

4th Edition

APPLICATION OF EVIDENCE

IN DIFFERENT LAWS

With Digital Evidence & Latest Rulings

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C O N T E N T S

Chapter-I	
Preliminary	25-30
Definition and explanations of words as given in the Evidence Act	25
Evidence, Proved, Disproved, Not proved	26
Relevant	28
Facts in issues	28
Chapter-II	
Relevancy of Facts	31-59
Section-6	31
Section-7, Section-8	32
Section-9	37
Section-10	39
Section-11	40
Section-14	41
Section-15	42
Section-18-23	43
Section-24-30	43
Section-30	48
Section-32	50
Section-40	52
Section-41-43, Section-44	53
Section-45	54
Section 52-55	55
Proof of documents, Section-64	55
Chapter-III	
Examination of witnesses and Recording Evidence	61-84
Evidence of a chance witness	62
Matters which does not require proof and which require proof	62
Rules relating to examination of witnesses in civil suits and criminal cases	63
Examination of witnesses in civil suits	63
Leading question	66
Importance and evidentiary value of noting demeanor of witnesses	68

Order of examination of witnesses	69
Guide line of the Appellate Division regarding Criminal Cases	70
Examination of witnesses in Criminal Cases, Order of examination of witnesses	71
Corss-examination	72
Re-examination of witnses	75
Assessment of related interested and police officer witnesses	79
Hostile witness	81
Evidence of the accused and approver	82
Evidentiary value of statement of accused made under section 342 of the Code of Criminal Procedure	83

Chapter-IV

Burden of Proof and Onus of Proof 85-103

Burden of Proof or onus of proof in civil cases	85
Section 101-103	86
Burden of Proof in Criminal Cases	87
Pleas taken by an accused	89
Plea of right of private defence of property and body	90
Other pleas taken by the accused	96
Application of Section 106 of the Evidence Act	98
Question of good faith in a transaction	101
Section 112	103

Chapter-V

Other Rules of Evidence 105-121

Some specific rules of evidence applicable in criminal cases	107
Evidence of an injured person	107
Evidence of Police Officer in certain matters	108
Evidentiary value of the statements of witnesses recorded under section 161 of the Code	108
Evidentiary value of FIR or ejahar	111
Evidentiary value of confession under section 164 of the CrPC	114

Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure	118
Extra-Judicial confession	119
Evidentiary value of DNA test	120
Sections 60 and 112	121
Section 9(1)	121

Chapter-VI

Proof of some matters relating to trial of cases-both civil and criminal 123-139

Proof of service of summons in a civil suit	123
Proof of service of summons in criminal cases	126
Search Warrant	126
Evidentiary value of commissions	130
Commission for examination of witnesses in civil cases	130
Commission to examine accounts	131
Commission for Holding Local Investigation	131
Commission to effect partition	133
Commission for Local Inspection	135
Commissions for examination of witnesses under the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure	137
Evidentiary value of reports of the Commissioner	138

Chapter-VII

Special rules of Evidence under Chapter XLI of the Cr.P.C and also under the provisions of the CPC

141-148

Section 509A	141
Section 510	143
Section 510A, 511, 512	144
Local Inspection under Cr.P.C	145
Discovery and inspection under the Code of Civil Procedure	146

Rules contained in order VII and VIII of the Code of Civil Procedure	147
Order XII, Admissions	147

Chapter-VIII

Evidentiary Value of Presumption under the Evidence Act

	149-161
Evidentiary Value of presumption. Presumption under the Evidence Act	149
Section 114(g)	151
Section 115- Estoppel	155
Section 116	157
Presumption under other Acts	158
ফরমালিন নিয়ন্ত্রণ আইন, ২০১৫	160

Chapter-IX

Rules of Evidence in some other laws now in force

	163-185
Application of Limitation Act, 1908	163
Artha Rin Adalat Ain, 2003	165
Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881	167
Family Courts Act, 2023	173
মানব পাচার প্রতিরোধ ও দমন আইন, ২০১২	175
এসিড অপরাধ দমন আইন, ২০০২	176
মাদকদ্রব্য নিয়ন্ত্রণ আইন, ২০১৮	176
Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006	178
Cyber Security Act, 2023	178
Shishu Ain, 2013	180
Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004	180
Law relating to pre-emption	182
Specific Relief Act and some other Special Laws	182
Evidence in Land Survey Tribunal and Land Survey Appellate Tribunal	184

CHAPTER-X

Rules of Digital Evidence of Bangladesh

	187-215
Forensic Evidence	193
Photographic Expert	197
Section 45A	198
Section 65A and 65B	199
“Any Information” and “Produced by the Computer”	200
“Deemed to be also a Document”	201
Admissibility of digital record	202
Contents of Certificate	210
Giving statement in any proceeding pertaining to digital record	210
“Shall be evidence of any matter stated in the certificate”	211
Tape-recorded evidence	212
Who can give certificate?	212
Audio CD	212
Applicability of provision of section 65B in proceedings of special law	213
Section 90A	214
Digital Signature	215

Chapter-XI

Assessment of the total evidence on record

	217-223
Assesment of oral evidence	217
Competence of witnesses (Tender age, Lunatic, dumb witnesses)	219
Distinction between contradictory and discrepant statement	222

Chapter-XII

Discussion on some sections of the Penal code

	225-238
Distinction between culpable homicide amounting to murder and hot amounting to murder. Distinction between part I and part II section 304	225
Sections 34, 109 and 148 of the Penal Code <i>(Common intention, Common object, abetment and When these sections may be added along with principal section of offence, explained)</i>	228
Conclusion	238

Appendix-1

THE EVIDENCE ACT, 1872

[With Amendments 2022]

PART I

RELEVANCY OF FACTS

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1.	Short title	239
	Extent	239
	Commencement of Act	239
2.	[<i>Repealed</i>]	239
3.	Interpretation-clause	240
4.	“May presume”	243
	“Shall presume”	243
	“Conclusive proof”	243

CHAPTER II

OF THE RELEVANCY OF FACTS

5.	Evidence may be given of facts in issue and relevant facts	244
6.	Relevancy of facts forming part of same transaction	244
7.	Facts which are the occasion cause or effect of facts in issue	245
8.	Motive, preparation and previous or subsequent conduct	246
9.	Facts necessary to explain or introduce relevant facts	248
10.	Things said or done by conspirator in reference to common design	249
11.	When facts not otherwise relevant become relevant	250
12.	In suits for damages, facts tending to enable Court to determine amount are relevant	251
13.	Facts relevant when right or custom is in question	251
14.	Facts showing existence of state of mind, or of body, or bodily feeling	252

JUDGMENTS OF COURTS OF JUSTICE WHEN RELEVANT

40.	Previous judgments relevant to bar a second suit or trial	269
41.	Relevancy of certain judgments in probate, etc., jurisdiction	269
42.	Relevancy and effect of judgments, orders or decrees, other than those mentioned in section 41	270
43.	Judgments, etc., other than those mentioned in sections 40 to 42, when relevant	270
44.	Fraud or collusion in obtaining judgment, or incompetency of Court, may be proved	271

OPINIONS OF THIRD PERSONS WHEN RELEVANT

45.	Opinions of experts	272
45A.	Opinion of experts on physical or forensic evidence	273
46.	Facts bearing upon opinions of experts	273
47.	Opinion as to handwriting, when relevant	273
47A.	Opinion as to digital signature where relevant	274
48.	Opinion as to existence of right or custom, when relevant	274
49.	Opinion as to usages, tenets, etc., when relevant	275
50.	Opinion on relationship, when relevant	275
51.	Grounds of opinion, when relevant	276

CHARACTER WHEN RELEVANT

52.	In civil cases, character to prove conduct imputed, irrelevant	276
53.	In criminal cases, previous good character relevant	276
54.	Previous bad character not relevant, except in reply	276
55.	Character as affecting damages	276

PART II

ON PROOF

CHAPTER III

FACTS WHICH NEED NOT BE PROVED

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 56. | Fact judicially noticeable need not be proved | 277 |
| 57. | Facts of which Court must take judicial notice | 277 |
| 58. | Facts admitted need not be proved | 278 |

CHAPTER IV

OF ORAL EVIDENCE

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----|
| 59. | Proof of facts by oral evidence | 279 |
| 60. | Oral evidence must be direct | 279 |

CHAPTER V

OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

- | | | |
|------|--|-----|
| 61. | Proof of contents of documents | 280 |
| 62. | Primary evidence | 280 |
| 63. | Secondary evidence | 280 |
| 64. | Proof of documents by primary evidence | 281 |
| 65. | Cases in which secondary evidence relating to documents may be given | 281 |
| 65A. | Special provisions as to evidence relating to digital record | 283 |
| 65B. | Admissibility of Digital Records | 283 |
| 66. | Rules as to notice to produce | 285 |
| 67. | Proof of signature and handwriting of person alleged to have signed or written document produced | 286 |
| 67A. | Proof as to digital signature | 286 |
| 68. | Proof of execution of document required by law to be attested | 286 |
| 69. | Proof where no attesting witness found | 287 |
| 70. | Admission of execution by party to attested document | 287 |
| 71. | Proof when attesting witness denies the execution | 287 |
| 72. | Proof of document not required by law to be attested | 287 |
| 73. | Comparison of signature, writing or seal with others, admitted or proved | 287 |
| 73A. | Proof as to verification of digital signature | 288 |
| 73B. | Comparison of physical or forensic evidence with others, admitted or proved | 288 |

CHAPTER X
OF THE EXAMINATION OF WITNESSES

135.	Order of production and examination of witnesses	317
136.	Judge to decide as to admissibility of evidence	317
137.	Examination-in-chief	319
	Cross-examination	319
	Re-examination	319
138.	Order of examinations	319
	Direction of re-examination	319
139.	Cross-examination of person called to produce a document	319
140.	Witnesses to character	319
141.	Leading questions	320
142.	When they must not be asked	320
143.	When they may be asked	320
144.	Evidence as to matters in writing	320
145.	Cross-examination as to previous statements in writing	321
146.	Questions lawful in cross-examination	321
147.	When witness to be compelled to answer	321
148.	Court to decide when question shall be asked and when witness compelled to answer	322
149.	Question not to be asked without reasonable grounds	322
150.	Procedure of Court in case of question being asked without reasonable grounds	323
151.	Indecent and scandalous questions	323
152.	Questions intended to insult or annoy	323
153.	Exclusion of evidence to contradict answers to questions testing veracity	324
154.	Question by party to his own witness	325
155.	Impeaching credit of witness	325
156.	Questions tending to corroborate evidence of relevant fact admissible	326
157.	Former statements of witness may be proved to corroborate later testimony as to same fact	327
158.	What matters may be proved in connection with proved statement relevant under section 32, or 33	327

159.	Refreshing memory	327
	When witness may use copy of document to refresh memory	327
160.	Testimony to facts stated in document mentioned in section 159	328
161.	Right of adverse party as to writing used to refresh memory	328
162.	Production of documents	328
	Translation of documents	328
163.	Giving, as evidence, of document called for and produced on notice	329
164.	Using, as evidence, of document production of which was refused on notice	329
165.	Judge's power to put questions or order production	329
166.	Power of jury or assessors to put questions	330

CHAPTER XI

OF IMPROPER ADMISSION AND REJECTION OF EVIDENCE

167.	No new trial for improper admission or rejection of evidence	330
	SCHEDULE — [Repealed]	330

Appendix-2

আদালত কর্তৃক তথ্য-প্রযুক্তি ব্যবহার আইন, ২০২০	331
সাক্ষীর	333
(ভার্চুয়াল উপস্থিতিতে সাক্ষ্য গ্রহণ ও গুনানীসহ মামলার যে কোন পর্যায়ে অবশ্যকরণীয় ক্ষেত্রে আদালত কর্তৃক অনুসরণীয় 'প্র্যাকটিস নির্দেশনা')	

CHAPTER-I

Preliminary

People come of to Court with different types of claim or complaints to get redress. When his claim is of civil nature, he will have to file the suit in a civil court which has jurisdiction to try the suit. Evidence may be necessary to determine whether the claim is of civil nature or not. On the other hand, if it is a compliant, the court trying criminal cases is to see whether the court in which the complaint is filed is the proper court to entertain the same. In this connection, as regards civil suit, section 9 of the Code of Civil Procedure and as regards criminal cases, sections 177, 179, 183 and 188, sections 200-204 of the Code of Criminal Procedure may be seen, and necessary evidence may be taken to determine the jurisdiction. Such a claim or complaint is to be established by adducing appropriate legal evidence. "Evidence" is the legal term used in judicial proceedings and sometimes the word "proof" is also used in lieu of "evidence" but it is proper to use the word 'evidence' in judicial proceedings. There is also distinction between "evidence" and "proof". In the Evidence Act of 1872, the word 'evidence' has been defined and explained but the word 'proof' has not been defined or explained. However, in the above Act the words' "Proved", "Disproved" and 'Not proved' have been explained from which we may get an idea as to what is "proof". It appears from the definition and explanation of the above four words, the word 'proof' shall mean the result or effect of the total evidence adduced or led in a case. It means the totality of the evidence adduce before the court on the basis of which the court decides the truth or falsehood of any fact or circumstance claimed by a party and opposed by another party.

Now, let us see what are the definition and explanations given in the Act itself [Section 3 of the Act].

"Evidence"– Evidence means and includes–

- (1) all statements which the Court permits or requires to be made before it by witnesses, in relation to matters of fact under inquiry: such statements are called oral evidence;
- (2) all documents produced for the inspection of the Court; such documents are called documentary evidence.

¹[(3) all materials or objects relating to blood, semen, hair, all body material, organ or part of organ, Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid (DNA), finger impression, palm impression, iris impression and foot print or any other similar material or object which may—

- (i) establish that an offence has been committed or establish a link or relation between an offence and its victim or an offence and its offender; and
- (ii) prove or disprove a fact:

such materials or objects are called physical or forensic evidence.];

“Proved”— A fact is said to be proved when, after considering the matters before it, the Court either believes it to exist, or considers its existence so probable that a prudent man ought, under the circumstances of the particular case, to act upon the supposition that it exists.

“Disproved”— A fact is said to be disproved when, after considering the matters before it, the Court either believes that it does not exist, or considers its non-existence so probable that a prudent man ought, under the circumstances of the particular case, to act upon the supposition that it does not exist.

“Not proved”— A fact is said not to be proved when it is neither proved nor disproved

¹ Sub-clause (3) was inserted after words by Section 2(c)(i) of the Evidence (Amendment) Act, 2022 (Act No. 20 of 2022) Date of effect: 20 November, 2022.

In order to understand the full meaning of evidence, the different words and expressions used in section 3 of the Act are to be understood with reference to the decisions of the superior courts of this sub-continent. In the interpretation section 3, first it is stated that all the statements which the court permits or requires to be made before it by the witnesses in relation to matters of fact under inquiry, such statements are called oral evidence. All the statements of a witness will not be evidence unless it meets or fulfills the above criteria. Not only that, the statement must also be related to matters of fact.

In this section what fact means and includes is stated in clause (1) from which we find that facts may be physical i.e. which are capable of being perceived and from clause (2) we find that facts include mental conditions of which a person of which he is conscious. Physical facts may be proved by a witness who saw the fact. When a witness did not see the fact but witnessed the circumstances under which the occurrence took place, those also may be considered as facts because from such a statement those it may be possible to make an inference as to the existence or non-existence of a fact. But mental condition can not be seen. A witness cannot say why accused 'B' stabbed 'A'. But the witness may state about some circumstances which he noticed before the stabbing or after the stabbing. Such evidence is called circumstantial evidence and on consideration of such a circumstantial evidence, it may be possible on the part of the judge to find out as to what was the probable intention of the accused. Section 6 and illustration (a) may be seen.

Besides the above words and expressions, the word "relevant" and the words "facts in issue", "document" have also been used.

The word 'relevant' is often used while recording statement of any person in a court or while admitting a document. Normal rule is that if the statement is not relevant relating to matters or facts of the case, then it is considered to be not admissible and the court does not allow a party to ask such a question to a witness. Even sometimes relevancy is also of importance at the time of cross-examination of a witness, the

CHAPTER-II

Relevancy of facts

While deciding the facts in issue, the court faces the question of relevancy. Specially, at the time of recording evidence or admitting a document in evidence, the question of relevancy is raised by the other side. It has already been mentioned that the provisions of sections 5 to 55 of Chapter II of the Act are to be taken into consideration in order to determine the question of relevancy. In section 5, it is provided that "Evidence may be given in any suit or proceeding of the existence or non-existence of every fact in issue and of such other fact as are hereinafter declared to be relevant and of no others."

From the above, two things are clear: (1) evidence may be given on matters which have been hereinafter declared to be relevant, (2) no evidence can be given on facts which are not declared to be relevant. It means that the facts declared in sections 5 to 55 are only relevant and no more. So, a judge must carefully go through all those provisions to determine which facts are relevant and which are not. Some important sections are discussed below:

Section 6

Facts forming parts of the same transaction are relevant. The expression "same transaction" is not defined in this Act nor it is defined in the Penal Code, though in several sections of the Code, the same expression is used. So, before applying the provisions of section 6 of the Act, the judge must have a clear idea about what is same transaction. This expression has been explained by our higher courts in several cases. On the basis of those decisions, three facts are to be taken into consideration:

- (1) proximity of time of the occurrences
- (2) proximity of places where the occurrence took place and,