

Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) celebrated the 71st Constitution Day today

Gandhinagar, November 26, 2020: Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) celebrated the 71st Constitution Day today. On this day in 1949, the Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution, laying the foundation for the modern, constitutional and democratic governance in India. Director, faculty and staff members participated in the celebration observing strict COVID protocol of wearing masks and maintaining social distance.

As part of the Constitution Day celebrations, GNLU also organized a webinar on “The Constitution and the Idea of India.” Dr Aditya Sondhi, Senior Advocate, High Court of Karnataka and Supreme Court of India, delivered the webinar.

Dr Sondhi began his talk with the historical background of the Constitution of India. He explained how India’s independence was not an end that was achieved, but the beginning of India’s political trajectory.

He noted how the Constitution came into being by deliberation, discussion, and collaboration of the makers of the Constitution. For India, having a working Constitution in the early years of independence, meant that there was not only democracy in place, but also a republic and institutional supremacy with checks and balances in place. Dr Sondhi expressed how the idea of India is greater than the Constitution itself, because the Constitution, as a living and liberating document, allows for it. He also acknowledged how the Constitution, despite being an old document, has, more often than not, kept pace with the changes in the country.

Addressing the contribution of the citizens of India in its democracy, Dr Sondhi explained how Article 51 of the Constitution provides a form of code of ethics for the citizens, paving way for them to become better citizens, better professionals and better human beings. Expanding on Glanville Austin’s thought of how the Constitution is the cornerstone of the nation, Dr Sondhi said that the cornerstone of the Constitution is the judiciary. With the Courts being central to the idea of India, it is important to acknowledge their role in guarding the rights of the people and safeguarding the letter and spirit of the Constitution. In conclusion, Dr Sondhi called upon everyone to be proud of the constitutionalism in India, the crystallized and certain idea and vision of its drafters, and recognize how each citizen is paramount to the system envisaged under the Constitution.

In his welcome address, GNLU Director Dr S. Shanthakumar acknowledged the contribution of Dr B.R. Ambedkar in giving the nation a wonderful and vibrant constitution. He also remembered

the unsung heroes of the Constituent Assembly, B.N. Rau, Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly and Mr S.N. Mukharjee, Chief Draftsman for drafting independent India's Constitution. He referred to the last speech of Dr Ambedkar to the Constituent Assembly and quoted "we should not be content with mere political democracy. We must make our political democracy a social democracy..... a way of life that recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as being inextricably linked to one another. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy."

Dr Sondhi also interacted with the participants and answered their questions relating to the conflicts between the Constitution and constitutional morality, the process of judicial review, and civil liberties.

The webinar concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr Girish R., Faculty Convenor, GNLU Centre for Constitutional and Administrative Law.

Media Contact:

Ashok Shah

Email: ashah@gnlu.ac.in, ashokshah.iima@gmail.com

Mobile: 9909960240, 8849110049