

A REVERED TRANSFER AND AN UNSPOKEN LOSS



The Sacred Journey of Hon'ble Justice
K. Surender
Judge, High Court for the State of Telangana

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Advocate, High Court for the State of Telangana
(Former District Judge)

Foreword by
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Addl DGP (Retired), Maharashtra &
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I also extend special thanks to Shri A. Jagan Garu, President of the Telangana High Court Advocates Association, as well as to the members of the Telangana High Court Bar Association and the broader legal fraternity, who generously shared their time, views, and opinions about Hon'ble Justice K. Surender. Their insights have significantly enriched the perspective of this work. I am equally grateful to my office staff and support personnel who assisted with research, editing, and logistics—often working quietly behind the scenes, yet playing a vital role in bringing this manuscript to life.

To all the readers, thinkers, and seekers of justice who continue to uphold the spirit of inquiry and integrity—this book is for you.

Finally, I offer my sincere thanks to the Almighty for the strength, clarity, and purpose to complete this work.



Foreword

I consider it a privilege to pen a few words in honour of Justice K. Surender of the Hon'ble High Court of Telangana, with whom I had the good fortune of closely associating during my tenure as Joint Director, CBI, Hyderabad.

Our professional paths intersected meaningfully when he served as the Special Public Prosecutor in the high-profile Satyam case, representing the CBI before the Special Court in Hyderabad. His approach to the case was exemplary — marked by a deep understanding of law, meticulous preparation, and methodical presentation. Despite being soft-spoken in demeanor, his courtroom arguments were always clear, articulate, and compelling. His presentation played a pivotal role in securing conviction in what was one of the most complex and technically challenging financial fraud cases of its time.

Our discussions with Sri K. Surender during that period were not only productive but also intellectually enriching. For many of us, they became valuable learning experiences, reflective of his vast knowledge, clarity of thought, and unwavering integrity. His contributions as Standing Counsel for the CBI were remarkable across a spectrum of high-stakes cases. He consistently held his ground against some of the country's finest legal minds — stalwarts like Ram Jethmalani, Uday Lalit, Sushil Kumar, Ahluwalia, and Ranjit Kumar, who appeared on the opposite side. In moments of intense legal battle, we would jokingly but proudly echo the iconic film dialogue, “Mere paas maa hai”, and say instead, “Hamare paas K. Surender hai.”

When Sri K. Surender was elevated to the Bench of the Hon'ble High Court of Telangana, it was a moment of great pride and happiness for all of us. His appointment was not only well-deserved but also a recognition of his unwavering commitment to justice and the rule of law.

I continue to hold Justice K. Surender in the highest esteem and wish him continued success and fulfillment in all his judicial endeavors. May his journey in the service of justice be long and impactful.

The book detailing the contributions of Hon'ble Justice K. Surender to the judicial system is truly remarkable—both promising and inspiring. His exemplary service deserves recognition not only within the legal fraternity but also among the wider public, especially the younger generation of legal professionals. At a time when the judiciary faces intense public scrutiny, Justice Surender's quiet, steadfast discipline and unwavering integrity stand as a powerful counter-narrative—one defined by humility, dedication, and tireless commitment to the cause of justice.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Shri G. Anil Kiran Kumar for his excellent and comprehensive analysis. His insightful work admirably captures Justice K. Surender's profound impact on the judiciary and his unwavering devotion to law and justice. This writing richly rewards readers and serves as a valuable source of inspiration.



31st May 2025,
Hyderabad

V.V. Lakshmi Narayana, IPS,
Addl DGP (Retired), Maharashtra
& Former Joint Director, CBI, Hyderabad

Preface

The Supreme Court Collegium, in its meetings held on 15th and 19th April 2025, recommended—among several other transfers—the transfer of **Justice Kasoju Surendhra (K. Surender)**, Judge of the High Court for the State of Telangana, to the **Madras High Court**. The stated reasons behind this decision were to infuse inclusivity and diversity within the judiciary at the High Court level and to strengthen the overall quality in the administration of justice.

Yet, this decision came as a bolt from the blue for the Bar of the Telangana High Court. The suddenness of the transfer left the legal community in a state of visible despair and emotional disquiet. Immediately, the **Advocate Bar Association of the Telangana High Court convened an emergency meeting**, where a unanimous resolution was passed, urging the rollback of the transfer of Justice K. Surender and another judge. A delegation was also proposed to be sent to the Hon’ble Supreme Court, seeking reconsideration of this unexpected move.

However, before further representations could be made, the **Warrant of Appointment** effecting the transfer was published in the **Gazette of India** on **1st May 2025**, by the **Ministry of Law and Justice, Department of Justice, Government of India**.

The issuance of the transfer warrant sent a ripple of anguish through the corridors of the Telangana High Court. The depth of this response knew no divisions—neither senior nor junior, no divide between criminal or civil lawyers. Across the spectrum, members of the Bar shared one unified sentiment: **this transfer was an unjustified act and a profound loss to the High Court of Telangana.**

The overwhelming response from the Bar to the transfer of Hon’ble Justice K. Surender moved me to personally reflect upon—and investigate—the manner in which he conducted his judicial duties over the past three years. What emerged from this inquiry was deeply inspiring.

Justice K. Surender had quietly but powerfully established himself as one of the most respected and dependable judges on the Bench. His decisions reflected intellectual rigour, judicial discipline, and profound empathy. His courtroom was a space where justice was not just administered—it was delivered with dignity.

Justice K. Surender’s judicial career is distinguished by a rare and admirable confluence of style and substance—qualities that merit recognition not only within the legal fraternity but also among the broader public, particularly the younger generation of legal professionals. His story should serve as a beacon. His unwavering work ethic, steadfast commitment to justice, and the dignified composure with which he accepted

his transfer—even amid widespread dismay—offer enduring inspiration to aspiring advocates and judges alike. He has not only upheld the dignity of the Bench through his service but has exemplified how the weight of difficult decisions can be borne with grace and integrity.

While judicial academies may strive to instill values in new appointees, such efforts often fall short. For values are not merely taught—they are inspired. True transformation arises not from manuals or lectures, but from witnessing a living embodiment of principle—a role model whose conduct speaks to the highest ideals of judicial office.

Another compelling reason that prompted me to undertake this work is the desire to understand—and bring to light for the wider world—the judicial behavior of an ideal judge. Speaking on the importance of judicial behavior, Richard A. Posner in his book ‘How Judges Think’ at page no.5 observed:

“The judicial mentality would be of little interest if judges did nothing more than apply clear rules of law created by legislators, administrative agencies, the framers of constitutions, and other extrajudicial sources (including commercial custom) to facts that judges and juries determined without bias or preconceptions. Then judges would be well on the road to being superseded by digitized artificial intelligence programs.

But even legal thinkers who believe passionately that judges should be rule appliers and unbiased fact-finders—and nothing more—do not believe that that’s how all, or even most, American judges behave all the time. Our judges have and exercise discretion. Especially if they are appellate judges, even intermediate ones, they are ‘occasional legislators.’

To understand their legislative activity, one must understand their motivations, capacities, mode of selection, professional norms, and psychology. Achieving a sound understanding of judicial behavior is thus of more than merely academic interest; it is key to legal reform.”

This book endeavors to document some of the most compelling elements of Hon’ble Justice K. Surender’s approach to judgeship. Through these reflections, the author seeks to illuminate a path for the next generation—one marked by sincerity, intellectual courage, and an unwavering commitment to the cause of justice.

3rd June 2025,
Hyderabad



G. ANIL KIRAN KUMAR

Biographical Sketch of Hon'ble Sri Justice K. Surender

Hon'ble Sri Justice **K. Surender** was born on **11th January 1968** in **Mahaboobnagar**, Telangana, to **Sri K. Laxminarayana** and **Smt. K. Pramila Devi**. His father served as an engineer in the **Electricity Department**, while his mother was a dedicated homemaker.

Justice Surender received his early education at the **Hyderabad Public School, Ramanthapur**, Hyderabad. He pursued his undergraduate studies in **Geology** from **Osmania University**, followed by a degree in **Law** from **Padala Rama Reddy Law College**, Hyderabad.

He was **enrolled as an advocate in 1992**, commencing his legal career under the mentorship of the distinguished Senior Advocate **Sri P. Sitapati**. He began his **independent practice in May 1997**, handling both **civil and criminal matters** at

trial and appellate levels, with particular focus on **economic offences, anti-terrorism, and anti-corruption laws**.

Over the course of his distinguished legal career, Justice Surender held numerous prominent positions:

- Assistant Additional Standing Counsel for the Central Government at the erstwhile High Court of Andhra Pradesh (2005–2008).
- Standing Counsel for the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) at the High Court and Special Public Prosecutor for CBI from 2010 onwards, being reappointed in 2013, 2017, and 2020—a rare distinction of being appointed four times.
- Senior Counsel for CBI in the high-profile Satyam Ramalinga Raju case (2009).
- Special Senior Counsel for CBI in the Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy cases (2012).
- Special Counsel for the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in the 2013 Dilsukhnagar Blast case.
- Special Counsel for the Counter Intelligence, Government of Telangana, in the Lumbini Park and Gokul Chat bomb blast cases.

- Special Counsel for the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the year 2020.

These assignments not only demonstrated his legal acumen but also his unwavering integrity and commitment to public interest. His successful prosecution in several high-profile and sensitive cases earned him wide respect in legal and judicial circles.

In recognition of his vast experience and exemplary service, Sri K. Surender was elevated as a permanent Judge of the High Court for the State of Telangana on 24th March 2022.

On the personal front, Justice **Sri K. Surender** is married to **Smt. K. Shanti**, a homemaker. The couple is blessed with two sons—**Hemanth**, who works as a software engineer in Canada, and **Siddharth**, who is pursuing legal studies.



Disposal of cases - A benchmark of judicial commitment

One of the most significant benchmarks for assessing a judge's performance is the volume and quality of case disposals during their tenure. Hon'ble Sri Justice K. Surender commenced his judicial duties as a Judge of the High Court for the State of Telangana on 24th March 2022. As of 2nd May 2025, the High Court functioned for approximately 651 working days. During this period, Justice Surender is understood to have availed only a few of the 45 casual leave days he was entitled to—rarely stepping away from his judicial responsibilities. Remarkably, he even continued to hold court during bouts of high fever, exemplifying an unwavering dedication to judicial duty.

In terms of judicial output, Hon'ble Justice K. Surender is reported to have disposed of more than 20,000 criminal cases—a truly extraordinary contribution. It is understood that nearly one-third of all criminal cases disposed of by the

High Court during this period were adjudicated by Hon'ble Justice K. Surrender alone. On average, this amounts to over 30 disposals per working day, reflecting not only his efficiency and discipline, but also a deep command over the law and procedure.

Breakdown of Case Disposals

A closer examination of these 20,000 disposed Criminal Cases, the learned Judge approximately disposed 1,900 criminal appeals. In Division Bench (CRLA-DB) matters, he contributed more than 500 disposals, with the vast majority of judgments authored by him. The average disposal rate in DB matters stood at approximately 10 cases per day. Additionally, Justice Surrender disposed of: Criminal Petitions (CRLPs): Nearly 16,000; Criminal Revision Cases (CRLsRCs): Around 1,500; Transfer Criminal Petitions: Close to 150. These figures are exclusive of civil matters he handled concurrently, further widening the scope of his judicial engagement. The reported judgments are more than 400, indicating substantial jurisprudential value.

Systemic Impact

The transfer of Hon'ble Justice K. Surrender is not merely an administrative development—it symbolically represents the relocation of an entire High Court's worth of judicial capacity.

His extraordinary judicial output has had a profound and systemic impact on criminal jurisprudence and the pace of case clearance at the Telangana High Court. His presence on the Bench significantly contributed to reducing pendency and restoring litigant confidence in timely justice.

An Unparalleled Legacy

This level of sustained judicial performance over just three years—marked by efficiency, consistency, and integrity—constitutes a historic contribution to the Indian judiciary. Hon’ble Justice K. Surender’s work ethic stands as a model for future generations of judges and advocates, underscoring what can be achieved through discipline, sincerity, and an unrelenting commitment to the cause of justice.



Timely Pronouncement of Judgments - A Hallmark of Judicial Integrity

The timely delivery of justice reinforces public confidence in the judiciary and promotes judicial accountability. In recognition of this, **Clause 6.5 of the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, 2022** expressly mandates that *judges shall deliver reserved judgments with reasonable promptness*.

Given the extraordinary number of criminal case disposals by Hon'ble Sri Justice **K. Surender**, a natural question that arises is: **Did he timely dictate and pronounce those judgments?** The answer lies not only in the volume but also in the speed, discipline, and fairness with which those judgments were delivered.

Justice Surender has always been deeply conscious of the **expectations of litigants**, who often await judgments with great anticipation soon after their case is heard. He upholds the principle that **justice delayed is justice denied**, particularly in the context of criminal litigation where the stakes involve life, liberty, and personal reputation.

Judicial Delay: A Common Systemic Challenge

It is well-known that, at the High Court level, judgments are sometimes reserved for extended periods. There are instances across various High Courts, where judgments are not **pronounced even after six months to five years**. While several institutional and personal factors may contribute to such delays, the result is often **speculation, erosion of public confidence**, and unwarranted **rumors about judicial integrity**. At this juncture, it is apposite to recall the insightful observations of Hon'ble Justice R.V. Raveendran, former Judge of the Supreme Court of India, in his monumental work *“Anomalies in Law & Justice”* (Page 339):

“...when a Judge keeps a matter reserved for long, parties/ lawyers tend to impute ulterior motives to him. Therefore, Judges should reduce their non-judicial work, weekend tours and avoid reserving too many judgments or reserving for too long.”

Justice K. Surender's Approach to Pronouncements

Hon'ble Justice K. Surender remains deeply conscious of the essential judicial ethic of timely pronouncement of judgments and has consistently upheld it with unwavering discipline and commitment. His approach has been both principled and consistent, setting a noteworthy standard:

- In nearly 90% of cases, he dictated judgments in open court immediately upon conclusion of the hearing.
- Where judgments were reserved, they were typically delivered within a week.
- Only in about 7–9% of cases did the pronouncement take between 10 to 15 days—and even then, only in matters involving complex legal or factual questions.
- In exceptional instances, a judgment was delivered within a month, and such delays were rare and well-justified.
- Significantly, Justice Surender adhered strictly to the chronological order of reservation in pronouncing judgments—demonstrating procedural fairness, transparency, and personal discipline.

Fairness, Transparency, and Devotion

This systematic and prompt pronouncement of judgments illustrates the **inherent fairness, transparency, and extraordinary judicial discipline** exhibited by Hon'ble Justice K. Surender. His conduct demonstrates an unwavering **sensitivity to litigants' rights**, a deep sense of **accountability to the Bench**, and a **devotion to the ethical standards** laid down in the Bangalore Principles and beyond.

Such judicial temperament not only reflects personal excellence but also serves as a **model of conduct** for present and future members of the judiciary.

The method and speed with which judgments are delivered by our Hon'ble Judge underscore the importance of closely examining the traits, habits, and skills that contribute to the speedy disposal of cases and overall judicial excellence. Such attributes should be key considerations when proposing individuals for appointment or elevation to the Bench.



Judgment Writing – Originality and Authority

In recent times, a subtle yet significant concern has emerged within the judicial system: the question of authenticity in the authorship of some court orders and judgments. This concern, while often unspoken, strikes at the very heart of judicial craftsmanship and the independence that must undergird every judicial pronouncement.

Authenticity in authorship is not a mere formality—it is a core component of judicial integrity. It affirms that the judge has personally applied his or her mind to the facts and law and taken ownership of the reasoning and relief granted. The absence of this personal authorship can dilute the legitimacy of the judgment and opens the door to both internal compromise and external speculation.

Every Word His Own

Against this background, the work of Hon’ble Sri Justice K. Surender stands out in stark contrast. Given the sheer number

of cases disposed of, and the limited time available, one might reasonably ask: Did he personally author every judgment? The answer is an emphatic yes.

Each judgment delivered by Justice Surrender is original, crafted by him, and bears the unmistakable imprint of his independent thought, analytical sharpness, and deep understanding of both law and humanity. His judgments do not merely dispose of cases—they resolve disputes with precision, fairness, and finality. His judgments are characterized by:

- Concise yet complete narration of facts
- Clear identification of the legal issues
- Balanced presentation of both sides' arguments
- Surgical precision in resolving the core dispute, grounded in sound legal reasoning
- Clarity in the Result Portion of Judgments

He avoids unnecessary elaboration—neither indulging in academic discourse nor digressing into unrelated areas of law or philosophy. Instead, like a senior cardiac surgeon approaching a critical operation, he focuses single-mindedly on the task at hand—delivering justice with clarity, efficiency, and purpose. There is no ambiguity in his decisions—no tentativeness, no speculative analysis. Every order reveals a deep and assured

command over the factual matrix and the legal framework. He does not write to persuade or impress; he writes to resolve. His firm conclusions are backed by courage, clarity, and conviction.

Clarity in the Result Portion of Judgments

One critical area that often remains under-emphasized—both in judicial academies and among senior judges—is the drafting of the result portion or relief granted in a judgment. Despite its pivotal role, it is frequently relegated to an afterthought, leading to avoidable appeals or revisions due to ambiguity or inconsistency.

Hon'ble Justice K. Surender, however, stands out in this regard. He is acutely aware of the significance of this segment of a judgment and approaches it with remarkable precision and clarity. His judgments reflect a deliberate effort to ensure that the result portion is not only candid and vivid but also legally sound and linguistically clear. It is carefully crafted to leave no room for misinterpretation, ensuring that the parties before him understand exactly what relief is granted, to whom, and under what terms.

More importantly, in his judgments, the result portion is never an isolated conclusion; it is a logical culmination of the ques-

tion framed for consideration and the discussion undertaken in the body of the judgment. This coherence between the reasoning and the relief reinforces judicial discipline and exemplifies best practices in judgment writing.

Uniformity and consistency in decisions:

One of the noblest qualities of a judge is the maintenance of uniformity and consistency in decisions, particularly in cases involving similarly situated factual or legal circumstances, and in conformity with the binding precedents of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. A broad survey of the judgments and case disposals by Hon'ble Sri Justice K. Surender reveals that he has consistently and conscientiously upheld this principle, thereby ensuring coherence, predictability, and reliability in the administration of justice. This approach reflects not only his deep respect for the rule of law but also the integrity and seriousness with which he discharges his judicial responsibilities.

A Reputation beyond Reproach

The quality of his judgments is not only reflected in their reasoning but also in their finality. Appeals against his orders are rare, and it is difficult to find instances where his judgments have been reversed on merit, let alone on extraneous grounds. This is a rare distinction and speaks volumes about his professional excellence and judicial integrity.

In sum, every judgment by Hon’ble Justice K. Surender is a testament to:

Uncompromising originality

- Devotion to the rule of law
- Absolute professional independence
- Maintenance of uniformity and consistency in decisions
- And an unflinching commitment to the cause of justice

These attributes make his judicial work not just commendable but exemplary, deserving of study and emulation by present and future members of the judiciary.

Each judgment is a rich resource, offering profound insights into the nuanced application of criminal law across a wide spectrum of human situations. They illuminate the complexities and sensitivities involved in criminal cases and provide practical approaches to address even the most challenging and delicate issues encountered by advocates and judges alike.

One can say without hesitation that reading the judgments authored by Hon’ble Justice K. Surender is akin to attending an advanced masterclass in criminal law. His judgments serve not only as invaluable guidance for aspiring and practicing High Court lawyers but also as a beacon for those who aspire to don the judicial robe on the criminal side.



Sentencing Policy - A Humanistic Approach

In the criminal justice system, conviction is governed by rules, evidence, and procedural law. It is a technical process that demands the judge to function as a legal technician—objective, analytical, and firmly bound by codified statutes. Sentencing, however, transcends technical boundaries. It is a deeply human, socio-psychological exercise that transforms the judge into a moral philosopher—balancing justice with mercy, individual accountability with societal interest.

At this juncture, it is apposite to recall the invaluable observations of Hon'ble Justice R.V. Raveendran, former Judge of the Supreme Court of India, in his monumental work *Anomalies in Law & Justice* (p. 325), where he eloquently outlines the complex terrain of criminal adjudication:

“In dealing with criminal cases, common sense, logic, recognition of harsh ground realities, respect for moral values and an understanding of human psychology are necessary for a Judge to render effective justice. The Judge faces several obstacles in arriving at a fair decision. In several cases, the

Judge may have to deal with witnesses who are ready to tell the truth outside the precincts of the court, but lie when they step into the witness box; police officers who prefer third degree methods to scientific investigation to arrive at an ‘adjusted or extracted truth’; and prosecutors who may not present the evidence properly or who may leave loopholes for the accused to escape... The Judge has to deal with rich and powerful accused trying their best to delay the trial until material witnesses are pressurised, persuaded, purchased, or won over to turn hostile. It is in this difficult terrain that the Judges are required to search for the truth and render justice. Sound common sense, perception as to what is right and wrong, and commitment to justice are the tools that would assist in criminal cases.”

These words serve as a serious caution and underscore the pressing need for profound knowledge, discernment, and moral clarity in the administration of criminal justice. The necessity is even more acute for High Court judges vested with extraordinary powers under Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (formerly Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973).

Hon’ble Justice K. Surender’s extensive experience in criminal law—both as a prosecutor representing the State in numerous cases and as a defence lawyer in many significant matters—has fully equipped him with the expertise and temperament

required to meet the highest standards of judicial responsibility. His judgments demonstrate not only technical precision and legal soundness but also a nuanced understanding of the human elements that underlie every criminal proceeding.

His approach to sentencing is especially noteworthy. Just as he exercises rigour in determining conviction, he approaches sentencing with equal care and moral clarity. For Hon'ble Justice K. Surender, sentencing is not a mere procedural conclusion—it is an opportunity to harmonise the letter of the law with the spirit of humanity. He exemplifies the philosophy that:

“While laws define offences, it is compassion that defines justice.”

In a legal environment where **the process itself can be punishment**, the learned judge recognized that **sentencing should alleviate—not aggravate—human suffering**, especially for first-time offenders and those who have already endured the burdens of trial and incarceration.

Key Features of His Sentencing Philosophy:

Minimum Punishment: Where permitted by law, he would impose the **minimum prescribed sentence**, ensuring that the punishment fits not only the crime—but also the context and the individual behind it.

Time Undergone: In many cases, where convicts had already spent considerable time in custody, he would sentence them to **‘imprisonment already undergone’**, acknowledging their ordeal and promoting rehabilitation over retribution.

Grave and Heinous Offences: In cases involving **gruesome acts or offences with far-reaching consequences**, he did not hesitate to impose **maximum punishment**, reflecting the seriousness of the crime and the need to protect society.

Balanced Discretion: He exercised discretion within the **bounds of fairness, legality, and public interest**, never allowing personal bias or public pressure to interfere with judicial reasoning.

Justice Tempered with Mercy:

This **humane and balanced sentencing approach** reflects not only deep legal understanding, but also a **genuine concern for the human condition**. He saw each case not just as a file, but as a **window into real lives**—often fragile, complex, and in need of both justice and compassion. Through this perspective, Justice **K. Surender elevated sentencing into a meaningful judicial act**, upholding the law while reinforcing the judiciary’s role as a protector—not merely a punisher—of society.



Interface with Advocates – Sobriety and Dignity

A judge's relationship with the Bar is a crucial component of judicial functioning. The **courtroom is not merely a place of adjudication**, but also a space where legal dialogue between the Bench and the Bar shapes the course of justice. This interface is central to the proper administration of justice. The position of a judge is not meant to showcase power or authority, and the lawyer who appears before the court is not a petitioner seeking favours. Both are equal partners in the pursuit of justice, working towards the same constitutional goal. Unfortunately, it is often this interface that becomes a flashpoint, leading to tensions between the Bar and the Bench, with justice itself becoming the unintended casualty. In this interface, Hon'ble Justice K. Surender stood out for his remarkable balance of accessibility, dignity, and judicial detachment.

Punctuality: The timely ascending of the bench by the judge is the first step toward ensuring a smooth and respectful interface between the Bar and the Bench. It sets the tone for the day's proceedings, communicates discipline, and inspires similar punctuality and seriousness among advocates. Hon'ble Justice K. Surender was known for beginning court proceedings exactly on time. Punctuality is one of the hallmarks of our learned judge. He ascends the bench at 10:30 AM without fail and usually continues until 4:30 PM. His punctuality was not merely a matter of habit, but a reflection of his deep respect for the judicial process and for the time and efforts of the advocates appearing before him.

Conduct on the Bench: He listens to every case with full attention and never exhibits disinterest. His judicial demeanor is marked by sobriety, legal wisdom, and restraint. He never gives the impression that he has pre-judged a matter. To maintain such unwavering focus and discipline over long hours is only possible for someone deeply committed to resolving human suffering through the instrument of law. Our learned Judge seldom poses questions during arguments, owing to his deep understanding of the subject matter—particularly in criminal law. However, when he does interject, it is solely with the purpose of seeking necessary clarifications to ensure justice is served. His questions are never intended to exhibit erudition or display command over the record, but rather to illuminate the core issues in a case with fairness and restraint.

Respectful and Fair Treatment of Advocates: Our learned judge treats every lawyer with the utmost respect and dignity. Even when faced with an unprepared or inexperienced advocate, he refrains from criticism. He shows no partiality based on seniority, reputation, or familiarity. Any advocate—junior or senior, new or veteran—can confidently appear and argue a matter before him.

This, however, does not mean that he fails to distinguish between approaches. He may assess lawyers based on their preparedness and clarity, but in the end, his focus is on the parties and ensuring justice is done. He adjudicates cases purely on legal merit, unaffected by any personal biases or prior relationships. This level of detachment and integrity is not easily achieved and reflects a rare combination of judicial discipline and divine grace.

Composure and Restraint: It is not uncommon for judges, particularly those elevated from the Bar with a flourishing practice, to express opinions—sometimes loosely—either verbally or through gestures. Our judge, however, is the epitome of restraint. He speaks sparingly from the bench and avoids unnecessary commentary. He is a no-nonsense judge, and his courtroom reflects that clarity and focus.

While many judges engage in discussions—sometimes digressing into law or facts—our judge limits his interventions

to essential, focused questions directly linked to the core issue. His sole concern is the file before him, the legal point involved, and the appropriate relief in law.

Some may perceive him as impatient if a lawyer repeats arguments or fails to be precise. However, he never loses his composure. Instead, he offers gentle guidance without offending or belittling the advocate. In reality, such conduct should be viewed not as impatience, but as an expectation of efficiency. At the High Court level, an advocate is expected to present a sharp legal issue rather than a sprawling narrative that burdens the judge with the task of unraveling the case.

Preparation and Judicial Maturity: Handling any bench at the High Court—particularly criminal admission courts or appeals courts or any criminal bench—is an inherently demanding task, given the heightened intensity and emotional stakes involved. Advocates and litigants closely monitor proceedings, often anxious to present their cases and secure timely relief. During his tenure presiding over admission courts, whether dealing with appeals, quash petitions, or bail applications, Hon’ble Justice K. Surender was noted for the remarkable absence of procedural delays or objections from advocates. This was largely due to his diligent and thorough preparation.

His ability to hear cases promptly and render decisions swiftly arose from an exhaustive pre-hearing study of case files. He came to court well-versed not only in the formal record but also in the subtle nuances and complexities that do not always surface explicitly in the paperwork. Another noble quality of our learned judge is that he reads the files thoroughly but never reveals that familiarity during proceedings. He maintains silence about the matter until the moment of dictation of the order or judgment, ensuring impartiality and giving each side a full opportunity to present their case.

This depth of understanding enabled him to balance the demands of legal procedure with the imperative to address human suffering compassionately and efficiently, delivering justice with both speed and sensitivity.

The judicial interface and approach of the Hon'ble Judge can be better understood by studying the manner in which he conducted proceedings on certain criminal benches.

Criminal Petitions (Quash matters)

Justice K. Surender approaches quash petitions with clarity, legal precision, and absolute neutrality. When a case for quashing is legally made out, he wastes no time in granting relief subject to due notice to the other side. His sole criterion is the legality of the proceedings—never influenced by personal opinions or prejudices. Notably, he does not subscribe to the

common judicial sentiment that “the accused can face trial and seek acquittal there.” Instead, he treats quash petitions with the seriousness they deserve—as a statutory remedy that has significant bearing on both fundamental and human rights. His approach reflects a deep constitutional sensitivity, ensuring that individuals are not subjected to unnecessary or unjustified prosecutions.

Even when a clear case for quash is not made out, he does not turn a blind eye to the suffering of the accused. Instead, he typically poses two fundamental questions to explore whether any other form of relief can be granted to mitigate hardship:

1. What does the party seek from the Court?

2. How does that request fit within the framework of law?

If the advocate can respond effectively, relief is granted without delay. Even if the advocate falters in presentation but the case has inherent merit, the judge offers relief—often by dispensing with the personal presence of the accused, directing expeditious disposal of the trial, or offering similar just and lawful remedies. This reflects not only his superior preparation and legal acumen, but also a deeply humane approach. Justice K. Surrender exemplifies the rare ability to blend the rigour of law with the compassion of humanity.

Criminal Petitions (Bail Matters)

In bail matters, Justice K. Surender's approach is equally principled. He is never influenced by media sensationalism, the severity of allegations, or speculative fears. His decisions rest squarely on the constitutional balance between the legality of detention and the right to personal liberty.

From the understanding of many in the legal fraternity, the usual parameters he considers include:

- The nature of the allegations, including their legality, inherent logic, and merit
- The admissibility and strength of the material
- The modus operandi as alleged in the complaint or First Information Report (FIR)
- The antecedents of the accused
- The demands of the investigation
- The balance between individual liberty and public interest

Almost intuitively, he assesses the likelihood and nature of the accused's involvement—whether it appears to be deliberate and systemic or merely an isolated, sporadic act. His decisions reflect careful judicial calibration rather than knee-jerk reactions. Bail, in his courtroom, is not treated as charity nor withheld as punishment—it is assessed purely on legal and constitutional principles.

Criminal Appeals and Revisions

In appellate or revision matters, our judge formulates key questions that cut through the clutter. If the answers are legally sound, he notes them—often using a highlighter or slips with page numbers—to begin forming his judgment. Nonetheless, he always provides a full hearing to the opposing side, reconciling all views before arriving at a final, considered decision.

In every facet of judicial conduct—from punctuality and preparation to restraint and respect—Justice K. Surender has exemplified the highest standards of the Bench. His interactions with the Bar were marked not by formality alone, but by a quiet nobility and an unshakeable commitment to justice. In an era where courtroom decorum is often tested, his conduct stands as a guidepost for how judges and advocates must interface: with mutual dignity, shared purpose, and unwavering respect for the institution of justice.

The judicial interface of our Hon’ble Judge highlights the significance of undertaking systematic research into the conduct and interaction of judges across the Bench. Such studies would contribute meaningfully to enhancing judicial performance and improving the overall quality of justice delivery.



Cause List - Ensuring Fairness and Efficiency

In the daily workings of the High Court, one of the most challenging aspects for advocates is **getting a case listed**. The **non-listing or irregular listing** of matters often leads clients to doubt their lawyer's abilities, creating frustration and mistrust. Even when a matter appears in the cause list, there is **no guarantee it will be taken up** the next day, or in any predictable timeframe.

This uncertainty has led to the **increasing practice of “mentioning”**, where advocates, usually through senior counsel, request the Bench at 10:30 AM to prioritize certain matters. If allowed, these matters may be heard at 2:15 PM or 4:00 PM, bypassing the regular sequence. In some cases, **improper practices** have crept in, where undue influence is exerted to secure favorable listing—undermining the integrity of the judicial process. However, **such concerns are entirely**

absent in the Court of Hon’ble Justice K. Surender. His Court is a model of transparency, discipline, and procedural integrity.

A System without Favour or Uncertainty

- The cause list in Justice Surender’s court explicitly states that: “No mentions will be entertained, and no case will be taken out of turn.”
- If a matter does not reach on a given day, it is automatically taken up the next day—following the exact order from where the list was previously concluded. There is no deletion or skipping of cases once listed. This consistent and predictable system:
- Eliminates the need for mentions.
- Removes scope for external influence.
- Upholds judicial dignity and impartiality.

Proper Listing Protocol

- If an advocate desires an urgent listing:
- A simple letter addressed to the Registrar (Cornered) suffices.
- The matter is listed the very next day and will not be deleted until heard, typically within one or two working days.

Exceptional Disposal Rate

Justice Surender's commitment to efficiency is further reflected in the **high disposal rate** of matters in his court:

- **Nearly 70% of the listed matters** are disposed of on the day they are taken up.
- Recently, in response to a **significant backlog** in a Criminal Admission Court—where many matters remained unheard for weeks—the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the High Court **reallocated those cases** among four to five judges.
- Over 50% of the pending cases were assigned to Justice K. Surender.
- He **disposed of more than 80%** of those matters within a short span.

Impressed by this performance, the Hon'ble Chief Justice entrusted **another 100 cases**, most of which were again **efficiently disposed of**. This trust reposed by the Hon'ble Acting Chief Justice is a clear recognition of:

- **Justice Surender's impeccable judicial discipline,**
- **His legal acumen, and**
- **His unwavering commitment to the efficient delivery of justice.**
- His approach has not only streamlined courtroom proceedings but has also restored **faith among the Bar and litigants in the fair and predictable administration of justice.**



The Sacred Path of Judgeship - A Tribute to the Discipline, Detachment and Devotion

The life of a judge is one of the highest forms of public service—a discipline so exacting that it often transcends the notion of a mere profession. It is a calling that demands absolute fidelity not only to the letter of the law but also to a lifestyle of relentless rigor, unwavering principles, and deep introspection. To be recognized even as an average judge, one must exhibit extraordinary discipline, consistency, and moral clarity—virtues that few professions demand with such unrelenting intensity.

The demands of the judicial office are immense. From 10:30 AM to 4:30 PM, with only a 45-minute recess, a judge must remain entirely present—physically, intellectually, and ethically. Yet, the courtroom schedule represents merely the visible portion of a judge's day. Evenings and nights are consumed by the unseen labour of reading files, drafting and revising judgments,

and preparing for the hearings of the following day. The work is sedentary yet intensely cerebral—requiring long hours of focused sitting and sustained reasoning, all while carrying the weight of human conflicts and the burden of judicial conscience.

At this juncture, one is reminded of the insightful observation by Hon’ble Ms. Justice Hima Kohli, former Chief Justice of our High Court and Judge of the Supreme Court of India, who likened the life of a judge to that of King Vikramaditya. As the tale goes, the legendary king dispensed justice from his throne by day, but at night wandered graveyards in dialogue with the spectral Betala—engaged in moral riddles and philosophical inquiry. Likewise, a judge assumes the throne by day, rendering decisions with dignity, restraint, and impartiality; yet by night, must confront the haunting questions of justice, equity, and consequence. It is a role not only of great power but of silent, solitary introspection—where the contours of true justice are defined in the quiet dialogue between duty and doubt.

The physical toll of this vocation is substantial. Prolonged sitting under high cognitive and emotional pressure leads to metabolic slowdowns, acidity, and chronic health complications—especially when compounded by age and sustained stress. In this context, physical wellness becomes not just a personal concern, but a professional obligation. A

judge who neglects health endangers the very clarity, stamina, and presence of mind essential to the administration of justice.

To endure and excel, a judge must adopt transformative lifestyle changes. These include embracing physical fitness, regulating diet, restricting social distractions, and devoting one's energies wholly to the law. Such transformation is rare—especially between the ages of 45 and 55, when habits are entrenched. Yet for those on the Bench, it is an indispensable requirement of the role.

DAILY ROUTINE AND LEISURE TIME

Hon'ble Justice K. Surender exemplifies a rare confluence of rigorous preparation, personal discipline, and judicial excellence. It is understood that his day begins as early as 3:30 AM, with meticulous reading of case files and preparation of notes that support precise and coherent judgment writing. This intense preparatory work continues until around 7:30 AM, after which he attends to his morning rituals and reaches the court premises by 9:15 AM. From then until the court convenes at 10:30 AM, he utilizes the time to dictate pending judgments. Except in the event of urgent matters, he typically returns home by 5:30 PM, takes a brief moment to unwind, and retires by 8:30 PM.

What is particularly remarkable is that this disciplined routine extends into the weekends. Saturdays and Sundays are often dedicated to dictating judgments, proofing drafts, or preparing

for the upcoming week's work. For Justice Surender, the call of duty is constant—and sincerely embraced.

An Uncommon Approach to Leisure and Stress

Given such a demanding and structured schedule—marked by early-morning preparation, full-day court proceedings, and holidays devoted to judicial work—the author was naturally curious about how the learned Judge manages moments of stress or finds time for leisure. Upon personal inquiry, it became evident that what others might regard as “leisure time” is, for him, a rare luxury.

Justice Surender is soulfully and wholly immersed in the law. Rather than seeking respite from his judicial duties, he finds solace and rejuvenation within them. In moments of stress, he prefers to delve deeper into reading case files or exploring the historical and philosophical evolution of legal principles. This engagement is not driven by compulsion but by a deep-seated intellectual and emotional connection to the law.

For him, law is not merely a profession or responsibility—it is a lifelong pursuit, a meditative refuge, and a source of personal peace. His life and work demonstrate that the highest levels of judicial commitment are not born from ambition or obligation, but from reverence, reflection, and an abiding love for justice. This profound dedication exemplifies the ideal of a judge whose commitment transcends obligation and becomes a way of life.

SOCIAL LIFE AND RELATIONS

Judgeship is a position of solemn authority—and with authority often comes the proximity of individuals seeking to derive subtle, and at times invisible, benefits. In such a context, it becomes imperative for a judge to maintain a deliberate and conscious distance. Social engagements and personal interactions must be calibrated with caution in order to preserve the integrity, independence, and impartiality that the judicial role inherently demands.

While it is undeniable that man is, by nature, a social being, a judge is required to strike a careful balance between his social instincts and professional detachment. Hon'ble Justice K. Surender was acutely mindful of these nuances. He consciously distanced himself from unnecessary social relations—even limiting interactions with close friends and extended family. This was not an act of emotional detachment, but one of ethical discretion—a protective measure to ensure that his decisions, both inside and outside the courtroom, remained unclouded by personal influence.

Yet, there is one circle from which a judge cannot—and should not—distance himself: his court staff and judicial officers. They form the closest working circle of his professional life, serving as his extended eyes, ears, and often, the first responders in the administration of justice.

The author, during his time as an intern at the Supreme Court under Hon'ble Justice Brijesh Kumar, came to understand a valuable truth: "To know a judge, observe how he treats his staff." A judge's conduct towards those who support his day-to-day judicial functions—often managing both professional and personal responsibilities—reveals volumes about his character.

On this front, Justice Surrender stands exceptional. His interactions with his staff were consistently marked by respect, patience, and quiet dignity. He never overlooked the vital contributions of those working behind the scenes, recognizing that the smooth functioning of his courtroom was a collective effort. His humane and considerate approach reflected the same humility and discipline that defined his judicial personality.

Justice Surrender was known for extending gracious and modest gestures toward his staff and their families—whether through small acts of kindness, words of encouragement, or thoughtful support during personal challenges. His guiding belief was simple yet profound: "Those who work with me should work with joy, not out of compulsion."

Despite setting a high bar for himself in terms of work ethic and commitment, he ensured that his team never felt overburdened. He bore the weight of the office with personal discipline while insulating his staff from undue pressure.

This quiet strength of character—balancing personal restraint with professional warmth—is part of what distinguished Justice K. Surrender not only as a judge of rare merit but as a wise, compassionate, and deeply principled leader.

LIVING LIFE ABOVE THE CRITICISM

Criticism is an inevitable companion of public office—especially for those entrusted with the weighty responsibility of delivering justice. It follows quietly behind every decision, every pronouncement, and every action. Ironically, if one does too little, one is faulted for inaction. If one does too much, the very diligence and initiative become grounds for questioning.

Given the exceptional volume of work undertaken by Hon’ble Justice K. Surrender, and the unrelenting commitment with which he executed his judicial duties, it was inevitable that criticism would occasionally come his way—whether informed or uninformed, constructive or misplaced, open or veiled.

In the face of such scrutiny, it is not uncommon for judges to tread cautiously. Some may shy away from handling complex or controversial matters—not because the law demands it, but because criticism can be disruptive, even demoralizing. The risk of misunderstanding or misrepresentation in the public domain often weighs heavy on the shoulders of those who carry the gavel.

But Justice K. Surender was guided by a different inner compass. He did not flinch from complexity. He did not avoid sensitive files or controversial matters. He did not seek the safety of silence where the law demanded speech. He remained unshaken by peer pressure, uninfluenced by senior counsel, and unbothered by speculative voices in the background.

He firmly believed that evading judicial responsibility out of fear of criticism is, in essence, a betrayal of the law's sanctity. He saw such avoidance not as prudence, but as a dilution of the judge's oath to uphold justice impartially and courageously.

This rare moral courage—this calm resistance to pressure—was rooted in a deeper understanding of both law and life. Justice, to him, was not a performance to please the world; it was a sacred service. His devotion to the rule of law, his clarity of purpose, and his spiritual discipline made him impervious to the noise of unjust criticism.

In living life above the criticism, Justice Surender did not merely endure its presence—he transcended it. His focus remained fixed on the constitutional oath he had taken, not on the applause or disapproval that followed his every judgment. For him, truth was its own reward, and justice its own justification.

His legacy reminds us that a judge's strength lies not in avoiding storms, but in standing tall through them—guided

by principle, fueled by integrity, and anchored in the quiet courage of doing what is right. Through his words, work, and unwavering example, Hon'ble Justice K. Surender lived a life above the criticism—not because he ignored it, but because he rose above it.

Hon'ble Shri Justice K. Surender stands as a **towering figure** - an embodiment of the ideals that define the very soul of the judiciary. His journey, both on and off the bench, reflects a **lifestyle of quiet sacrifice, firm principle, and unwavering devotion to justice**. His disciplined routine, measured conduct, and inner strength have not only enriched the courtrooms of the High Court of Telangana, but have also become a source of deep inspiration for those who wish to walk the sacred path of judgeship.



Transfer of a High Court Judge – Enlightened Decision

The post of a High Court Judge is not merely a position—it is an elevation. It is a noble calling, not a recruitment or an appointment in the conventional sense. The very word “elevation” signifies a rise to a higher plane of thought, refined wisdom, and the ability to address complex legal questions with enlightened understanding. Judges of the High Court are not chosen through examinations, but elevated based on their lived experience at the Bar. For a life in law, the real qualification is the accumulation of meaningful experience—experience that not only shapes the individual but also enriches the society they serve.

It is this reservoir of experience that empowers an advocate-turned-judge to approach the law with empathy, insight, and an appreciation for the nuanced, often difficult, realities of human life. Justice K. Surender exemplified this approach. His practice as an advocate grounded him in the lived experience of

litigants, imbuing his judicial decisions with both compassion and clarity. His ability to harmonize legal reasoning with the inherent uncertainties of life enabled him to dispose of a great many cases swiftly, without compromising on fairness or depth.

During his tenure at the Telangana High Court, Justice Surender distinguished himself through his efficiency, clarity, and compassion. His ability to navigate complex legal and factual matrices without losing sight of humanity set him apart. He was not only an exceptional judge but also a remarkable human being, whose approach to judgeship was characterized by service rather than authority.

His judgments were never mere legal pronouncements—they reflected a deep, principled understanding of law, shaped by years of experience and an exceptional command over criminal jurisprudence. On and off the bench, his conduct testified to his unwavering devotion to law and justice. In truth, he did not merely occupy the office of a judge—he elevated it.

Justice Surender's legacy serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring value of integrity, restraint, and silent perseverance in the pursuit of justice. In an era that often rewards speed over substance, his example highlights that true greatness lies not

in acclaim but in steadfastness and the quiet resolve to uphold justice, come what may.

The Telangana High Court, established in 2019, remains a relatively young institution in the Indian judiciary. Many of its judges have not had the opportunity to be mentored by seasoned seniors, which can be crucial for professional growth and the development of judicial temperament. In such a judicial climate, the transfer of a legal giant like Justice K. Surender is indeed a significant loss for the Telangana judiciary. The President of the High Court Advocate Bar Association, Shri A.Jagan, rightly emphasized that the call for reconsidering the transfer is not based on personal reasons but is in the larger interest of society and the institution. Over and above, the suddenness of Justice Surender's transfer has been particularly disheartening for young advocates and those who have benefited from his judicious and compassionate approach. This sentiment reflects the deep respect and admiration the legal community holds for Justice Surender's contributions.

In the face of this unexpected development, Justice Surender has responded with remarkable dignity and grace. He neither protested nor resisted the transfer but quietly prepared to assume his new role at the Madras High Court. This composed response underscores his commitment to the ideals of judicial

service and his unwavering dedication to upholding justice, regardless of the circumstances.

In light of Justice Surender's exemplary service, there is a collective hope among the legal community for his repatriation to the Telangana High Court, akin to the repatriation of other judges by the Supreme Court on May 26, 2025. Such an enlightened move would serve as a beacon of judicial excellence and inspire the next generation of legal professionals in Telangana.

The author extends heartfelt gratitude to the parents, family, and personal staff of Hon'ble Justice K. Surender, whose unwavering support has enabled him to pursue the sacred path of judgeship in an exemplary and cherished manner. The author also expresses deepest appreciation for Justice Surender's exemplary contributions to the High Court of Telangana and extends heartfelt wishes for continued success, strength, and well-being in his new role at the Hon'ble Madras High Court.





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Date: 22.04.2025

Telangana High Court Advocates' Association has convened an Extraordinary General Body Meeting on **22.04.2025** at **1.35p.m.**, in the Association Hall, the General Body unanimously resolved as under:-

RESOLUTION

1. It is unanimously resolved to request the Hon'ble Supreme Court collegium to recall the transfers of Hon'ble Smt. Justice P. Sree Sudha and Hon'ble Sri Justice K. Surender who transfer to Karnataka High Court and Madras High Court respectively.
2. It is further resolved to send an Executive Committee to meet Hon'ble Supreme Court collegium and make a representation to ensure that transfers are stopped.

KhaJa V. Ali
Secretary

The book offers a true and compelling portrayal of the sacred path of judgeship as exemplified by Hon'ble Justice K. Surender. His transfer marks a significant loss to the High Court for the State of Telangana - particularly for young advocates who looked up to him for guidance, and for numerous convicts who had long awaited fair and timely justice. For many of them, his transfer is not just administrative - it is deeply disheartening.

Sri A. Jagan,
President, Telangana High Court,
Advocates Bar Association.

The book fundamentally explores how a noble judge pursues the sacred path of judgeship. It is truly illuminating and highly recommended for reading.

Dr. K. V. Muralidhar Patnaik,
Advocate, High Court
for the State of Telangana