

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE  
DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

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**LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1806  
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 11<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY, 2022**

**Online Dispute Resolution**

1806: SHRI KHAGEN MURMU:

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

(a) whether the Government has taken note that in the present pandemic conditions private dispute resolution centres and courts around the world have embraced technology-based approach and adequate protocols have been allowed entry to make video-conferencing-enabled participation in proceedings;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the initiatives proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard keeping in mind the fact that the use of technology for Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) can facilitate judicial process in this challenging times?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE**

**(SHRI KIREN RIJU)**

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**(a) & (b):** Yes. Video conferencing has emerged as the mainstay of the Courts during the ongoing Covid pandemic period as physical hearings and normal court proceedings in the congregational mode were not possible. To facilitate dispensation of justice in such times 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. Further, 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. In addition, eSewaKendras 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 eSewaKendras. As on 31.12.2021, 451 eSewa Kendra's have been made functional in District Courts under 25 High Courts. Also, training programs and awareness campaigns have been conducted from time to time to train various stakeholders and familiarise them with court digitisation initiatives. Data/information relating to private dispute resolution centres is not collated by the Government.

(c) The concept of Online Dispute Resolution(ODR) in India is at a nascent stage. The NITI Aayog had constituted a high level committee to take it forward and the report of the committee titled "Designing the future of dispute Resolution: the ODR Policy Plan for India" was released on 29.11.2021. It *inter-alia* recommends for mainstreaming of ODR in India, as a cost effective, convenient, efficient process which can be customised to the specific needs of the parties, considering the nature of the dispute. The Government of India has also acknowledged the importance of online dispute resolution and proposes to provide legal sanction to ODR by way of requisite provisions in the Mediation Bill, 2021 introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 20.12.2021. The Bill recognizes online pre-litigation mediation as an acceptable and cost effective process of dispute resolution thereby removing the distance barrier for parties.

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