

“From Law Books to Courtrooms: A Study of Court Functioning Through Internship at the Supreme Court”

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ABSTRACT

This research paper provides a thorough overview of my internship experience at the Supreme Court of India, as a part of NTCC internship program for my B.A. LL.B. (Hons.) degree.

The main aim of this internship is to report the learning I gained from the court and insights gained during the internship. The areas of focus were Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) under Article 136 of the Constitution and Public Interest Litigations (PILs) under Article 32.

This research paper highlights the importance of Article 32, which is also called as heart and soul of the constitution, which guarantees the right to seek remedies for the enforcement of fundamental rights. It also examines the process of filing and arguing SLPs, which serves as a strong remedial action in the Indian legal system.

During the internship, I worked under the guidance of an Advocate-on-Record at the Supreme Court, where I was actively involved in reading case files, preparing legal arguments, and observing courtroom proceedings. A major part of my learning came from studying the journey of legal cases—from the District Courts, through the High Courts, and up to the Supreme Court. I developed skills in identifying legal issues, analysing judgments, and understanding procedural intricacies.

Aside from academic learning, this internship offered a special opportunity to witness important Supreme Court ceremonies, such as the swearing-in of the new Chief Justice of India, Justice B.R. Gavai, illuminating the institutional traditions of the Court.

Altogether, this research paper provides to bridges the gap between legal theory and practice. It offered an analysis on the strengths and difficulties of the Supreme Court system and provided recommendations for better accessibility, efficiency, and transparency in India's courts.

Keywords: Supreme Court, SLP, PIL, Article 32, Indian Constitution, Judicial Process, Legal Internship

Introduction

The legal profession is a dynamic, ever-evolving field that finds its fullest expression in the courtroom; it is not limited to textbooks and classrooms; it is a living, evolving discipline that finds its fullest expression in the courtroom

m. This Research paper is the outcome of my internship at the Supreme Court of India, the apex judicial authority of the nation. It is the final court of appeal in the country.

It serves as the nation's supreme interpreter and defender of the legal system in addition to being a constitutional body. For every prospective law student, the chance to intern at the Supreme Court of India is a dream come true since it provides a profound awareness of how the nation's highest court operates and a high-level comprehension of the legal system.

This Research paper is the result of my academic internship in the Supreme Court of India, where I worked under the supervision of an Advocate-on-Record as part of the NTCC internship program. It was a significant and rewarding event. This internship allowed me to be involved in complex and comprehensive office work, in contrast to internships that just focus on court appearances. In addition to actively participating in the preparation of the arguments and the review of the court records, I also learned how the case moved from the District Court to the High Court and, ultimately, the Supreme Court.

My mentor emphasized the importance of thoroughly going over case files, highlighting legal issues from all court levels, and ensuring that every facet of the case was fully grasped before formulating legal strategies or arguments. I especially focused on *Special Leave Petitions (SLPs)*, *Public Interest Litigations (PILs)*, and criminal cases out of all the various types of cases the Supreme Court considers.

The dynamic and changing role of the Indian judiciary is reflected in these two legal procedures. While PILs allow citizens, especially the underprivileged, to petition the court for the protection of their rights and the greater good of society, SLPs represent the Supreme Court's extraordinary appellate power to ensure that justice is served even in cases where there is no legislative right of appeal. I gained a thorough understanding of SLP filing procedures, legal and procedural requirements, petition construction, and the types of issues that typically make their way to the Supreme Court through this process, thanks to my internship.

I observed the way case files were examined and noted how even a minor error at the trial stage could become a substantial question of law in the Supreme Court.

I also had the good fortune to help prepare the dates, synopsis, grounds for special leave, and verify annexures for a few pending SLPs. These hands-on activities helped me understand how legal reasoning is constructed using the facts and procedural records of earlier courts.

Additionally, I closely followed various PIL matters being argued in open court.

Some have to do with public health issues, environmental infractions, and prison reform. It was instructive to observe how the court used its authority granted by Article 32 of the Constitution to consider and admit such matters, frequently with tact and a focus on social fairness and equity. I will continue to learn throughout my legal career from the courtroom setting, the behaviour of advocates, the interactions between the Bench and the Bar, and the careful examination of each and every word in the pleadings. Seeing the Supreme Court's formal ceremonies, especially the swearing-in of the new Chief Justice of India, was a significant aspect of my internship.

The institution's majesty and the profound respect it enjoys in Indian democracy were reflected in the etiquette, customs, and constitutional procedures observed during such events. The Court's changing legacy and the human component of the legal system were also brought to light by these incidents.

This research paper captures all of the above dimensions and more. It has been structured not only to document my practical experience but also to analyse the legal and constitutional mechanisms I encountered. Sections of the research paper explore the jurisdictional framework of the Supreme Court, Article 32, the significance and procedural nature of SLPs and PILs, and key cases I worked on or observed. It also includes critical observations on the pros and cons of the Supreme Court's functioning, viewed from a student intern's lens.

The knowledge gained from books and classroom lectures is given life and meaning through such internships. Therefore, the research paper stands as a bridge between theory and practice, between constitutional ideals and their application in courtrooms.

In essence, this research paper is not just an academic requirement but a tribute to the Supreme Court of India and the immense learning I gained during my internship. It reflects my evolution from a law student to a budding legal practitioner aware of the intricacies, responsibilities, and nobility of the legal profession. The Supreme Court, with all its power, tradition, and human challenges, remains a cornerstone of Indian democracy and a guardian of justice, and this research paper seeks to reflect that truth.

Objectives of the Study

The internship at the Supreme Court of India under the NTCC program provided an unparalleled opportunity to explore the working of the highest judicial authority in the country. As a law student, stepping into the corridors of the Supreme Court was more than just an academic exercise—it was an exposure to the living mechanism of justice delivery in its most complex, refined, and impactful form. This research paper is aimed at documenting and analysing that experience with clearly defined objectives that guided the course of the internship and the preparation of this report.

- A primary objective of this study is to understand how the Supreme Court of India operates on a daily basis—both in terms of court proceedings and behind-the-scenes documentation and preparation.
- This includes comprehending the types of jurisdictions exercised by the Court (original, appellate, advisory, and writ), the composition of benches, and the procedural hierarchy followed in judicial matters.

- Unlike theoretical studies, the internship involved hands-on work such as reading voluminous case files, reviewing judgments from lower courts, drafting arguments, and observing how advocates prepare for cases.
- One major objective was to learn how to read legal documents deeply—tracing a case from the District Court level through the High Court to the Supreme Court. This process helped in understanding the progression of arguments, procedural defects, and the manner in which facts and law are intertwined.
- A major focus of my internship and this research paper is the concept of Special Leave Petitions. The objective is to explore Article 136 of the Constitution in practical terms—how SLPs are filed, what grounds are considered valid, and how the discretionary power of the Court is used to admit or reject such petitions.
- Courtroom etiquette, modes of addressing the bench, ethical duties of advocates, and professional conduct were key areas of observation.
- Beyond legal theory, it was important to identify real-world strengths and weaknesses in the judicial process, such as procedural delays, case pendency, ceremonial practices, and administrative efficiency. This objective helps provide a balanced view of how justice is actually administered.

Methodology

This research paper is based on an experiential, observational, and qualitative approach. The research and reflections in this report are not solely based on books or secondary data but emerge directly from my personal engagement with the judicial system, legal files, and the working culture of the Supreme Court. The study follows a qualitative approach since it emphasizes detailed understanding over statistical analysis.

The core data for this research paper is based on firsthand experience gained during a structured internship under the NTCC program. I was attached to a senior Advocate-on-Record, who assigned me a variety of office-based and court-related tasks. These included reading case files, drafting summaries, preparing arguments, researching legal provisions, and observing live court proceedings. This real-world exposure enabled me to gather practical insights into the functioning of the judicial system—especially regarding Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) and Public Interest Litigations (PILs).

A significant part of the methodology involved direct observation of: Courtroom proceedings, Conduct of judges and lawyers, Arguments presented in various cases, Filing processes and registry protocols, Ceremonial functions such as the swearing-in of the Chief Justice and other judicial rituals.

Such observational research helped me understand how the theoretical knowledge of law is applied in actual practice, particularly how constitutional provisions like Article 32 and Article 136 are invoked and interpreted.

To support and supplement my practical experience, I conducted doctrinal legal research by referring to: Constitutional provisions, Supreme Court Rules, 2013, Landmark case laws and precedents, Legal commentaries like M.P. Jain, V.N. Shukla, and online legal databases such as SCC Online and Indian Kanoon.

This helped in forming a deeper legal understanding of the cases I observed or assisted with.

I had regular informal interactions with senior advocates, juniors, clerks, and fellow interns. These discussions offered multiple perspectives on how the judiciary functions, the challenges faced by lawyers, and insights into legal ethics and courtroom strategy.

Structure and Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of India stands at the apex of the Indian judicial system and serves as the final court of appeal, the guardian of the Constitution, and the protector of fundamental rights. Its structural framework and jurisdictional powers are enshrined primarily in Part V, Chapter IV (Articles 124 to 147) of the Constitution of India. Understanding the Court's structure and jurisdiction is essential to comprehend its role in maintaining constitutional order and delivering justice in India.

Structural Composition

The Supreme Court is composed of the **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** and a maximum of **thirty-three other judges**, making the sanctioned strength a total of **thirty-four judges**, as per **The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2019**. However, this number may vary depending on vacancies.

Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the **President of India**, following the recommendation of the **Collegium System**, which includes the Chief Justice of India and four senior-most judges of the Court. To be eligible for appointment, a person must have served as a High Court judge for at least five years, or as an advocate in a High Court for at least ten years, or must be, in the President's opinion, a distinguished jurist.

The **Chief Justice of India** is the head of the judiciary and has both administrative and judicial responsibilities. He allocates cases, constitutes benches, and oversees the functioning of the registry. Cases in the Supreme Court are heard by benches of **two or more judges** (Division Bench), and important constitutional matters are decided by **larger benches**, such as Constitution Benches comprising **five or more judges**.

Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court exercises a wide range of jurisdictional powers. These jurisdictions define the scope and reach of the Court's functioning. It Includes:

➤ **Original Jurisdiction (Article 131)**

Under Article 131, the Supreme Court has exclusive authority to adjudicate disputes between:

- The Government of India and one or more states,
- Between two or more states.

This jurisdiction is essential to resolve federal conflicts and maintain the balance of power between the Union and the states.

- **Appellate Jurisdiction (Articles 132 to 136)**

The Supreme Court serves as the highest court of appeal in both **civil and criminal matters**, as well as **constitutional cases**. Appeals can reach the Supreme Court from High Courts under:

- Article 132: Appeals in constitutional cases,
- Article 133: Civil appeals,
- Article 134: Criminal appeals,
- Article 136: **Special Leave Petition (SLP)** – a discretionary power allowing the Court to grant leave to appeal from any judgment or order passed by any court or tribunal in the country.
- **Advisory Jurisdiction (Article 143)**

The President of India may refer any question of public importance or constitutional interpretation to the Supreme Court for its opinion. Though advisory in nature, such opinions carry great significance.

- **Writ Jurisdiction (Article 32)**

One of the most powerful tools in the hands of the Supreme Court is its ability to issue writs for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights. This is a cornerstone of Indian constitutional jurisprudence.

- **Review and Curative Jurisdiction**

The Court has the authority to review its own judgments under Article 137 and, in exceptional cases, hear curative petitions to prevent a miscarriage of justice.

- **Conclusion**

The structure and jurisdiction of the Supreme Court ensure that it acts not just as a legal forum but also as a constitutional guardian. Through its diverse powers, the Court plays a crucial role in shaping India's legal and social landscape.

Working Experience at the Supreme Court

One of the most valuable and intensive learning experiences during my internship at the Supreme Court of India was reading and analysing case files that progressed from the District Courts to the High Court, and ultimately to the Supreme Court. This journey through the procedural and substantive layers of law helped me understand how a case matures, evolves, and is finally contested before the apex court. My internship focused more on office work, and hence I spent considerable time reading case briefs, orders, pleadings, written submissions, and judgments.

Each case file, particularly one being argued before the Supreme Court, is a comprehensive record of the entire legal journey of that case.

Going through these documents was not merely an exercise in reading; it was about understanding the chronology, legal arguments, factual development, and the transformation of the case theory at each level.

At the District Court stage, I observed that the focus is primarily on fact-finding. This is where oral and documentary evidence is produced, witnesses are examined and cross-examined, and the judgment is based on the merits of the case with respect to factual accuracy and legal provisions.

While reading these files, I developed the skill to extract key information such as:

- FIR details and sections involved (in criminal cases)
- Plaintiff and defendant's claims (in civil cases)
- Statements recorded under CrPC Sections 161, 164
- Witness depositions and evidentiary value
- Judgments citing the Indian Penal Code, Civil Procedure Code, and Evidence Act

I learned that even small procedural errors or misinterpretations at the trial stage can become crucial grounds for appeal later. The District Court's findings often become the factual backbone of the entire litigation.

The High Court takes a more legalistic view. It reviews the judgment of the lower court, often through appeals or revisions. The focus shifts from raw facts to how those facts were interpreted and whether the trial was conducted in accordance with the law.

When reading files from the High Court stage, I paid attention to:

Grounds of appeal or revision, Whether the principles of natural justice were followed, Use of precedent and judicial interpretation, Constitutional challenges, especially in writ petitions.

The High Court judgment would typically either affirm, reverse, or modify the lower court's decision. In several files, I saw how even a small point of law, if properly argued, led to significant relief at this level.

When a matter reaches the Supreme Court, the level of argument and scrutiny is extremely refined. This is especially true in Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) and writ petitions under Article 32.

At this stage, the pleadings are more structured and legal-heavy. Reading these files taught me how:

- A clear statement of facts and law is presented in precise language
- Citations of previous judgments form the crux of arguments
- Brief notes or synopses are crafted for easy reference by judges
- Counsel use concise and persuasive language to highlight the need for Supreme Court intervention

I also learned how to trace the legal history of a case from lower courts and identify where and how the legal argument changed. In some cases, the main focus had shifted completely — for instance, a matter that started as

a criminal appeal might, at the Supreme Court level, centre around the violation of Article 21 or misuse of power by authorities.

The process of reading files from the District Court to the Supreme Court sharpened several skills:

- **Analytical Reading:** Learning to quickly extract relevant facts and legal issues from voluminous documents.
- **Issue Identification:** Distinguishing between material and irrelevant facts, and identifying what legal question is actually being decided.
- **Understanding Procedural Flow:** Mapping how a case flows procedurally from FIR to final appeal.
- **Comparative Judging:** Understanding how different courts treat the same facts or legal provision differently.
- **Drafting Insights:** Picking up techniques of good drafting, especially for petitions, affidavits, and written submissions.

At my internship office, I often prepared briefs and summaries based on files, which were then used by seniors for court arguments. This gave me the confidence to:

- Draft lists of dates
- Point out discrepancies in statements or findings
- Suggest additional legal grounds or precedents
- Organize annexures and evidence effectively

I also learned about court registry practices, modes of filing, and the importance of following formatting and procedural rules — even a minor mistake could delay listing or invite objections.

Article 32: The Heart and Soul of the Constitution

Article 32 of the Constitution of India has rightly been called the “heart and soul of the Constitution” by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. This article provides a direct and powerful remedy to individuals whose fundamental rights have been violated. It empowers citizens to move directly to the Supreme Court of India for the enforcement of these rights, bypassing the lengthy procedures of lower courts. During my internship at the Supreme Court, I observed the practical application of Article 32 in multiple cases, particularly in Public Interest Litigations (PILs) and other human rights-related matters. This exposure gave me a strong understanding of its critical role in constitutional governance and access to justice.

Article 32 states that:

“The right to move the Supreme Court by appropriate proceedings for the enforcement of the rights conferred by this Part is guaranteed.”

It further authorizes the Supreme Court to issue directions, orders, or writs, including habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto, and certiorari, for the enforcement of any of the fundamental rights.

What sets Article 32 apart is that it not only recognizes a right but also guarantees a remedy. The presence of such a constitutional remedy gives teeth to the entire chapter on Fundamental Rights (Part III) and ensures that the rights are not merely theoretical ideals but practically enforceable.

Throughout my internship, I came across several Article 32 petitions, particularly in the PIL section, where the Supreme Court was directly approached in cases involving:

- Unlawful detention and custodial violence.
- Environmental degradation affecting the right to life (Article 21).
- Denial of medical access and rights to prisoners.
- Government inaction or failure to implement welfare policies.

In most of these matters, the petitioners relied heavily on Article 32 as a tool for constitutional justice, often representing the voiceless or marginalized who could not access ordinary legal channels.

I observed how senior advocates framed their arguments using precedents from landmark judgments like *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, *Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar*, and *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation*, which all originated under Article 32.

What struck me most was how accessible and responsive the Court was when it came to protecting basic rights, especially under a bench led by judges with a progressive outlook. Even letters converted into writ petitions under Article 32 showed the humanitarian side of the Court.

Unlike most legal matters that require appeals or revisions from lower courts, Article 32 allows direct recourse to the Supreme Court. This significantly reduces delays in the enforcement of fundamental rights.

The Supreme Court has creatively expanded the interpretation of fundamental rights, especially Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty), using Article 32. The right to live with dignity, the right to education, clean air, privacy, and even the right to internet access have evolved through this route.

The PIL mechanism, though not explicitly mentioned in Article 32, owes its existence and growth to it. Through PILs, Article 32 has been used to address mass grievances related to bonded labour, environmental concerns, sexual harassment at the workplace, and corruption in governance.

While Article 32 is powerful, the Supreme Court has also laid down boundaries to prevent its misuse. It discourages frivolous petitions and ensures that Article 32 is invoked only in matters where fundamental rights are clearly violated.

From what I observed and assisted during my internship; Article 32 is not just a legal right—it is a symbol of hope, justice, and accountability. It reflects the living spirit of the Constitution and stands as a pillar of trust for the people of India. My experience with Article 32 petitions strengthened my belief that the judiciary is not distant from the people but stands as a vigilant protector of their rights. In many ways, working with Article 32 shaped my understanding of justice and deepened my commitment to the values embedded in our Constitution.

Special Leave Petition (SLP): Concept and Procedure

Among the most major legal frameworks observed during my internship at the Apex Court of India was the Special Leave Petition (SLP). This provision, revered under Article 136 of the Constitution of India, it empowers the Apex Court with broad discretionary powers to hear appeals against any order, judgment, or decree passed by any court or tribunal in the country, except military courts and tribunals. It is one of the most often used routes to approach the Supreme Court, and a major portion of the Court's caseload consists of SLPs.

Concept of Special Leave Petition

SLP is not a matter of right, unlike appeals under Articles 132, 133, and 134. It is a discretionary power vested in the Supreme Court to grant “special leave” to appeal. The language of Article 136 is intentionally broad, allowing the Court to entertain a case even if no legal right to appeal otherwise exists.

Article 136(1): “The Supreme Court may, in its discretion, grant special leave to appeal from any judgment, decree, determination, sentence or order in any cause or matter passed or made by any court or tribunal in the territory of India.”

This article allows the Court to correct gross miscarriages of justice, particularly where there is a substantial question of law, violation of natural justice, or constitutional importance.

Procedure for Filing an SLP

During my internship, I assisted in preparing and reviewing several SLPs. Here's the general procedure followed:

- An SLP must be filed within 90 days from the date of the judgment or order passed by the High Court.
- If the High Court has refused to grant a certificate of appeal, the SLP must be filed within 60 days from such refusal.
- The petition should include:
 1. A certified copy of the judgment/order.
 2. A list of dates and events.
 3. Statement of facts and grounds for seeking leave.
 4. An affidavit verifying the facts.
 5. Annexures such as relevant documents and evidence from the lower courts.

- Once filed in the Supreme Court Registry, the petition is scrutinized for defects. If found in order, it is listed before a bench for preliminary hearing. The Court may:
 1. Dismiss the SLP if no substantial question is involved.
 2. Issue notice to the opposite party.
 3. Convert the SLP into an appeal if leave is granted.
- Unlike statutory appeals, SLPs are not guaranteed to be admitted. The Supreme Court may refuse to grant leave without providing detailed reasons, which is a clear sign of its selective jurisdiction.

During my internship, I realized that SLPs serve as a vital corrective tool in the Indian legal system. In several instances, litigants used SLPs to challenge:

- Wrongful acquittals or convictions.
- Misapplication of law by High Courts.
- Denial of fundamental rights.
- Dismissal of PILs on technical grounds.

SLPs often become the final resort for justice, especially in landmark cases, commercial disputes, environmental issues, and constitutional matters.

I observed multiple SLPs drafted and reviewed by my mentor. Saw how brief synopsis and list of dates helped structure complex facts. Learned to identify inconsistencies in lower court decisions.

Landmark Judgments Observed

During my internship at the Supreme Court of India, one of the most enriching experiences was the opportunity to observe landmark judgments and hearings that reflected the functioning of the judiciary at the highest level. Watching senior advocates argue, constitutional benches deliberate, and judges deliver verdicts that would influence national policy and public life was both intellectually and emotionally impactful. Some cases I came across — either through live hearings, order reading, or file study — became a deep learning experience for me.

Suo Motu writ petitions

One of the most important types of cases I encountered was the *Suo Motu* writ petitions filed by the Court during the COVID-19 pandemic. These included matters concerning oxygen shortage, hospital infrastructure, and vaccination policy. Article 32 was invoked in these matters, often through PILs filed by individuals or NGOs. The Supreme Court's humanitarian approach, especially under Justice D.Y. Chandrachud (then the Chief Justice of India), emphasized the right to health as an integral part of Article 21. The Court's intervention helped improve vaccine distribution, ensured oxygen supply, and directed the government to file regular status reports.

Vishaka Guidelines Reaffirmation

I also came across several cases involving sexual harassment at the workplace, especially within institutions. The foundational Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan case was repeatedly cited. Though the guidelines were issued in 1997, the Supreme Court still uses them to direct inquiry and institutional reforms in newer cases. Observing such hearings helped me understand how precedents live on through interpretation and application, not just theoretical knowledge.

POCSO Act

I also came across various cases involving sexual harassment and attempt to rape cases of rape cases of minor girls. POCSO stands for Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, which was passed by the parliament in 2012 to reduce the burden on courts and to provide speedy justice to victims. Although, POCSO Act primarily falls under the jurisdiction of special courts, the Supreme Court also has the authority to hear appeals and also exercise its power under Article 142 to ensure "complete justice" in such cases.

Key Learnings from These Cases

- The Court's language is precise but compassionate, especially in PILs and fundamental rights cases.
- Precedent plays a crucial role. Every judgment I saw relied on at least 4–5 past rulings to build a legal argument.
- Interconnectedness of Articles 14, 19, and 21 was central to most judgments — whether on liberty, expression, or equality.
- The Chief Justice and senior judges often showed a remarkable ability to balance legal technicalities with moral reasoning.

New Chief Justice Appointment and Ceremonies

During the course of my internship at the Supreme Court of India, I had the unique opportunity to witness the ceremonial transition of the office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI). On May 25, 2024, Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai took oath as the 50th Chief Justice of India, succeeding Justice D.Y. Chandrachud. This historic moment was not only symbolic but also reflected the constitutional continuity and decorum observed by the apex institution of the country.

Justice Gavai became the second Dalit CJI in Indian history, after Justice K.G. Balakrishnan. His appointment was widely acknowledged as a step forward in promoting inclusivity and representation in the higher judiciary. This also held symbolic importance for the marginalized communities of India, showcasing the judiciary's ability to transcend societal hierarchies and uphold constitutional values.

Following the oath ceremony, a Full Court Reference was held in the Chief Justice's Court (Court No. 1), which I was fortunate to observe. A Full Court Reference is a formal gathering where sitting judges, senior advocates,

the Attorney General, and the Solicitor General pay their respects to the outgoing Chief Justice and welcome the incoming one.

The courtroom was filled with an air of dignity and formality, as senior judges praised the contributions of Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and extended their best wishes to Justice Gavai. The Bar acknowledged Justice Gavai's deep commitment to social justice, constitutional morality, and his accessibility to young lawyers. The tradition of presenting floral bouquets, official addresses, and standing ovations was followed meticulously.

PROS AND CONS OF THE SUPREME COURT SYSTEM

Like any institution, Supreme Court has its strengths and areas of concern, which I was able to observe closely during my internship.

PROS

1. The Apex Court has given many progressive judgments. It has helped protect the environment, promote gender equality, defend online rights, and ensure privacy. This shows that the Court understands modern problems while still upholding the original values of the Constitution.
2. The Apex Court works independently and is free from political pressure. Judges are chosen based on their honesty, experience, and fairness. Because of this, people trust the Court to protect their rights.
3. The arguments presented by senior advocates and amicus curiae are often of exceptional quality, adding intellectual and moral credibility to the Court's decisions.

CONS

1. One of the most critical issues observed is the massive backlog of cases. Despite being the top court, several cases remain pending for years, delaying justice. Adjournments, lengthy arguments, and time-consuming procedures contribute to this problem.
2. Navigating the Supreme Court is procedurally complex. From filing to registry scrutiny, the system often becomes overwhelming, especially for common citizens and junior advocates. This may hinder true access to justice.
3. While Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) are a unique feature of the Indian judiciary, the selective discretion exercised by the Court can sometimes appear arbitrary. Many deserving cases are dismissed in the preliminary stage without detailed hearings.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on my internship experience at the Supreme Court of India, I offer the following suggestions and recommendations that may enhance the efficiency, accessibility, and transparency of the Court:

The Supreme Court should further improve e-filing mechanisms, virtual hearing access, and digitization of case files. This will reduce paperwork, expedite registry processing, and improve access for advocates and litigants across the country.

Strict adherence to time-bound hearings and discouragement of unnecessary adjournments can help reduce pendency. The introduction of case management software and structured daily cause lists can make the system more efficient.

The Court should simplify certain procedures, especially for PILs and fundamental rights petitions, so that individuals and groups without legal knowledge can still access justice. A legal assistance helpdesk could be beneficial.

The collegium system, while crucial for judicial independence, needs more transparency in appointments and transfers. A formal disclosure of reasons, barring sensitive details, will improve public trust.

The Supreme Court can enhance its outreach by supporting internship programs, legal aid camps, and training modules for students, ensuring that more young minds understand the working of the judiciary.

CONCLUSION

My internship at the Supreme Court of India was a transformative experience that deepened my understanding of the Indian legal system, enriched my practical legal skills, and gave me a unique opportunity to observe the highest court of the land in action. It allowed me to bridge the gap between academic legal studies and real-world judicial functioning.

From the very first day, I was struck by the discipline, decorum, and intensity that defines the work environment at the Supreme Court. The way senior advocates and judges engage with complex constitutional and statutory questions gave me insight into the depth of legal reasoning that goes into every case. Watching and participating in the back-end preparation—such as reading files from the District Court up to the Supreme Court, drafting summaries, and assisting in legal research—enhanced my ability to think like a legal practitioner.

One of the key highlights of my experience was developing a deeper knowledge of Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) and Public Interest Litigations (PILs). I understood how Article 136 provides discretionary powers to the Supreme Court and how Article 32 ensures that any person whose fundamental rights are violated can directly approach the Court. This was not just a legal study but a lived experience, as I handled real SLP files and observed how constitutional remedies are invoked in practice.

The ceremonial entry of Justice B.R. Gavai as the 50th Chief Justice of India was another important milestone I witnessed during the internship. The swearing-in ceremony and full court reference taught me about the tradition

and continuity that defines India's judiciary. It emphasized the institutional dignity and the importance of leadership in maintaining judicial integrity.

I was critically engaged with the strengths and weaknesses of the Supreme Court. While its position as the protector of the Constitution, promoter of social justice, and beacon of equality, freedom, justice, fairness, and equity is unchallenged, issues like case pendency, procedural complexity, and lack of transparency in appointments demand attention. These insights helped me understand that legal reform is not just about laws, but also about systems, access, and attitudes.

Throughout the internship, I was encouraged to develop my legal reasoning, hone my writing and analysis, and most importantly, to view law not just as a subject but as a tool for justice. This experience reaffirmed my desire to pursue a career in litigation and constitutional law.

In conclusion, the internship was not merely a certificate requirement for my academic program; it was a defining chapter in my legal education. The Supreme Court of India stands as a monument to constitutional morality, judicial wisdom, and social transformation. I feel privileged to have spent time within its walls, learning not just the law but also its spirit, purpose, and power.

