

**GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS OF THE  
WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION  
- 16.03.2013 -  
SPEECH BY HONOURABLE THE ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE**

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My Lord Hon'ble Mr. Justice P. Sathasivam, Hon'ble Mr. Justice F.M. Ibrahim Kalifulla, Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.Y. Eqbal, Judges, Supreme Court of India, Hon'ble Mr. Justice D. Murugesan, Chief Justice, Delhi High Court, my esteemed brother and sister Judges, senior advocates, Mrs. Prasanna, President and other Office bearers of Women Lawyers Association, Ms. Vedavalli, founder Member of Women Lawyers Association, Presidents and Office bearers of various Bar Associations, women advocates, judicial officers, officers and staff of the Registry, ladies and gentlemen,

I am happy to note that Women Lawyers Association is celebrating its Golden Jubilee Celebrations. A pioneer, the Women Lawyers Association has 5,000 members in your rolls.

Today is a red letter day for your Association. It is a day for rejoicing as the Members and the Office Bearers throughout all these years have striven hard to remain together. I greatly admire and am full of praise for their sincere efforts.

But that should not be an end. Your Association has to go a long way.

On this occasion, I request the Office bearers and all the Members of your Association to give a thought as to why a necessity arose for the woman lawyers of this Court to form an Association exclusively for them 50 years ago. It is a very long period. You should sit and make an introspection as to whether the aims and objectives, for which this Association has been formed, have been achieved or not. If not, then you should set a time frame for achieving the same. Your Association should also take welfare schemes not only for your members but also the woman lawyers in this State. In its 50 years of its existence, the Women Lawyers Association has seen many stalwarts and legal luminaries. I would suggest that your Association should set an example for others and days are not far when your Association will become a force to reckon with. I wish that the Governments, both at the Centre and in this State, take your suggestion before making and implementing welfare measures, not only for the woman

lawyers of this State but also the entire women lawyers fraternity of this country.

Recently, I happened to go through the book 'Madras: The Land, The People & Their Governance' published by Palaniappa Brothers. It is seen that B. Ananda Bai, the first woman law graduate of the Madras University, about 90 years back, had written to the Government seeking a position in Government service and she was ultimately informed by the Government that they could not comply with her request. By then, she had already become an apprentice to V.V. Srinivasa Iyenger. But before her, Seeta Devadoss had enrolled as an advocate in the Madras High Court. We can, therefore, say with a sense of pride that our Court had been a pioneer in encouraging women to enter this noble profession.

Friends, your first task should be to encourage more woman to join this profession. We see many girls studying in Law Colleges or National Law Schools but only a miniscule percentage of them chose law as their profession. They prefer working in corporates or confine themselves to homemaking.

The reason for my emphasis is that women are better placed in understanding the pain and sufferings of their clan.

Unlike the past, the women of today are well educated and they have greatly expanded their capabilities. If we need to improve our society, we cannot do it without the help of woman. We have to create more avenues for them to prosper and prove their worthiness.

As an Association, you must create legal awareness among the women. I am very happy that you have started Legal Counselling Centre for Women and Helpline for needy people. Poor and destitute woman can be assisted by your Association without charging anything or charging basic fees. One thing leads to another and the woman who has got help when she was in need would certainly help the other woman when in need. If it is done with true conviction and spirit, as a chain reaction, it will bring lot of relief to the suffering womenfolk.

On this Golden Jubilee Year, I wish all the members of Women Lawyers' Association a very bright future in the years ahead.

Thanking you all.