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LEGISLATIVE COMMENTARY ON LIMITATION ACT, 1963

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ABSTRACT

The Limitation Act, of 1963, is an essential legislation that regulates the time limits for filing lawsuits in different situations related to contracts, torts, and other civil cases. The Act has provided legal certainty and predictability in litigation by defining the limitation period and preventing parties from delaying legal action. However, its effectiveness has been challenged by technical loopholes, which require further amendments. Despite its imperfections, the Limitation Act, of 1963 is pivotal for maintaining judicial discipline and has significantly contributed to the growth of the Indian legal system.

The Limitation Act 1963 is a crucial statute that outlines the time limits within which a legal action can be initiated. This act is of utmost importance in the legal landscape as it governs the rights and obligations of parties involved in a dispute. As such, legal practitioners need to have a comprehensive understanding of the Limitation Act 1963 and its provisions.

KEYWORDS: LIMITATION, INDIANS LEGISLATION, REMEDIES, COMMENCEMENT, AMENDMENT.

INTRODUCTION:

The Limitation Act, of 1963 is a legislation in the Indian legal system that regulates the time limit for filing lawsuits in different situations. The Act has undergone several amendments in the past to bring clarity and cover various situations. The primary objective of this legislation is to provide a time bar beyond which no legal remedies would be available. The Act covers legal

proceedings related to contracts, torts, and other civil cases.

The Limitation Act, of 1963 has defined the time limit for filing a claim or a suit in case of various violations. A claimant must file the lawsuit within three years of discovering the injury or harm in the case of personal injuries or damages. In cases of recovery of possession of the property, the limitation period is 12 years, while in boundary disputes, it is 30 years. The Act also provides for an extension in the limitation period in situations of fraud or concealment, but it has a maximum limit of 30 years.¹²¹

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE LIMITATION ACT 1963

The Limitation Act of 1963 replaced the earlier Limitation Act of 1908. The new act came into effect on 1st January 1964 and was amended in 1974, 1980, 1987, 1991, and 2002. The 1963 act was based on the recommendations of the Law Commission of India.¹²²

OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES OF THE LIMITATION ACT 1963

The main objective of the Limitation Act 1963 is to provide a statutory limitation period within which legal actions must be filed to provide certainty and finality to legal disputes. The act helps in avoiding stale claims coming up after a long time and ensures prompt resolution of disputes. It also ensures that a defendant is not harassed by an action that is filed long after the cause of action has arisen.

¹²¹ https://blog.iplleaders.in/statute-of-limitations/#The_Limitation_Act_1963

¹²² <https://www.shareyouessays.com/knowledge/history-of-law-of-limitation-act-1963/119805>

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE LIMITATION ACT 1963:**1. Limitation Periods for Various Types of Claims**

The Limitation Act 1963 provides different limitation periods for various types of claims or actions such as suits for recovery of money, property, specific performance of a contract, etc. For example, the limitation period for filing a suit for recovery of money is three years from the date the money became due.

2. Calculation of Limitation Periods

The act provides specific rules to calculate the limitation periods. The limitation period starts from the date when the cause of action arose or from the date when the right to sue first accrued to the plaintiff.

3. Commencement and Extension of Limitation Periods

The limitation period can be extended under certain circumstances such as the disability of the plaintiff, fraudulent concealment of facts, or acknowledgment of debt. The limitation period can also be suspended or extended due to certain conditions.

4. Effect of Limitation on Legal Rights and Remedies

If a suit is filed after the limitation period, the defendant can raise the defence of limitation and the plaintiff's claim may become time-barred. However, there are exceptions to this rule.¹²³

APPLICATION OF THE LIMITATION ACT 1963 IN CIVIL MATTERS:

Limitation Period for Filing Civil Suits: The Limitation Act 1963 applies to all civil suits filed in a court of law. It specifies the period within which a person must file a suit for enforcing their rights. **Limitation Period for Filing Appeals and Revision Petitions:** The act also provides for a limitation period for filing appeals and revision petitions in a higher court against a decision of

the lower court. **Limitation Period for Enforcement of Decrees and Orders:** The act provides for the limitation period for the enforcement of decrees and orders passed by a court of law. **Limitation Period for Filing Applications and Petitions:** The act also provides for the limitation period for filing applications and petitions in a court of law.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE LIMITATION ACT 1963

Tolling of Limitation Periods: The limitation period can be tolled under specific circumstances such as the period when the plaintiff was not aware of the cause of action, or when the parties have agreed to a specific mode of settlement.

Exclusion of Time in Certain Circumstances (SECTION 15): The act also provides for the exclusion of time in certain circumstances such as the time when the plaintiff was prosecuting another civil proceeding. **Limitation Period for Fraud, Mistake, and Acknowledgement of Debt (SECTION 17):** The act provides for the limitation period of suits on the grounds of fraud, mistake, and the acknowledgement of debt. **Limitation Period for Suits by Minors, Insolvents, and Persons of Unsound Mind:** The act also provides for specific limitation periods for suits by minors, insolvents, and persons of unsound minds.¹²⁴

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE LIMITATION ACT 1963 FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES:

It helps in understanding the Importance of Timely Filing of Claims and Petitions and the effective Strategies for Dealing with Time-Barred Claims and Defences for individuals and companies along with maximizing Legal Remedies and Protections under this act.

CONCLUSION:

Emphasizing the Need for Awareness and Compliance with the Limitation Act 1963

1. Significance of the Limitation Act 1963 in Indian Law

¹²³ https://www.indiacode.nic.in/handle/123456789/1565?sam_handle=123456789/1362

¹²⁴ <https://blog.iplayers.in/law-limitation-india-limitation-act-1963/>

The Limitation Act 1963 is a vital piece of legislation that plays a crucial role in promoting certainty and finality in Indian law. It sets out time limits or “limitation periods” within which legal proceedings must be initiated or claims must be made. These time limits apply to various types of civil and commercial disputes and are designed to ensure that cases are resolved in a timely and efficient manner.

Role of the Limitation Act 1963 in Promoting Certainty and Finality in Law: By providing clear time frames and rules for initiating legal proceedings or making claims, the Limitation Act 1963 promotes a level of certainty and predictability in the law. It helps to prevent claims from being brought years or even decades after the relevant events took place, which would create uncertainty and disrupt the administration of justice.

Impact of the Limitation Act 1963 on Access to Justice and Fairness: While the Limitation Act 1963 sets out strict time limits for legal proceedings, it also ensures fairness in the litigation process. It enables defendants to know their legal position at an early stage, allowing them to prepare a defence with accuracy and certainty. This promotes a level playing field in the litigation process and helps to ensure that both parties are on equal footing.

Importance of the Limitation Act 1963 in Protecting Legal Rights and Interests: The Limitation Act 1963 is crucial in protecting legal rights and interests. It ensures individuals and companies act promptly and diligently to enforce their legal rights and protects parties who may be liable to claims from enduring an indefinite period of uncertainty. It also provides a safeguard for companies and individuals against potentially stale claims.

2. Recent Developments and Amendments to the Limitation Act 1963

The Limitation Act 1963 has undergone several amendments over the years, addressing

various issues in the law. The most significant of these amendments are summarized below.

Updates to the Limitation Periods for Certain Types of Claims: The recent amendment to the Limitation Act 1963 has introduced new time limits for specific claims, such as those relating to real estate and contracts. The amendment has increased the limitation period for filing such claims and has removed a few exceptions.

Changes in the Calculation and Commencement of Limitation Periods: The Limitation Act 1963 now mandates the commencement of the limitation period from the date of the cause of action’s accrual. The recent amendment introduced a provision stating that the period of limitation will be calculated from the date when the right to sue accrues.

Impact of Recent Amendments on Litigation and Dispute Resolution: The recent amendments have been welcomed as they have increased the time limit for certain claims, enabling parties to file their claims on time. This, in turn, has helped to ease the pressure on courts and has resulted in a more efficient dispute resolution process.

Challenges and Criticisms of Recent Amendments to the Limitation Act 1963: Critics have argued that extensions to the limitation period may lead to an increase in litigation cases and that this could pressurize the Indian judicial system. Lawyers and litigants must stay up-to-date regarding the new developments in the Law.¹²⁵

3. Practical Implications of the Limitation Act 1963 for Individuals and Companies

The Limitation Act 1963 has several practical implications for individuals and companies. Below are three of the most important practical implications:

¹²⁵ <https://www.livelaw.in/tags/Limitation-Act-1963>

Understanding the Importance of Timely Filing of Claims and Petitions: To ensure that their legal rights are protected, individuals and companies must file claims and petitions within the limitation period. This will enable them to enforce the rights they have under the law.

Effective Strategies for Dealing with Time-Barred Claims and Defences: In cases where the limitation period has passed, it is important to adopt effective strategies for dealing with time-barred claims and defences. Such strategies may include arguing that the claim is time-barred and that the plaintiff is not entitled to relief.

Maximizing Legal Remedies and Protections Under the Limitation Act 1963: By understanding the Limitation Act 1963, individuals and companies can maximize their legal remedies and protections. This will enable them to pursue claims and seek appropriate remedies within the established time limits.

4. Conclusion

The Limitation Act 1963 is an essential piece of legislation for individuals and companies in India. It promotes certainty and finality in the law, ensures fairness in the litigation process, and provides a safeguard against potential stale claims. The recent amendments to the act have been welcomed by some and criticized by others. All stakeholders must stay up-to-date with the law's developments and understand its practical implications to protect their legal rights and interests. In conclusion, the Limitation Act 1963 plays a crucial role in promoting the rule of law and ensuring access to justice in India. It sets out clear time limits for legal action in civil matters, and its provisions have significant implications for litigants and legal practitioners alike. By understanding the key features of this legislation, individuals can protect their legal rights and interests, while also contributing to a fair and efficient legal system.

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