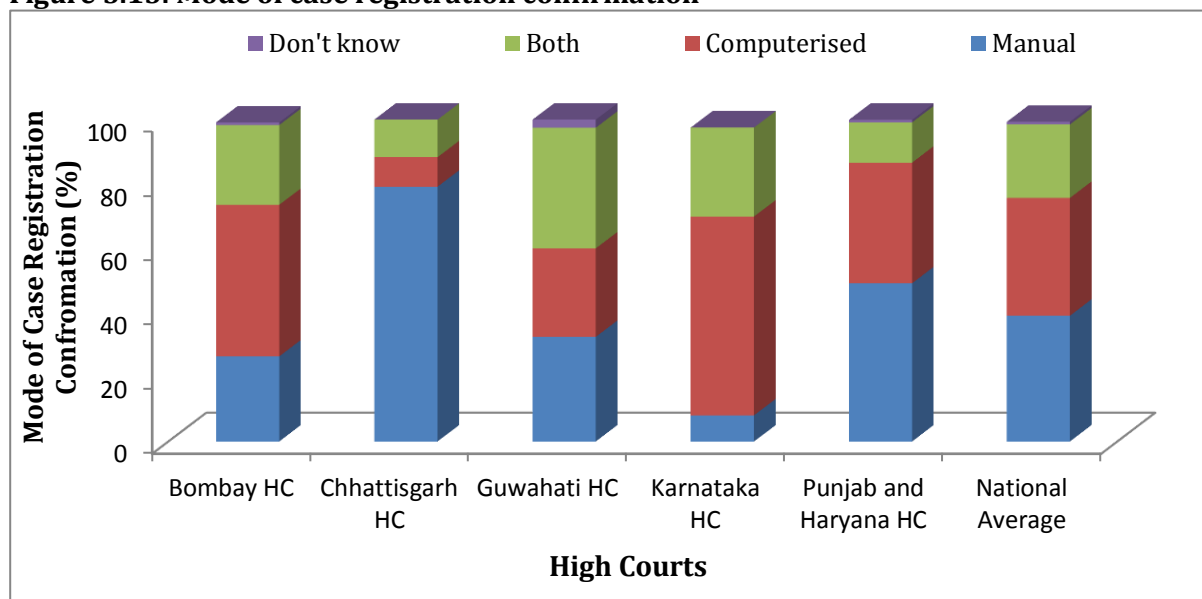
Note: Author's compilation

Among the surveyed HCs the number of lawyers who responded that the manual system was used for case scrutiny defect notification was the highest in the Bombay HC, whereas the number of lawyers who claimed that a computerised system was used was the highest in the Karnataka HC.

5.2.3.6 Case registration confirmation

Forty per cent of the lawyers (Figure 5.15) observed that information regarding case registration was disseminated exclusively through a manual system, whereas more than 30 per cent said that it was done exclusively through a computerised system.

Figure 5.15: Mode of case registration confirmation



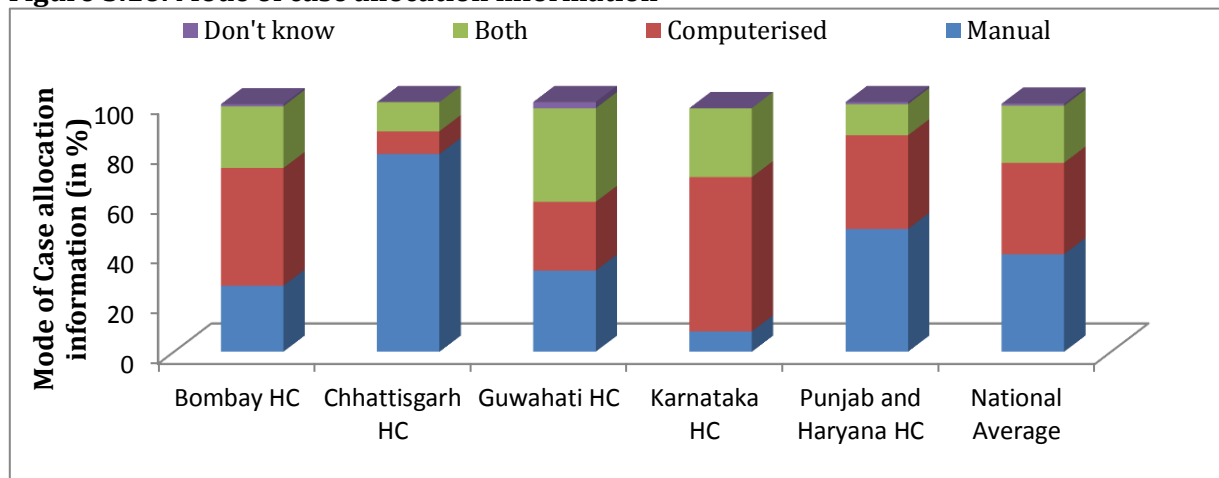
Note: Author's compilation

The number of lawyers who responded that case registration confirmation information is provided exclusively through a computerised system is the highest in the Karnataka HC, whereas the number of lawyers who observed that it is done exclusively through a manual system was the highest in the Chhattisgarh HC. The Guwahati HC experienced the largest number of respondents who claimed case registration confirmation was being done using both systems.

5.2.3.7 Case allocation confirmation

Forty per cent of the lawyers (Figure 5.16) observed that the information regarding case allocation was done exclusively through a manual system, whereas one-third of the lawyers, on average, revealed that it was done exclusively through a computerised system.

Figure 5.16: Mode of case allocation information



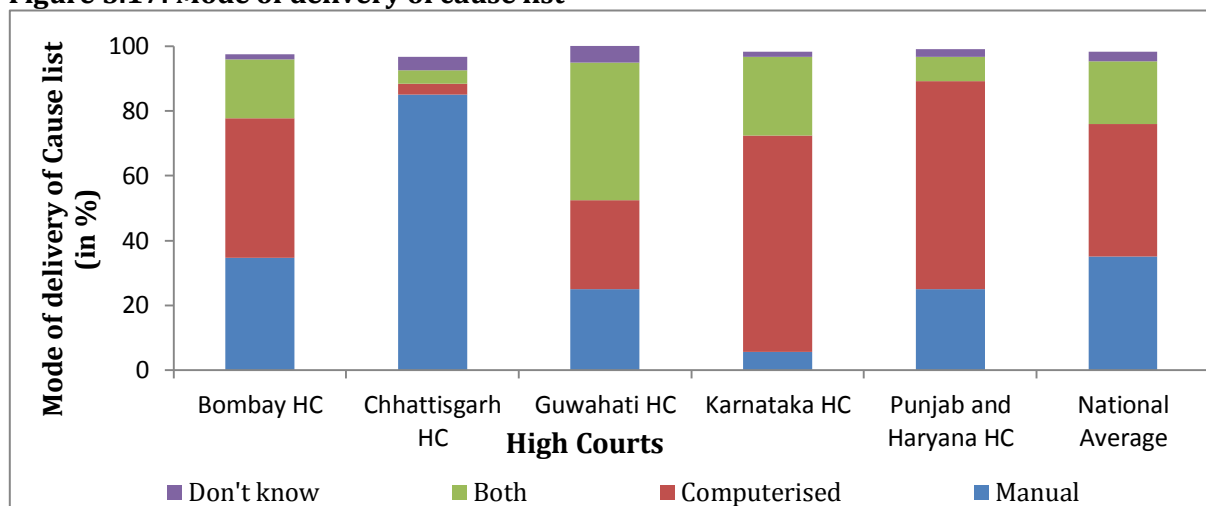
Note: Author's compilation

The number of lawyers who observed that case registration confirmation information was being provided exclusively through a computerised system was the highest in the Karnataka HC followed by the Bombay HC, whereas the number vouching for an exclusive manual system was the highest in the Chhattisgarh HC. A large number of lawyers (around 40 per cent) in the Guwahati HC observed that the case allocation information was being imparted using both systems.

5.2.3.8 Preparation and delivery of cause list

The survey data reveals that 40 per cent of the lawyers said that the cause list is delivered through a computerised system, which is the highest, followed by 35 per cent who observed that it is delivered through the manual system at the court premises (Figure 5.17).

Figure 5.17: Mode of delivery of cause list



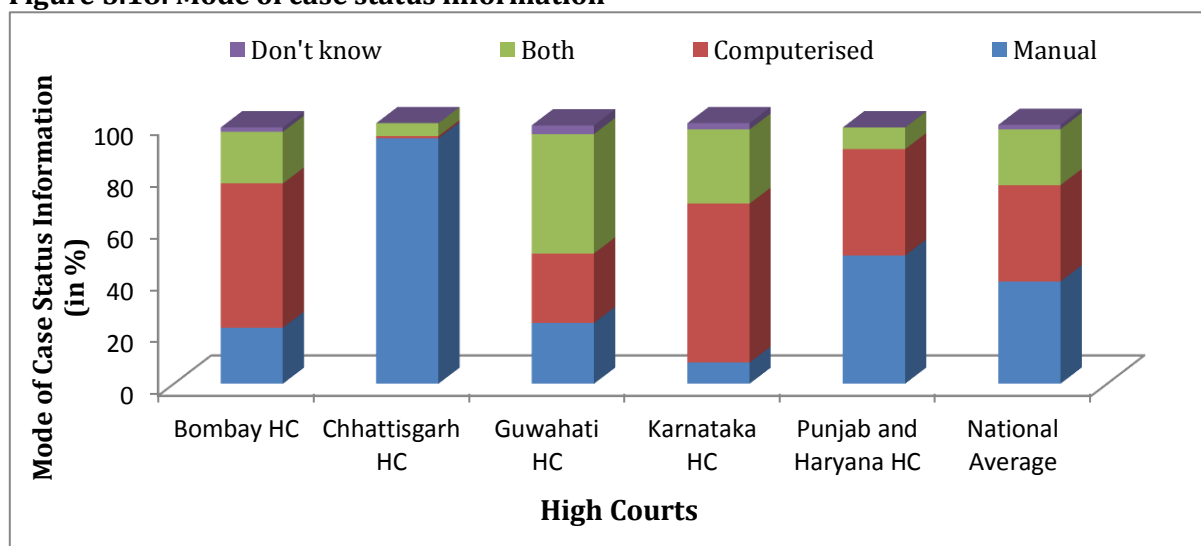
Note: Author's compilation

Among the HCs surveyed, the majority of courts under the jurisdiction of the Chhattisgarh HC were still delivering cause lists exclusively through a manual system, whereas a large number of courts were doing this through a computerised system in the Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana HCs, with both staying above the five-HC average on those parameters.

5.2.3.9 Case status information

Approximately 40 per cent of the lawyers (Figure 5.18) stated that case status information was delivered exclusively through a manual system, followed by 36 per cent who observed that it was delivered through a manual system in their respective court premises.

Figure 5.18: Mode of case status information



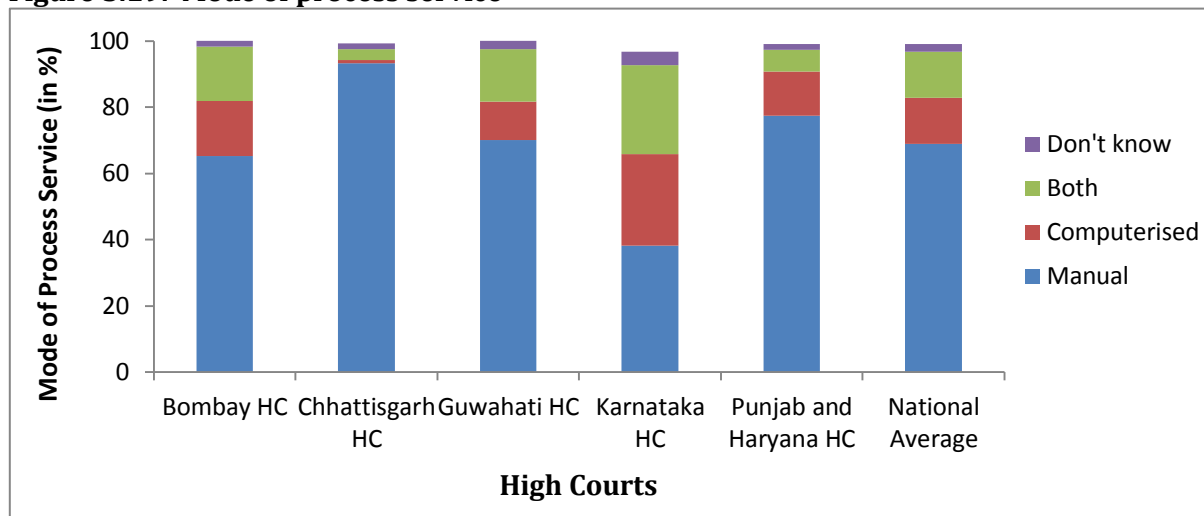
Note: Author's compilation

The number of lawyers who observed that case status information was being delivered through a manual system was the highest in the Chhattisgarh HC, whereas the number of lawyers who claimed that it was done exclusively through a computerised system was the highest in the Karnataka HC, followed by the Bombay and Punjab & Haryana HCs.

5.2.3.10 Process service

More than 60 per cent of the courts (Figure 5.19) used the manual system exclusively for process service, whereas less than 15 per cent of lawyers observed that the courts use a computerised system exclusively for process service.

Figure 5.19: Mode of process service



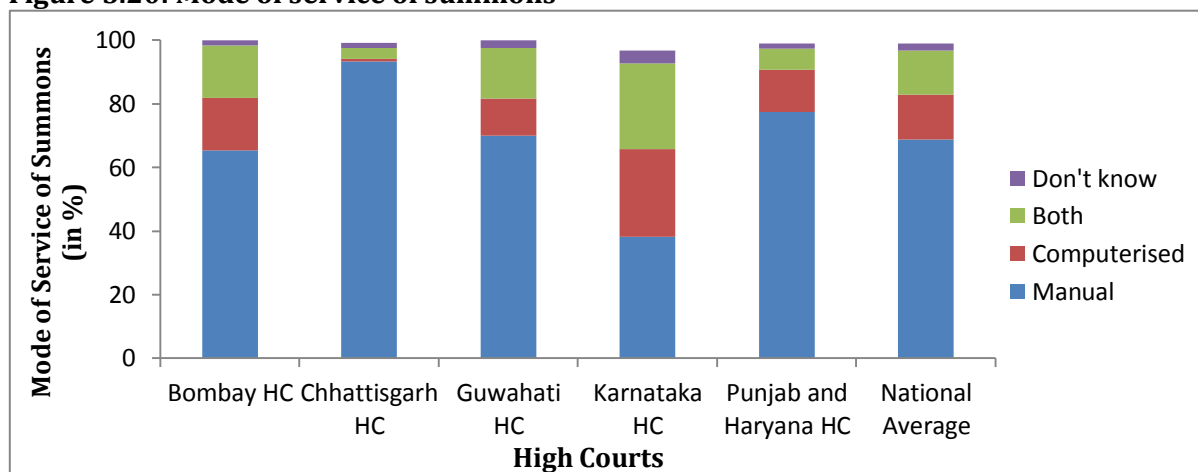
Note: Author's compilation

Among the HCs surveyed, the majority of the lawyers in the Chhattisgarh and Punjab & Haryana HCs observed that process service is being performed through the manual system, whereas only in the Karnataka HC more than one-fourth of interviewed lawyers observed that the process service is being performed through the computerised system.

5.2.3.11 Service of summons

It can be seen from the survey data (Figure 5.20) that 80 per cent of the lawyers observed that summons were served exclusively through a manual system, whereas less than 10 per cent observed that they were served exclusively through a computerised system.

Figure 5.20: Mode of service of summons



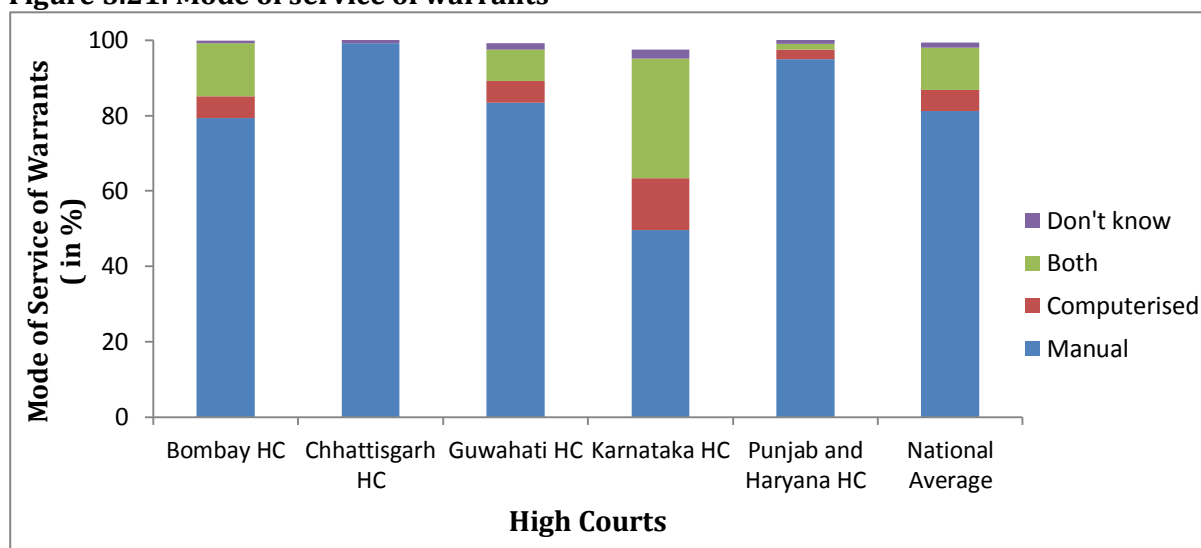
Note: Author's compilation

Among the HCs surveyed, a large number of lawyers belonging to every High Court observed that summons were served exclusively through a manual system, except in Karnataka where a considerable number of lawyers (around 50 per cent) observed that they were served through either a computerised system or through both manual and computerised modes.

5.2.3.12 Service of warrants

Around 80 per cent of the lawyers (Figure 5.21) observed that warrants were being served exclusively through a manual system, whereas only around 5.5 per cent observed that it being served exclusively through a computerised system.

Figure 5.21: Mode of service of warrants



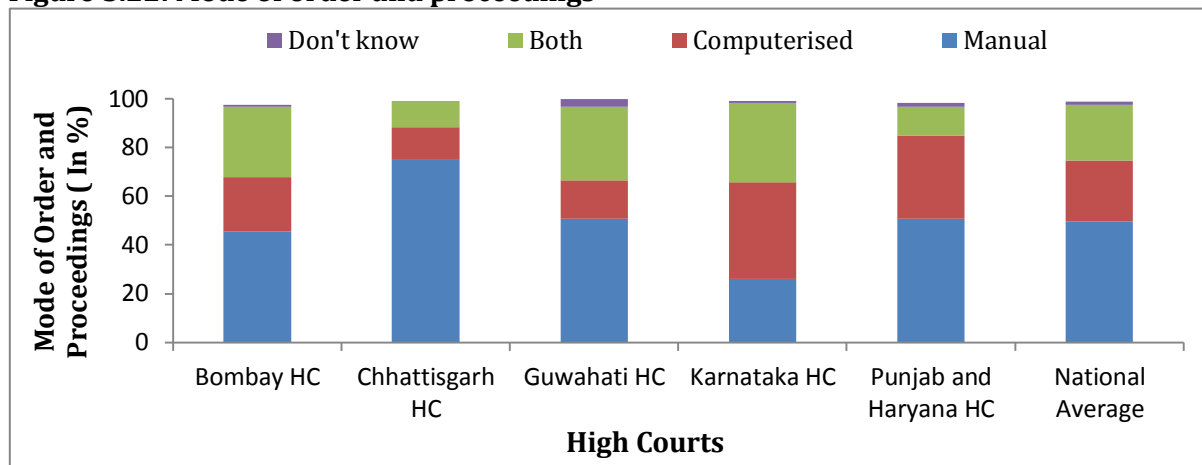
Note: Author's compilation

In all the surveyed High Courts, the majority of lawyers reported that a manual system was used exclusively to serve warrants. In the Chhattisgarh HC, all the lawyers said that this was the case, closely followed by the Punjab & Haryana HC. Karnataka was the only HC where a considerable number of respondents claimed a computerised system was used either separately or along with the manual system.

5.2.3.13 Delivery of order and proceedings

On average, almost half the lawyers (Figure 5.22) responded that copy orders and proceedings were delivered exclusively through a manual system, whereas a fourth of them did this exclusively through a computerised mechanism.

Figure 5.22: Mode of order and proceedings



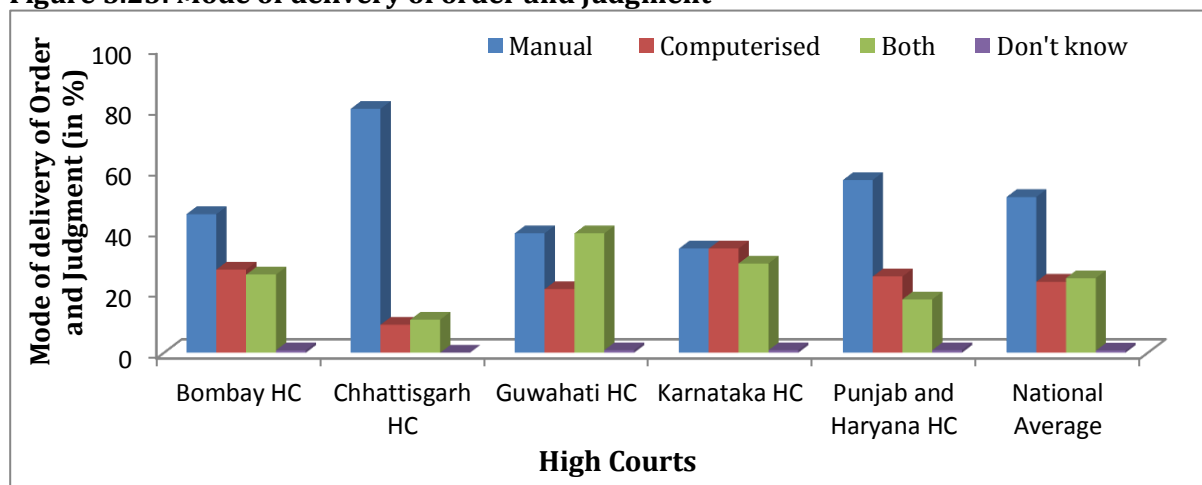
Note: Author's compilation

The survey also revealed that the number of lawyers who found the copy of order and proceedings being delivered exclusively through the computerised system was the highest in the Karnataka HC, followed by the Punjab & Haryana HC, whereas lawyers of the Chhattisgarh HC had the highest number of respondents claiming that the manual system was used for delivery of order and proceedings.

5.2.3.14 Delivery of order and judgment

Half the interviewed lawyers (Figure 5.23) mentioned that the copy of order and judgement is delivered through the manual system, whereas less than one-fourth of the lawyers said that it is delivered through the computerised system.

Figure 5.23: Mode of delivery of order and judgment



Note: Author's compilation

Among the surveyed HCs, most of the lawyers in every HC jurisdiction revealed that copies of order and judgements were delivered mostly through the manual system, except in the Karnataka HC where the numbers of responses for computerised and manual modes are equal.

5.2.4 Service delivery mechanism: Feedback of lawyer

Lawyers are the link between Judiciary and litigants gave their feedback on quality of service delivery. It was captured through average time taken in different judicial activities.

Considering five states, on average (Table 5.1(a)), officials take less than 10 minutes in filing a case, 9.5 minutes for caveat checking of cases, more than 10 minutes for issue of check slips, 8 minutes for confirming the case filing, around 15 minutes for case scrutiny defects notification, nearly 13 minutes for confirming the case registration and around 16 minutes for giving information regarding case allocation.

Table 5.1(a): Time taken in delivery of different services (in mins)

S. N.	High Court	Filing of cases	Caveat checking for cases	Issue of Check Slips	Case filing confirmation	Case scrutiny defects notification	Case registration confirmation	Case allocation information
1	Bombay	5.32	1.43	3.04	4.26	6.70	9.23	5.74
2	Chhattisgarh	3.10	9.93	14.05	13.48	30.68	29.06	17.00
3	Guwahati	2.50	1.38	1.40	1.90	1.45	1.84	1.26
4	Karnataka	0.82	0.66	0.70	1.05	1.36	1.18	1.39
5	Punjab & Haryana	37.21	33.72	32.54	20.09	32.36	24.58	53.76
	National	9.79	9.42	10.35	8.16	14.51	13.18	15.83

Note: Author's calculation

Among the High Courts surveyed, it was found that in states with higher computerisation, less time is taken to perform a judicial activity. For example, Karnataka courts take less than a minute in case filing, caveat checking and issue of check slip and just more than a minute in case filing confirmation, case scrutiny, case registration and case allocation information, which is far below the five-HC average. In contrast, in states with lower computerisation such as Chhattisgarh and Punjab & Haryana, courts take much more time to perform basic judicial activities. So, it can be deduced that computerisation decreases the amount of time taken to perform judicial activities.

According to the data (Table 5.5.1(b)), services whose activities are still more or less manual, such as process service, service of summons and service of warrants, take more time than activities like case status information, which take less time due to computerisation/ online availability.

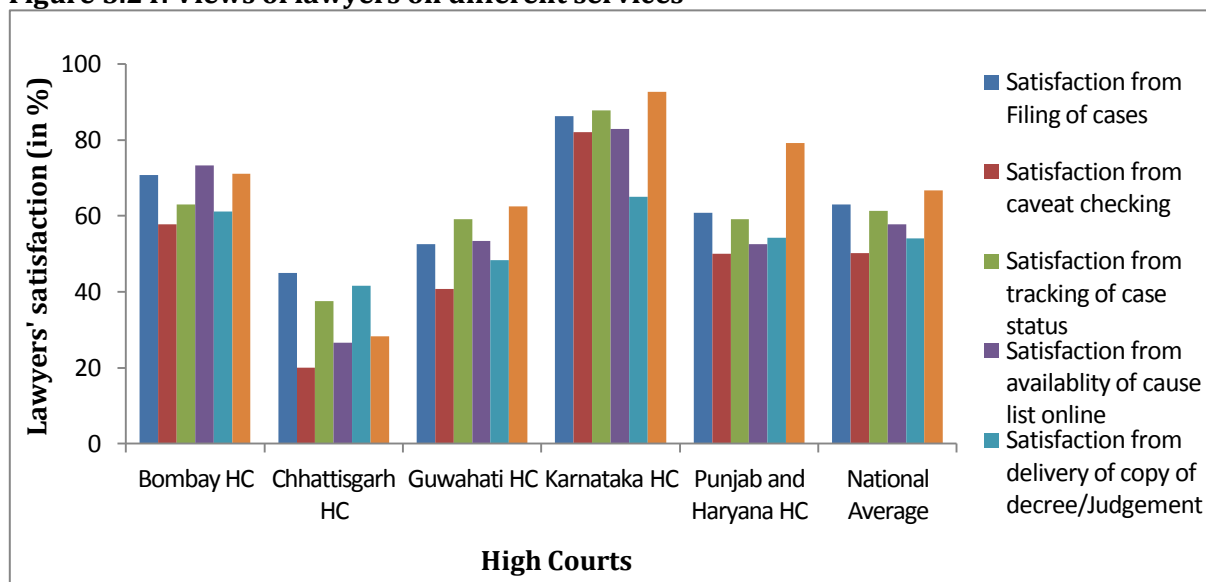
Table 5.5.1(b): Time taken in delivery of different services (in mins)

S.N o.	High Court	Case status information	Process Service	Service of summons	Service of warrants	Orders/ Proceedings	Delivery of Order & Judgements
1	Bombay	9.10	54.87	107.58	122.04	37.20	51.80
2	Chhattisgarh	6.91	139.45	146.03	188.31	47.57	34.63
3	Guwahati	2.10	33.77	48.88	43.10	12.31	22.63
4	Karnataka	1.38	12.44	19.80	22.18	15.58	16.43
5	Punjab & Haryana	25.74	231.88	28.62	77.42	6.58	26.87
	National	9.05	94.48	70.18	90.61	23.85	30.47

Note: Author's calculation

Lawyers also shared their level of satisfaction with computerised service delivery for different services. More than half the lawyers are satisfied with the service delivery after computerisation, on average (Figure 5.24).

Figure 5.24: Views of lawyers on different services



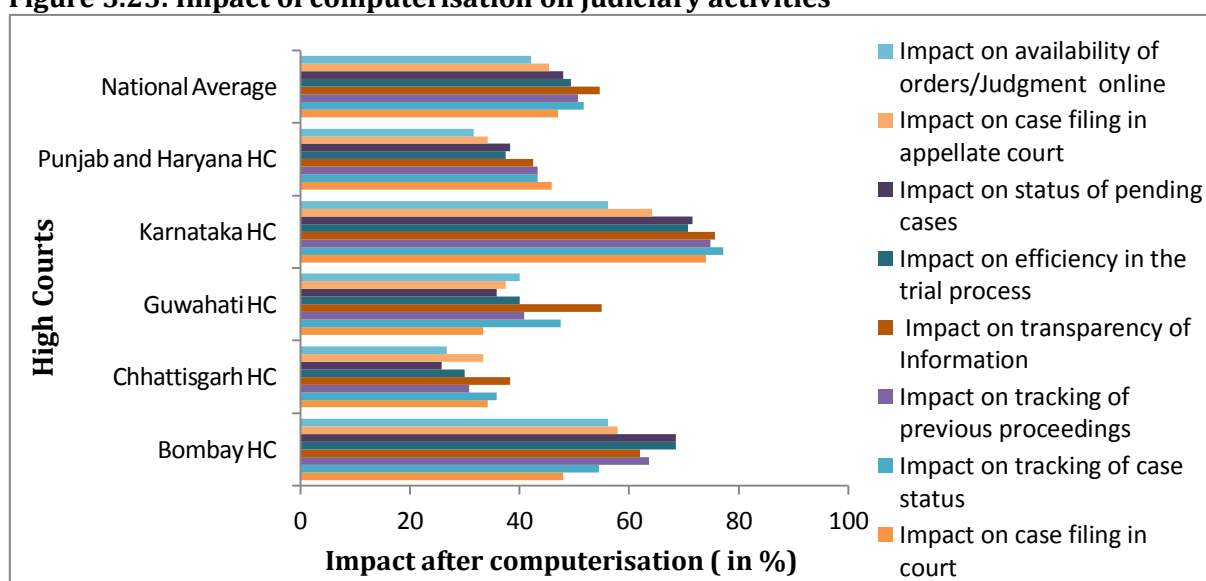
Note: Author's compilation

It was also observed that more than half the lawyers were very satisfied with the present judicial services provided, except in the Chhattisgarh HC, where it is lower due to less computerisation. As a result, Chhattisgarh HC lawyers are looking for further improvement in the current service delivery.

5.2.5 Impact of computerisation on Judiciary activities: Views of lawyers

To pinpoint how much progress computerisation in courts has made, questions like the effect and impact of computerisation on factors like judicial efficiency, cost and accessibility were taken into consideration along with the usefulness and changes it has brought from the lawyers' point of view. It is evident from the survey data that computerisation has significant effect on judicial service delivery. It can be observed that the Karnataka HC, followed by Bombay, has shown the highest level of improvement in all activities and aspects such as status of pending cases, transparency level and efficiency in the trial process and both HCs perform above the five-HC average (Figure 5.25).

Figure 5.25: Impact of computerisation on judiciary activities

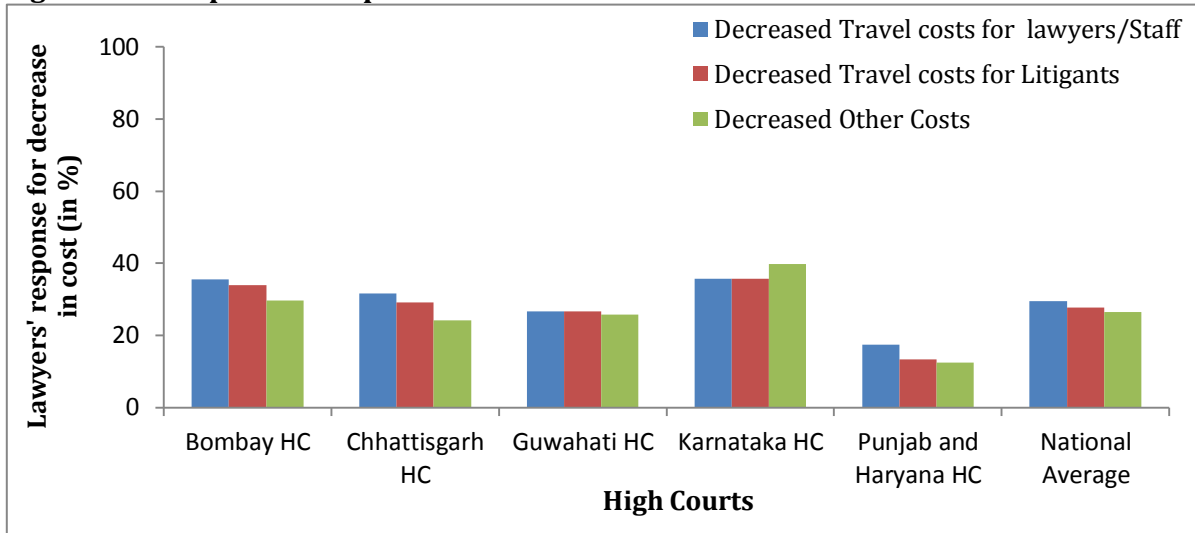


Note: Author's compilation

The Chhattisgarh HC showed the least improvement in judicial services due to the use of manual operations for delivery of judicial services, followed by the Guwahati HC. Hence, it can be concluded that computerisation leads to improvement in the judicial service delivery system.

Less than a third of the surveyed lawyers reported that computerisation reduced the travel cost for lawyers, litigants and other costs, on average (Figure 5.26).

Figure 5.26: Impact of computerisation on economic cost

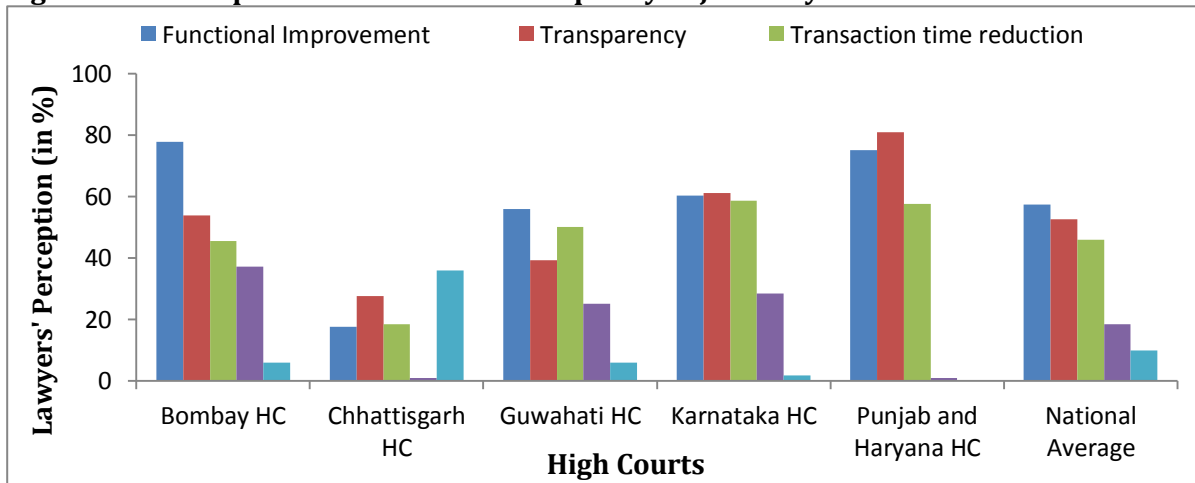


Note: Author's compilation

It was also observed that the Karnataka HC is the only High Court where more than a third of the lawyers said that computerisation reduced the allied costs, since the rest of the High Courts have given less than 30 per cent responses in this regard.

Lawyers in general have expressed that computerisation has improved Judiciary activities. More than half of them perceived a functional improvement and increase in transparency after the introduction of computerisation and more than 45 per cent of them observed that it saved costs and time (Figure 5.27).

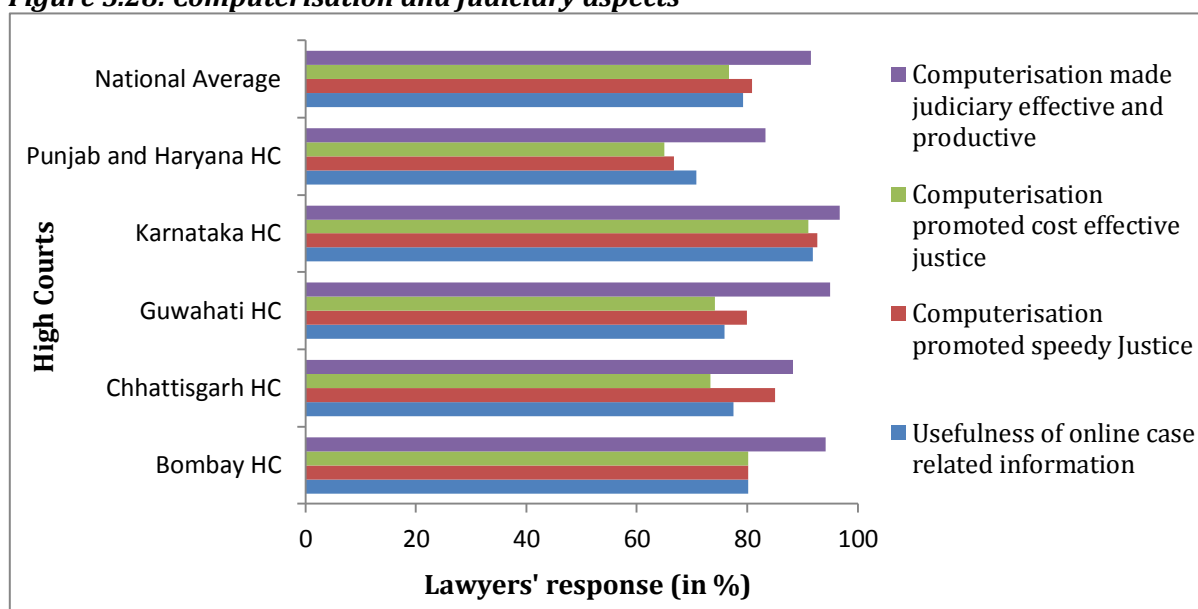
Figure 5.27: Computerisation and overall quality of judiciary activities



Note: Author's compilation

Most lawyers in the Karnataka, Bombay and Guwahati HCs observed that computerisation increased transparency, while most lawyers in Punjab & Haryana and Chhattisgarh observed that it increased transparency more, but functional improvement less. Karnataka HC lawyers ranked both functional improvement and transparency as equal in terms of the effects of computerisation. More than half the interviewed lawyers found the online availability of case-related information very useful and more than 90 per cent of them agreed that it increased the productivity and effectiveness of the judicial process. While more than 80 per cent of the respondents observed that computerisation promoted speedy justice, three-fourth of them observed that it promoted cost-effective justice and saved money and time (Figure 5.28).

Figure 5.28: Computerisation and judiciary aspects



Note: Author's compilation

Among the HCs surveyed, 75 per cent of lawyers claimed that computerisation promoted cost-effective, speedy justice while also making the judiciary effective and productive. Additionally, respondents across court lines agreed that case-related information is very useful.

5.2.6 Conclusion

To summarise, lawyers have various concerns about the smooth functioning of the eCourts project. They require more computers in the court complex to access the system. Computerisation should be extended to all the related rooms in a court complex beyond the courtroom. One of them suggested that the records room should also be computerised.

Lawyers recommend hiring more technical staff to run the eCourts project in an efficient manner. They also emphasised adequate training of court staff, including lawyers. More information centres are required at the court complexes. A help line may be introduced to help advocates clearly understand the process of eCourts. They urged the introduction of a video conferencing facility and an e-Library. Display board and kiosks are also essential in the court complexes. They demanded an awareness campaign for citizens. Such campaigns may be extended up to the village level. The system should become user-friendly enough to be used by citizens as well. SMS and email alerts about case-related information should be sent to litigants. Awareness campaign should also be organised for advocates within the court complexes. One way would be to organise seminars and workshops.

There should be digitisation of all previous documents and files so that they are easily accessible. Mobile applications may be developed so that lawyers can check all the information on their cell phones. One important suggestion is to introduce computer education as one of the core subjects in the legal education system. Most importantly, lawyers expressed that one of the necessary conditions of success of eCourts project is co-ordination among related employees.

5.3 Litigants' Perspective

Detailed feedback from litigants was collected about their awareness and usage of the eCourts project and the eCourts national portal, and their perceptions of the time required to perform different judiciary activities. We also attempted to assess citizen-level satisfaction with case-related activities after computerisation in courts.

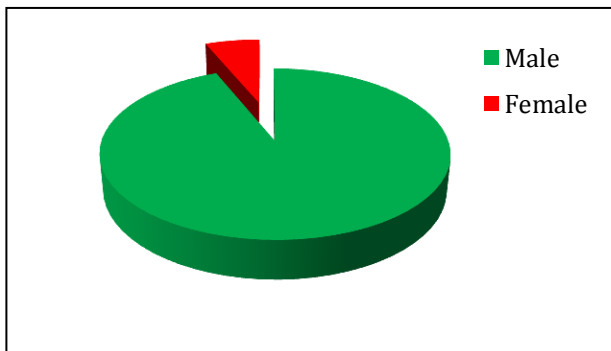
5.3.1 Background of litigants

As mentioned before, 600 litigants were randomly chosen from three courts of 20 court complexes under the jurisdiction of five High Courts: Bombay, Punjab & Haryana, Karnataka, Guwahati and Chhattisgarh. We will briefly discuss the background of this group of respondents based on the following parameters: gender, age, level of education and knowledge of computers.

5.3.1.1 Gender distribution

More than 90 per cent of litigants who visit the court were found to be male. It was also observed that the lowest participation was found in Chhattisgarh, whereas the highest was observed in Guwahati, followed by Karnataka (Figure 5.29).

Figure 5.29: Gender distribution among litigants

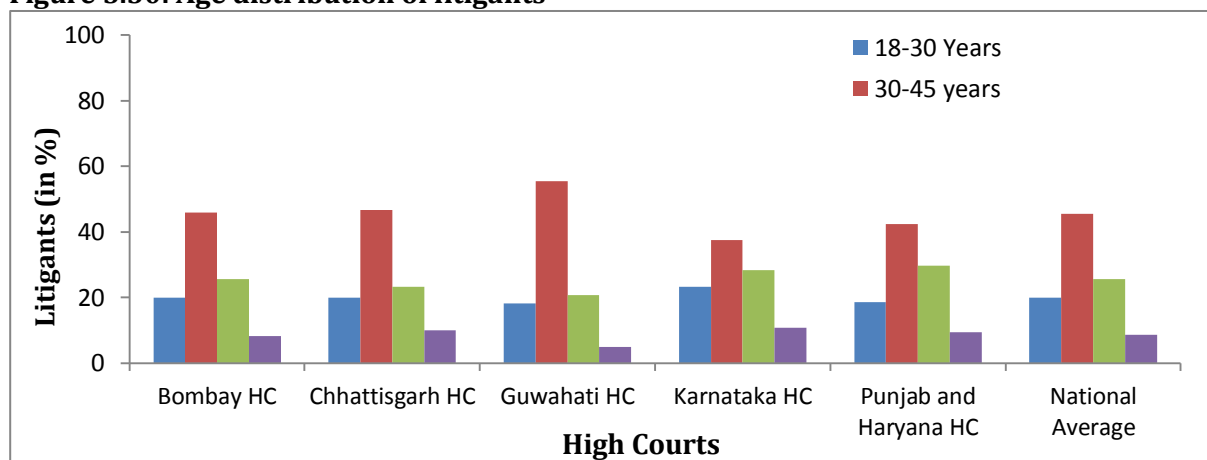


Source: Author's compilation

5.3.1.2 Age distribution

Four age groups are defined as 18–30 years, 30–45 years, 45–60 years and more than 60 years. The majority of litigants (Figure 5.30) who participated in the survey were in the age group of 30–45 years, followed by the 45–60 year demographic across all five High Courts.

Figure 5.30: Age distribution of litigants

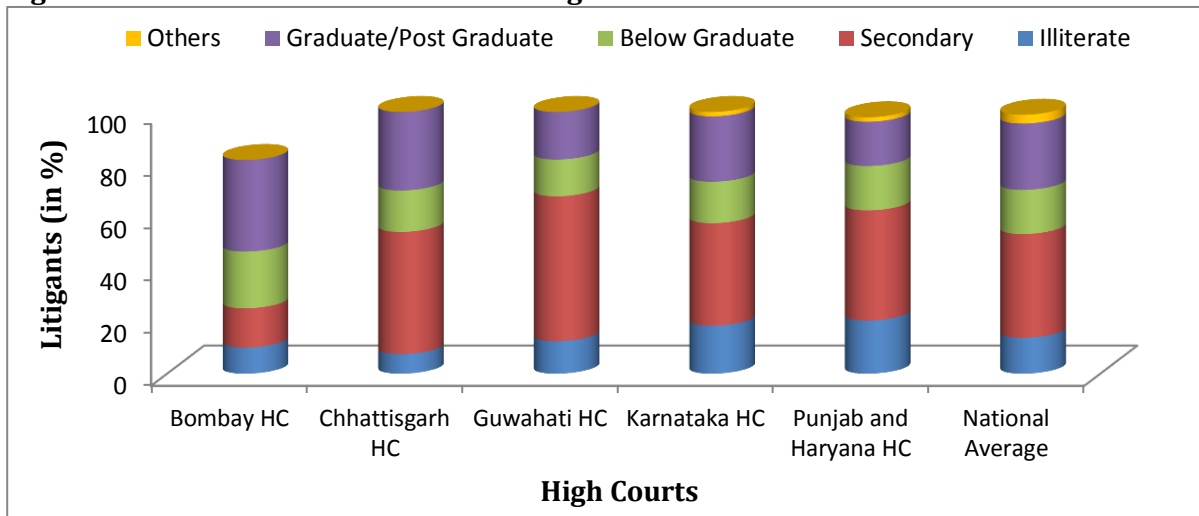


Source: Author's compilation

5.3.1.3 Educational attainment

We divided the level of education into five categories: illiterate, secondary, below graduate, graduate or post-graduate and other. The majority of litigants (Figure 5.31) were educated up to the secondary level except in the Bombay HC where the majority were graduates or higher. The Punjab & Haryana HC was the only one where illiterate litigants accounted for more than 20 per cent of total litigants.

Figure 5.31: Educational attainment of litigants

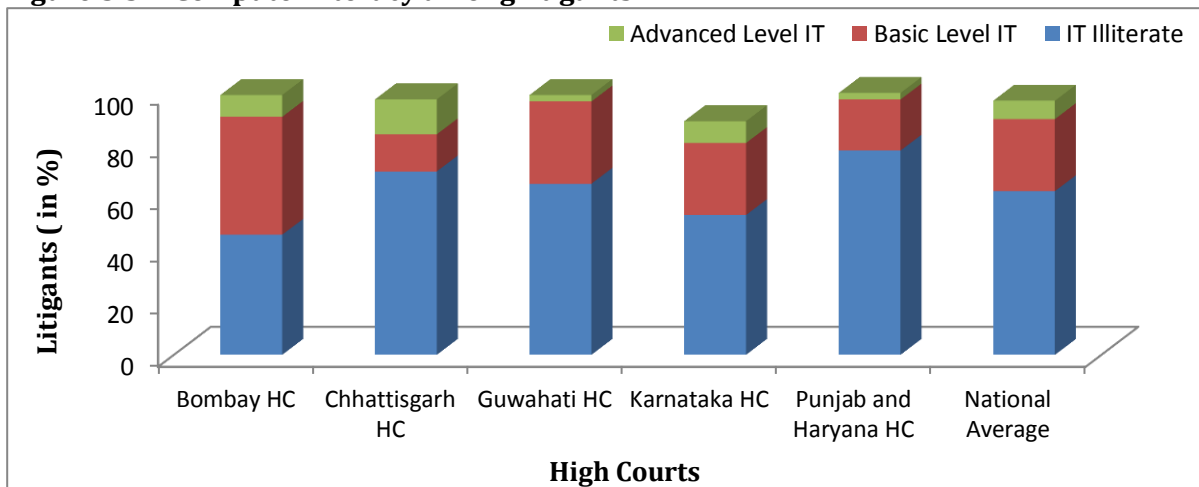


Source: Author's compilation

5.3.1.4 Knowledge of computers

Most of the litigants (Figure 5.32) do not have any knowledge of computers, with only a third of them having any kind of IT knowledge and, even among them, the majority had only basic IT knowledge.

Figure 5.32: Computer literacy among litigants



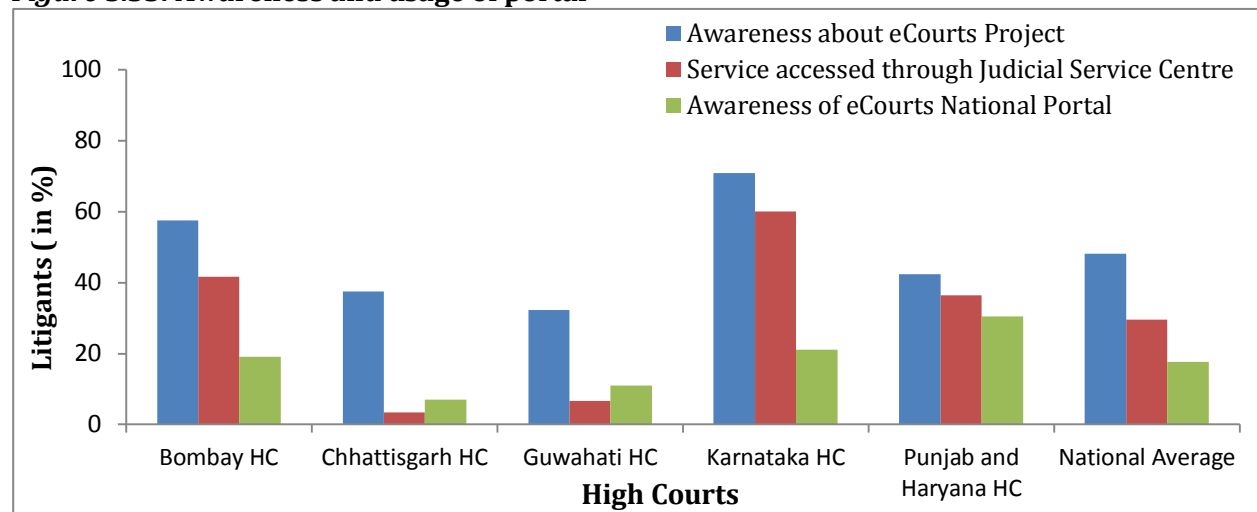
Source: Author's compilation

The Punjab & Haryana and Chhattisgarh HCs had the maximum number of IT-illiterate litigants, followed by Guwahati, whereas Bombay was the single HC where IT literates outnumbered the IT illiterates.

5.3.2 Awareness and usage of portal

Almost half the litigants (Figure 5.33) were aware of the computerisation of courts, but only a third had actually accessed the services from the Judicial Service Centre and less than 20 per cent were aware of the eCourts National Portal.

Figure 5.33: Awareness and usage of portal



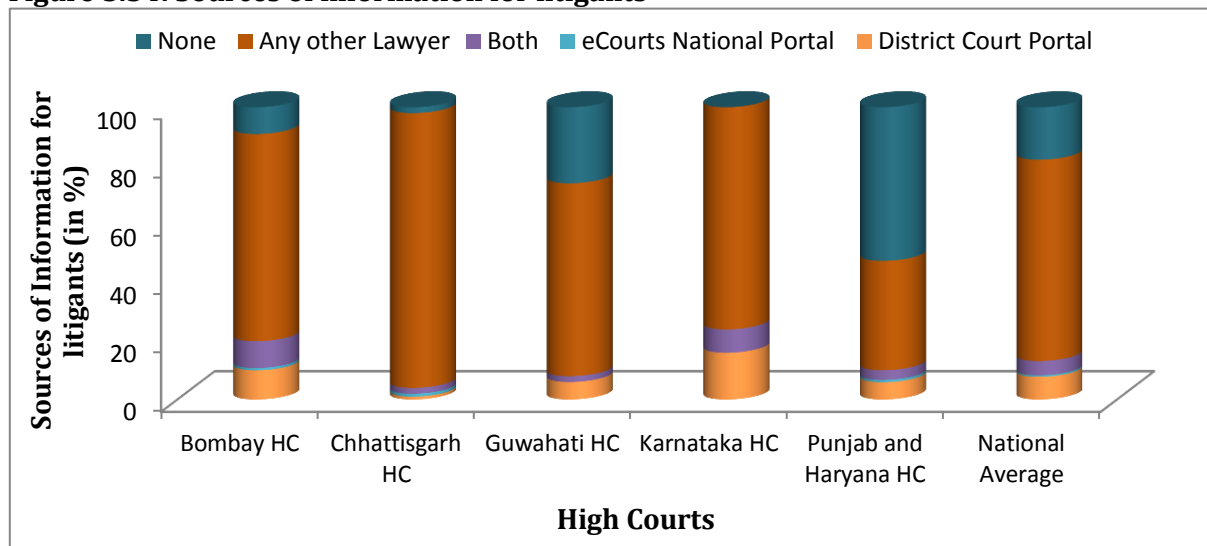
Source: Author's compilation

Among the High Courts surveyed, the Karnataka HC registered the highest level of awareness and the maximum number of litigants who accessed the services from the Judicial Services Centre, whereas Chhattisgarh registered the lowest access among all the HCs surveyed. It was also observed that litigants who were aware of the eCourts National Portal were the highest number in the Punjab & Haryana HC, followed by the Karnataka and Bombay HCs.

5.3.2.1 Sources of information

Less than 10 per cent of litigants (Figure 5.34) had accessed information from either the District Court or the eCourts National Portal, while most litigants (around 70 per cent) talked to their lawyer to access any case-related information. It was also observed that usage of eCourts National Portal for information was negligible in all surveyed HCs.

Figure 5.34: Sources of information for litigants



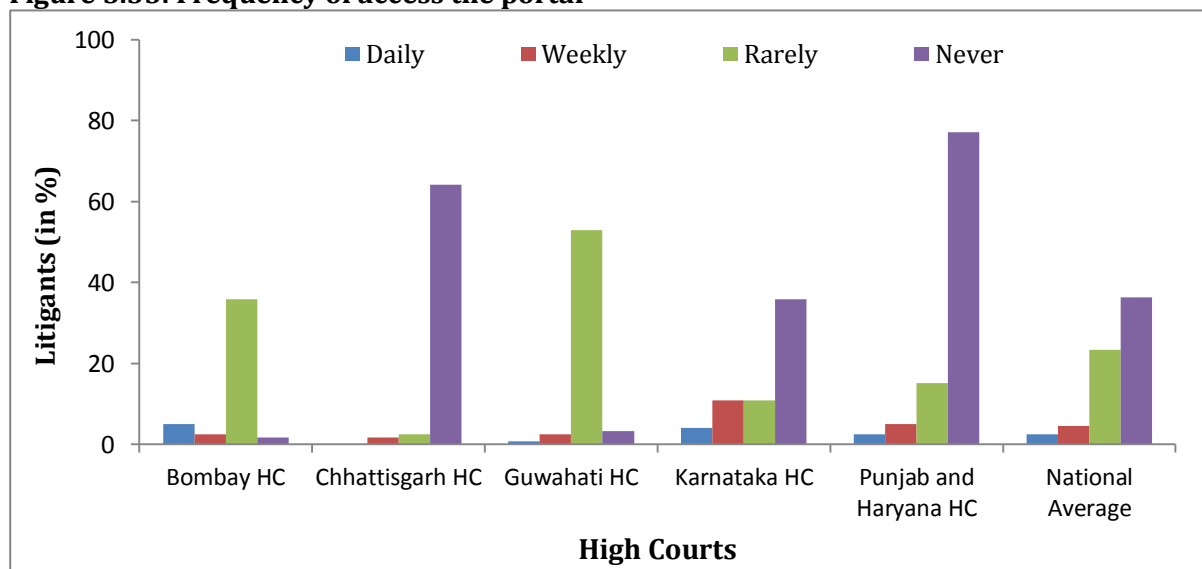
Source: Author's compilation

More than 90 per cent of litigants in Chhattisgarh used lawyers to access information, which was the highest among all surveyed High Courts followed by the Karnataka and Bombay HCs. Around a quarter of Karnataka litigants used either or both the portals, which was the highest for any state.

5.3.2.2 Frequency of accessing the portal (eCourts/District Court)

Around 60 per cent of litigants (Figure 5.35) were either not accessing or rarely accessed the portal, while less than 10 per cent did it either weekly or daily.

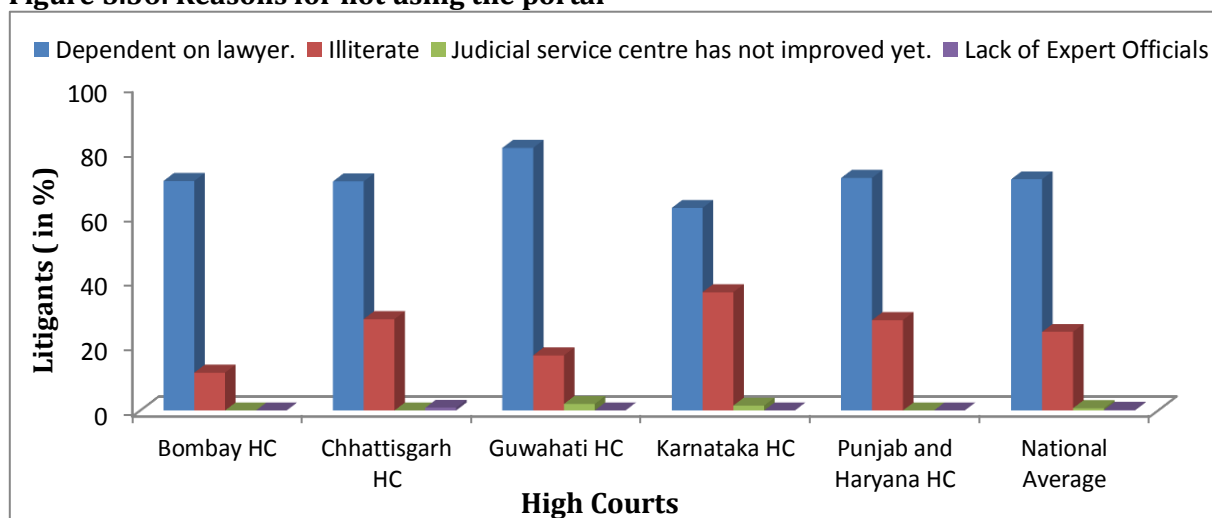
Figure 5.35: Frequency of access the portal



Source: Author's compilation

Among the High Courts surveyed, the majority of litigants accessed the portal rarely in the Guwahati HC, while the Karnataka HC had the highest number of litigants, around 15 per cent, who accessed the portal.

Figure 5.36: Reasons for not using the portal

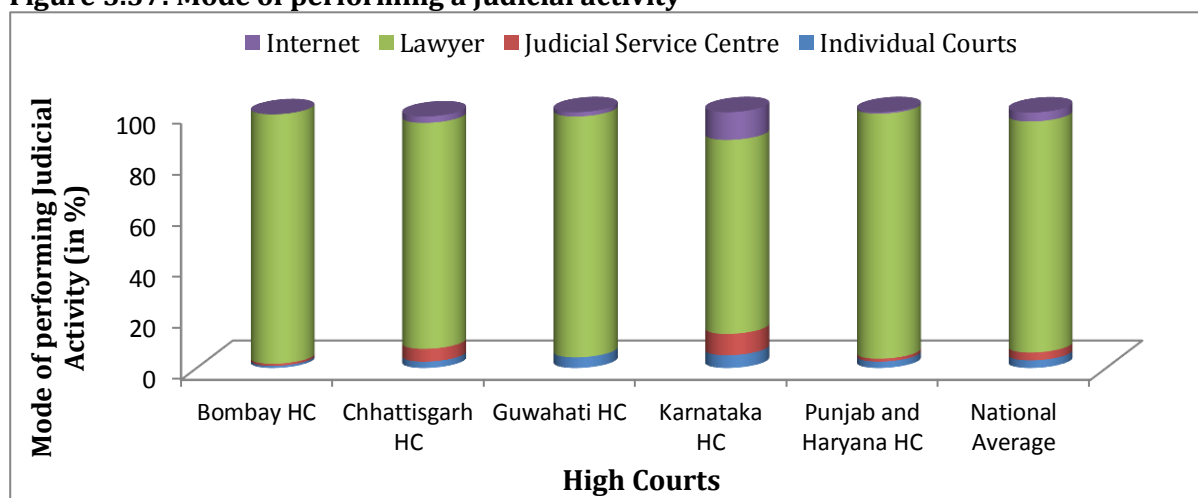


Source: Author's compilation

A huge number (around 70 per cent) of litigants (Figure 5.36) depended on lawyers for case-related information, leading to them not using the portal. Another significant reason for the non-use of the portal was illiteracy among litigants.

5.3.3 Mode of performing a judicial activity

Figure 5.37: Mode of performing a judicial activity



Source: Author's compilation

It was observed that the majority of litigants performed the judicial activity through lawyers. A considerable number (around 11 per cent) of litigants used the Internet for the same (Figure 5.37) only in the Karnataka HC.

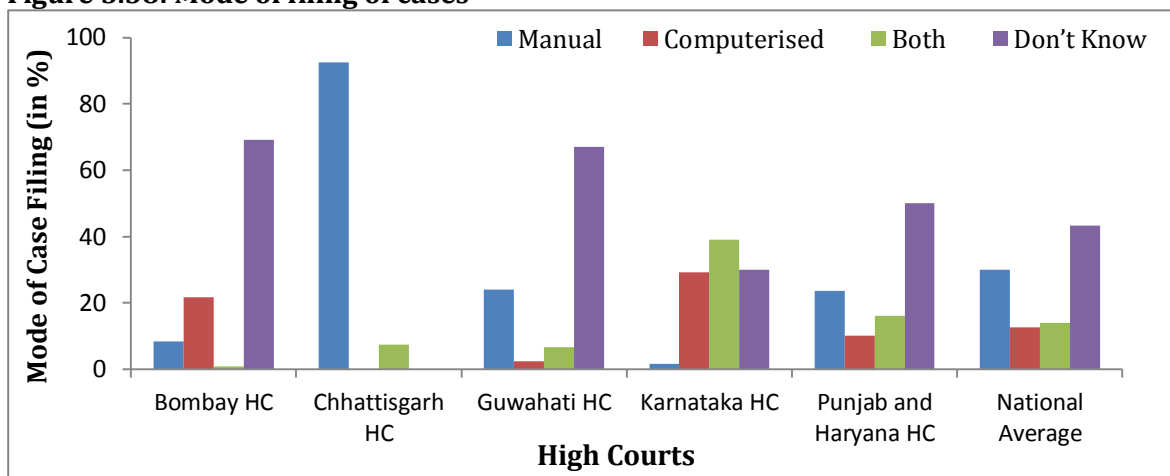
5.3.4 Awareness about mode of service delivery

Our aim is to assess whether citizens are aware about the mode of service delivery in the judiciary. Therefore, litigants were asked about the mode of service delivery for the following services: filing of cases, caveat checking for cases, issue of check slips, case filing information, defects and notification of case scrutiny, case registration confirmation, case allocation information, case status information, process service, service of summons, service of warrants, orders or proceedings and delivery of copy of order and judgements. They were provided with four options: the process is still manual, it has been computerised, both methods are used and they are not aware of it. We will discuss the detailed feedback across five high courts for each of the services.

5.3.4.1 Mode of filing of cases

Survey findings (Figure 5.38) show that a high number of litigants are not aware of how to file a case as they are primarily dependent on the lawyers. The highest computerised filing of cases was observed in the Karnataka HC, whereas filing of cases was mostly done through the manual system in Chhattisgarh.

Figure 5.38: Mode of filing of cases

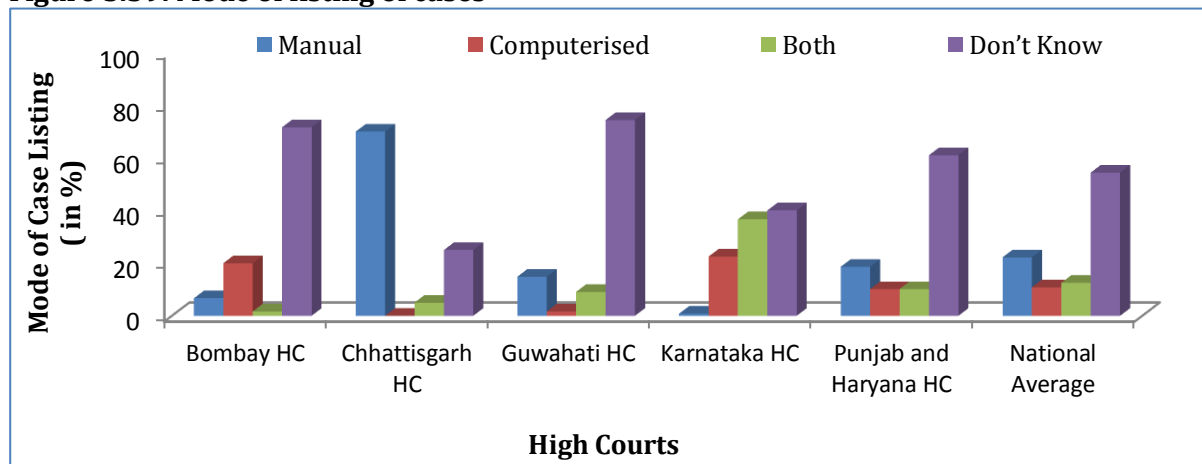


Source: Author's compilation

5.3.4.2 Mode of listing of cases

Except in Chhattisgarh (Figure 5.39) where most of the litigants knew that case listing was done through a manual system, the majority of litigants in other states did not know how case listing was done at court.

Figure 5.39: Mode of listing of cases

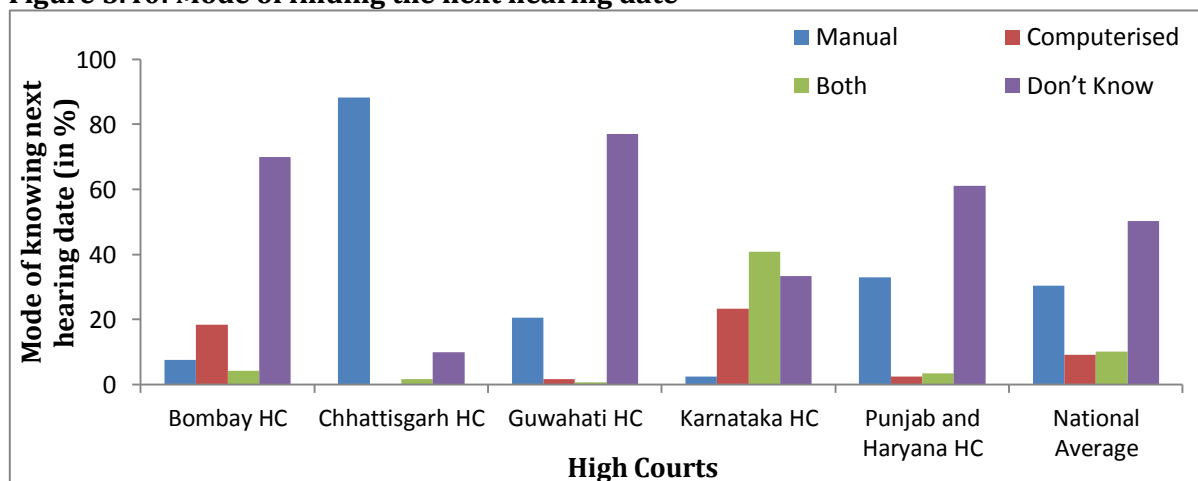


Source: Author's compilation

5.3.4.3 Mode of finding the next hearing date

The maximum number of litigants (Figure 5.40) did not know the process of finding the next hearing date, except in the Chhattisgarh HC where most of them observed that it was done through a manual system and the Karnataka HC where most litigants observed that it was done through either a computerised system or both the manual and computerised systems.

Figure 5.40: Mode of finding the next hearing date

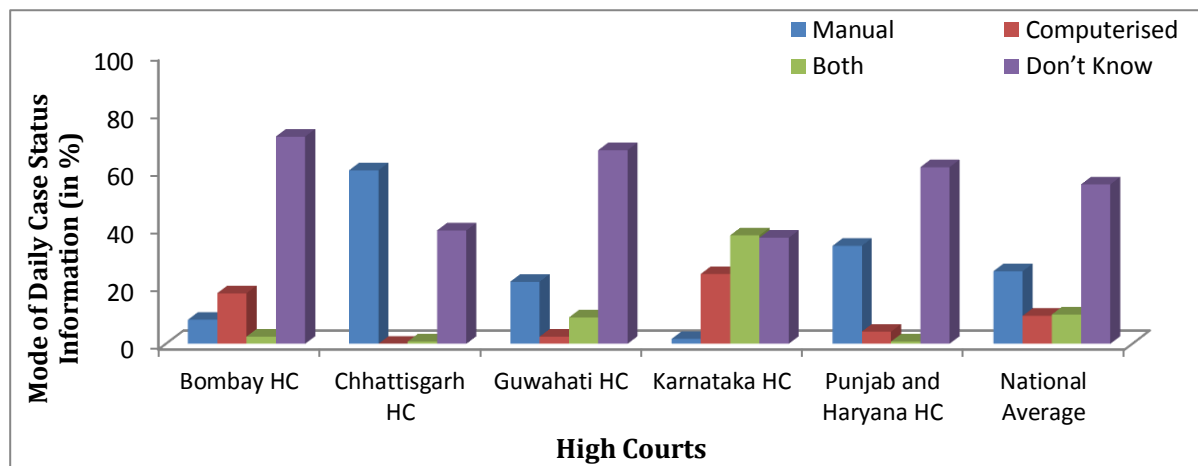


Source: Author's compilation

5.3.4.4 Mode of daily case status information

A high number of litigants, around 55 per cent (Figure 5.41), are not aware of how to access daily case status information. While the majority of the respondents observed that it was done through a manual system in the Chhattisgarh HC, most litigants in the Karnataka HC observed that it was done through either a computerised system or both the manual and computerised systems.

Figure 5.41: Mode of daily case status information

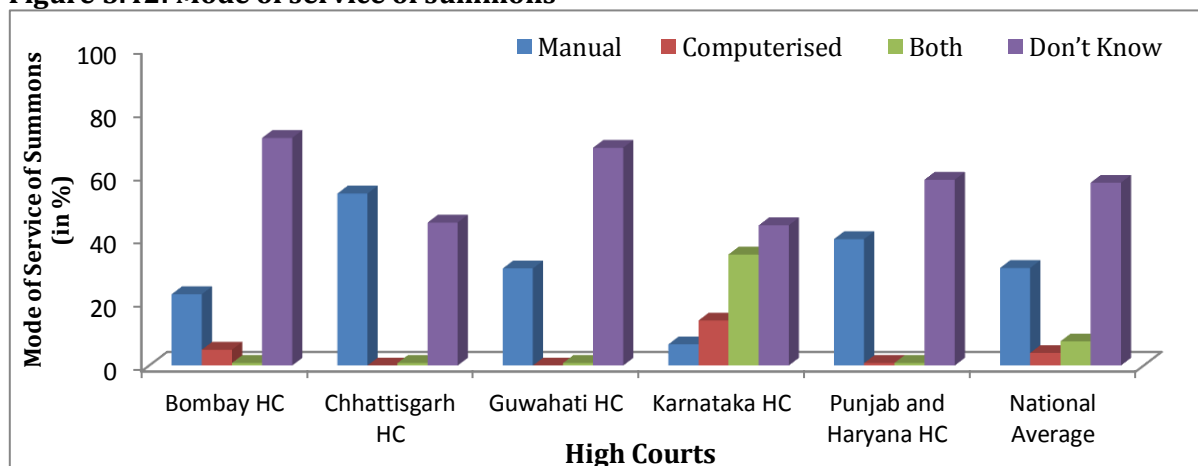


Source: Author's compilation

5.3.4.5 Service of summons

The majority of litigants (Figure 5.42) were not aware of how the summons is served at court. While most of the respondents observed that they were served through a manual system in Chhattisgarh, a considerable number of respondents in Karnataka observed that both the manual and computerised systems were used.

Figure 5.42: Mode of service of summons

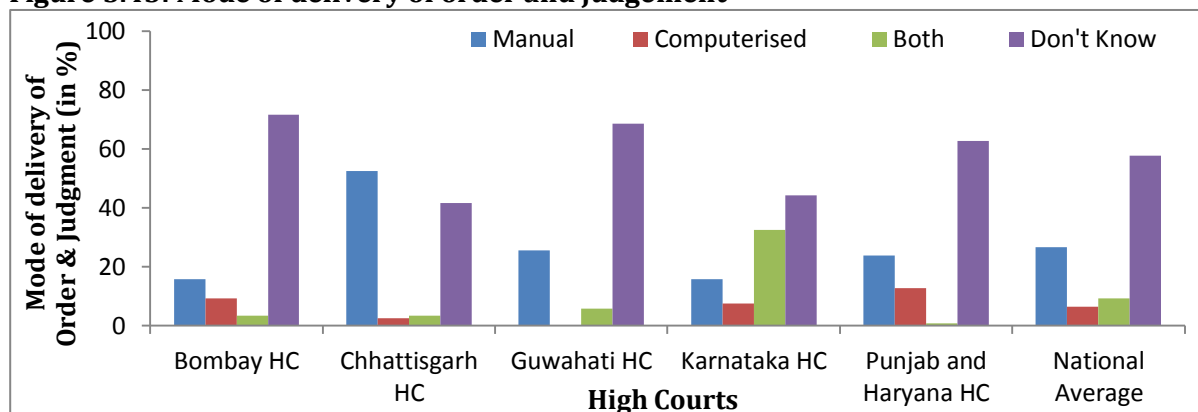


Source: Author's compilation

5.3.4.6 Mode of delivery of order and judgement

Most of the litigants were not aware (Figure 5.43) of the mode of delivery of orders and judgement in courts. While three-fourths of Karnataka HC litigants observed that orders and judgment were delivered either exclusively through a computerised system or through both systems, half the Chhattisgarh HC litigants responded that it was delivered via a manual system.

Figure 5.43: Mode of delivery of order and judgement



Source: Author's compilation

5.3.5 Service delivery mechanism: Feedback of litigant's

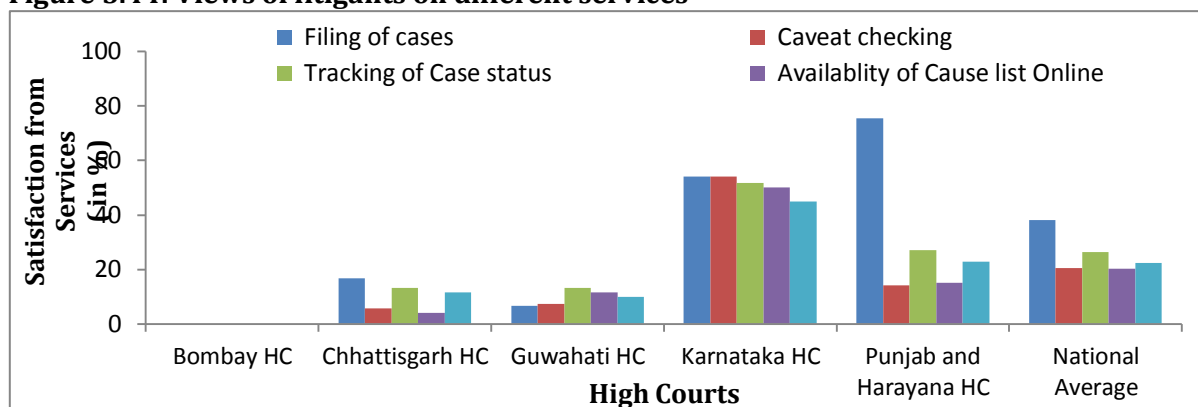
Using parameters such as the time taken for delivery of judicial services and satisfaction variables, we found out the quality of service provided to litigants by the courts in different parts of the country.

The majority of litigants across the country in different High Court jurisdictions responded that they were not aware of the time taken in providing each judicial service. This can be attributed to their dependence on lawyers for knowledge about even the basic details of their cases. Since they wholly delegate their legal liabilities to advocates, it keeps the litigants from gaining any insight into the finer workings of the judicial system. Since they were not accurately aware of the time spent in attaining each judicial service, we dropped their input in our analysis of the judicial system through the litigants' perspective.

The maximum satisfaction (Figure 5.44) from judicial service delivery was observed in the jurisdiction of the Karnataka HC, followed by the Punjab & Haryana HC. The satisfaction level in the Bombay HC could not be pinpointed because litigants were not well aware of the judicial services provided, once again due to their dependence on lawyers for the same. We can also relate the

satisfaction with computerisation levels, as Karnataka with the highest computerisation foray into judicial services satisfied the litigants, while Chhattisgarh lay at the other end of the spectrum.

Figure 5.44: Views of litigants on different services



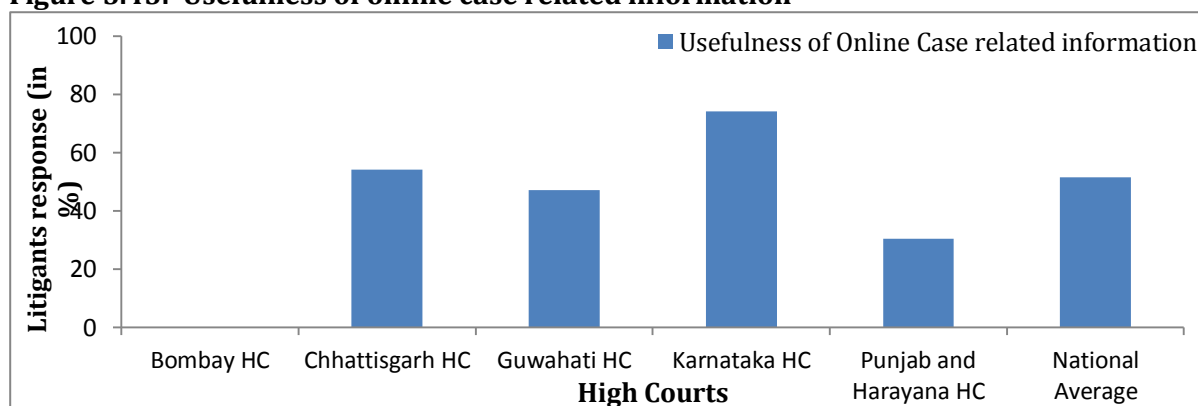
Source: Author's compilation

5.3.6 Impact of computerisation on judiciary activities: Views of litigants

To pinpoint how much progress computerisation in courts has made, questions like the effect and impact of computerisation on factors like judicial efficiency, cost and accessibility were taken into consideration along with the usefulness and changes it has brought from the litigants' point of view.

Most litigants (around 75 per cent) in the Karnataka HC observed that online case-related information was very useful, followed by the Chhattisgarh HC (Figure 5.45).

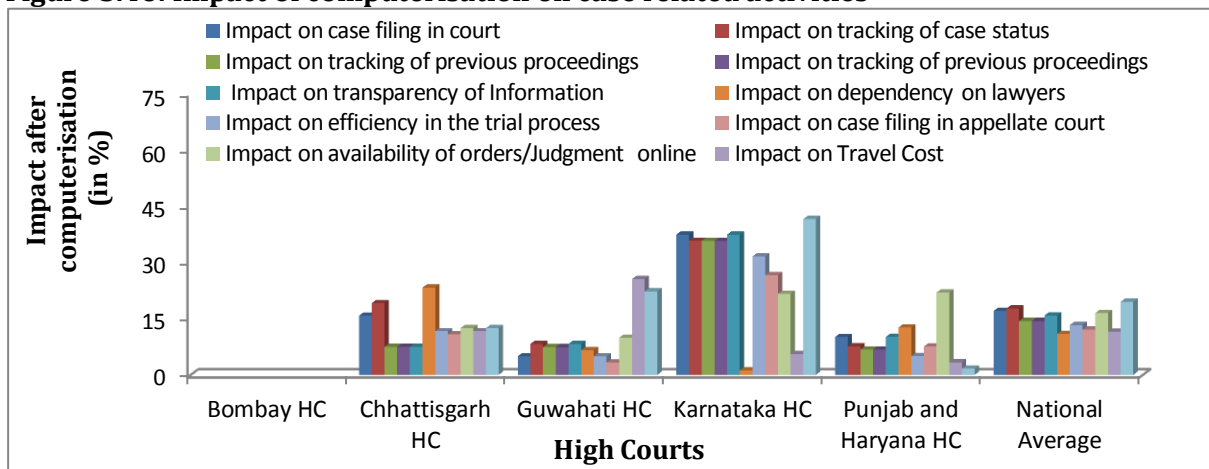
Figure 5.45: Usefulness of online case related information



Source: Author's compilation

The survey findings (Figure 5.46) show that less than 20 per cent of litigants found a positive impact of computerisation on various judicial activities performed in courts. The highest impact on aspects of judicial activities was observed in the Karnataka HC jurisdiction.

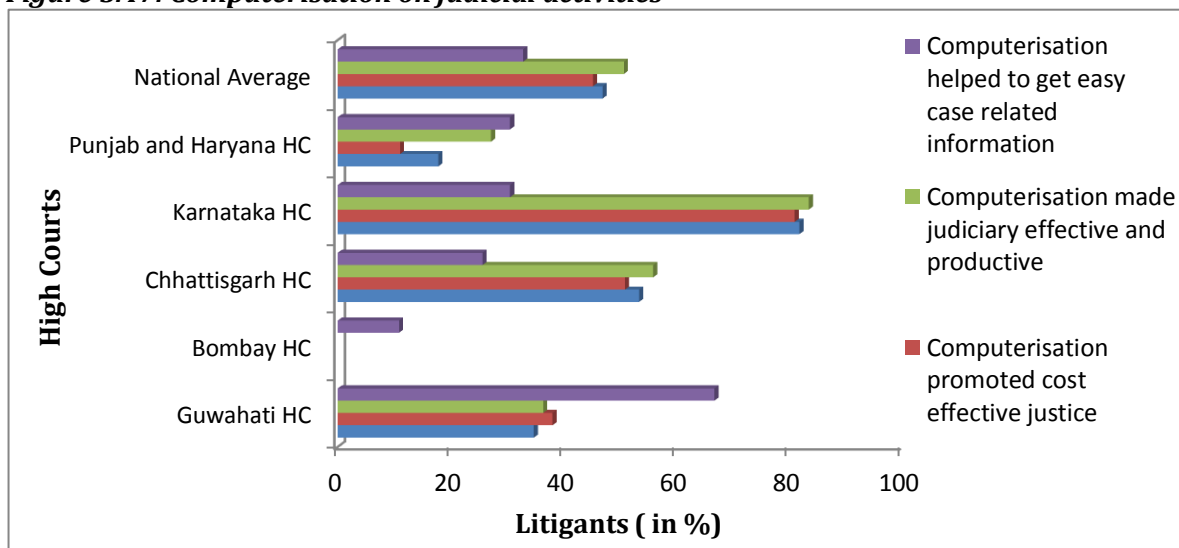
Figure 5.46: Impact of computerisation on case related activities



Source: Author's compilation

Nearly half the litigants (Figure 5.47) who were interviewed at the national level during the survey observed that computerisation made the judiciary more effective and productive, while more than 40 per cent thought that it has promoted fast and cost-effective justice. It was also noticed that a third of the litigants iterated that computerisation had helped them easily acquire case-related information.

Figure 5.47: Computerisation on judicial activities



Source: Author's compilation

5.3.7 Conclusion

To summarise, litigants have put the main emphasis on increasing awareness about the eCourts project. Most of them are not aware of the project. Those who are aware of the project suggested hiring more trained manpower for easy functioning of the system. The litigants without computer knowledge also require guidance at the judicial service centre. According to the litigants, the entire computerised system should be easy enough to be handled by the common people. They also suggest putting the kiosk in the villages where they can check the case status. An SMS service for case-related information may also be promoted among litigants within the scope of the project. The future of the eCourts project would be such that a litigant would become able to file a case from home.

Perspective of NIC officials, Central Project Co-ordinators and Vendors

Chapter 6

Perspective of NIC officials, Central Project Co-ordinators and Vendors

6.1 Introduction

Officials from National Informatics Center (NIC) and central project co-ordinators from high courts are the representatives of core members from supply side of eCourts project. In this chapter, we will discuss the feedback received from three groups of respondents: NIC officials, Central Project co-ordinators from five High Courts and vendors.

6.2 Feedback from NIC officials

NIC is solely responsible for software support related to the operating system (OS) and the CIS application at the district and subordinate court levels. They also provide support if court officials face difficulty installing the OS, using the software and face problems uploading the data on the web portal; they also explain features that the officials cannot understand. They rarely receive complaints from users about the non-functioning of the CIS application. They normally receive complaints and problems related to data upload, and NIC officials, on average, take 2–3 hours to resolve such problems. Sometimes users have difficulty understanding a particular function and NIC officials explain it to them through a telephonic discussion or video conferencing. NIC is also responsible for organising training programmes for the CIS application and OS users on a half-yearly basis, and they also train master trainers who provide training at the court level. They conduct both types of training: basic IT training for computer illiterates, and CIS application & OS training for others. NIC has also prepared CBTs/manuals to train members, which are available on eCourts.nic.in.

The CIS application is a uniform software throughout the country, which is its biggest strength. In addition, CIS has facilitated complete transparency of information, leading to data from across the country and case-related information being available on a portal for litigants, advocates and citizens. Like all software, CIS has certain drawbacks that will be addressed as the application is

updated and modified. The non-uniform workflow throughout the country and distributed system are critical challenges for CIS, so customisation and localisation of the software is necessary.

The biggest challenge in implementing the software according to NIC is implementation in remote locations and the large size of these locations. They also emphasised the need for capacity building; so technical staff need to be available at the court level, as the domain is vast, technical and difficult to understand. A new UI (User Index) needs to be designed and new technology on open source can also be used for further improvement.

NIC also faces challenges related to vendors. There are multiple vendors and each vendor is assigned a different task in various locations. It is difficult for NIC to gather them together and resolve all the issues related to the eCourts project. It is also difficult to provide LAN connections in remote locations through an appropriate vendor.

NIC has never faced any problems with the warranty service of vendors and they are quite satisfied with it. They have also prepared a roadmap of further implementation of the eCourts project and the project is to be developed and implemented, considering the services envisaged in Phase II documents. There should be inclusion of new technology and innovation to fulfil service commitments in Phase II of the eCourts project.

6.3 Feedback from Central Project Co-ordinator

The Central Project Co-ordinator (CPC) plays a pivotal role in the implementation of the eCourts project. Every HC has a CPC who co-ordinates and monitors the functioning and implementation of the project in district and taluka courts. Among all the surveyed HCs, CPCs found that it has provided judicial officers with great impetus in monitoring judicial activity and that the availability of ICT resources and CIS application has provided a better and more efficient work environment, which has helped in better monitoring and planning to reduce the pendency of cases. A Digital Signature (DSC) Token has been provided to all judicial officers across the state through which they can upload signed judgements/documents, which would be accessible to the public online. Every judicial officer received training on the UbuntuOS and CIS, which would facilitate capacity building at courts.

It has made court management easier for court officials and judicial officers. It has also increased accountability and now officials get more time for judicial work. CIS has provided the facility of

computerising judicial activities such as filing cases, caveat checking, case allocation information and cause list preparation. Summons and notice generation and online availability of judgement and orders have made the staff more efficient and regular and provided efficient disbursement of various judicial activities at courts. It has hence promoted more efficiency and transparency in the judicial system.

For lawyers and litigants, this project provides all the case-related information such as the next hearing date, orders and judgements, which can be accessed from the Judicial Service Centre or online. They can also get information through SMS at some courts, which has made case tracking easier, saving both time and money. In some HCs such as Karnataka, a kiosk facility is available for lawyers and litigants to access all case-related information.

This project has also provided benefits to other stakeholders like police officials and other prosecuting officials, who can get access to case-related information free of cost at a single click.

Table 6.1: Status of implementation of e-Courts project (HC-wise)

S.No	High Courts	Fully Implemented	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
1.	Guwahati HC	66 Court Complexes (58 in Assam, 8 in Mizoram)	3 Court Complexes (1 in Arunachal Pradesh, 2 in Nagaland)	14 Court Complexes (4 in Arunachal Pradesh, 10 in Nagaland)
2.	Bombay HC	434 Court Complexes (1978 courts)	38 Court Complexes (109 courts)	
3.	Chhattisgarh HC	11 District and Sessions Court Complexes (202 courts)	51 District and Sessions Court Complexes (113 courts)	25 District and Sessions Court Complexes (33 courts)
4.	Karnataka HC	774 Courts		165 Courts
5.	Punjab & Haryana HC	111 Court Complexes (904 courts)		

Source: Author's compilation from field survey

6.3.1 Problems and challenges

CPCs face several challenges in implementing the eCourts project. In the Guwahati HC, there is a lack of manpower and computers, along with little awareness about computerisation and IT among court officials and staff. In Chhattisgarh, apart from the shortage of court staff and manpower, there is an acute problem of funds. Although funds were provided in 2008–09, an increase in the cost of raw materials and the number of court complexes has increased the cost of the sites and so they are

not ready for use. Some Civil Courts have been upgraded to District & Sessions Courts, but NIC has issued a Purchase Order for LAN and hardware based on the old court.

In Karnataka, officials used the Legal Management System (LMS), so the transition to the CIS system is another challenge. Also, there has been no upgrade of the master table in all servers and no integration of Police IT with the CIS system. Change management for court officials remains another challenge.

In Punjab & Haryana, the newly built court complexes are not covered under the eCourts Project, which has made integrating the system a difficult task. There is a lack of funds for additional facilities such as touch screens, kiosks and public address systems. High dependence on NIC for connectivity and application development or updates is another critical issue, apart from the lack of proper software application support. Vendors are also non-responsive and there is a delay in providing technical support in the Bombay and Punjab & Haryana HCs because they are managed centrally.

6.3.1.1 Challenges related to maintenance and replacement of hardware

There is non-availability of prompt services and thin clients are not power-backed by UPS, which creates problems during power cuts in the Guwahati HC; in Chhattisgarh, the hardware supplied under this project in the year 2009 is now out of warranty, which makes their maintenance very difficult. Vendor response is not satisfactory, so officials have to contact them and follow up continuously to rectify problems.

In the Karnataka HC, migration from the Windows OS to the Linux OS is a major challenge because officials were earlier using the LMS. Replacing thin client browsers, printers, etc. and handling the associated technical support was tedious, while the UPS connections supplied by Uniline were not maintained and associated vendors never attended to calls. Similarly, service providers take longer than stipulated to attend to hardware-related calls.

The Punjab & Haryana HC faces the same problems such as non-responsive vendors, non-execution of the penalty clause and periodic maintenance not being exercised as per the SLA, which results in faulty hardware more frequently in initial stage. In the Bombay HC, officials also faced non-cooperation from vendors due to the inadequate and vague clause in the SLA prepared by NIC.

6.3.1.2 Challenges related to availability of technical manpower

Since High Courts bear the responsibility for providing technical support, there is a need for regular recruitment of skilled and technical staff, with extensive skill upgrading of existing resources. All technical support has been provided by NIC officials and training to technical manpower under the eCourts project. Gathering technical information from subordinate courts is very difficult without technical manpower. Change management has emerged as another challenge, such as training court officials who are computer illiterate. Integration of various prosecution departments with the CIS such as Police IT and Traffic Police IT is another critical challenge.

In the Punjab & Haryana HC, there was a high attrition rate due to the low wages; officials were appointed on an ad hoc or contract basis, without any domain knowledge of the court environment. So, there is a need for regular skillset updating of technical manpower. On the other hand, Bombay HC officials found that there is a need for capacity building and knowledge management for senior management officials so that they can take informed decisions on technical support, including hardware, software, connectivity and manpower.

6.3.2 Strengths of CIS

CIS is web-based application and, hence, easy to access. It has provided transparency of information and an auto-generated cause list and various types of case-related information and reports that help judicial officers, lawyers, court staff and litigants gain access to relevant case information and prepare reports. Case management has been made very simple and has saved the courts' time, while easily providing staff with pending/ disposal reports and mail systems so that they can quickly rectify problems. It has helped increase user productivity, improved case management, improved the status of pending cases and facilitated better monitoring.

6.3.3 Drawbacks of CIS

The CIS application lacks a facility for customisation and modules of the copying section and record room; hence, the CIS application needs to be developed to include them. The current version of CIS does not support a bilingual interface (between English and Hindi or a local language); it is only available in English, while most of the work takes place in the local language, leading to court employees facing problems with the English version. It would be more convenient if the CIS software also supports local languages. There is also a delay in attending to the modifications

required in CIS, by the development team of eCourts. Some officials emphasised that CIS needs to be made more user-friendly.

6.3.4 Views on infrastructure

The CPC in the Guwahati HC was satisfied with the DG set, existing hardware, LAN and CIS application, but dissatisfied with the alternate power facility, i.e., the UPS, and neutral on Internet connectivity/WAN. In Chhattisgarh, the CPC was satisfied with the DG set, existing hardware, LAN, UPS, Internet connectivity/WAN and CIS application, whereas in Karnataka, the CPC was satisfied with the existing hardware and LAN, partially satisfied with the CIS application but dissatisfied with the DG set, UPS and Internet connectivity/WAN. In the Bombay HC, the CPC was satisfied only with the CIS application, but dissatisfied with the DG set, UPS, LAN, Internet connectivity/WAN and hardware. The Punjab & Haryana HC was the single HC where the CPC was satisfied with all types of infrastructure ranging from the DG set, hardware and LAN to UPS, Internet connectivity/WAN and the CIS software.

6.3.5 Expectations and suggestions

CPCs suggested that there should be provision for online filing of cases, introduction of online fees, e-Stamping, cloud computing, online payment ATM machines, a facility that allows copying of application status on the Web, a bilingual keyboard layout in CIS applications, seamless data exchange between the court, police, jails and other government departments and permanent technical manpower to be posted at the High Courts as well as the District and Subordinate courts. Also, basic computer and software training need to be provided to all court staffs.

In the Punjab & Haryana HC, the CPC suggested that additional funds should be provided to cover newly created court complexes and newly appointed judicial officers and more equipments such as kiosks and public address systems to deliver citizen-centric services. It is necessary to have video conferencing in lower courts and digitisation of lower court records, whereas in the Bombay HC, the CPC suggested that process re-engineering and change management exercises should be the top priorities.

6.4 Feedback from Vendors

Vendors are critical stakeholders in this project as they supply the hardware, install the LAN, Internet connectivity/WAN, set up other ICT infrastructure and provide technical support for the maintenance of ICT resources. HCL and Wipro are two major vendors associated with this project.

According to vendors they provide the services as per the terms and condition of their tender. There are multiple vendors and each vendor is assigned a different task in various locations. In some cases, Wipro has installed the facility in more than 1,200 locations and gets calls from 9–10 court complexes every month.

Vendors also face problems because there is no clarity in the scope of work with the end-user. Multiple parties are involved in the project, so the sign-off on the completion of work lies with a third party, making it possible for them to shift the blame on others. There is also a lack of coordination among the parties associated with this project. For example, if the materials are provided by one party but the testing is to be done by a second party, there should be a provision for testing at the end location for easier and faster delivery.

Regarding system maintenance, vendors do not get details about the problems that end-users face and, hence, they are unable to provide proper helpdesk service, which creates difficulty in resolving these issues.

Another challenge for vendors is that they receive orders based on court complexes, and having fewer than nine courts requires additional materials/ PO (Purchase Order). There should be a survey of all court complexes and work provision, and the sign-off should be provided in a single visit, so that an additional visit is not required.

In the current scenario, the supply of materials and their testing is done at different locations, which creates a need for road permits. Vendors expect these road permits to be provided to them, or that the delivery and testing should be carried out at the same place, i.e., the end location. Multiple OEMs should be allowed with similar specifications for the smooth, efficient functioning and maintenance of ICT resources.

Overall Findings and Policy Suggestions

Chapter 7

Overall Findings and Policy Suggestions

7.1 Introduction

The assessment of the eCourts project aims to evaluate the performance of computerisation in the lower courts mainly in terms of infrastructure, hardware and software. Awareness, usage and computer training are important components of assessment. Four groups of major stakeholders from supply side as well as demand side shared their exhaustive views on various aspects of the eCourts project: judicial officers, court officials, lawyers and litigants. We will discuss their overall views in this chapter. We will also talk about future directions for the eCourts project and make policy suggestions for the next phase of the eCourts project.

7.2 Summary findings: Judicial Officers

Judicial officers are a key respondent group since they use different facilities provided by eCourts to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the judicial system in India. Almost all judicial officers who participated in the online survey are aware about the eCourts project across the five High Courts of Guwahati, Bombay, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana. They are also aware about CIS, the application software launched as part of the eCourts project. We found low awareness among judicial officers in Chhattisgarh, i.e., one-third of judicial officers in Chhattisgarh are not aware about computerisation in courts. It was also observed that 85 per cent of all judicial officers are aware of the eCourts National portal except in Chhattisgarh. The CIS application at the district and Taluka courts are used “often” or “very often” by half the judicial officers. Less than one-fourth of them “always” used the application, while approximately 60% of judicial officers in Chhattisgarh “never or rarely used CIS”. One-third of all judicial officers have a digital signature, but only 25% out of them use it. The number of judicial officers who have a digital signature is the highest in the Karnataka High Court while the lowest is in the Chhattisgarh High Court. All of them believe that the CIS application is a useful tool that has significantly contributed to the functional improvement of the work process, reduced the number of pending cases and increased the productivity of users and the case management system.

Judicial officers mention that infrastructure comprising hardware, LAN, DG set, UPS, Internet connectivity and CIS software are available in the premises of almost all the lower courts. However,

the level of satisfaction related to infrastructure varies across courts. We have summarised the opinion of judicial officers in Box 1.

Box 7.1: Views and expectations

- 15 per cent of all judicial officers were satisfied with the current infrastructure situation in courts.
- 72 per cent of the judicial officers emphasised the development of better infrastructure.
- 8 per cent wanted the Internet facilities to be improved.
- 4 per cent urged the deployment of skilled manpower in the courts.

Source: Author's compilation

Approximately 60 per cent of judicial officers have received basic IT training and more than 80 per cent received training to work with the Ubuntu operating system. The district and Taluka courts under the jurisdiction of the Punjab & Haryana High Court performed best in terms of IT training, while least amount of training is provided in Chhattisgarh.

Most respondents in this category gave positive feedback about the CIS application. Eighty per cent of all judicial officers are satisfied with the transparency of information, monitoring of court activities, availability of information from the appellate court and the usefulness of the CIS application while 60% of all judicial officers said that computerisation increased effectiveness in terms of reducing the pendency of cases.

7.3 Summary findings: Court Officials

Court officials are another important group of stakeholders who directly use the infrastructure provided through the eCourts project. They play a crucial role in implementing this project. Ninety per cent of the respondents are aware of the eCourts project and the CIS application. A significant proportion is also aware of the eCourts national portal. We found awareness about the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) among 70% of the respondents while 60% of them upload data on it. However, court officials under the Chhattisgarh High Court have low awareness of the project. Both versions of CIS—Unified National Core version 1.1 and CIS Pune version—are popular with them.

Computerisation in service delivery is observed to varying degrees among the five High Courts. It ranges from 11% to 60% (Table 7.1). The various services are filing of cases, issue of check slips,

caveat checking, scrutiny check of plaints, preparation of summons, updating of daily orders, preparation of cause list, preparation of court diaries, transcription of evidence, warrants and notice generation, preparation and delivery of decree and issue of copy of judgement and order.

Table 7.1: Computerisation in service delivery

	Manual	Computerised	Both	Highest	Lowest
Filing of cases	8	39	53	Karnataka	Guwahati
Issue of Check Slip	31	26	31	Karnataka	Guwahati
Caveat Checking	26	26	39	Karnataka	Guwahati
Scrutiny Check of Plaints	37	26	30	Karnataka	Bombay
Preparation of summons	52	11	32	Karnataka	Chhattisgarh
Update of daily orders	17	47	33	Punjab & Haryana	Guwahati
Preparation of cause list	12	60	25	Punjab & Haryana	Chhattisgarh
Preparation of Court diaries	37	18	27	Karnataka	Chhattisgarh
Transcription of evidence	51	24	19	Karnataka	Guwahati
Warrants and Notice generation	34	32	27	Karnataka	Chhattisgarh
Preparation of decree	30	36	26	Punjab & Haryana	Guwahati
Delivery of decree	33	34	25	Punjab & Haryana	Guwahati
Issue of copy of judgement/order	37	29	25	Karnataka	Guwahati

Source: Author's compilation

Note: Figures in per cent

The highest level of computerisation is seen in the preparation of cause list, while the lowest level is in preparation of summons. It is evident from Table 7.1 that district and taluka courts in Karnataka and Punjab & Haryana perform well in terms of computerisation in the service delivery mechanism, while the lower courts in Chhattisgarh and Guwahati lag behind.

Though a considerable proportion of court officials conveyed that infrastructure is provided through the eCourts project, their level of satisfaction varies as was observed in the case of judicial officers. The main components of infrastructure are as follows: computer server room, judicial service centre, DG set, AC in server room, LAN connection, computer, printer, scanner, Internet connectivity/WAN, CIS application software and video conferencing. We have documented the availability of each component of infrastructure along with the satisfaction level in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Infrastructure: Availability and quality

	Availability (in %)	Level of satisfaction (in %)
Computer Server Room	97	NA
Judicial Service Centre	83	NA
DG Set	90	63
AC in server room	92	NA
LAN	97	62
Computer	99	70
Printer	99	67
Scanner	95	NA
Internet Connectivity/ WAN	88	71
CIS application software	97	78
Video Conferencing	59	NA

Source: Author's compilation

Note: NA = Not Applicable

The availability of infrastructure ranges from 59% to 99%. The availability of video conferencing is as low as 59% since it was not included under the mandate of the eCourts project in all the subordinate courts. This facility is provided in only 500 locations. Though the rest of the key components of infrastructure are available in 90% of the places, the level of satisfaction with the components ranges between 63% and 78%. The reasons for dissatisfaction have been elaborated in Chapter 4. It requires further improvement in the quality of infrastructure. They also expect Wi-Fi connection in the court premises, upgrades of the hardware and servers, improvement in Internet connection, good compensation package as remuneration and more manpower. (Table 7.3). These expectations differ across the five High Courts under study as depicted in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Expectations related to improvement in infrastructure

	in %	High priority	Low priority
Wi- Fi in court premises	47.6	Punjab & Haryana	Bombay
Inadequate pay and less staff	35.54	Punjab & Haryana	Karnataka
Upgrade of hardware and servers	14.18	Bombay	Karnataka

CIS application should include section-wise balance sheet	7.68	Punjab & Haryana	Chhattisgarh
Improvement in Internet connection, servers	1.88	Guwahati	NA

Source: Author's compilation

Another important contribution of the eCourts project is time saving in the work process through computerisation. Two-fold to twenty-fold less time is required in various aspects of the service delivery mechanism. The time reduction is the greatest (from manual to computerised mode of work) in the delivery of summons, delivery of decree and issue of copy of judgement or order. The magnitude of decrease in time required is 18-fold, 16-fold and 20-fold, respectively.

Sixty per cent of the court officials who participated in the online survey have received IT training. Officials in Karnataka have received the highest level of training, while it is the lowest in Chhattisgarh. They demand extensive application training and a live demo of the application.

Though they have different views on infrastructure and computer training, court officials strongly believe that the CIS application has increased transparency in the work process. It is user friendly, saves time and paper and makes it easy to track cases. Most importantly, the cause list is easily available. However, there are still several challenges in using this application. Court officials complained that report generation is not as per format, customisation is not possible in report generation, questions are not appropriate, there is no option for bulk updates of cases and dormant files are not shown in CIS. Double entry cases cannot be deleted, software is not available in the local language and case types cannot be modified. It is not possible to use special characters. Some mentioned that the software is complicated and time consuming. There is a lack of security as well as a lack of manpower. The workload has increased tremendously for this group because of the dual mode of work (manual as well as computerised). We received this feedback because the training provided to court officials is inadequate. The same problem is reflected in data uploading or updating. The VPN set-up is not always compatible with the operating system. There is a connectivity problem (KSWAN) in Karnataka.

Court officials also face problems in dealing with vendors. According to them, vendors do not address problems and the engineers are not available when required. There are delays in resolving problems. The machines supplied by the designated vendors do not work properly. Vendors do not

follow the conditions given in the SLA. LAN connectivity is also very poor. In many courts, no UPS is provided. In Chhattisgarh, the optical fibre problem has not been solved in the past two years.

7.4 Summary findings: Lawyers

Lawyers have been the main link between the judiciary and litigants until now. The eCourts project aims to deliver efficient services to lawyers along with litigants through judicial officers and court officials. One of the main aims of the project is to provide services to lawyers online so that they save time and money. It is promising to note that 95% of lawyers who participated in face-to-face interviews are aware of the eCourts project. Sixty-six per cent of them access services through the Judicial Service Centre, but only 6 per cent of them use the eCourts national portal. The rest of the lawyers do not access the portal since they are not aware of such services and they lack knowledge of computers; in fact, many of them do not own a personal computer. The portal is not updated regularly according to the lawyers associated with the subordinate courts in Guwahati and Punjab & Haryana.

Though they do not use the portal often, they strongly believe that computerisation has improved the process of filing cases, caveat checking, tracking of the case status, availability of the cause list online and delivery of the copy of judgement. However, there is not much change in the travel costs of lawyers or litigants.

7.5 Summary findings: Litigants

Computerisation through eCourts is intended to provide efficient services to litigants. However, this group of respondents have little awareness of computerisation in the courts. The low level of education and lack of computer knowledge and awareness are the main reasons. Forty-eight per cent of litigants among 600 respondents know about the eCourts project and only 17% of them are aware of the eCourts national portal. However, they do not have any knowledge about the mode of service delivery in the court complex. In other words, they do not know whether different work process in courts is performed manually or through computers. Litigants in India perform all judicial activities through lawyers. They also access case-related information solely through lawyers. However, litigants believe that computerisation in courts promotes speedy and cost-effective justice. It also has the potential to help in getting case-related information.

Four groups of respondents suggested various improvements to the system. These are summarised below. It would help us decide the path of the project in the next phase.

Judicial officers aim to further reduce case pendency. They want the CIS application to be more user-friendly. The overall process should be improved eventually.

Respondents emphasised extensive training, upgrade of the existing infrastructure, generalisation of the CIS application by adding more options and customisation, digitisation of all information and the deployment of skilled manpower. There are varying degrees of demand for these components in the five courts. We categorised the demands into three groups: high, medium and low. High priority is recorded where the demand is more than 50%, medium is defined as greater than 10 per cent but less than 50 per cent. Low demand is observed when it is less than 10 per cent. This is presented in Table 7.2.

To improve the overall functioning of the system, judicial officers from the Punjab & Haryana HC suggested that CIS features should be generalised and more options should be added, whereas officials in the Chhattisgarh and Bombay HCs wanted infrastructure upgrades to be put in place. Some judicial officers suggested that all information should be disseminated through SMS. Judicial officers from the Guwahati HC suggested that frequent and extensive training should be provided to judicial officers and court officials.

The majority of judicial officers suggested that all the information should be displayed online and there is an urgent need for skilled manpower. Also mentioned were infrastructure upgrades and regular training sessions for officials.

Table 7.4: Suggestions to improve service delivery (HC wise)

Suggestion	Bombay	Chhattisgarh	Guwahati	Karnataka	Punjab & Haryana
Extensive training	High	Medium	High	Low	Low
Infrastructure upgrade	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low
CIS generalisation	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High
Inclusion of SMS facility	Zero	Zero	Zero	Medium	Low
Digitisation of all information	Medium	Low	Low	High	High
Deployment of skilled manpower	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Low

Source: Author's compilation

The demand for extensive training is the highest in Bombay and Guwahati, while the highest demand for infrastructure upgrade is observed in Bombay and Chhattisgarh. Judicial officers from Guwahati also prioritised the deployment of skilled manpower.

Court officials conveyed almost similar suggestions. They demanded adequate and frequent training to smoothen the work process in courts. There is a huge shortage of technical manpower. Therefore, they have suggested taking steps in this regard. They have also proposed regular upgrades of hardware. A centralised UPS is also required along with the provision of more infrastructures. They have suggested a more user-friendly version of the application software. One of the most important suggestions is to stop the dual mode of work immediately. Unless, there is a complete switch to a computerised process, it is not possible to get optimal outcome.

The most important policy suggestion made by lawyers is to increase awareness about the eCourts project among citizens. They also echoed the suggestions of the other two groups of respondents in terms of better training to court officials and lawyers and the recruitment of skilled manpower to run the system. They demanded computer facilities in all the court complexes. The option of SMS also needs to be included. Since many of the lawyers do not own personal computers, display kiosks in all the courts would help them to get updates. The provision of video conferencing in courts is also recommended.

Since litigants are not very aware of the eCourts project, they suggested increasing awareness among citizens. There is also a proposal to upgrade the infrastructure. However, we would like to point out that litigants are not aware of the exact provision of infrastructure under the eCourts project. Therefore, their recommendations for improved infrastructure may not be limited within the scope of project. They also suggested providing SMS notifications along with help line and display boards in all the court complexes.

7.6 The Way Forward

The eCourts Integrated Mission Mode Project has noteworthy objectives where the main aim is ICT enablement at the courts in districts and talukas. It has provided hardware, application software, namely, the Case Information System, and training to judges and court officials to run the system. The project has achieved more than 90% in ICT deployment. At the same time, it is an achievement in terms of asset creation. All the outcomes could not be achieved due to various challenges. The

major challenges include data entry in a piecemeal fashion, lack of connectivity and inadequate manpower and training to the concerned officials. The project would become a success once the key outcomes are achieved. We have identified the key outcomes as a continuous process of training, total connectivity, upgrade of infrastructure and hardware and capacity building.

It is important to note that a successful project requires optimal participation by all stakeholders. Unfortunately, the benefits realised by stakeholders in the eCourts project have been sub-optimal. Approximately, twenty percent of judicial officers who participated in the survey do not use computers. Similarly, 80 per cent of the court officials do not have any knowledge of computers. Therefore, the findings had to be analysed through the views received from the remaining balance. Judicial officers and court officials are the main human resources through whom ICT enablement in the court complexes will take place. The project is yet to achieve total participation by them.

In the next phase, the eCourts project would emphasise the continuous process of data entry, 100 percent connectivity in the lower courts, effective training to all users along with the extension of eCourts to the remaining district and Taluka courts.

Though the existing eCourts project has an appropriate design, the focus needs to be intensified to achieve the outcomes identified above. We recommend following collective policies in the future course of the project.

Upgrade of infrastructure: The existing courthouses in subordinate courts should be revamped since the current rooms are tiny. The Judicial Service Centre and server room should be located in two different rooms of the courthouse. Proper road directions should be given to reach the Judicial Service Centre. Power back-up should be provided in all the court complexes, consisting of a DG set and UPS.

Increase in supply of hardware: Hardware is provided under the eCourts project, but it is not adequate to convert the entire system to a computerised one. Therefore, it is necessary to provide enough computers, printers and scanners along with other computer accessories. The quality of computers, printers, scanners and Internet connectivity should be thoroughly checked and improved.

Capacity building in terms of manpower: Specialised manpower should be hired to run the system efficiently. They should have thorough technical knowledge. The position of court managers

remains vacant or is not floated in various courts. This position should be created and competent young people should be hired in all the subordinate courts. The responsibility of technical staff and the court manager should be clearly laid out. An appropriate incentive mechanism may attract skilled people. The new position should be permanent and contract staff can be hired in the transition phase, with renewal of their contracts based on performance.

Continuous training to concerned officials: Since court officials play a crucial role in the eCourts project as end-users, they need long-term training. A report published by the Judicial Commission of New South Wales, Australia mentions that they have been providing computer training to their staff for more than two decades. The training programme should include the provision of fresh training for new employees along with a refresher course for old employees. Judicial officers also need training on a regular basis. The training may include computer training along with application-specific training. Since many lawyers lack computer knowledge, the Department of Justice may conduct the computer training programmes at different levels for lawyers in the subordinate courts.

Continuous data entry: Data entry should be done on a continuous basis so that the latest case update always takes place in all the court complexes irrespective of its physical location. Change management should be serious enough to make the data entry process uninterrupted.

Improvement in connectivity: Court complexes in remote locations suffer due to low connectivity. One main important condition for the success of the project is uninterrupted connectivity. Internet as well as electrical connectivity needs to be improved.

Awareness creation: Awareness creation about the project is of utmost importance for the success of the project. Awareness should be increased among citizens since computerisation in the courts is meant to improve the service delivery mechanism. This is possible through campaigns on the radio and television. Since the majority of users lack education, such campaigns through audio-visual media would be helpful. A demo of the project could be run in the court complexes through display board or kiosks. Lawyers also lack knowledge about the eCourts project. They play a crucial role as a link between litigants and the judicial system. Campaigns through audiovisual media in the court complexes would be one of the best ways to increase awareness among lawyers. It is also possible

to use hoardings or banners in the bar association. Handouts of information about the project may be distributed among lawyers.

Customisation of application software: The CIS application needs to be customised. The application software could consist of a core version along with a peripheral version. The core version may be controlled by NIC while lower courts in different states may have the access to customise the database using the peripheral version. Security of data can be maintained through proper data classification.

In India, we are still in the initial stages of ICT deployment where computerisation has been done in a sectoral set-up. To make the entire system sustainable and efficient, we should eventually be able to integrate all the sectors through ICT enablement. The eCourts project may lead to such an efficient system where all related information is available online and various locations such as hospitals, police stations, jails and the forensic departments are integrated through the Internet and video conferencing facility. Files, evidence and other case-related documents should be scanned and digitised so that they are accessible through a computer by judges, lawyers and other authorised personnel. To ensure the security of the digital information, adequate safety measures through data encryption should be provided. Digital signature is an appropriate initiative through eCourts project to increase data security. We also recommend 24x7 availability of records online, live webcast of the case proceedings, provision for police, forensic departments and others to update their reports online and an appropriate mechanism to search for records.

Adopting such a system will provide flexible retrieval of stored information. This will allow judges to view the proceedings of a previous case or to retrieve other important documents at the click of a button. Data sharing between different courts and various departments will also be made easy as everything would be available online under the integrated system. The system would allow police, forensic departments and other concerned bodies to submit their reports from their premises, thereby saving time and reducing costs. We envision the future courtrooms in the following manner: With the help of video conferencing, the accused and the witnesses can be made to participate in the proceedings from various locations other than the courtroom. This will, to a certain extent, reduce the time required to solve the case. The judiciary system in India in this way would overcome the challenges and the service delivery mechanism would become transparent and efficient.

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix 1

System of Indian judiciary: An overview (ref: pp. 3)

The Indian legal system is one of the oldest legal systems in the world. It evolved and developed over the past few centuries, absorbing influences from legal systems around the world. The Constitution of India is the fountainhead of the Indian legal system while the country follows a single hierarchy of courts.

Structure of the Indian Judicial System

India has a quasi-federal structure, with 30 states that are sub-divided into 671 administrative districts. The Indian judiciary is a single integrated system of courts for the union as well as for the states, which administers both union and state laws, and at the head of the entire system is the Supreme Court of India. High Courts form the second tier in the system. There are 'subordinate courts' under each High Court, i.e., courts subordinate to and under the control of the High Courts. The Indian judiciary comprises nearly 16,127 courts situated in approximately 2,800 court complexes throughout the country, apart from the Supreme Court and 24 High Courts.

The Supreme Court is the highest court of law in India. It has appellate jurisdiction over the High Courts and is the highest tribunal of the land. The law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all courts within the territory of India. It has the final authority to interpret the Constitution.

The High Court is at the apex of the state judiciary. There are 24 High Courts in India, mostly situated in the state capitals. High Court judges are appointed by the President of India in consultation with the Chief Justice of India and State Governors. Each High Court is headed by a Chief Justice and has jurisdiction over the state in which it is situated or a Union Territory or several union territories or a group of states. It is a court of record and not subject to the superintendence of any court or authority, though appeals from its decision may be taken to the Supreme Court.

The third tier of the judicial system consists of subordinate courts, which are 'subordinate' to the High Courts. The State Governments act to create subordinate courts. Although the nomenclature of

these subordinate courts differs from state to state, there is broad uniformity in their organisational structure.

District Courts, functioning for each district, are part of subordinate courts, and have appellate jurisdiction in the district. Under the District Courts, there are the lower courts such as the Additional District Court, Sub-Court, Munsiff Magistrate Court, Court of Special Judicial Magistrate of II Class, Court of Special Judicial Magistrate of I Class and the Court of Special Munsiff Magistrate.

Appendix 2

List of Selected Court Complexes (Ref: pp. 16)

S.N.	High Court	State	District	Zone	Court Complex
1	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Rajnandgaon	W	Dist. & Session Court Rajnandgaon
2	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Bilaspur	W	Civil Court Takhatpur
3	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Rajnandgaon	W	Civil Court AmbagarhChowki
4	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Bastar	S	Distt. & Session Court-Bastar
5	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Dhamtari	S	Distt. & Session Court Dhamtari
6	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	DakshinBastar	S	Civil Court Bacheli
7	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Dhamtari	S	Civil Court Kurud
8	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Dhamtari	S	Civil Court Nagri
9	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Raigarh	N	Distt. & Session Court Raigarh
10	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Korba	N	Civil Court Katghora
11	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Koriya	N	Civil Court Manendragarh
12	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Raigarh	N	Civil Court Dharamjaigarh
13	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Mahasamund	E	Distt. & Session Court Mahasamund
14	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Janjgir-Champa	E	Civil Court Champa
15	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Janjgir-Champa	E	Civil Court Nawagarh
16	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Raipur	E	Civil Court Rajim
17	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Durg	C	Civil Court Balod
18	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Durg	C	Civil Court Gunderdehi
19	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Durg	C	Civil Court Patan
20	Chhattisgarh HC	Chhattisgarh	Durg	C	Civil Court Saja
21	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Uttar Kannada	W	District Court Complex-Karwar
22	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Belgaum	W	Court Complex- Sankeshwar
23	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Uttar Kannada	W	Court Complex- Bhatkal
24	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Uttar Kannada	W	Court Complex- Siddapur
25	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Bangalore Urban	S	Mayo Hall Court Complex, Bangalore
26	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Mandya	S	Court Complex- Maddur
27	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Ramanagarm	S	Court Complex- Magadi
28	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Tumkur	S	Court Complex- Sira
29	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Bidar	N	Court Complex-Basavakalyan
30	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Bidar	N	Court Complex-Humnabad
31	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Raichur	N	Court Complex-Devadurga
32	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Raichur	N	Court Complex-Lingasugur
33	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Chitradurga	E	Court Complex-Hiriyur

S.N.	High Court	State	District	Zone	Court Complex
34	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Chitradurga	E	Court Complex-Molakalmuru
35	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Chitradurga	E	Court Complex-Challakere
36	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Koppal	E	Civil Judge Senior Division and JMFC court, Gangavathi
37	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Davanagere	C	Court Complex- Harihara
38	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Haveri	C	Court Complex- Hirekerur
39	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Haveri	C	Court Complex- Ranebennur
40	Karnataka HC	Karnataka	Haveri	C	Court Complex- Savanur
41	Punjab & Haryana	Chandigarh	Chandigarh	EP	District Courts, Chandigarh
42	Punjab & Haryana	Haryana	Fatehabad	WH	Sessions Court Fatehabad
43	Punjab & Haryana	Haryana	Rewari	SH	District Court Complex, Rewari
44	Punjab & Haryana	Haryana	Jind	CH	Judicial Complex, Jind
45	Punjab & Haryana	Haryana	Sirsa	WH	Judicial Complex, Sirsa
46	Punjab & Haryana	Haryana	Sonipat	EH	Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate Court, Ganaur
47	Punjab & Haryana	Haryana	Karnal	NH	Court Complex Assandh
48	Punjab & Haryana	Haryana	Bhiwani	WH	Siwani
49	Punjab & Haryana	Haryana	Fatehabad	WH	Tohana Court
50	Punjab & Haryana	Haryana	Gurgaon	SH	Civil Courts Nuh
51	Punjab & Haryana	Haryana	Mohindergarh	SH	Court Complex Mohindergarh
52	Punjab & Haryana	Punjab	Gurdaspur	NP	District Courts, Gurdaspur
53	Punjab & Haryana	Punjab	Amritsar	WP	Judicial Courts, Patti
54	Punjab & Haryana	Punjab	Amritsar	WP	Judicial Courts, Tarn Taran
55	Punjab & Haryana	Punjab	Bathinda	SP	Judicial Court Complex, Talwandi
56	Punjab & Haryana	Punjab	Faridkot	WP	Judicial District Courts Complex, Muktsar
57	Punjab & Haryana	Punjab	Firozpur	WP	Civil Courts Abohar..Ferozepur
58	Punjab & Haryana	Punjab	Kapurthala	CP	Civil Courts Phagwara
59	Punjab & Haryana	Punjab	Moga	CP	Sub Division Nihal Singh Wala
60	Punjab & Haryana	Punjab	SBS Nagar	CP	SBS Nagar
61	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Aurangabad	C	Family Court, Old High Court Building, Aurangabad
62	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Beed	C	District and Sessions Court, Beed
63	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Bhandara	E	Industrial & Labour Court, Bhandara
64	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Bhandara	E	District & Sessions Court, Bhandara
65	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Latur	E	District & Sessions Court, Latur
66	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Wardha	E	District & Sessions Court, Wardha
67	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Buldana	N	District & Sessions Court,
68	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Jalgaon	N	District Judge - 1 & ASJ, Amalner

S.N.	High Court	State	District	Zone	Court Complex
69	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Jalgaon	N	District and Sessions Court, Jalgaon
70	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Jalgaon	N	Industrial & Labour Court, Jalgaon
71	Bombay High Court	Goa	North Goa	N	Civil & Criminal Court Complex, Mapusa, Goa
72	Bombay High Court	Daman and Diu	Diu	N	District & Sessions Court, Diu
73	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	S	Civil Court, Junior Division, Kagal
74	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	S	District & Sessions Court, Kolhapur
75	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	S	Industrial & Labour Court, Kolhapur
76	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Pune	S	District Judge - 1 & ASJ, Baramati
77	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Dhule	W	District & Sessions Court, Dhule
78	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Nashik	W	District & Sessions Court, Nashik
79	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Thane	W	District Judge - 1 & Addl. Sessions Court, Kalyan
80	Bombay High Court	Maharashtra	Mumbai	W	Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Bandra, Bandra
81	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Kamrup	w	Chief Judicial Magistrate's Complex
82	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Darrang	C	District Court Complex
83	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Sonitpur/Tezpur	N	District Judge's Court, Sonitpur
84	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Nagaon	C	District Court Complex
85	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Morigaon	C	District Court Complex
86	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Sivasagar	E	District Judge's Court and CJM Court
87	Guwahati High Court Guwahati	Assam	Dibrugarh	E	District Court Complex
88	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Tinsukia	E	District Court Complex
89	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Lakhimpur	E	District Court Complex
90	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Goalpara	W	District Court Complex
91	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Kokrajhar	W	Foreigners' Tribunal
92	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Bongaigaon	W	SDJM Court Complex, Abhayapuri

S.N.	High Court	State	District	Zone	Court Complex
93	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Cachar	S	District Court Complex
94	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Karimganj	S	District Judge's Court
95	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Karimganj	S	Chief Judicial Magistrate's Complex
96	Guwahati High Court	Assam	Hailakandi	S	District Court Complex
97	Guwahati High Court	Mizoram	Aizawl		District Court Complex
98	Guwahati High Court	Mizoram	Kolasib		District Court Complex
99	Guwahati High Court	Assam			
100	Guwahati High Court	Assam			

Appendix 3

Parameters used in questionnaires for all four groups of stake holders (ref: pp 18):

The Survey/ Questionnaire was structured to capture the following information sets:

i. Advocates/Litigants' perspective

1. User Profile

- a) Contact Details
- b) Age
- c) Gender
- d) Level of Education
- e) Level of Income

2. Awareness

- a) List of Online services and their availability
- b) Awareness regarding CIS
- c) Online information availability through applications
- d) Query Handling through CIS

3. Direct and Indirect Cost (Expenditure)

- a) Intermediaries
- b) Utilities
- c) Travel/ Commuting

4. Quality of Service

- a) Service Delivery
- b) Response Time
- c) Attitude/ Responsiveness/ Support from functionaries
- d) CIS application effectiveness related to Case Information

5. Governance

- a) Access to Court Functionaries
- b) Accountability of functionaries
- c) Clarity of rules and procedures related to service delivery

6. Problems/ Challenges

- e) Language
- f) Response to queries
- g) Service delivery

f) Filing and Tracking of Cases

ii. Departmental perspective

End Users and Judiciary Officials

1. User Profile

- a) Location
- b) Designation
- c) Contact Details
- d) Level of Education
- e) IT literacy
- f) Length of Service

2. Awareness

- a) eCourt
- b) Rules and Procedure of the Functioning
- c) Available facilities and services to citizen

3. Quality of Service

- a) Availability and Functioning of ICT Infrastructure

4. Governance

- b) Transparency of Rules & Procedures
- c) Governance Structure

5. Capacity Building

- a) Training
- b) Skill Management

6. Problems/ Challenges

- a) Information/ Material/ Support
- b) CIS & other technical aspects (Hardware, LAN, Software ,Connectivity, Application and Training)

7. Process Improvements

- a) Cycle Time of Key Processes
- b) Accuracy and Consistency in Documents
- c) Query Handling and Problem Resolution

Appendix 4

Questionnaires (ref: pp. 18)

Questionnaires for all stakeholders inclusive of judicial officers, court officials, lawyers, litigants, NIC officials, Central Project Co-ordinators and vendors.

Questionnaire for Judicial Officers

This questionnaire is a part of the assessment study of the e-Courts Project conducted under the aegis of the Department of Justice. You are being approached for feedback to evaluate the eCourts project. Your personal information will not be disclosed to anybody and will not be used for any other purpose. Also, the feedback provided will not be disclosed and will be used for aggregate analysis only. Your response would be considered only when you fill the entire questionnaire.

PART-1: RESPONDENT PROFILE			
S.N		Date:	DD/MM/YYYY
101	Name of Respondent:		
102	Designation:	List of Designation	
103	e-mail ID:	Valid e-mail ID for considering your responses/(Will not be Shared)	
104	Mobile No:		
105	Gender:	Male	1
		Female	2
106	Association with Court:	Less than 1 year	1
		1-5 years	2
		5 -10 years	3
		More than 10 years	4
107	High Court:	List of High Courts ↓	
108	State	List of States ↓	
109	Type of Court	District Court	1
		Taluka Court	2
110	Name of Court:	List of Courts ↓	
111	Computer Literacy:	IT Illiterate	1
		Basic Level IT	2
		Advanced Level IT	3

PART-2: AWARENESS

201.Are you aware of the project for computerisation of courts?

Yes	1
No	2

202.Are you aware about the Case Information System (CIS) application?

Ψεσ	1
No (Σκιπ το Παρτ:3)	2

203.Does your court use the CIS Application?

Yes	1
No (Skip to Part:3)	2

204. In terms of the objectives of the eCourts project, please rank the CIS application from 1 to 9 (in order of importance):

Functional improvement	
Improved status of pending cases	
User productivity	
Case Management	
Others specify	

205.How often do you use this application?

Never	1
Rare	2
Often	3
Very Often	4
Always	5

206.Are you aware of the eCourts National Portal?

Yes	1
No	2

207.Are you aware of the National Judicial Data Grid?

Yes	1
No	2

208.Do you have a digital signature?

Yes	1
No(Skip to Part:3)	2

209.How often do you use the digital signature to sign the decree/Judgement/order?

Never	1
Rare	2
Often	3
Very Often	4

Always	5
--------	---

PART-3: CAPACITY BUILDING

301. Please grade your satisfaction level with the following components of infrastructure?

S.N	Infrastructure	Satisfaction Scale				
		1 Dissatisfied	2 Somewhat dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Highly Satisfied
i.	DG Set					
ii.	Hardware					
iii.	UPS					
iv.	LAN					
v.	Internet Connectivity/WAN					
vi.	CIS Software					

302. Please give us your comments on the sufficiency of infrastructure:

303. Did you receive any IT training?

Yes	1
No (Skip to Part:4)	2

304. Have you received Operating System Training (UBUNTU)?

Yes	1
No	2

305. Please mention your satisfaction level with the IT training received:

Dissatisfied	1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Satisfied	4
Most Satisfied	5

306. If you are not satisfied with the training please, mention the reasons of dissatisfaction.

PART-4: IMPACT OF APPLICATION

401. Please grade the impact of computerisation of courts on the following aspects on the scale of 1 to 5

S.N	Aspects	Satisfied (Dissatisfied to Highly Satisfied)				
		1 Dissatisfied	2 Somewhat dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Highly Satisfied
i.	Improvement in court time management					
ii.	Monitoring of court activities					
iii.	Transcription of evidence					
iv.	Transparency of information					
v.	Improved process issuance					
vi.	Improved overview of case proceedings					

402. Please suggest how the above-mentioned aspects can be further improved.

403. Is information from appellate courts easily available through the eCourts website?

Yes	1
No	2
Not Applicable	3

404. In your opinion has computerisation of courts contributed to reduction in pendency of cases? Please grade on the scale of 1 to 5.

Scale of Effectiveness (least effective to most effective)				
1	2	3	4	5

405. What further improvements are required in the eCourts project for reduction in pendency of cases?

406. How useful did you find the CIS application for judicial officers?

Not at all useful	1
Less useful	2
Neither useful nor not useful	3
Useful	4
Most useful	5

407. Did the CIS application meet your expectations?

Yes	1
No	2

408. Please give your views on making the CIS application more useful?

Questionnaire for Court Officials

This questionnaire is a part of the assessment study of the e-Courts Project conducted under the aegis of the Department of Justice. You are being approached for feedback to evaluate the eCourts project. Your personal information will not be disclosed to anybody and will not be used for any other purpose. Also, the feedback provided will not be disclosed and will be used for aggregate analysis only. Your response would be considered only when you fill the entire questionnaire.

PART-1: RESPONDENT PROFILE

S.N		Date:	DD/MM/YYYY
101	Name of Respondent:		
102	Designation:	List of Designation ↓	
103	e-mail ID:	Valid e-mail ID/(Will not be Shared)	
104	Mobile No:		
105	Gender :	Male	1
		Female	2
106	Association with Court:	Less than 1 year	1
		1-5 years	2
		5-10 years	3
		More than 10 years	4
107	High Court:	List of High Courts ↓	
108	State	List of States ↓	
		District Court	1
		Taluka Court	2
110	Name of Court:	List of Courts ↓	
111	Level of Education:	Graduate/Post Graduate	1
		Law Graduate//Post Graduate	2
		Others	3
112	Computer Literacy:	IT Illiterate	1
		Basic Level IT	2
		Advanced Level IT	3

PART-2: AWARENESS

201.Are you aware about the project for computerisation of Courts?

Yes	1
No	2

202.Are you aware about the Case Information System (CIS) Application?

Yes	1
No	2

203. How are the following activities performed in your court? Please put a tick mark against the relevant option: Manual: 1; Computerised: 2; Both: 3, Don't Know: 4

S.N	Activities	Mode of Service Delivery			
		1	2	3	4
i.	Filing of cases				
ii.	Issue of check slips				
iii.	Caveat checking for new cases				
iv.	Scrutiny check of plaints				
v.	Preparation of summons				
vi.	Updating of daily Orders				
vii.	Preparation of cause list				
viii.	Preparation of court diaries				
ix.	Transcription of evidence				
x.	Warrants and notice generation				
xi.	Preparation of decree				
xii.	Delivery of decree				
xiii.	Issue of copy of judgment/order copy				

204. Which CIS application are you using?

CIS (Delhi version)	1
CIS (Pune version)	2
Unified National Core CIS version 1.0	3
Any other (Please Specify) _____	4
Don't Know	5

205. Are you aware of the eCourts National Portal?

Yes	1
No	2

206. Are you aware of the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)?

Yes	1
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No (Skip to Part 3)	2
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207. Do you upload data on the National Judicial Data Grid?

Yes	1
No (Skip to Part 3)	2

208. How frequently do you upload data on the National Judicial Data Grid?

Daily	1
Once in two days	2
Once in a Week	3
Once in a Month	4

PART-3: INFRASTRUCTURE

301. Please indicate if the following Physical Infrastructure is available in your court complex?

Yes: 1; No: 2

S.N	Physical Infrastructure	Availability
vii.	Computer Server Room	
viii.	Judicial Service Centre	

302. Please indicate if the following components of Infrastructure are available in your court complex?

Yes: 1; No: 2

S.N	Infrastructure	Availability
i.	DG Set	
ii.	AC in server room	
iii.	LAN	
iv.	Computer	
v.	Printer	
vi.	Scanner	
vii.	Internet Connectivity/ WAN	
viii.	CIS application software	
ix.	Video Conferencing	

303. Please grade your satisfaction level with the following components of infrastructure?

Please put a tick mark against the relevant option

S.N	Infrastructure	Satisfaction Scale				
		1 Dissatisfied	2 Somewhat dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Most Satisfied
2	DG Set					
2	LAN					
2	Computer					
2	Printer					
2	UPS					
2	Internet Connectivity/WAN					
2	Functioning of CIS Application Software					

304. Additional Comments (If any)

PART-4: QUALITY OF SERVICE

401. In your perception, what is the time taken in Manual and Computerised Systems for the following processes?

S.N	Activities	Time Taken (in mins)	
		Manual	Computerised
i.	Filing of new cases		
ii.	Issue of check slips		
iii.	Caveat checking for new cases		

S.N	Activities	Time Taken (in mins)	
		Manual	Computerised
iv.	Scrutiny check of complaints		
v.	Preparation of summons		
vi.	Delivery of summons		
vii.	Updation of daily Orders		
viii.	Preparation of cause list		
ix.	Preparation of court diaries		
x.	Transcription of evidence		
xi.	Warrants and notice generation		
xii.	Preparation of decree		
xiii.	Delivery of decree		
xiv.	Issue of copy of judgment/order copy		

PART- 5: CAPACITY BUILDING

409. Have you received any type of IT training?

Yes	1
No (Skip to Part6)	2

410. What type of training did you receive?

Knowledge of computer training	1
CIS application training	2
All of the above	3

411. Please mention your satisfaction level with the IT training received?

Dissatisfied	1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Satisfied	4

Most Satisfied	5
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412. What improvement do you expect in the training programme? (May indicate more than one option)

Increase the duration of training sessions	1
Regular application oriented training sessions	2
More emphasis on live demo	3

PART-6: PROBLEMS/ CHALLENGES

304.Are you getting adequate technical support from NIC officials?

Yes	1
No	2

305.Have you faced problems in using the CIS application?

Yes	1
No (Skip to Q.N. 604)	2

306.What problems have you faced in using the CIS Application? (please specify)

307.Have you faced any challenges in data updation/ uploading on CIS application?

Yes	1
No (Skip to Q.N. 606)	2

308. What type of challenges have you faced in data updation/ uploading on CIS application?

-
309. Are you satisfied with the reports generated through CIS? Please grade your level of satisfaction (On the scale of 1 to 5).

Dissatisfied	1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Satisfied	4
Most Satisfied	5

310. Are you satisfied with the warranty service of vendors? Please grade your level of satisfaction (On the scale of 1 to 5).

Dissatisfied	1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Satisfied	4
Most Satisfied	5

311. If you are not satisfied with the warranty service provided by vendor please explain what type of problems you are facing?

312. Have you ever faced any hurdles in the functioning of equipment due to warranty service provided by vendor?

Yes	1
No	2

313. Additional Comments (If any)

PART-7: USAGE OF APPLICATION

701. Please indicate your level of satisfaction on the scale of 1 to 5 with the following aspects of the CIS Application.

S.N.	Attributes	Applications				
		1	2	3	4	5
vii.	Accessibility					
viii.	Navigation					
ix.	Help section/Help desk support					
x.	User friendliness					
xi.	MIS and reporting					
xii.	Problem resolution & trouble shooting support					

702. Do you think CIS is an effective application?

Yes	1
No	2

703. If no, what are the reasons?

PART-8: IMPACT OF APPLICATION

801. Please grade the impact of computerisation on the following activities on the scale of 1 to 5

S.N	Aspects	Impact (Not Improved to Improved)				
		1	2	3	4	5
i.	Case filing in court					
ii.	Tracking of case					
iii.	Case filing in appellate court					
iv.	Tracking of previous proceedings					
v.	Internal efficiency & management					
vi.	Transcription of evidence					
vii.	Transparency of Information					

viii.	Issue of copy of Judgment/Order					
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802. Additional Comments for Improvement in above mentioned aspects(If any)

803. Please grade changes brought about by computerisation on the following aspects on the scale of 1 to 5

S.N	Aspects	Scale of Change(Increase to Decrease)				
		1	2	3	4	5
i.	Status of pending cases					
ii.	Level of transparency					
iii.	Work load of court officials					
iv.	Distribution of work					
v.	Stationary and paper costs					
vi.	Communication-related costs					

804. Do you think e-Courts project promotes speedy and cost-effective justice?

Yes	1
No	2

805. In your opinion what are the two basic strengths of the CIS application? Please also mention two drawbacks of this application, which needs to be addressed to make this application more effective?

Strengths: (i) _____

(ii) _____

Drawbacks: (i) _____

(ii) _____

806. Please give your views on how ICT enablement can make judicial system more effective?

Questionnaire for Lawyers

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PART-1: RESPONDENT PROFILE

S.N		Date:	DD/MM/YYYY
	Name of the Interviewer		Signature of Interviewer
101	Name of Respondent:		
102	Contact Address;		
103	Mobile No:		
104	How long are you practicing?	Less than 1 year	1
		1-5 years	2
		5-10 years	3
		More than 10 years	4
105	Gender :	Male	1
		Female	2
106	Age Distribution:	18-30 Years	1
		30-45 years	2
		45-60 years	3
		More than 60 years	4
107	Type of Court	High Court	1
		District Court	2
		Taluka Court	3
108	Name of Court:		
109	High Court:		
110	Computer Literacy:	IT Illiterate	1
		Basic Level IT	2
		Advanced Level IT	3

PART-2: AWARENESS

704.Are you aware about the project for computerisation of Courts?

Yes	1
No	2

705.Have you accessed services through the Judicial Service Centre?

Yes	1
No	2

706. How are the following services being delivered in the court? Tick mark on the option. Manual: 1; Computerised: 2; Both: 3, Don't Know: 4

S.N	Activities	Mode of Service Delivery			
		1	2	3	4
217	Filing of cases				
218	Caveat checking for cases				
219	Issue of check slips				
220	Case Filing confirmation				
221	Case Scrutiny –Defects Notification				
222	Case Registration Confirmation				
223	Case Allocation Information				
224	Cause list				
225	Case status information				
226	Process Service				
227	Service of summons				
228	Service of Warrants				
229	Orders/proceedings				
230	Delivery of order & judgments				

707. Are you aware of the eCourts National Portal?

Yes	1
No	2

708. How do you access case-related information?

District Court Portal	1
eCourts National portal	2
Both	3
Any other	
None (Skip to Q.N. 207)	4

709. How frequently do you use the above mentioned portal for case-related information?

Daily	1
-------	---

Weekly	2
Rarely	3
Never	4

710.If you are not using any of the above portals, then what are the reasons?

PART-3: QUALITY OF SERVICE

xiii.Please mention the approximate time taken in following activities?

S.N	Activities	Approximate Time Taken (in minutes)
314.	Filing of cases	
315.	Caveat checking for cases	
316.	Issue of check slips	
317.	Case filing confirmation	
318.	Case scrutiny –Defects notification	
319.	Case registration confirmation	
320.	Case allocation information	
321.	Case status information	
322.	Process service	
323.	Service of summons	
324.	Service of warrants	
325.	Orders/Proceedings	
326.	Delivery of copy of Order & Judgments	

xiv. Please grade your level of satisfaction with computerised service delivery of the following services?
(Please put a tick mark against your choice)

S.N	Services	Satisfaction Scale				
		1 Dissatisfied	2 Somewhat	3 Neither	4 Satisfied	5 Most

			dissatisfied	satisfied nor dissatisfied		Satisfied
ix.	Filing of cases					
x.	Caveat Checking					
xi.	Tracking the case status					
xii.	Availability of cause list online					
xiii.	Delivery of copy of decree/Judgment					

xv. What additional expectations do you have with the current service delivery?

xvi. In your opinion what further improvements are needed in service delivery?

PART-4: PROGRESS OF COMPUTERISATION

ix. How do you find case-related information available online?

Not at all useful	1
Less Useful	2
Neither useful nor not useful	3
Useful	4
Most useful	5

x. What major changes have you observed after computerisation of courts? (You may tick more than one option)

Functional Improvement	
Transparency	
Transaction time	

reduction	
Litigants access	
Others specify _____	

xi. Please grade the effect of computerisation on the following aspects on the scale of 1 to 5

S.N	Aspects	Scale of Effect (Not Improved to Improved)				
		1	2	3	4	5
413	Case filing in court					
414	Tracking of case status					
415	Tracking of previous proceedings					
416	Transparency of Information					
417	Efficiency in the trial process					
418	Status of pending cases					
419	Case filing in appellate court					
420	Availability of orders/Judgment online					

xii. Please give your views on improvements perceived on the above aspects after computerisation, and also mention additional improvements that can be made?

xiii. Please rank your perception of change arising out of computerisation on the following aspects on the scale of 1 to 5

S.N	Aspects	Scale of Change (Increase to Decrease)				
		1	2	3	4	5
xv.	Travel costs for lawyers/Staff					
xvi.	Travel costs for Litigants					
xvii.	Other Costs					

xiv. Are you satisfied with the present basket of computerised services?

Yes	1
No	2

xv. What additional services do you expect from ICT enablement of courts?

xvi.Do you think computerisation has promoted speedy justice?

Yes	1
No	2

xvii.Do you think computerisation has promoted cost-effective justice?

Yes	1
No	2

xviii.Do you think computerisation of judicial process is a major step to make Indian Judiciary system more effective and productive?

Yes	1
No	2

xix.Please suggest how ICT enablement can make the judicial system more effective?

Questionnaire for Litigants

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.PART-1: RESPONDENT PROFILE

S.N		Date:	DD/MM/YYYY
	Name of the Interviewer		Signature of Interviewer
101	Name of Respondent:		
102	Contact Address;		
103	Mobile No:		
104	Gender :	Male	1
		Female	2
105	Age Distribution:	18-30 Years	1
		30-45 years	2
		45 - 60 years	3
		More than 60 years	4
106	Type of Court	High Court	1
		District Court	2
		Taluka Court	3
107	Name of Court:		
108	High Court:		
109	Level of Education:	Illiterate	1
		Secondary	2
		Below Graduate	3
		Graduate/Post Graduate	4
		Others	5
110	Computer Literacy:	IT Illiterate	1
		Basic Level IT	2
		Advanced Level IT	3

PART-2: AWARENESS

711.Are you aware of the project for computerisation of Courts?

Yes	1
No	2

712.Have you accessed services through the Judicial Service Centre?

Yes	1
No	2

713. How are the following services delivered in court?. Manual: 1; Computerised: 2; Both: 3, Don't Know: 4, (Tick mark on the option)

S.N	Activities	Mode of Service Delivery			
		1	2	3	4
327	Whether the case has been filed?				
328	Whether the case has been listed?				
329	Whether next date of case can be known?				
330	Daily case status Information				
331	Service of summons				
332	Delivery of order & judgments				

714. How do you perform the above mentioned activities?

Through Individual Courts	1
Through the Judicial Service Centre	2
Through the Lawyer	3
Through Internet	4

715. Are you aware of the eCourts National Portal?

Yes	1
No	2

716. How do you access case-related information?

District Court Portal	1
eCourts National portal	2
Both	3
Any other _____	
None (Skip to Q.N. 208)	4

717.How frequently do you use the above mentioned portal for case-related information?

Daily	1
Weekly	2
Rarely	3
Never	4

718.If you are not using any of the above portals, what are the reasons?

PART-3: QUALITY OF SERVICE

xvii.Please mention the approx. time taken to carry out each of the following activities in the judicial process?

S.N	Activities	Approximate Time Taken (in minutes)
421.	Filing of case	
422.	Caveat checking for new cases	
423.	Case Filing Confirmation	
424.	Case Scrutiny –Defects Notification	
425.	Case Registration Confirmation	
426.	Case Allocation Information	
427.	Case Status Information	
428.	Service of summons	
429.	Service of Warrants	
430.	Orders/Proceedings	
431.	Delivery of copy of Order & Judgements	

xviii. Please grade your level of satisfaction with computerised service delivery of the following services? (Put a tick mark against your choice)

S.N	Services	Satisfaction Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5

		Dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Most Satisfied
xviii.	Filing of Cases					
xix.	Caveat Checking					
xx.	Tracking the Case Status					
xxi.	Availability of Cause List Online					
xxii.	Delivery of copy of decree/Judgment					

PART-4: PROGRESS OF COMPUTERISATION

231. How useful is the case-related information available online to litigants?

Not at all useful	1
Less Useful	2
Neither useful nor not useful	3
Useful	4
Most useful	5

232. How often do you face difficulty in obtaining correct information after computerisation?

Very Often	1
Sometimes	2
Rarely	3
Never	4

233. Does computerisation help to get the required case-related information more easily?

Yes	1
No	2

234. What major changes have you observed after Computerisation of courts?

Transparency	1
Process time reduction	2
Litigants access	3

Others (specify) _____	4
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235. Please grade the effect of computerisation on following aspects on the scale of 1 to 5

S.N	Aspects	Scale of Effect (Not Improved to Improved)				
		1	2	3	4	5
xiv.	Case filing in court					
xv.	Tracking of case status					
xvi.	Tracking of previous proceedings					
xvii.	Dependency on lawyers					
xviii.	Transparency of information					
xix.	Efficiency in the trial process					
xx.	Case Filing in appellate court					
xxi.	Availability of order/Judgement Online					

236. Please rank your perception of change arising out of computerisation on the following aspects on the scale of 1 to 5

S.N	Aspects	Scale of Change (Increase to Decrease)				
		1	2	3	4	5
xx.	Travel costs					
xxi.	Other Costs					

237. Are you satisfied with the present basket of computerised services?

Yes	1
No	2

238. What additional services do you expect from ICT enablement of courts?

239. Do you think computerisation has promoted speedy justice?

Yes	1
No	2

240. Do you think computerisation has promoted cost-effective justice?

Yes	1
No	2

241. Do you think computerisation of judicial process is a major step to make Indian Judiciary system more effective and productive?

Yes	1
No	2

242. Please suggest how ICT enablement can make judicial system more effective?

Questionnaire for NIC Officials

This questionnaire is a part of the assessment study of the e-Courts Project conducted under the aegis of the Department of Justice. You are being approached for feedback to evaluate the eCourts project. Your personal information will not be disclosed to anybody and will not be used for any other purpose. Also, the feedback provided will not be disclosed and will be used for aggregate analysis only. Your response would be considered only when you fill the entire questionnaire.

PART-1: RESPONDENT PROFILE

S.N		Date:	DD/MM/YYYY
101	Name of Respondent		
102	Contact Address		
103	Designation		
104	Mobile No		
105	email ID		
106	How long are you associated with eCourts project?	Less than 1 year	1
		1–5 years	2
		5–10 years	3
107	Gender	Male	1
		Female	2

PART-2: Feedback on e-courts

201. What type of software support do you provide at the district and subordinate court level?

202. How often do you receive the complaint from the users for non-functioning of CIS application?

203. Do you organise training for CIS application user?

Yes	1
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No	2
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204. How frequently do you organise training for CIS application user?

Monthly	1
Quarterly	2
Half Yearly	3
Yearly	4
Only one time at time of installation	5

205. What type of training do you provide?

Basic IT training	1
CIS application training	2
Both	3

206. Please specify three frequent technical problems faced by users and how long does it take to resolve?

S.N	Type of Problem	Time to resolve (in Mins/Hrs)
1		
2		
3		

207. What type of complaint do you receive regarding the functioning of CIS application?

208. What are the challenges do you face in implementation of eCourts project?

209. What type of problems do you face with warranty service of vendors?

210. What are the two basic strengths of the CIS application? Please also mention the two major drawbacks of this application, which need to be redressed to make this application more effective?

Strengths: (i) _____

(ii) _____

Drawbacks: (i) _____

(ii) _____

211. How these applications can further be improved? Please suggest.

212. What would be the future road map of further implementation of the eCourts project?

Questionnaire for CPC

This questionnaire is a part of the assessment study of the e-Courts Project conducted under the aegis of the Department of Justice. You are being approached for feedback to evaluate the eCourts project. Your personal information will not be disclosed to anybody and will not be used for any other purpose. Also, the feedback provided will not be disclosed and will be used for aggregate analysis only. Your response would be considered only when you fill the entire questionnaire.

PART-1: RESPONDENT PROFILE

S.N		Date:	DD/MM/YYYY
101	Name of Respondent		
102	Contact Address		
103	Designation	CPC High Court	
104	Mobile No		
105	How long are you associated with court?	Less than 1 year	1
		1–5 years	2
		5–10 years	3
		More than 10 years	4
106	Gender	Male	1
		Female	2
107	Age	18–30 Years	1
		30–45 years	2
		45–60 years	3
		More than 60 years	4
108	Name of High Court		
109	Computer Literacy	IT Illiterate	1
		Basic Level IT	2
		Advanced Level IT	4

PART-2: Feedback on e-courts

201. In your opinion how have the following stakeholders benefitted from the eCourts project:

Judicial Officer:

Court Officials:

Lawyers:

Litigants:

Others (specify):

202. Please specify the number of courts under the jurisdiction of your High court where e-Courts project has been implemented.

Fully Implemented: _____

Partially Implemented: _____

Not Yet Implemented: _____

203. (A) What are the challenges faced in the implementation of the eCourts project? Please specify in detail

(B) What are the challenges faced in the maintenance/replacement of hardware. Please specify in detail.

(C) What are the challenges faced in the availability of technical support. Please specify in detail.

204. What are the two basic strengths of the CIS application? Please also mention the two major drawbacks of this application, which need to be redressed to make this application more effective?

Strengths: (i) _____

(ii) _____

Drawbacks: (i) _____

(ii) _____

205. Please grade your satisfaction level with the following components of infrastructure?

S.N	Infrastructure	Satisfaction Scale				
		1 Dissatisfied	2 Somewhat dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Highly Satisfied
xix.	DG Set					
xx.	Hardware					
xxi.	UPS					
xxii.	LAN					
xxiii.	Internet Connectivity/WAN					

xxiv.	CIS Software					
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206. What are your suggestions for further ICT enablement of courts to make judicial system speedy and cost-effective?

Questionnaire for Vendors

This questionnaire is a part of the assessment study of the e-Courts Project conducted under the aegis of the Department of Justice. You are being approached for feedback to evaluate the eCourts project. Your personal information will not be disclosed to anybody and will not be used for any other purpose. Also, the feedback provided will not be disclosed and will be used for aggregate analysis only. Your response would be considered only when you fill the entire questionnaire.

PART-1: RESPONDENT PROFILE

S.N		Date:	DD/MM/YYYY
101	Name of Respondent		
102	Contact Address		
103	Name of Organisation		
104	Mobile No		
105	Email ID		
106	How long have you been associated as a vendor with the eCourts project?	Less than 1 year	1
		1-5 years	2
		5-10 years	3

PART-2: Feedback on e-courts

213. Which of the items do you supply for the eCourts project? Please tick the option.

S.N	Items	
I.	DG Set	
II.	AC	
III.	Installation of LAN	
IV.	LAN Items	
V.	Hardware Installation	
VI.	Internet Connectivity/WAN	
VII.	Computer/Laptop	
VIII.	Printer	
IX.	Scanner	
X.	Video Conferencing equipment	

214. Do provide the warranty service to the client? If yes, what is the timeframe of warranty services?

215. How often do you get complaints from clients regarding service quality or warranty service?

216. What are the problems you face in following activities?

Installation:

Maintenance:

Supply:

217. What are the challenges you face in your work process?

218. How do you think the efficiency in supply of items could be improved? Please suggest.
