

Hon'ble the Chief Justice, my sister and brother Judges,

Mr. Neeraj Kishan^{Kaul} Additional Solicitor General of India

Mr. Ram Singh Chauhan, Chairman, Bar Council of Delhi

Mr. Vijay Sondhi, Secretary, Bar Council of Delhi

Mr. Rajiv Khosla, President of the Delhi High Court Bar

Association Mr. Jatan Singh, Vice-president of the Delhi High

Court Bar Association

Mr. Abhijat, Honorary Secretary of Delhi High Court Bar

Association

All other Executive Members of the Delhi High Court Bar

Association,

District Judge Mr. A.K. Chawla

Ms. Zubeda Begum, Standing Counsel (Civil) and Mr. Saleem

Ahmad, Standing Counsel (Criminal), Government of NCT of

Delhi and other members of their respective teams

Senior advocates and other members of the Bar present here

as well those watching the proceedings outside on big screen

Office bearers of other Bar Associations

Secretary, Law & Justice, Govt. of NCT of Delhi

Registrar General and other officials of the Registry

and all others who have come here to be a part of this

ceremony.

I acknowledge with demureness the showering of kind words spoken about me, especially eulogizing about my stint as a Judge.

I accentuate having spent more than two decades as a Judge. I can certainly avouch that the journey from the time I got myself enrolled as an advocate in the year 1974 till today when I demit office as a Judge of this great Court, has been richly rewarding. This phase of my life has given me the opportunity to belong to a tribe of advocates and Judges which has the aureole of purity and righteousness around it. It has been an enriching journey, wherein members of the bar as well the Judges of District Judiciary and this Court have contributed in my reaching the place where I am today.

As a young boy who had initially studied in DAV school in Chandigarh and then in DAV school in Delhi and graduated from Khalsa College of Delhi University. I had never thought that destiny would one day give me an opportunity to serve the society at large by becoming a Judge initially in District Courts and then after getting elevated to this Court. And here, indeed I wish to share that my father always advised me to just believe in one thing- do your assigned duty sincerely and be positive about the outcome. He had always been my guiding light. He

believed in me more than I could ever believe in myself. His uprightness and humility have taught me a lot. In fact, I got inspiration to tread into the legal profession from my father who had started his career as a soldier in the Indian Army before partition. Then after partition he came to settle in a small village in Kurukshetra District and joined a foreign Oil Company in Ambala as a mere clerk and with the passage of time rose to the level of Legal Head of that Company after his transfer to Delhi even though he did not possess any degree in Law. However, I could not excel in the legal profession even after remaining in the field for more than a decade, which fact I have no hesitation in accepting, and my father expressed his helplessness in getting cases for me by using his position as the legal head of his Company. My parents however got me married even when I was not settled in the profession. I was blessed with a good fortune to have had a tolerant family. Then I was advised by my father to try my luck in the Judiciary which I did and got selected as Additional District & Sessions Judge sometime in 1988. However, even after my selection I could not join because of some legal barriers created by some members of the bar who were also aspiring to become Judges. I need not go into that aspect any more since that is now a history. They also became Judges and I could also join Delhi

Higher Judicial Service in the end of 1991.

As a Judge I have seen the progression of law. I have witnessed the joys and the pain in the eyes of litigants who throng the courtrooms in their quest for justice, which at times may be delayed but is never denied since as Martin Luther King Jr. Had said **“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”**. It has given me the rapturous and sublime pleasure in my quest for truth and justice and I undertook to strive to see that injustice is not done to any of the litigant before me.

This rewarding career has given me enough exposure to profound thoughts and worthy experiences which I can cherish and enjoy for the rest of my life. I have endeavoured to discharge my duties with a sense of duty and keeping in mind the fact that in such endeavour no one can please everybody. Some dissatisfaction is always there. I feel I have done justice with my duty as a Judge in District Courts for over a decade and then for more than eight years in this Court as per my conscience and with full satisfaction.

The real satisfaction which I have felt all these years is that I have been giving hearing to the lawyers to the extent they had been wanting to get without any limit and I have no hesitation in saying that on many occasions that patience

shown might have reduced my disposal rate. However, since the lawyers got their due of patient hearing from me, I have no regrets on that account.

During my stint as a Judge of the District Courts and this Court I found that the biggest challenge which the judiciary is facing is the problem of backlog of pending cases. Though Judges in the District Courts as well as in the High Court do all their best to dispose of as many cases as is humanly possible but still there is a huge pendency of cases. It is the collective responsibility of the Government as well as the judiciary to tackle this problem and as far as the judiciary is concerned the Judges at all levels try to dispose of cases much more than they are expected to do and in a way have taken upon themselves the entire responsibility of reducing the backlog of cases which has made the Government lethargic in sharing its part of the responsibility in not providing enough infrastructure timely with the result that entire blame comes on the Judiciary. So, in my view, the Government should also look into this aspect quite seriously.

A few words I would like to say about the fresh entrants in the legal profession. Litigation cannot be taught through text books in classrooms and is only learnt through real practical experience. One does not tend to imbibe substantive and

procedural provisions until one battles a case in a courtroom. However, one of the challenges which the Bench and Bar is facing these days is the advent of corporate law firms. These law firms are already attracting and will continue to attract the best talent of lawyers who choose not to come to the Courts. The first reason for the new entrants in the legal field joining law firms is that they are compensated in a healthy manner. This is proving to be a major attraction for all young lawyers as it is natural for a young mind to want to opt for a job which pays well right from the beginning. The second major thing which corporate law firms have done is that they have ushered in a wave of professionalism in the way they go about their business. This again is proving to be a major attraction for the young lawyers who belong to the internet age and want to be identified as people working in truly professional environments. If the litigation side of things does not wake up to this reality, in the decades to come, the bar and the bench will be deprived of the next breed of great lawyers, and this will have a negative impact to the justice delivery system, which we are so proud of. Therefore, both the Bar and Bench as well as the Government need to ponder over this aspect seriously.

I would also like to say a few words for the judicial

officers in subordinate courts of Delhi. While I was working in District Courts it was felt that Judges there work under the fear of High Court criticizing their orders on Judicial side. However, when I got elevated to this Court I found the situation to be totally reverse. I found all the Hon'ble Judges to be not at all critical of judicial officers unless some glaring error is committed by any judicial officer. Therefore, the judicial officers need not work under any kind of fear of this Court and this message can be conveyed to them by the learned District Judge who is present here.

I don't wish to say anything more except to express my thanks to all those who mattered to me as a Judge of this Court. First of all I would thank the members of the Bar for extending full co-operation to me in the discharge of my judicial functions in the District Courts as well as in this Court. A court is much more than its Judges. Without the assistance of our Registry staff Judges would be greatly handicapped. So, I wish to record my deep appreciation for the support and assistance extended to me by Registry officials and my special thanks to my personal staff who remained attached with me during my stint as a Judge of this Court. My Law researchers, who remained sincere, trustworthy, devoted, and dedicated throughout and rendered valuable assistance also deserve

special thanks.

I thank all those who gathered here for this farewell
Full Court Reference.