



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Perunthalaivar Kamarajar"

e-Courts Mission Mode Project Advances Digital Transformation of Indian Judiciary for Accessible, Efficient and Citizen-Centric Justice Delivery

Published On: 11-08-2026

Recent Developments:

- The **e-Courts Mission Mode Project** entered a significant phase of digital transformation in **2026**, with the Supreme Court's e-Committee and the Department of Justice jointly organising a **National Conference on Judicial Process Re-engineering and Digital Transformation** in April 2026.
- The conference highlighted **process re-engineering, digital preservation, electronic evidence, hybrid courts, artificial intelligence, and interoperability** as key components of modern judicial reform.
- The **e-Courts Phase III**, approved with an outlay of **₹7,210 crore**, seeks to move Indian courts towards **inclusive, paperless, digital and technology-driven justice delivery** during **2023–2027**.
- Phase III includes **scanning and digitisation of case records, cloud infrastructure, virtual courts, e-Sewa Kendras, paperless courts, video conferencing, e-filing, connectivity, capacity building, online dispute resolution and judicial process re-engineering**.
- The **National Judicial Data Grid** currently provides a public dashboard containing real-time judicial data on pending, instituted and disposed cases, age-wise pendency and other indicators, strengthening data-driven judicial administration.

Background and Need for Judicial Digitisation:

- The Indian judiciary historically depended heavily on **physical records, paper-based procedures and court-centred processes**, which increased the time and cost involved in accessing justice.
- Judicial digitisation refers to the systematic use of **Information and Communication Technology**, digital records and interoperable platforms across the **Supreme Court, High Courts, District Courts and subordinate courts**.
- The objective is not merely to replace paper with computers but to **re-engineer judicial processes** so that technology improves accessibility, efficiency, transparency and accountability.
- The continuing scale of judicial pendency makes technological reform particularly important, as the **National Judicial Data Grid** records several crore pending cases across the judicial system.

e-Courts Mission Mode Project:

Evolution of the Project:

- The **e-Courts Mission Mode Project** emerged from the **National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology in the Indian Judiciary, 2005** and was launched as a pan-India technology initiative in **2007**.
- **Phase I, 2011–2015**, focused primarily on **computerisation of courts and creation of basic technological infrastructure**.

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

- **Phase II, 2015–2023**, expanded citizen-oriented digital services such as **e-filing, e-Sewa Kendras, the National Judicial Data Grid and video conferencing**.
- **Phase III, 2023–2027**, seeks to establish **digital and paperless courts**, strengthen interoperability and introduce advanced technologies such as **artificial intelligence, machine learning, optical character recognition and natural language processing**.

Major Components of Phase III:

- **Case-record digitisation:** Large-scale scanning, digitisation and digital preservation of existing judicial records.
- **Cloud infrastructure:** Creation of scalable digital infrastructure for storing and accessing judicial information.
- **Paperless courts:** Digitisation of courtroom proceedings, records and workflows to reduce dependence on physical files.
- **Virtual courts:** Technology-enabled disposal of selected categories of cases, particularly petty traffic offences, without requiring physical appearance.
- **Video conferencing:** Expansion of remote participation for litigants, witnesses, lawyers, experts and other stakeholders.
- **e-Filing:** Enables electronic submission of cases, pleadings and documents without requiring repeated physical visits to courts.
- **e-Sewa Kendras:** Provide assisted digital access to citizens, particularly those who may face difficulty using online judicial services independently.
- **Online Dispute Resolution:** Uses digital platforms to facilitate resolution of suitable disputes outside conventional courtroom processes.
- **National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes:** Uses technology to improve electronic service and tracking of summons and other judicial processes.
- **Capacity building:** Focuses on training judges, court staff, lawyers and other stakeholders in digital judicial processes.
- **Accessible technology:** Phase III also provides for **disabled-friendly information and communication technology-enabled facilities**.

Major Digital Platforms and Judicial Technology:

National Judicial Data Grid:

- The **National Judicial Data Grid** is a public judicial-data platform providing information on **case pendency, institution, disposal, age of cases and other judicial indicators**.
- It supports **data-driven judicial management** by enabling institutions to identify pendency patterns and administrative bottlenecks.
- Its integration with other digital systems strengthens **transparency, evidence-based policy making and judicial performance monitoring**.

Interoperable Criminal Justice System:

- The **Interoperable Criminal Justice System** connects major components of the criminal justice architecture, including **police, courts, prisons, prosecution and forensic institutions**.
- It facilitates electronic exchange of information such as **first information reports, charge-sheets, judicial orders and forensic reports**, thereby reducing duplication and delays.

Police and Investigation Platforms:

- The **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems** digitises police processes and facilitates electronic management of criminal investigations.

- The **Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences** monitors investigation progress in sexual-offence cases against prescribed timelines.
- The **National Automated Fingerprint Identification System** enables automated fingerprint matching and assists criminal investigation through centralised biometric records.

Digital Evidence and Forensics:

- **e-Sakshya** supports secure digital capture and management of evidence while preserving its integrity during the judicial process.
- **e-Forensic** enables digital management of forensic cases and facilitates electronic coordination between forensic laboratories and other criminal justice institutions.
- **MedLEaPR** facilitates digital management of medico-legal examination and post-mortem reports.

Prison, Prosecution and Virtual Testimony:

- **e-Prison** provides a digital framework for prison and prisoner management.
- **e-Prosecution** facilitates electronic coordination between investigating agencies and prosecutors.
- **Nyaya Shruti** enables virtual testimony through video conferencing by appropriate participants, including witnesses, accused persons, police officials, prosecutors and forensic experts.

Benefits of Judicial Digitisation:

Access to Justice:

- Digital case-status services, e-filing, virtual hearings and online access to judicial orders reduce the need for citizens to make repeated physical visits to courts.
- **Video conferencing** can particularly benefit litigants, witnesses and lawyers who face geographical or financial constraints.
- **e-Sewa Kendras** provide assisted access to digital judicial services for citizens with limited digital literacy.

Speed and Efficiency:

- **Electronic filing, automated workflows, digital records and electronic service of processes** can reduce administrative delays.
- Digitised records allow faster retrieval of documents and facilitate legal research.
- Digital integration can reduce repetitive data entry and improve coordination among judicial institutions.

Transparency and Accountability:

- Public access to judicial information through platforms such as the **National Judicial Data Grid** strengthens institutional transparency.
- Digital tracking of cases and processes creates greater traceability and can reduce opportunities for procedural opacity.

Data-Driven Judicial Administration:

- Real-time judicial data can help courts identify **pendency patterns, ageing cases and procedural bottlenecks**.
- Technology therefore shifts judicial administration from largely reactive management towards **evidence-based and data-driven decision-making**.

Cost and Environmental Benefits:

- Reduced dependence on physical files lowers expenditure on **printing, transportation and storage**.

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

- Digital preservation protects old judicial records from physical deterioration and facilitates their retrieval.
- Reduced paper consumption contributes to **environmentally sustainable court administration**.

Criminal Justice Integration:

- Interoperability among **police, prosecution, courts, prisons and forensic institutions** can create a more coherent criminal justice information system.
- Electronic information exchange can reduce delays caused by fragmented institutional records.

Challenges in Judicial Digitisation:

Digital Divide:

- Rural and remote populations may face inadequate **internet connectivity, digital devices and digital literacy**, limiting equitable access to online justice.
- Digital-first systems therefore require assisted-access mechanisms such as **e-Sewa Kendras** and accessible interfaces.

Infrastructure Gaps:

- Uneven availability of **reliable electricity, broadband connectivity, hardware and technical support** remains a challenge, particularly in some subordinate courts.
- Digital transformation must therefore prioritise district and subordinate courts rather than focusing predominantly on higher judiciary.

Cybersecurity and Data Protection:

- Judicial databases contain highly sensitive information involving **personal data, criminal records, financial information and electronic evidence**.
- Centralised digital systems increase the consequences of **cyberattacks, unauthorised access, data breaches and manipulation of electronic records**.
- Strong encryption, access controls, audit trails, secure backups and disaster-recovery mechanisms are therefore essential.

Human and Institutional Capacity:

- Judges, court staff, lawyers and other stakeholders require continuous **digital training and capacity building**.
- Technological reform can remain ineffective when institutional processes continue to depend on traditional paper-based practices.

Artificial Intelligence Risks:

- **Artificial intelligence** can assist with legal research, translation, scheduling, document processing and administrative functions, but its outputs may contain **bias, inaccuracies or unexplained reasoning**.
- The Supreme Court's 2026 conference emphasised that technology and artificial intelligence should **assist rather than replace judicial reasoning**, while also highlighting concerns regarding confidentiality and open-source technological platforms.

Digital Evidence and Preservation:

- Electronic evidence requires reliable mechanisms for **authentication, integrity, chain of custody, storage and retrieval**.

- Standardised rules and technical protocols are necessary to ensure that digitisation does not compromise evidentiary reliability.

Way Forward:

From Computerisation to Judicial Process Re-engineering:

- Judicial digitisation should move beyond merely converting paper records into electronic files and focus on **simplifying, standardising and redesigning judicial processes**.
- Technology should address the underlying causes of delay rather than merely digitising inefficient procedures.

Inclusive Digital Justice:

- The government should strengthen **e-Sewa Kendras, multilingual interfaces, accessibility features, digital literacy and assisted services**.
- A **hybrid model of physical and virtual justice delivery** can prevent digital exclusion while retaining the advantages of technology.

Stronger Cybersecurity Architecture:

- Judicial institutions should adopt **privacy-by-design, encryption, role-based access, continuous security audits, secure backups and disaster-recovery systems**.
- Electronic evidence should be governed through standardised protocols ensuring authenticity and integrity.

Responsible Artificial Intelligence:

- Artificial intelligence should primarily function as a **decision-support and administrative tool**, while judicial discretion and constitutional responsibility remain with judges.
- AI systems should undergo **human oversight, bias testing, explainability checks and accuracy validation** before being deployed in sensitive judicial functions.

Interoperability and Standardisation:

- Greater integration among **e-Courts, criminal justice platforms, police, prosecution, prisons and forensic institutions** can create seamless information flows.
- Common technical standards can prevent fragmented digital ecosystems and reduce duplication.

Capacity Building:

- Continuous training should be provided to **judges, judicial officers, court staff, lawyers and other stakeholders**.
- Digital transformation should be accompanied by institutional change management so that technological tools become embedded in everyday judicial practice.

Significance for Governance and Constitution:

- Judicial digitisation strengthens **access to justice**, an essential component of the rule of law and constitutional governance.
- Faster and more accessible judicial services can contribute to the effective realisation of **Article 21**, particularly the broader constitutional principle of fair and timely justice.

- Transparent judicial data strengthens **accountability and public trust** while respecting judicial independence.
- Technology can support **equal access to justice**, but digital access must not become a new barrier for disadvantaged citizens.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Constitutional Linkages:

- **Article 14:** Digital judicial services can promote equal access, provided the digital divide is addressed.
- **Article 21:** Efficient and accessible justice supports the broader constitutional protection of life and personal liberty.
- **Article 39A:** Judicial digitisation can advance the constitutional objective of **equal justice and free legal aid**.

Key Terms for Mains:

- **Digital Justice**
- **Access to Justice**
- **Judicial Process Re-engineering**
- **Interoperability**
- **Paperless Courts**
- **Digital Divide**
- **Responsible Artificial Intelligence**
- **Data Protection**
- **Electronic Evidence**
- **Hybrid Courts**

UPSC Mains Perspective:

- **Core Argument:** *Judicial digitisation should be understood not merely as technological modernisation but as an institutional reform aimed at making justice accessible, timely, transparent and citizen-centric.*
- **Balanced Conclusion:** *Technology can act as a force multiplier for the judiciary only when digital inclusion, cybersecurity, data protection, human oversight and judicial independence develop alongside technological capacity.*

The official **e-Courts Phase III** framework itself reflects this broader approach by combining technology with **process re-engineering, capacity building, accessibility, digital preservation and institutional integration**