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Fast Track Special Courts

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Why is in news? Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) achieving new heights

Under **Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Department of Justice**, Ministry of Law & Justice, Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) disposed of 1.74 lakhs **cases of Rape & POCSO Act** as on 30.06.2023, providing speedy justice to the victims.

Features of the FTSCs scheme:

The decision on extension of the scheme beyond one year will depend on the recommendations in the external evaluation.

The scheme **does not intend to create any permanent infrastructure**.

The courts will be made functional in suitable premises taken on lease or as decided by the States/UTs and respective High Courts.

Composition: Each FTSC will have one Judicial Officer and seven staff members. States/UTs may engage judicial officers and court staff on contractual basis where sufficient manpower is not available. Services of retired judicial officers with relevant experience may also be engaged to dispose of cases in the FTSCs.

Championing the cause of safety and security of women and girl child, the Government provided for stringent punishment including death penalty for perpetrators of rape by passing the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018.

Incidents of sexual offences and prolonged trials of accused necessitated dedicated court machinery to provide immediate relief to the victims.

Since October 2019, the Department of Justice is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, to **set up 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs)** including 389 exclusive POCSO Courts across the nation for expeditious trial relating to sexual offences. Each court comprises of 1 Judicial Officer and 7 Staff Members.

Out of 31 States and UTs eligible, 28 have joined this scheme. Puducherry made a special request to join the Scheme and the one exclusive POCSO Court was operationalized in May, 2023.

The Scheme was initially for a period of one year spread over two Financial Years 2019-20 and 2020-21 at a total outlay of Rs. 767.25 Cr. with Rs. 474 Cr. as Central Share to be met from Nirbhaya Fund.

The Cabinet further approved the continuation of the Scheme of FTSCs for two years i.e. up to March, 2023 with a total budgetary outlay of Rs. 1572.86 Cr. with Rs.971.70 Cr. as central share. Further extension of the Scheme is under process.

In FY 2019-20, Rs. 140 Cr, in FY 2020-21 Rs.160.00 Cr, in FY 2021-22, Rs.134.56 Cr, and in the FY 2022-23, Rs. 200.00 Cr was released to States as Central Share.

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As on June 2023, 763 FTSCs including 412 exclusive POCSO Courts are functional in 29 States / UTs which have disposed of more than 1,74,000 pending cases.

During the F.Y 2023-24, a total of Rs. 200.00 Cr. has been allocated, out of which Rs. 100.37 Cr. has been released till 31st July 2023 as a Central share of funds for the functioning of such FTSCs in the States/UTs.

For the robust implementation of the Scheme, this Department has created an online monitoring framework for monthly monitoring of case statistics. Regular review meetings with the Registrar Generals of High Courts and State functionaries are being undertaken.