

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 3736
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 11th AUGUST, 2023

Modernisation of Courts

3736. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:

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

- (a) whether the Government is taking measures to modernise the courts aligning with the technological requirements, especially equipments for virtual hearings;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the budgetary allocation for the same and the timeline, if any for modernisation of courts;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the Government has taken any steps to reform the Revenue courts with necessary resources and infrastructure for their effective and efficient working; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE; MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

(SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL)

(a) to (c): As a part of the National eGovernance Plan, the Government has launched eCourts Mission Mode Project which is under implementation for ICT development of the District & Sub-ordinate courts in the country based on the “National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology in the Indian Judiciary”. It is being implemented by the Department of Justice in association with the e-Committee Supreme

Court of India. Phase I (2011-15) was aimed at basic computerization of courts and providing local network connectivity under which a total expenditure of Rs.639.41 crore was done. It was concluded in 2015 in which 14,249 Court sites were computerized. Phase II of the project started in 2015 with an outlay of Rs. 1,670 crore out of which a sum of Rs.1668.43 crore has been released by the Government which includes a sum of Rs. 111.29 crores released for installation of video conferencing infrastructure. 18,735 District & Subordinate courts have been computerised till Phase II. In the eCourts Project, the Government has taken the following initiatives to make justice accessible and available for all using technology: -

- i. Under the Wide Area Network (WAN) Project, connectivity has been provided to 99.4% (2976 out of earmarked 2994) of total Court Complexes across India with 10 Mbps to 100 Mbps bandwidth speed.
- ii. National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) is a database of orders, judgments, and cases, created as an online platform under the eCourts Project. It provides information relating to judicial proceedings/decisions of all computerized district and subordinate courts of the country. Litigants can access case status information in respect of over 23.58 crore cases and more than 22.56 crore orders / judgments (as on 01.08.2023).
- iii. Case Information Software (CIS) based on customized Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS) has been developed. Currently CIS National Core Version 3.2 is being implemented in District Courts and the CIS National Core Version 1.0 is being implemented for the High Courts.
- iv. As part of eCourts project, 7 platforms have been created to provide real time information on case status, cause lists, judgements etc. to lawyers/Litigants through SMS Push and Pull (2,00,000 SMS sent daily), Email (2,50,000 sent daily), multilingual and tactile eCourts services Portal (35 lakh hits daily), JSC (Judicial Service centres) and Info Kiosks. In addition, Electronic Case Management Tools (ECMT) have been created with Mobile App for lawyers (total 1.88 cr.

downloads till 30th June 2023) and JustIS app for judges (19,164 downloads till 30th June 2023).

- v. The India emerged as a global leader in Video Conferencing. The High Courts (78,69,708 cases and Subordinate Courts 1,98,67,081 cases) have conducted 2.77 crore virtual hearings till 30.06.2023. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India held 4,82,941 hearings through video conferencing till 31.05.2023. One video conference equipment each has been provided to all Court Complexes including taluk level courts. VC facilities have also been enabled between 3240 court complexes and corresponding 1272 jails. Funds for 2506 VC cabins and VC equipment for 14,443 courtrooms have also been released. 1500 VC licenses have been procured to promote virtual hearings.
- vi. Live Streaming of court proceedings has been started in High Courts of Gujarat, Gauhati, Orissa, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Patna, Madhya Pradesh & Constitutional Bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India thus allowing media and other interested persons to join the proceedings.
- vii. 22 Virtual Courts in 18 States/UTs have been operationalized to handle traffic challan cases. More than 3.26 crore cases have been handled by 22 virtual courts and in more than 39 lakhs (39,16,405) cases online fine of more than Rs. 419.89 crores has been realized till 30.06.2023.
- viii. New e-filing system (version 3.0) has been rolled out for the electronic filing of legal papers with upgraded features. Draft eFiling rules have been formulated and circulated to the High Courts for adoption. A total of 19 High Courts have adopted the model rules of e-Filing as on 30.06.2023.
- ix. e-Filing of cases requires the option for electronic payment of fees which includes court fees, fines and penalties which are directly payable to the Consolidated Fund. A total of 20 High Courts have implemented e-payments in their respective jurisdictions. The Court Fees Act has been amended in 22 High Courts till 30.06.2023.

- x. To bridge the digital divide, 819 eSewa Kendras have been rolled out with the intention of facilitating the lawyer or litigant who needs any kind of assistance ranging from information to facilitation and eFiling.
- xi. In addition to eSewa Kendras, as part of the DISHA (Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice) scheme the Government of India has launched Tele Law program since 2017, which provides an effective and reliable e-interface platform connecting the needy and disadvantaged sections seeking legal advice and consultation with panel lawyers via video conferencing, telephone and chat facilities available at the Common Service Centres (CSCs) situated in Gram Panchayat and through Tele-Law mobile App.
- xii. National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP) has been launched for technology enabled process serving and issuing of summons. It has currently been implemented in 28 States/ UTs.
- xiii. A new “Judgment Search” portal has been started with features such as search by Bench, Case Type, Case Number, Year, Petitioner/ Respondent Name, Judge Name, Act, Section, Decision: From Date, To Date and Full Text Search. This facility is being provided free of cost to all

The eCourts Phase II formally came to an end on 31st March 2023. Taking the gains of Phase-I and Phase-II to the next level, the e-Courts Phase-III aims to usher in a regime of maximum ease of justice by moving towards digital, online and paperless courts. The Government of India, in the Union Budget 2023-2024, announced Rs. 7000 crores for Phase-III of e-Courts project. Based on the Detailed Project Report approved by eCommittee, Supreme Court of India, the Expenditure Finance Committee in its meeting held on 23.02.2023 has recommended eCourts Phase III with a total outlay of Rs.7210 Crore. Further, the Empowered Technology Group chaired by the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Prime Minister in its meeting held on 21.06.2023 has also recommended the eCourts Phase III for approval.

(d) and (e) : The Revenue Courts are not covered under the eCourts Mission Mode Project. They are under the domain of respective State Government and the Government of India has no direct role in their upgradation and modernization.
