

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 479
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 4th FEBRUARY 2022

Virtual Courts

479. SHRIMATI VEENA DEVI:

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to establish virtual courts in view of the positive effect seen in the virtual hearing by the courts during the corona period;
- (b) the number of service centres setup for the e-courts by the Department of Justice presently, State/UT-wise; and
- (c) whether the Government has also organized any type of training and awareness campaigns regarding functioning of said e-courts and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE

(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)

(a): 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 1,08,36,087 cases while the High Court heard 57,39,966 cases (totalling 1.65 cr) till 30.11.2021 using video conferencing only. The Supreme Court held 1,81,909 hearings till 08.01.2022 since the beginning of

lockdown period, making it the world leader in Video Conferencing hearings. One video conference 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.

Virtual Courts is a concept, aimed at eliminating the presence of litigant or lawyer in the court and for adjudication of cases on a virtual platform. The concept has been evolved in order to efficiently utilize court resources and to provide litigants with an effective avenue to settle petty disputes. Virtual Court can be administered by a Judge over a virtual electronic platform whose jurisdiction may extend to the entire State and function 24X7. As on 19.01.2022, 17 Virtual Courts have been set up in 13 States / UTs viz. Delhi (2), Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala (2), Maharashtra (2), Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir (2), Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Meghalaya and Himachal Pradesh to try traffic offences. Over 1.20 crore cases (1,20,31,758) have been handled by 17 virtual courts and in more than 20 lakhs (20,40,003) cases online fine of more than Rs. 212 (212.01) crore has been realised till 19.01.2022. However, the establishment of Virtual Courts is an administrative matter which falls strictly within the purview and domain of the judiciary and respective State Governments and Central Government has no role to play in the matter.

(b): Judicial Service Centres (JSC) have been established to serve as a single window for filing petitions and applications by litigants / lawyers, and for obtaining information on ongoing cases and copies of orders and judgments etc.

The State/UT-wise number of JSC setup for the e-courts are tabled below:

S.No	High Court	Number of Judicial Service Centers
1	Allahabad	100
2	Telangana and Andhra Pradesh	210
3	Bombay	419
4	Calcutta	84
5	Chhattisgarh	58
6	Delhi	6
7	Gauhati	46
8	Gujarat	216
9	Himachal Pradesh	25
10	Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh	33
11	Jharkhand	20
12	Karnataka	181
13	Kerala	46
14	Madhya Pradesh	168
15	Madras	223
16	Manipur	13
17	Meghalaya	1
18	Orissa	110
19	Patna	46
20	Punjab & Haryana	117
21	Rajasthan	232
22	Sikkim	4
23	Tripura	12
24	Uttarakhand	29
	Total	2399

In addition, eSewa Kendras have been rolled out to bridge the digital divide by providing eFiling services to lawyers and litigants. Government has released Rs. 12.54 crore for setting up eSewa Kendras. As on 31.12.2021, 451 eSewa Kendra's have been made functional in District Courts under 25 High Courts.

(c): Training programs and awareness campaigns have been conducted from time to time to train various stakeholders and familiarise them with court digitisation initiatives as follows:

- 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.
- Following trainings and awareness programmes on the ICT services for different stakeholders have been conducted by the eCommittee of the Supreme Court of India:

Training & Awareness programs from May 2020 to December 2021

Trainees	Numbers
Advocates & Clerks	259881
Advocate Master Trainers	4050
Court Staff	72134
High Court Judges	259
Judicial Officers (District Judiciary)	1307
NJDG Workshop	1443
ICT Awareness Program for Judicial Officers and Staffs	21202
Law Students	675
Cyber Crime (Master Trainers)	42
Total	360993