

National Judicial Academy, Bhopal



Programme Report

**P-1243: Seminar for Principal District
and Sessions Judges on Leadership
Skills**

March 06-07, 2021

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The National Judicial Academy (NJA) organized a two-day online Seminar for Principal District and Sessions Judges on Leadership Skills on 6th & 7th March, 2021. It was attended by 42 district judges from across the country. The seminar was conceived to provide a forum to participant judges to deliberate upon contemporary themes like leadership skills, strategies to achieve organizational goals, high performance through reorganizing courts to handle intensive and complex cases and organizing the civil & the criminal docket for effective caseload management. The Seminar provided a forum for participants to discuss, deliberate amongst themselves, share experiences, knowledge and best practices in exercise of jurisdiction.

The discourse was kindly guided and navigated by Dr. Justice S.S. Phansalkar Joshi [Former Judge, High Court of Bombay], Justice Ram Mohan Reddy [Former Judge, Karnataka High Court], Justice R. Basant [Former Judge, High Court of Kerala] and Justice N. Kotiswar Singh [Judge, High Court of Gauhati].

Session-wise Programme Schedule

Day-1

Special Session - Presentation by e-Committee, Supreme Court of India on e-Court Services

Session 1 - Leadership Skills: Organizational Performance and Leadership Effectiveness

Session 2- Strategies to Achieve Organizational Goals

Day-2

Session 3 - High Performance through Reorganizing Courts to Handle Intensive and Complex Cases

Session 4 - Organizing the Civil and the Criminal Docket for Effective Caseload Management

Day -1

SESSION 1

Leadership Skills: Organizational Performance and Leadership Effectiveness

Speakers: Justice Ram Mohan Reddy Justice S.S. Phansalkar Joshi

The discussion commenced by highlighting the significance of developing leadership skills for effectively discharging the duties of principal district judge (PDJ). It was accentuated that true leadership is all about enhancing the performance of everyone associated, doing right things when nobody is watching and leading by example. It was stressed that a judge should be a motivational leader and possess qualities like- inquisitive nature, logical reasoning, camaraderie and command over language. Thereafter, the speaker discussed at length the “know-doing gap”. It was highlighted that a judge knows the work which needs to be done in effective district administration but decides not do such work due to fear or otherwise, they were advised to reduce this know-doing gap by optimal utilization of manpower, technology, infrastructure and finances as they are as good as a chief justice of a district. The session was concluded with the quote of Martin Luther King – ‘We need leaders not in love with money but in love with justice; not in love with publicity but in love with humanity’.

SESSION 2

Strategies to Achieve Organizational Goals

Speakers: Justice Ram Mohan Reddy Justice S.S. Phansalkar Joshi

The panelists deliberated that PDJs should set realistic short term goals, medium term goals and long term goals and strive to achieve those goals by strategic planning. Strategic planning involves determination of organization’s vision and its fundamental purpose, translating goals, training employees, formulating policies, allocating resources and redesigning the technologies. Further,

it was opined that PDJ must strive to make justice accessible to each litigant within the limits of district. The administrative decisions should be well thought, transparent and inspire public confidence. Thereafter, the panelists referred to the International Framework of Court Excellence and suggested that PDJ should strive to achieve excellence in 11 keys areas viz. user satisfaction, accessibility of justice, affordability of justice, case clearance rate, duration of pre-trial custody, court file integrity, case backlog, trial date certainty, employee engagement, compliance with court orders and cost per case. The participants were suggested to adopt a pragmatic approach, have a long term vision, attract and develop talent, maintain high standards of rule of law, refrain from populism and follow meritocracy.

Day- 2

SESSION 3

High Performance through Reorganizing Courts to Handle Intensive and Complex Cases

Speakers: Justice R. Basant Justice S.S. Phansalkar Joshi

The session commenced by emphasising the meaning of high performance and what could be the parameters to measure this high performance. It was highlighted that to measure high performance 11 key measures as laid down by the International Framework for Court Excellence could be reconnoitre. It was suggested that if we measure our court performance according to these parameters as laid down by the International Framework for Court Excellence we will be able to know whether our performance is high or not. Thereafter, various questions discussed during the discourse included- Why to measure court performance? How to measure court performance? And most importantly, how court performance results can be used to achieve court excellence? Further, it was discussed that to achieve high performance judges should not just focus on disposal but also the management of the court at the district level. At this point leadership skills of the judges play a pivotal role. High performance can be defined through qualitative judgments. It was accentuated that to achieve high performance it is important to locate talent at the time of appointment and selection of judges. These selected judges should be well versed with all the laws so that they can efficiently preside over all kinds of cases. The session concluded by emphasising

that the pivotal proactive role of principal district judge is to unclog bottlenecks that are faced by the system. This responsibility is sort of a self-research and self-assessment which leads to that area which requires reorganisation thereafter, performance will follow.

SESSION 4

Organizing the Civil and the Criminal Docket for Effective Caseload Management

Speakers: Justice N. Kotiswar Singh Justice S.S. Phansalkar Joshi

The session commenced by highlighting the need to organise civil and criminal dockets for effective caseload management with the increase in the number of cases pending due to COVID which has significantly increased the arrears of cases. PDJs need to organise the docket according to the requirements of litigants, judges and other stakeholders for effective caseload management especially for those cases which may have a serious impact on the society. In such cases judges should identify the priority and impart affective disposal along with qualitative performance. Thereafter, the significance of Case Information System (hereinafter CIS) was highlighted. Various features of CIS were highlighted and participants were apprised on available use and benefits of CIS like- pending monitoring, nature of cases pending, calendar etc. which can aid them in effectively manage the pendency of cases in their district. Various provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code and Indian Evidence Act that may be used by courts for speedy and effective trial were discussed at length.