

NATIONAL JUDICIAL ACADEMY



SOUTH ZONE-I REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON OPTIMIZING QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY IN JUSTICE DELIVERY: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Programme Report [P-1203]

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The National Judicial Academy (NJA) in collaboration with the High Court for the State of Telangana and the Telangana State Judicial Academy organized the South Zone-I Regional Conference on the theme *Optimizing Quality and Efficiency in Justice Delivery: Challenges & Opportunities*. The Conference was designed to provide a forum for exchange of experiences, knowledge and dissemination of best practices from across the cluster of High Court jurisdictions in the southern region; and amongst the hierarchy; to accentuate the experience of familial community between High Court and Subordinate Court judicial officers; re-visiting established and imperative norms of the constitutional vision of justice; role of a judge in constitutional democracy; enhancing access to justice through ICT and court and case management. The conference also included deliberations upon the fiscal and budgetary planning, and cadre management at the level of the District Judiciary. The Conference was divided into 05 sessions over the duration of 2 days on following themes.

Session 1: Constitution Vision of Justice

Session 2: Being a Judge-

Role of a Judge in Constitutional Democracy; and
Nurturing Public faith in Judicial Process

Session 3: Access to Justice-

Information and Communication Technology in Courts;
Court and Case Management; and
Role of Judge in Promoting ADR

Session 4: Cadre Management in District Judiciary

Recruitment Process: Aptitude Test;
Identifying and Filling of Vacancies; and
Human resources/manpower planning

Session 5: Fiscal and Budgetary planning for District Judiciary

Planning for the next Fiscal;
Infrastructure Issues; and
Optimal Utilisation of allotted Funds

In the sessions dedicated to constitutional vision of justice and being a judge, the speakers began with discussing, in brief, the evolution of the constitution in the world and in the context of constitution of India and termed it a living organ. Important areas within the frame of constitution such as core of constitutionalism, constitutional values, basic structure doctrine, separation of power and rule of law was highlighted & discussed in brief during the sessions. Citing landmark judgements and important provisions of the constitution, the scope of justice within the parameters of the constitutional scheme and the role of judiciary in protecting fundamental rights was explained. It was stressed that the provisions of law must be interpreted in such a way that sanctity of the constitution remains intact. In the end, various contemporary challenges before the judges with respect to interpretation of the constitution was highlighted and participants were asked to share their experience and views on role of a judge in constitutional democracy and how they can build public trust and confidence in judicial process.

On the theme “*Access to Justice*”, the speaker initiated the discussion by highlighting the importance of technology and its positive impact on access to justice. The conference further included deliberations upon the disruptive innovation, hyper loop and social networking vis-a-vis traditional social relations. The speaker emphasized that harnessing technological revolution will shape courts in a manner that will improve the state of affairs. The speaker underlined various uses of technology such as; electronic case management, e- service of summons, e-filing, cognitive computing, digital management of files, docket management and artificial intelligence.

On the theme “*Cadre Management in District Judiciary*” speakers highlighted the importance of cadre management through appointment, promotion and service condition. A reference was made to Articles 233 and 234 of the constitution which accords power to the High Court in matters of appointment to the district judiciary. During the course of discussion various Law Commission reports on judges’ strength, delay and arrears were discussed at length. The existing judicial service recruitment process was deliberated upon by identifying competitive examination and direct recruitment as an existing and methods of requirement.

On the theme “*Fiscal and Budgetary Planning for District Judiciary*” the speaker deliberated upon major categories of budget including revenue and expenditure. The key components under the two heads were discussed in detail which included repayment of capital and interest, non-tax revenue, grant-in-aid and tax revenue. The common principle of budget reform was discussed whereby, improvement of government’s planning and reporting framework along with budgetary negotiations was discussed amongst participants. The need for coordination between different executive departments & judicial functionaries for efficient fiscal and budgetary planning was highlighted. Further, during the course of discussion it was stated that integration with treasuries and account offices must be correlated in order to get information regarding actual expenditure.