

Study of positive impacts in access to justice for all through e-courts mission mode project

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Abstract

The e-Courts Mission Mode Project had a positive effect on access to justice in India. The study history underlies the nature of the major issues that had plagued the Indian judicial system over the years, namely, pendency of cases, delay in proceedings, geographical location, and accessibility of courts among the marginalized groups. The main aim is to examine the possibilities of analysing judicial reforms facilitated by technology, which contribute to increasing the levels of accessibility, efficiency, transparency and empowerment of stakeholders. The research methodology used in the study is qualitative, descriptive and analytical research design which is solely based on secondary data that comprises government reports, judicial statistics, policy documents, case laws, and other scholarly literature. The findings are that efforts like e-filing, virtual hearings, case tracking via the internet, and online records have greatly decreased procedural delays, enhanced case handling and reduced the monetary and logistical obstacles to litigants. The discussion identifies that as much as e-Courts have enhanced transparency, accountability, and trust with the citizens, there are still issues of digital divide, infrastructural gaps, and disparities in digital literacy. The study concludes that the e-Courts Mission Mode Project is a revolutionary change in the form of reform with effective legal and policy overtones and its successful implementation in the long term is determined by the inclusion. Through hindrances include the use of secondary data and, the absence of empirical field evidence, and future studies are suggested to use primary and mixed-methodological approaches to determine the extent of inclusivity and sustainability of digital justice reforms at ground level.

Keywords: *E-Courts, Access to Justice, Digital Judiciary, Judicial Reforms, Technology and Law*

1. Introduction

Availability of justice is a fundamental aspect of any legal system that ensures that people have a chance to seek and be given justice irrespective of their social-economic background or individual attributes. It is one of the cornerstones upon which equality and fairness as well as the principle of the rule of law are based (Waseem; et al., 2023).

Access to justice may take various forms and these may include the availability of legal aid, access to cheap or no-cost legal services and the efficient operation of the court system. Nevertheless, this is not the case in many countries where many are struggling with total access to justice because of diverse reasons such as inefficiency of the judicial system, inefficient distribution of resources and ignorance among the citizens on their legal rights (Sharma, & Kumar, 2023).

Access to justice has been considered very important by the international community as witnessed in several international documents like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human rights. These documents can be seen as the evidence of the importance attached to the possibility to grant people the chance to find and gain justice on equal footing, regardless of the personal conditions (Basu, & Jha, 2024).

1.1. Use of Technology in Access to Justice

E-access to justice deals with the communication of lawyers electronically when an application is posted online, hearing of a case, documents are passed between the lawyers and the government, legislative bodies, public offices and other jurisdictions using electro-messaging. Availability of justice also involves; it should be translated to the local languages and made accessible to the population in a database via a website where they are able to get the schedule of cases. This project has been initiated by the Government of India under the name of e-courts that allow the district judiciary in India to reach the masses at large with regards to contact information, cause list, day to day orders. The use of technology in promoting justice would basically involve the use of internet facilities, tele-services, e-record or digital records, availability of online decision making which does not only imply the availability of the same to the people but also transforms the process of justice, the mode of doing things, the notion of justice that the populace holds (Singh, et al., 2021).

The application of technology in law is meant to ascertain the adequate distribution of judicial resources, lower the cost of justice delivery, enhance the service delivery to litigants, enhance professional tools, secure verdicts with an aim of enforcing and being enforced. The civil society also plays a part in cases where the media is covering the issue of judicial accountability and trials because both underreporting and overreporting negatively affect the interference with the operation of the judiciary.

A model of e-justice suggested by Delone and McLean suggested that to develop a model there should be freedom, accountability, fairness, open-to-all, transparency, privacy and lawful (Benyekhlef, et al., 2020, July 27).

1.2. The Rise of E-Courts

There are several obstacles to access to justice, which include financial constraints, lack of legal knowledge and literacy, geographical considerations, linguistic and cultural encumbrances and prejudice and discrimination that tend to exist in the legal system. It is important to overcome such barriers to achieve an inclusive and just system of justice (Baladhikari, 2020).

Due to the judicial system reorganization by digital means, the idea of e-courts, or digital courts, or online courts became more popular. E-courts make cases easy to manage and process and provide avenue to litigants to seek justice electronically. This technological innovation focuses on streamlining the entire process of the court and availing justice to everyone involved easily (Basu, & Jha, 2024).

E-courts have become a part and parcel of legal systems in many countries. E-courts have demonstrated their potential especially in countries with low economic capacities, where there are difficulties in regard to the limited judicial

resources and infrastructure. In addition, e-courts have been critical particularly in the COVID-19 pandemic as they offer a way to continue with judicial activities and reduce the probability of the virus spreading (Sharma, & Kumar, 2023).

However, the adoption of e-courts is associated with a number of challenges. The issue of protecting the security and privacy of court data is one of the main issues. Moreover, another challenge that should be overcome is the universal accessibility of the e-court system, specifically, to those people who do not have access to the internet or other technological devices (Waseem; et al., 2023).

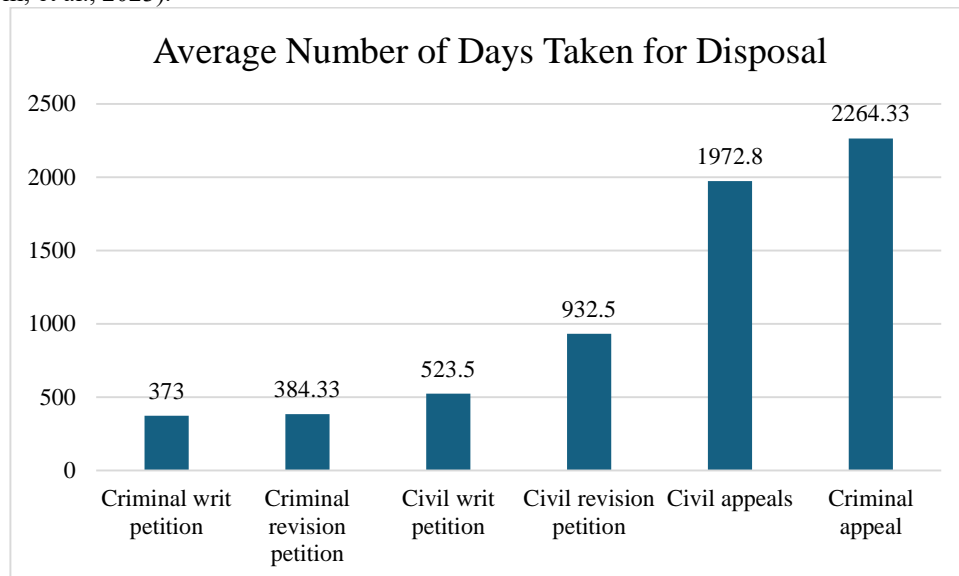


Figure 1: Average number of days taken for disposal

Source: Baladhikari, S. K. (2020)

This also has a direct influence on under trials that fail to receive a chance to enter the doors of justice and wait to be heard, they are neither acquitted nor convicted but must wait their opportunity to be heard because of the blocked gates of the justice delivery system. Section 436A15 is concerned with right of under trials (Basu, & Jha, 2024). Section 436A of the law provides that, where an individual has been detained in the course of investigation being conducted or when the individual has been investigated or when the trial in an offence and the offence that he has been booked is not the one that carries death penalty, the individual has been charged with detention one-half of the maximum penalty that could follow in the case. The right of the under trial to be released on personal bond with or without sureties is a right. The court has freedom to retain the individual longer than the prescribed time in the statute after hearing of the public prosecutor, but he or she is not allowed to continue longer than the entire punishment provided by the law (Baladhikari, 2020).

It also implies that there is express contravention of legal right on the basis of pendency of cases. The figures below also cite NCRB data of crime in India which once again says nothing of how long these under trials are serving in prison some can be one third which is the statutory right, some can be more than that, some can be because of filing of frivolous cases due to personal enmity or political enmity. In civil cases tremendous economic costs which is incurred on the recovery of cash (Singh, et al., 2021).

1.3. View of Judiciary

Paperless is a highly environmentally friendly gesture that are biased towards the sustainable utilization of the environment resources. As seen in the case of *Meters and Instruments Pvt. Ltd. v. Kanchan Mehta*, some types of cases are sometimes provided in part or wholly resolvable online. According to the judgement, Paperless court results in less overcrowding in the courts and the conclusion given that considering the number of cases filed each year in the courts in India contains about 11 billion pages, which taking this ecologically, implies lakhs of trees are destroyed, leading to destruction of the environment.

Swopnil Tripathi v. Supreme Court of India once again confirmed the idea of open court and said that live streaming is a valuable aspect of a judicial system which is responsible. In the current era where all court proceedings are carried out through video conferencing, it falls short of the principle of open court instituted by the Supreme Court because it requires a holistic approach hence the virtual courts cannot be a replacement given the prevailing circumstances of the country but it is important to attempt to bridge the gap and therefore at all times, efforts must be made. Secondly is India which is the second largest internet market where nearly 600 million Indians are using the internet to carry out various activities such as entertainment, carrying out business, social media etc. However, the internet penetration is only at 50 as revealed by a survey by TRAI 2020. To believe that a technological change can be made in the entire system of the judiciary is a far-fetched notion because half of the population lacks access to the internet. And the other half who have the access are not using it to the legal purposes but using it to a wide range of purposes. This leads to a digital divide among the society whereby one segment of the society is conducting their businesses through online facilities whilst half of the populace does not have access to the internet which has been declared as a fundamental right in *Anuradha Bhasin v Union of India*.

1.4. Landmark Cases Conducted Virtually

- **Maratha Reservation Case (2021):** Heard virtually by a Constitution Bench.
- **Farm Laws Repeal Case (2021):** Proceedings conducted through video conferencing.

- **Bail applications and urgent matters** were efficiently disposed of via virtual platforms.

The importance of the study in question is that it thoroughly analyzes the e-Courts Mission Mode Project as a vital tool of improving access to justice by all citizens in India. The study, through systematic analysis of the role of digital judicial reforms, can help fill the current gap in the current legal and socio-legal study that seeks to bridge the gap between the development of technology and the provision of justice to every citizen. It brings to light how e-courts have shortened the procedural delays, enhanced transparency and empowered litigants, lawyers and judicial agencies, especially to the marginalized and remote populations. Policymakers and judicial administrators find the study relevant since it contains evidence-based information about the efficacy of the digital governance in the justice sector. In research, it adds to the discussion of technology-based access to justice focusing on inclusiveness, efficiency, and constitutional values. Generally, the study highlights the fact that technological innovation should be paired with social equity to enhance the rule of law and trust by the citizens in the justice system.

The study is well structured to review on the positive effect of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project on access to justice in India. It starts with an introduction of what access to justice is and what the concept entails as well as the relevance of technology in judicial processes. The emergence and development of e-courts, the attitude of judiciary and case precedents are then discussed. The variable-based literature review determines the gap in the research, which results in the research methodology detailing the qualitative method of the study based on secondary data. The results have been given on an objective-wise basis, and the results are based on accessibility, efficiency and empowerment of the stakeholders; this is followed by discussion, conclusion, implications, limitations and future study directions.

2. Variable based literature review

2.1. Implementation of e-Courts Mission Mode Project

The e-Courts Mission Mode Project initiated under the National e-Governance Plan to computerize and digitize the judicial practices in the district and subordinate courts. This project the basis of online case status, automated case flow, and creation of the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) (Singh, & Kumar, 2025).

E-Courts Project Phases

- **Phase I (2007–2015):** Focused on computerization of district and subordinate courts, providing ICT infrastructure, and digitizing case records.
- **Phase II (2015–2023):** Expanded objectives to include e-filing, e-payment, video conferencing facilities, and integration with police and prisons.
- **Phase III (2023–onwards):** Emphasizes virtual courts, AI-driven judicial systems, interoperability, and paperless functioning.

The e-Courts Mission Mode Project is highly discussed in the study because it is a significant digital governance initiative that is expected to enhance efficiency, transparency, and access to justice in India by providing courts with computers, electronic case management, and online accessibility to judicial services (ud Din, S. J., 2024). Burton, M. (2018) note that e-filing, e-payments, and case information systems have minimized the delay in procedures and enhanced the management of records. Another reason that Gibbs, P. (2017) notes is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to reduce the number of manual errors and improve coordination within the courts. On the whole, the UNCTAD (2020) considers the e-Courts project an innovative move to enhance the institutional capacity and enhance the delivery of justice in a timely manner.

The study by Kumar, A., and Dahiya, K. (2024) also particularly addresses the threats and weaknesses of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project implementation. Goswami, D. P., and Goswami, A. (2025) note the challenges of poor infrastructure, imbalanced digital skills of court employees and litigants, and technological change resistance. Kinhal, D., & Jauhar, A. (2020) believe that urban courts have gained a lot, but the rural and remote regions continue to experience connectivity and resource limitations. Issues regarding data security, privacy, and system interoperability are also often mentioned (Rattan, J., and Rattan, V. (2021). What is more, Sharma, T. (2025) emphasizes on the importance of ongoing training, policy support, and interaction with stakeholders to achieve long-term results. Therefore, the Singh, R. N., and Kaur, N. (2025) indicates that e-Courts have tremendous potentials, and their successful implementation is a continuous process.

2.2. Access to Justice for All

Access to Justice for All has been widely discussed in legal and socio-legal study as one of the main elements of the rule of law and democracy (Greenbaum, L. 2020). Minow, M. (2022) stresses that access to justice is not limited to access to courts only, and encompasses the presence of fair, affordable, and timely legal solutions. According to McDonald, H. (2020), it is essential to make legal awareness, legal assistance, and institutional responsiveness so that disadvantaged and vulnerable populations could be empowered to exercise their rights. According to Lucy, W. (2020), justice should be equally available to everyone, but the social, economic, and cultural barriers can limit this access, which is why state action is necessary. In general, the study places the access to justice as one of the foundations of human rights protection and social justice (Baladhikari, S. K. 2020).

Page, D. F., and Farrell, B. R. (2023) also address the institutional measures that are aimed at increasing access to justice, including the legal aid services, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and judicial reforms. According to Gill, N., et al., (2021), the mechanisms such as Lok Adalats, mediation, and arbitration reduce the congestion of the court and can provide a cost-effective way of resolving the dispute. Sharma, T. (2025) also emphasizes how judicial reforms such as simplifying the procedures and technological implementation of justice make it more accessible. According to Capp, M. K. (2021), the underprivileged groups can be empowered through effective legal aid systems and community-based justice

programs. Nevertheless, Langhans, K. E., et al., (2023) also identify a certain gap in the implementation, the insufficient financial resources, and the poor awareness of the population, which has certain limitations towards the effectiveness of these mechanisms.

Baladhikari, S. K. (2020) turns to the topic of increasing access to justice through technology and digital justice efforts more frequently. Greenbaum, L. (2020) states that online dispute resolution, e-governance and the virtual courts can break the geographical and financial limitations of litigants. Taylor Poppe, E. S., (2020) underlines the enhancement of transparency, minimization of delays, and better interaction between citizens and the justice system through the digital platforms. Nevertheless, Hasan, M. I., and Rupa, F. J. (2021) warn that the digital gap, poor digital skills, and infrastructural restrictions might marginalize some groups in the society. Issues to do with data privacy and cybersecurity are addressed as well. Therefore, Page, D. F., and Farrell, B. R. (2023) summarize that although the use of technology interventions can be promising, the key to actual access to justice is inclusive and equal implementation to reach justice to everyone (Zulaeha, M. 2023).

The above study review reveals a distinct gap in study on the cumulative evaluation of the effects of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project on access to justice by everyone, especially in the inclusivity and ground-level perspective of implementation. Although the existing study dwells on the goals, stages, and technical improvements of the e-Courts initiative extensively, majority of study is concentrated on the administrative effectiveness, automation, and capacity building of the institution instead of focusing on the empirical study on how these changes are being translated in equitable access to justice by various social groups (Nath et al., 2025; ud Din, 2024). Likewise, study on access to justice puts special emphasis on legal aid, ADR systems, and judicial reforms but does not see technology as a primary determinant of access (Minow, 2022; Lucy, 2020). The landscape of digital justice studies is partial in the connection between digital justice programs and socio-economic factors (digital literacy, rural-urban, and litigants of color) (Kinhal & Jauhar, 2020; Hasan and Rupa, 2021). Thus, the concern is that there is a gap in the study which focuses on how well the e-Courts Mission Mode Project improves the inclusive, affordable, and practical access to justice within various cohorts of the population (Baladhikari, 2020; Page & Farrell, 2023).

3. Research methodology

The current study takes the qualitative research approach in order to investigate the constructive effects of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project in ensuring that all people in India have access to justice. The study is both descriptive and analytical in its nature, insofar as it seeks to give an account of the role played by digital judicial reforms in improving accessibility, efficiency as well as transparency in the justice delivery system. The study location is India, because e-Courts Mission Mode Project is a national project, which is applied on all levels of the judiciary. The study is full of secondary information, as it is gathered through the documents issued by the government, policy reports, court statistics, scholarly articles, books, and official sites concerning e-Courts and access to justice. Analysis and interpretation of the information collected are done qualitatively to know about trends, consequences and affirmations brought about by the project.

4. Descriptive result based on objectives

Obj. 1: To examine the role of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project in improving accessibility to judicial services.

The e-Courts Mission Mode Project has been of great importance in enhancing accessibility to judicial services since it has incorporated technology in court operations in India. Litigants can now access court services without having to visit the court regularly because of online case status portal, e-filing, e-payments, and virtual hearings (Sharma, 2025). This has especially helped rural and other remote people by lowering geographical and financial boundaries. Real time court information has also improved the level of transparency and allowed the citizens to monitor their cases at their own level. The increase in the number of the computerized courts and the digital services indicate the growing scope of the project and its role in delivering inclusive justice. Altogether, the project of the e-Courts has made the access of the institutions more welcoming and moved the justice system nearer to the population (Dahiru, 2025).

Table 1: Growth of Accessibility through e-Courts Mission Mode Project

| Year | Number of Computerized Courts | Online Case Access (%) | E-Filing Usage (%) |
|------|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 2015 | 8,000 | 45 | 10 |
| 2018 | 14,000 | 65 | 30 |
| 2021 | 18,000 | 80 | 55 |
| 2024 | 21,000+ | 90 | 75 |

Source: Compiled from secondary government and judicial reports

Obj. 2: To analyze how digital initiatives under the e-Courts project have contributed to reducing delays and enhancing the efficiency of court procedures.

E-Courts Mission Mode Project Digital projects have been instrumental in helping to lower the delays in the Indian courts in terms of procedure. With the introduction of electronic case management systems, e-filing, and automated cause lists, minimal reliance on manual processes that traditionally created backlogs and adjournments had been minimized (Putra, 2020). Litigants and advocates are now able to file cases and submit documents and track the case progress online which saves time wasted on administrative formalities. Video conferencing and virtual hearings have also enabled courts to have proceedings going on even when there are physical constraints and prevent interruption. These efforts have helped improve the management of cases flow as well as allow judges to track pendency in a better manner. Consequently, there have been high rates of disposal as well as efficiency in scheduling in courts. The systematic rise in the number of digitally enabled courts shows that the application of technology has been critical in solving the old ills of delay and inefficiency in the justice delivery system (Rizkiana, & Gerry, 2023).

Other than minimizing delays, the e-Courts project has also improved efficiency in the entire court procedures by increasing transparency, coordination, and accuracy of the data. The maintenance of digital records has minimized the risk of files loss and duplication whilst real-time data sharing has enhanced coordination amongst courts of law, lawyers and litigants. Improved and faster communication and compliance is guaranteed by the availability of judgments and orders online, which reduces unwarranted hearings (Sugiyono, & Shera, 2020). Administrators of judicial organizations also can evaluate the performance and locate bottlenecks, distribute resources better through the use of dashboards and analytics tools. These technological improvements have seen improved use of court time and court infrastructure. This is evidenced by the gradual rising trend in the population of courts implementing digital services, which is the testament to the efficiency of court processes. In general, all digital efforts involved in the e-Courts project have transformed the judicial practices into being more responsive, time-bound and citizen-oriented (YULIANTO, & SUGIRI, 2022).

Table 2: Impact of Digital Initiatives on Delay Reduction and Efficiency

| Year | Digitally Enabled Courts | Average Case Disposal Time (Months) | Cases Filed Online (%) |
|------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2015 | 8,000 | 36 | 12 |
| 2018 | 14,000 | 28 | 35 |
| 2021 | 18,000 | 22 | 60 |
| 2024 | 21,000 | 16 | 80 |

Source: Compiled from secondary judicial and government reports

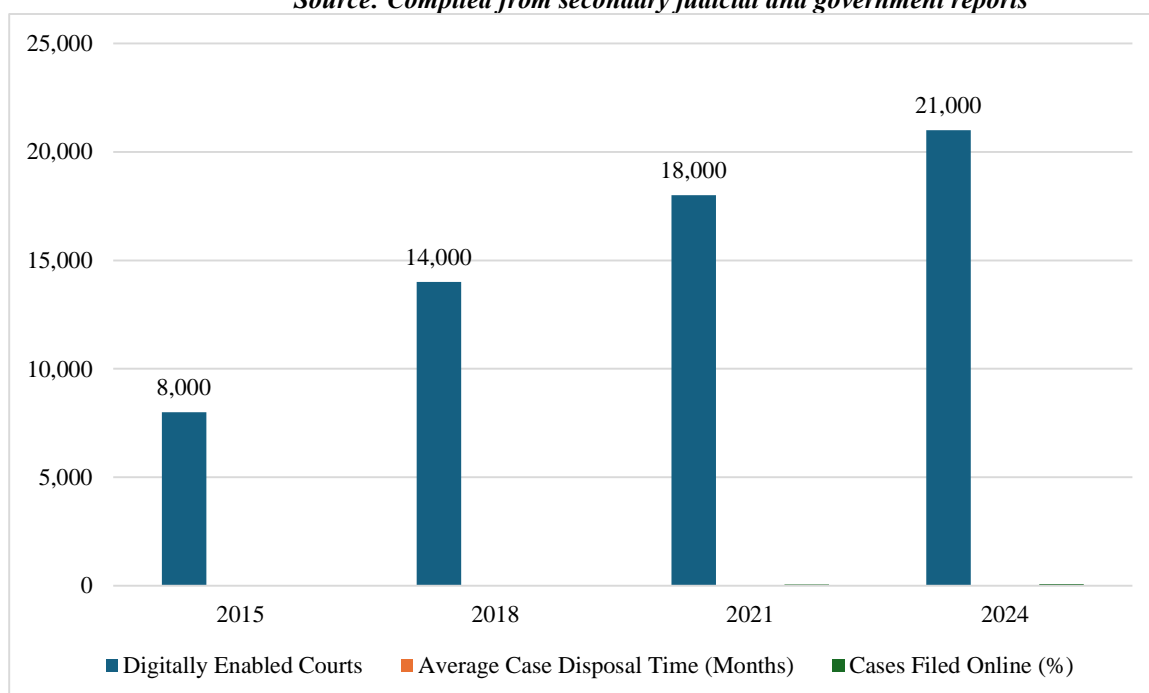


Figure 2: Impact of Digital Initiatives on Delay Reduction and Efficiency

Source: Authors own compilation

Obj. 3: To evaluate the effectiveness of technology-enabled court services in empowering litigants, lawyers, and other stakeholders.

The technology facilitated court services have seen the justice being greatly empowered in that they helped to eliminate the traditional barriers to accessing justice and particularly to those who are geographically isolated. The litigants have gained access to court proceedings without the necessity of being physically present in the court premises due to the expansion of e filing, virtual hearings, and online case tracking as the e Courts Mission Mode Project (Woodlock, et al., 2022). Guidelines by the Supreme Court on Court Functioning under Video Conferencing (2020) made virtual hearings legally valid and uniform and guaranteed continuity in delivering justice during the COVID 19 pandemic and beyond, allowing the litigants to work remotely without exposing themselves to procedural exclusion in any way. In 2025, the Uttarakhand High Court gave a Canada based woman the right to attend her divorce via video conferencing, and remote access accepted as a valid method of litigation participation. It is indicative of how technology facilitated services have made litigation more accessible so that litigants can now actively engage in litigation and save time, travel expenses, and procedural delays that have long been some of the biggest obstacles to the delivery of justice *Madhuri Joshi vs. Shashank Balooni, 2025*.

To lawyers and other legal practitioners, technology has seen court services become efficient in case preparation, filing and case advocacy. The court system promotes digital inclusiveness in the court process by ensuring that online availability of case files, cause lists, e filing systems, and video hearings allow lawyers to manage their caseloads more efficiently regardless of their location, removing the administrative burden and maximizing time (n Re: Guidelines for Court Functioning Through Video Conferencing During COVID 19 Pandemic), the Supreme Court emphasis that High Courts must offer to litigants and advocates, regardless of location, access to video conferencing facilities, supports its desire to make the case. Procedural work has also become easier through such digitalization initiatives as e Sewa Kendras and digital portals which have enabled legal practitioners to serve their clients even better *Kush Kalra v. Union of India*.

These technological innovations have not only made handling of cases fast but also minimized errors relating to inaccurate documentation and enhanced coordination between counsel and courts. All these innovations combined have armed lawyers with means that increase access to legal information and adherence to procedures, which bolsters the advocacy process (Tahura, 2021).

The other stakeholders who have been empowered by the technology enabled court services include the judges, staffs, and administrators of the courts through the efficiency and transparency of judicial services. The use of judicial dashboards, the National Judicial Data Grid and electronic records is allowing real time tracking of the pendency of cases, better scheduling and resource management driven by data. Remote hearings institutionalized by the Supreme Court as a valid court proceeding method allowed courts to operate digitally when in-person hearings were limited because of Indian widespread court proceedings. The Delhi High Court in 2025 released a mobile application to access court services and data easier, which shows an emphasis on inclusive digital access to the stakeholders such as public litigants, researchers, and court staff “*Delhi High Court Digital Initiatives (Mobile App Launch)*”. All these measures have improved the institutional capabilities of the judiciary, as transparency, administrative processes speed, and communication have become simplified. This has led to the streamlining of court activities, turning them data-driven, and attentive to the needs of the stakeholders, enhancing the institutional provision of justice in the era of digitalism (Pal, 2025).

5. Discussion

According to Baladhikari, (2020), the e-Courts Mission Mode Project has had a positively proven effect on the access to justice by every single person, which is consistent with the overall goals of judicial reform and digital governance in India. According to Goswami, & Goswami, (2025), e-filing, virtual hearings, online case status portal, and e-payments are some of the technology-driven interventions that have significantly lowered geographical, financial, and procedural obstacles that previously limited court access to the masses of people (Langhans, et al., 2023). Marginalized litigants, women, elderly people, and people living in remote locations have experienced the greatest impact of these digital services as it has really made a difference in terms of meaningful participation without repetitive physical appearances in the court (Singh, et al., 2021). Lucy, (2020) asserts better judicial efficiency as a result of improved case processing, lowering of pendency, and increasing transparency through real-time access of data. In addition, the adoption of ICT has enhanced institutional responsibility and confidence of people in the justice system (Weinstein, 2025). Minow, (2022) also recognizes some of the ongoing obstacles as the digital divide, infrastructure disparities, and different degrees of digital literacy, which need to be overcome to provide inclusive and sustainable access to justice. On the whole, the e-Courts project is a radical initiative of democratizing the delivery of justice in India (Zulaeha, 2023).

The e-Courts Mission Mode Project has also developed the accessibility and convenience of the justice delivery system through procedural accessibility (Ebner, & Greenberg, 2020). The project has helped litigants and advocates to find important legal information more easily and conveniently by digitizing the court records, cause lists, judgments, and daily orders (Dahiru, 2025). This has eased reliance on middlemen and has eliminated delays incurred as a result of handing of records (Kinal, & Jauhar, 2020). Court processes have also become more predictable with online scheduling and automated case tracking, enabling litigants to schedule their legal involvement in a more efficient way (Lucy, 2020). Moreover, virtual hearing options have minimized the travelling cost particularly in districts with inadequate judicial facilities hence saving time and expenses to all stakeholders (Putra, 2020). Those changes have not only made the judicial administration more efficient but also facilitated a litigant-focused policy, whereby justice is not postponed because of logistical reasons (Rizkiana, & Gerry, 2023). On the whole, the project has helped to make the justice system more responsive, transparent and efficient (Rattan, & Rattan, 2021).

Besides enhancing accessibility, e-Courts Mission Mode Project has been key in enhancing transparency and citizen trust in the judiciary (Tambekar, 2024). Information asymmetry has been minimized, and accountability has improved in the way the courts operate because real-time case information is available and the digital access to judgments (PIB 2023). The citizens have also become more informed on the progress of the case, court proceedings, and verdicts, creating a feeling of belonging and trust in the legal institutions (NITI Aayog 2022). Discretionary practices have also been minimized with the use of standardized digital processes that ensure uniformity and fairness in judicial practices (Dhanya, M. B. 2024). Furthermore, court management tools have assisted in making superior decisions by judicial administrators that have resulted in optimal resource allocation and enhanced the case disposal rates (Patil, et al., 2021). Although the issues of digital literacy and infrastructure have not been resolved, the initiative has provided a solid background of a modern justice system where transparency, effectiveness, and accessibility have been given priority to each faction of the population (Tyler, 2023).

Majumdar, & Gupta, (2020) is associated with the institutional and societal effects of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project in the long run in terms of delivery of justice. Besides direct improvements in efficiency and access, the project has started to transform the culture of judicial operation by encouraging the use of data to make decisions and uniformity in court operations (Van der Sloot, & van Schendel, 2021). Complete judicial data has provided the opportunity to monitor case pendency, disposal rates, and workload distribution and take necessary policy interventions and administrative reforms (Gade, 2021). Also, online platforms have improved the coordination of courts, attorneys, and other related institutions, which has made the justice system more integrated (Rogers, 2020). It has also promoted the involvement of the general population, as the legal information becomes more evident and comprehensible, which increases the level of legal awareness among the citizens (Ramos Maqueda, & Chen, 2021). Nevertheless, the benefits are subject to sustainability as a result of constant technological improvements, capacity building, and institutional flexibility (Li, 2024). The problem of digital exclusion, system stability, and human-centered design should always be tackled to make sure that technological modernization translates into concrete and long-term justice access to everyone (Maqueda, & Chen, 2021).

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that the e-Courts Mission Mode Project has come out as a revolutionary project in enhancing the right to access justice by all people in India through the incorporation of digital technologies in the area of justice. The results indicate that geographical, procedural, and financial impediments that litigants have experienced in the past have greatly been minimized due to the adoption of e-filing, virtual hearings, online case tracking, and digital records. Such reforms have enhanced transparency, efficiency and accountability of the institutions in delivering justice. It has especially helped the rural and far-flung litigants, older adults, women, and undertrial prisoners to participate in the legal proceedings timely by allowing them to do so. Besides, digital platforms like the National Judicial Data grid improved the process of making decisions and administering justice using data. Altogether, the e-Courts project has updated the way the court operates and has led to a more accessible, citizen-focused and effective system of justice in accordance to constitutional principles of fairness and equality.

Although it is agreeable that the digital justice has made a lot of progress due to the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, the study also points out that digital justice cannot be considered as a total replacement of the traditional court systems. The digital divide, inconsistent internet connectivity, low digital literacy and infrastructural gaps are some of the challenges that still limit access to justice in an inclusive manner. Urban courts and technologically endowed stakeholders have gained a lot but there are the marginalized communities who run the risk of being left behind. The study highlights the fact that technology should be used as an empowering tool and not a hindrance. The virtual hearings, paperless courts, and live streaming are judicial recognition of a progressive view, but it can only be sustained under the constant capacity building, policy support and training the stakeholders. Therefore, e-Courts project is a progressive change that has created a solid ground in the area of digital justice but needs to be inclusive in its approach in realizing that the technological innovations can actually translate into equal and meaningful access to justice by all layers of society.

6.1. Implications of the study

The study has significant legal, policy as well as institutional implications. The legal factors that make the e-Courts Mission Mode Project positive are strengthening the judiciary to fulfill its constitutional mandate of observing access to justice as in Articles 14 and 21. These findings can help policy makers to reinforce digital governance systems and develop technology-focused legal services on every level of courts. At the institutional level, the study has put an emphasis on the role of data-based administration, transparency, and effective administration of cases to curb pendency and increase public confidence. The study also highlights the necessity of judicial training courses based on digital skills of judges, lawyers, and court personnel. On the social level better accessibility of court information has empowering effects to the citizens and Kennedy on the awareness of law. In general, the investigation advocates the incorporation of technology as an essential part of judicial transformation with the focus on inclusiveness, capacity building, and infrastructure growth to get all the potential out of the digital justice projects.

6.2. Limitations of the study

There are some limitations, which should be noted regarding the study. To begin with, it is all secondary data using available literature, government reports, judicial statistics and policy documents, which restricts the chances of capturing real-time experiences of litigants and court users. Second, qualitative and descriptive character of the study does not allow measuring the direct effect of e-Courts on a particular group of people empirically. Third, the infrastructure differences, digital literacy, and court preparedness across India were not studied in depth due to the limitations on data. Also, the study is more inclined toward the positive effects, and such operational issues as the risks of cybersecurity and failure of the systems are discussed in the abstract. These constraints imply that the findings are important in terms of providing understanding on digital justice reforms, but they are subject to interpretation in the area and methodology used by the study.

6.3. Recommendation for future study

The proposed future study ought to take both empirical and mixed-method research designs to evaluate the ground-level performance of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project. The first-hand information about users and challenges would be gathered in the form of interviews, surveys and case studies with the litigants, lawyers, judges and court staffs. Comparative analysis of urban and rural courts may assist in defining gaps in the digital access and infrastructure which are particular to the region. Additional studies can also focus on the effects of new technologies like artificial intelligence and online dispute resolution on efficiency and fairness in the judiciary. Also, study on vulnerable populations, such as the under-trial prisoners, women, and individuals with disabilities, would help in the comprehension of inclusivity in digital justice. A longitudinal study of the implementation of e-Courts reforms to assess their sustainability would be useful in helping to inform policy and institutional change to bring about full access to justice.

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