

Guidelines for Expeditious Disposal of Old/Zero Tolerance Cases

1. Special colour marking be made on the front page of file of old cases (may be 'red' for 10 & 10+ years old cases and 'blue' for 5 & 5-9 years old cases) so as to distinctly identify it.
2. Similar colour mark be given on all copies of Cause-list in respect of old cases to make the litigants aware that the case falls in the category of old cases and no adjournment will be granted.
3. Except in rare and compelling circumstances, no adjournment be allowed in old cases.
4. In criminal cases evidence of formal witnesses be taken on affidavit under Sec. 296 of Cr.PC.
5. Witnesses of repetitive nature (multiple witnesses on same facts) may be dropped. (Sec. 134 of The Evidence Act).
6. Admission/Denial of documents be invariably carried out in all cases (Order X CPC) & Sec. 294 Cr.PC.
7. In case of difficulty in service of summons on the parties/witnesses due to ambiguity in address, affidavit about the address being complete and correct be taken from the party interested in getting the process issued and dasti service be allowed. In case of avoidance of process, alternative/coercive process may be issued.
8. In criminal cases, process to public witnesses be served through the Investigating Officer.
9. Time limit for addressing arguments on charge or miscellaneous applications be fixed. The parties be given liberty to submit short written synopsis, if the arguments are likely to continue beyond time so fixed.
10. Short adjournment be given in cases where the litigants is in judicial custody.
11. Resort to Order XVIII Rule 4 CPC may be taken for recording statements of witnesses, through Local Commissioners, in time-bound manner.
12. Oral final arguments once started, may be heard on day to day basis by fixing time-lines in consultation with counsels.
13. Unnecessary lengthy orders/judgments be avoided to save time for dealing with other cases of the old category.
14. Have free and frank discussions on legal points with seniors and fellow judicial officers.
15. Multiple dates with short gaps be given for recording evidence with clear specification that the party will have to conclude the exercise by appropriately calling witnesses.

