



## JUDICIAL PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SUPREME COURT JURISPRUDENCE

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### ABSTRACT

In a constitutional democratic society, human rights are paramount, and the Indian Supreme Court, through its forward-thinking interpretation of the constitution, plays a pivotal role in protecting and expanding human rights. Examining the evolution of the Indian Supreme Court's constitutional jurisprudence and a handful of seminal cases in which it significantly expanded the scope of Fundamental Rights, this paper provides a critical and analytical examination of the judicial protection of human rights in India under the constitution. The analysis of the study is carried out with doctrinal research whereby it entails the study of constitutional laws, judicial decision-making and legal literature. The paper demonstrates the role played by the Supreme Court in the expansion of the scope of Article 21 and how this has helped to improve equality, the right of free speech, environmental and socioeconomic rights, as well as access to justice in the form of PILs. There have been numerous cases that have shaped the human rights jurisprudence in India and they include *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan*, *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India*, and *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation*, and all of them have been analyzed in this paper. The study has revealed that there are some challenges in the area of delays, implementation, and judicial activism. However, it has also been observed that the Supreme Court is still the guardian of constitutional rights.

**Keywords:** Human Rights, Supreme Court of India, Fundamental Rights, Judicial Activism, Public Interest Litigation, Constitutional Remedies, Article 21, Judicial Review.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term "human rights" refers to the set of basic liberties and protections that every individual has by virtue of being human. These rights are fundamental to people's and society's well-being because they uphold people's inherent worth, equality, freedom, and fairness. Part IV, the Directive Principles of State Policy, and Part III, the Fundamental Rights, both contain stipulations about human rights in India. These constitutional articles work together to establish a framework that seeks to promote economic, social, and political fairness while protecting citizens from the arbitrary actions of the state.

The Indian Supreme Court places a premium on upholding and protecting human rights in the country. The responsibility of correctly "living the Constitution" falls on it, as the protector of the document. If there is any violation of fundamental rights, then remedies can be provided by the Court under Article 32 of the Constitution. Due to the changing nature of society, the interpretation of the Constitution by the Supreme Court has changed and evolved to include human rights.

The guarantees under Article 21 related to life and personal liberty, especially, have undergone substantial enlargement and deepening through Supreme Court's interpretation over the years. The right to privacy, a healthy environment, education, occupation/livelihood, and dignified life are some examples of unenumerated rights which the Court has protected through important judgments. One way that under-represented groups can have their cases heard by the courts when they are unable to physically appear in court is through public interest litigation (PIL), which has recently gained popularity and contributed to expanding access to justice.

The aim of this study is to critically analyse and examine the role of Supreme court in safeguarding human rights in India by drawing upon its interpretations of the constitution and its landmark judgements. This research work deals with the extent to which judicial activism has contributed towards human rights, issues associated with judicial implementation of such decisions, delays in the judiciary, and the conflict between judicial activism and judicial restraint. This research work is done to examine the effects of the decisions taken by the Supreme Court on human rights.

## 2. CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA

The Indian Constitution has provided a framework which can guarantee and promote human rights in the country. There is a democracy with rule of law. It is the embodiment of the ideals of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity as provided in the preamble. Part III of the Indian Constitution provides for fundamental rights while Part IV provides for directive principles of state policy. There is also the

provision in Article 32 of the Constitution which provides constitutional remedy. All these provisions are important for human rights in India.

### **2.1 Fundamental Rights under Part III**

Fundamental Rights are guaranteed to all the citizens and in some cases to all the persons in the territory of India in Part III of the Constitution (Articles 12-35). They are rights that the Courts can enforce and are a protection against acts of the State that are arbitrary. They embody the values of equality, freedom, dignity and justice, that are pillars of a democratic society.

Articles 14-18 provide equality; Articles 19-22 provide liberty; Articles 23-24 prevent exploitation; Articles 25-28 provide freedom of religion; Articles 29-30 provide cultural and educational rights; and Article 32 provides for the right to remedies under the Constitution. The Supreme Court has, over time, extended the meaning of these rights to cover a number of topics, which include, but are not limited to, the following: the right to maintain one's livelihood, access to quality healthcare, an adequate education, personal privacy, protection from environmental hazards, access to affordable legal representation, adequate housing, and the right to live in a dignified manner. This suggests that Part III is actively protecting civil-political and socioeconomic rights.

### **2.2 Directive Principles of State Policy**

Part IV (Articles 36 to 51) of the Constitution lists the Directive Principles of State Policy, which are fundamental guidelines for the governance that aims to create a just, equitable and welfare-oriented society. These principles have no binding effect in courts, but have moral and constitutional responsibilities on the part of the State towards social, economic and political justice.

The DPSPs state goals to address social and economic disparities, provide equality of justice, ensure sustainable livelihood, protect the rights of workers, public health, and access to legal representation, and to prevent environmental degradation, among others. The Supreme Court has been able to reconcile the relationship between Fundamental Rights and DPSPs in the course of its decisions, and has determined that they are complementary, and that when it comes to the constitutional vision of a welfare state, they work together. On multiple occasions, the Judiciary has expanded the reach of Fundamental Rights and strengthened human rights protections by citing the Directive Principles.

### **2.3 Constitutional Remedies under Article 32**

Article 32, which enables people to petition the Supreme Court for the protection of fundamental rights in case of any violation, is one of the vital features of the Indian Constitution. According to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, "Article 32 is the heart and soul of the Constitution, as it is the remedy for enforcing our Fundamental Rights."

The Supreme Court, under Article 32 of the Indian Constitution, has the power to issue writs, such as Habeas Corpus, Mandamus, Prohibition, Certiorari, and Quo Warranto, for the purpose of protecting the citizens from arbitrary government action or detention. Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has also brought a radical shift in how access to justice is now perceived, as it enables the participation of public-spirited people and institutions to demand justice for the disadvantaged and marginalised communities. The Supreme Court has used Article 32 extensively to make it an effective constitutional tool for protecting human rights, bolstering constitutional governance and maintaining rule of law in India.

### **3. EVOLUTION OF SUPREME COURT HUMAN RIGHTS JURISPRUDENCE**

The Supreme Court of India has witnessed an amazing transformation after the emergence of the Constitution in 1950. Initially, the Court interpreted the Fundamental Rights in a very limited and literal way, and always kept in mind the spirit of the Constitution more than the letter of the Constitution. In recent years, however, judicial philosophy shifted to a more progressive and prospective understanding, focusing on human dignity, social justice and constitutional morality. It was a progressive approach that helped the judiciary address new challenges of human rights cases and evolving socio-economic conditions and thus enhanced the constitutional democracy in India.

The Supreme Court has introduced an innovative concept of human rights that has evolved beyond those specified in the Constitution. Many basic rights, which are essential for a good and equal life, have been recognized by the courts. Women, children, workers, inmates, people with disabilities, and disadvantaged communities are among the vulnerable groups that the Court has worked tirelessly to safeguard. Consequently, the Indian Supreme Court has made significant contributions in ensuring the existence and protection of human rights in the nation.

#### **3.1 Judicial Interpretation of Fundamental Rights**

As stated in Article III, Section 3, the Supreme Court's approach to interpreting fundamental rights has been dynamic and ever-changing. To further the attainment of constitutional ideals, the Court has read and construed these rights concordantly. This has aided the court in addressing modern social and legal concerns by broadening the meaning of liberty, equality, and justice.

The Supreme Court had used an interpretation favourable to the spirit of Articles 14, 19, and 21 in the landmark case of *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India* in 1978, whereby it held the expression “restriction on freedom of the person” as being “fair, just, and reasonable.” Similarly, the Basic Structure Doctrine, as laid down by the Supreme Court in the landmark case of *Kesa Vananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* in 1973, states that fundamental rights and other basic features of a constitution cannot be defeated by amendment. The Supreme Court, in making such decisions, changed the way the Constitution was interpreted from a legal formality to a means of safeguarding individual rights and democratic principles.

### 3.2 Expansion of Article 21

According to Article 21 of the Constitution, the only way to take someone's life or personal freedom is through the legal process. Strict interpretation of Article 21 laid the groundwork for contemporary human rights law in India. The right to life, according to the Supreme Court, encompasses not only the ability to endure physical harm but also the means to do so with respect and dignity.

According to the Court's expansive reading of Article 21, it covers a wide range of rights, including those to a means of subsistence, an adequate education, health care, a safe place to live, an unpolluted environment, access to justice, a fair trial, personal confidentiality, and safety from abuse while in custody, among many others. *Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar* (1991), *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017), *Unni Krishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh* (1993), and *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* (1985) illustrate how Article 21 has broadened to include protection of human rights in diverse situations. The fundamental principle embodied in the Constitution of India, which holds that "human dignity comes first," has been strengthened, and the rights of citizens have greatly increased.

### 3.3 Growth of Public Interest Litigation (PIL)

Notable aspects of Indian constitutional law involve PIL. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Supreme Court began to relax its rules regarding locus standi so that selfless individuals, social activists, and non-government organizations could approach the court on behalf of the oppressed and underprivileged citizens who could not access the courts.

Public Interest Litigation is a tool that has been used to safeguard human rights and cause social justice. The Supreme Court has issued directives on a variety of issues, including bonded labour, child labour, environment protection, prison reforms, sexual harassment in the work place, custodial violence, pollution, and rights of marginalised communities using Public Interest Litigation (PIL). The cases of *People's Union for Democratic Rights v. Union of India* (1982), *Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of*

India (1984), Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997), and environmental cases of M.C. Mehta illustrate the vital role played by the PIL in creating access to justice opportunities. Despite certain reservations regarding the potential abuse of power by the courts, PIL remains a powerful constitutional instrument for ensuring governments are held accountable and human rights are upheld.

#### **4. JUDICIAL PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Indian Supreme Court has made important strides in interpreting the constitution in a way that protects and expands human rights. Part III of the Constitution guarantees fundamental rights, and the Court has always interpreted these rights liberally, making them relevant to society's evolving requirements while ensuring their continuous efficacy. The judiciary's decisions have essential in striking a balance between individual rights and the public interest, as well as in safeguarding the rights of marginalised and vulnerable people. Human rights in India are primarily safeguarded by the Supreme Court through constitutional remedies, judicial review, and Public Interest Litigation (PIL).

The Court has read the Constitution as a document that is 'living and breathing' and adapts to evolving social, economic and technological circumstances. This has made it possible to identify some of the rights that are assumed but are vital to the realization of human dignity and social justice. The Supreme Court has played significant role in the protection of human rights in the following areas.

##### **4.1 Right to Life and Personal Liberty**

The basis of human rights in India is derived from Article 21, which enshrines the Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Even though it initially looked like the Article 21 only pertained to the right to life, due to the historical interpretation of the decisions taken by the Supreme Court, it included other rights such as the right to dignity, justice, and fairness. Expanding upon the concept of "fairness, reasonableness, and non-arbitrariness," the decision in *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India* (1978) expanded what is covered under the constitution.

In subsequent years, other subsidiary rights necessary for living a dignified life were added to Article 21. Among others, such as the right to means of subsistence (*Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation*, 1985), the right to education, healthcare, adequate housing, and privacy (*Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, 2017), the right to a fair trial (access to legal counsel included), and the right to freedom from torture in jail, other basic rights are included in. Those decisions solidified Article 21, making it one of the most dynamic elements of the Constitution, and defining human dignity and personal freedom in its entirety.

##### **4.2 Equality and Non-Discrimination**

Equality is one of the basic values of the Constitution enshrined in the Articles 14-18 of the Constitution. The Supreme Court has consistently read these provisions as giving no room for arbitrary action by the State and guaranteeing equal protection of the law. Judicial rulings have reinforced the concept of equality, and that it must mean equal treatment and affirmative action to address past and current social and historical inequities.

The LGBTQA+ community, children, disabled people, women, and people of colour have all had their rights vigorously protected in court. In the case of *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India* (1992), the constitutional propriety of reservation for social and educational backward classes was upheld, and in *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018), the constitutional propriety of decriminalization of consensual same-sex was upheld. In both cases, equality, dignity, privacy, and individual liberty were emphasized. In addition, in the case of *(NALSA) v. Union of India* (2014), the rights of transgender people, along with their right to equality and non-discrimination, were protected.

#### **4.3 Freedom of Speech and Expression**

In India, one of the cornerstones of democracy is the right to freely express oneself as stated in Article 19(1)(a). Democracy rests on three pillars: free expression, public responsibility, and the exchange of ideas according to the Supreme Court. Under Article 19(2), however, the Court has also determined that reasonable limitations on fundamental freedom are necessary to protect sovereignty, public order, morality, decency, and other constitutional considerations.

The Supreme Court has protected journalistic freedom, artistic expression, academic freedom, and online communication while also helping to prevent the government from acting arbitrarily. The Supreme Court of India declared section 66A of the IT Act, 2000 invalid in the landmark judgment of *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India*, 2015, on the grounds that it was vague and too wide. The judgment was a step forward in ensuring digital rights and has demonstrated the significance of protecting one's liberty in the information technology era.

#### **4.4 Environmental and Socio-Economic Rights**

The Supreme Court's decision to include environmental and socioeconomic rights into the Right to Life under Article 21 significantly expands the definition and application of human rights. The Court has ruled that the right to live in an unpolluted setting with access to potable water, fresh air, and ecological harmony are basic human rights. The public has been pressing governments and public

bodies to do more to protect the environment and promote sustainable development through a string of environmental PILs, which have now reached the courts.

These cases have established the foundation for the principles of sustainable development, precautionary principle, and polluter pays principle. Equally, the court has recognized socio-economic rights as Fundamental Rights. Such rights relate to the right to education, right to health, right to housing, right to food, and right to livelihood, which are also related to the Directive Principles of State Policy. Social justice through the constitution has received further reinforcement from various legislations and judgments on the issues of bonded labor, child labor, reform of jails, and economic vulnerable groups. Despite ongoing difficulties in execution, the environmental, socioeconomic, and human rights agendas in India have been strengthened by the decisions of the Supreme Court.

**Table 1:** Judicial Protection of Human Rights through Supreme Court Jurisprudence

| Human Right                        | Constitutional Provision     | Landmark Judgment                                                         | Key Judicial Contribution                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Right to Life and Personal Liberty | Article 21                   | <i>Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India</i> (1978)                             | Expanded the meaning of personal liberty by requiring laws to be fair, just, and reasonable.                                                       |
| Right to Livelihood                | Article 21                   | <i>Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation</i> (1985)                 | Adopted the principle that the right to survival cannot be separated from the right to life.                                                       |
| Right to Equality                  | Articles 14–16               | <i>Indra Sawhney v. Union of India</i> (1992)                             | Ensured affirmative action policies that would enhance substantive equality for the socially and educationally disadvantaged classes.              |
| Rights of Transgender Persons      | Articles 14, 15, 16, 19 & 21 | <i>National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India</i> (2014) | Asserted that transgender individuals represent an independent gender and that they have the right to equality and dignity under the constitution. |

|                                  |                          |                                                         |                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Freedom of Speech and Expression | Article 19(1)(a)         | <i>Shreya Singhal v. Union of India</i> (2015)          | Preserved the right to free expression on the internet by ruling that IT Act Section 66A was invalid.                                           |
| Right to Privacy                 | Article 21               | <i>Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India</i> (2017) | Acknowledged the right to privacy as an integral part of the right to live with dignity.                                                        |
| LGBTQIA+ Rights                  | Articles 14, 15, 19 & 21 | <i>Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India</i> (2018)      | Decriminalised same-sex partnerships based on consent and bolstered rights to equality, respect, and privacy.                                   |
| Environmental Rights             | Article 21               | <i>M.C. Mehta Cases</i>                                 | Achieved environmental health and safety by establishing concepts like sustainable development, polluter pays, and the precautionary principle. |

## 5. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF LANDMARK SUPREME COURT JUDGMENTS

The Supreme Court has made significant strides in advancing human rights jurisprudence in India. To accommodate societal, political, and technical changes, the Court has interpreted the Fundamental Rights more broadly and made them flexible through constitutional interpretation. As a result of landmark decisions, the Constitution is now an evolving instrument that guarantees fundamental rights to equality, justice, liberty, and dignity to all people. Not only have they protected personal liberties, but they have also strengthened constitutional responsibility and democratic rule.

Judicial activism has spurred discussion about the scope of judicial authority. Many judgements have been delivered to fill legislative and executive gaps in human rights protection, but critics say that over-ambitious judicial rulings could intrude on the role of other constitutional organs. However, these are some of the milestones in human rights jurisprudence in India.

### 5.1 *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India* (1978)

The decision in *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India* (1978) It was a milestone in the history of Indian law. The matter was taken into account due to the fact that the Government confiscated the petitioner's passport without furnishing adequate grounds, hence the violation of the Constitutional rights, Articles 14, 19, and 21 of the Constitution guaranteeing the right to a passport of all citizens. The Supreme Court rejected the earlier narrow view of personal liberty and stated that any law interfering with personal liberty should be reasonable and just.

The court's ruling established the principle of the harmonious interpretation and interconnection of Articles 14, 19, plus 21. It substantially broadened Article 21's scope and cleared the way for the acknowledgement of several subsidiary rights, including as the right to health, education, privacy, legal assistance, a fair trial, and dignified existence. Some academics argue that the judge's expansive interpretation increased judicial activism as the courts had more voice in constitutional matters, notwithstanding the judgment's status as a cornerstone in protecting human rights.

### 5.2 *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* (1997)

Bhanwari Devi, a social worker who opposed child marriage, was brutally gang raped; the Vishaka case followed. Back then, India lacked specific laws that addressed sexual harassment on the job. In light of this legislative vacuum, the Supreme Court drafted the Vishaka Guidelines by consulting the Constitution and its numerous articles (14, 15, 19, and 21) as well as international conventions like CEDAW.

However, before the enactment of laws regarding this issue by Parliament, this ruling set out legally binding guidelines for the prevention and cure of sexual harassment at work. A law which prohibits, prohibits, and remedies sexual harassment of women at work was crafted in 2013 based on these recommendations. The ruling is hailed as a step towards gender justice and upholding the dignity of women, but there are also comments on the role of the judiciary in formulating policy in a time of absence of legislation. The judgment is nonetheless an important instance of innovative judicial human rights protection, despite the debate.

### 5.3 *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017)

In *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017), a Constitution Bench comprising of nine judges ruled unanimously, affirming that the right to privacy is a fundamental right derived from Article 21 and other sections of Part III of the Constitution. This ruling was done against the backdrop of concerns

associated with the Aadhaar identification scheme and the collection of personal information by the State.

The judgment acknowledged that privacy is a fundamental component of human dignity, autonomy and individual liberty. It believed in privacy as an integral part of bodily integrity, informational privacy, decisional autonomy and personal choice. This choice has ramifications for data protection, digital governance, reproduction rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, and surveillance laws. The judgment has certainly reinforced constitutional rights in the digital age, but the effective implementation of such rights is still dependent on broad and detailed data protection law and good governance.

#### **5.4 *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018)**

The decision in *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018) ranks high among India's most forward-thinking constitutional choices. The Supreme Court found that Articles 14, 15, 19, and 21 of the Indian Penal Code rendered Section 377, which made it a crime to engage in consenting adult intercourse, unconstitutional. Constitutional morality, the Court ruled, must take precedence over societal bias and popular opinion.

It affirmed the principle of equality, dignity, privacy and individual autonomy and that the rights of LGBTQIA+ people are part of human rights. It represented an important step towards taking a more inclusive approach towards constitutionalism and India's resolve for non-discrimination. However, the judgment also noted that LGBTQIA+ communities still face many hurdles such as lack of anti-discrimination laws and lack of social acceptance.

#### **5.5 *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* (1985)**

The case of *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* (1985) involved the forced removal of people living on the streets and in slums in Mumbai. It was stated that eviction would affect the capacity of the petitioners to earn their livelihood, and therefore affect their basic human rights despite rehabilitation. In accordance with the Supreme Court's understanding of Article 21, the Right to Livelihood cannot be separated from the Right to Life as, without a means of livelihood, no one can live with dignity.

The court's ruling noted the interconnected nature of economic, civil, and political rights and emphasised the need for development programs to prioritise the needs of marginalised groups. The Court did permit eviction in the current case, but it stressed that fairness, humanitarian considerations, and safeguards to protect the rights of the dispossessed should be paramount. The decision ushered in

a new age of socio-economic rights legislation, but it also brought to light the challenge of balancing the development of cities with the protection of marginalised communities.

**Table 2:** Comparative Analysis of Landmark Supreme Court Judgments on Human Rights

| Landmark Judgment                                       | Constitutional Provisions | Human Rights Issue                 | Key Judicial Principle                                                           | Impact on Human Rights Jurisprudence                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India</i> (1978)           | Articles 14, 19 & 21      | Personal liberty and due process   | Procedure affecting liberty must be fair, just, and reasonable                   | Expanded Article 21 and established the interrelationship between Articles 14, 19, and 21, laying the foundation for modern human rights jurisprudence.   |
| <i>Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan</i> (1997)             | Articles 14, 15, 19 & 21  | Sexual harassment at the workplace | Judicial guidelines can protect fundamental rights in the absence of legislation | Led to the enactment of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 that increased the rights of women. |
| <i>Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India</i> (2017) | Article 21 and Part III   | Right to privacy                   | Privacy is an intrinsic part of life, liberty, dignity, and autonomy             | Solidified the right to privacy and had a major impact on the fields of data protection and digital rights law.                                           |
| <i>Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India</i> (2018)      | Articles 14, 15, 19 & 21  | Equality and LGBTQIA+ rights       | Constitutional morality prevails over social morality                            | Reinforced non-discrimination, equality, privacy, and dignity; decriminalised same-sex partnerships based on mutual consent.                              |

|                                                           |            |                     |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation</i> (1985) | Article 21 | Right to livelihood | Livelihood is an integral component of the right to life | Educated subsequent welfare jurisprudence emphasises the importance of a person's ability to provide for themselves and their families, thus expanding socioeconomic rights. |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## 6. CONCLUSION

The progressive jurisprudence of India's highest court has bolstered the country's constitution by interpreting it to protect fundamental rights like equality, freedom, and justice for all citizens. Historic rulings and a comprehensive interpretation of Article 21 of the Fundamental Rights have led the Court to uphold a number of rights that are implied, including the right to freedom of expression, protection of the environment and socioeconomic rights, promotion of gender equality, and improved access to justice through PIL. The study shows how the judges have been essential in filling the lacuna of legislative and administrative action and keeping the values of the constitution alive in the society undergoing transformation. The supreme court remains the last arbiter of constitutional rights and the rule of law, notwithstanding the persistence of problems with judicial overreach, implementation problems, and delays in deciding cases. Justice, accountability, and the efficient protection of human rights in India can be supported by the growing body of human rights jurisprudence developed by its Court, which stands as a monument to constitutional democracy.

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