# Citation Analysis of Legal Instruments in Research

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Abstract

*This paper examines the use of legal instruments in legal research through a citation analysis of 731 legal instruments referenced in 98 theses submitted to the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru. The study reveals that the National Health Bill, 2009, was cited three times, while the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007, was cited five times. Notably, international legal instruments were also frequently cited, with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979 being cited 24 times, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 cited 16 times. This analysis provides valuable insight into the prominence and influence of both national and international legal instruments in academic legal research.*

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Keywords
Legal research; Legal instruments; Citation analysis

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## 1 Introduction

Citation analysis evaluates the impact of research by tracking citations in academic work. It helps measure an article's influence using metrics like the H-index, Impact Factor, and G-index. Tools like Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar facilitate citation tracking. Methods such as co-citation analysis and bibliographic coupling identify research trends. However, limitations include self-citations, negative citations, and citation manipulation, which can distort impact measurement. While useful, citation analysis should complement qualitative assessments to evaluate research contributions comprehensively.

Legal instruments are official documents that establish, define, or regulate legal rights and obligations within a legal system. These instruments are crucial legal resources that guide legislation, judicial decisions, and policy implementation. They can be classified into different forms based on authority, function, and applicability. Primary legal resources include fundamental documents such as constitutions, statutes, case law, treaties, and regulations. These instruments carry binding legal authority and form the foundation of legal systems. Constitutions outline the fundamental principles of governance, while statutes are laws enacted by legislatures. Judicial precedents, derived from court decisions, contribute to legal interpretation and the evolution of case law. Treaties and international agreements, such as United Nations conventions, establish legal obligations between nations.

Governments and regulatory bodies issue legal instruments such as executive orders, government policies, and administrative regulations. These instruments influence legal interpretation and governance, even though they may not always have statutory authority. Regulatory agencies create rules and guidelines that impact sectors such as healthcare, finance, and environmental protection. In many legal systems, customary law and soft law instruments also play a significant role. Customary law is based on long-standing traditions recognized as legally binding within specific communities. Soft law instruments, such as Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), declarations, and policy recommendations, are non-binding agreements that influence legal and policy decisions globally. For example, declarations by international organisations like the United Nations (UN) or the World Health Organization (WHO) provide guidance that shapes international norms. Legal instruments, whether binding or advisory, are

fundamental to the functioning of legal systems. They help shape national and international laws, guide legal practitioners, and ensure a structured legal framework for governance and justice. Understanding these instruments is essential for legal research, policymaking, and judicial decision-making.

### 1.1 National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru

The National Law School of India University (NLSIU) in Bengaluru, founded in 1986, is India's leading law institution. It introduced the five-year integrated BA.,LL.B (Hons.) program, setting a high standard for legal education in the country. Known for its rigorous academic framework, esteemed faculty, and strong focus on research and advocacy, NLSIU offers undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs in law and public policy. The university has nurtured prominent legal professionals, judges, and policymakers who have played a pivotal role in shaping India's legal and judicial landscape. With a dynamic campus, a thriving moot court culture, and partnerships with top global institutions, NLSIU remains at the forefront of advancing legal education and the justice system in India.

## 2 Objectives of the Study

This paper aims to comprehensively analyse the legal instruments cited in theses submitted to the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru. The specific objectives are:

- To determine the number of legal instruments cited in theses submitted to NLSIU.
- To classify the legal instruments cited in theses.
- To identify the most frequently cited legal instruments.
- To rank the legal instruments based on citation frequency.

## 3 Methodology of the Study

This study adopted a systematic, quantitative approach to examine various bibliographic details of legal instruments, including their frequency, year, and title. The primary data source consisted of legal instruments citations extracted from the bibliographies of law theses submitted to the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru. A total of 98 theses, submitted between the university's establishment in 1987 and 2023, were selected for analysis. Of these, 47 theses were retrieved from the Shodhganga Repository, while the remaining 51 were physically accessed and scanned during a visit to the NLSIU library. A total 731 Citation data was extracted using a combination of manual transcription and scanning techniques and subsequently compiled into Microsoft Excel for further analysis. To ensure accuracy and consistency, the dataset underwent a meticulous cleaning process. Sorting and filtering functions in Excel were employed to eliminate duplicate, incomplete, or irrelevant records. After refinement, the cleaned dataset was then used to explore trends and patterns in legal research citations across the examined theses.

## 4 Analysis of Data

It explores the descriptive data on citations of selected legal instrument found in the bibliography and in the lists of cases, statutes, and other documents included in the preliminary pages of the theses. It highlights frequently cited legal instruments, such as bills, policies, circulars, rules, conventions, declarations, and treaties, offering insights into the preferences of legal scholars. This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the current legal research landscape and the sources shaping scholarly discourse.

### 4.1 Analysis of Bills Cited More Than Once:

**Table 1:** Analysis of Bills Cited More Than Once

| Sl No | Bill | No of Times Cited |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | National Health Bill, 2009 | 3 |
| 2 | Assisted Reproductive Technologies Bill, 2014 | 2 |
| 3 | Mental Health Care Bill, 2013 | 2 |
| 4 | The Consumer Protection Bill, 2015 | 2 |
| 5 | The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill, | 2 |
| 6 | The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018 | 2 |
| 7 | The Witness (Protection Of Identity) Bill, 2015 | 2 |

Table 1 depicts the most frequently cited legal instruments in the research. The National Health Bill, 2009, stands out with three citations, highlighting its influence in health-related legal frameworks. Other bills, such as the Assisted Reproductive Technologies Bill, 2014, Mental Health Care Bill, 2013, and The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018, are each cited twice, reflecting ongoing discussions on reproductive rights, mental health, and data privacy. The Consumer Protection Bill, 2015, and The Land

Acquisition (Amendment) Bill also received two citations, emphasizing their role in consumer rights and land acquisition. The Witness (Protection of Identity) Bill, 2015, underscores the importance of witness protection in criminal justice reform.

### 4.2 Analysis of Policies Cited More Than Once

**Table 2:** Analysis of Policies Cited More Than Once

| Sl No | Policy | No of Times Cited |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 | 5 |
| 2 | National Forest Policy, 1988 | 4 |
| 3 | National Health Policy, 2002 | 3 |
| 4 | The National Energy Policy, 2014 | 3 |
| 5 | National IPR Policy, 2016 | 2 |
| 6 | National Litigation Policy, 2010 | 2 |
| 7 | National Policy for Children, 1974 | 2 |
| 8 | National Policy on Local Government, 2009 | 2 |
| 9 | National Population Policy, 2000 | 2 |
| 10 | National Water Policy,2002 | 2 |

Table 2 provides an overview of the most frequently cited policies, emphasizing their relevance in legal studies. The National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007, cited five times, plays a key role in addressing land acquisition and displacement issues. The National Forest Policy, 1988, with four citations, underscores sustainable forest management and conservation. The National Health Policy, 2002, and National Energy Policy, 2014, each cited three times, highlight the significance of public health and energy security. Policies like the National IPR Policy, 2016, National Litigation Policy, 2010, and National Policy for Children, 1974, reflect concerns in intellectual property, litigation, and child welfare, demonstrating their legal impact.

### 4.3 Analysis of Rules Cited More Than Once

**Table 3:** Analysis of Rules Cited More Than Once

| Sl No | Rules | No of Times Cited |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Information Technology (Intermediately Guideline) Rules, 2011 | 3 |
| 2 | Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016 | 3 |
| 3 | Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994 | 2 |
| 4 | Disaster Management Rules, 2006 | 2 |
| 5 | Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 | 2 |
| 6 | Information Technology (Reasonable Security Practices and Procedures and Sensitive Personal Data or Information) Rules, 2011 | 2 |
| 7 | Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Karnataka Rules, 2010 | 2 |
| 8 | Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodity) Rules,2011 | 2 |
| 9 | Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Rules, 1994 | 2 |
| 10 | UN, Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 1993 | 2 |

The analysis of Table 3, listing the most frequently cited rules, offers insights into key legal frameworks in the research. Two sets of rules are cited most often, each appearing three times: the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules, 2011, regulating digital platforms, and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016, safeguarding children's rights. Several rules appear twice, spanning technology, disaster management, health, and international standards, reflecting a multidisciplinary approach. The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, is the oldest cited, while the Juvenile Justice Model Rules, 2016, is the most recent, demonstrating legal evolution. The UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 1993, highlights international legal influences. The prominence of IT rules underscores digital governance challenges, while repeated citations of juvenile justice rules emphasize protections for vulnerable populations. The diverse selection of rules showcases the research's broad legal scope and historical depth.

### 4.4 Analysis of Conventions Cited More Than Once

**Table 4:** Analysis of Conventions Cited More Than Once

| Sl No | Convention | No of Times Cited |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979 | 24 |
| 2 | Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 | 12 |
| 3 | Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984 | 9 |
| 4 | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006 | 6 |
| 5 | Convention Relating to the International Status of Refugees, 1933 | 6 |
| 6 | Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 1969 | 5 |
| 7 | American Convention on Human Rights, 1969 | 4 |
| 8 | Night Work (Women) Convention, 1948 | 4 |
| 9 | European Convention on Human Rights, 1989 | 4 |
| 10 | International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965 | 4 |

Table 4 summarises the most frequently cited international conventions, highlighting their role in international and comparative law. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979, is the most cited with 24 references, emphasising gender justice. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, follows with 12 citations, underscoring child protection. Other notable conventions include the Convention against Torture, 1984 (9 citations), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, and the Refugee Convention, 1933 (each cited 6 times), focusing on human dignity and marginalised groups. The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 1969 (5 citations), highlights treaty interpretation. Regional treaties, such as the American and European Conventions on Human Rights (4 citations each), provide a comparative perspective. The research integrates global and regional conventions, illustrating an intersectional approach to discrimination and rights. From 1933 to 2006, the temporal range demonstrates the evolution of international legal principles, balancing historical grounding with modern applicability.

### 4.5 Analysis of Declarations Cited More Than Once

**Table 5:**Analysis of Declarations Cited More Than Once

| Sl No | Declaration | No of Times Cited |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 | 16 |
| 2 | Beijing Declaration, 1995 | 4 |
| 3 | Madrid Declaration on Ethical Standards for Psychiatric Practice, 1996 | 4 |
| 4 | Declaration of Hawaii, 1983 | 3 |
| 5 | Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, 1975 | 3 |
| 6 | Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons, 1971 | 3 |
| 7 | Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, 1985 | 2 |
| 8 | Declaration on Principles of International Law, 1970 | 2 |
| 9 | Vienna Declaration And Programme Of Action, 1993 | 2 |

Table 5 presents the most frequently cited legal declarations in the study. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), cited 16 times, is the most referenced, emphasizing its universal impact on human rights jurisprudence and Indian legal frameworks. The Beijing Declaration (1995) and Madrid Declaration on Ethical Standards for Psychiatric Practice (1996), each cited four times, highlight gender equality and medical ethics. The Declaration of Hawaii (1983), Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975), and Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971), each cited three times, reflect India's engagement

with disability rights, aligning with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (1985) influences India's victim-centric legal provisions. The Declaration on Principles of International Law (1970) reinforces sovereignty and legal equality, while the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993) aligns with India's human rights commitments.

**5 Discussions and Conclusion**

This paper highlights the diverse focus of legal studies and the frequent citation of these legal instruments, which signifies their pivotal role in shaping legal discourse, legislative frameworks, and judicial interpretations. Additionally, including policies spanning multiple decades reflects the continuous evolution of India's legal and policy landscape in response to socio-economic and environmental challenges. The analysis provides a balanced perspective on regulatory evolution and emerging challenges by engaging with historical and contemporary regulations. The recurring citation of specific legal provisions reinforces their significance in addressing the legal, social, and policy concerns central to the thesis. This structured citation pattern strengthens the research by establishing a comprehensive legal foundation for its arguments and analyses. The frequent references to conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child highlight their role as foundational legal texts within the research. These conventions likely serve as benchmarks for assessing domestic compliance and policy frameworks. By emphasising conventions with direct policy relevance, the research aligns itself with actionable insights that can inform legal reforms and advocacy efforts.

This further demonstrates the strategic selection of international conventions, underscoring their critical relevance to the research objectives. The balanced emphasis on global and regional legal instruments, historical evolution, and intersectional themes reinforces the thesis's contribution to international and comparative legal scholarship. These conventions establish a strong normative foundation for addressing key legal and human rights issues examined in the study. This integrative approach illustrates how Indian jurisprudence synthesizes domestic and global perspectives to address contemporary legal challenges. Future research could delve deeper into judicial interpretations and legislative reforms to navigate emerging legal issues effectively. Moreover, maintaining accurate citation practices remains crucial for preserving the credibility and reliability of legal research. This analysis offers valuable insights for law librarians, educators, and researchers, providing a strong foundation for future studies on legal citation behavior and its impact on legal scholarship.

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