

**Full text of the speech delivered by
Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India Shri Justice N V Ramana
at the Constitution Day celebration organised by
the Supreme Court Bar Association.**

Supreme Court Lawns
26 November, 2021

1. It was 72 years ago today that the text which has come to define us, as a people and a nation, was adopted. I pay my humble respects to all the freedom fighters and members of the Constituent Assembly who have enabled all of us to stand here today.

2. I am happy to be a part of the legal community, which has given so much to the freedom struggle and played such an integral role in the drafting of the Constitution. None can forget the contributions of lawyers such as Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B.R Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sardar Patel and Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer, whose dedication and sacrifices for the cause of the people are legendary. All of us here are successors of that glorious legacy.

3. While celebrating this day and paying homage to our freedom fighters and the framers of our Constitution, I think it is also important for all of us to celebrate the citizenry of independent India. It is their actions over the past 7 decades- the litigants, lawyers, judges, legislators, businesspersons, workers and many more, that has breathed life into what might otherwise have been just another bare document.

4. The Constitution of today, built upon the foundations laid by the framers, is a richer and more complex document than what it was when it was adopted in 1949. This is a result of the dialogue that took place both inside and outside the Courtroom, resulting in novel and unique interpretations. Perhaps, the most important feature of the Indian Constitution is the fact that it provides a framework for debate. It is through such debate and discussion that the nation ultimately progresses, evolves, and achieves higher levels of welfare for the people. The most direct and visible players in this process are of course, the lawyers and judges of this country.

5. I would therefore like to request all of you to keep this dual significance and role in mind, while you go about your legal practise and interact with others. You are following in the footsteps of the great men and women who created the vision document of this nation and are also direct participants in the redefining of that vision. As people with intimate knowledge of the Constitution and the laws, it is also your responsibility to educate the rest of the citizenry about the role that they play in society. The history, present and the future of this nation lie on your shoulders.

6. This is a heavy, if not the heaviest, burden to bear. This profession is called a noble profession for a reason. It demands expertise, experience, and commitment, like any other profession. But in addition to the above, it also requires integrity, knowledge of social issues, social responsibility, and civic

virtue. You must be leaders and mentors in society. Take an active role in lending your hand to those in need. Take up cases *pro bono* whenever possible. Be worthy of the confidence reposed in you by the public.

7. I am extremely happy to be felicitating respected senior members of the Bar today.

- Shri Ramesh P. Bhatt, Senior Advocate
- Shri A.P.S. Ahluwalia, Senior Advocate
- Shri Satya Prakash Singh, Senior Advocate
- Shri Mohammed Z. Choudhary, Advocate
- Shri Krishna Prasad, Advocate

50 years in the profession is no small feat and I would like to commend you for your passion for the law, and to thank you for the service you have rendered to society and to the Courts. You are role-models for everyone in the profession, particularly the young advocates.

8. At this juncture, I would like to give a message to the young members of the Bar. Please respect and pay due regards to your seniors. They have immense experience, knowledge, and wisdom which no amount of book learning can provide. Learn from their example, and keep the flag of the legal profession flying high.

9. I also congratulate all the members of the Bar Association who are receiving certificates for writing and publishing books. Knowledge and information are extremely important. They are even more precious in the legal profession. Researching a topic, gaining in-depth knowledge of the same and sharing it with the world is therefore a great service that you are providing to the legal community and the public. Additionally, I know how hard it is to sit and write, and to write a book while practising must have been extremely difficult. I applaud you for your hard work and dedication and look forward to reading your works.

10. Lastly, I want to tell all of you, that you must assist judges and the institution. We are all ultimately part of one large family. Protect the institution from motivated and targeted attacks. Do not shy away from standing up for what is right, and against what is wrong.

11. To end my speech, I would like to quote Dr. B. R. Ambedkar-

*“Men are mortal. So are ideas.
An idea needs propagation,
as much as a plant needs water.
Otherwise, both will wither and die.”*

12. On this Constitution Day, let us all pledge to propagate the ideas that form the basis of the Constitution: freedom, equality and justice in all of its facets for all people. I expect all of you to guide the nation to an ever-brighter future. Thank You all for organising this event.

Thank you.