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Cooperative Court, Raigad-Alibag,
upholding the legality of hybrid online and
physical format for Special General
Meeting (SGM), and Annual General
Meeting (AGM) in cooperative societies.

ON NOVEMBER 18, 2025 / BY VIJAY P. PATEL - CHS CONSULTANTS & SOLUTIONS / IN CHS

A detailed write up on all key points addressed in the landmark judgment of the Cooperative Court, Raigad-Alibag, upholding the legality of hybrid online and physical format for Managing Committee (MC), Special General Meeting (SGM), and Annual General Meeting (AGM) in cooperative societies.

Case Title and Background

- **Parties:** Mr. Errol Francis Lobo (Plaintiff) vs Power Grid Sankalp Co-op. Hsg. Society Ltd. (Defendant).
- **Case No:** Co-op. Dispute No. 142 of 2025, heard at the Cooperative Court, Raigad-Ratnagiri, Alibag.
- **Matter:** Challenge to the legality of conducting MC, SGM, and AGM meetings in hybrid (physical and online) mode, citing lack of specific provision for online participation under the Maharashtra Cooperative Societies Act, 1960.

Contentions of the Parties

- **Plaintiff:** Sought an injunction to prohibit the Society from holding meetings online or in hybrid mode, demanding exclusively physical meetings. The ground cited was absence of clear statutory provision permitting online meetings under the MCS Act, 1960. Plaintiff also sought a stay on resolutions passed in previous online/hybrid meetings.
- **Defendant Society:** Contended that hybrid meetings are lawful, practical, and inclusive, given the large membership (over 400 members), many of whom reside outside the premises, including in other parts of India and abroad. The Society provided both options—members could choose to attend meetings either in person or virtually. It was further argued that technological participation is supported by legal precedents from the Supreme Court and Bombay High Court.

Legal Reasoning and Precedents

- The Court noted references to Supreme Court judgments affirming the legitimacy of video-conferencing and technology-enabled participation, stating: “Advances in science and technology have shrunk the world... Video conferencing permits one to see, hear, and talk with someone far away, with the same ease as if physically present. Except for touch, all other modes of presence are the same.” It held that video conferencing constitutes “presence” for legal purposes as per procedure established by law.
- The Court found that the MCS Act, while not expressly mentioning online meetings, does not prohibit hybrid meetings, especially where members are given the liberty to attend physically if desired.

Court’s Findings

- **Inclusivity:** Society members were given both options—no compulsion was exercised in favor of online attendance. Venue for physical meetings was also specified, ensuring accessibility.
- **Majority Will:** Out of more than 400 members, only one objected (the plaintiff). The remainder raised no objections, and some proactively preferred hybrid mode.
- **Balance of Convenience:** The Court held that stopping hybrid meetings would deprive many members of participation, whereas the plaintiff retained the right to attend physically. Thus, the balance of convenience favored the Society.
- **No Prima Facie Case:** The objection was found to be unsupported by compelling reasons or statutory prohibition. The plaintiff was unable to demonstrate that hybrid meetings would cause substantive harm or illegality.

Order and Implementation

- The application for interim injunction was rejected, with the Court expressly upholding the right of the Society to conduct MC, SGM, and AGM meetings in hybrid (physical and online) mode.
- Previous resolutions passed in hybrid meetings, as well as scheduled future meetings, were validated by the judgment. No costs were awarded in this order.

Implications and Practical Directives

- **Legal Validity:** Hybrid meetings in cooperative societies, where members are offered both physical and virtual attendance options, are lawful and in line with technological advancements recognized by higher courts.
- **Best Practice:** Societies should continue to offer both options to maximize member participation, specifying venues for physical meetings and secure, accessible online platforms.

– **Member Rights:** Objections to hybrid meetings must show concrete harm or legal prohibition; mere preference for physical meetings is

insufficient for relief.

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