

The 20th Law Commission was constituted in October 2012 by the Government of India (Ministry of Law and Justice) for a term of three years. In January 2013, Justice D.K. Jain, a Judge of the Supreme Court of India, was appointed as the Chairman of the Commission. In November 2013, Justice A.P. Shah, a former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court, was appointed as the new Chairman of the Commission.

The Terms of Reference of the Twentieth Law Commission are as follows:-

1. Review/Repeal of Obsolete Laws

- (i) Identify laws which are no longer needed or relevant and can be immediately repealed.
- (ii) Identify laws which are not in harmony with the existing climate of economic liberalisation and need change.
- (iii) Identify laws which otherwise require changes or amendments and to make suggestions for their amendment.
- (iv) Consider in a wider perspective the suggestions for revision/amendment given by Expert Groups in various Ministries/Departments with a view to coordinating and harmonising them.
- (v) Consider references made to it by Ministries/Departments in respect of legislation having bearing on the working of more than one Ministry/Department.
- (vi) Suggest suitable measures for quick redressal of citizens grievances, in the field of law.

2. Law and Poverty

- (i) Examine the laws which affect the poor and carry out post-audit for socio-economic legislations.
- (ii) Take all such measures as may be necessary to harness law and the legal process in the service of the poor.

3. Keep under review the system of judicial administration to ensure that it is responsive to the reasonable demands of the times and in particular to secure:

- (i) Elimination of delays, speedy clearance of arrears and reduction in costs so as to secure quick and economical disposal of cases without affecting the cardinal principle that decision should be just and fair.
- (ii) Simplification of procedure to reduce and eliminate technicalities and devices for delay so that it operates not as an end in itself but as a means of achieving justice.
- (iii) Improvement of standards of all concerned with the administration of justice.

4. Examine the existing laws in the light of Directive Principles of State Policy and to suggest

ways of improvement and reform and also to suggest such legislations as might be necessary to implement the Directive Principles and to attain the objectives set out in the Preamble to the Constitution.

5. Examine the existing laws with a view for promoting gender equality and suggesting amendments thereto.
6. Revise the Central Acts of general importance so as to simplify them and to remove anomalies, ambiguities and inequities.
7. Recommend to the government measure for making the statute book up-to-date by repealing obsolete laws and enactments or parts thereof which have outlived their utility.
8. Consider and to convey to the government its views on any subject relating to law and judicial administration that may be specifically referred to it by the government through Ministry of Law and Justice.
9. Consider the requests for providing research to any foreign countries as may be referred to it by the government through Ministry of Law and Justice.
10. Examine the impact of globalisation on food security, unemployment and recommend measures for the protection of the interests of the marginalised.