

**SUPREME COURT OF INDIA.
E-COMMITTEE.**

**SUGGESTIONS OF HIGH COURTS FOR NEUTRAL
CITATION**

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SUGGESTIONS OF HIGH COURTS FOR NEUTRAL CITATION

I. Allahabad High Court

"The process adopted by the Delhi and Kerala High Court for neutral citation is a good initiative to identify a case in the database and to get its print out.

However, if case law on a particular point is to be searched out from the database, the proposed neutral citation is likely to be grossly inadequate especially in the High Court of Allahabad, which has huge database of interim orders as also final judgements.

If search of the database for finding case Law on a point is also an objective, it would be appropriate to incorporate other fields also or at least an indicator and as to whether the citation is of civil or criminal nature or decides a constitutional issue(s).

Incorporation of these indicators will necessarily make the neutral citation more effective for search of case Law in the database, as it will necessarily narrow down the scope of a search, reducing system over heads, when such queries are processed by the system.

Therefore, the suggestion is that there should be some indication in the neutral citation as to the nature of the case itself as also the point involved therein. For example (for all final and interim Judgments and Orders) we can adopt the following pattern:-

1. <Year of Judgment/Order date>/AHC/CIVIL/<Unique Number>
2. <Year of Judgment/Order date>/AHC/CRIMINAL/<Unique Number>
3. <Year of Judgment/Order date>/AHC/CONST/<Unique Number>
4. <Year of Judgment/Order date>/AHC/TAX/<Unique Number>
5. <Year of Judgment/Order date>/AHC/REVENUE/<Unique Number>

In the absence of such indicator(s) in the neutral citation, additional work in the form of preparation of a digest will necessarily be required."

II. Bombay High Court

- At the Bombay High Court we have to handle an additional layer of complexity in dealing with the benches at Aurangabad and Nagpur as also the sister seat at Porvorim, Goa.
- Overall, we are fully supportive of the project. For now, we proceed on the basis that only judgments (and not 'orders') will receive neutral citations. This aspect may be revised after further discussions.
- The usual format, with the necessary variations, is acceptable ([2022] BHC NNNNN, where NNNNN is a unique computer-generated identifying number). Like other High Courts, we may need to uniquely identify our benches and sister seat. At least one view is that the citation should be truly neutral and not identify benches or seats. This may not be feasible, but needs further study. The reason is purely technical: the unique number is auto-generated at the time of upload (before digital signatures), and that Auto-generation cannot be coordinated between benches and seats.
- In addition, the citation should indicate bench strength if its by a Division Bench ([2022] BHC NNNNN (DB)) etc.
- We do however suggest that REPORTABLE judgments be so indicated in the neutral citation [2022] BHC NNNNN (REP). This will ensure that law reporters can quickly identify the reportable judgments and process them.
- Law reporters should be asked to use the Neutral Citations in their online databases as equivalents along with other citations.
- All references in judgment body copy should be to the neutral citation AND then a law report: [2022] BHC NNNNN (REP) : (2022) SCC ONLINE BOM 123.
- 10 The search field will be modified to include:[YEAR] [COURT] [NUMBER] [BENCH]
- Since each judgment has a UNIQUE number, it is NOT presently thought necessary to include (DB), (FB) etc. That is only for ease of reference within the citation. [YEAR], [COURT] and [NUMBER] search will ALWAYS return an accurate single hit.

- Using just [YEAR] and [COURT] to return a 'fuzzy' hit of a full, unfiltered list of ALL orders and judgments of that bench is all but useless — the list will be very long indeed, and even if hyperlinked will be of next to no utility. But if used in combination with a party name (full or partial), it will return a more accurately filtered list. Therefore, the search field should NOT permit a search only by [YEAR] and [COURT] but, if only those two are specified, then AT LEAST one more parameter needs to be entered for a search: [NUMBER] or party-name etc or judge-name or date-range etc.

III.Calcutta High Court

First four digits : Year of Upload

Next one digit : Separator

Next five digit : Name of Establishment of Calcutta High Court

(Original Side)

(Appellate Side)

(Jalpaiguri Circuit Bench)

(Port Blair Circuit Bench)

Next one digit : Separator

2	0	2	2	/	C	H	C	O	S	/	0	0	0	0	0	1
2	0	2	2	/	C	H	C	A	S	/	0	0	0	0	0	1
2	0	2	2	/	C	H	C	J	P	/	0	0	0	0	0	1
2	0	2	2	/	C	H	C	P	B	/	0	0	0	0	0	1

Next six digits : Serial Numbers.

IV.Chhattisgarh High Court

1. Neutral citation may be made as under:-

1 [Parties Name][Year of Judgment date][Name of the High Court][Case Type][Case no. with Year]
like. ABC vs XYZ 2022 CGHC MCRCA 123/2020

OR

2 [Parties Name][Year of Judgment date][Name of the High Court][CNR no. without Year and State
code] like. ABC vs XYZ 2022 CGHC 12345

OR

3 If more then one Judgment or Order passed in on particular case so date of Judgment /order
may be added in citation as follows:

ABC vs XYZ 2022 CGHC MCRCA 123/2020 (date of Order/Judgment)

OR

ABC vs XYZ 2022 CGHC 12345 (date of Order/Judgment)

2. Short notes may be included about the Subject.

V. Gauhati High Court

1. A standardized system of reference numbering and for search of neutral citations based on application/software for usage at pan India level, be developed.
2. The judgments and orders passed by the Gauhati High Court in the Principal Seat as well as the three outlying Benches may be referred to with the help of the following Prefixes:-
 - a) Principal Seat at Guwahati- GAU(AS)
 - b) Itanagar Bench at Naharlagun (Arunachal Pradesh)- GAU(AP)
 - c) Aizawl Bench (Mizoram)- GAU(MZ)
 - d) Kohima Bench (Nagaland)- GAU(NL)
3. The neutral citation references should be extended not only to judgments but also in respect of those orders wherein, there has been adjudication of legal rights based on reasoning.
4. In case any judgment and order carrying neutral citation reference is reported in any law journal, in that event, the neutral citation reference be also mentioned.

VI.Himachal Pradesh High Court

1. It is suggested to have the recommended standard format for Neutral Citations as under:-

Year of decision [2022]

Court identifier [HHC] (For Himachal High Court)

Ordinal number [Auto Generated Number]*

* Auto Generated Number starts from One at the beginning of every year

2. Judgment writing module is already in place under HP Periphery on HC CIS, which provides facility of judgment template populated with Court details, case details, Advocate details and memo of parties etc., and the proposed module regarding neutral case citation may be included in the judgment writing module, which in addition to displaying Court details, case details, memo of parties etc., will also automatically generate neutral case citation pertaining to said case.

Screenshots of the judgment writing module developed by High Court of Himachal Pradesh now referred as Himachal High Court (HHC) for the purpose of Common National Module of Neutral Citations, are annexed as attachment with this email.

3. Alternatively, similar provision as discussed under point No.2 above may be provided in HC CIS enabling the Stenographers, Judgment Writers to generate the neutral citation pertaining to a particular case at the time of uploading the judgment/order on CIS.

VII.Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court

" It is suggested that neutral citations shall be alike that of CNR number of the case so as to have uniqueness in the citation, as the CNR number has all the fields which differentiate a particular case from any other case in the Country. However, in the neutral citation, institution year mentioned in the CNR can be substituted by the disposal year in order to give an impression and idea about the year in which that particular judgement has been delivered. "

The neutral citation may consists of "Year of disposal/Name of the High Court/CNR Number".

VIII.Jharkhand High Court

1) At the time of delivering judgments/orders, for example, the neutral citation number may be generated with unique numerical code containing:-

(i) State Code, viz; 20,

(ii) Institution Year viz; 2018,

(iii) six digits from CNR viz; 040617 (From-JHHC01-040617- 2018),

(iv) Judgment /Order year viz; 22 and

(v) Judgement/Order number viz; 01 or 02 as the case may be.

2) This may appear as- 20/2018/040617/22/01 and be displayed on top of every page of judgement as well as in the case status menu of the particular case as neutral citation number.

3) This citation number must be linked with particular case record table of CIS.

IX.Karnataka High Court

Apart from assigning unique citations and indexing the decisions in the database and making the contents available for free text search, the following value additions may be considered;

- Assigned Neutral Citations to each case may be published in the e-courts service portal as an authorised identifier of Judgments and orders of each High Court.
- Neutral Citation Search parameter in JUDIS may be introduced.
- Practice Directions to the Advocates and party in persons may be issued to refer and produce only to the Judgements and orders downloaded from the eCourt services portal having the neutral citation in order to achieve standardisation in producing and referring judgments in courts as precedent by both the parties to the litigation.
- Search within the search of any document (Judgment) may be introduced in the judgment portal to gather a relevant portion of neutral cited judgments in the absence of any editorial notes of Law reports in such neutral citation.
- AI may be employed in the neutral citation documents (Judgments) for gathering or tracing relevant portions of ratio decidendi and narration of facts and issues involved, as well, as citations referred etc by developing algorithms depending upon judgment patterns of each High court.
- Neutral citations of each High court may have to be quoted compulsory by the Law reporters, journals in their report to locate the standardized source for downloading from JUDIS etc.,

X. Kerala High Court

IT Team, High Court of Kerala has initiated the implementation of Neutral citation on 17.10.2022 as proposed by Honourable, Chairman of the Computer Committee. Accordingly, Neutral citation number for all Judgments / Reportable-marked interim orders was implemented in our High Court on 01.11.2022. Subsequently, Neutral citation numbering was further extended to all Judgments issued by the High Court since 1949. The unique citation number given to each Judgment is auto-fetched and reflected in the Judgment while downloading the same from the web site of High Court of Kerala (<https://hckinfo.kerala.gov.in/digicourt/Casedetailssearch>). The link is also provided in the Library Digital Repository of the High Court of Kerala.

The neutral citation assigned to each Judgment will be permanent and it will be possible to search and access the Judgments in public domain when the same is uploaded to the web site of the Court. The format of neutral citation designed for the Judgment and the reportable interim Orders respectively is: • 2022/KER/1 (Year / indicate the Court / Unique no. of the judgment for reporting. • 2020/IO/KER/1- (Year / indicate the interim order/ indicate the Court /Unique no. of the interim order As to the suggestions sought regarding the formulation of a common national model of neutral citations, the Chairman of the Computer Committee has recommended that the aforesaid model may be formulated subject to a national policy, as to the common format.

XI.Madras High Court

As Hon'ble Committee constituted by Hon'ble Chairperson of eCommittee of Supreme Court and Chief Justice of India-Designate would be looking into formulation of a uniform national pattern, it may be desirable to have a Pan India policy regarding reportability and as to who decides on reportability, the Hon'ble Judge concerned or should any other mechanism be put in place.

The Judgment Search Portal of the Hon'ble e-Committee, Supreme Court of India (<https://judgments.ecourts.gov.in/>) is an amazing portal which is really going to be a boon for the Advocates / Litigants in availing the Judgments of all High Court(s) under the common delivery platform in the near future.

The Search Parameters and User Interface of the Portal is quite user friendly, which would definitely serve the objective of this portal among the Advocates.

Further, it is noted that the private organizations are offering the similar services only after the payment of subscription charges, thus this Judgment Search Portal will definitely create a greater impact among the Advocates.

While reporting judgments on pan India pattern for Madras High Court, MHC, being clear and easily identifiable by the readers, can be taken as mode of neutral citation for citing judgments of Principal Bench and Madurai Bench of Madras High Court.

In respect of proposed model of Neutral Citation System, the proposed citation number should have a field of unique reference code for every high court similar to that of the CIS Establishment Code.

With respect to the fixing of numbering system in the proposed Citation System, a common numbering system for the Principal Seat and its respective benches may be followed, so that there wouldn't be a chance for the raise of duplicity in the generated numbers at the time of merging / bifurcation of high court benches in future. Similarly, necessary mechanism to create a common citation numbering system for the orders of different benches (Principal Seat & Benches), may also be enabled in the Case Information System (CIS) Software.

XII. Manipur High Court

The neutral citation number of the High Court shall consists of the following three elements: "Year of Judgment or interim order uploaded / High Court Name / Auto-Generated Number".

XIII.Meghalaya High Court

1. The data for neutral citations may be obtained from CIS and NJDG and since all cases registered on CIS have been assigned a unique CNR no. the neutral citations may be derived from the CNR no.
2. As stated by his Lordship Hon'ble Dr. Justice DY Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India, since Delhi High Court has launched a neutral citation for its decisions in this regard, a request may be made to the Hon'ble Delhi High Court to share the application and modalities adopted by them and the same may be deployed in this High Court, if found feasible with customization as required.

XIV.Orissa High Court

1. The neutral citations should be mapped with the Case Number Record (CNR).
2. Search by neutral citations to be added to the eCourts Services Portal, KIOSK and Query Search module in CIS.
3. Existing Orders/Judgments to be added with neutral citations codes.
4. Auto generation of the neutral citations codes and appending the same to the uploaded Orders/Judgments

XV.Patna High Court

- (2022)Jan(PatHC)(1)2345PartyName
- Where the figures in the first () denotes the year and thereafter month of Judgment is mentioned. The second () denotes the name of the Hon'ble High Court whereas the third () denotes the strength of the Hon'ble Bench, The forth figure 2345 is indicative of the page and party name is also mentioned at the end. Further, the Bench strength may be mentioned in Red ink.
- The volume may be mentioned month wise like instead of volume 1,2,3 etc., Jan., Feb., mar., Apr. May be considered.
- The strength of the bench may be mentioned in the citation with Roman number.
- Page numbering may be done month wise.
- Civ. , Cri., Cri. (App.), Civ. (S.A.) etc. may be used in citation to distinguish the nature of cases.
- Blue book of citation may be referred to follow the citation samples of various court to ensure universality of application.

XVI. Punjab & Haryana High Court

I have the honour to submit the format of neutral citation number consisting of four elements :

"Year/Case Number/HCR/High Court Name" through the following examples —

1. 2022(1) HCR (P&H) (in case of decisions rendered by the Punjab & Haryana High Court)
2. 022(1) HCR (Himachal) (n case of decisions rendered by the High Court of Himachal Pradesh)

Note: HCR stands for High Court Reporter/Journal

XVII.Rajasthan High Court

- Neutral Citation numbers may be generated exclusively for final orders/ judgments of individual High Court.

- For the purpose of common national model of neutral citations, following syntax may be generated:-

<Year- 4 digit numeric> i.e. 2022

<State High Court- 4 digit alpha> i.e. RJJP/ RJJD

<Auto Neutral Citation No.-6 digit numeric> i.e. 000001

- Auto Neutral Citation Number with above syntax may be displayed in template program (CIS periphery programme) for final orders/ judgments of High Court.
- Auto Neutral Citation Number may be printed on all pages of final orders/ judgments.
- Display of Neutral Citation Number on Website and Mobile App of High Court-
- Case Status Search- At the time of display of order/ judgments, neutral citation number may also be displayed.
- Judgment Search- At the time of display of search result on any of the parameter, neutral citation number may be displayed with other details of the case.
- On more parameter may also be added for search on the basis of neutral citation number.
- In case connected matters (bunch cases) are decided by a common order/ judgment, auto neutral citation number applied for main case should be used for all connected matters. In case, the connected cases are divided in 2 or more bunches, then a mechanism is required to be developed to give different neutral citation numbers.
- Suggestion for old orders/ judgments- A mechanism may be developed for tagging Neutral Citation Number for old final orders/ judgments, but the same could not be printed on every page of final order/ judgments.

- When final order/ judgments are downloaded, the QR code (periphery of Rajasthan High Court) is printed on its top corner. Neutral citation number may also be added within this QR Code.

XVIII. Sikkim High Court

I. That the citation standard may have only essential elements in order to minimize the length of the citation with the core elements as – year of the judgment/the Court identifier/the ordinal number generated automatically. However where the judgments and orders of High Courts are delivered and published in large numbers in a particular year, the ordinal number may be large increasing the length of the citation, this aspect may have to be considered while formulating the elements of the citations.

II. We may suggest that optional elements may not be included as a part of citation by each High Court unless absolutely essential so that uniformity of neutral citation is achieved considering indispensability of such optional elements.

III. We may also suggest that after the proposed uniform neutral citations are formulated for implementation the same may be circulated to all the High Courts for further Suggestions.

XIX.Telangana High Court

(a) The Unique citation number should contain three elements as “year of decision [YYYY] in square bracket / Court identifier (TSHC-two character state code, two character Court or Tribunal identifier) / Auto Generated Number for each year”

Example : [2021] TSHC 12.

(b) Guidelines on the use of Neutral citations may be provided common to all the High Courts, which may be useful to understand the Citation elements and use case of Citation like positioning etc., when referring to the same in the upcoming Judgments.

(c) A module may be provided in the CIS software for linking the unique neutral citation number with the CNR number whenever final order/judgment is uploaded, in order to utilize the Case details later onwards as and when require.

XX.Tripura High Court

"It is suggested that a system should be developed by the NIC in the HC CIS software for auto-generation of the neutral citation of a judgment delivered by the High Court as per the national model so that the neutral citation can be available in all the eCourts Services applications including NJDG, Free Text Judgment Search portal etc. Such auto-generation of neutral citation for judgment may occur once the judgments are uploaded in the HC CIS by the stenographer of the respective Court. The process may be developed akin to the process of auto-generation of CNR of a case in CIS. However, neutral citation generation can be adopted only with respect to the reportable judgments passed by the High Court."

XXI.Uttarakhand High Court

i. Year of Judgement /Abbreviation of High Court/Auto Generated 6 Digit Unique Code

Example:- 2022/UHC/999999

2022- Year of Judgment

UHC-Abbreviation of Uttarakhand High Court

999999- Auto Generated 6 Digit Unique Code

ii. Case Type abbreviation/ Case Number/Case Year/ Abbreviation of High Court / Auto Generated 6 Digit Unique Code

Example:- WPSS/123/2022/UHC/999999

WPSS- Case Type abbreviation

123-Case Number

2022- Year of Judgment

UHC-Abbreviation of Uttarakhand High Court

999999- Auto Generated 6 Digit Unique Code