



Research Paper

Smart Handling of Court Cases in the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW): A Framework for Efficient Litigation Management

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Abstract

The Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW)¹, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, is responsible for the welfare, resettlement, pension administration, and grievance redressal of ex-servicemen (ESM), war widows, and their dependents. With the growing population of beneficiaries and the increasing complexity of legal disputes involving pension, disability benefits, healthcare, resettlement schemes, and service-related matters, the Department faces a significant litigation management challenge. This paper examines the organizational structure and grievance redressal mechanisms of DESW and proposes a Smart Court Case Handling Framework. The framework emphasizes digital case monitoring, centralized litigation management, artificial intelligence (AI)-based analytics, timeline-driven workflows, legal coordination mechanisms, and performance monitoring. The proposed model aims to improve litigation outcomes, reduce delays, enhance accountability, and strengthen governance in legal and administrative processes.

I. Introduction

The welfare and rehabilitation of ex-servicemen have long been a national priority in India. Recognizing the need for a dedicated institutional mechanism to address the welfare concerns of retired armed forces personnel, the Government of India established the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW) under the Ministry of Defence on 22 September 2004.

DESW was created to provide focused attention to the welfare, resettlement, rehabilitation, pension administration, and grievance redressal of ex-servicemen, war widows, and their dependents. The Department functions through two primary divisions:

1. **Pension Division** – Responsible for pension policies of Armed Forces personnel and redressal of pension-related grievances.
2. **Resettlement Division** – Responsible for welfare, rehabilitation, employment, training, and other resettlement-related matters².

The Department is supported by three attached offices:

- **Kendriya Sainik Board Secretariat (KSB)**
- **Directorate General Resettlement (DGR)**
- **Central Organisation Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS)**

These organizations collectively ensure the welfare, healthcare, training, employment, and rehabilitation of ex-servicemen across the country.

II. Organizational Framework of DESW

2.1 Kendriya Sainik Board (KSB)

The Kendriya Sainik Board³ is responsible for the welfare of ex-servicemen and their dependents and the administration of welfare funds. It functions through a nationwide network comprising:

¹ Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare. (2025, May). *Newsletter* (May 2025 issue). Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

² Directorate General Resettlement. (2024). *Resettlement and rehabilitation schemes for ex-servicemen*. Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

³ Kendriya Sainik Board. (2024). *Annual report 2023–24*. Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

- 34 Rajya Sainik Boards (RSBs)
- 410 Zila Sainik Boards (ZSBs)

These bodies operate under State Governments and Union Territory Administrations and serve as grassroots-level institutions for welfare delivery and grievance assistance.

2.2 Directorate General Resettlement (DGR)

The Directorate General Resettlement implements various schemes related to:

- **Pre-retirement training** - One of the major functions of DGR is the conduct of pre-retirement training programs. These programs equip service personnel with professional and managerial skills before retirement, thereby enhancing their employability in civilian sectors. The training covers a wide range of fields, including information technology, management, security services, entrepreneurship, and vocational skills.
- **Post-retirement training** - In addition to pre-retirement training, DGR also offers post-retirement skill development programs. These initiatives help ex-servicemen adapt to changing employment requirements and improve their career prospects. The organization further supports self-employment schemes by facilitating access to financial assistance, business opportunities, and entrepreneurship guidance.
- **Re-employment opportunities** - DGR operates through five Directorate Resettlement Zones located at Udhampur, Chandimandir, Lucknow, Kolkata, and Pune. These regional offices ensure effective implementation of resettlement programs across different geographical regions of the country.
- **Self-employment initiatives** - The Directorate General Resettlement (DGR), under the Ministry of Defence, supports the resettlement of retired Armed Forces personnel through self-employment and welfare schemes. These initiatives provide opportunities in security services, transportation, retail operations, technical consultancy, and distributorships, enabling Ex-Servicemen (ESM) to build sustainable livelihoods and utilize their skills in civilian sectors.

DGR⁴ is supported by five Directorate Resettlement Zones (DRZs) located at Udhampur, Chandimandir, Lucknow, Kolkata, and Pune.

2.3 Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS)

The ECHS⁵ provides healthcare services to ex-servicemen and their dependents through a nationwide network of approximately 427 polyclinics, ensuring accessible medical support across the country.

III. Grievance Redressal Mechanism in DESW

DESW receives and processes grievances from ex-servicemen and their family members on a wide range of issues, including:

- **Pension and family pension matters** - Pension-related grievances constitute a major category of complaints. Beneficiaries frequently seek clarification regarding pension calculations, revision of pension benefits, family pension claims, and arrear payments.
- **Disability pension claims** - Disability pension matters also generate substantial grievances due to medical assessments, eligibility criteria, and procedural delays.
- **ECHS related healthcare issues** - Healthcare-related complaints under ECHS often involve issues concerning medical reimbursements, treatment authorization, hospital empanelment, and service availability.
- **Land allotment concerns** - Land allotment schemes provide serving and retired Armed Forces personnel with access to residential, agricultural, or commercial land as a welfare measure. These schemes, implemented by the Central and State Governments, recognize military service and support veterans in establishing stable post-retirement livelihoods and long-term financial security.
- **Benefits under DGR and KSB schemes** - In collaboration with the Directorate General Resettlement (DGR), the KVK Ramkrishna Mission Ashrama offers 9-week Quality Framework (NSQF) Level 4 resettlement courses for armed forces personnel, focusing on: (a) Dairy, Poultry & Goat Farming (b) Mushroom Cultivation, Bio-Input Resource Management, Beekeeping & Honey Production⁶.

⁴ Directorate General Resettlement. (2024). *Resettlement and rehabilitation schemes for ex-servicemen*. Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

⁵ Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme. (2024). *ECHS annual report 2023–24*. Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

⁶ Empowering Armed Forces Veterans: Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Ranchi, page 8 of veteran newsletter dated 28 May 2025.

Grievances are received through multiple channels⁷, including:

CPGRAMS, email, postal correspondence, telephone communication, and references received from constitutional authorities. Each grievance is systematically examined and forwarded to the appropriate authority for resolution. Continuous monitoring and follow-up ensure that beneficiaries receive timely responses and appropriate corrective action.

A Joint Secretary-level officer serves as the Nodal Officer for grievance redressal. Each grievance is examined, forwarded to the concerned authority, monitored continuously, and followed up until resolution. The extensive network of **KSB, RSBs, and ZSBs** is leveraged for local-level coordination and support.

IV. Legal and Court Case Management Challenges

As the number of ex-servicemen beneficiaries continues to increase, DESW encounters a growing volume of litigation involving. The increasing number of ex-servicemen and beneficiaries has led to a significant rise in litigation involving DESW and its associated organizations. Legal disputes frequently arise due to differing interpretations of policies, delays in administrative decisions, and complex procedural requirements:

- **Pension entitlements** - Pension entitlement disputes represent a substantial portion of court cases. Beneficiaries often challenge pension calculations, eligibility determinations, and implementation of revised pension policies.
- **Disability pension appeals** - Disability pension appeals also contribute significantly to litigation, particularly when claimants disagree with medical board findings.
- **Service-related disputes** - Another challenge is the delay in collecting records and documents required for court proceedings. Since information may be dispersed across multiple offices and agencies, obtaining complete records can be time-consuming. This frequently results in delays in filing affidavits and responding to legal notices.

These challenges necessitate the adoption of a smart, technology-enabled litigation management framework.

V. Proposed Smart Court Case Handling Framework



(fig. no.1 overall process of CLCMS. Source

<https://dgrindia.gov.in/writereaddata/media/documents/Veteransnewsletter28May2025print.pdf>)

5.1 Centralized Legal Case Monitoring System (CLCMS)⁸

A centralized digital platform should be established by leveraging or upgrading existing systems such as:

- **Legal Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS)** - The proposed Centralized Legal Case Monitoring System (CLCMS) aims to create a unified digital platform for managing all litigation involving DESW and its attached organizations. The system would serve as a centralized repository of

⁷ <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2226247®=3&lang=1>

⁸ Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare. (2025, May). *Newsletter* (May 2025 issue). Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

legal information, enabling real-time monitoring and coordination. The platform could be developed by leveraging existing government systems such as LIMBS and Integrated Court Case Management Systems. Integration with these platforms would facilitate seamless information exchange and strengthen litigation governance.

- Integrated Court Case Management Systems (ICCMS) -

All litigation involving DESW and its attached offices should be mandatorily registered and monitored through the platform.

5.2 Case Registration and Classification⁹

Every legal notice, court case, appeal, and compliance requirement would be registered on the platform. Authorized officers would be able to access case details, review progress, upload documents, and track important deadlines. This centralized approach would reduce duplication of efforts and improve organizational efficiency.

This classification will facilitate effective resource allocation and monitoring.

5.3 Nodal Officer and Legal Cell Structure

Each division should designate a Nodal Officer responsible for litigation coordination.

A dedicated Legal Cell should oversee:

- Communication with advocates and government counsels
- Preparation of affidavits and legal documents
- Compliance monitoring
- Case tracking and reporting

5.4 Engagement of Law Officers

Selection of empanelled advocates should be based on domain expertise and experience.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should govern: Vetting of legal documents, Preparation of counter-affidavits, Filing schedules and Litigation strategy development etc.

5.5 Use of Technology and Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence tools can significantly enhance litigation management¹⁰ by: Modern technologies and artificial intelligence can significantly transform litigation management within DESW. AI-powered tools are capable of analyzing large volumes of legal data, identifying patterns, and generating actionable insights for decision-makers.

One important application of AI is the identification of repetitive litigation. By analyzing historical case records, the system can detect recurring disputes arising from similar policy issues. This information can help policymakers introduce corrective measures and reduce future litigation.

AI can also assist in predicting potential case outcomes based on previous judgments and legal precedents. Such predictive analytics can support informed decision-making regarding settlement options, appeals, and litigation strategies. Furthermore, intelligent document management systems can simplify evidence retrieval, document classification, and legal research activities.

⁹ <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2085127®=48&lang=2>

¹⁰ Ashley, K. D. (2017). *Artificial intelligence and legal analytics: New tools for law practice in the digital age*. Cambridge University Press.



(fig.no.2 uses of technology Source : AI generated Image)

VI. Timeline-Based Litigation Workflow

Stage	Responsible	Timeline
Case Notification	Court Portal	Immediate
Case Entry & Tagging	Legal Portal	Within 1 Day
Document Collection	Nodal officer	2-3 Days
Drafting & Reply	Advocate + Legal Cell	Within 7-10 days
Filing in Court	Advocate	As per dead line
Monitoring & Compliance	Nodal Officer	Continuous

A structured workflow ensures timely action and minimizes procedural delays.

VII. Pre-Litigation Review and Dispute Resolution

To reduce avoidable litigation, DESW should establish: Pre-litigation review mechanisms can play a vital role in reducing avoidable court cases. Before initiating or contesting litigation, cases should be carefully evaluated through structured review processes. Pre-Litigation Screening Committees can assess the legal merits of each case and explore opportunities for amicable resolution. The committees should examine financial implications, policy considerations, and the likelihood of success in litigation. Such evaluations can help prevent unnecessary legal proceedings and reduce expenditure.

Periodic litigation review meetings involving senior officers can further strengthen decision-making. These meetings should focus on high-priority cases, compliance issues, and emerging litigation trends. Regular reviews can improve accountability and facilitate timely corrective action.

VIII. Capacity Building and Performance Monitoring

Effective litigation management requires skilled personnel and robust performance monitoring systems. Therefore, continuous capacity building should be an integral component of the proposed framework.

Training programs should familiarize officials with digital litigation platforms, court procedures, legal drafting techniques, and electronic evidence management. These programs would enhance institutional capabilities and improve the quality of legal responses.

Performance monitoring should be based on measurable indicators such as the number of cases filed, disposal rates, compliance levels, and financial implications. A Litigation Performance Scorecard can provide valuable insights into organizational effectiveness and promote accountability among stakeholders. A Litigation Performance Scorecard can improve transparency and accountability.

IX. Continuous Improvement Mechanism

Feedback received from courts, law officers, and stakeholders should be systematically analyzed and Continuous improvement is essential for maintaining an efficient litigation management system. Feedback obtained from courts, advocates, beneficiaries, and administrative authorities should be systematically analyzed to identify operational weaknesses.

Recurring grievances and frequently litigated issues often indicate gaps in existing policies or administrative procedures. By addressing these root causes, DESW can significantly reduce future disputes and improve service delivery outcomes.

Data-driven decision-making can facilitate evidence-based reforms and strengthen organizational learning. Over time, continuous improvement initiatives will contribute to better governance, enhanced transparency, and greater beneficiary satisfaction.

Data-driven policy reforms can significantly reduce future litigation and improve beneficiary satisfaction.

X. Conclusion

The Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare plays a critical role in safeguarding the welfare, rights, and interests of ex-servicemen and their dependents. As litigation related to pension, healthcare, rehabilitation, and welfare schemes continues to grow, traditional legal management approaches are becoming increasingly inadequate. A Smart Court Case Handling Framework based on centralized case monitoring, technology integration, artificial intelligence, structured workflows, accountability mechanisms, and continuous performance evaluation can transform litigation management within DESW. The adoption of such a framework will not only improve legal outcomes but also strengthen governance, reduce administrative delays, enhance transparency, and ensure timely justice for the ex-servicemen community.

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