

Standing Committee Report Summary

The Delhi High Court (Amendment) Bill, 2014

- The Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice (Chairperson: Dr. E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan) submitted its report on the Delhi High Court (Amendment) Bill, 2014 on November 28, 2014. The Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on February 17, 2014.
- The Bill amends Section 5 of the Delhi High Court Act, 1966 and Section 25 of the Punjab Courts Act, 1918. It seeks to enhance the original pecuniary jurisdiction of the Delhi High Court and 11 district courts in the National Capital Territory of Delhi from Rs 20 lakh to Rs two crore. Pecuniary jurisdiction refers to the jurisdiction of a court to try cases which are up to a certain monetary value.
- The Committee endorsed the enhancement of pecuniary jurisdiction of the Delhi High Court and district courts. It further observed that there is a need to bring in uniformity in the pecuniary jurisdiction of High Courts across the country.
- It observed that, following such amendment, around 12,211 cases, which are pending in the High Court of Delhi, would be distributed amongst 11 district courts. This would facilitate speedier disposal of these cases.
- At present, adjudication of technical areas of law falls under the jurisdiction of the High Courts. The Committee suggested that permitting district courts to decide questions on technical areas of law, would aid in their better functioning.
- The Commercial Division of High Court Bill, 2009 lapsed with the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha. That Bill sought to establish specialised divisions in High Courts to handle commercial disputes. All commercial disputes above a specified value (more than Rs five crore) were to be heard by the commercial division.

The Committee observed that if similar law is enacted, High Courts alone would have jurisdiction to adjudicate all commercial disputes of a specified value. Thus, commercial disputes pending in subordinate courts of value above that which is specified by law (like in the 2009 Bill) would have to be transferred to the commercial division of the High Court.

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