

## Approved Special Mention Text for 02 Feb 2024

PNO Dy. No. 22

Name of Member:- Shri P. Wilson, M.P.

**Subject:- Demand for mandatory functioning of Virtual courts along with Physical Courts across country.**

The advent of COVID had forced us to conduct court proceedings virtually. Virtual courts had enabled participation from remote areas irrespective of geographical or economic constraints, eliminating the need for individuals to bear significant financial burdens in physical court sessions.

However, just like the COVID times are behind us, the virtual courts are slowly becoming a thing of the past in some Tribunals such as CERC, TDSAT, NCLAT, APTEL etc. The Hon'ble CJI has appealed to High Courts and Tribunals for utilizing the virtual court infrastructure for which the Government had invested a huge amount of public money.

Denying a virtual hearing to a litigant would not just increase litigation cost, but also convert the court proceedings from accessible and convenient to complex and time consuming. A litigant would have to bear the cost of travel, lodging and extra fees of the lawyer since most of the Tribunals are situated at Delhi.

The concept of access to justice has been etched in our Constitution. Through Virtual Courts, the legal process could be streamlined by reducing paperwork and automating administrative tasks.

This can lead to faster case resolution and reduce backlog of cases.

Therefore, I demand from Government to bring a comprehensive legislation mandating virtual court hearings along with physical courts in <sup>Supreme Court and</sup> all High courts, District judiciary and all tribunals across country which includes a code of conduct for Judges, lawyers, litigants and other

stakeholders along with penal provisions for any misconduct.