

Conclusion

Today the Judiciary in India is regarded as the most independent and also by far the least accountable wing of the government. However, the judicial system in India still retains substantial legitimacy in the eyes of many Indians despite its politicisation in the 1970s and 1980s and recent allegations of impropriety levelled against several High Court judges. The effective use of the tool of 'public interest litigation' or 'social action litigation' has led to many Indians turning to the courts to redress grievances against the other two wings of government, viz. the Legislature and the Executive. This has in effect led to a scenario where the balance of power has shifted perceptibly to the hands of the Judiciary.

As judicial systems move into the 21st century, they must respond to new demands. Recent studies⁷⁹ have conclusively shown that legal and judicial reforms can contribute greatly to the nature and quality of economic development.

Recent trends in judicial reforms mandates that efficiency, integrity, fairness in court performance and the ability to understand the demands of law enforcement are the *sine qua non* of an effective

justice delivery system. Knowledge sharing is key to building a more responsive judicial system. There is thus an urgent need for learning, building partnerships and networking among judiciaries, NGOs, professionals, researchers and the civil society, so that judicial reform becomes a reality.

Further there is an immediate need for the judicial system to address the issue of delay in the judicial process. Is 'Dispute Resolution and Contract Enforcement' an informal mechanism or is it a general statement? The judicial system ought to address the laws and institutions, which are required to encourage informal mechanisms of the justice delivery system so that they complement the formal legal and judicial system in place.

Further, the judicial system should be geared for providing a voice to the under-privileged and the less resourceful. This would entail providing all citizens, particularly the poor, access to justice, one of the most essential aspects of legal and judicial developments to ensuring in the long run, that issues related to gender, children and indigenous people are addressed by a more responsive judicial system.

79. The annual allocation under Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the development of infrastructural facilities for the judiciary in states has been gradually increased since the Scheme was first launched in 1993-94 on a 50:50 cost sharing basis between the Centre and the States. The Central allocation under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme has been increased from Rs 480 million in 1998-99 to Rs 550 million in 1999-2000 and to Rs 749.5 million in 2000-2001. It was increased to Rs 1.08 billion during the financial year 2002-2003.