

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

**RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1869  
ANSWERED ON - 16/03/2023**

**Virtual hearings in Courts**

**1869. Dr. Ashok Bajpai:**

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

- (a) whether Government has taken initiative, by writing and having dialogue with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and of High Courts, to promote virtual hearings of the cases;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the status of implementation of each of the recommendations made in the 103rd Report of the Standing Committee regarding virtual courts; and
- (d) whether Government is aware that virtual hearing of the matters by the Courts would help to have easy access to justice?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE**

**(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)**

(a)& (b): Holding of court proceedings is an administrative matter and falls strictly under the domain of judiciary. It is for courts to decide whether court proceedings are to be held physically or online. The e-Committee of Supreme Court of India, currently headed by CJI, is responsible for overall planning, policy, and implementation of the e-Courts Project in close coordination with the Department of Justice. To bring about uniformity and standardization in the conduct of Video Conferencing, an overarching order (Suo Motu Writ (Civil) No. 5/2020) 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 Video Conferencing. Further, Video Conferencing rules were framed by a 5-judge committee which was circulated to all the High Courts for adoption after local contextualization.

As part of IEC campaign several initiatives have been taken to educate the Judicial Officers, lawyers and public about the facilities available under eCourts Project. Training and

awareness programmes on the ICT have been conducted by e-Committee, SCI covering nearly 5,13,080 stakeholders including Judges of States, Courts staff and Advocates.

(c) An Action Taken Report on the various observations and recommendations of the 103<sup>rd</sup> interim report of the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee has been furnished to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat on 16.12.2020. The same is under consideration before the Parliamentary Standing Committee.

(d) Yes sir. Virtual hearing of cases helps to have easy access to justice. Following are some of the advantages of virtual hearing:

- The lawyers and litigants can appear before the court from any location (far-flung areas as well) of their choice.
- There is considerable saving of time and money thus helping under privileged litigants
- The lawyers can attend hearings at multiple locations at short notice.
- Production of witnesses becomes easy as they can be at their own safe locations.
- Movement of under trial prisoners can be done very economically and conveniently.

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