

PART II

MEDIATION/CONCILIATION RULES

RULE-1 :

These Rules shall be called the Mediation and Conciliation Rules.

RULE 2:

Appointment of mediator/conciliator:

- (a) The parties to a suit may agree on the name of a sole mediator/conciliator for mediating between them. In that event, he shall be appointed as mediator/conciliator. If the parties fail to agree on the name of a mediator/conciliator, then the Court shall appoint one or more mediator/conciliators out of the panel of mediator/conciliator referred to in Rule 3.
- (b) Where the parties are unable to agree on the name of a sole mediator/conciliator, then each set of parties shall nominate a mediator/conciliator.
- (c) Where the parties agree on the name of a sole mediator/conciliator, he need not necessarily be a person from the panel of mediator/conciliators referred to in Rule 3, nor bear the qualifications referred to in Rule 4 but should not be a person who suffers from any of the disqualifications referred to in Rule 5.
- (d) Where there are more than two sets of parties having diverse interests, each set shall nominate a person on its behalf and the said nominees shall select the sole mediator/conciliator and failing unanimity in that behalf, the Court shall appoint a sole mediator/conciliator.

RULE 3 :

Panel of mediator/conciliators :

- (a) The High Court shall, for the purpose of appointing mediator/conciliators in the cases filed on its original side prepare a panel of mediator/conciliators. Such panel shall be published on the notice board of the High Court, within three months of the coming into force of these Rules. A copy of the panel of mediator/conciliators shall be sent to the High Court Bar Association.
- (b) (i) The District Judge in each District shall, for the purpose of appointing mediator/conciliators to mediate between parties in the suits filed on the original side, prepare a panel of mediator/conciliators, within a period of three months of the commencement of these Rules. Such panel shall be published on the notice boards of various Courts after obtaining approval of the High Court.

- (ii) Copies of the panels referred to in clause (i) shall be forwarded to all the Court subordinate to the District Judge and the Bar Associations attached to each of the Courts.
- (c) The consent of the persons whose names are included in the panel shall be obtained before empanelling them.
- (d) The panel of names of mediator/conciliators shall be accompanied by an Annexure containing details of the qualifications of the mediator/conciliators, and their professional or technical experience in different fields.
- (e) **The panel of mediators/conciliators appointed under clause (a) and (b) shall normally be for a period of three years from the date of appointment/further extension of the panel of mediators/conciliators or any mediator/conciliator shall be at the discretion of the High Court or District & Sessions Judge with the prior approval of the High Court, as the case may be.**

RULE 4 :

Qualifications of persons to be empanelled under Rule 3 :

The following persons shall be treated as qualified and eligible for being empanelled as mediator/conciliators under Rule 3:-

- (a) (i) Retired Judges of the Supreme Court of India;
- (ii) Retired Judges of the High Courts;
- (iii) Retired District and Session Judge/Additional District and Sessions Judges.
- (b) **Legal practitioners with at least five years standing at the Bar in the Supreme Court/ High Court / District Court;**
(Amended as per Correction Slip No.66 Rules/II.D4 dated 06.11.2013)
- (c) Experts or other professionals with at least fifteen years standing or retired senior bureaucrats or retired senior executives;
- (d) Institutions which are themselves experts in mediation/conciliation and have been recognized as such by the High Court.

RULE 5 : Disqualifications :

The following shall be disqualifications for being empanelled as mediator/conciliators:-

- (i) any person who has been adjudged insolvent;
- (ii) any person against whom criminal charges involving moral turpitude have been framed by a criminal court and are pending; or
- (iii) any persons who has been convicted by a criminal court for any offence involving moral turpitude;

- (iv) any person against whom disciplinary proceedings have been initiated by the competent authority or who has been punished in such proceedings;
- (v) Such other categories of persons as may be notified by the High Court.

RULE 6 : Preference

The Court shall, while nominating any person from the panel of mediator/conciliators referred to in Rule 3, consider his suitability for resolving the nature of dispute involved in the suit and shall give preference to those who have proven record of successful mediation/conciliation or who have special qualification or experience in mediation/conciliation.

RULE 7 : Duty of mediator/conciliator to disclose certain facts :

- (a) When a person is approached in connection with his possible appointment as a mediator/conciliator, he shall disclose in writing to the parties the factors which may give rise to a justifiable doubt as to his independence or impartiality. If any such factor comes into existence after his appointment as Mediator/conciliator; the same shall be disclosed to the parties in writing without delay.

Note.- While appointing mediator/conciliator the Court concerned shall ensure that the person to be appointed is not interested or connected with the subject matter of the dispute and is not related to any of the parties or to those who represent them. However, the parties shall be free to waive such objection in writing.

- (b) Every mediator/conciliator shall, from the time of his appointment and throughout the continuance of the mediation/conciliation proceedings, without delay, disclose to the parties in writing, about the existence of any of the circumstances referred to in clause (a).

RULE 8 : Cancellation of appointment :

Upon information furnished by the mediator/conciliator under Rule 6 or upon any other information received from the parties or any other person, if the Court concerned is satisfied after conducting such inquiry as it deems fit and after giving opportunity of hearing to the mediator/conciliator, that the said information has raised a justifiable doubt as to the mediator/conciliator's independence or impartiality, it shall cancel the appointment by a reasoned order and replace him by another mediator/conciliator.

RULE 9 : Removal or deletion from panel :

The name of a person placed in the panel referred to in Rule 3 may be removed or deleted from the said panel by the Court concerned if :

1. if he incurs any of the disqualifications referred to in Rule 5 ;

2. he resigns or withdraws his name from the panel for any reason;
3. he exhibits or displays conduct, during the continuance of the mediation/conciliation proceedings, which is unbecoming of a mediator/conciliator;
4. if, upon receipt of an information and after conducting such enquiry as it deems fit, the

Court concerned is satisfied that it is not desirable to continue the name of that person in the panel;

Provided that, before removing or deleting his name, under clauses (iii) or (iv), the Court shall hear the mediator/conciliator whose name is proposed to be removed or deleted from the panel and shall pass a reasoned order.

RULE 10 : Procedure of mediation/conciliation :

- (a) The parties may agree on the procedure to be followed by the mediator/conciliator in the conduct of the mediation/conciliation proceedings.
- (b) Where the parties do not agree on any particular procedure to be followed by the mediator/conciliator, the mediator/conciliator shall follow the procedure hereinafter mentioned, namely:-
 - (i) he shall fix, in consultation with the parties, a time schedule, the dates and the time of each mediation/conciliation session, where all the parties have to be present;
 - (ii) he shall hold the mediation/conciliation at any convenient location agreeable to him and the parties, as he may determine;
 - (iii) he may conduct joint or separate meetings with the parties;
 - (iv) each party shall, ten days before a session, provide to the mediator/conciliator a brief memorandum setting forth the issues, which according to it, need to be resolved, and its position in respect of those issues and all information reasonably required for the mediator/conciliator to understand the issues such memoranda shall also be mutually exchanged between the parties;
 - (v) each party shall furnish to the mediator/conciliator such other information as may be required by him in connection with the issues to be resolved.
- (c) where there is more than one mediator/conciliator, the mediator/conciliator nominated by each party shall first confer with the party that nominated him and shall thereafter interact with the other mediator/conciliators, with a view to resolve the disputes.

RULE 11 : Mediator/conciliator not bound by Evidence Act, 1872 or Code of Civil Procedure, 1908:-

The mediator/conciliator shall not be bound by the provisions of Evidence Act, 1872 or Code of Civil Procedure 1908, but shall be guided by the principles of fairness and justice, having regard to the rights and obligations of the parties, usages of trade, if any, and the circumstances of the dispute.

RULE 12 : Non-attendance of parties at sessions or meetings on due dates :

The parties shall be present personally or through their counsel or power of attorney holders at the meetings or sessions notified by the mediator/conciliator.

If a party fails to attend a session or a meeting notified by the mediator/conciliator, other parties or the mediator/conciliator can apply to the Court in which the suit is filed, to issue appropriate directions to that party to attend before the mediator/conciliator and if the Court finds that such party is absenting himself before the mediator/conciliator without sufficient cause, the Court may take action against the said party by imposition of costs or by taking action for contempt.

RULE 13 : Administrative assistance :

In order to facilitate the conduct of mediation/conciliation proceedings, the parties or the mediator/conciliator with the consent of the parties, may arrange for administrative assistance by a suitable institution or person.

RULE 14 : Offer of settlement by the parties :

Any party to the suit may, without prejudice, to the rights of either party, offer a settlement to the other party at any stage of the proceedings with notice to the mediator/conciliator.

RULE 15 : Role of mediator/conciliator:

The mediator/conciliator shall attempt to facilitate voluntary resolution of the dispute by the parties and communicate the view of each party to the other, assist them in identifying issues, reducing misunderstandings, clarifying priorities, exploring areas of compromise and generating options in an attempt to solve the dispute, emphasizing that it is the responsibility of the parties to take decision which affect them. However, he shall not impose terms of settlement on the parties.

RULE 16: Parties alone responsible for taking decision :

The parties must understand that the mediator/conciliator only facilitates in arriving at a decision to resolve disputes and that he will not and cannot impose any settlement nor does the mediator/conciliator give any warranty that the mediation/conciliation will result in a settlement.

RULE 17 : Time limit for completion of mediation/conciliation :

On the expiry of ninety days from the date fixed for the first appearance of the parties before the mediator/conciliator, the mediation/conciliation shall stand terminated, unless the Court, which referred the matter, either suo motu or upon request by any of the parties and upon hearing all the parties, is of the view that extension of time is necessary or may

be useful then he may extend the time but such extension shall not be beyond a further period of thirty days.

Rule 18 : Parties to act in good faith :

All the parties shall participate in the mediation/conciliation proceedings in good faith with the intention to settle the dispute.

RULE 19 : Confidentiality, disclosure and inadmissibility of information :

- (1) When a mediator/conciliator receives information concerning the dispute from any party, he shall disclose the substance of that information to the other party, so that the other party may have an opportunity to present such explanation as it may consider appropriate;

Provided that, when a party gives information to the mediator/conciliator subject to a specific condition that it be kept confidential, the mediator/conciliator shall not disclose that information to the other party.

- (2) Receipt or perusal, preparation of records, reports or other documents by the mediator/conciliator, while serving in that capacity, shall be confidential and the mediator/conciliator shall not be compelled to divulge information regarding those documents nor as to what transpired during the mediation/conciliation.
- (3) Parties shall maintain confidentiality in respect of events that transpired during mediation/conciliation and shall not rely on or introduce the said information in any other proceedings as to:
 - (a) views expressed by a party in the course of the mediation/conciliation proceedings;
 - (b) documents obtained during the mediation/conciliation which were expressly required to be treated as confidential or notes, drafts or information given by parties or mediator/conciliators;
 - (c) proposals made or views expressed by the mediator/conciliator;
 - (d) admission made by a party in the course of mediation/conciliation proceedings;
 - (e) the fact that a party had or had not indicated willingness to accept a proposal.
- (4) There shall be no stenographic or audio or video recording of the mediation/conciliation proceedings.

RULE 20: Privacy:

Mediation/conciliation sessions and meetings are private. Only the concerned parties or their counsel or power of attorney holders can attend. Other persons may attend only with the consent of the parties and with the permission of the mediator/conciliator.

RULE 21 Immunity :

No mediator/conciliator shall be held liable for anything bona fide done or omitted to be done by him during the mediation/conciliation proceedings for civil or criminal action nor shall he be summoned by any party to the suit to appear in a Court of law to testify in regard to information received by him or action taken by him or in respect of drafts or records prepared by him or shown to him during the mediation/conciliation proceedings.

RULE 22: Communication between mediator/conciliator and the Court :

(a) In order to preserve the confidence of the parties in the Court and neutrality of the mediator/conciliator, there shall be no communication between the mediator/conciliator and the Court, except as stated in clauses (b) and (c) of this Rule.

(b) If any communication between the mediator/conciliator and the Court is necessary, it shall be in writing and copies of the same shall be given to the parties or their counsel or power of attorney holder.

(c) Communication between the mediator/conciliator and the Court shall be limited to communication by the mediator/conciliator:

- (i) with the Court about the failure of party to attend;
- (ii) with the Court with the consent of the parties;
- (iii) regarding his assessment that the case is not suitable for settlement
Through mediation/conciliation;
- (iv) that the parties have settled the dispute or disputes.

RULE 23 : Settlement agreement:

(1) Where an agreement is reached between the parties in regard to all the issues in the suit or some of the issues, the same shall be reduced into writing and signed by the parties or their power of attorney holders. If any counsel have represented the parties, they shall attest the signatures of their respective clients.

- (2) The agreement of the parties so signed and attested shall be submitted to the mediator/conciliator who shall, with a covering letter signed by him, forward the same to the Court in which the suit is pending.
- (3) Where no agreement is arrived at between the parties, before the time limit specified in rule 17 or where, the mediator/conciliator is of the view that no settlement is possible, he shall report the same to the Court in writing.

RULE 24: Court to fix a date for recording settlement and passing decree;

(1) Within seven days of the receipt of a settlement, the Court shall issue notice to the parties fixing a date for their appearance which date shall not be beyond 14 days from the date of receipt of the settlement and the Court shall then take the settlement on record.

(2) Thereafter, the Court shall pass a decree in accordance with the settlement, so taken on record, if the same disposes of all the issues in the suit.

(3) If the settlement disposes of only certain issues arising in the suit, the Court shall take on record the settlement on the date fixed and shall include the terms of the said settlement in the judgment, while deciding the other issues.

RULE 25 : Fee of mediator/conciliator and costs :

(1)The remuneration/fee to be paid to the mediator shall be ₹10,000/- for each successful mediation and ₹3000/- for each failed mediation.

The Court may, however, in its discretion fix a higher fee in either case.

(Amended as per Correction Slip No.70 Rules/II.D4 dated 08.05.2015)

(2) Where there are two mediator/conciliators as in clause (b) of Rule 2, the Court shall fix the fee payable to the mediator/conciliators which shall be shared equally by the parties.

(3) Besides, the expenses of the mediation/conciliation, costs of administrative assistance and other ancillary expenses concerned shall be borne equally by the various contesting parties or as may be otherwise directed by the Court.

(4) Each party shall bear the costs for production of witnesses on his side including experts, or for production of documents.

(5) The mediator/conciliator may, before the commencement of mediation/conciliation, direct the parties to deposit equal sums tentatively, to the extent of 50% of the probable costs of mediation/conciliation, as referred to in clause (3), including his fee. The remaining 50% shall be deposited with the mediator/conciliator, after the conclusion of mediation/conciliation. The amount deposited towards costs shall be expended by the mediator/conciliator by obtaining receipts and a statement of account shall be filed, by the mediator/conciliator in the Court.

(6) If any party or parties do not pay the amount referred to in sub-rule (5), the Court shall, on the application of the mediator/conciliator, or any party, issue appropriate directions to the defaulting party. If the defaulting party does not pay the amount of expenses including fee, the Court shall recover the same as if it was a decree for the said amount.

Rule 25-A: Funds, Audit and Accounts of the Committee.

(1) The Committee shall maintain a fund to be called the High Court Mediation & Conciliation Committee Fund to which shall be credited.

(a) Such amount as may be allocated and granted to it by the States/Legal Service Authorities of Punjab, Haryana and Union Territory of Chandigarh.

(b) All such amounts as received by the Committee by way of donations; costs, charges and expenses recovered from the persons or parties concerned as per orders of the Court concerned.

(2) All the amounts credited to the said Fund shall be deposited in a Nationalized bank.

Explanation :-- In this sub-regulation “Nationalised bank” means corresponding new bank as defined in the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970 and the banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980.

(3) For the purpose of meeting incidental minor charges, such as serving of tea, biscuits etc., to the litigants and Mediators, a permanent advance of Rupees Ten thousands shall be placed at the disposal of the Nodal Officer. (Amended as per Correction Slip No.71 Rules/II.D4 dated 08.05.2015)

(4) All expenditure on Mediation & Conciliation Programmes viz Training and awareness Programmes, Workshops & Seminars and various other

functions of the committee shall be incurred out of the funds of the Committee with the prior approval of the Chairman.

(5) The funds of the Committee may be utilised for meeting the expenses incurred on or incidental to journeys undertaken by the Chairman or other members of the Committee or the Secretary in connection with Mediation & Conciliation activities. The travelling allowance and dearness allowance payable to the expert trainers or other dignitaries invited for various training programmes and functions organised by the Mediation & Conciliation Committee.

(6) The Secretary of the Committee shall operate the bank account of the Committee in accordance with the directions of the Chairman.

(7) The Cashier of High Court shall maintain regular accounts of receipts and disbursement of income and expenditure, and submit annual returns to the Committee. The account shall be subject to audit."

(Rule 25-A is added as per Correction Slip No.59 Rules/II.D4 dated 29.4.2011)

Rule 26: Ethics to be followed by mediator/conciliator;

The mediator/conciliator shall:

follow and observe these Rules strictly and with due diligence;

not carry on any activity or conduct which could reasonably be considered as conduct unbecoming of a mediator/conciliator;

uphold the integrity and fairness of the mediation/conciliation process;

ensure that the parties involved in the mediation/conciliation are fairly informed and have an adequate understanding of the procedural aspects of the process.

Satisfy himself/herself that he/she is qualified to undertake the complete the assignment in a professional manner;

Disclose any interest or relationship likely to affect impartiality or which might seek an appearance of partiality or bias;

Avoid, while communicating with the parties any impropriety or appearance of impropriety;

Be faithful to the relationship of trust and confidentiality reposed in the office of mediator/conciliator;

Conduct all proceedings related to the resolution of a dispute, in accordance with the applicable law;

Recognize that mediation/conciliation is based on principles of self-determination by the parties and that mediation/conciliation process relies upon the ability of parties to reach a voluntary, undisclosed agreement;

Maintain the reasonable expectations of the parties as to confidentiality;

Refrain from promises or guarantees of results;

RULE 27 : Transitory provisions :

Until a panel of mediator/conciliators is prepared by the High Court or the District Court as provided under Rule 3, the Court concerned may nominate a mediator/conciliator of its choice provided that he is fully qualified and does not suffer from any disqualification.

BY ORDER OF HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND JUDGES.

Sd/-

Registrar General