

VICE PRESIDENT EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER GROWING PENDING OF CASES AT ALL LEVELS OF JUDICIARY

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Judiciary in India: its Structure, Organization & Functioning, Judges of SC & High Courts, Judgments and related Issues

The Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu today expressed concern over the mounting pendency of cases from the Supreme Court to the lower courts and urged the government and the judiciary to ensure faster justice by addressing the issue.

Addressing through virtual mode the Platinum Jubilee meet of Dr B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, Andhra University on the occasion of its 76th Foundation Day, he underscored the need to make delivery of justice speedier and affordable. Citing adjournment of cases over long periods, he observed that justice was becoming costly and referred to the well-known proverb “justice denied is justice delayed”.

The Vice President said that Public Interest Litigations (PILs) should not become private interest litigations for personal, pecuniary and political interests. There was nothing wrong if it was for a larger public cause, he stressed.

Asking the law students to be the voice of the voiceless and to use their legal knowledge to empower the marginalized people, he advised them to take up legal aid for the poor as a commitment. He also told the budding lawyers to nurture professionalism and ethical conduct, while being fearless and fair when it comes to discharging their duties. “Fight injustice wherever it exists and in whichever manner it is perpetuated”, he added.

Highlighting the need to avoid ambiguity while drafting laws, the Vice President said laws should be simple and uncomplicated. The focus should not only be on the letter but also on the spirit of and the intent behind our laws. “The intent and purpose of the law must be very clear”, he added.

Observing that lawyers are capable of bringing about great social transformation, the Vice President said that as a society evolves, so must its laws. “We must constantly introspect and scrutinize our laws from the prism of justice, fairness, equity, compassion and humanity and must continually reform and update our laws, rules and regulations”, he said.

Shri Naidu said that laws which do not find a place in a progressive society must be repealed without prejudice and without delay, while modifying others to suit the times.

Calling for an all-round effort to improve our justice system, the Vice President spoke of the need to continually improve our legal infrastructure and access to justice, especially for the common man. Expressing concern that a vast majority of our laws and regulations were still illegible to the ordinary citizen, he called for the expansion of legal literacy.

Referring to the New Education Policy, he stressed the need to impart basic primary and upper primary education in mother tongue. “I go a step further, in due course of time, we must strive hard to see that all our systems and public life mother tongue must be used, practiced and propagated. Whether it is education, whether it is governance or whether it is judiciary, people must be able to speak, argue and write in their mother tongue so that they are able to express freely”.

Quoting Gandhi Ji, who had said “the ancient ideal of Ramarajya is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure”, the Vice President said “ the foundation of Ramarajya is truth and justice and that is what we aspire for when we strengthen various institutions of democratic governance, including the judiciary”.

He asked young students to look upon legal profession as a mission and always be ready to be of service to the most powerless and helpless of our citizens.

Advising students to remain life-long learners and understand the nuances of our democratic system and the functioning of its institutions and processes, Shri Naidu stressed the need to make policies that are not only legally sound but also morally righteous and socially just.

Paying rich tributes to the founder of the College, Dr C.R. Reddy, he recalled his student days and said that his time at the college laid strong foundations to his political and public life.

Justice T. Rajani and Justice, Battu Devanand, Hon'ble Judges of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, Prof. P.V.G.D. Prasada Reddy, Vice Chancellor, Andhra University, Prof. S. Sumitra, Principal, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, Prof. D.S. Prakasa Rao, Dean, Faculty of Law, Andhra University, Prof.K.Gupteswar , Founder Principal, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, Dr.P.S.Rao, Special Adviser, Attorney-General Office, State of Qatar and others were present on the occasion.

The following is the full text of the speech:

I am delighted to join all of you in this Platinum Jubilee meeting today on the auspicious occasion of the 76th Foundation Day of Dr B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, Andhra University. It gives me great pleasure to tell you that I myself am a proud alumnus of this great temple of learning.

The Law College was established in Andhra University in 1945 in order to meet a long felt need for a College of Law in this part of the country, which was then a part of the province of Madras.

On this momentous occasion of celebrating Platinum Jubilee, we must remember with gratitude the great visionary, Dr. C.R. Reddy, the founder Vice Chancellor of Andhra University, whose farsightedness led to the establishment of this institution of great stature. Dr.Cattamanchy Ramalinga Reddy, in consultation with Jurists like Sri Lionel Leach, Chief Justice of Madras, Sri P.V.Rajamannar, the then Advocate General of Madras, Sri V. Govindarajachari, Advocate and a few others, laid the foundations of this college.

This College began its illustrious journey in 1945 and was inaugurated by the legendary Judge of the Madras High Court, Sri Rajamannar. This college, the then department of law, was originally located in Machilipatnam and was relocated in 1949 to Waltair, which is the present Visakhapatnam. Prof. S. Venkataraman was the first Head of the Department of Law & Professor of Law. It became independent from being part of Arts, Commerce and Law wing of Andhra University and was renamed as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law. This college was one of the first institutions to introduce semester system in 1975, much before the Bar Council of India has envisaged it. It is also one of the few institutions offering international law as a field of specialization in post graduation since long time.

Dr. C R Reddy was an ardent believer in promoting academic and scholarly study of law. He visualized this institution as a centre for comparative and interdisciplinary study of Law, which would mould outstanding practitioners and teachers of law.

I pay my humble tributes to the great soul today.

As a matter-of-fact, I spent some of the most significant and memorable years of my life as a student leader and a prominent personality of Jai Andhra movement in Visakhapatnam. I was initially imprisoned in Visakhapatnam and later shifted to Mushirabad Jail in Hyderabad during the infamous Emergency. In all, I was in prison for about one-and-half years. My only fault was that as a student leader, I had invited Shri Jayaprakash Narayan to address a public meeting at Visakhapatnam and that was used as a pretext by the then government to send me to jail along with several other opposition leaders at that time.

I feel fortunate to have studied in this college. My stay in this college laid a strong foundation for political and public life. I always cherish my long association with the beautiful city of Visakhapatnam and its people. I paid my reverential respect in a facebook post, to all my gurus including the professors who taught us different subjects in the law college- Shri B S Murtygaru, Shri Gopalakrishna Sastry garu, Shri Gupteswargaru, Shri Laxmana Rao garu, Shri Ramachandra Rao garu; Shri Appalanaidugaru, Shri Santosh garu, Shri Jaganmohangaru, Shri Padmanabhamgaru, Shri Krishna Murtygaru.

It is heartening to note that since its inception, the college had outstanding jurists and Legal Luminaries as the Members of the Faculty.

I am happy to note that the College has been constantly endeavouring to raise the benchmarks for teaching and research to prepare the students for advanced study and research at LL.M., and Ph.D. levels and to build their careers at the Bar.

Platinum Jubilee is a major milestone for any institution. It is an occasion not only to list out the achievements, but also to introspect and chalk out a roadmap for the future. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate each and every one of you on this occasion.

My dear sisters and brothers,

It is also appropriate that this college has been named after one of the most eminent jurists India has ever seen, the chief architect of the Constitution of India, Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar.

Dr Ambedkar was a multi-faceted genius—a visionary statesman, philosopher, towering intellectual, eminent jurist, economist, writer, social reformer and a humanist par excellence. The nation will be ever grateful to the iconic leader for his stellar contribution in drafting the Constitution and for his pioneering role in guiding the nation at a critical juncture.

Dr Ambedkar left an indelible imprint on the sands of time and his thoughts are relevant for all times. Indeed, he was the messiah of the oppressed and all through his life, he strove to dismantle the caste barriers and ensure equality for all people.

He strongly believed in gender equality and emancipation of women through education. He famously said: "Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life."

As students of law, I ask each and every one of you to understand the life and work of Dr Ambedkar and to draw inspiration from it so that you may serve this nation to the best of your ability.

My dear young friends,

You have the good fortune of being enlightened in the portals of a premier educational institution. As inheritors of the legacy of Dr Ambedkar and as budding lawyers, each one of you must always strive to protect the constitution. Please remember that several eminent legal luminaries played a crucial role in laying strong foundations for our democratic republic. The tallest leaders of our freedom struggle, from Mahatma Gandhi to Bal Gangadhar Tilak to C. Rajagopalachari, Lala Lajpat Rai and TanguturiPrakasamPantulu were lawyers.

I have always felt that the leadership of lawyers played a major role in the evolution of our independence struggle where we sought freedom, basic rights and democracy in a peaceful and non-violent manner using reasoned argument and moral courage which are traits of excellent lawyers. We all are also aware of the decisive role played by lawyers in drafting our constitution.

As advocates and jurists of tomorrow, you have an equally important role to play in shaping the future of this country.

Having been a student of law myself, I would like to dwell on the significance of legal education in nation building. As a society and nation governed by the rule of law, we must focus not only on the letter but also on the spirit of and the intent behind our laws.

There should not be any room for ambiguity while drafting laws. They should be simple and uncomplicated. Any ambiguity can lead to the possibility of misinterpretation and misuse and that should be totally avoided.

Although many youngsters are joining law courses and becoming lawyers, there continues to be manpower shortage. We need to study the reasons for the same and take remedial steps. At the same time, it should be remembered that quality is more important than quantity. I feel that the judiciary should also focus on this issue.

Over the years, India has produced many outstanding and eminent jurists like V R Krishna Iyer, Nani Palkhivala, Fali S. Nariman, Soli Sorabjee, Harish Salve, P. B. Gajendragadkar, KokaSubba Rao, K S Hedge and Hans Raj Khanna, who did not budge or bend during the Emergency to safeguard the fundamental rights of the people.

Lawyers are capable of bringing about great social transformation. As society evolves, so must our laws. We must constantly introspect and scrutinize our laws from the prism of justice, fairness, equity, compassion and humanity and must continually reform and update our laws, rules and regulations. Laws which do not find a place in the progressive society must be repealed without prejudice and without delay, while modifying others to suit the times.

In the same spirit, there must be an unrelenting quest to improve our justice system. We must continually improve our legal infrastructure and access to justice, especially for the common man. A vast majority of our laws and regulations are still illegible to the ordinary citizen. Here comes the importance of expanding the reach of legal literacy and the need to simplify our laws and rules. I appreciate the government for scrapping several redundant and obsolete laws.

It is not sufficient to take justice to the people. We must also ensure that the intricacies of the legal system are understood by them in the languages they speak and understand.

There is also a need to make the delivery of justice speedier and affordable. The legal profession must continue to address this issue collectively.

My dear young friends,

As students of this prestigious university, you must constantly endeavour to find ways in which you can give back to the society and the country. You must look upon legal profession as a mission and must be always ready to be of service to the most powerless and helpless of our citizens. Be the voice of the voiceless. Use your legal knowledge and acumen to empower them and make their lives better.

I call upon each and every one of the students joining us today to take up legal aid for the poor as a commitment. As lawyers and jurists of the future, always try to be responsive. Nurture professionalism and ethical conduct, while being fearless and fair when it comes to discharging your duty. Fight injustice wherever it exists and in whichever manner it is perpetuated.

India undoubtedly has one of the best constitutions in the world. It places at its centre the highest of human values and has justice, liberty and equality as its cornerstones. It seeks to banish the social evils such as gender inequality, discrimination, communalism and casteism and endeavours to provide equality and equal protection of laws to all citizens. It was Dr Ambedkar who once remarked that "Constitution is not a mere lawyers' document, it is a vehicle of Life, and its spirit is always the spirit of Age."

Dear youngsters, always remain life-long students. Understand the nuances of our democratic system and the functioning of its institutions and processes. Help policy makers in making policies that are not only legally sound but also morally righteous and socially just. A democracy cannot be healthy without informed participation. Inform yourself and inform others. Help the nation create better citizens who are able to access all the opportunities that our country offers.

I am sure that as lawyers of the future, you will always strive for positive social change and take up the mantle of leadership in our quest to build a New India.

Before I conclude, I would like to recollect the words of Gandhi Ji, who had said, "Whether Rama of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal of Ramarajya is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure. Even the dog is described by the poet to have received justice under Ramarajya." The foundation of Ramarajya is truth and Justice and that is what we aspire for when we strengthen various institutions of democratic governance including Judiciary.

Tomorrow, we are going to witness a historic event at Ayodhya. An event that connects most of us to our illustrious cultural heritage. An event that makes us recollect Ramayana, the timeless epic written at least two thousand years ago, that has become a part of our collective consciousness.

It is indeed a moment of spontaneous celebration because we are bringing the glory of the past alive and enshrining the values we cherish.

Rama is an embodiment of Indian culture. He is the ideal King, an ideal human being. He combines in himself some of the finest qualities a human being can aspire to imbibe.

On this auspicious occasion, as we start rebuilding the ancient temple on 5th August, 2020 at Ayodhya for Rama and create a magnificent structure as desired by people, it would be good to understand and spread the universal message of Ramayana, the remarkable Indian epic, and enrich our lives based on its rich foundational values.

Once again, let me congratulate all of you on the 76th Foundation day of Dr B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, Andhra University. May this institution keep moulding lawyers of exceptional calibre and unblemished character and scale greater heights in the time to come.

I wish each and every one of you the very best in your future endeavours.

Thank You!

Jai Hind!

VRRK/MS/MSY/DP

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Thank You!

Jai Hind!

VRRK/MS/MSY/DP

END

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