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MESSAGE

I am pleased to learn that the Association of Retired Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts of India (Rajasthan Chapter) is organizing a National Conference on the theme, *'The Bench Beyond Retirement: Role of Retired Judges in Advancement of ADR and Awareness of Laws among Common Masses'*, and is also bringing out the luminous souvenir you now hold in your hands.

The theme of this conference embodies the core truth that the pursuit of justice does not end with the demitting of judicial office. The robe may be retired, but one's work toward the advancement of society is unceasing.

In this milieu, 'Other Dispute Resolution', as I like to call it, must be seen as the primary pathway to justice, not secondary or an alternative one. Such resolution mechanisms are not merely a matter of convenience, they are a constitutional imperative. ADR, in its many forms, be it Mediation, Arbitration, Conciliation, or Lok Adalats, offers a culturally resonant and sprightly avenue to dispute resolution and thus, must be viewed not as a substitute to justice, but as justice itself, delivered closer to people, in their own language and at their threshold.

It is in this context that the role of former Judges assumes singular importance. The wealth of judicial experience, the moral authority earned through years of dedicated service, and the nuanced understanding of both law and human nature that these doyens bring to the table are resources that no other institution can replicate. These seasoned veterans carry with them an abundance of wisdom, experience, and institutional memory that remains of tremendous value to society. And that's why there is no more fitting

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champion for these causes than those who have devoted a lifetime in pursuit of the Rule of Law.

Their active engagement as mediators, arbitrators, legal educators, and community counsellors is like that of dedicated gardeners in the great orchard of justice. Their wisdom tills the soil, their experience plants seeds of understanding, and their patient guidance cultivate a harvest of trust, fairness and legal literacy that benefits all. Through their nurturing hands, the law continues to grow vigorous and fruitful for generations to come.

I once again commend the Association of Retired Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts of India (Rajasthan Chapter) for organising this National Conference in collaboration with the Rajasthan State Legal Services Authority. Such initiatives are vital to demystify our labyrinthian legal system in the eyes of the common citizen. I extend my best wishes to all the participants and am quite sanguine that the deliberations will yield tectonic insights that accelerate the cause of justice at the grassroots level.

I wish the Conference boundless success and look forward to the continued contributions of the Association in bolstering access to justice across the country.


[Surya Kant]