

**SPECIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE HON'BLE ACTING  
CHIEF JUSTICE IN THE ANNUAL GENERAL BODY  
MEETING OF THE TAMIL NADU JUDICIAL OFFICERS  
ASSOCIATION HELD ON 29.6.2013**

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Dear Judicial Officers, ladies and gentlemen,

Good Morning to all of you,

I am very happy to be a part of this distinguished gathering. Being the head of any family, leave alone the judicial family, is a tough task. But I consider all of you as my brothers and sisters. We, as a family, shall strive to bring down the huge pendency and work for the betterment of the poor litigant.

I am aware that the infrastructure in the subordinate judiciary is not upto the desired level. We have severe staff crunch. The number of cases are increasing manifold. Against all these odds, the subordinate judiciary is performing well and I place on record my appreciation for their performance.

On the infrastructure front, the Governments, both the Central and State, on their part, have been doing their best to

help us out. Apart from strengthening the infrastructure, the Government of Tamil Nadu have taken earnest efforts in constructing around 65 quarters in 19 districts over the last three years. Recently, 31 new cars have been provided to all the Principal District Judges and the Government have made an announcement in the Assembly on 30.4.2013 that they have earmarked Rs.6 Crores for providing new cars to all the Judicial Officers in the cadre of District Judges.

On the promotional aspects, over the last year, 171 Civil Judges have been appointed, 57 Civil Judges have been promoted as Senior Civil Judges, 34 Senior Civil Judges have been promoted as District Judges, on regular basis as well as by conducting limited competitive examination, 15 District Judges, who were working on ad hoc basis, were promoted on regular basis, 13 District Judges were awarded Selection Grade and one District Judge was awarded Supertime Scale.

To assist you in improving your efficiency, the Tamil Nadu State Judicial Academy has been regularly conducting refresher courses.

All these are done with the only objective of helping the poor litigant for early and effective disposal of his cases. Your paramount concern should be the welfare of the litigant. We all owe a duty to him, to serve him and above all to uphold the majesty of law. You all must possess the quality of integrity, which is the hallmark of judicial discipline. The judiciary survives only in the confidence of the people in its probity and such confidence is the foundation on which the pillars of the judiciary are built. You must not fail the litigant public, whose confidence will get affected if they develop a feeling that any of you lack integrity or character. One must not forget that even though you decide the disputes between two parties, the final Judge is the general public and how they hold you in their esteem.

As a Judicial Officer, you have the dual responsibility of holding courts and also carrying on your administrative duties. Your time is also often consumed by administrative responsibilities. You are expected to maintain a cordial relationship both with the lawyers and also with your subordinates. Friends, please remember that just because you

have become a Judicial Officer, you should not think that you are above law. You are judged not only by the quality of your judgments but also by the quality and purity of your character.

You have to maintain responsible standard of conduct in private life, you shall not accept hospitality from anyone and above all you should be honest to your conscience. Please avoid even a semblance of impropriety in your conduct or else it could have an impact on the public perception of the integrity of the judiciary and ultimately will result in affecting the independence of the judiciary.

The Apex Court in **TARAK SINGH v. JYOTI BASU (2005) 1 SCC 201**, had observed that Integrity is the hallmark of the judicial discipline, apart from others and that it is high time the judiciary took utmost care to see that the temple of justice does not crack from inside, which will lead to a catastrophe in the judicial-delivery system resulting in the failure of public confidence in the system. The Supreme Court in **RAJENDRA SINGH VERMA v. LT. GOVERNOR, NCT, DELHI (2011) 1 SCC 1**, also held that Judicial Service is not a service in the sense of an employment as commonly understood.

Judges are discharging their functions while exercising the sovereign judicial power of the State. Their honesty and integrity is expected to be beyond doubt. It should be reflected in their overall reputation.

While discussing about the judicial service, the Supreme Court in ***HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY v. SHASHIKANT S. PATIL (2000) 1 SCC 416***, had held that the Judges, at whatever level they may be, represent the State and its authority, unlike the bureaucracy or the members of other service. Judicial service is not merely an employment nor the Judges merely employees. They exercise sovereign judicial power. They are holders of public offices of great trust and responsibility.

On the conduct of the Judicial Officers, in ***DAYA SHANKAR v. HIGH COURT OF ALLAHABAD (1987) 3 SCC 1***, the Supreme Court held that the Judicial Officers cannot have two standards, one in the court and another outside the Court. They must have only one standard of rectitude, honesty and integrity. They cannot act even remotely unworthy of the office they occupy.

Dear Judicial Officers, you have to maintain discipline at all times and the Supreme Court in ***HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE, BOMBAY v. UDAYSINGH (1997) 5 SCC 129***, had held that Maintenance of discipline in the judicial service is a paramount matter. Acceptability of the judgment depends upon the credibility of the conduct, honesty, integrity and character of the officer. The confidence of the litigating public gets affected or shaken by lack of integrity and character of judicial officer.

Again in ***TARAK SINGH v. JYOTI BASU (referred supra)***, the Supreme Court held that Judicial discipline is an inbuilt mechanism inherent in the system itself. Because of the position that we occupy and the enormous power we wield, no other authority can impose a discipline on us. All the more reason judges exercise self-discipline of high standards. The character of a judge is being tested by the power he wields. Abraham Lincoln once said:

*'Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character give him power'.*

Justice-delivery system, like any other system in every walk of life, will fail and crumble down in the absence of integrity. The judiciary is the repository of public faith. It is the trustee of the people. It is the last hope of the people. After every knock at all the doors fail, people approach the judiciary as the last resort. It is the only temple worshipped by every citizen of this nation, regardless of religion, caste, sex or place of birth. Because of the power he wields, a judge is being judged with more strictness.

Dear Judicial Officers I took the liberty of speaking this length only because I wanted all of you to excel in your work and consequently in your career so that not only you but also the poor litigant will benefit from your actions. Let your deliberations today also dwell on improving the services that we offer to the litigants.

I wish all of you all the best...