



Affirmative Action and Representation in India's District Judiciary

Law, Policy, and Practice

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Contents

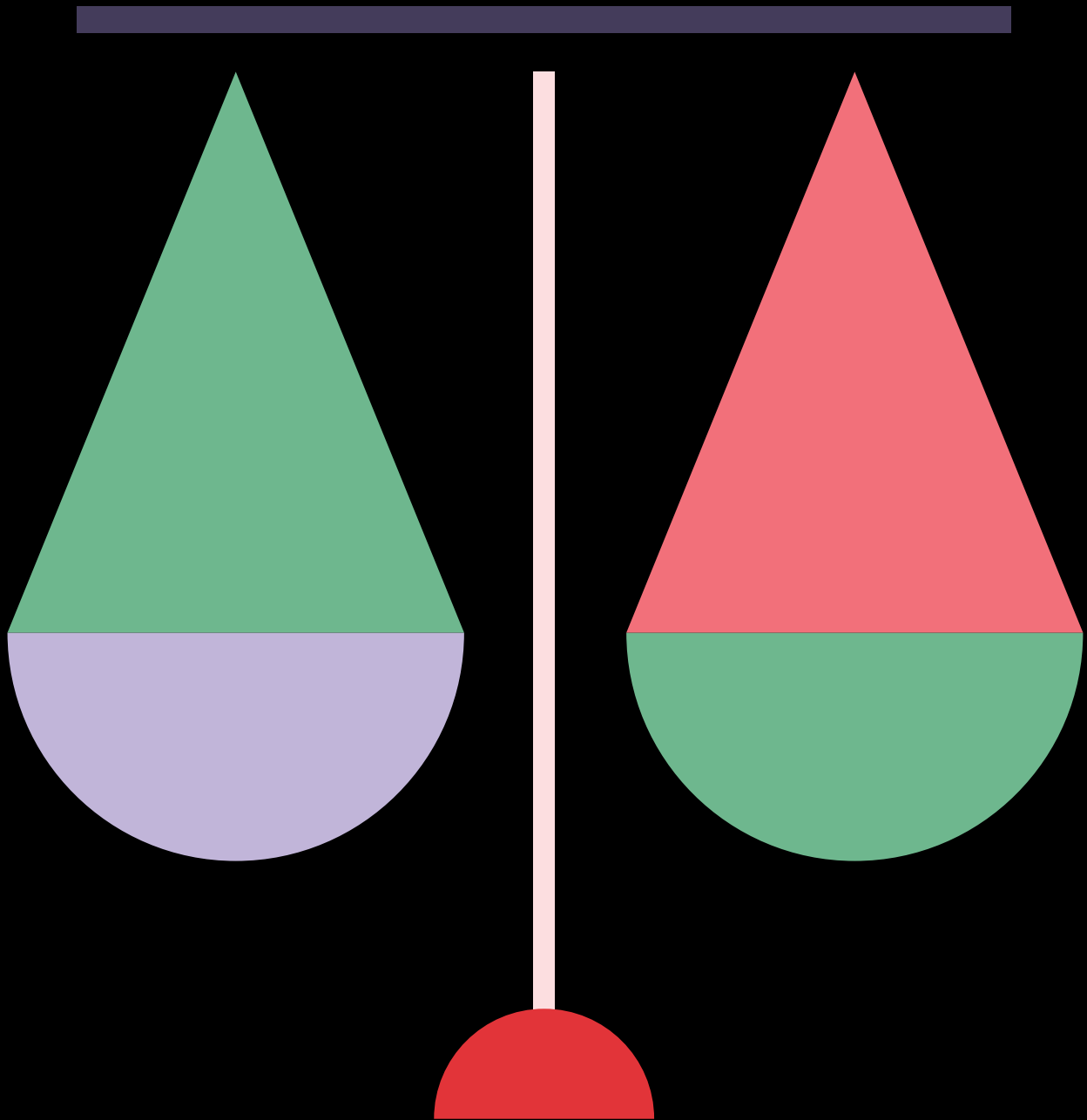
Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
Why judicial diversity matters	7
Challenges in understanding the extent of diversity in the judiciary	10
Lack of transparency regarding applicable law	11
Gaps in data	12
Research methodology	14
Understanding affirmative action for representation in the district judiciary	16
Extent of inclusion/exclusion	19
Tracking caste diversity in appointments	20
Looking beyond caste	23
Relaxations provided for reserved categories	24
Conclusion	26
Annexure	27
Nature of reservations and relaxations for direct appointments to the district judiciary, state-wise	28

Executive Summary

A diverse judiciary helps improve public trust, address barriers to access justice, and ensures that the reality of varied lived experiences determines judicial outcomes. Such diversity assumes greater salience in Indian society, which is characterised by multiple groups, some of which have faced historic injustice in the form of discrimination and exploitation.

The objective of this report is to study the present state of diversity in the district judiciary, including, affirmative action and ensuring representation of different groups. The report sheds light on the challenges encountered in understanding the extent of diversity in the judiciary ranging from the lack of transparency in the applicable laws to data gaps. It includes a detailed examination of the legal provisions in each state laying down reservation benefits and other relaxations for specific groups in the district judiciary on the basis of caste, gender, disability status, economic backwardness, etc. Drawing on data collected by JALDI through Right to Information applications, it also presents data on caste diversity in direct appointments made to the district judiciary from 2018 to 2024.

The report concludes by putting forth recommendations for the judiciary to enhance its diversity and ensure greater representation on the Bench. These include (i) introducing greater transparency and uniformity in data keeping and documentation practices to help better map judicial diversity, and (ii) meaningfully addressing problems of inclusion and ensuring regular appointments to fill all reserved vacancies in judicial posts.



Introduction

A fundamental contradiction characterises state institutions in any liberal democracy, namely that although these institutions derive their structure and functions from neutral, 'colour-blind' legal provisions, the social milieu which they seek to govern is rife with unequal group identities, often in conflict with each other.¹ Therefore, a universalist, one-size-fits-all approach towards designing institutions often falls short in ensuring adequate representation of diverse social groups. As a result, the idea of a 'politics of presence' has been proposed as a means of ensuring fair representation of underrepresented communities within state institutions through special legal arrangements.² This concept is also reflected in international standards as seen in Sustainable Development Goal 16 on ensuring representative national and local institutions.³ The underlying assumption is that greater diversity would encourage these institutions to address social hierarchies and support vulnerable groups of citizens.

As the judiciary plays a key role in securing the rights and entitlements of citizens, ensuring greater social representation in the judiciary is of prime importance. Historically, Indian society has always been highly stratified, consisting of numerous groups who have been at the receiving end of structural injustice, oppression, and violence over centuries.⁴ They include women, economically disadvantaged sections, the Scheduled Castes ('SC'), the Scheduled Tribes ('ST'), Other Backward Classes ('OBC'), Persons with Disabilities ('PwD'), and religious and ethnic

minorities. These groups often face barriers in accessing justice and getting their rights legally secured. Navigating the justice system, they often have to contend with neglect, systemic discrimination, and a mystifying maze of procedural hurdles while interacting with the legal system.⁵ However, the hurdles are not limited to litigants alone; entering the legal profession and gaining a foothold in the Bar can be equally challenging. As an advocate's litigation experience can have a bearing on their legal careers, challenges faced by disadvantaged groups can affect their opportunities to join the judiciary.⁶ If we are to strive for a reflective Indian judiciary, it is of the utmost importance that the system takes proactive measures to ensure that representatives from marginalised groups are present on the bench and that the playing field is level.

The first step towards ensuring a reflective judiciary is to understand how representative the institution is at present. The lack of systematically maintained and publicly available data on diversity in the Indian judiciary, or on the laws that mandate such representation, makes

- 1 Gautam Bhatia, 'Reservations, Equality and the Constitution – II: The Early Cases' (*Indian Constitutional Law and Philosophy* 29 January 2014) <<https://indconlawphil.wordpress.com/tag/colour-blind/>> accessed 25 October 2025.
- 2 Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Representing India: Ethnic Diversity and the Governance of Public Institutions* (Palgrave Macmillan 2006) ch 'Democracy in India: Democracy and Diversity' 8.
- 3 Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, 'Goal 16, Sustainable Development' Target 16.7.1, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16#targets_and_indicators> accessed 30 December 2025.
- 4 Kalpana Kannabiran, *Tools of Justice: Non-discrimination and the Indian Constitution* (Routledge 2012).
- 5 S. Muralidhar, 'Appearing in Court in India: Challenges in Representing the Marginalised' (2022) 3(2) *CASTE: A Global Journal on Social Exclusion* 441 <<https://journals.library.brandeis.edu/index.php/caste/article/view/452/139>> accessed 25 October 2025.
- 6 Gital Mittal and Dipika Jain, 'Women's equal representation in the higher judiciary: a case for judicial diversity in India' (2023) 47(2) *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*.

it difficult to understand the kind of diversity that is prioritised.

The Indian judiciary consists of the Supreme Court, High Courts, and the district judiciary. The district judiciary consists of courts placed under the administrative oversight of the High Courts; it includes District and Sessions Judges, Civil Judges, and Magistrates. Appointments to the post of Civil Judge (Junior Division) (who also act as Judicial Magistrates) are done through direct recruitment in all the states, usually by means of an examination conducted by the State Public Services Commission. Appointments to the post of District Judge are usually done through a combination of promotion, limited departmental examinations, and direct recruitment from the Bar, with quotas fixed for each route of appointment.

The provisions governing the recruitment and conditions of service of Civil Judges and District Judges are usually found in the judicial service rules of the concerned state ('Judicial Service Rules'). Some states have two sets of rules governing these posts: one set of rules for Civil Judges, and a separate Higher/Superior Judicial Service Rules governing District Judges. Reservations in direct recruitments for the posts of Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judges vary depending on the state, and consist of horizontal and vertical reservations based on a number of criteria including caste, gender, disability status, ex-servicemen, meritorious sportspersons, etc. However, the groups most commonly provided with reservations

are women, persons with disabilities, and caste groups. While attempts have been made to understand specific forms of diversity in the judiciary, such as gender and disability, no study has collated data on caste diversity or examined the different groups that receive reservations in direct appointments to the judiciary.⁷

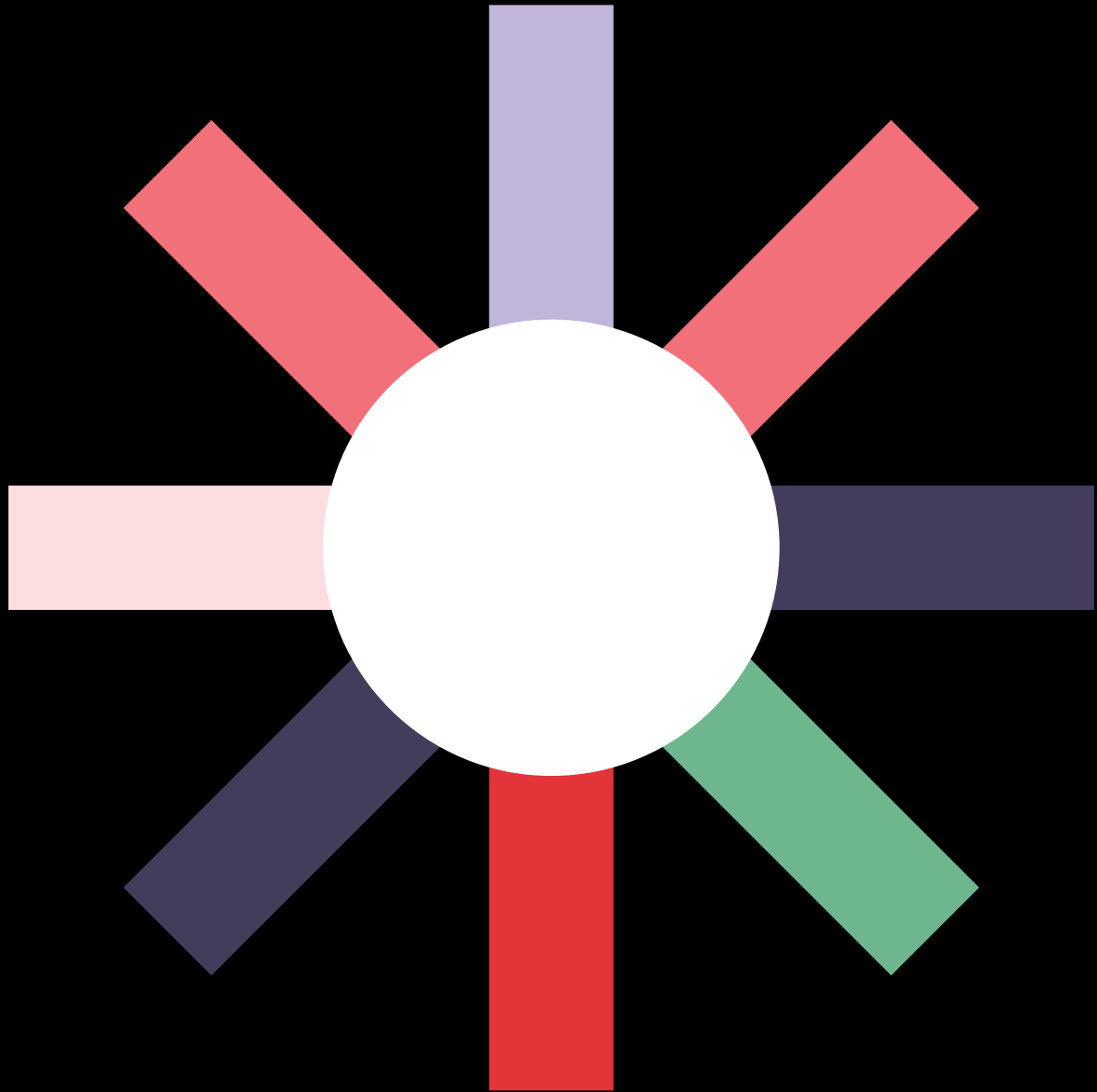
This paper aims to examine the nature of diversity prioritised in the district judiciary by highlighting the legal provisions reserving posts for specific groups, and the relaxations granted to them at the time of their appointment. Additionally, the paper presents data on caste diversity in appointments made to the district judiciary from 2018 to 2024, based on data collected by JALDI through Right to Information ('RTI') applications.

While the paper does not seek to evaluate the merits of the reservation system, it views reservations as a form of affirmative action and aims to identify the groups that the system proactively includes.

The structure of this paper is such that it discusses why diversity matters, and problems in understanding the extent of diversity

⁷ Jyotika Randhawa and others, 'Changes in Gender Diversity in the District Judiciary: 2007-24' (JALDI, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, 2026) <<https://jaldi-vidhilegalpolicy.in/overview-projects/diversity-judiciary/report?id=371&title=Changes-in-Gender-Diversity-in-the-District-Judiciary:-2007-24>> accessed 25 October 2025; JALDI, 'Women in the Judiciary' Portal <<https://jaldi-vidhilegalpolicy.in/jaldi-portal/women-in-judiciary>>; 'India Justice Report: Ranking States on the Capacity of Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid' (2025) <[https://indiajusticereport.org/files/IJR%204_Full%20Report_English%20\(1\).pdf](https://indiajusticereport.org/files/IJR%204_Full%20Report_English%20(1).pdf)> accessed 25 October 2025; Centre for Law and Policy Research (CLPR), 'Equal Justice: Addressing the Gender Gap in the Higher Judiciary in India' (2024-2025); PACTA, 'Access to Justice: For Persons with Disabilities in India' (2025) p. 252 <https://e6a1ddce-638a-4c2a-a468-3bb06cb66ec2.filesusr.com/ugd/0e1e8f_7d39fdef8b9b4906b24849aaecb9ae6e.pdf> accessed 10 March 2026.

in the judiciary due to lack of transparency regarding applicable laws and gaps in existing data. It then presents the methodology used for gathering information for the paper, and provides an understanding of the nature of affirmative action to ensure representation in the district judiciary.



**Why judicial diversity
matters**

At present, there is a disproportionately low representation of judges from marginal socio-economic backgrounds. **As of December 2025, there was only one female judge serving in the Supreme Court (out of a strength of 33 judges), and as of March 2025, women made up 37.4 per cent of all judges, 14 per cent in the High Courts, and 38 per cent in the district courts.⁸ The figures for caste representation in the judiciary are similarly dismal. Of all appointments to the High Courts between 2018 and March 2025, only 3% have been from the SC category, 2% from the ST category, and 12% from the OBC category.⁹**

Such homogeneity within the judiciary is not ideal, given the structural barriers faced by marginalised groups in accessing justice. Internationally, research suggests that there is an increased likelihood of handing out a disproportionately higher number of convictions against ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities if the composition of the judiciary is largely homogeneous.¹⁰ While some studies in the Indian context found evidence of limited in-group bias when judges share a rare last name with litigants,¹¹ other studies showed that experiences of judges can have

a bearing on outcomes.¹² This raises questions about whether systemic bias can creep in. As a corollary, it has been observed that a more representative bench results in fairer decisions in favour of vulnerable groups, especially in cases involving protection of civil liberties, resulting in a check against possible bias.¹³ The presence of judges from minority groups in the courtroom also ensures that litigants from the same background as them feel safer and protected. Additionally, on the level of perception, a more diverse bench is more likely to inspire confidence in the judicial process among such groups and can boost their reliance on the legal system.¹⁴ As former Chief Justice of India, D.Y. Chandrachud observed, "People will start trusting the judiciary only when they see a reflection of themselves in the people who dispense justice."¹⁵ Therefore, increased representation of the 'underprivileged and the marginalised' in the legal system has been touted as one of the solutions to remove the barriers they confront and to ensure that the exercise of the rule of law is applied in an equitable manner in protecting their rights.¹⁶

8 'India Justice Report: Ranking States on the Capacity of Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid' (n 7).

9 Rajya Sabha, Unstarred Question No. 2354 Answered on 20/03/2025 <https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/267/AU2354_GpF5iE.pdf?source=pqars> accessed 25 October 2025.

10 Danielle Root, Jake Faleschini, Grace Oyenubi, 'Building a More Inclusive Federal Judiciary' (*Centre for American Progress (CAP)* 3 October 2019) <<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/building-inclusive-federal-judiciary/>> accessed 25 October 2025.

11 Elliott Ash and others, 'In-group bias in the Indian judiciary: Evidence from 5 million criminal cases' (2025) *The Review of Economics and Statistics* <https://users.nber.org/~dlchen/papers/India_Courts_In_Group_Bias_Restat.pdf> accessed 30 December 2025.

12 Nitin Kumar Bharti and Sutanuka Roy, 'The early origins of judicial stringency in bail decisions: Evidence from early childhood exposure to Hindu-Muslim riots in India' (2023) 221 *Journal of Public Economics* <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0047272723000282>> accessed 30 December 2025.

13 Lee Epstein and Jack Knight, 'How social identity and social diversity affect judging' (2022) 35(4) *Leiden Journal of International Law* 897 <<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/leiden-journal-of-international-law/article/how-social-identity-and-social-diversity-affect-judging/4028AF1AF121946B4C6B53762224A202>> accessed 13 March 2026.

14 Justice P.S. Narasimha, 'Justice for the Marginalized in a Constitutional Democracy' (2024) 5(2) *CASTE: A Global Journal on Social Exclusion* 302 <<https://journals.library.brandeis.edu/index.php/caste/article/view/2290/1816>> accessed 25 October 2025.

15 'Supreme Court poly-vocal, it represents diversity: CJI Chandrachud' *Indian Express* (New Delhi 23 Aug 2023) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/supreme-court-poly-vocal-it-represents-diversity-cji-dy-chandrachud-8904668/>> accessed 25 October 2025.

16 S. Muralidhar, 'Appearing in Court in India: Challenges in Representing the Marginalised' (2022) 3(2) *CASTE: A Global Journal on Social Exclusion* 441 <https://journals.library.brandeis.edu/index.php/caste/article/view/452?utm_source=chatgpt.com> accessed 25 October 2025.

Not only does greater diversity in the judiciary aid in making it easy for the majority of people to navigate the justice system, a greater variation in social backgrounds amongst judges also ensures that the reality of variegated lived experiences determines judicial outcomes. Judges not only analyse and apply the law in the abstract, but also have to rely on an understanding of society and human experiences.¹⁷ Judges from marginalised sections are more likely to draw from their own intersectional experiences across the lines of gender, caste, religion, etc. while adjudicating the claims and interests of individuals belonging to similarly placed groups. **Thus, a more diverse bench enriches the quality of judicial decision making as a whole by accommodating a wide number of viewpoints tethered to social realities.**¹⁸

Even in the Indian context, our constitution framers had early on, realised the effect that equitable representation would have on the quality of institutions. For Ambedkar, good governance was not a tradeoff against representation but a byproduct of it.¹⁹

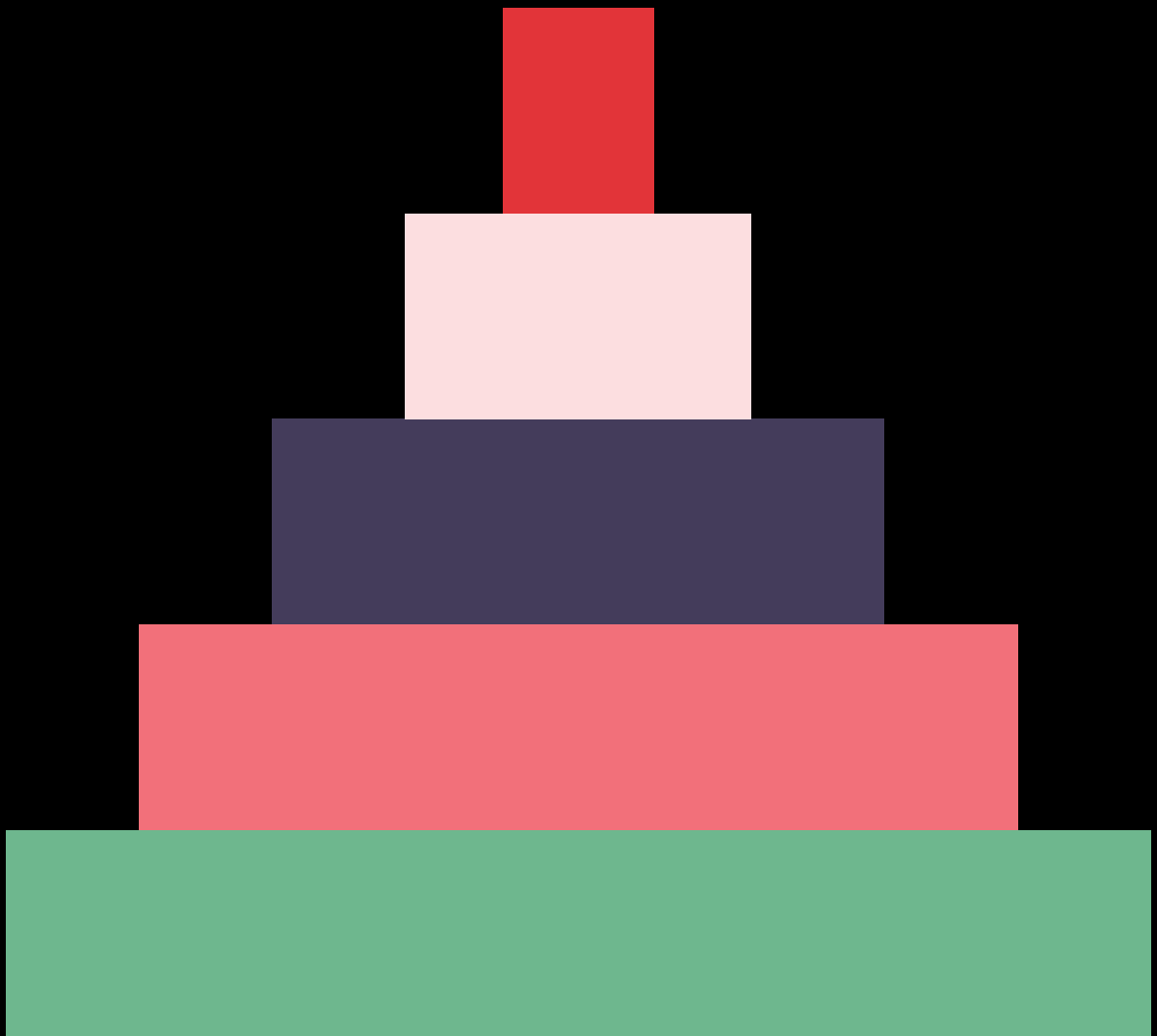
Ensuring diversity in the judiciary can also be looked at from the perspective of furthering the constitutional ideal of equality of opportunity. Article 16 promises equality of opportunity in matters of public employment to all sections of citizens and in order to ensure equality in effective terms, it provides for special measures in favour of backward classes not adequately represented in services. The guarantee of equal opportunity may fall short of its promise if it fails to cover an entire organ of the state like the judiciary. In view of the underrepresentation of disadvantaged groups within the judiciary,

it is important to take measures to ensure greater diversity within the institution in order to realise the imperative of Article 16.

17 Edward M. Chen, 'The Judiciary, Diversity, and Justice For All' (2023) 1 Asian Law Journal <<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/aslj29&div=3&id=&page=>> accessed 25 October 2025.

18 Joy Milligan, 'Pluralism in America: Why Judicial Diversity improves Legal Decisions about Political Morality' (2006) 81 New York University Law Review 1206 <<https://nyulawreview.org/issues/volume-81-number-3/pluralism-in-america-why-judicial-diversity-improves-legal-decisions-about-political-morality/>> accessed 25 October 2025.

19 Faizan Ahmed, 'Distributive Justice and the EWS Judgment' (*Indian Constitutional Law and Philosophy* 10 January 2023) <<https://indconlawphil.wordpress.com/2023/01/10/guest-post-distributive-justice-and-the-ews-judgment/>> accessed 25 October 2025.



**Challenges in
understanding the extent
of diversity in the judiciary**

Lack of transparency regarding applicable law

In order to understand the law at any point in time, a person needs to be able to identify the most recent version of, and access, the legislation, rules, orders, etc. that would apply to them. While there is no provision for reservations in the higher judiciary, nearly all states have instituted some form of affirmative action in recruitments to the district courts, and the states provide for appointments, reservations, and relaxations to appointment criteria in different ways. This poses a unique set of challenges as no uniform policy is followed with regard to either the substance of the provisions or the sources from which they derive their validity. **As a result, reservation provisions are scattered across multiple legislations, rules, and orders across India, with many also being difficult to locate in the absence of a repository of laws maintained by the state governments.**

While some states provide for a single, consolidated set of rules covering appointments for both Civil Judges and District Judges, in the case of others, there is a clear distinction between the Judicial Service Rules dealing with the Civil Judges and the Higher/Superior Judicial Service Rules governing District Judges. Additionally, while many of the rules mention the percentage of posts that have been reserved for various groups, others simply state that the reservation policy governing judicial appointments shall be the same as the reservations provided by the policy of the state government (with the exception of Delhi and Puducherry which refer to the central government policy) that is enshrined in the general reservation legislation of the state covering all posts. Pertinently, a few

other states leave the distribution of the benefits subject to the orders issued by the concerned state government from time to time. Although state governments can stipulate reservation percentages in executive orders rather than in statutes or rules, doing so usually undermines transparency. Unlike the Judicial Service Rules, it is really difficult to locate specific state government orders due to the lack of an updated searchable digital repository of all orders.

Even when the Judicial Service Rules of states are found online, it is often unclear whether they reflect the latest amendments. While in some instances²⁰ the rules available online provide the date as of which the rules are updated, this is most often not the case. In other instances, while the amended rules are available online, there is no consolidated version of the rules, which makes it difficult to understand the current rules without looking through every single set of amendments.²¹ **Thus, it becomes difficult to gather information about the nature of the legally sanctioned reservation benefits currently in force, the groups entitled to the same, and the manner of distribution of the benefits amongst them.** As studies have found that reservation issues contribute to frequent litigation,²² not making available information in an accessible manner hinders the right to information and can also pose significant challenges for groups seeking to advance legal challenges against the reservation policy in place in a state. Government orders being inaccessible and subject to untraceable changes materially affect any person seeking to enforce rights. Courts have time and again observed that public employment has to be provided in a transparent manner

20 For example: The Orissa Superior Judicial Service and Orissa Judicial Service Rules, 2007 <https://www.orissahighcourt.nic.in/rules/OSJS_OJS_rules/> accessed 28 January 2026; Delhi Judicial Service Rules, 1970 <<https://delhihighcourt.nic.in/files/2025-04/notifications-and-practice-directions/136679835667a1f645cee31.pdf>> accessed 20 January 2026.

21 Gujarat State Judicial Service Rules, 2005 <<https://gujarathighcourt.nic.in/servicerules>> accessed 20 January 2026.

22 Sumathi Chandrashekar, Shriyam Gupta and Diksha Sanyal, 'The long road to becoming a judge: an empirical analysis of litigation around recruitment in India's lower judiciary' (2024) 8(3) Indian Law Review <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/24730580.2024.2407735>>. accessed 13 March 2026

free from arbitrariness.²³ The absence of publicly available information on the reservation policy governing direct recruitment to the district judiciary militates against this principle.

Gaps in data

While it is imperative that the judiciary enhance the representation of marginalised groups, no constructive steps can be taken in that direction without first mapping the extent of their existing representation across courts at different levels. Very often, it is the deficiency of data alone that prevents a fuller appreciation of the gravity of the issue, resulting in slow progress towards expanding inclusivity. Having accurate and reliable data in the public domain helps institutions and the public to understand levels of diversity, and make informed policy decisions.

What instantly comes to the fore in undertaking this endeavour in the Indian context, however, is the absence of a centralised repository of data regarding judges at the district level, and mapping the numbers of judges based on categories such as caste, gender, religious background, disability status and so on. This is unlike other jurisdictions; for example, the United Kingdom has a systematic mechanism in place to record such data.²⁴ Published on a yearly basis, the statistics are disaggregated based on sex, ethnicity and professional background, and also track diversity among magistrates and non-legal members of tribunals.

In recent years, attempts by non-governmental actors have made some progress in capturing information on judicial diversity

in India.²⁵ However, state institutions continue to release data on an ad hoc basis, mostly when it is asked of them through routes such as parliamentary questions and RTI queries. For instance, official statistics on the caste composition across different levels of the judiciary is found almost exclusively in answers given in response to parliamentary questions. Caste data regarding appointments to the High Courts is only available since 2018 when High Courts first started recording socio-economic data of appointees to their benches. However, the central government has stated that owing to the absence of any reservation policy to the higher judiciary, it does not centrally maintain any 'category-wise data pertaining to representation of SCs, STs and OBCs' in the higher judiciary,²⁶ making it difficult to estimate caste diversity in the higher judiciary as a whole. The India Justice Report 2025 ('IJR') also mentions that disaggregated, state-wise data on the caste profiles of High Court judges is not available.²⁷ Similarly, data pertaining to women judges has to be aggregated from multiple sources such as answers to Parliamentary questions or from the websites and annual reports of High Courts.

In the absence of an updated, official source of demographic data of judges, tracking the representation of different marginalised groups in the judiciary largely becomes subject to the caprices of public attention. For instance, there has been significant discussion in the media, civil society, and even among members of the judiciary about the lack of proportionate representation of women on the bench, resulting in many attempts to actively track appointments of

²³ Amrit Yadav v. State of Jharkhand 2025 INSC 176.

²⁴ Ministry of Justice, 'Diversity of the judiciary: Legal professions, new appointments and current post-holders - 2025 Statistics' (2025) <<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/diversity-of-the-judiciary-2025-statistics/diversity-of-the-judiciary-legal-professions-new-appointments-and-current-post-holders-2025-statistics--2>> accessed 30 December 2025.

²⁵ JALDI 'Changes in Gender Diversity in the District Judiciary: 2007-24' (n 7); JALDI 'Women in the Judiciary' Portal (n 7); 'India Justice Report: Ranking States on the Capacity of Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid' (n 7); CLPR 'Equal Justice: Addressing the Gender Gap in the Higher Judiciary in India' (n 7).

²⁶ Rajya Sabha, Unstarred Question No. 2354 (n 10).

²⁷ 'India Justice Report: Ranking States on the Capacity of Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid' (n 7) p.107

women judges.²⁸ However, lesser focus has been cast on less visible categories such as those of persons with disability, for whom there is a paucity of data.²⁹ **Additionally, in the absence of granular information about individual judges, it is difficult to pinpoint their intersectional profile by connecting various demographic identities which they may hold.** We may have information on the overall numbers of, say, women judges but it is impossible to track how many amongst them belong to the SC, ST, or OBC categories. This prevents a fuller appreciation of the nature of intersectional representation in the judiciary, thereby making it impossible to know the extent to which multiple internal marginalities find a place on the bench. What is needed, therefore, is a comprehensive record of the judicial presence of the various different groups recognised by the state as being entitled to special protections, moving beyond the most visible constituencies.

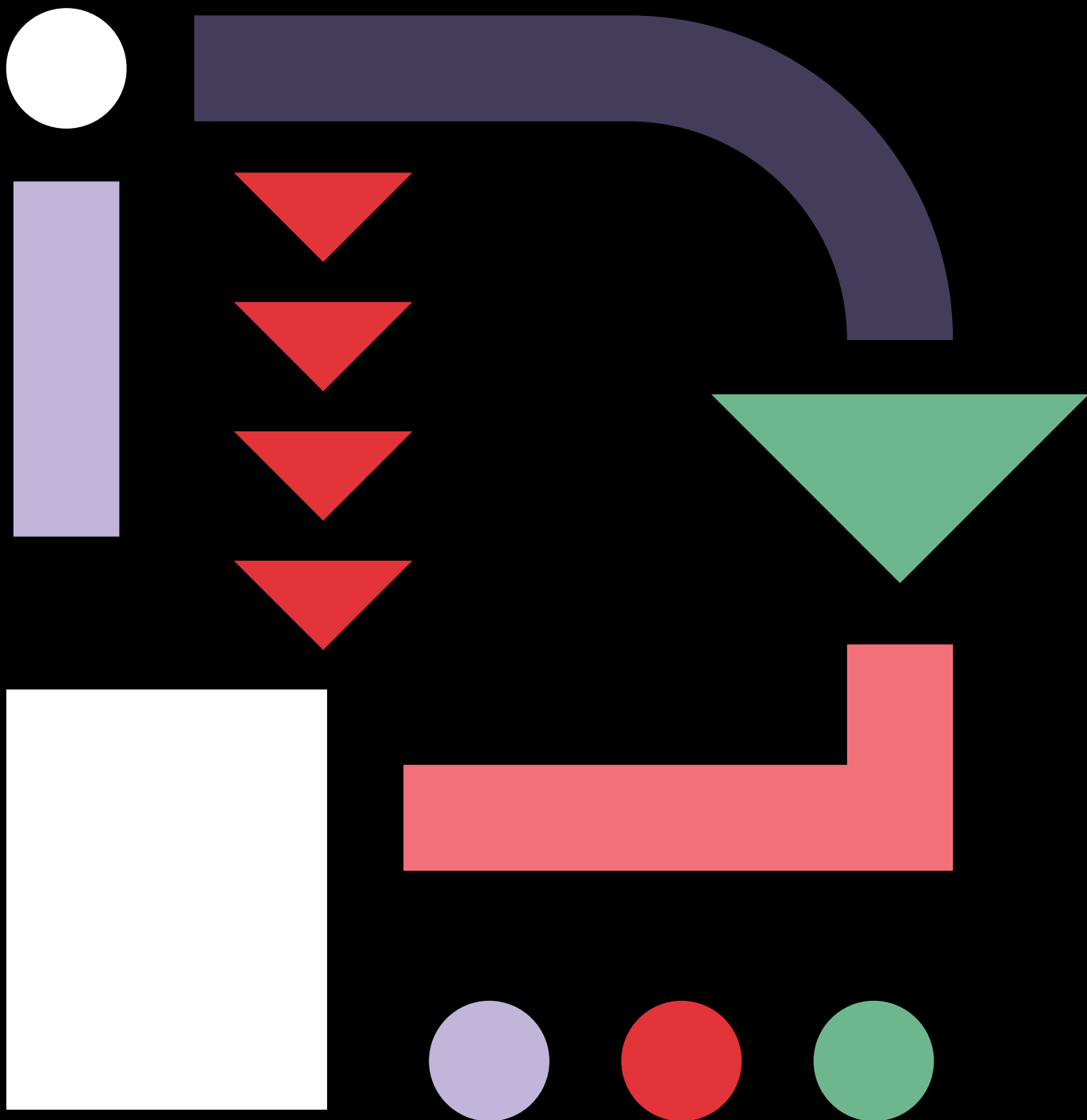
While there is still some data available on the higher judiciary, a bigger hurdle is encountered in tracking diversity data of the district judiciaries as their composition is rarely the subject of public or institutional attention. Moreover, the decentralised character of the district judiciary and the sheer number of judges operating within it, also pose significant challenges in subjecting it to a diversity analysis. To give an illustration, while it is relatively easy to calculate the number of women judges in the higher judiciary by perusing court websites and annual reports, the same is not true of the numerous district courts across the country. However, responses to parliamentary questions have provided some data regarding diversity in the district judiciary. Disaggregated data regard-

ing diversity in the working strength of the district judiciary as of February 2025 is publicly available, providing insight into the number of SC, ST, OBC, specially abled, women, and other judges.³⁰ Such information is however made available to the public only when questions are raised in Parliament, making it difficult to track the progress of diversity in appointments or changes in the composition of the district judiciary.

28 JALDI 'Changes in Gender Diversity in the District Judiciary: 2007-24' (n 7); Arijeet Ghosh and others, 'Tilting the scale: Gender Imbalance in the Lower Judiciary' (Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, 2018) <<https://protonhub.s3.ap-south-1.amazonaws.com/jjOn0fa8nd9uy2p29v84qk3pmd8qc>> accessed 25 October 2025; Centre for Law & Policy Research, 'Equal Justice. Women Judges: In Numbers' (2025) <<https://clpr.org.in/projects/equal-justice-advancing-womens-representation-in-the-higher-judiciary-in-india/>> accessed 30 December 2025.

29 PACTA, 'Data Narrative: For Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Judicial System' <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G_hhB3bVkJGdkHcn5YS5KgGo6W7mOjyCY/view> accessed 30 January 2026.

30 Rajya Sabha, Unstarred Question No. 2354 (n 10).



Research methodology

The information in this paper is based on desk-based research, from December 2025 to February 2026, into applicable laws as published on official government and court websites. The paper also draws on RTI applications filed by JALDI with High Courts across India, in order to gain insight into gender and caste diversity in direct appointments to the district judiciary between 2018 and 2024,³¹ as well as the legal mandate providing for reservations in such appointments.

Based on responses to JALDI's RTIs, as well as surveying the legislative framework regulating direct recruitments to the district judiciary, this paper presents an overview of the reservations mandated by the state Judicial Service Rules and applicable state legislations. It also provides data regarding the number of direct appointments to the district judiciary from 2018 to 2024, disaggregated by caste (SC, ST, and OBC). Lastly, the paper presents information regarding relaxations provided to marginalised groups under the relevant state laws, including relaxations in upper age limit, minimum qualifying percentage in the examination, etc. which aim to address structural access barriers for these groups.

However, a limitation of this paper is that, in the absence of a centralised repository of all applicable laws, the authors relied on copies of the law found on official government or court websites, coupled with any available amendments from two legal research databases: Manupatra and SCC Online. Furthermore, due to the limited publicly available information regarding the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Lakshadweep, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, the study does not cover these jurisdictions.

31 The reason for selection of this time period was that JALDI was looking to update its 'Women in the Judiciary' portal that already contained gender-disaggregated data on direct appointments to the district judiciary from 2007 to 2017.



Understanding affirmative action for representation in the district judiciary

This section of the paper presents an analysis of the reservations and relaxations applicable at the time of direct appointments to ensure representation and diversity in the district judiciary. This section begins by highlighting some key findings based on the applicable law and the extent of inclusion/exclusion in existing state mandates, then tracks caste diversity in district judiciary appointments from 2018 to 2024, examines the nature of other reservations available (other than caste-based reservations), and concludes with the relaxations provided to reserved categories.

Key findings based on applicable laws

The Annexure to this paper provides a detailed breakdown of the applicable law in each state. In terms of the ease of identifying and locating the applicable law, we found that **only 15 states appear to provide a copy of the current law on an official government or court website, either consolidated or with all amendments attached as shown in Figure 1.**³² However, only 6 of them provide the date as of which the document was last updated.³³

In terms of understanding the reservations applicable in a state, we found that only 13 states³⁴ appear to make the applicable reservations clear by stipulating them in the Judicial Service Rules. 15 other states³⁵ mention that reservations will be as per state/central government policy or orders, making it difficult for one to understand the current state of reservations in the absence of a clear accessible source for such information. **Three states, Goa, Maharashtra, and Sikkim do not appear to provide for any reservations.**

Figure 1: States where the current applicable laws are accessible on official websites.

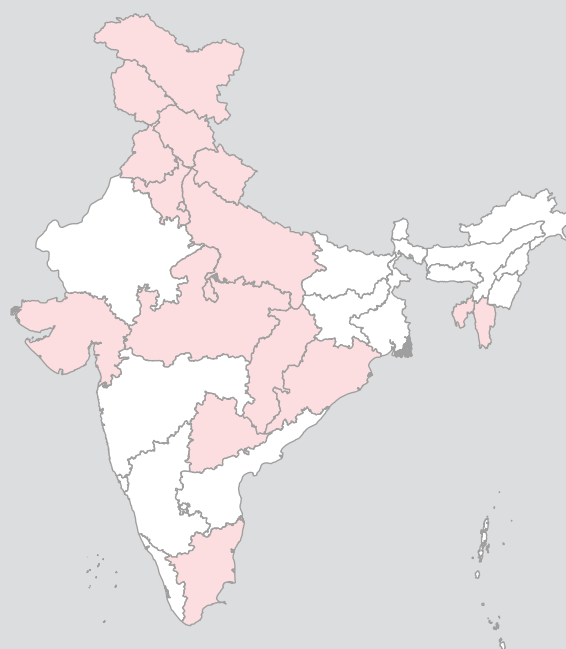


Table 1 provides an overview of the reservations provided for in the applicable laws. Any reservations provided through government notifications or orders have not been captured in this table. Further, for states where the Judicial Service Rules mention specific categories and lay down that reservations will be as per applicable state or central laws, only those categories that are specifically mentioned in the Judicial Service Rules have been captured in the table, although other categories may also be mentioned in other laws or state orders.

³² Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

³³ Delhi, Haryana, Odisha, Punjab, Tripura, and Uttarakhand.

³⁴ Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, and West Bengal.

³⁵ Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

Table 1. Overview of reservations as per state Judicial Service Rules

State	SC	ST	BC, EBC, OBC, SEBC ^a	EWS ^b	PwD	Women	Others
Andhra Pradesh	SC	ST	BC		PwD	Women	MS ^c
Arunachal Pradesh		ST					
Assam	SC	ST				Women	
Bihar	SC	ST	EBC, BC	EWS	PwD	Women	
Chhattisgarh	SC	ST	OBC	EWS	PwD	Women	
Delhi	SC	ST			PwD		ES
Goa							
Gujarat	SC	ST				Women	
Haryana	SC	ST	BC				
Himachal Pradesh	SC	ST	BC		PwD		
Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh ^d							
Jharkhand	SC	ST	OBC				
Karnataka	SC	ST	OBC		PwD		
Kerala	SC	ST	OBC				
Madhya Pradesh	SC	ST	OBC		PwD		
Maharashtra							
Manipur	SC	ST	OBC		PwD		
Meghalaya	SC	ST	OBC				
Mizoram ^e							
Nagaland	SC	ST			PwD		Indigenous inhabitants
Odisha	SC	ST	SEBC		PwD	Women	
Puducherry	SC	ST	OBC		PwD		
Punjab	SC	ST	OBC				
Rajasthan	SC	ST	OBC, more BC	EWS	PwD	Women	ES
Sikkim							
Tamil Nadu	SC	ST	BC, BC muslims, most BC and deno- tified com- munities		PwD	Women	
Telangana	SC	ST	SEBC	EWS	PwD	Women	MS
Tripura	SC	ST			PwD		ES
Uttar Pradesh	SC	ST			PwD	Women	
Uttarakhand	SC	ST	OBC				
West Bengal	SC	ST					

a 'BC' means Backward Classes, 'EBC' means Extremely Backward Class, 'OBC' means Other Backward Classes, and 'SEBC' means Socially and Educationally Backward Classes.

b 'EWS' means Economically Weaker Sections.

c 'MS' means meritorious sportspersons and 'ES' means ex-servicemen.

d Please refer to the Annexure - rules, directions, or orders applicable to government officers apply.

e Please refer to the Annexure - the reservation policy of the state civil services applies.

As seen in Table 1, SC and ST are the two categories most consistently provided with reservations, along with BC following closely. Although there exists a mandate for inclusion for PwD³⁶, we found that not all state Judicial Service Rules incorporate reservations for them. **A few states also provide reservations for SEBC or EWS, women, ex-servicemen, and meritorious sportspersons; Nagaland additionally reserves posts for indigenous inhabitants.** We additionally found that a few states reserve seats for transgenders, rural candidates, freedom fighters, Pahari Speaking People (PSP), residents living near the International Border/Line of Actual Control, etc. in their recruitment notifications. Please refer to the Annexure for more details about these states and categories.

Extent of inclusion/exclusion

Most states provide reservations across nearly all the major demographic categories including gender, caste, disability status, etc., however a few states exclude one or more of these categories. Such exclusion may be due to states having unique demographic characteristics which reserve a large percentage of their vacancies for certain groups while excluding others, as in the case of most northeastern states where there are a larger number of persons belonging to scheduled tribes.³⁷

However, there are a few states which exclude groups having significant population shares from their reservation pool. Delhi, for instance, excludes the Backward Classes from availing reservation benefits in both

Civil Judge and District Judge recruitments while including the SC/ST categories. In 2015, the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) flagged this omission, stating that reservation must be provided in the Delhi Judicial Service and in the Delhi Higher Judicial Service as per the constitutional mandate.³⁸ But no amendment since then has been effected to the Rules to include the OBCs.

Other states provide reservations to marginalised groups, but only in appointments to the post of Civil Judge (Junior Division), and are yet to introduce reservation policies for direct recruitments in their District Judge posts. In the states of Assam and Jharkhand, there is no reservation altogether in direct appointments to District Judge posts. In 2018, the Jharkhand High Court had, in principle, agreed to grant caste-based reservation to District Judges in the state.³⁹ However, the reservation policy was not accordingly modified by the state. A petition was filed in the Supreme Court in 2022 challenging the absence of a reservation policy for SC/ST/OBC groups, but the Court dismissed the petition on the ground that the recruitment process was already underway.⁴⁰

Goa, Sikkim, and Maharashtra notched up the level of exclusion further by not providing for any reservation benefit in either Civil Judge or District Judge recruitment. The RTI query addressed to the Bombay High Court by JALDI yielded an ambiguous response which mentioned that caste-based reservation is under consideration by the High Court. Whether

³⁶ Section 34, Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

³⁷ Katharina Buchholz, 'North-East is India's Tribal Stronghold' (*Statista*, 10 May, 2023) <https://www.statista.com/chart/29948/recognized-tribes-in-india/?srsltid=AfmBOoqQQkXfmFXaU_YDGDrdleGI3pBGPuZQLUCI1lQ2dwTobifl4W> accessed 10 March 2026.

³⁸ Subodh Ghildiyal, 'No OBC Quota in Judiciary in Delhi: Panel' *Times of India* (6 November 2015) <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/no-obc-quota-in-judiciary-in-delhi-panel/articleshow/49679950.cms>> accessed 25 October 2025.

³⁹ Sohini Chowdhury, 'Approach High Court': Supreme Court Refuses To Entertain Plea Challenging Exclusion Of SC/ST Reservation In Jharkhand District Judges Appointment' (*LiveLaw*, 13 September 2022) <<https://www.livelaw.in/top-stories/supreme-court-district-judges-appointment-jharkhand-hc-sc-st-obc-reservation-209114>> accessed 25 October 2025.

⁴⁰ Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Educational And Cultural Trust v. Hon'ble High Court Jharkhand And Ors. WP(C) No. 405/2022.

this refers to the dispute pending in the Court over the Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act, 2024 or whether the Court is considering a fresh reservation policy reserving seats for all entitled caste categories, is unclear at the time of writing this paper.

Additionally, while the paper aims to identify different groups that are provided reservations, we note that some states further specify that only domiciled persons can claim such reservations. For example, only Arunachal Pradesh STs are eligible for the reserved ST posts⁴¹; only domiciled persons may claim the reserved posts in Madhya Pradesh⁴²; and reservations in Uttarakhand apply to candidates belonging to the state of Uttarakhand⁴³.

Tracking caste diversity in appointments

The judiciary has been trying to achieve inclusivity in the institution through instituting a reservation policy and specifying the percentage of seats to be reserved for persons belonging to marginalised backgrounds. However, such an attempt would remain incomplete if the impact of the policy is not tracked or the policy is not put into action in an effective manner. Inconsistency in filling up of reserved posts is a broader problem in India affecting nearly every sector, as a result of which reservation policies have failed to achieve their intended objective of increasing the representation of vulnerable groups in public administration.⁴⁴ The scenario is not much different in the case of the district judiciary, looking at the pattern of direct appointments to the posts of Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge, as found by responses to the RTIs filed by JALDI.

While this paper highlighted problems with the lack of publicly available data regarding judicial diversity, we found that challenges persisted even when RTI applications were filed seeking information regarding appointments. The responses to RTIs filed by JALDI, in a lot of cases, failed to yield the desired information about the numbers of SC/ST/OBC judges appointed in each year between 2018 and 2024 to the posts of Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment). **The Delhi High Court responded that they did not maintain the requisite data, while the Bombay High Court stated, “The information sought by you is vague, presumptive and interrogative in nature, which cannot be termed as an ‘information’ as per Section 2(f) of the Right to Information Act, 2005.” The Telangana High Court stated, “...as there is not larger public interest in the information sought, hence, the same cannot be provided.”** Further, other High Courts like Gujarat simply provided appointment lists without segregating the same based on caste category. Some states also did not provide information concerning either one of the two posts in question. A few other states like Andhra Pradesh and Bihar did not provide any data on caste diversity. Based on the RTI responses that provided data regarding appointments, this section of the paper highlights diversity in district judiciary appointments.

Based on the RTI responses, the number of appointees between 2018 to 2024, belonging to the SC, ST, and OBC categories, has been provided in Tables 2 and 3.

⁴¹ See Rule 8 of the Arunachal Pradesh Judicial Service Rules, 2006.

⁴² See Rule 6(3) of the Madhya Pradesh Higher Judicial Service (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 2017.

⁴³ See Rule 6 of the Uttarakhand Judicial Service Rules, 2005.

⁴⁴ Vani Borooah, Amaresh Dubey and Sriya Iyer, ‘The Effectiveness of Jobs Reservation: Caste, Religion, and Economic Status in India’ (2007) 38(3) *Development and Change* <<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2007.00418.x>>.

Fig 2-4: Proportion of SC, ST and OBC persons appointed as Civil Judge (Junior Division) from 2018 to 2024, as a percentage of the total number of persons appointed during that period

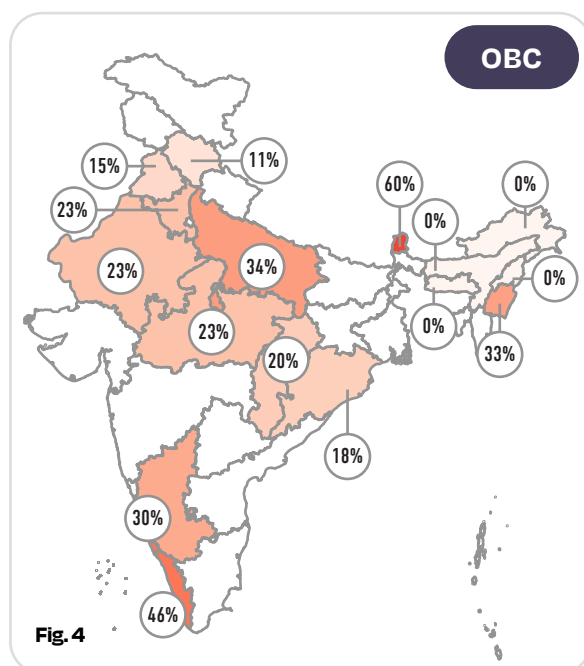
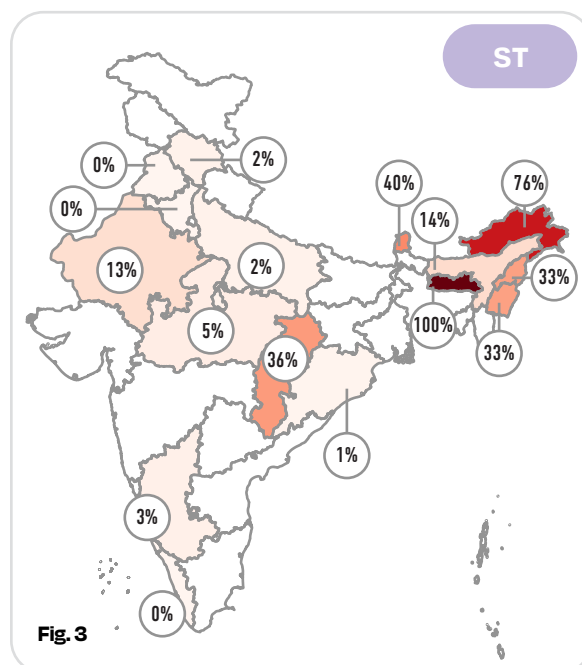
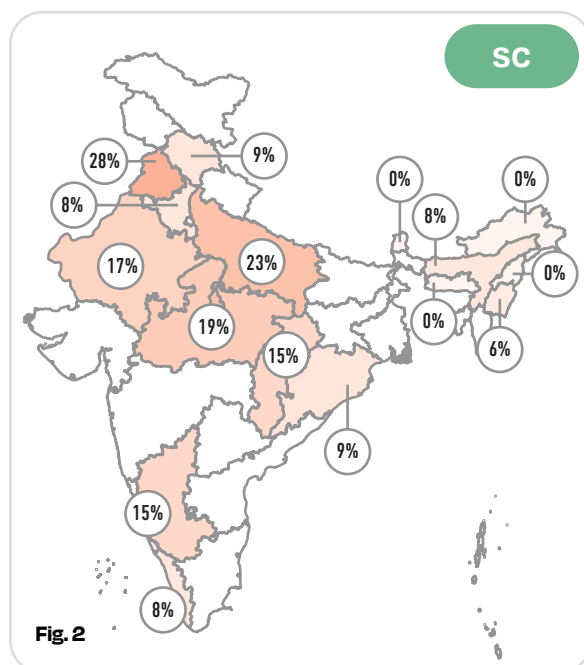
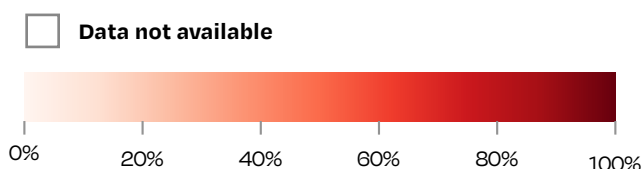


Table 2: Number of SC, ST, OBC, and total number of candidates appointed as Civil Judge (Junior Division) from 2018 to 2024, per state.

State	SC	ST	OBC	Total appointed
AR	0	16	0	21
AS	10	18	0	127
CH	29	69	38	193
HR	12	0	33	144
HP	4	1	5	44
KT	49	11	98	328
KL	15	0	82	177
MP	103	28	123	536
MN	1	6	6	18
ME	0	15	0	15
NL	0	1	0	3
OD*	26	4	56	304
PB	73	0	39	259
RJ	53	41	71	311
SK	0	2	3	5
UP	214	16	309	912

* The RTI response for Orissa stated that persons were appointed under an OBC/SEBC social category. They have been considered as OBC in this table.

Abbreviations used in Figures 2 to 7.

Andhra Pradesh (AP) • Arunachal Pradesh (AR) • Assam (AS) • Bihar (BR) • Chhattisgarh (CG) • Goa (GA) • Gujarat (GJ) • Haryana (HR) • Himachal Pradesh (HP) • Jharkhand (JH) • Karnataka (KA) • Kerala (KL) • Madhya Pradesh (MP) • Maharashtra (MH) • Manipur (MN) • Meghalaya (ML) • Mizoram (MZ) • Nagaland (NL) • Odisha (OD) • Punjab (PB) • Rajasthan (RJ) • Sikkim (SK) • Tamil Nadu (TN) • Telangana (TG) • Tripura (TR) • Uttar Pradesh (UP) • Uttarakhand (UK) • West Bengal (WB)

Fig 5-7: Proportion of SC, ST and OBC persons appointed as District Judge (Direct Recruitment) from 2018 to 2024, as a percentage of the total number of persons appointed during that period

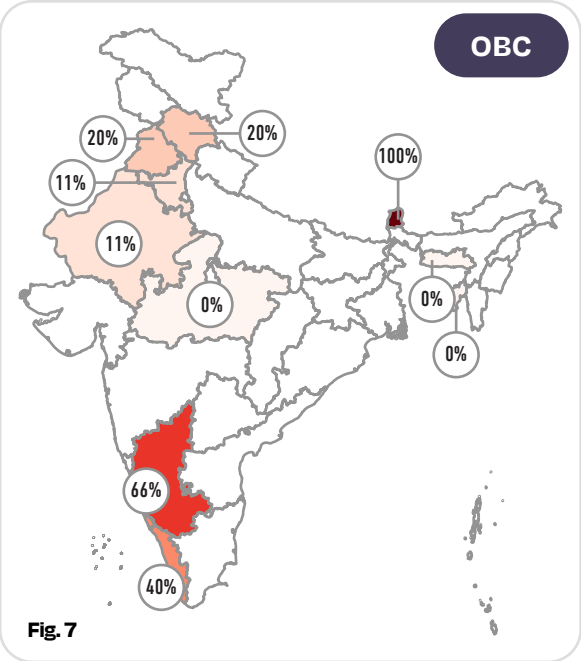
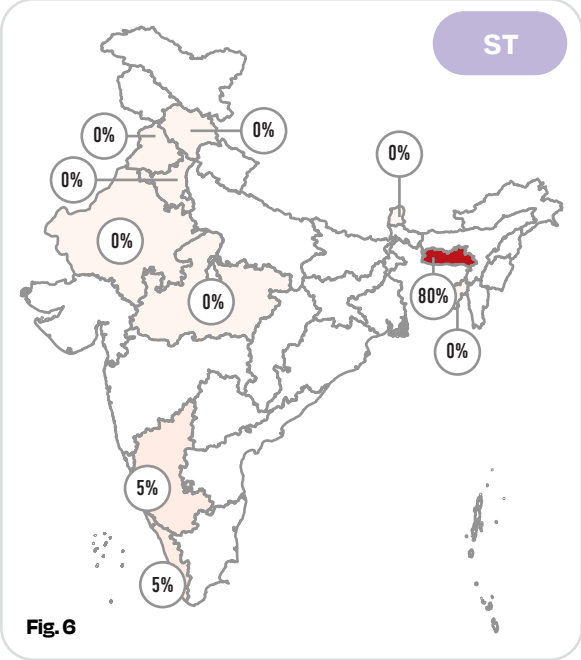
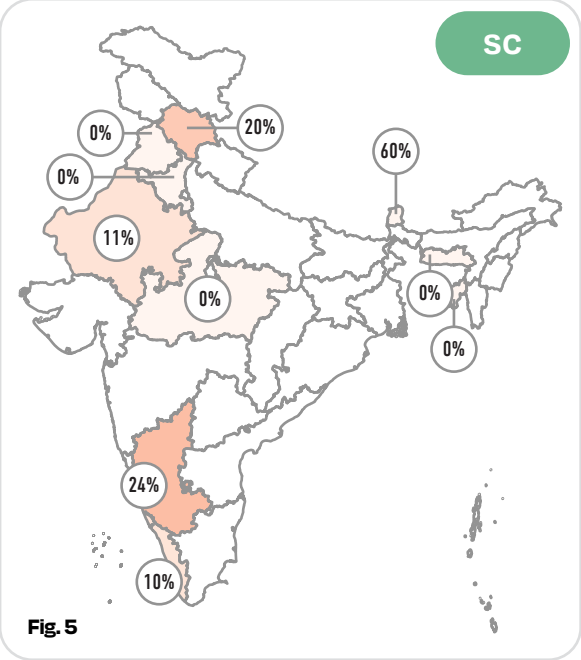
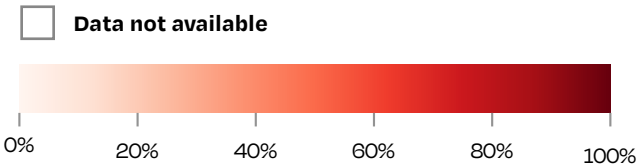


Table 3: Number of SC, ST, OBC, and total number of candidates appointed as District Judge (Direct recruitment from the Bar) from 2018 to 2024, per state.

State**	SC	ST	OBC	Total appointed
HR	0	0	1	9
HP	1	0	1	5
KT	15	3	41	62
KL	2	1	8	20
MP	0	0	0	5
ME	0	4	0	5
PB	0	0	1	5
RJ	1	0	1	9
SK*	0	0	3	3
TR	0	0	0	5

* The RTI response for Sikkim stated that “1 OBC and 2 “ST/OBC” were appointed. They have been considered as OBC in this table.

** While the RTI response for Manipur did provide some information, there were discrepancies between the total number of appointments and the break-up provided and the numbers have therefore been excluded in this table.

Abbreviations used in Figures 2 to 7.
 Andhra Pradesh (AP) • Arunachal Pradesh (AR) • Assam (AS) • Bihar (BR) • Chhattisgarh (CG) • Goa (GA) • Gujarat (GJ) • Haryana (HR) • Himachal Pradesh (HP) • Jharkhand (JH) • Karnataka (KA) • Kerala (KL) • Madhya Pradesh (MP) • Maharashtra (MH) • Manipur (MN) • Meghalaya (ML) • Mizoram (MZ) • Nagaland (NL) • Odisha (OD) • Punjab (PB) • Rajasthan (RJ) • Sikkim (SK) • Tamil Nadu (TN) • Telangana (TG) • Tripura (TR) • Uttar Pradesh (UP) • Uttarakhand (UK) • West Bengal (WB)

Figures 2 to 4 and Figures 5 to 7 depict the total number of SC, ST, and OBC persons appointed as Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment) respectively, from 2018 to 2024, as a percentage of the total number of persons appointed during that period.

The number of appointments in the reserved categories alone however may not tell us much without considering the total number of vacancies in these categories. It is therefore important that we take a look at this data in light of diversity vacancies, the data for which has been compiled by the IJR 2025. The IJR found that, except for Karnataka, no state meets all their SC, ST, and OBC quotas.⁴⁵

Let us have a closer look at the diversity in some of the states that fell short of adequate representation from marginalised communities. For example, as per the IJR, the number of working SC, ST, and OBC judges as a percentage of the reserved seats in Himachal Pradesh was 56%, 78% and 40% respectively, as of February 2025. This shows that there are significant vacancies in reserved posts that warrant greater representation in appointments. However, the number of persons from the SC, ST and OBC categories appointed to the Civil Judge (Junior Division) posts in Himachal Pradesh between 2018 and 2024 are 4, 1 and 5, respectively. As a proportion of the total number appointees in this period, 9%, 2%, and 11% of them were from the SC, ST and OBC categories respectively. As far as District Judge appointments are concerned, one of the five people appointed belonged to the SC community, and the rest of the categories saw no appointments. This shows that despite a large number of vacancies in reserved posts, the number of appointments made for such posts was far fewer. One may wonder if this is representative of the general judicial vacancies in the state, however IJR 2025 found that vacancies in the district judiciary of Himachal

Pradesh stood at 10.6%, demonstrating that there are disproportionately higher vacancies in reserved posts compared to the total vacancies in the state.

The IJR had also found that Odisha was one of the states with the lowest diversity representation; it found that only 18% of the reserved SC judge posts, 2% of the ST judge posts, and 64% of the OBC judge posts were filled in the state. If one compares the percentage of reservations for the SC, ST, and OBC categories in Odisha as shown in the Annexure (16.25% of posts are reserved for SCs, 22.50% for STs, and 11.25 for OBC/SEBCs), with the number of appointments to the reserved posts as shown in Figures 2 to 4 (9% were SCs, 1% were STs, and 18% were OBC/SEBCs), it can be seen that Odisha fell short of proportionally appointing SC and ST candidates. This means that despite having a significant number of reserved posts lying vacant, the state has been unable to proportionally appoint candidates and fill the posts.

Across the country however, the problem is particularly acute in the case of the STs as the IJR reveals that for a number of states the ratio of the actual to reserved ST posts in the district judiciary falls below 70%. This figure is again corroborated by the low number of appointments to the ST category across states as evident in Figures 3 and 6. The data pertaining to appointments thus throws up a worrying picture about the prioritisation of diversity in the district judiciary. Despite making legal provisions for caste-based reservation, states are failing to proactively encourage the upliftment and filling up of reserved vacancies.

Looking beyond caste

As mentioned earlier, there are vulnerable groups in our country whose interests have not received adequate attention for a long time. Affirmative action measures like res-

⁴⁵ 'India Justice Report: Ranking States on the Capacity of Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid' (n 7) p.107.

ervations for these groups have either been introduced only recently or continue to elude them. One such group is PwD. **Despite the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ('RPwD Act') providing for a minimum horizontal reservation of 4% for PwD, the reservation policies of many states in appointments to the district judiciary fail to adhere to this requirement, often allotting a lesser share of reservations or excluding the PwD category altogether.** The Judicial Service Rules of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh (for District Judges) and Manipur, provide for reservation shares to the PwD category lesser than the 4% prescribed in the 2016 Act. The failure of the state governments and High Courts to align their reservation policy with the mandate of the 2016 Act denies persons with disability the equality of opportunity, despite the enactment of a special legislation providing for affirmative action to the community.

Even states that have brought their policies in line with the 4% requirement have arbitrarily excluded certain classes of persons with disability from reservation benefits. In some states (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Tripura), only persons with locomotor or orthopaedic disability are included within the ambit of the provisions, to the exclusion of persons with visual impairment and hearing disabilities. The Supreme Court recently struck down one such provision in the Madhya Pradesh Judicial Service (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 1994 which excluded persons with visual impairment from the reservation policy in direct recruitment to Civil Judge (Junior Division) posts. Labelling the exclusion as discriminatory, the Court observed that it interfered with substantive equality and that no person could be denied consideration solely on the basis of their disability.⁴⁶ A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) petition is pending with the Supreme Court

calling attention to the lack of reservation for the PwD category in the district judiciaries of many states.⁴⁷

In terms of the number of judges with disabilities, the Department of Justice is said to have a dashboard providing such data for the district judiciary.⁴⁸ However, it has been noted that there were discrepancies in the data,⁴⁹ and as of December 2025 the dashboard was no longer available on the website.

Apart from persons with disability, some states like Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Telangana and Tripura, also provide for reservation benefits to meritorious sportspersons and ex-servicemen, including commissioned officers.

Relaxations provided for reserved categories

In addition to providing reservations for marginalised communities in direct appointments to posts in the district judiciary, nearly all states provide for some form of relaxations in relation to the examinations conducted for selection of candidates. These broadly include:

1. Relaxation in examination fees;
2. Relaxation in upper age limit to appear in the examination; and
3. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks to appear in the written examination and in the viva voce.

Some states additionally provide relaxations relating to the prior experience required, gross professional income required to qualify, allowing a higher number of candidates from reserved categories to appear for the viva voce, etc.

⁴⁶ In re Recruitment of Visually Impaired in Judicial Services v. The Registrar General, The High Court of Madhya Pradesh 2025 SCC OnLine SC 481.

⁴⁷ Dr. Renga Ramanujam v. Union of India W.P.(C) No. 000222 - / 2024.

⁴⁸ 'Dashboard' (Department of Justice) <<https://dashboard.doj.gov.in/>> accessed 13 March 2026.

⁴⁹ PACTA 'Access to Justice: For Persons with Disabilities in India' (n 7) 252.

Similar to the reservation policies, there is a lack of uniformity among states in providing for these relaxations, both in terms of the specific relaxations granted as well as the eligible categories. As seen in the Annexure, nearly all states provide the SC and ST communities the aforementioned relaxations, and some states also provide such relaxations to the OBC and PwD categories.

Conclusion

The paper reveals that although steps have been taken to ensure diversity in India's district judiciary, the efforts still fall short of fully achieving their intended objectives. This has implications for the social composition of the judiciary as a whole. As noted earlier, the High Courts and the Supreme Court continue to remain largely homogeneous in terms of demographic representation. The lack of diversity in the district courts only exacerbates the situation. A more diverse district judiciary however could result in a higher chance of judges belonging to disadvantaged groups getting elevated to the High Courts and the Supreme Court, thereby resulting in a more reflective judiciary. In this regard, we present two key recommendations for the judiciary to enhance its diversity and ensure representation on the Bench: better documentation, and addressing inclusion.

Our findings reveal the urgent need to improve data keeping and documentation practices concerning diversity in the judiciary. First, both State departments and High Courts must maintain digitised, searchable copies of relevant statutes, Judicial Service Rules, and recruitment and gazette notifications. It would go a long way in making available in one place, the information relevant to candidates appearing for direct recruitment to Civil Judge or District Judge posts. In addition to furthering transparency, such a measure would also clarify the exact nature of the benefits that marginalised communities are entitled to. **Further, transparency in data regarding appointments, disaggregated on the basis of caste, gender, disability, and other reserved groups is necessary to track the extent to which reserved vacancies are being filled.**

Secondly, it is also vital that problems of inclusion be addressed. This includes re-examining both reservations and other relax-

ations to ensure they are provided in an equitable manner in accordance with constitutional and statutory mandates. The interests of persons with disability must be accommodated by aligning the Judicial Service Rules of all states with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. **Genuine inclusivity must also be reflected in periodic appointments to fill reserved vacancies as well as measures to uplift communities to level the playing field.**

Annexure

Nature of reservations and relaxations for direct appointments to the district judiciary, state-wise

The meanings for abbreviations used in Table 1 of this Annexure have been provided below:

1. 'BC' means Backward Classes
2. 'OBC' means Other Backward Classes
3. 'PwBD' means Persons with Benchmarked Disabilities
4. 'PwD' means Persons with Disabilities
5. 'SC' means Scheduled Castes
6. 'ST' means Scheduled Tribes

In the column mentioning the applicable law in Table 1, links have been provided to official sources when the website appears to have updated versions of the applicable law. For others, updates were found on SCC Online or Manupatra.

Table 1

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Andhra Pradesh	Rule 7 of the Andhra Pradesh State Judicial Service Rules, 2007 Rule 22 of the Andhra Pradesh State and Subordinate Services Rules, 1996	Out of a unit of 100: (a) 15 for SC (b) 6 for ST (c) 29 for BC ⁵⁰ A horizontal reservation of 33.3% for women in SC, ST, BC, physically handicapped, EWS, and open competition ⁵¹ A horizontal reservation of 4% for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities ⁵² A horizontal reservation of 2% for meritorious sportspersons ⁵³	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, and BC. 2. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks in written examination and minimum marks in viva voce for SC, ST, and BC. 3. Relaxation in fee amount for SC and ST.
Arunachal Pradesh	Rule 8 of the Arunachal Pradesh Judicial Service Rules, 2006	80% for ST	Munsiff, and Judicial Magistrate, District Judge (Direct Recruitment from Bar) ⁵⁴	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for ST. 2. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks in written examination for ST. 3. Relaxation in fee amount for ST.

⁵⁰ See GO MS No. 674 dated 30 Oct 2008.

⁵¹ See GO MS No. 63 dated 17 April 2018; Also, GO MS No. 77 dated 2 August 2023.

⁵² See GO MS No. 77 dated 2 August 2023.

⁵³ See GO MS No. 77 dated 2 August 2023.

⁵⁴ However, the Gauhati High Court's response, dated 14 May 2025, to JALDI's RTI application states that there exists no reservations (by caste or for women) in appointments to the position of District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar).

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Assam	Rule 8 of the Assam Judicial Service Rules, 2003 Section 4 of The Assam Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Posts) Act, 1978 Section 4 of The Assam Women (Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Posts) Act, 2005	7% for SC 10% for ST (Plains) 5% for ST (Hills) 30% for women (inclusive of other reservations provided statutorily or otherwise) ⁵⁵	Munsiff and Judicial Magistrate ⁵⁶	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC and ST. 2. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks in written examination for ST. 3. Relaxation in fee amount for SC and ST.

⁵⁵ Recent advertisements for recruitments show no reserved posts for PwD candidates in Grade III, but show reserved posts for PwD in Grade I (District Judge). See Advertisement No. HC.XXXVII-30/2025/37/R. Cell dated 7 February 2025, <https://ghconline.gov.in/Recruitment/Notification-07-02-2025-1.pdf> (accessed 16 February 2026); Advertisement No, HC.XXXVU-49/2025/258 /R. Cell dated 20 August 2025, <https://ghconline.gov.in/Recruitment/Notification-20-08-2025.pdf> (accessed 16 February 2026).

⁵⁶ The Gauhati High Court's response, dated 14 May 2025, to JALDI's RTI application states that there exists no reservations (by caste or for women) in appointments to the position of District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar).

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Bihar	Rule 3A of the Bihar Civil Service (Judicial Branch) (Recruitment) Rules, 1955 Rule 4A of the Bihar Superior Judicial Service Rules, 1951	16% for SC 1% for ST 21% for Extremely Backward Class 12% for BC 35% horizontal reservation for women 1% horizontal reservation for orthopedically disabled candidates 10% for economically weaker sections	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Limit on number of eligible candidates to be admitted to the exam does not apply to SC and ST candidates. All eligible SC and ST candidates can appear in the examination (only for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 2. Relaxation in upper age limit for reserved categories (only for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 3. Higher number of chances for appearing in the examination for reserved categories (only for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 4. Relaxation in the minimum qualifying marks for the test for reserved categories. 5. Provision for admitting SC and ST candidates to the viva voce even though they may not have cleared the minimum qualifying marks, under exceptional circumstances (only for Civil Judge (Junior Division)).

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Chhattisgarh	Rule 6 of the Chhattisgarh Lower Judicial Service (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 2006 read with Chhattisgarh Lok Seva (Anusuchit Jatiyon, Anusuchit JanJati Aur Anya Pichhade Vargon Ke Liye Aarakshan) Adhiniyam, 1994 Rule 6 of Chhattisgarh Higher Judicial Service (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 2006	13% for SC 32% for ST 27% for OBC 4% for EWS 4% for the following persons: (a) 1% for persons with low vision and blindness (b) 1% for persons with hard of hearing excluding deaf (c) 1% for persons with locomotor disability, leprosy cured person, dwarfism, acid attack victims, cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy (d) 1% for persons with autism and multiple disabilities, from amongst persons under clauses (a) to (c) in the posts identified for each disability 30% horizontal reservation for women	Civil Judge (Junior Division)	Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, OBC, and women.
		15% for SC 18% for ST 14% for OBC 30% horizontal reservation for women	District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks in written examination as well as in viva voce for SC, ST, and OBC. 2. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, and OBC.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Delhi	Rule 28 of the Delhi Judicial Service Rules, 1970 Rule 22 of the Delhi Higher Judicial Service Rules, 1970	Reservations for SC, ST and PwD candidates (as per RPwD Act) and to be provided by law or orders issued by the Central Government. Additionally, reservations for ex-servicemen including Emergency Commissioned Officers and Short Service Commissioned Officers to be provided by law or orders issued by the Central Government (for Civil Judge (Junior Division))	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, and OBC. 2. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks in written examination as well as in viva-voce for SC, ST, and PwD. 3. Relaxation in fee amount for SC and ST.
Goa	Goa Judicial Service Rules, 2013	No provision for reservation		1. Relaxation in upper age limit for communities recognised as backward by the state government. 2. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks in written examination for SC and ST. 3. Relaxation in prior experience for SC, ST, and other Special Categories of persons in accordance with orders issued by the central government (only for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)). 4. Relaxation in fee amount for SC and ST.
Gujarat	Rule 7 and 7A of Gujarat State Judicial Service Rules, 2005	Reservations for SC, ST and other categories, including women, will be in accordance with orders of the state government for reservation as adopted by the High Court ⁵⁷	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC), PwBD, and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). 2. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for viva voce for SC, ST, SEBC, PwBD, and EWS. 3. Higher number of candidates, vis a vis number of vacancies, are eligible for viva voce from PwBD category.

⁵⁷ Recruitment advertisements for Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge posts provide reservations for SC, ST, SEBC and EWS categories, and horizontal reservations for women and PwBD. See <https://hc-ojas.gujarat.gov.in/AdvtDetailFiles/999_999_2025_1_30_567.pdf> and <https://hc-ojas.gujarat.gov.in/AdvtDetailFiles/999_999_2025_7_25_765.pdf> accessed 4 March 2026.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Haryana	Rule 11 of Part C of the Punjab Civil Service (Judicial Branch) Rules, 1951 as applied to state of Haryana	The selection committee to appoint persons belonging to SC, ST, and BC in a manner to be determined by the committee ⁵⁸	Civil Judge (Junior Division)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, and BC. 2. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for viva voce, and in aggregate marks secured (main written examination and viva voce) for SC, ST, and BC.
	Rule 18 of the Haryana Superior Judicial Service Rules, 2007	Reservations for SC, ST, and BC as per orders by the state government ⁵⁹	District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in gross professional income as qualifying criterion for SC, ST, BC, physically challenged persons and ex-servicemen. ⁶⁰

⁵⁸ However, as per an advertisement for recruitment to the post of Civil Judge (Junior Division), posts are reserved for SC, BC, EWS, ex-servicemen and PwBD. See Advertisement No. 1 of 2024 dated 1 January 2024 <https://hpsc.gov.in/Portals/0/Advt_01_2024_HCS_JD_01_01_2024.pdf> accessed 16 February 2026.

⁵⁹ Additionally, we note that a recent advertisement for recruitments to the Haryana Superior Judicial Service reserves posts for PwBD (blindness and low vision; locomotor disability), and ex-servicemen <https://highcourtchd.gov.in/sub_pages/left_menu/recruitments/judicialofficers/openings/advts_hsj_01062025_3c58f.pdf> accessed 20 January 2026.

⁶⁰ Additionally, we note that a recent advertisement for recruitments to the Haryana Superior Judicial Service provides a relaxation in the examination fee payable by SC, BC, economically weaker sections, ex-servicemen, PwBD, and women <https://highcourtchd.gov.in/sub_pages/left_menu/recruitments/judicialofficers/openings/advts_hsj_01062025_3c58f.pdf> accessed 20 January 2026.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Himachal Pradesh	Rule 5 of Himachal Pradesh Judicial Service Rules, 2004	Reservations for SC, ST, BC, and physically disabled as per orders by the state government 3% reservation for persons: (a) suffering from blindness of low vision provided that the disability is not 75% and more; (b) suffering from hearing impairment, provided that such impairment is not of 60 decibel or more after hearing aid / surgical correction; or (c) suffering from locomotor disability.	Civil Judge (Junior Division) ⁶¹	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for all reserved categories (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 2. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, and BC (for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)).
Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh	Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Judicial Service Rules, 2025 Jammu and Kashmir Higher Judicial Service Rules, 2009	Rules, directions, or orders applicable to government servants holding corresponding posts in connection with the affairs of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will apply ⁶²	Civil Judge (Junior Division)	

61 For District Judges, the Rules simply provide that “Reservation in direct recruitment shall be as per Model Roster for cadre strength up to 31 posts.” However a recruitment advertisement discloses reserved seats for “ST” and “OBC” for the post of Additional District Judge. See <https://www.hphighcourt.gov.in/pdf/notice_31032025_1.pdf> accessed 4 March 2026.

62 Recruitment advertisement for Civil Judge (Junior Division) provides reservation to SC, ST, OBC, EWS, Residents of Backward Areas (RBA), Pahari Speaking People (PSP), “Social Caste” Line of Actual Control/International Border (LAC/IB) categories. See <<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://jkpsc.nic.in/Pdf/Downloader1.ashx%3Fnid%3D15366%26type%3Dn&ved=2ahUKEwig7b6du5eTAxWda2wGHYwvE4UQFnoECBsQAQ&usg=AOvVaw28LD5vVvjDPqafMoVShCLP>> accessed 11 March 2026.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
		Rules, directions, or orders applicable to officers of corresponding posts in the Indian Administrative Service and serving in connection with the affairs of Union of India	District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, and OBC. 2. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for viva voce for SC and ST.
Jharkhand	Rule 4 of the Jharkhand Judicial Service (Recruitment) Rules, 2004 Jharkhand Superior Judicial Service (Recruitment, Appointment and Condition of Service) Rules, 2001	Reservations for SC, ST, and OBC as per the Act, rules, and regulations regarding the reservation of vacancies in posts and services under the state ⁶³	Civil Judge (Junior Division)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC and ST (applicable to both Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)). 2. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for SC and ST (applicable to both Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)).
Karnataka	Rule 5(4) of Karnataka Judicial Service (Recruitment) Rules, 2004	Reservations for SC, ST, and OBC as per orders passed by the state government ⁶⁴ 4% for PwBD	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, and ex-servicemen (for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)). 2. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, BC, and ex-servicemen (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 3. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks in examination and viva voce for SC and ST. 4. Relaxation in fees payable by SC, ST, Category I of BC, and physically handicapped.

⁶³ Additionally, an advertisement for recruitments to Civil Judge (Junior Division) shows reservations for EWS, women, PwD, persons from primitive tribes, and persons from a sports background. See Advertisement No. 22/2023, <https://www.jpsc.gov.in/data/Advertisement_22_23_dated_14_08_2023.pdf> accessed 16 February 2026.

⁶⁴ Regarding reservations for women, the Karnataka High Court's responses dated 23 April 2025 and 9 May 2025 to JALDI's RTI applications provide that the reservations for women shall be as per the reservation policy of the state government; See Government Order No. DPAR 02 SeHiMa 2023, dated 08.03.2023, <<https://dpar.karnataka.gov.in/storage/pdf-files/KCS%20GR%20Rules/%E0%B2%B8%E0%B2%BF%E0%B2%86%E0%B2%B8%E0%B3%81%E0%B2%8702%E0%B2%B8%E0%B3%86%E0%B2%B9%E0%B2%BF%E0%B2%AE2023DATED08032023.pdf>> accessed 16 February 2026; Recent notifications for recruitments show posts reserved for SC, ST, OBC, women, rural candidates, Kannada-medium candidates, ex-servicemen, PwBD, and transgenders. See High Court of Karnataka Notification No. HCRB/CJR-1/2024, dated 10 February 2025 <https://judiciary.karnataka.gov.in/common_folder/notification//8187.pdf> accessed 20 January 2026; High Court of Karnataka Notification No. GOB(I) 8/2023, dated 19 October 2023 <<https://images.assettype.com/barandbench-kannada/2023-10/bec9dc87-332d-4bae-8007-bdad8a1fbca6/Notification.pdf>> accessed 20 January 2026.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Kerala	Rules 14-17 of the Kerala State and Subordinate Services Rules, 1958	Unit of appointment is 20, of which: (a) 2 for SCs and STs (b) 8 for OBCs Provided that for every 5 posts reserved for SCs and STs as a whole, 1 for ST and 4 for SC ⁶⁵	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, and OBC. 2. Relaxation in upper age limit for PwD 3. Relaxation in fees payable by SC and ST.
Madhya Pradesh	Rule 6 of The Madhya Pradesh Judicial Service (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules 1994 Rule 4 of the Madhya Pradesh Lok Seva (Anusuchit Jatiyon, Anusuchit Janjatiyon aur Anya Pichhade Vargon ke Liye Aarakshan) Adhiniyam, 1994 Rule 6 of the Madhya Pradesh Higher Judicial Service (Recruitment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 2017	16% for SC 20% for ST 27% for OBC 6% horizontal reservation for persons suffering from locomotor disability including leprosy cured, dwarfism, muscular dystrophy and acid attack victims, excluding cerebral palsy	Civil Judge (Junior Division)	1. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks in examination for SC and ST. 2. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, OBC, specially abled persons, and government servants. 3. Relaxation in requisite prior experience for SC and ST.

⁶⁵ As per a recruitment advertisement for Civil Judge (Junior Division), 4% horizontal reservation has been provided for PwBD in the regular vacancies. Also in the No Candidate Available (NCA) vacancies, seats for Muslims have been reserved. See Notification HCKL/1/2025-REC 4-HC Kerala dated 31 January 2025, <<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec022067e2650cd701ae71c68080f9db/uploads/2025/02/2025022565.pdf>> accessed 16 February 2026. Additionally, there are reserved vacancies in the No Candidate Available (NCA) class for Scheduled Caste converts to Christianity, Hindu Nadars and Latin Catholics/Anglo Indian categories in another recruitment advertisement for Civil Judge (Junior Division). See Notification HCKL/589/2024-REC4 dated 31 January 2024, <<https://hckrecruitment.keralacourts.in/hckrecruitment/Recruitment/notifications>> accessed 10 March 2026.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
		15% for SC 18% for ST 14% for OBC 2% for persons suffering from locomotor disabilities excluding those suffering from cerebral palsy	District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	
Maharashtra	Maharashtra Judicial Service Rules, 2008	No provision for reservation		1. Relaxation in marks for eligibility for viva voce for communities recognized as backward by the state government. 2. Age relaxation for communities recognised as backward by the state government.
Manipur	Rule 7 of the Manipur Judicial Service Rules, 2005	Reservations as per order or rules for representation of SC, ST, OBC as issued by the state government 3% for physically handicapped, namely blind, deaf or orthopaedically handicapped	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, and OBC. 2. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for viva voce for SC and ST (for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)). 3. Relaxation in fees for SC and ST.
Meghalaya	Rule 9 of Meghalaya Judicial Service Rules, 2006 Meghalaya Higher Judicial Services Rules, 2015	Reservations for SC, ST, and OBC to be determined by the state government from time to time ^{66 67}	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC and ST. 2. Relaxation in fee amount for SC/ST (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 3. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for personal interview for SC, ST, and OBC (for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)).

⁶⁶ Although a recruitment advertisement for Civil Judge (Junior Division)-cum-Judicial Magistrate First Class mentions that reservations for SC/ST and PwD categories are in accordance with the Meghalaya Govt's policy, the breakdown in vacancies that it provides, only covers the Khasi-Jaintia and Garo categories. See Advertisement No: HCM.11/27/2024-Rect/20 dated 17 February 2026 <<https://meghalayahighcourt.nic.in/sites/default/files/recruitment/R208.pdf>> accessed 9 March 2026.

⁶⁷ The High Court of Meghalaya in its response to JALDI's RTI application, dated 30 April 2025, provided the reservation policy of the state government whereby 40% of vacancies in posts and services are reserved for Khasis and Jaintias, 40% for the Garos and 5% for other Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Mizoram	Rule 29 of the Mizoram Judicial Service Rules, 2006	Conditions of service for which no express provisions have been made in the Rules, are governed by the rules and orders applicable to the State Civil Services ⁶⁸	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for ST (for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)). 2. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC and ST (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 3. Relaxation in qualifying marks for viva voce for SC and ST. 4. Relaxation in fees for SC and ST.
Nagaland	Rule 8 of the Nagaland Judicial Service Rules, 2006	Reservations for SC and ST as per state government orders issued from time to time ⁶⁹ Reservation for physically handicapped persons shall be maintained as per the RPwD Act vide state government notification A 125 point roster table to be maintained to depict the posts reserved for indigenous inhabitants, backward tribes and unreserved candidates, where 80% is reserved for indigenous inhabitants as per the Government of Nagaland reservation policy (for Civil Judge (Junior Division))	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC and ST. 2. Relaxation in qualifying marks for viva voce for SC and ST. 3. Relaxation in fees for SC and ST.

⁶⁸ However, the Gauhati High Court's response, dated 14 May 2025, to JALDI's RTI application states that there exists no reservations (by caste or for women) in appointments to the position of District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar).

⁶⁹ However, the Gauhati High Court's response, dated 14 May 2025, to JALDI's RTI application states that there exists no reservations (by caste or for women) in appointments to the position of District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar).

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Odisha	Rule 9A and Rule 17 of The Orissa Superior Judicial Service and Orissa Judicial Service Rules, 2007	16.25% for SC 22.50% for ST 11.25 for socially and educationally backward classes (SEBC) 33.33% horizontal reservation for women 4% for PwBD excluding cerebral palsy	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, SEBC, women, and persons with disability (for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)). 2. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, SEBC, women, ex-servicemen, and commissioned/short service commission officers of the defense services, and persons with disability (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 3. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for main examination for SC and ST (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 4. Relaxation in qualifying marks for the interview for PwBD (for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)).
Puducherry	Puducherry Judicial Service (Cadre and Recruitment) Rules, 2008	Reservations for SC, ST, OBC to be in accordance with orders issued by the Central Government ⁷⁰ 4% for PwBD, of which: (a) 1% for locomotor disability (b) 1% for low vision (c) 1% for hard of hearing (d) 1% in rotation for the above three categories (for Civil Judge (Junior Division))	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Age relaxation for SC and ST (for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)). 2. Age relaxation for reserved categories (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 3. Relaxation in minimum pass marks in examinations for SC, ST, most backward classes, OBC, extreme backward classes, backward class muslims and backward tribes, and PwBD.

⁷⁰ In addition to the mentioned categories, reservation for EWS is also provided in a recruitment advertisement for Civil Judge. See Notification No. 34/2023, High Court of Judicature, Madras: <https://www.mhc.tn.gov.in/recruitment/docs/Not_34_2023.pdf> accessed 6 March 2026.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Punjab	Rule 10, Part C of the Punjab Civil Service (Judicial Branch) Rules, 1951	Reservations for SC, ST, and OBC shall be prescribed by the state government ⁷¹	Civil Judge (Junior Division)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, backward classes, and ex-servicemen. 2. Relaxation in minimum qualifying mark for viva voce for SC, ST, backward classes, and PwD.
	Rule 16 of the Punjab Superior Judicial Service Rules, 2007	Reservations for SC, ST, backward classes, and other reserved categories shall be prescribed by the state government ⁷²	District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC and ST. 2. Relaxation in examination fees for reserved category candidates. 3. Relaxation in the number of cases required to demonstrate prior experience for SCs, physically challenged persons, and ex-servicemen category. 4. Relaxation in the qualifying gross professional income during the last three years for SCs, physically challenged persons, and ex-servicemen category.

⁷¹ In addition to the mentioned categories, reservation for women, ex-servicemen/lineal dependent of ex-servicemen, freedom fighters, sportspersons and EWS categories has also been provided in a recruitment advertisement for Civil Judge (Junior Division) Cum Judicial Magistrate post. See Advertisement No. 2022103 <<https://ppsc.gov.in/usermanual.ashx?id=c11882>> accessed 10 March 2026.

⁷² In an advertisement for direct recruitment to Punjab Superior Judicial Services, reservation benefits have been provided to women, Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes, EWS and PwBD categories. Additionally, posts are horizontally reserved for women See Notification No. No.111 Gaz.I/VI.F.2 <https://highcourtchd.gov.in/sub_pages/left_menu/recruitments/judicialofficers/openings/advts_psjs_01062025_94d03.pdf> accessed 6 March 2026.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Rajasthan	Rule 10 of the Rajasthan Judicial Service Rules, 2010	16% for SC 12% for ST 21% for OBC 5% for more backward classes 10% for economically weaker sections (EWS) Reservation for PwBD in accordance with rules of the state government Reservation for ex-servicemen in accordance with rules of the state government 30% horizontal reservation for women, of which one third shall be for widows and divorced women candidates in the ratio of 80:20	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, OBC, more backward classes, EWS and women. 2. Relaxation in upper age limit for PwBD and ex-servicemen as applicable in the state. 3. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for interviews for SC, ST, PwBD, and ex-servicemen (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 5. Relaxation in minimum qualifying aggregate marks for final recommendation for SC, ST, PwBD, and ex-servicemen (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 6. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks in examination for SC, ST, PwBD, and ex-servicemen (for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)).
Sikkim	Sikkim Judicial Service Rules, 1975 Sikkim Superior Judicial Service Rule, 1980	No provision for reservation		

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Tamil Nadu	Rule 10 of the Tamil Nadu State Judicial Service (Cadre and Recruitment) Rules, 2007 Sections 26 and 27 of Tamil Nadu Government Servants (Conditions of Service) Act, 2016	Unit of selection is 200, of which: (a) 36 for SC (within which 6 offered to Arunthathiyars on preferential basis) (b) 2 for ST (c) 53 for backward classes (d) 7 for backward class muslims (e) 40 for most backward classes and the denotified communities 4% for PwBD⁷³, of which: (a) 1% for locomotor disability (b) 1% for low vision (c) 1% for hard of hearing (d) 1% in rotation for the above three categories 30% horizontal reservation for women	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC and ST (for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)). 2. Relaxation in upper age limit for reserved categories (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 3. Relaxation in required marks in law degree for eligibility for reserved categories (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 4. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks in the examinations for SC, ST, backward class, backward class muslims, most backward classes and the denotified communities.
Telangana	Telangana State Judicial (Service and Cadre) Rules, 2023 Rules 22 and 22-A of the Telangana State and Subordinate Service Rules, 1996	Unit of appointments is 100, of which: (a) 15 for SC (b) 6 for ST (c) 29 for SEBC, excluding creamy layer (A-7; B-10; C-1; D-7 and E-4) 4 positions out of the open competition positions for PwBD 2 positions for meritorious sportspersons Horizontal reservation of 33.33% for women 10% for EWS	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST, backward classes, and PwD. 2. Relaxation in marks obtained in law degree for eligibility for reserved categories (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 3. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for viva voce for SC and ST. 4. Relaxation in fee amount for SC and ST.

⁷³ Section 34 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 will apply.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Tripura	Rule 8 of the Tripura Judicial Services Rules, 2003 read with Section 4 of the Tripura Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Reservation Act, 1991	17% for SC 31% for ST 4% for persons with locomotor disability (who qualify to be treated as PwBD) (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)) 2% reservation for ex-servicemen	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC and ST. 2. Relaxation in fee amount for SC and ST. 3. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for viva voce for SC and ST.
Uttar Pradesh	Rule 8 of the Uttar Pradesh Judicial Service Rules, 2001 Rule 7 of The Uttar Pradesh Higher Judicial Service Rules, 1975	Reservations for SC, ST and other categories to be in accordance with the law prescribing reservations for them ⁷⁴ 4% for PwBD, out of which: (a) 1% for locomotor disabilities (b) 1% for persons with low vision (c) 1% for the persons with hard of hearing (d) 1% for the persons mentioned in the above clauses, on rotation basis	Civil Judge (Junior Division)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST and any other category specified by the state government.

⁷⁴ As per the Allahabad High Court's response, dated 14 May 2025, to JALDI's RTI application, the proportion of reserved posts at present are: 21% for SC, 2% for ST, and 27% for OBC. Further, there exists a 20% horizontal reservation for women.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
		Reservations for SC, ST and other categories to be in accordance with orders of the State Government for reservation as adopted by the High Court ⁷⁵ 20% horizontal reservation for women 4% for PwBD, out of which: (a) 1% for locomotor disabilities (b) 1% for persons with "low vision" (c) 1% for the persons with 'hard of hearing' (d) 1% for the persons mentioned in the above clauses, on rotation basis	District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, ST and any other category specified by the state government. 2. Relaxation for SC, ST, and OBC in minimum number of cases conducted in the three years preceding the examination (only for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)).

⁷⁵ As per the Allahabad High Court's response, dated 14 May 2025, to JALDI's RTI application, the proportion of reserved posts at present are: 21% for SC, 2% for ST, and 27% for OBC. Further, there exists a 20% horizontal reservation for women.

State	Applicable law	Reserved categories and extent	Reservation applicable to	Other relaxations
Uttarakhand	Rule 6 of the Uttarakhand Judicial Service Rules, 2005 Rule 7 of the Uttarakhand Higher Judicial Service Rules, 2004	Reservations for SC, ST, OBC and other categories to be in accordance with the orders of the State Government ⁷⁶⁷⁷	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	1. Relaxation in marks percentage in each individual written paper as well as in aggregate. 2. Age relaxation for SC, ST, OBC and other categories as notified by the State Government. 3. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for viva voce for SC and ST (for Civil Judge (Junior Division)). 4. Relaxation in minimum qualifying marks for viva voce for reserved categories (for District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)).
West Bengal	S. 4 of The West Bengal Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of vacancies in Services and Posts) Act, 1976	10% for SC 5% for ST ⁷⁸	Civil Judge (Junior Division) and District Judge (Direct Recruitment from the Bar)	Relaxation in upper age limit for SC, and ST OBC.

⁷⁶ Additionally, a prior study noted that Uttarakhand provides a 30% reservation for women. See Arijeet Ghosh et.al., 'Tilting the scale: Gender imbalance in the lower judiciary' (2018, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy), <<https://jaldi-vidhilegalpolicy.in/overview-projects/diversity-judiciary/report?id=226&title=Tilting-the-Scale:-Gender-Imbalance-in-the-Lower-Judiciary>> accessed 16 February 2026.

⁷⁷ Apart from the categories mentioned, an advertisement for Civil Judge (Junior Division) recruitment gives reservation benefits to the EWS category, and horizontal reservation benefits to women from Uttarakhand and certain groups from the PwD category. See Advertisement No. 04/E-2/DR/Civil Judge/2024-25 <<https://psc.uk.gov.in/public/uploads/recruitment/235912125.pdf>> accessed 28 April 2026; Another advertisement for Additional District and Sessions Judge recruitment also mentions reservation benefits being provided to the EWS category and horizontal reservation benefits to women from Uttarakhand. See Notification No. 19389-19405/Genl./Misc/Circulation/2024: <<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0277ee3bc58ce560b86c2b59363281/uploads/2024/06/2024060746.pdf>> accessed 28 April 2026

⁷⁸ A recent advertisement for appointments to the post of Civil Judge (Junior Division) shows reservations for SC, ST, OBC and EWS categories (only from West Bengal) as well as for PwBD. See Advertisement No. 9/2024 <https://psc.wb.gov.in/Download?param1=An_20250813164604_Advt_WBJS_2024.pdf¶m2=advertisement> accessed 9 March 2026.

