

## **Justice Madan B. Lokur**

### *A Judge Extraordinaire*

Justice Madan B. Lokur was born on the last day of the year 1953. He graduated with History (Hons.) from St. Stephen's College. He did law from Delhi University. He joined the legal profession in 1977. He was designated as Senior Advocate in 1997. He was appointed as Additional Solicitor General of India in 1998. He was appointed as Additional Judge of Delhi High Court in 1999. He was elevated as Chief Justice of Guwahati High Court in 2010. He was transferred as the Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court. He was elevated to the Supreme Court in 2012. He completed 65 years of his age on Dec.30, 2018 when he retired from the apex Court of the country. What a legal and judicial journey of more than four decades. Hugely contributory.

Justice Lokur is a judge with a difference. Different from other judges. Face to face. His smile. His silvery beard. His mind. His intellect. His demeanour. His communication. His humility. All sui generis. It is a feast to watch him in action. It is a treat to read his judgments. It is a joy to talk to him. It is a comfort to be in his company. What a fulfilling feeling one gets after meeting him. His capacity to work. 24 x 7. Monday to Friday in court. Evenings in his study. Inter-acting. Reading. Dictating. All going together at the same time. Week-ends on the move. Lectures in seminars and conferences. Conducting workshops. Monitoring different committees. Participating in national and international conferences and colloquiums. What rich contribution. What a dynamo. Justice Lokur is the epitome Socrates four ways test : Hear courteously. Consider soberly. Answer wisely. Decide impartially. He conceives quickly. Delivers maturely. He is so fair. Not only complexion-wise. Equally fair in doing justice. What a blend of goodness and greatness. His magnanimity. His simplicity. His sincerity. His graciousness. All this blend him into a unique human being. A good judge. Above all, a good human being.

Justice Lokur was the presiding judge of the Social Justice Bench. Exclusively heard Public Interest Litigation Petitions. Primarily related to socio-economic matters. The concept of continuous mandamus was strengthened and effectively utilized by this Social Justice Bench. People admire Justice

Lokur for protecting Aravalis, protecting the Taj Mahal and hauling up the industries for their large scale pollution. There are also days when people question his legitimacy for getting rid of 10 years old diesel cars and sealing their business/ residential premises. Justice Lokur has never wavered in the face of volatile public opinion. He has shaped Human Rights Jurisprudence, covering the right to food, shelter, health, dignity and livelihood. What a protective umbrella. He has nursed and monitored the 'Social Justice Bench' with compassion and humanism. He firmly believes that 'we are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided'.

Justice Madan B. Lokur was elevated as Judge of the Supreme Court of India on June 4, 2012. It was sometime in Feb.2013, I met him at his residence in New Delhi. I was in the process of being appointed as Director, National Judicial Academy, Bhopal, India. I was told to meet Justice Lokur. During this meeting, I came to know that Justice Lokur while being a judge of Delhi High Court had acted as the Director, National Judicial Academy for couple of months. The Govt. of India could not spare a sitting judge of the High Court. Therefore, Justice Lokur returned to Delhi High Court. This short sojourn with NJA kindled a spark for judicial education in Justice Lokur. I took charge of NJA on April 01, 2013. My relationship with Justice Lokur which began in Feb. 2013 continues till date. I wish it to continue. This journey of almost six years into judicial education has been meaningful and useful. In Justice Lokur, I found a true mentor and a true path settler. Before I joined NJA, he was conscious of the problems which I was likely to encounter. Before and after joining NJA and even thereafter, I found in Justice Lokur, a friend and a guide, who would take pains. I had couple of meetings before I joined NJA. Immediately after joining (within a space of two months), we had Regional Conference at the Himachal Pradesh High Court. Justice Lokur reached in the evening before the inauguration of the Regional Conference next morning. Reaching, we took a walk and shared concerns concerning NJA. I briefed Justice Lokur. He gave me patient and full hearing. He was satisfied with the steps that I had taken. He expressed the desire that I should send him a report about the entire matter. Of course, I did so. It gave me a feeling of his concern which was, indeed, so comforting. This was the beginning. Sometime later, we had Regional

Conference in Chennai. It was past 10:30 that we finished dinner along with some other justices. Rather than retiring to his room, he held my hand and took me to the lobby in the hotel. He discussed every possible detail. The meeting concluded past 2:00 a.m. How can you forget his generosity. His magnanimity. His concern to the cause of judicial education and the furtherance of the role of NJA. During my sojourn with NJA, he frequented NJA, made rich contribution as the 'human resource'. It was the end of the year 2014 that my term came to a close in view of the age constraints. This did not mean snapping the ties with him. I took charge of Chandigarh Judicial Academy (CJA). He continued to be the mentor. Also the 'human resource'. Continued to encourage to play different roles in order to ensure multifaceted role of judicial education. My association with him has been an education. I treasure this association. It has been an enriching experience.

Justice Lokur would begin his second innings with the new year 2019. He has played his strokes like the opening batsman throughout the first innings. He brings in rich experience. The second innings would also be full of strokes. We wish him to hit the century playing the second innings.

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