

Convocation Address

By Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar¹

1. It gives me great pleasure to be with you, and to address you, in this convocation. I am an alumnus of this University. I owe everything, to the teachers and the faculty of the Law Department. And therefore, when I received the invitation, to speak to you, I felt truly honoured.

2. I know graduation day, is a day full of joy, pride and accomplishment. Students all over the world, anxiously wait for this memorable moment. This day is important, not merely for the University and its students, but also for the parents of the graduating students. It is a matter of pride, for all of us to see young boys and girls, ready to begin a new journey in their life. I would like to congratulate all of you, for successfully completing your academic course. I would also like to applaud you for your achievement. And the faculty members, for shaping your young minds. You are the future of the legal family, of this nation. My best wishes to you all.

¹ Judge, Supreme Court of India, delivered at the Convocation of Panjab University on 01.10.2016.

3. From tomorrow, you will be a part of a larger responsibility, where your performances will emerge, from the intellect and wisdom, you have had the opportunity to acquire. Life really starts now, and the battle has just begun. A multitude of new challenges and options, are on your horizon. You will now enter a new world of competition. The faculty has fully equipped you, to face this new challenge. Just remain focused for the task ahead. This process envisages transformation from student-hood to professionalism. One could often feel confused, with the direction, that should be chosen. For many choices will be available to you. But whatever be your choice, your journey as a student, in understanding the nuances of law, will never end. It will continue, so long as you wish to be meaningfully valuable.

4. You could decide to start practicing law. Litigation has a charm of its own. You may alternatively confine yourself, to arbitration or mediation. These fields also offer a complete career prospect. You may take a different call, and become a legal consultant. In that eventuality, you will have to acquaint yourself, with the present day economic and commercial developments. You could join the corporate world, and be happy with an office job, which will surely bring home a

large packet of money. You could choose a career in teaching. You will then manage young scholars, and take the responsibility to organize their careers. In the options available to you, you will have to acquaint yourself, with all contours of emerging rights, trends, and legal challenges. The choices open to you though multiple, are not simple. They all require hard work for success and excellence.

5. You know, law has attained global recognition. And so also, legal education. In view of the globalization of legal issues, we need lawyers who can look beyond the law of jurisdiction – the jurisdiction in which they practice. And forge new tools and techniques, appropriate to the changing needs of the time. In order to be an accomplished lawyer, it is necessary, besides having knowledge of law, to be a person graced with general knowledge, knowledge of history, of science, of philosophy, of everything that concerns, the well being, and interaction of men and society. Trained in such a manner, and having these acquirements; and two more things - incorruptible integrity, and a high sense of honour. You can hold and feel success, in your hands.

6. We require capacity oriented lawyers, because, they are society's problem solvers. Lawyers are called upon to make distinctions, to explain how and why cases or experiences are alike or different. Lawyers are expected to restore equilibrium - to be balancers. Every discipline, every profession, every job, and every calling has a cutting edge. At that cutting edge, lines are drawn. Lawyers are society's ultimate line drawers.

7. It is your bounden duty, to assist in amelioration of the downtrodden, whether social, political or economic, and to steer the dynamics of change, by being an instrument for the fulfillment of all constitutional values. You must be the hope of those, who suffer all kinds of wrongs silently, apart from unfair treatment, and denial of justice. You must help in building an inclusive society, in which everyone gets his due, regardless of his race, religion, or caste. Your commitment to the ethics of the legal profession, and to the rule of law, will help this country to progress and prosper. I say all this, because most of the historic events of social change in India, have been led by lawyers, including the struggle for India's independence.

8. Remember, that while the interest of the client is what you are expected to protect, as an officer of the Court, you should never contribute to projecting a wrong legal proposition. Lawyers very often are accused of being responsible for misleading the Court, which in turn defeats justice. That is neither professionally, nor morally correct. Remember that you are an active participant in the judicial process, and in that capacity, no part of the blame for deception, should fall on you. With the cooperation of righteous lawyers, the performance of the Judges improves. The quality of justice, is undoubtedly commensurate with the quality of assistance, which the bar provides to Judges.

9. I quote Eleanor Roosevelt before concluding my address:-

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams. We are all unique but I think the luckiest are those who challenge themselves to dream impossible dreams, make them a reality and ultimately leave behind a legacy.”

Thank you.