

## Navneet Chugh, Managing Partner and Founder of Chugh, LLP talks about Indian Lawyers Association and continuing legal education for lawyers



This interview was taken by Ramanuj

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Navneet Chugh is the managing partner and founder of The Chugh Firm and has over 30 years of experience as an attorney and a certified public accountant. A founding donor of 1947 Partition Archives and a member of the World Presidents' Organization, he founded TiE Southern California in 1997. In 2003, he was the founder president of the North American South Asian Bar Association ([www.NASABA.com](http://www.NASABA.com)), a nationwide body representing 10,000 south Asian lawyers in the U.S. and Canada. In 1995, he founded South Asian Bar Association of Southern California (SABA).

Navneet serves on the boards of HAB Bank, Ignify Consulting, Dhandho Holdings, India Community Center, Sikh Center of Orange County and Premier Media, Inc., the publisher of *India Journal*. He is a former board member of TiE Global, American India Foundation and Asia Society of Southern California.

He also serves as a board member of Pratham USA's Los Angeles chapter.

He is or has been on the boards of:

1. American India Foundation
2. Asia Society of Southern California
3. India Community Center (ICC)
4. Ignify Consulting
5. Pratham USA
6. Sikh Center of OC
7. Habib American Bank
8. Ignify – an IT Consulting Firm
9. Premier Media, Inc., publisher of “India Journal”.
10. The 1947 Partition Archives

In this interview, he talks about

- Indian Lawyers Association
- The vision behind this association and how much the vision has been achieved so far.
- Why further education is important for lawyers.
- He is also talking about personal development for lawyers.

## **WHAT IS INDIAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION?**

Indian Lawyers Association helps in connect with other legal professionals across the country to share information and best practices. Member groups include more than 70 chapters that produce valuable resources. We hope to be at 400 chapters by the end of next year. It is amazing that for 71 years, the lawyers of India do not have a professional trade association. ILA is one of the indigenous largest voluntary professional organization which is committed to doing what only a national association of advocates can do for improving the legal profession by eliminating the bias and enhancing diversity. ILA provides members with opportunities to enhance their professional skills and helps them grow their network and to access world-class resources to stay on top of current developments in the legal field. At ILA we promote the rule of law and the effective administration of justice which leads to an increase in public understanding and respect for the rule of law, the legal process and the role of the advocates.



## **WHY DID YOU SET THIS UP AND WHAT IS THE VISION BEHIND IT?**

We need to elevate the profession, increase the respect for the profession. We need to fight for our rights. We need to create a fairer marketplace wherein lawyers can advertise, take matters on a contingency basis, do other businesses along with the practice of law. To create a common platform for lawyers Pan India where the lawyers can not only deliberate upon various legal and social issues ailing or prevalent in our country or may crop up in future but also try to find a solution and bring about a change through policymakers. The vision of this platform is also to find solutions and work for the welfare of fellow lawyers and to motivate the legal fraternity to do pro bono work.



### **HOW MUCH OF THAT VISION HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR?**

We have already created 70 chapters of ILA across India where we are first trying to build a platform for lawyers pan India and once we are done with creating a platform pan India basis, then we can robustly pursue our vision through the common platform. Having said so, we are also simultaneously organising events and conferences across India on various legal issues. We did our first annual conference in Delhi in December of 2018 with 80 speakers and 700 attendees.

Each chapter will have a board of 15 members, and several committees that will operate independently. We would like ten per cent of the 1.3 million lawyers to be actively involved in ILA daily, monthly, and annual activities.

### **WHAT IS YOUR THOUGHT ON CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION FOR LAWYERS?**

In my thought, there should be a mandatory continuing legal education as it ensures that the members of bars are informed of the evolving laws. It is important for ILA to recognize this and emphasize upon it. That such innovation is a very good thing and should still be required, if for no other reason than to give the public confidence in the profession and apart from that it will extend well beyond just staying up-to-date with the law.



### **HOW SHOULD LAWYERS APPROACH PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUOUS GROWTH?**

Personal growth and development are essential for everyone in the workplace, not just lawyers.

Organisations change and so does the law. This means that you need to be continually developing personally to meet ever-evolving challenges. If you are not consciously learning all the time, you are probably going backwards. The key to realising your full potential begins with setting relevant and achievable objectives that allow you to keep pace with change and then grow.

Whatever your role, you'll want to know what success looks like. In most cases, success comes from a combination of how you use your skills and knowledge, and the behaviours and attitudes you adopt.

I feel successful lawyers must also focus on the soft skills of networking both internally and externally in order to increase their name and recognition.

Community involvement and civic engagement are also important to me (and should be for any lawyer