

# **Citation Analysis of Legislative Acts in Legal Scholarship**

**Chidananda M.<sup>1</sup>; Mallinath Kumbar<sup>2</sup>**

Research Scholar, Dept of Studies in Library and Information Science, University of Mysore, Mysuru<sup>1</sup>; Former Professor and Chairman, Dept of Studies in Library and Information Science, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Mysuru<sup>2</sup>

*chidanandammlisc@gmail.com; mallinathk@yahoo.com*

## **ABSTRACT**

*This paper emphasizes the significance of legislative Acts in legal scholarship. A total of 1,584 citations of legislative Acts were extracted from 98 theses at the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru, and analyzed through citation analysis. The study reveals that Indian legislative Acts are cited more frequently than those from other countries. Among Indian states, Acts enacted by the Government of Karnataka were the most commonly cited. Notably, the central Act, the Constitution of India (1950), emerged as the most cited legislation in the study.*

**KEYWORDS:** Legal research, Acts, Legislation, Citation analysis, Indian States.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Citation analysis is the study of how scholarly works reference one another, providing insights into their impact and influence. It examines citations' frequency, patterns, and relationships within academic literature. This method is widely used to assess the credibility and significance of research papers, authors, and journals. Tools such as Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Scopus offer citation metrics that help in evaluating scholarly contributions. Citation analysis also aids in identifying key publications, emerging research trends, and academic collaborations across various disciplines.

Legislative acts are laws formally enacted by a governing body, such as a parliament or congress. These acts establish legal frameworks, regulate societal conduct, and address public policy concerns. They undergo a structured legislative process that includes proposal, debate, amendment, and approval before becoming law. Legislative acts may consist of primary laws or amendments to existing statutes. They play a crucial role in shaping governance, defining legal rights and responsibilities, and ensuring legal consistency within a jurisdiction.

Legal scholarship encompasses academic research and writings that analyze, critique, and interpret legal principles, doctrines, and judicial decisions. It includes law review articles, case commentaries, legal theories, and comparative

law studies. Legal scholarship contributes to legal reforms, influences court decisions, and plays a key role in the evolution of jurisprudence. Scholars employ doctrinal, empirical, and interdisciplinary approaches to explore legal issues. As a vital resource, legal scholarship aids practitioners, policymakers, and academics in understanding and advancing legal systems.

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

The **National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru**, established in 1986, is India's premier law institution. It pioneered the five-year integrated **BA LLB (Hons.)** program, setting a benchmark for legal education in the country. Renowned for its rigorous curriculum, distinguished faculty, and strong emphasis on research and advocacy, NLSIU offers undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs in law and public policy. The university has produced eminent legal professionals, judges, and policymakers who have significantly contributed to the legal and judicial landscape. With a vibrant campus, a thriving moot court culture, and collaborations with leading global institutions, NLSIU continues to be at the forefront of shaping India's legal education and justice system.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Citation analysis is widely used to assess the influence of legal resources, including legislative acts, within legal scholarship. Research indicates that legislative acts serve as primary sources in legal studies, significantly shaping judicial reasoning and academic discourse (Garfield, 2006). Citation metrics provide a means to evaluate the impact and relevance of legislation across various legal contexts. Fowler et al. (2007) highlight how citation analysis can measure the authority of legislative acts in judicial decisions and scholarly writings. The frequency of citations reflects the legal and societal significance of the legislation. Moreover, Hafner and Berman (2010) suggest that citation networks can illustrate legislative evolution, demonstrating how laws interact and develop over time.

Legal scholarship frequently relies on doctrinal research, wherein statutory provisions are analyzed and interpreted in academic discussions. According to Posner (2015), the extent to which legislative acts are cited in law review articles underscores their doctrinal importance. Similarly, Williams and Whiteman (2018) examine citation patterns to identify landmark statutes that shape legal theory and policy development. Recent advancements in research have incorporated computational and bibliometric methodologies to analyze legislative citations. Machine learning models, as proposed by Peters and Smith (2020), provide deeper insights into the cross-referencing of statutes across various legal domains. These methods enhance traditional citation analysis by revealing citation trends and legislative interconnections. Citation analysis serves as a valuable tool for understanding the role of legislative acts in legal scholarship. It offers empirical evidence of legal influence, aids in legislative reforms, and contributes to jurisprudential advancements. Future research should explore interdisciplinary approaches to further refine citation analytics in legal studies.

## **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the legislative Acts cited in theses submitted to **National Law School of India University, Bengaluru**. The specific objectives are:

- ✓ To determine the number of Acts cited in theses submitted to NLSIU.

- ✓ To classify the Acts (country and state wise) cited in theses.
- ✓ To identify the most frequently cited Acts.
- ✓ To rank the Acts based on citation frequency.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a systematic, quantitative approach to examine various bibliographic details of statutes, including their frequency, year, title, and publisher. The primary data source consisted of statute 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. 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 study identified and analyzed a total of **1,584 statute citations**. The cleaned dataset was then used to explore trends and patterns in legal research citations across the examined theses.

#### 5. ANALYSIS OF DATA

A comprehensive analysis of the descriptive data on Act citations found in the bibliographies, as well as in the lists of cases, statutes, and other documents included in the preliminary pages of the theses, is presented here. This study examines key aspects, including the top ten countries citing Acts, the state-wise distribution of Acts, and the most frequently cited Indian Acts. The findings offer valuable insights into the legal research landscape, highlighting citation patterns and trends in legislative references.

##### 5.1 Analysis of Citations of Top 10 Countries of Acts

**Table 1** Analysis of Citations of Top 10 Countries of Acts

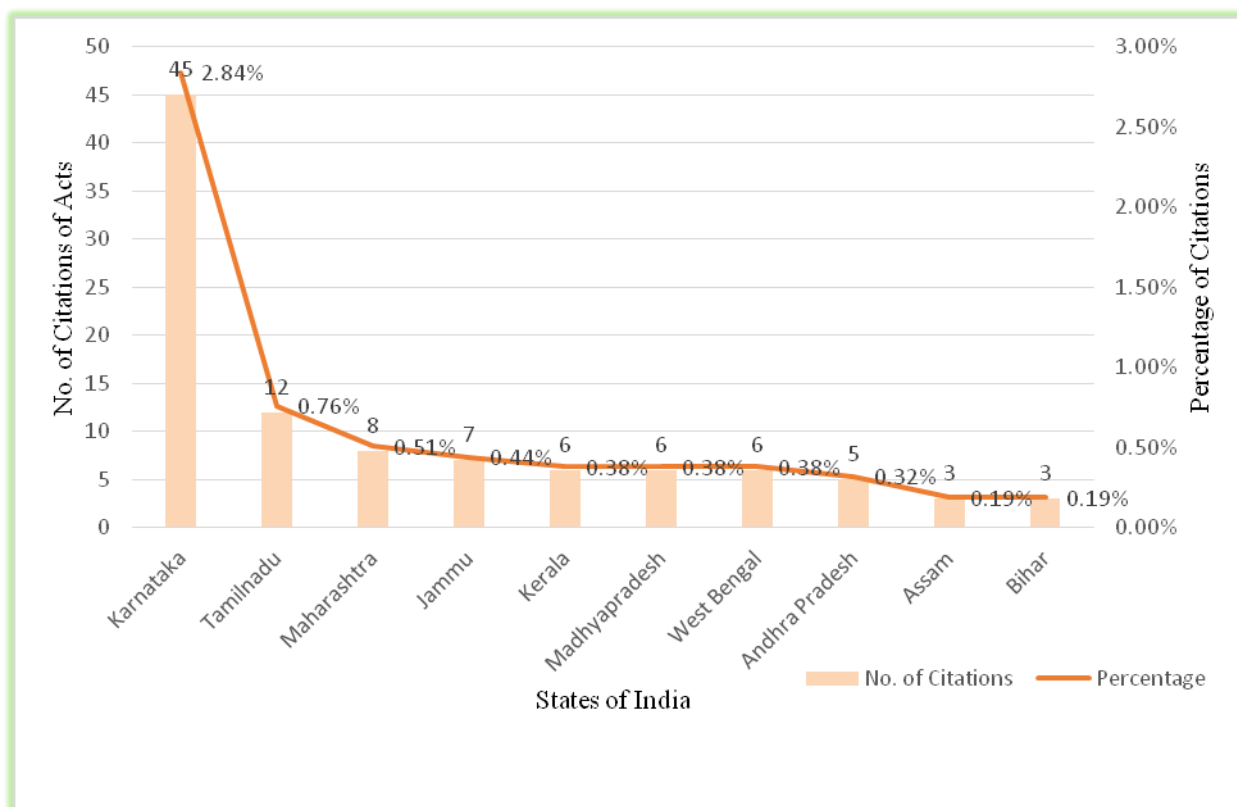
Sl No	Country	No. of Citations of Acts Cited	Percentage
1	India	1163	73.42%
2	United States of America	110	6.94%
3	United Kingdom	69	4.36%
4	Srilanka	35	2.21%
5	Australia	21	1.33%
6	Canada	11	0.69%
7	South Africa	8	0.51%
8	Germany	6	0.38%
9	Singapore	6	0.38%
10	New Zealand	5	0.32%
<b>Total - 1584</b>			

## Citation Analysis of Legislative Acts in Legal Scholarship

The data in **Table 1** depicts the distribution of legal acts cited across the top ten countries, offering insights into their prominence and influence in legal research. The table categorizes the number of cited acts and their respective percentages within the total corpus of **1,584 citations**. India accounts for **1,163 citations (73.42%)**, reflecting its dominant presence in the dataset. The **United States (110 citations, 6.94%)** and the **United Kingdom (69 citations, 4.36%)** also emerge as significant contributors. Other countries, including **Sri Lanka (35 citations, 2.21%)**, **Australia (21 citations, 1.33%)**, and **Canada (11 citations, 0.69%)**, underscore the influence of Commonwealth nations in shaping legal references. Additionally, **South Africa, Germany, Singapore, and New Zealand** collectively contribute **25 citations (1.59%)**, indicating a limited yet noteworthy presence. The inclusion of these jurisdictions suggests their relevance in specific thematic or comparative legal analyses within the examined theses.

### 5.2 Analysis of Citations of Top 10 States of India:

**Figure 1** Analysis of Citations of Top 10 States of India



**Figure 1** presents a detailed visualization of legislative act citations across the top ten states in India, highlighting regional disparities and trends in legislative development. The **central government** accounts for **754 citations**, forming a substantial portion of the overall statutory framework. The figure also showcases the citations of state-specific Acts from the **top Ten Indian States** with the highest number of references. Collectively, these states contribute **108 citations**, representing approximately **6.82%** of the total **1,584 laws** documented. Among the states, **Karnataka** leads with **45 citations (2.84%)**, followed by **Tamil Nadu** with **12 citations (0.76%)** and **Maharashtra** with **8 citations (0.51%)**. **Jammu (7 citations, 0.44%)**, along with **Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal** (each with **6 citations or 0.38%**), reflects a moderate legislative output, potentially influenced by regional governance priorities. At the lower end, **Andhra Pradesh (5 citations, 0.32%)**, **Assam**, and **Bihar** (each

with 3 citations or 0.19%) demonstrate a comparatively limited presence in the dataset. These variations in citation frequency may be indicative of differing legislative priorities, research focus areas, or historical legal developments within each state.

### 5.3 Analysis of Citations of Top 10 Acts of India

Figure 2 Analysis of Citations of Top 10 Acts of India

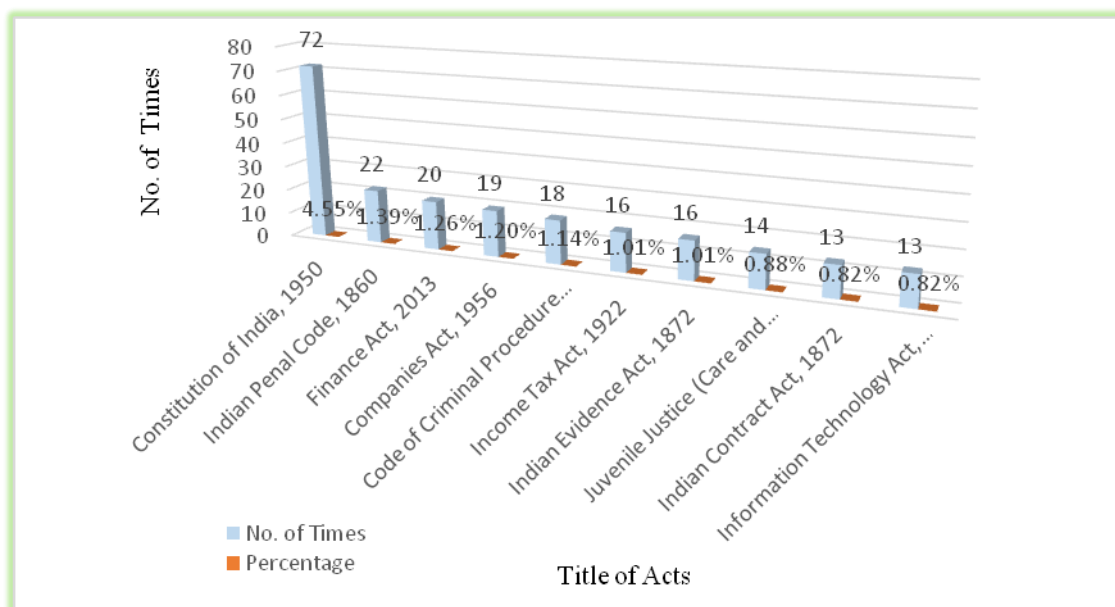


Figure 2 provides an overview of the most frequently cited legislative acts enacted in India, highlighting their significance within the legal framework and their impact on governance and society, as referenced by researchers. The **Constitution of India** leads the list with **72 citations (4.55%)**, reaffirming its foundational role in shaping the country's legal and political landscape. Ranking second, the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** appears **22 times (1.39%)**, underscoring its critical function in maintaining law and order through codified criminal laws that continue to be applied with periodic amendments. The **Finance Act, 2013** follows with **20 citations (1.26%)**, reflecting the evolving landscape of fiscal legislation and its influence on economic policies and tax reforms. The **Companies Act, 1956 (19 citations, 1.20%)** and the **Indian Contract Act, 1872 (13 citations, 0.82%)** highlights the significance of commercial laws in governing corporate entities, contracts, and business operations. Additionally, the **Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (18 citations, 1.14%)** and the **Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (16 citations, 1.01%)** emphasizes the fundamental role of procedural laws in ensuring effective justice delivery mechanisms. The **Income Tax Act, 1922 (16 citations, 1.01%)** underscores the lasting impact of tax laws in shaping financial administration and governance. The **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (14 citations, 0.88%)** reflects the growing emphasis on child rights and protection, while the **Information Technology Act, 2000 (13 citations, 0.82%)** signifies India's legislative response to the challenges posed by the digital era.

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

The citation analysis of Acts in NLSIU theses highlights key trends in legal research, revealing a strong foundation in Indian legislative frameworks while integrating selective international and comparative elements. The notable presence of references to the United States and Commonwealth countries reflects an increasing interdisciplinary and global approach within Indian legal scholarship. This trend underscores the evolving nature of legal research, emphasizing transnational perspectives to address contemporary legal challenges. The citation patterns also reveal regional disparities in legislative activity among Indian states. Karnataka demonstrates a proactive approach, contributing significantly more than states like Bihar and Assam, which have relatively lower citation frequencies. This imbalance likely reflects variations in governance priorities and administrative capacities. Furthermore, the predominance of central acts over state acts reinforces the trend of centralization within India's legal framework. Understanding these patterns can help scholars and policymakers assess legislative adequacy and regional governance needs. Future research could explore the qualitative impact of these laws on regional development and governance structures.

The study also highlights a combination of historically significant laws, such as the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Indian Evidence Act, alongside modern legislation, including the Information Technology Act and the Juvenile Justice Act. This reflects Indian law's adaptability to evolving socio-economic conditions. The emphasis on corporate, fiscal, and digital laws aligns with India's economic and technological trajectory, offering insights into the role of legal scholarship in assessing the effectiveness and adaptability of legislation. Future research could further analyze judicial interpretations and legislative reforms to address emerging challenges. Additionally, ensuring accurate citation practices is crucial for maintaining the credibility and reliability of legal research. This analysis provides valuable insights for law librarians, educators, and researchers, offering a strong foundation for future studies on legal citation behavior and its impact on legal scholarship.

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