

# UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 15-09-2023

**India marks one year of launch of National Logistics Policy on 17th September 2023**



To complement PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (NMP), the National Logistics Policy (NLP) was launched on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2022 by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. While the PM GatiShakti NMP addresses integrated development of the fixed infrastructure and network planning, the NLP addresses the soft infrastructure and logistics sector development aspect, *inter alia*, including process reforms, improvement in logistics services, digitization, human resource development and skilling.

## **Vision**

The vision of NLP is to drive economic growth and business competitiveness of the country through an integrated, seamless, efficient, reliable, green, sustainable and cost-effective logistics network by leveraging best in class technology, processes and skilled manpower. This will reduce logistics cost and improve performance.

## **Targets**

**The targets of the NLP** are to: (i) Reduce cost of logistics in India; (ii) improve the Logistics Performance Index ranking – endeavor is to be among top 25 countries by 2030, and (iii) create data driven decision support mechanism for an efficient logistics ecosystem.



## Comprehensive Logistics Action Plan (CLAP)

To achieve these targets, a Comprehensive Logistics Action Plan (CLAP) as part of the NLP was launched covering eight action areas including (i) Integrated Digital Logistics Systems; (ii) Standardization of Physical Assets and Benchmarking of Service Quality Standards; (iii) Logistics Human Resource Development and Capacity Building; (iv) State engagement; (v) EXIM Logistics; (vi) Services Improvement Framework; (vii) Sectoral Plans for Efficient Logistics (SPEL); and (viii) Facilitation of Development of Logistics Parks.

### Outreach Events/meetings:

Since the launch of the NLP, significant progress has been made with respect to the implementation of the Policy. By means of regional conferences, one-on-one interactions, and inter-Ministerial meetings, DPIIT has facilitated the implementation of NLP. An overview of these outreach activities is given below.

#### 1. Inter-Ministerial meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023

On completion of ten months of the launch of the National Logistics Policy (NLP), an inter-Ministerial meeting to review the progress of its implementation was held by DPIIT, on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023. During the meeting measures taken by different Ministries to improve logistics efficiency in the country were showcased.

The meeting saw participation from eleven infrastructure and user Ministries including M/o Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH), M/o Port Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), M/o Coal, D/o Food & Public Distribution, M/o Civil Aviation (MOCA), M/o Steel, D/o Commerce, D/o Fertilizer, D/o Revenue, M/o Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and M/o Power and, National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation Limited (NICDC).

The meeting was Chaired by Special Secretary (Logistics). Secretary DPIIT had joined during the closing session. The meeting was divided into two sessions. Session, I focussed on review of measures undertaken by DPIIT and Session II covered progress in implementation of the NLP by participating Ministries.

#### 2. Regional Workshops (between 20<sup>th</sup> March and 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023)

DPIIT organised five regional workshops between 20<sup>th</sup> March and 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023. All workshops had a dedicated session on NLP, wherein key features and progress of NLP was showcased and participating States/UTs presented the status and key highlights of respective State Logistics Policy and other interventions.

Over 500 participants covering Officials from all 36 States/UTs and concerned line Ministries/Department, and representatives from knowledge partners and multilateral organisations, attended these workshops.



### 3. Other one-on-one Interactions / Meetings:

Meetings on Logistics Performance Index (LPI): In an endeavor to further improve India's ranking in the LPI, DPIIT has undertaken several measures. To apprise the World Bank team about the several initiatives and reforms of the Government of India and draw their attention on need for greater emphasis on objective based methodology for LPI scoring, Secretary, DPIIT met senior officials of World Bank Group at their headquarter in Washington DC.

In continuation with that DPIIT held a series of meetings with the World Bank Group [Logistics and Infrastructure India team] and concerned line Ministries.

A dedicated Unit is being set up within the Logistics Division to develop and implement an action plan for improving India's LPI ranking.

In addition, concerned line Ministries are setting up a dedicated cell for a focused project-based approach to improving India's performance across the six LPI parameters.

Services Improvement Group (SIG) meetings: In line with approved institutional mechanism for the NLP, an Inter-Ministerial SIG was constituted on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Chaired by SS (Logistics), this group comprises of representatives from MoRTH, MoR, MoPSW, MNRE, MoP, DoT, MoPNG, MoCA, NITI Aayog, MoEFCC, MoHUA, DoR and DoC.

Objective: The SIG has been constituted to facilitate speedy resolution of logistics services and processes related issues of the industry, in a coordinated manner. Resolution of issues through SIG shall promote inter-operability; eliminate fragmentation in documentation, formats, processes, liability regimes and reduce gaps in regulatory architecture.

E-LoGs portal (digital system for registering logistics related issues by logistics sector associations): As on date 29 logistics sector associations are registered on the E-LoGs portal, with total 71 issues, of which 34 issues have been resolved.

Regular roundtables with industry players and SIG meetings are held. Till date, six meetings of SIG, along with industry associations have been held.

### Progress on Implementation of NLP & CLAP

Since the launch of the NLP, progress made in implementation of the CLAP is summarised below:

Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP): For digital integration in logistics sector and to provide single sign to users who are trading goods and using multiple modes of transport – the Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) was launched along with the NLP.

ULIP is an indigenous data-based platform which integrates 34 logistics-related digital systems /portals across Ministries / Departments. It is worth noting that GST data is also being integrated with ULIP.



ULIP provides opportunities to private sector to develop use cases on ULIP. By signing Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) and after due diligence, data on ULIP can be accessed through API integration and private players can develop apps/use cases.

Over 614 industry players have registered on ULIP.

106 private companies have signed NDAs

142 companies have submitted 382 use cases to be hosted on ULIP.

57 applications have been made live.

**EXIM Logistics:** To promote trade facilitation and **streamline EXIM logistics**, following measures have been undertaken:

Infrastructure gaps are being addressed and digital initiatives undertaken (under **National Committee on Trade Facilitation**);

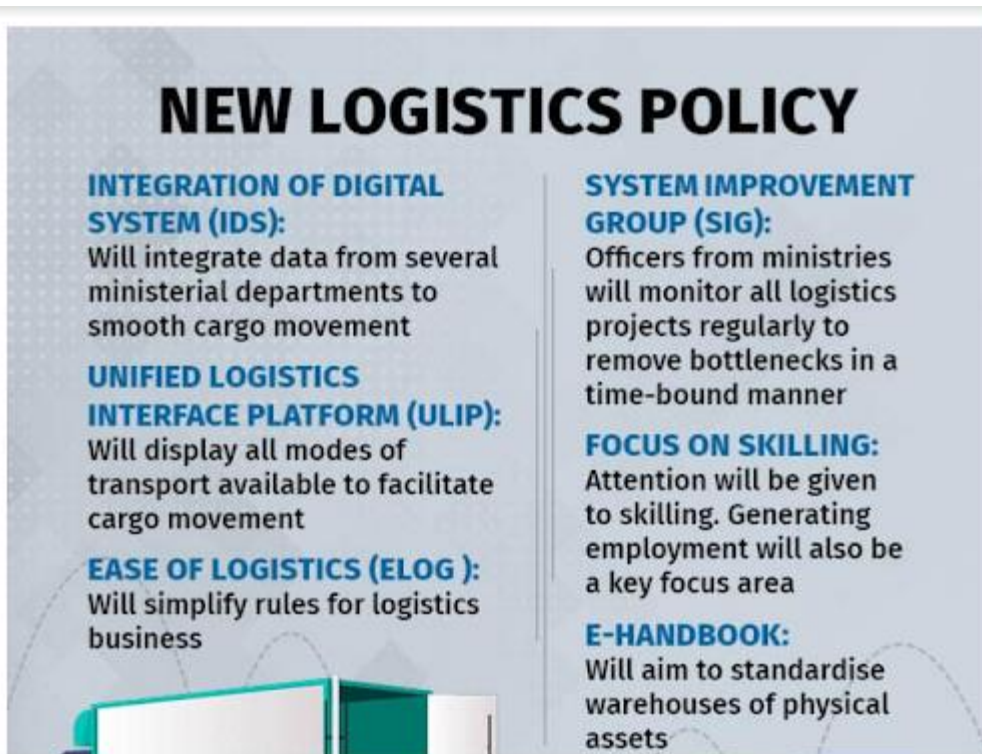
**An EXIM Logistics Group** has been constituted;

A Comprehensive port connectivity plan developed by M/o port shipping and waterways, to address last and first mile infra gaps and promote seamless movement of goods to ports. 60 projects of MORTH and 47 of Railways have been sanctioned to improve last mile connectivity to ports.

To improve port productivity and address issues, several meetings have been held with MOPSW, port authorities, etc.; Port Processes studies have been conducted at 3 Major Ports (Chennai, JNPT and Vishakhapatnam); Visit to ports are being undertaken by DPIIT.

The Logistics Data Bank (LDB) is an application that tracks and traces of EXIM cargo. greater predictability, transparency and reliability, logistics cost will come down and wastages in supply chain will reduce.

Using LDB data, new analysis of port-wise vessel turnaround time is being prepared. Congestion between port and nearest check post is provided in the form of Port to CFS/ICD (For import cycle); CFS/ICD to Port (For export cycle); Port to nearest toll plaza. Using these analytics, port authorities are taking measure to improve performance.



## Human Resource Development

To promote professionals in the sector, Government is notifying qualification packs for different job roles in the sector.

A Webinar with Capacity Building Commission, Central Training Institutes (CTIs) and State Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs) was held in July 2023.

To further give traction to training and capacity building in Logistics and Infrastructure Development, *Syllabus and training modules* is being developed.

## Sectoral Plan for Efficient Logistics (SPEL)

To address sector-specific needs in the logistics sector and streamline movement of bulk and break-bulk cargo in the country, Sectoral Plans for Efficient Logistics (SPEL) are being developed by user Ministries. These include sector specific action plans /interventions necessary for seamless movement of goods across different origin-destination pairs.

So far, Comprehensive Port Connectivity Plan (CPCP) to bridge last mile gaps to ports, has been developed by M/o Port, Shipping and Waterways. The CPCP consisting of 107 Port connectivity projects (47 of MoR and 60 of MoRTH) has been notified.

A Coal Logistics Plan for efficient coal evacuation has been developed by M/o Coal.

M/o Steel is also developing its sectoral plan.



## State Engagement

**State Logistics Policy:** To bring holistic focus on ‘logistics’ in public policy at State level, States/UTs are developing State Logistics Plans (SLPs) aligned with NLP. So far, 22 States have notified their respective State Logistics policies.

**Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS):** An indigenous logistics performance index on lines of the World Bank’s LPI, called ‘Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS)’ index for logistics performance monitoring across states has been developed. The survey is conducted annually and States are ranked according to their performance. The main objective is to identify areas of improvement and support State Governments to undertake adequate infrastructure, services and regulatory reforms to improve their logistics performance. The LEADS 2023 report will be unveiled soon.

## Logistics Cost Framework

Logistics Division, DPIIT, has initiated an endeavour to estimate Logistics cost, since no official estimates available and they vary from 8-14% of GDP.

In the past studies in private sector (Armstrong & Armstrong and NCAER):

Hence a **need was felt for developing accurate estimates** based on holistic data and relevant statistical models.

### STEPS TAKEN:

In March 2023, Government organized a workshop with international experts to brainstorm on best practices.

Task Force with members including Senior Officials from concerned line Ministries and experts from academia, industry and think tanks, notified in March 2023.

Several meetings of Task Force held.

Using secondary data available in public domain baseline estimates for logistics cost achieved (using MOSPI’s Supply Use Tables). A long-term survey-based framework for logistics cost calculation developed.

Despite data limitations (data available in public domain is mainly aggregated estimates of transportation cost). This estimate will be used as a baseline for carrying out comprehensive trend analysis in future. This long-term survey-based study will help in arriving at robust logistics cost estimates at a disaggregated level so that targeted interventions across sectors / modes can be undertaken.

## Advocate-on-Record (AoR)

A Supreme Court (SC) Bench recently imposed a cost of ₹2,000 on an advocate-on-record (AoR) for sending a young junior to appear before the Bench without any papers.



### About Advocate-on-Record (AoR):

The concept of AoR was introduced by the SC with the power given to it under Article 145(1) of the Indian Constitution, which states that the SC may, from time to time, make rules for regulating the practices and procedures in the court.

“Advocate on record” is a title given to an advocate who can represent a cause or pleading before the SC.

Only these advocates are entitled to file any matter or document before the SC. They can also file an appearance or act for a party in the SC.

No other High Court in India has a similar provision.

**Order IV Rule 5 of the Supreme Court Rules, 2013 lays down the requirements to be fulfilled to become an AoR. They are as follows:**

The Advocate is required to be enrolled with any State Bar Council.

The Advocate is required to have a prior experience of at least 4 years.

The Advocate has undergone a training of 1 year under a senior AoR.

The Advocate has appeared for the examination conducted by the SC.

The Advocate is required to have an office in Delhi within a radius of 10 miles from the SC house and give an undertaking to employ a clerk, who shall be a registered clerk, within one month of being registered as an advocate on record.



Once registered, an AOR is issued a unique identification number that must be used on all documents filed in the SC.

Whether an Advocate is allowed to assist in a matter held before the SC?

- An advocate is allowed to assist, brief, collect all documents related to the case and help in the drafting as well.
- He can also argue and plead a case with the instructions of an AoR.
- Only the filing of a case under his Vakalatnama is restricted.

## **TRAI releases Consultation Paper on “Digital Inclusion in the Era of Emerging Technologies”**

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released a Consultation Paper (CP) on “Digital Inclusion in the Era of Emerging Technologies” today 14th Sept 2023. The consultation paper aims to explore and address the challenges and opportunities presented by the rapid advancement of emerging technologies, with a focus on ensuring inclusivity for all segments of society and industries particularly Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

In today’s world, being connected online has become a way of life. Connectivity works as an essential tool for everyday functions such as accessing information, receiving basic services, working remotely, pursuing education, conducting financial transactions, and staying connected with loved ones. TRAI recognizes that digital inclusion is crucial empowerment of every citizen of the country at right moment, failing which the gaps in access of digital services may widen further and thereby depriving large segments of the society from an inclusive growth along with others who are well connected and availing the benefits of the digital services. In the consultation paper, TRAI emphasizes the need for a robust policy framework and collaborative efforts among stakeholders to ensure participation of individuals in digital economic activities.

India has made remarkable progress in digital transformation, emerging as the world’s second-largest telecom market in terms of subscribers. The country has experienced significant growth in mobile broadband subscriptions and internet usage, along with a substantial reduction in data costs. The government’s initiatives such as Digital India, National Digital Communications Policy 2018, National Broadband Mission 2019, BharatNet, Common Service Centres (CSCs), and Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) have played a pivotal role in expanding connectivity and promoting digital inclusion across the nation.

The success story of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for an inclusive financial society has been well acknowledged across the world. The Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity has played a pivotal role in transparent direct benefit transfers of welfare subsidies to bank accounts of the underserved. UPI has empowered users to conveniently transfer money from one bank account to another in real-time. Despite these achievements, it is observed that disparities in internet broadband penetration and its effective usage across different sections of society and





geographies still persist. There are concerns related to accessibility, affordability and effective & safe usage of the services and applications working on broadband connections, specially by the persons with marginalised communities, woman & girls and participation of micro or small entrepreneurs operating at remote and difficult terrains or in villages, which need to be addressed in a timebound manner.

In the consultation paper, TRAI has analysed various gaps in digital inclusion present in the country such as the mobile internet usage gap, rural-urban internet penetration disparities, gender gaps in internet access, etc. as well as gaps identified from some global indices. Proactively prioritizing inclusion can create an ecosystem that benefits every individual, fostering a more equitable and accessible digital economy.

The rapid pace of technological advancements and launch of 5G enabled services including Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning based services and the associated costs of adopting and utilizing these technologies can widen the digital divide further, particularly for marginalized communities and underserved regions. Unequal access of infrastructure limited digital literacy, and affordability issues could hinder the equitable distribution and utilization of emerging technologies, exacerbating existing disparities in digital inclusion. To ensure comprehensive digital inclusion, it is imperative to address the gaps which are likely to arise due to emerging technologies.

The TRAI has also identified various challenges being faced by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in the country from the adoption of new and emerging digital technology solutions. As MSME sector contributes significantly towards the nation's economy, it is imperative that the MSMEs are empowered to contribute more towards the digital economy through new emerging technology solutions, especially the micro-enterprises as majority of the MSMEs are micro-enterprises.

#### **4th G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group Meeting concludes in Varanasi with finalisation of the G20 Sustainable Finance Report, 2023**

The 4th and the last meeting of the G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG) held under India's G20 presidency, successfully concluded in Varanasi today. The two-day meeting witnessed proactive engagement from over 80 delegates from G20 member countries, invitee countries and International Organisations including World Bank, New Development Bank, among others. Many other organisations joined the meeting virtually.

The G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG) aims to mobilise sustainable finance to help ensure global growth and stability, and promote the transition towards greener, more resilient and inclusive societies and economies. The main purpose of the Group is to advance international work to help scale up private and public sustainable finance and in doing so, accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The G20 Sustainable Finance Roadmap, as finalized in 2021, is the core around which the SFWG functions and takes up future work.

Towards this end, the SFWG in 2023 carried out work for enabling finance for SDGs along with the mobilisation of timely and adequate resources for climate finance as agenda priorities.

The SFWG during India's G20 presidency has made recommendations on the following six areas, viz, (1) Mechanisms for Mobilisation of Timely and Adequate Resources for Climate Finance; (2)



Policy Measures and Financial Instruments for Catalysing the Rapid Development and Deployment of Green and Low-Carbon Technologies; (3) Scaling-up the adoption of social impact investment instruments; (4) Improving Nature-related Data and Reporting; (5) G20 Technical Assistance Action Plan; (6) Overcoming data-related barriers to climate investments. In addition, the members have finalised the compendium of case studies on financing SDGs and the compendium on non-price policy levers to support sustainable investments.

The G20 New Delhi Leader's Declaration 2023 which was adopted in the Leader's Summit held recently, has welcomed the work undertaken by the SFWG under India's G20 presidency. The four Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG) meetings were held in Guwahati, Udaipur, Mahabalipuram and Varanasi. The two-day meeting in Varanasi aimed at jointly agreeing on the final G20 Sustainable Finance Report 2023 that assimilates the work carried out by the SFWG in the form of recommendations for the identified priority areas. The 4th meeting also discussed the progress made by G20 members and International Organizations (IOs) on the G20 Sustainable Finance Roadmap.

Achieving sustainable development requires collective efforts from all member countries. All through the SFWG meetings, both the Co-Chairs, US and China, members and invitee countries, as well as international organizations actively participated and contributed in the finalization of deliverables as key outcomes under the SFWG this year.

## Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT)

The Chennai bench of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) recently ruled against Cognizant Technology Solutions India, stating that the company is liable to pay Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) on a buyback of shares worth Rs 19,000 crore under a scheme of arrangement.



It was a tax imposed by the Indian government on companies that distributed dividends to their shareholders.

It was introduced to tax the dividend income received by shareholders indirectly through the company rather than taxing the dividend income at the individual level.

Companies that pay dividends to their shareholders in India were required to pay the DDT.

DDT has been repealed and abolished by the Government for Indian corporations under the Finance Act 2020.

With this modification, Indian corporations are no longer obligated to pay DDT on dividends paid to shareholders. Instead, shareholders will be forced to pay tax on dividends based on their tax bracket.

For example, if a shareholder is in the 30% tax bracket, the dividend received will be subject to 30% tax.

The dividend income is taxed in the hands of the shareholders only if the dividend is distributed on or after 01-04-2020.

### Dividend

A dividend is a return given by a company to its shareholders out of the profits earned by the company in a particular year.

Dividends can be issued in various forms, such as cash payment, stocks or any other form.

A company's dividend is decided by its board of directors, and it requires the shareholders' approval.

It is not obligatory for a company to pay dividends. Many companies do not pay dividends and instead retain earnings to be invested back into the company.

### **Dividend Yield:**

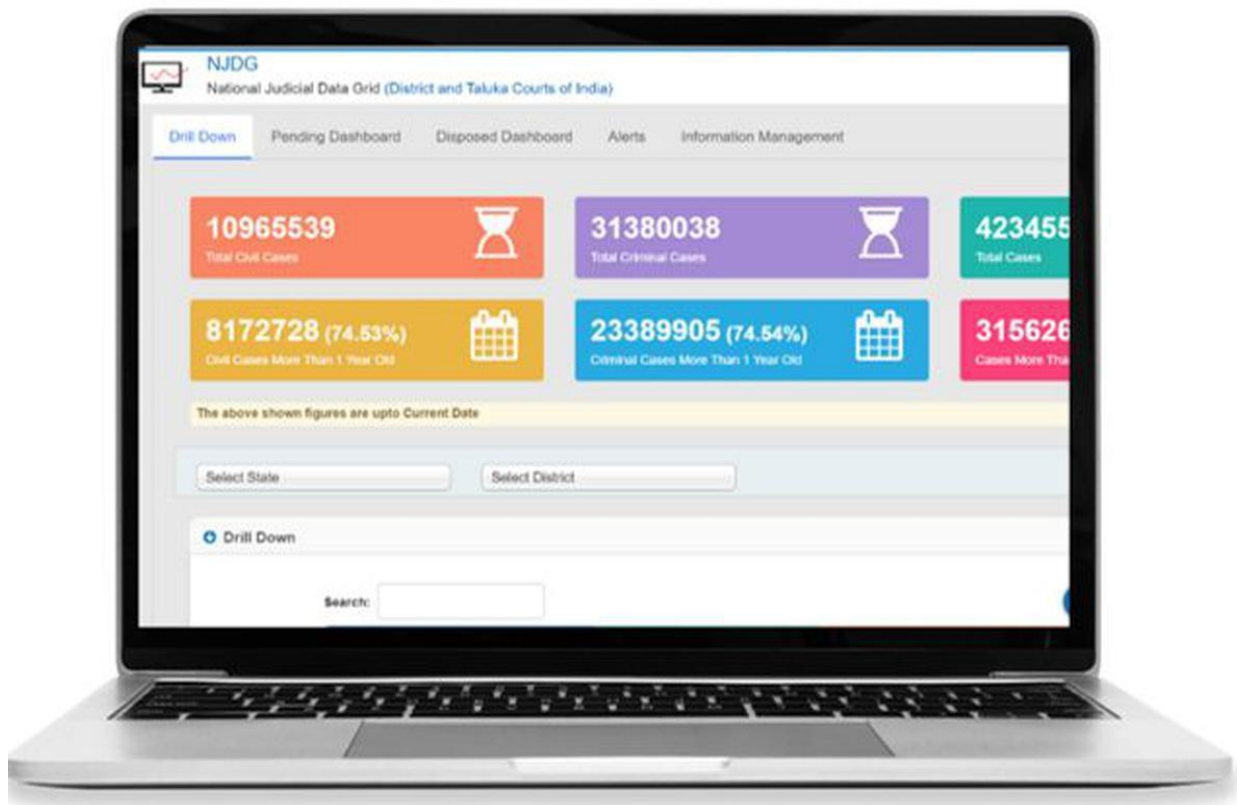
It is a measure of the annual dividend income an investor can expect to receive from an investment in a particular stock.

It is calculated by dividing the annual dividend per share by the stock's current market price.

This percentage helps investors assess the income potential of a stock.

### **National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) portal**

Recently, the Chief Justice of India announced the onboarding of the Supreme Court on the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) in open court.



The NJDG portal is a national repository of data relating to cases instituted, pending and disposed of by the courts across the length and breadth of the country.

In this portal, one may access case-related information, statistics such as institution, pendency, and disposal of cases, case types, and year-wise break-up of the Supreme Court of India.



It is a database of orders, judgements, and case details of 18,735 District & Subordinate Courts and High Courts created as an online platform under the e-Courts Project.

It has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in close coordination with the in-house software development team of the Computer Cell, Registry with an interactive interface and analytics dashboard.

The entire database will be periodically updated on the NJDG portal.

NJDG works as a monitoring tool to identify, manage, & reduce the pendency of cases.

It helps to provide timely inputs for making policy decisions to reduce delays in disposing of cases and reduce case pendency.

It also facilitates better monitoring of court performance and systemic bottlenecks and, thus, serves as an efficient resource management tool. To track cases related to land disputes.

### **e-Courts Project**

It was conceptualised on the basis of the “National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Indian Judiciary – 2005,” submitted by the e-Committee, Supreme Court of India. E-committee is a body constituted by the Government of India in pursuance of a proposal received from the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India to constitute an e-Committee to assist him in formulating a National Policy on computerisation of the Indian Judiciary and advise on technological communication and management-related changes.

It is a Pan-India Project, monitored and funded by the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India for the District Courts across the country.