

**SPEECH OF HON'BLE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE
ON THE OCCASION OF INAUGURATION OF NEW
BUILDING FOR THE KERALA JUDICIAL ACADEMY
ON 16TH JANUARY, 2016 AT KOCHI.**

Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, Shri T.S. Thakur ji, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala, Shri Oommen Chandy ji, Hon'ble Chief Justice of Kerala High Court, Shri Ashok Bhushan ji, Hon'ble Judges, other distinguished personalities on the dias, legal fraternity, ladies and gentlemen.

I am very happy to address this august gathering on the occasion of the inauguration of the new campus of the Kerala Judicial Academy.

Increased awareness among the citizens of India has vested the State Judicial Academies with the onerous responsibility of imparting training to the Judges in the laws which have become more relevant to today's needs. Globalization and socio-economic revolutions especially the advent of science and technology, has brought out new issues, new frontiers and new value systems. The need for Laws to be more dynamic and responsive to the situations is more than ever before. Increased judicial recruitment, increasing caseloads and more complex laws and legal issues that found birth in changed scenario, have enhanced the demand and need for continuous education and training in Common, Criminal and Civil law jurisdictions. Ideally, judicial training programmes and curricula should respond to concrete problems, be based on the needs

assessment, have specific objectives that shape the training programme and be subject to periodic evaluation.

The quality of the judiciary is an essential component in achieving access to justice, and a key element in maintaining the high quality of the judiciary is judicial education. In an age that increasingly demands more judicial independence and understanding to solve increasingly complex and sensitive issues that society leaves to be settled by litigation, the need for judicial education is perceived as greater than ever. In addition, the value of judicial education can be related to specific outcomes, such as better managed and less costly litigation, as well as greater public confidence in the judiciary. The value and importance of judicial education has long been recognised, and in large part, this is connected to the early recognition of the significance of the judiciary in the social and political life of the nation. This would also help the Government, which invests money for intellectual enrichment of judges, to plan for the future.

The Kerala Judicial Academy is already actively involved in judicial education, training and research. Continued judicial education and training needs to be organized and imparted in systematic manner in order to enhance the efficiency of the justice delivery system. Pendency and backlog of cases is one of the major challenges facing our judicial system. Several High Courts have adopted innovative techniques for dealing with the backlog of cases which need to be disseminated to the judges / judicial officers and other stakeholders. The State Judicial academies should be sharing

best practices undertaken by various stakeholders in the mission of Judicial reforms and quick access to justice delivery.

In this context, a note prepared by the National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms of the Government containing the details of legislative changes and dealing with the problems of delays in judicial processes has been made available to the High Courts for circulation among the judges and judicial academies. The Kerala Judicial Academy may like to use it for preparing the course material in its training programmes. Similarly, there is a need to emphasize review of the cases of undertrials who are eligible for bail under section 436 and 436A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and take *suo moto* action for their release. There is also a need to curb frequent adjournments to quicken disposal of cases. Judiciary must take prime responsibility to ensure access to fair, timely and cost-effective justice for all. I do not need to overemphasize that poor citizens of our country can hardly afford litigation as the cost is too high and unaffordable for many. When I talk about the cost of litigation, it is not only the cost of engaging a lawyer and fees paid to the court, it travels much beyond in the form of time spent and the benefits forgone by the parties to the litigation.

Government has also requested the State Governments and the Chief Justices of the High Courts to establish suitable number of Fast Track Courts relating to offences against Women, Children, differently abled persons, Senior Citizens and Marginalized Sections of the Society. Government has been contributing to the cause with the increase in strength of the judges and improvement in Judicial infrastructure. I am happy to share with you that the Government has

implemented eCourts Mission Mode Project Phase-I for computerization of 14,249 district & subordinate courts in the country with the objective of providing designated services to litigants, lawyers and the judiciary. As on 31st December, 2015, 13672 computerised courts are capable of delivering their services online. An outcome of the training of judicial officers would be efficient use of this infrastructure and bring judicial services to the doorstep of the citizens.

Envisaging further ICT enhancement of all the courts in the country, and enhanced availability of e-services to lawyers and litigants through e-filing, e-payment gateways and mobile applications etc., the Phase II of the project has also been initiated within the approved cost of Rs. 1670 Crores to be completed in the duration of four years. The project would function in line with the digital India program of the Government of India which emphasizes on citizen centric services.

I hope that the Kerala Judicial Academy which is coming up in the new spacious building with improved and latest infrastructure will further provide more useful and valuable training to Judges in Kerala and will also focus on the research in order to provide greater accessibility towards justice to the common man of our country who is looking forward to the Judiciary with great hopes. The National Judicial Academy is in the process of reviewing the training modules of State Judicial Academies and the Kerala Judicial Academy can also benefit from this exercise.

I wish the State Judicial Academy at Kerala all the very best to excel in its endeavor for providing intellectual inputs needed towards enhancing the efficiency of justice delivery system.

Thank You.