

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

RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 584  
TO BE ANSWERED ON THURSDAY, THE 17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2020

Virtual courts in rural areas

584. Shri Derek O' Brien :

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

- (a) whether courts in rural areas have adequate infrastructure to move to virtual hearing;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Ministry has allocated funds to make the transition to virtual courts in rural areas smoother, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) what other steps, if any, the Ministry has taken to strengthen the IT infrastructure of courts in rural areas?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE, COMMUNICATIONS AND  
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

**(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)**

(a) & (b): One video conference equipment each has been provided to all Court Complexes including Taluk Level Court Complexes in rural areas under the Phase II of the e-Courts Project for virtual hearings. To further augment the Video Conferencing infrastructure, the eCommittee of the Supreme Court has

approved Video Conferencing equipment to be provided to 14443 court rooms in these court complexes. The details are at Annexure-I.

As per information available the number of hearings done by video conferencing from 24.3.2020 till 15.7.2020 by the district and subordinate courts across the country were 1193046.

(c) : The Government is implementing the e-Courts Mission Mode Project for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enablement for District and Subordinate Courts across the country in association with the eCommittee, Supreme Court of India. The eCourts Mission Mode Project Phase-II commenced its implementation in 2015. The target set out for computerization of 16845 District and Subordinate Courts has been completed. Against the financial outlay of Rs.1670 crores for this Phase, the Government has released a sum of Rs. 1424 crores so far to various organizations involved in the implementation of the project.

With a view to handle the COVID-19 challenges better and to make the transition to Virtual Court hearings in rural areas smoother, funds have been allocated by the Department of Justice recently under eCourts Project Phase II for creating additional infrastructure in the court complexes. Rs.12.54 crore has been allocated for 235 e-SewaKendras at court complexes to facilitate lawyers and litigants needing assistance ranging from case status, getting judgements/orders, court/case related information and e-filing facilities. Rs.5.01 crores has been allocated for providing equipment in Video Conferencing cabins in various court complexes to facilitate virtual hearings. Rs.12.12

crores has been allocated for 1732 Help desk counters for e-filing in various court complexes.

(e) : Various steps have been taken under e-Courts Mission Mode Project Phase-II.

New and user-friendly version of Case Information Software has been developed and deployed at all the computerized District and Subordinate Courts. All stakeholders including judicial officers can access information relating to judicial procedures / decisions of computerized District and Subordinate Courts and High Courts on the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG). Currently case status information in respect of 13.72 crore pending and disposed cases and more than 12.67 crore orders / judgements pertaining to these computerized courts is available on NJDG. The eCourt Services provides citizen-centric services through 7 platforms viz. eCourts Web Portal, eCourts Mobile App, e-Mail Service, SMS Push and Pull Services, Judicial Service Centres (JSC) and Touch Screen Information Kiosks. The eCourts Services provides details of case registration, cause list, case status, daily orders and final judgement etc. A Sub-Committee consisting of five Judges of the High Courts was constituted by the Chairperson, e-Committee for drafting model rules of Video Conferencing for courts and has been circulated to all the High Courts for their adoption. Similarly, a Sub-Committee consisting of five Judges of the High Courts was constituted to draft model E-Filing Rules during May 2020 which has been circulated to all High Courts for their adoption. A new Software Patch and Court User Manual has been recently developed for COVID-19 Management. This tool has been developed to help in smart

scheduling all cases to effectively manage overcrowding in courts. Towards creating awareness and familiarization of advocates on e-filing, eCourt Services and ICT awareness, training programmes have been organized in all Districts in regional languages. Help tutorials, Manuals and Brochures on e-filing have been created in regional languages and made available on the e-filing portal for use of advocates and litigants.

## ANNEXURE-I

## Fund proposal for VC equipment for Court Rooms

S.No	High Court	Number of Functioning Court Rooms	Number of VC equipment were already provided	Number of additional equipment to be provided	Total Estimated Cost (In Lac)
A	B	C	D	E	F=Ex20000
1	Allahabad	2438	150	2288	457.6
2	Andhra Pradesh	550	212	338	67.6
3	Bombay	2178	486	1692	338.4
4	Calcutta	840	88	752	150.4
5	Chhattisgarh	395	90	305	61
6	Delhi	479	6	473	94.6
7	Gauhati	442	194	248	49.6
8	Gujarat	1078	327	751	150.2
9	Himachal Pradesh	135	43	92	18.4
10	Jammu & Kashmir	218	86	132	26.4
11	Jharkhand	417	28	389	77.8
12	Karnataka	1029	200	829	165.8
13	Kerala	508	159	349	69.8
14	Madhya Pradesh	1274	203	1071	214.2
15	Madras	1169	267	902	180.4
16	Manipur	38	37	1	0.2
17	Meghalaya	36	64	0	0
18	Orissa	688	141	547	109.4
19	Patna	1046	76	970	194
20	Punjab & Haryana	972	118	854	170.8
21	Rajasthan	1239	238	1001	200.2
22	Sikkim	21	17	4	0.8
23	Telangana	440	129	311	62.2
24	Tripura	78	66	12	2.4

25	Uttarakhand	184	52	132	26.4
	Total	17892	3477	14443	2888.6

**Note:** Every Court to be equipped with

i. LED display unit (50” or more as per the room requirements) to connect laptop output (Optional).

ii. USB PTZ Camera

iii. External USB Speaker cum

mike Estimated Cost per Court

Rs.20,000/-

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