

INAUGURATION OF
LEGAL LITERACY AND AWARENESS CAMP,
UDHAGAMANDALAM

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SATISH K. AGNIHOTRI
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24.05.2014

Vanakkam.

Mr. G.P.Elango, District and Sessions Judge, Ooty, Dr.K.Arul, Member Secretary, Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority, Judicial Officers, Senior Advocates, Advocates, other Officers, I am not addressing Mr.S.Arunkumar by name – he represents all the members of the Bar – so all the members of the Bar, media, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I express my gratitude for arranging this function in such a large scale and in a fantastic manner. Inauguration of Legal Literacy and Awareness camp is one step forward towards the commitment for the development of the society. What is this legal literacy and awareness camp? This is not only to help or advise the people to come to the Courts if there is any conflict or dispute. This camp is for the purpose of

informing people in respect of their problems. May be problem of getting electricity connection, getting ration card, getting proper health care. So all the people, all the stakeholders, advocates, paralegal volunteers are under an obligation to help people so that they can lead a decent beautiful social life. You all have this awakening call. First awareness among the advocates, paralegal volunteers, citizens that what is their responsibility and duty towards the people. That we have to do it through this legal literacy and awareness camp. We are creating para legal volunteers on payment of a small honorarium, trained volunteers would extend all help whatever is possible for better social life for better society. You all know now this has been codified. Judiciary, which was once upon a time an aloof partner not mixing with anyone, not giving any advice, they used to go to the Courts and used to resolve disputes through proper pleadings and other things with the assistance of learned advocates. But our role has changed. In addition to what we do in Courts, we are reaching to people by way of this camp and other methods; we are now organizing this type of camps. We are going to have an additional Dispute Resolution Buildings in all Districts. There is some problem in

this District, that will be resolved very shortly. You will have a place where the public, in their difficulty, can first go and resolve the problem. Thereafter, if it is not resolved, they may take recourse to litigation.

Always go back to your historical background. What was the system in this country? It is a country having its own civilization. There was no court system like this. This court system was actually developed by Britishers, which we are finding today, little not more effective having a problem of pendency, lots of litigation, lot of expenses. For that alternate dispute resolution has been evolved. You have Arbitration, Mediation, Lok Adalat and Conciliation. But the best way is Mediation and Conciliation. There, all senior citizens - anyone who has social consciousness - can offer their services for mediation. This is a system where the disputing parties themselves decide and resolve their disputes to avoid litigation, to avoid waste of money and time. Docket explosion is also checked.

Conciliation, that is similar to mediation. In other methods, there is a short of adjudication. But, in Lok Adalat,

parties, are on the basis of give and take, can resolve their problems. Arbitration though it can do good purpose, is not giving good results. It is like other litigations. Arbitration award goes to District Courts, High Court and Supreme Court. That may not be useful. One more important thing, like in family dispute, people go for dissolution of marriages. That perhaps cannot be done in Lok Adalat. But, by mediation, it can be resolved. So, the burden of courts can be reduced and you will have beautiful excellent, long life. You all please remember this. What we have to do to have a decent social life.

We have organized Mega Lok Adalat. One National Lok Adalat on 23.11.2013. This is a matter of pride for all of you as our disposal was Number One in the entire country. It was 13,77,250 cases by disbursing of Rs.1,140 Crores. Immediately, within a short period, we had a State Mega Lok Adalat. There also, we could dispose of much more cases, that is about 15,08,767 cases. The amount disbursed was Rs.915 Crores!! Of course, in Nilgiris District, in the first Lok Adalat, the disposal was little more, but money disbursed was less. In the second Lok Adalat, disposal was little less - for which I

would request all of you to contribute little more – but the award of money was more than the earlier one. It was Rs.4,66,45,393. You can all cheer up for that.

One more good news I would like to give today. Now, we are going to have 32 permanent Lok Adalats in the entire state of Tamil Nadu presided over by an Officer of the District Judge Rank. One permanent Lok Adalat will be here in the Nilgiris District. There, all Pre-litigation cases can be taken and resolved without much delay, much botheration. Future is very bright. Out of 32, Nilgiris District has been chosen Number One. With this hope, I am sure, when I come next time, there will be much less conflicts, disputes, problems.

Thank you.