

Minutes of the Conference of Uttarakhand Judges' Association "JUDICIUM 2025: Inclusion, Access, and Strengthening"

Date: 23 February 2025

Venue: Doon University, Dehradun

Participants- Judicial officers of State judiciary of Uttarakhand

Arrival of Participants/Judicial Officers:

The Conference commenced at 10:00 am with the arrival of participants and judicial officers from various districts of Uttarakhand. The attendees were greeted with a warm welcome and were provided with conference materials.

Arrival of Dignitaries: The dignitaries Honourable Justice Shri Sudhanshu Dhulia, Judge, Supreme Court of India, Honourable Justice Shri Guhanathan Narendar, Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court, Honourable Justice Shri Manoj kumar Tiwari, Honourable Justice Shri Alok Kumar Verma, Honourable Justice Shri Rakesh Thapliyal and Honourable Justice Shri Ashish Naithani, High Court of Uttarakhand arrived at the venue at 10.15 am. They were received with great respect and honor.

Shri Pradeep Mani Tripathi was the anchor and the voice behind the proceedings of the Conference, taking care of the seamless flow of events.

Adorning of Dais:

The dignitaries Honourable Justice Shri Sudhanshu Dhulia, Judge, Supreme Court of India, Honourable Justice Shri Guhanathan Narendar, Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court, Honourable Justice Shri Manoj kumar Tiwari, Honourable Justice Shri Alok Kumar Verma, Honourable Justice Shri Rakesh Thapliyal and Honourable Justice Shri Ashish Naithani adorned the dais, marking the formal beginning of the conference. The dais was decorated with flowers and the Conference banner that reflected the theme of the conference.

Lightening of Lamp:

The lamp was lit in the backdrop of Pahadi mangal geet, setting a spiritual tone for the conference. The lighting of the lamp symbolized the illumination of knowledge and wisdom.

Felicitation of Dignitaries:

The dignitaries were felicitated with bouquets and mementos, expressing gratitude for their presence and honoring their support to the district Judiciary of Uttarakhand.

Welcome Address:

Respected District Judge of Dehradun, Shri Prem Singh Khimal delivered the welcome address, highlighting the significance of the conference and the importance of inclusion, access, and strengthening in the judiciary. The welcome address set the tone for the conference and emphasized the need for collective efforts to address the challenges faced by the judiciary.

Speech of Honourable Justice Shri Manoj Kumar Tiwari:

Honourable Justice Shri Manoj Kumar Tiwari addressed the gathering of judges emphasizing the importance of inclusion, access, and strengthening in the judiciary. Honourable Justice Tiwari highlighted the importance of technology in improving access to justice eg. AI based legal aid, online ADR mechanisms, e-courts etc.

Speech of Honourable Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court:

The Honourable Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court Shri G. Narendar shared valuable insights on the role of the judiciary in promoting social justice. Honourable Chief Justice emphasized the need for sensitivity and compassion in dealing with cases involving senior citizens, women and children.

Speech of Honourable Shri Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia -

Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, Judge, Supreme Court of India, delivered the keynote address, focusing on the need for reaching out to the last man standing, speedy justice and also emphasized the importance of reading other literary works apart from legal books and judgments.

Release of Souvenir : The dignitaries released a souvenir to mark the occasion, which included Messages from Honourable Dignitaries, articles on various subjects of law, the journey of Uttarakhand Judges' Association and a directory of Judges.

High Tea: The conference was adjourned for a high tea providing an opportunity for networking and informal discussions among the participants. The high tea session was a relaxed and informal setting where participants could engage with each other and share their experience.

Minutes of the First Session

The first session of the Conference was chaired by Honourable Shri Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, Honourable Shri Justice G. Narendar, Honourable Shri Justice Manoj Kumar Tiwari, Honourable Shri Justice Alok Kumar Verma, Honorable Shri Justice Rakesh Thapliyal and Honourable Shri Justice Ashish Naithani.

The first session of the conference commenced with a presentation by the President of the Uttarakhand Judges Association Shri Rakesh Kumar Singh. The President of the Association presented a comprehensive overview of the issues faced by the district judiciary. The presentation highlighted several pressing concerns that required immediate attention.

Key Issues

1. ***Accommodation Facility*:** The President emphasized the need for adequate accommodation facilities for judicial officers and ensuring that they are safe and habitable.

2. Updated Library :- The President stressed the importance of having updated libraries in district courts. This would facilitate easy access to legal resources, enabling judicial officers to stay informed about the latest developments in the law.

3. Security Concerns :- The President highlighted the importance of addressing security concerns for judicial officers. This includes providing adequate security measures, such as security personnels, and secure transportation in hilly areas, to ensure judicial officer's safety and well-being.

4. Home Orderly :- The President proposed the provision of home orderlies for judicial officers. This would support their domestic needs, enabling them to focus on their judicial duties without added burdens.

5. Timely Promotions :- The President emphasized the need for timely promotions for judicial officers. This would recognize their merit and dedication, providing a motivating factor for their continued hard work and commitment.

6. Allowances and Salary :- The President proposed merging allowances with salaries for judicial officers. This would streamline their compensation, reducing administrative complexities and ensuring that they receive fair and transparent remuneration.

7. Medical Facilities :- The President stressed the importance of providing proper medical facilities and reimbursement of medical bills for judicial officers. This would ensure that they receive timely and quality medical care, supporting their health and well-being.

8. Staff and Stenographers :- The President highlighted the scarcity of staff and stenographers, which hampers the efficient functioning of the judiciary. The President

emphasized the need to address this shortage, ensuring that judicial officers have the necessary support staff to perform their duties effectively.

The Chair's response :-

Honourable Justice Shri Sudhanshu Dhulia recommended that judicial officers engage in reading literature beyond law. This would broaden their perspectives, enabling them to approach judicial decision-making with a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved.

Furthermore, Honourable Chief Justice of High Court of Uttarakhand also emphasized the need for better infrastructure and medical facilities for judicial officers and urged the Association to put the concerns in the form of proposals and resolutions and present the same to the Honorable High Court for consideration and deliberation.

The presentation provided a comprehensive overview of the problems faced by the district judiciary and sparked a meaningful discussion.

Cultural Program

The Cultural Department, Government of Uttarakhand, performed the Nanda Raj Jat Yatra, a traditional folk dance of Uttarakhand. The performance was a vibrant display of the State's rich cultural heritage and was appreciated by the gathering.

*** Vote of Thanks***

The Senior Vice President of the Association Shri Manindra Mohan Pandey delivered a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the dignitaries, participants, and organizers for their presence and contributions. The vote of thanks acknowledged the efforts of everyone involved in making the conference a success.

*** National Anthem ***

The gathering sang the National Anthem, paying respect to the nation. This solemn moment was a reminder of the importance of national unity and pride.

*** Group Photograph ***

A group photograph was taken to commemorate the occasion. The photograph captured the spirit of camaraderie and cooperation among the participants.

*** Lunch ***

The participants took a break for lunch, providing an opportunity for networking and informal discussions. The lunch break allowed the participants to relax and recharge.

*** Departure of Dignitaries ***

The dignitaries departed, marking the conclusion of the first session. The departure of the dignitaries brought an end to the first session, but the discussions and debates sparked during the session continued to resonate with the participants.

*** Second Session ***

Proceedings

1. *Felicitation of Core Committee Members*

The session commenced with the felicitation of the members of the Core Committee- Shri Pradeep Pant, Shri Sikand Tyagi, Shri Prashant Joshi, Ms. kahkasha Khan, Shri Harish Goel, and Shri Pradeep Mani Tripathi. This gesture recognized their hard work, dedication, and invaluable contributions in the revival of the Association. The felicitation ceremony was a testament to the Association's appreciation for the tireless efforts of its Core Committee members.

2. Proposals to amend the Constitution of the Association.

Secretary General of the Association Shri R. K Srivastava, moved proposals to amend the Constitution of the Association in the Full House. The session was chaired by Shri Pradeep Pant, Shri Sikand Tyagi, Shri Prashant Joshi, Shri Narendra Dutt, Shri Malik Mazhar Sultan and Shri Rakesh Kumar Singh. This interactive session provided a

platform for members to discuss proposals for amendments to the Association's constitution. The Open House session fostered a spirit of transparency, inclusivity, and participatory governance, allowing members to engage in constructive dialogue and shape the Association's future.

key notes-

*** Amendments ***

- 1. *Name Change*:** The name of the Association was changed from "Uttaranchal Judges' Association" to "**Uttarakhand Judges' Association**", effective from 15th November 2024. This change reflects the updated name of the state and ensures consistency in branding and identity. The logo of the association was also incorporated into the constitution, providing a visual representation of the association's identity.
- 2. *Head Office*:** The head office of the association was fixed at Dehradun, providing a central location for administrative activities and facilitating communication among members.
- 3. *Membership and Annual Fees*:** The membership fee and annual fee of the association were fixed at ₹12,000 and ₹6,000 respectively. This decision aimed to establish a stable financial foundation for the association, enabling it to pursue its objectives effectively. It was suggested that the constitution should also define how the funds will be utilized, ensuring transparency and accountability in financial management.
- 4. *Virtual Meetings*:** A provision for virtual meetings/conferences was approved, allowing the association to adapt to changing circumstances and technological advancements. This provision will facilitate participation from members who may be unable to attend in-person meetings, promoting inclusivity and diversity.

5. *Executive Committee*: The executive committee shall consist of 11 members, comprising 5 ex-officio members(LR, Legal Advisor to the Governor, District Judge Dehradun, Cjm Dehradun, and DLSA Secretary Dehradun) and 6 elected members of the executive council. This structure aims to balance representation from various stakeholders, ensuring that the association's decision-making process is informed and effective.

6. *Nomination of Executive Council Members*: The following members were nominated to form the executive council: Ms. Anjali Benjwal, Shri Sudhir Tomar, Smt. Simranjit Kaur, Shri Sachin Pathak, Shri Vishal Vashisht, and Shri Prateek Kapil. The members were chosen from junior division, senior division and HJS cadre bringing diverse perspectives and expertise, enriching the association's governance and decision-making processes.

7. *Utilization of Association Funds*: Members suggested that the association funds be demarcated percentage-wise into various heads, depending on the needs of the officers and areas of concern and emergency. This approach aims to allocate resources effectively, addressing pressing needs and priorities within the association.

*** Resolution ***

All the amendments were passed by a full house, and the constitution of the Uttarakhand Judges Association was amended accordingly. These amendments mark a significant milestone in the association's evolution, positioning it for continued growth, effectiveness, and service to its members.

*** Presentations**

1. *Benevolent Scheme*

A comprehensive presentation was made on the benevolent scheme, outlining its benefits, features, and objectives. The presentation highlighted the scheme's importance in providing support to members in need.

2. *Online Medical Facility*

A detailed presentation was made by Doctors on Duty on the online medical facility for judicial officers. The presentation underscored the facility's advantages, ease of use, and accessibility. Members were informed about the procedures for availing of the facility and the benefits it offers.

3. *Accidental Insurance*

A comprehensive accidental insurance plan was presented by State Bank of India, detailing its coverage, benefits, and terms. The presentation explained the importance of accidental insurance for judicial officers and the protection it provides.

4. *Group Insurance Schemes*

A presentation was made on group insurance schemes, of Niva Bupa and HDFC explaining their features, advantages, and benefits. Members were informed about the various options available and the procedures for enrollment.

Open house Session-

This session was chaired by Shri Pradeep Pant, Shri Prashant Joshi, Shri Narendra Dutt, Shri Malik Mazhar Sultan and Shri Rakesh Kumar Singh.

On the recommendation of the members of the Association, another open house session was convened to discuss on the following issues.

*** Infrastructure and Resources**

1. *Laptop Provision*: It was proposed that rules be framed to provide laptops for a period of four years to judicial officers. This would enable them to perform their duties efficiently and effectively.

2. *Vehicle Allowance*: The House recommended that full 100 liters of petrol be provided as vehicle allowance to judicial officers. This would help them meet their transportation needs and facilitate their official duties.

3. *Infrastructure Development*: The members emphasized the need to address shortage of court infrastructure and staff . This would involve creating additional courts, providing adequate infrastructure, and recruiting sufficient staff to support the functioning of the Courts.

*** Leave Policy Reforms**

1. *Casual Leave*: The members proposed that casual leave be granted to judicial officers as and when needed, removing the requirement of a 7-day prior application. This would provide them with greater flexibility in managing their personal and professional responsibilities.

2. *Earned Leave*: The members also recommended that restrictions on taking full 10 days of earned leave be removed. It was suggested that the provision of less than 10 days of Earned Leaves should be made available to the judicial officers so that the leaves are utilised judiciously and only according to the requirement. This would enable judicial officers to plan their leave and personal activities more effectively and reduce wastage of judicial time.

*** Medical and Security Benefits**

1. *Medical Reimbursement*: The meeting emphasized the need to simplify and make medical reimbursement hassle-free for judicial officers. This would involve streamlining the reimbursement process and reducing the administrative burden on officers.

2. *Security*: The House proposed that a gunner be provided for the security of judicial officers. This would enhance their personal safety and security, enabling them to perform their duties without fear or apprehension.

*** Career Advancement and Support**

1. *Timely Promotion*: The meeting emphasized the need for timely promotion of judicial officers. This would involve establishing a clear and transparent promotion policy, ensuring that officers are promoted based on merit and seniority.

2. *Transfer Support*: The meeting proposed that in case of non-availability of government accommodation during transfer, 45 days' money expenditure for staying out be refunded to judicial officers. This would provide them with financial support and assistance during the transition period.

These issues highlighted the need for reforms in the district judiciary to improve the working conditions, benefits, and career advancement opportunities for judicial officers.

Vote of Thanks

The session concluded with a vote of thanks by the Secretary General, Shri R.K. Srivastava, expressing gratitude to the participants, press, Faculty of Doon University, support staff and all those who contributed to the Conference's success. The vote of thanks acknowledged the efforts of all the stakeholders in making the Conference productive, engaging and successful.