

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE  
(DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE)

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1876**  
**TO BE ANSWERED ON THURSDAY, THE 17<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2022**

**Online courts for ensuring fair trial**

**1876. Shri N.R. Elango:**

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether online courts are yet to adapt to ensure a fair trial and evidence taking; and
- (b) if so, the remedial steps being taken by Government keeping in view the fact that the digital divide is enormous, and also that the infrastructure in all the approximately 19,000 courts in the country are not up to the mark?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE**  
**(SHRI KIREN RIJIJU)**

(a): In the pre-Covid period, the virtual hearing setup was being used by most of the courts primarily for conducting remand matters without movement of prisoners between court and jails. This experience helped in expanding the video-conferencing (VC) of court hearings in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. To bring about uniformity and standardization in the conduct of VC, an overarching order was passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India on 6th April 2020 which gave legal sanctity and validity to the court hearings done

through VC. Further, Model VC rules were framed by a 5-judge committee which was circulated to all the High Courts for adoption after local contextualization. 23 High Courts have already adopted these Model Rules. Video conferencing emerged as the mainstay of the Courts during the Covid lockdown period as physical hearings and normal court proceedings in the congregational mode were not possible. Since Covid lockdown started, the District courts heard 1,11,40,223 cases while the High Court heard 60,21,688 cases (totalling 1.71 cr) till 31.01.2022 using video conferencing. The Supreme Court held 1,81,909 hearings till 08.01.2022 since the beginning of lockdown period. To augment the VC infrastructure of the Courts, one VC equipment each has been provided to all Court Complexes including Taluk level courts and additionally funds have been sanctioned for additional VC equipment for 14,443 court rooms. Funds for setting up 2506 VC Cabins have been made available. Additional 1500 VC Licenses have been acquired. VC facilities are already enabled between 3240 court complexes and corresponding 1272 jails. A sum of Rs. 7.60 crore has been released for procurement of 1732 Document Visualizers.

(b): To bridge digital divide, Government has released Rs. 12.54 crore for setting up eSewa Kendras. As on 31.01.2022, 475 eSewa Kendras have been made functional under 25 High Courts. Rs. 12.12 cr has been allocated for creating 1732 Help Desk counters for e-Filing in Court Complexes; Judicial Service Centres have been established at all computerized courts to serve as a single window for filing petitions and applications by litigants / lawyers and for disseminating judicial information related to cause lists and other case related information to the lawyers and litigants through Info Kiosks. Mobile e-courts van equipped with Wi-Fi and computers for video conferencing for speedy disposal of cases have also been started in Uttarakhand and Telangana High Courts. Training programs and awareness campaigns have been conducted from time to time to train various stakeholders to bridge digital divide and familiarise

them with court digitisation initiatives. Towards creating awareness and familiarization of e-Filing amongst lawyers, Webinars on e-Filing for Tamil Nadu, Goa, Maharashtra and Delhi Bar Council was organized during June 2020 which had more than 19,000 viewers. A Manual on e-Filing entitled as “Step by Step Guide for e-Filing” has been prepared and made available on the e-Filing portal, in both English and Hindi, for use of advocates and litigants. It has also been released in 11 regional languages. The e-Committee, Supreme Court of India has issued user manual for e-Courts Services Mobile Application and uploaded it on the official website of e-Committee in 14 languages namely English, Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Gujarati, Kannada, Khasi, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu. A Brochure in English and Hindi on “How to register for e-Filing” has been made available on the e-Filing portal for the use of lawyers. It has also been released in 12 regional languages. As part of awareness campaign, a YouTube Channel has been created in the name of eCourts Services where video tutorials on e-Filing have been made available for larger outreach to stakeholders. 12 self-help videos on e-Filing in 7 regional languages apart from Hindi and English was prepared and circulated for the advocates as part of awareness raising programme. The said videos are available in the e filing portal help desk and also in the social media through the eCommittee YouTube channel. To conduct awareness programme for advocates on eFiling and ECMT tools under eCourt Services, training of trainers has already been undertaken by eCommittee of the Supreme Court at the National and State level. 25 Master Trainers have been trained in each High Court who in turn have already trained 5409 Master Trainers across the country. These, 5409 Master Trainers have in turn imparted training programme on eCourt Services and eFiling in each district of the country for advocates in their regional languages and also identified Master Trainer Advocates.

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