

You see a change in system only when the youth join it: Justice Chandrachud

Swati Deshpande, TNN | Dec 2, 2012, 03:59 AM IST

MUMBAI: Justice D Y Chandrachud of the Bombay HC on Saturday expressed concern at the "reluctance of young qualified India to assume public office". He said, "I don't believe assuming public office makes you a cog in the system. I think only when young people join do you see a change in the system."

The judge was speaking at the Agenda For India Series at the Nehru Centre organized by Excellence Enablers. The topic was Federalism-The Indian Experience. Justice Chandrachud, responding to a belief expressed by G Mohan Gopal, director, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies, who said that judges too must be elected and are answerable to people, said he disagreed. "Judges should not be answerable to the electorate and can't be elected." He said the Constitution founders wisely did not provide for elected judges.

The judge observed that there was a "rise in culture of intolerance which is not just restricted to two girls making a Facebook post... anything against a mainstream thought is considered reactionary". The judge also said that in a federal nation, the judiciary is seen to be shifting its role from a "forum purely for dispute resolution" to playing a greater role in "realization of basic human freedom". Introducing each speaker and setting the agenda was M Damodaran, chairperson of Excellence Enablers and former Sebi chairperson. He expressed a belief that despite all its faults, the Indian system of federalism was working.

Gopal Krishna Pillai, the former Union home secretary, however, succinctly pointed out to a host of issues including planning commission's mechanism in fund allotment. He said foreign policy needs to take into account state-level concerns and pointed out that that statutory zonal and inter-state council committees hadn't met for a single meeting in five years.

The last speaker at the event, Dr Haseeb Drabu, former economic advisor, government of J&K, lamented that "today corporate India is so far removed from reality".

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