

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
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PRESS NOTE

Neutral citations in Supreme Court of India

The Supreme Court of India will soon implement a uniform, reliable and secure methodology known as 'Neutral Citation System' for identifying and citing decisions for all its judgments, as announced by the Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India, Dr. Dhananjaya Y. Chandrachud. The system shall make it easier for Courts to publish the judgements in public domain by providing a consistent method of citing judicial decisions.

Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India had directed for evolving a mechanism for standardizing citations, particularly for easing the adjudicatory process and to avoid confusion arising out of one case being cited by different people in a number of different ways, as they may rely upon different sources to read the reported case laws.

A few decades ago, the exercise of citing cases was simple because the number of litigation was low, resulting in fewer judicial pronouncements, which were reported manageably by a handful of official law reporters.

The scenario has undergone a radical change, as the number of litigation has escalated exponentially, thus paving way for numerous law reports. Additionally, several websites have started reporting case laws online owing to the development of IT facilities.

A 'Sub-Committee' for formulating a standard national model for Neutral Citations for judgments rendered by the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts, was constituted by the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India. The Sub-Committee invited suggestions, deliberated upon various facets of Neutral Citation System and held a considered view that a uniform national model of generating and allocating neutral citation should be adopted.

'Neutral Citation' would be a Court's approved system of citation, which would be independent of the series of the Law Reports or other publications, and unique to each decision. Every order and judgment (reportable and non-reportable) of the

Supreme Court of India would have a citation of its own, facilitating easy identification, referencing and retrieval thereof.

The legacy data for judgments and orders shall be considered for seeding neutral citations retrospectively. In the e-SCR module, neutral citation number shall be seeded along with SCR number, which will be shown distinctly. As regards live data, i.e., orders and judgments w.e.f. 01.01.2023, shall be assigned neutral citation at the time of their publishing on the official website.

Access to case law is an important facet of the rule of law. It helps in providing transparency and predictability concerning the settled legal position. It also aids in enhancing public scrutiny, education, academic research and development of law.

This initiative of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India will revolutionize the pattern in which the citations operate. Such access to citations, which was so far available only to the subscription holders of private law-reporters, would now be available to everyone free of cost' in the reformed and indigenous form of 'Neutral Citations'.
