

EFFECT OF COVID- 19 ON JUDICIARY IN INDIA

The pandemic has a great impact on people, environment and all the nations. Looking into all the aspects of COVID 19 we can see that it has both positive and negative impact on our life. It has forced many nations across the world to impose the lockdown throughout the country. This way it has helped in cleaning the environment and the nature to regain its resources which were overused blatantly by human over the last century but on the other hand it has created a huge barrier in the day to day life and working of people. As far as the impact of COVID 19 is concerned, India is among the top 5 country of the world. All the commercial activities, transportation, manufacturing, tourism, hotels and offices were completely closed including all the courts during lockdown. The parliament, executive and judiciary all are badly struck by COVID 19. The impact of pandemic on judiciary is not visible to all section of the society. It had led to the closure of courts unless the matter is urgent, final argument in criminal appeal would hardly qualify as emergency. Analysing the situations from beginning of the pandemic it can be seen that judiciary was not ready for battle with COVID 19. But gradually it adapted the conditions and situations pandemic brought to the country and started planning accordingly to strengthen the judiciary system in India. Technology is of great use which only will help the courts to clear the backlog of the cases from the apex court to the court at our grassroots of legal system. The Supreme court paved the way for uninterrupted access to justice through court hearings via video conferencing. Regarding issue of delivery of justice during COVID 19 the Hon'ble apex court addressed it and issued instructions in form of a order. The directions were issued by the Supreme Court's bench consisting CJI Bobde, Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice L Nageswara Rao regarding measures to be taken by courts to reduce the physical presence of all litigants within court premises by adapting the social distancing guidelines. Virtual hearings give speed to the process of delivering justice but at the same time it is a hurdle in the path of seeking justice for people living in rural and remote areas of country. Supreme court addressing criticism against hearing in virtual court stated that it is need of the hour and aims at delivering justice. Video conferencing is being used only for extremely urgent matters and e-filing facility is available for all matters. There are several benefits of hearing via video conferencing including no requirement of physical presence, parties do not need to travel miles to be present in person before courts also it is cost and time effective for the parties as well as for judiciary. Video conferencing should be made optional in all courts across country for all type of matters. Digitalisation will decrease pendency of cases in country and also it will release load of judiciary and is an effective remedy for delayed justice. The pandemic has brought

many challenges with it but the judiciary faced and accepted all challenges in the best way possible.