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LEGAL DIVERSITY- Shubh Maheshwari¹**ABSTRACT**

Each country in the world wears several shades of the colour of its flag around itself, each shade emblematic of the various ideologies, castes and communities that flourish on its land. These shades are not as clear as black and white but they persist in the grayscale, just like the different viewpoints that perpetuate in its society. The mere persistence of this grayscale does not mark acceptance and sensitization among otherwise polar communities. I strongly believe that the legal profession must act as the mediator between the persistence of a diverse society and its acceptance, even though it fails to do so now across nations. As of 2019, India stood as the 68th country in the Rule of Law Index. The route from 68 to 1 cannot be traversed by the mere claim of the world's best constitution, but only through its manifestation in all domains, essentially the judiciary.

INTRODUCTION

The legal class has been given great power and responsibility in preserving the health of a democracy, irrespective of their caste, colour, sexual preferences or nationality. It shoulders the burden of listening and answering to each individual. Hearing every voice makes us stronger as a nation because it fortifies the principles of justice, liberty and fraternity. This won't be possible unless the legal class is dexterous enough in interpreting the problems of the people. This ability to accurately understand the grievances might not come naturally to those who cannot relate to it but is innate to the people who have experienced the pain and sorrow attached with a particular issue. This does not mean that only a judge or a lawyer who comes from the same background as an accused, litigant or victim is fair, but prejudices and subconscious biases are nearly

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impossible to eliminate. It is a generally accepted fact that a poor would understand the problems of a poor better, a woman for a woman and an oppressed for an oppressed. By inculcating diversity in its crux, the legal class will not only ensure better apprehension of people's problems but also a better representation of the communities and constitutional ideologies that it claims to uplift. This act will reinforce the legitimacy and constitutional image of our legal class into the conscience of the masses. This helps me conclude my first point i.e. apart from a person's educational qualifications, it is his background and life experiences which make him fit for a particular situation in the legal world.

My second point is the need for representation felt by each community. As of now, minorities are under-represented. Even though Muslims contribute to 12% of our country's population, only 1.6% are enrolled in law schools. Of the whopping 1.7 million advocates enrolled with the bar council, only 15% are women. Nobody likes to follow a priest who professes but does not practice. The same is the case with our judiciary and so the need of the hour is to make a statement, not by words but by actions. It is necessary for the judiciary to address questions like why only 3 out of 34 supreme court judges are females, or even though more minorities are coming into the legal profession, why do they tend to fall off the radar when it comes to becoming a judge. This step by the judiciary will juxtapose the principles of tolerance, acceptance and equality on the ever-dogmatic population of ours. By inculcating its own preaching, the judiciary can re-embark the pivotal role of the legal profession in creating the necessary change within itself, so that it may foster change in the rest of society.

My third point is closely woven with my second one, that is, human psychology. Whenever a client has a legal issue to solve, he or she should feel confident that his voice will be heard, no matter his gender, colour, religion or economic status. A client will feel confident that he has received a fair diagnosis of his grievance when he sees diversity in the legal profession. Diversity will advance the public's perception of a fair and equal judicial system. It is critical to the validity and acceptability of our judicial system because if it fails to reflect the diversity of our community, it will lose credibility among those who feel their views and conditions are not being fairly represented. The idea here is not only to make our citizens feel represented but is also to sensitize the lawyers towards the issues they otherwise fight for detachedly. When there is

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confidence in both the parties, an atmosphere of mutual trust, empowered by logic, with a purpose greater than winning is created. In my perspective, that can make the legal class more ethical by itself, making up for a just legal system. The process of diversification, apart from attaining a just legal system, will also act as a catalyst to a major mentality change. It will broaden our perspectives and help break free from some unrighteous prejudices prevalent from time immemorial. The benefits of this change in mentality towards people of different gender, caste, colour, region, language and wealth status will gradually trickle down to other sectors of democracy i.e., legislative and executive. Eventually, the entire system would represent the ideals of each community, which may be inadequately represented now. When each community that deserves a say gets one, we will learn to recognize and consequently embrace everybody's uniqueness. Thus, justice would be served to all, not just in courts of law, but in the general existence by the seemingly trivial act of constituting a diverse legal class.

CONCLUSION

As I conclude, I would like to reiterate my very first words that dwell around this subject. For those of my opponents who claim greater clashes and compromise of justice by instituting a diverse legal class, I say diversification is quintessential because apart from the abovementioned, it also allows individuals from different backgrounds to learn from one another, grow and work together. This will not only reduce clashes but also foster a legal class, representative of the society but not its stigma. It is important so that logic and rationality still pave the way of justice and not the stronger force of emotion that sways from one end to another. A balance is what we seek here, just like in justice, or for that matter, the greater quest of life. With the reinforcement of this final idea of mine, I now rest my case.

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