

Short Notes on Webinar on Neutral Citations

Purpose of Citations

- Citations are used to reference judgments or provisions without detailing the entire judgment.
- Only the judgment name and its unique code are necessary to support legal arguments.
- The citation code varies between publishers, but the content remains consistent.

Neutral Citation System

- Aimed at systematizing citation practices to eliminate confusion among various stakeholders.
- All Supreme Court judgments (approx. 30,000 to date) now follow the neutral citation system.
- High Courts were also directed to implement this system.

Understanding Neutral Citations

- Neutral citation ensures the medium and publisher are neutral.
- Whether in print or online, the citation remains consistent.
- Example of a neutral citation: **2017 INSC 785** (India Supreme Court judgment, 785th judgment of the year 2017).

Systematization of Citations

- Supreme Court developed a uniform citation system to facilitate easy access to judgments, especially for individuals without access to commercial legal research platforms.
- It also ensures that there is no commercial monopoly of any publisher, and it helps to maintain one citation style.
- The system enables referencing judgments directly from the Supreme Court's website.

Implementation of Neutral Citations

- Almost all the High Courts like Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Sikkim etc. have started adopting the neutral citation system.
- Website access for neutral citations: <https://www.sci.gov.in/neutral-citation/>

Benefits of the Neutral Citation System

- Enhances access to justice by allowing easier access to legal judgments.
- Eliminates dependency on specific publishers or paid platforms for reliable legal citations.

Supreme Court's Judicial Information System (JUDIS)

- The Supreme Court has implemented the Judicial Information System (JUDIS) to create uniformity in how judgments are cited across courts.
- It's now recommended that legal professionals rely on judicial copies of judgments. This helps avoid inconsistencies that can arise from using reports or published copies, ensuring that only official, accurate documents are used in petitions and appeals.
- It was highlighted that only **true copies** of judgments from the Supreme Court website should be relied upon moving forward. This will standardize the practice of referencing judgments in court.

Neutral Citation and True Copies of Judgments on Manupatra

- An example was shown using Manupatra to retrieve a judgment from 2021. The **neutral citation** for the judgment was **2021 INSC 264**, which indicates the 264th judgment of that year.
- Manupatra has a specific search by the name of Neural Citation through which judgments can be searched by adding the neutral citation.
- By using Manupatra even the true copies can be downloaded, ensuring the original judgment is always accessible for legal reference.