

Court Excellence Enhancement Programme-II (CEEP –II)
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The National Judicial Academy organized Court Excellence Enhancement Programme–II [CEEP-II] on 22-24 December, 2017. CEEP is conceived to develop a comprehensive framework for enhancing the excellence of courts involving all duty-holders of a Court i.e. Chief Judicial Magistrate, members of the Bar, Public Prosecutors and ministerial staff (Reader and Clerk). CEEP is an attempt to bring all duty-holders on one platform with a view to gain insights through discourses on challenges and constraints in achieving excellence in court. Participants from twelve high courts participated in this programme.

Major Suggestions and Highlights from the Programme

Session 1: Assessing and Enhancing Court Performance

The session began with opening remarks from Hon’ble Ms. Justice Manju Goel followed by Hon’ble Mr. Justice R.C. Chavan. Hon’ble Mr. Justice G. Raghuram also added his valuable inputs on his idea of Court Excellence Enhancement. It was emphasised that the goals to be set out for Court Excellence Enhancement must not be generalised and should be court specific and practicably achievable. The speakers said that all duty holders should devise a Citizen’s Charter which will be a significant step towards overcoming various milestones in the progress of a case by facilitating disposal of cases within a fixed time schedule. It will also go a long way in spreading the awareness among the citizens about the best services rendered by the judicial system. All the duty-holders including the judge, advocates, public prosecutors, clerks and staff of the court are an integral part of the entire system and it is not solely the judge but it is the combined efforts of all the duty-holders that contribute to the quality of the justice that is being delivered by the courts. The court staff must understand that the task assigned to them is vital and must also understand the purpose of the work that has been assigned to them. Towards this continuous training of court staff is required. Lack of coordination among the duty-bearers leads to significant loss of time. Hence, there has to be team work, coordination, confidence in one-self as well as the other duty-holders, balancing of situations, devotion and dedication to the work and a set target to achieve.

Session 2: Discussion on Court Excellence Indicators and Model Court Plan

The second session was an interactive session with inputs from the participants. The speakers highlighted that all duty holders should strive to make their court excellent. An excellent court is that where every litigant coming to the court returns home satisfied. Such satisfaction would arise when the litigant is given proper attention and given an opportunity of being heard. Another feature of an excellent court is that cases should be heard on the day fixed for them and only few adjournments should be granted on rational and rare grounds. The speaker also highlighted various issues which prevent a court from becoming excellent. Other issues discussed in this session included that the judges and public prosecutors may mutually decide about the matters to be taken up by them on particular dates and on specified time, examination of witnesses through video conferencing, access of public prosecutors to the Bar

library and offices for court staff with arrangement of information desks for litigants to reduce unnecessary disturbance to court staff.

Session 3: Challenges faced by the Duty Holders and Suggestions to Improve Performance of Courts

In this session the participants were divided into four groups- Chief Judicial Magistrates, Public Prosecutors, Advocates and Ministerial Staffs (Readers and Clerks). The groups were dispersed to four different places for Break-Out Group Discussions and filling the templates given to them.

Session 4: Challenges faced by the Duty Holders and Suggestions to Improve Performance of Courts

Based on the break out group discussions the representatives of the four groups came forward to present their respective suggestions to improve the performance of the courts. The suggestions focused on vision of an ideal court, key constraints and challenges in relation to the performance of court and how to improve functioning of duty holders.

Session 5: Open Discussion- Best Practice Solutions for Improving Court Performance

This session was chiefly devoted towards facilitating an open discussion between the resource persons and participants about the best practice solutions for improving court performance. The speakers highlighted importance of making court litigant friendly and improving performance of court. An improvement in the performance of court will enhance the trust of the litigants in the court system. All duty holders should strive for improving their capacity through continuous learning. The speakers emphasised that all duty holders should improve management of their court and should ensure that cases are heard when listed for particular dates. The key concerns of discussions were improving storage facilities in courts, ensuring bar coding of files, ensuring availability of help desk, understanding of roles by duty holders, classification of cases according to nature of cases and priorities, regular mutual discussion among duty holders towards improving performance of court and avoidance of frivolous and vexatious litigation.

Session 8 & 9: Court Wise Presentation on Developing Court Excellence Enhancement Plan

In these two sessions, 9 trial courts made their presentations on Developing Court Excellence Enhancement Plan. Briefly discussing the situations of their respective courts, the presentations were mainly directed at providing suggestions in relation to various aspects of court environment for improving the quality of service which the court delivers to the litigants. The major issues discussed included effective court management, access to courts, Court infrastructure, effective use of ADR measures, coordination among all duty holders, strategies to reduce arrears and pendency, avoiding delay in process service, use of information technology in court processes and human resource management.

Session 10: Way Forward

In this session remaining 3 trial courts presented their ideas and suggestions for developing Court Excellence Enhancement Plan. The Chief Judicial Magistrates first discussed the situation in their respective courts and then proposed various strategies to address issues

affecting the performance of their courts. The session ended on a note of positive enthusiasm, hope and promise from all the participants to make best efforts for ensuring the successful implementation of the plan of an excellent court.