

**Full text of the speech delivered by**  
**Hon'ble Chief Justice of India Shri Justice N V Ramana**  
**at the launch of**  
**“Pan India Legal Awareness and Outreach Campaign”**  
**of NALSA**

Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

02 October, 2021

1. Today marks a historic day, not only for India but also for the world. The teachings and philosophy of the Mahatma, not only shaped the path to an independent, tolerant and self-reliant India, but also shaped many modern civilisations. Even today, the teachings of the Mahatma continue to guide humanity towards a better tomorrow.
2. The words of Rabindranath Tagore capture the essence of Gandhism, I quote:

*He stopped at the threshold of the huts of the  
thousands of dispossessed,  
dressed like one of their own.  
He spoke to them in their own language.  
Here was living truth at last.” Unquote*
3. Gandhi strongly believed in the concept of *Sarvodaya* through *Antyodaya* i.e., *development of all through the welfare of the weakest sections of the society.*
4. *It is an undeniable truth that only inclusive growth can lead to a sustainable and vibrant democracy. Inclusive and sustainable growth would be impossible to attain without providing inclusive access to justice.*
5. The framers of our Constitution were well aware about our socio-economic reality. Therefore, they envisaged a welfare state where no one is denied basic needs of life.
6. In order to protect the aforesaid rights, the framers accorded us all, equal protection and equality before law. But this guarantee of equal justice will be rendered meaningless if the vulnerable sections cannot enforce their rights.

- 7.** Equality and “Access to Justice” complement each other. *In countries with major socio-economic gaps, unequal access to justice leads to widening of these divides.*
- 8.** Every person comes across legal issues in their lifetime, be it related to employment, inheritance, business or the family. *Suppression of unmet legal needs results in the suppression of the full potential of an individual.*
- 9.** In a complex society like ours, which is full of inequities, problems tend to multiply on their own. Loss of daily wage, prospect of eviction, lack of health care and uncertainty about the next meal- all these flow from absence of justice. The social costs of this are unimaginable. *SOCIO-ECONOMIC JUSTICE WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE WITHOUT PROVIDING EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE.*
- 10.** This is why today, all the three organs of the state, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary have come together, to strive for future based on inclusion, equality and fairness.
- 11.** The key to equal access to justice, lies in creating legal awareness first. Legal awareness will be the galvanizing force behind the reform process that we are propagating. Only when the vulnerable classes are aware about their rights, they can shape their own future.
- 12.** As I have emphasized before, in this country, we need the people to feel that law and the institutions are for everyone. In a democratic country, it is the faith and trust of the people that sustains institutions. We must earn that faith. *THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY RESTS ON THE QUALITY OF JUSTICE.*
- 13.** For a healthy democracy, a vibrant judiciary is essential. Covid-19 has created many problems to many institutions including the judiciary. Thousands of cases have accumulated in different fora. Apart from large vacancies, the non-working of Courts and lack of virtual conferencing facilities in rural areas, pandemic

has exposed some deep rooted problems. My companion judges and I have attempted to enable litigants to get faster justice. I want to state that, since May onwards, my team so far has recommended appointment of 106 Judges and 9 new Chief Justices to various High Courts. The Government has cleared 7 names out of the 106 judges and 1 out of the 9 Chief Justices, so far. I expect that the Government will clear the rest of the names very soon. These appointments will take care of pendency to some extent. I seek the cooperation and support of the Government to enable access to justice and to strengthen democracy.

- 14.** Since its inception 25 years ago, NALSA has rendered service to crores of people and has helped them in realising their rights and entitlements, all free of cost. But now we need to turn our efforts into a movement. Towards this end, NALSA is embarking on this ambitious six week programme beginning on the auspicious day of Gandhi Jayanti till the birth anniversary of Pandit Nehru. NALSA's goal should be: *"If the needy cannot reach us, we shall reach the needy."* Making this noble mission a grand success will be the real tribute to our founders.
- 15.** I urge you all, to whole heartedly support this endeavour and carry the flag of justice to the remotest corner and to the weakest person in this country. As we celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> year of our independence, *it is a challenge for all the three organs of the State, to work together to realise the goals of true freedom and independence.*
- 16.** *Empowering and enabling the people is the key to true freedom- freedom from inequity, freedom to dream, freedom to achieve.*
- 17.** I would like to invoke the spirit of the Mahatma in light of the colossal task that lies in front of us:  
*"Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow men"*

- 18.** We are fortunate to have a President who was a lawyer himself. I would like to express my gratitude for the support that the Hon'ble President of India has always given to further the legal reforms in the country. In the interest of justice he was the first to advocate making available all the judgments in the regional languages. Being concerned with the welfare of the people, he always seeks to improve the legal aid system, his presence here is a testament to that. It is his strong belief in gender justice that was instrumental in the recent appointment of judges to the Supreme Court. With him at the helm, the positivity will spread across all the High Courts.
- 19.** I am grateful to Rashtrapati ji for agreeing to launch this historic "Pan India Legal Awareness and Outreach Campaign"
- 20.** We all know how dynamic our law minister is. His high energy level is reflected in his interactions with the people. I was told that, he set twitter on fire with his high energy dance. His connect with the common people defines his commitment to society.
- 21.** Under the leadership of my Brother Justice U. U. Lalit, who is a creative leader, I am sure this innovative campaign will turn a new page in the history of legal services in India.
- 22.** My Brother Justice Khanwilkar is a very hard working and diligent Judge. Under his leadership, the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee is leading from the front and setting new benchmarks in legal service.
- 23.** I consider media to be one of the key stakeholders in this mission. I request the media to partner with NALSA to advance the cause of 'Justice to All'.
- 24.** I urge upon all the stakeholders to join this historic journey aimed at making justice accessible to each one of those in need of legal aid. *Best Wishes.*
- 25.** Thank You.