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## Article For Reading -Judge and prejudice: On conduct in judicial proceedings

The Supreme Court of India has **rapped judges over the knuckles**, asking them to refrain from making “casual observations” that reveal their communal bias or **misogyny**. Judicial proceedings are live-streamed in some courts across the country, with a wide reach beyond the four walls of a courtroom, and the top court was firm that judges, and everyone in the judicial **fraternity**, must be aware of the responsibility and act accordingly. The “**heart and soul** of judging is to be fair”, it observed, and noted that judges must strictly adhere to the values laid down by the Constitution, and not be guided by **prejudice**. Taking **suo motu cognisance** of video clips featuring Karnataka High Court Judge V. Srishananda and his sexist comments to a woman lawyer on two separate judicial proceedings, a five-judge Special Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud observed in its order on Wednesday that **off-the-cuff** remarks by judges would show them in a negative light and impact the entire judicial institution adversely. On a previous occasion, the Karnataka High Court judge had referred to a Muslim-dominated locality in west Bengaluru as ‘Pakistan’.

The Bench took a **stern** note of that remark as well, **contending**, “you cannot call any part of the territory of India ‘Pakistan’... This is fundamentally wrong under the Constitution”.

The judge apologised after the **suo motu** notice, and calling it a “**contrite apology**”, the top court said it was concluding the proceedings, but not before making several observations in open court. In fact, Attorney General R. Venkataramani and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had advised the Court to hold the procedure in-house so that its remarks are not misrepresented on social media later. To this, the CJI **quipped**, “The answer to sunlight is more sunlight. The answer is not to close our doors and shut out everything.” Last month too, the Court had cautioned a judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court to stop making “random, unwarranted” remarks during proceedings. In 2023, the Court released a handbook to combat gender stereotyping within the judiciary. Aiming to assist the legal community in “identifying, understanding and combating stereotypes about women”, it came out with a glossary of gender-unjust terms, suggesting alternative words or phrases to be used while drafting pleadings as well as orders and judgments. It is imperative for court officials to be gender-sensitised.

**The judicial ecosystem must run without any bias towards any community. Stereotyping any person on the lines of gender or religion will perpetuate harmful inequalities, and carriers of justice should be mindful of this at all times.**

## **Summary –**

**The Supreme Court of India has criticized judges for making casual remarks that reveal communal bias or misogyny, emphasizing the importance of fairness in judicial proceedings, especially given the live-streaming of court sessions. This came in response to comments made by Karnataka High Court Judge V. Srishananda, including sexist remarks towards a woman lawyer and referring to a Muslim-majority area as "Pakistan." The Supreme Court underscored the need for judges to adhere to constitutional values and avoid prejudice. Although the judge apologized, the Court emphasized transparency and the need for judges to be aware of their influence. Additionally, the Court has previously cautioned judges against making unwarranted remarks and has released a handbook to combat gender stereotypes within the judiciary, advocating for gender sensitivity and unbiased practices in the legal system.**



# Vocabulary –

## 1. Misogyny (Noun) स्त्री द्वेष

**Meaning-** concept or practice of hatred, prejudice, or dislike towards women.

**Synonyms** – Sexism, Chauvinism.

**Antonyms** – Egalitarianism, Philogyny, Feminism.

E.g.- The film faced criticism for perpetuating misogyny through its negative portrayal of female characters.

## 2. Prejudice (Noun) पूर्वाग्रह-

**Meaning** – A preconceived opinion or bias form without sufficient knowledge reasoning or experience.

**Synonyms** – Stereotyping, Bias, Bigotry.

**Antonyms** – Equality, Impartially, Objectivity.

E.g.- The prejudice against people from different background was evident in her comment.

## 3. Fraternity (Noun) भाईचारा-

**Meaning** – A group of people sharing a common interest, unity, or support.

**Meaning** – Union, Solidarity, Camaraderie.

**Antonyms** – Hostility, Alienation, Disunity.

E.g.- The fraternity among the team members help them overcome challenges during the competition.

#### 4. Suo motu (Adv) स्वयं संज्ञान लेना-

**Meaning** – An action taken by a court on its own without a formal request by another party.

**Synonyms** – Self- initiated, Self-acting.

**Antonyms** – upon request, reactivate, upon appeal.

**E.g.-** The court took suo motu action to investigate the illegal land deals.

#### 5. Cognisance (Noun) जागरूकता, ज्ञान-

**Meaning** – The state of being aware or having knowledge of something.

**Synonyms** – Knowledge, Perception, Insight.

**Antonyms** – Ignorance, Unawareness, Oblivion.

**E.g.-** The judge took cognisance presented during the trial.

#### 6. Contending (Verb) प्रतिस्पर्धा-

**Meaning** – Competing, struggling or arguing in a particular situation.

**Synonyms** – Disputing, Contesting, Fighting.

**Antonyms** – Complying, Yielding, Conceding.

**E.g.-** They are contending for the championship battle.

#### 7. Quipped (Verb) टिप्पणी करना-

**Meaning** – To make a witty ,or clever remark, or comment.

**Synonyms** – Jest, Banter, Joke, Gag.

**Antonyms** – Complain, Mourn, Sob, Sigh.

E.g.- She quipped that perhaps the software upgrade would also fix coffee machine.

### 8. Stern (Adj) कठोर-

Meaning – Serious, strict, or severe, especially in the assertion of authority and exercise of discipline.

Synonyms – Firm, Harsh, Grim, Auster.

Antonyms – Lenient, Gentle, Soft.

E.g.- The teachers turn expression made it clear that she expected full attention from her students.

### Idiomatic Expression –

#### 1. Rapped over the knuckles –

Meaning- To receive a reprimand and punishment for mistake or behaviour.

#### 2. Heart and Soul-

Meaning – Putting once complete effort, and commitment into something.

#### 3. Off-the-cuff remarks –

Meaning – Spontaneous, informal comments made without preparation.

#### 4. Contrite apology-

Meaning – Expression of regret that is sincere and heartfelt.