

**Inauguration of Post-Graduate Diploma Course on
Judging and Court Management at
National Law University, Delhi**

(November 16, 2009 – Dwarka, New Delhi)

Address by Hon'ble Mr. K.G. Balakrishnan, Chief Justice of India

Chief Justice A.P. Shah,

Shri Fali Nariman,

Dr. Ranbir Singh, Dr. Ghanshyam Singh

And Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be present here for this programme which has given me the opportunity to visit this campus. As all of you are well aware, the autonomous law universities established in recent years have led to a considerable improvement in the profile and status of legal education in our country. I am certain that the National Law University Delhi will also gain prominence in the coming years. Even though the existing National Law Schools have been able to strengthen the teaching of undergraduate programs there is a lot to be desired when it comes to promoting research and extension activities. It is in this regard that this institution must take on the triple mantle of producing motivated law graduates, encouraging legal scholarship that aspires to world-class standards and continuously engage with the problems that exist at the grassroots level of our legal system.

There is of course a widespread perception that the activities which take place in law schools are often far-removed from the

realities of courtroom litigation. That gap is being bridged to a certain extent since nowadays many law students gain exposure to the working of the courts by way of internships under judges and lawyers. However, the law colleges must aspire to do more than facilitating such learning at an individual level. Institutional efforts must be made to ensure that the teaching and research activities actively contribute to improvements in the justice-delivery system. It is in that sense that I must commend the initiative being taken to launch a Post-Graduate Diploma course on Judging and Court Management. The idea is all the more praiseworthy since this is a very young institution which is only in the second year of its existence.

I have been made to understand that this diploma programme has been designed to meet the needs of law graduates who are interested in pursuing careers in the judiciary. I am also told that those who enrol for this programme will also get an opportunity to interact with sitting judges of the Delhi High Court as well as eminent legal practitioners on a frequent basis. There is of course a need for structured programmes to encourage competent and motivated individuals to join the judiciary, especially at the subordinate level. You all know that one of the biggest challenges before us today is that of a chronic shortage of judicial officers. For a variety of reasons, the recruitment processes conducted in different states are not able to yield an adequate number of qualified individuals. One reason for this is that young lawyers now have several lucrative career options before them in comparison to a career in the judicial services. We have of course undertaken several measures to improve the service-

conditions and avenues for career advancement but it will take time for meaningful changes to set in. In the meanwhile, it is our duty to convince the younger generation of lawyers that a career in the judicial services is not only a means for personal upliftment but also a tool for contributing to social welfare at large. It is only when the best and brightest of our law graduates commit to careers in the public services that we will be able to tackle the pervasive problems of delay and arrears in the delivery of justice.

In today's day and age, a judicial officer should not only be a master of legal doctrines, statutes and precedents but should also understand the administrative aspects of our justice-delivery system. Much of the undue delay which is associated with litigation can be reduced through effective court-management practices. In recent years, the computerization of administrative functions has ensured that the filing, listing and allocation of matters are being done in a far more efficient manner. At the level of the Supreme Court and the various High Courts, simple strategies such as the clubbing of matters on the basis of subject-categories and factoring in the expertise of the various benches have been implemented. The daily cause-lists as well as orders and judgments are readily available through the Judgment Information System (JUDIS) on the internet. These methods reduce the scope for duplication of work and also ensure that lawyers and litigants are able to keep track of their cases. However, the challenge before us is to devise ways for using technology as well as sound-administrative practices at the trial level. Computerisation is only one-part of the challenge. The more

substantive task is to train our judicial officers to use innovative methods for controlling the progression of the cases before them. This can be achieved through administrative expertise as well as procedural reform which empowers judges to direct the pace of proceedings which have traditionally been controlled by the lawyers.

While these aspects are being incorporated in the programmes conducted by the various judicial academies, I am happy to note that this institution is being ambitious enough to touch on these issues in a course meant for those who are preparing to become judges. I hope for the success of this programme in the coming years.

Thank You!
