

PRESS RELEASE

ONE YEAR CELEBRATION OF RECORD ROOM DIGITIZATION CENTRE

The Record Room Digitization Centre (RRDC) of the High Court of Orissa has completed one year and the occasion was celebrated on 9th September, 2022 in Odisha Judicial Academy. The Centre is considered to be an innovative and pioneering project in the country in the field of judicial record keeping and digitization.

Record keeping is an important component of management in the Judiciary. From the Supreme Court to the Taluka Courts, nearly lakhs of cases are filed everyday and nearly equal numbers of cases are disposed of which are then stored safely in the Record Rooms of the respective Courts.

The High Court of Orissa was established in the year 1948. With more and more legacy (disposed) records being consigned to the record rooms regularly, solutions had to be found for managing space within these record rooms. When Dr. S. Muralidhar took charge of the office of Chief Justice, the Record Rooms in the High Court were already overflowing. In early 2021, with a view to addressing the enormous challenge of storage, preservation and retrieval of the ever growing corpus of legacy records, under the guidance of the Chief Justice, the process of scanning of legacy records was given an impetus by simultaneously establishing three scanning hubs in the High Court. The idea was to ensure that by scanning the legacy records and keeping a database of records, their soft copy or authenticated print out of soft copies could be accessed with the click of a button thereby ensuring that there is minimum movement of records, thereby reducing the exposure to ancillary hazards.

This led to the conceptualization and establishment of the High Court's Record Room Digitization Centre, a year back, situated approximately a kilometer away from the High Court. This involved taking the task of storing, preserving, scanning and retrieving legacy records of the High Court to a whole new level. Separate spaces were dedicated in the RRDC for the Court's Civil and Criminal Record Rooms as well as for the work of their scanning and digitization. Dedicated staff are positioned both in the Civil and Criminal Record Rooms, while the scanning and digitization is looked after by one of the empanelled vendors of NICSI. The servers containing repository of the scanned records are maintained with utmost precision and is made accessible from all locations of the RRDC as well as the Courtrooms and offices of the High Court. The overall supervision of the work of RRDC has been entrusted to a Judicial Officer who is designated as the, Registrar Records. Cutting edge technology, ICT equipments

and state of the art amenities have been provided in the RRDC to maintain consistency in the process of storing, scanning and retrieval of legacy records. Simultaneously, shredding of digitized records was taken up in order to manage the space for daily inflow of legacy records into the Record Rooms.

Meanwhile a year has gone by and there has been considerable progress in the digitization and shredding of Legacy Records of the High Court. As of 09.09.2022 about **5,27,763** records have been digitized, which includes **2,27,124** Civil and **3,00,639** Criminal Records. Correspondingly, **2,00,193** Digitized records have been shredded, which includes **87,160** Civil and **1,13,033** Criminal Records.

Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Chairperson, e-Committee had inaugurated RRDC a year back. Completion of one year of the Centre was celebrated on 09.09.2022 in the presence of Justice Chandrachud, the Chief Guest in the function who attended the function virtually and Dr. S. Muralidhar, Chief Justice of the High Court of Orissa. The event was attended by Justice R.C. Chavan, Member, e-Committee, Supreme Court of India, Justice Debabrata Dash, the Chairman of RRDC Committee, Dr. Justice Sanjeeb Kumar Panigrahi, Justice M.S. Sahoo, Justice Sashikanta Mishra, Justice B.P. Satapathy and Justice Sanjay Kumar Mishra, Members of the RRDC Committee and the Judges of the High Court of Orissa. Dr. R. Balakrishnan, the Chief Advisor to the Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Suresh Chandra Mohapatra, Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha, Shri Prasanna Kumar Parhi, Assistant Solicitor General of India for the High Court of Orissa, Office Bearers of the High Court Bar Association also attended the event. All the staff members of RRDC whose contribution has been instrumental for the Centre's success also attended the function.

Justice Debabrata Dash delivered the welcome address. He expressed gratitude to Dr. S. Muralidhar for the guidance in taking digitization to a higher scale in the High Court of Orissa. Justice Dash said RRDC is first of its kind in the country as it has ensured safekeeping of judicial records and space management.

Dr. S. Muralidhar, Chief Justice of High Court of Orissa who conceived and materialized the objectives of RRDC thanked the State Government for its support to the cause and also lauded hard work of the 275 personnel working in RRDC. The Chief Justice said the RRDC has been a learning experience on how good functioning of the Record Rooms impacts the atmosphere of the work place of the staff in improving and making it comfortable and on the importance of

preservation of judicial archives. Highlighting the importance of digitization Dr. Muralidhar said digitization makes a record available till eternity because the digitized record is always accessible with multiple backups even after destruction of its physical copy. He expressed gratitude to the e-Committee, Supreme Court of India for the guidance and commended the effective role of the RRDC Committee of the High Court for the progress made in the RRDC in last one year.

Delivering the keynote address Dr. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud complimented Dr. S. Muralidhar for the progress in the RRDC and said the High Court of Orissa has been in the forefront in implementing the decisions of the e-Committee, Supreme Court of India in letter and spirit. He said the High Court of Orissa has been an exception in institutionalizing digitization and emphasized on the need of an institution similar to RRDC for the Supreme Court. Dr. Chandrachud appreciated the efforts of the RRDC Committee and the staff working in the RRDC. He said the pandemic necessitated the use of technology in the Courts in terms of e-Filing, virtual hearing etc. but the High Court of Orissa has shown active and sustained endeavour in use of technology and not only as response to a situation. Justice Chandrachud highlighted the important features of digitization, as an able tool for preservation and as instrument to ensure transparency, access and efficiency. He also stressed upon the need of e-Filing going hand in hand with digitization for reduction of carbon footprint.

Presenting the vote of thanks Dr. Justice S.K. Panigrahi thanked the staff of RRDC for their untiring work.

For information of the guests and audience about the activities of the Centre, video presentations were made by Shri Abhilash Senapati, the Registrar, Records showing the Preservation of Case Records, Workflow in the RRDC, evolution of RRDC beginning from its initial set-up, transporting of legacy records to its present stage of functioning. He also made a presentation of the statistics of the work undertaken in RRDC.
