
A STUDY ON ROLE OF CHIEF JUSTICE AS A MASTER OF ROSTER IN INDIA

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“Justice is not to be taken by storm. She is to be wooed by slow advances.”

- Benjamin Cardozo

ABSTRACT

In today's competitive world the Judicial system plays a pivotal role through administration, quasi-judicial and rulemaking. The Chief Justice of India is considered to be highest authority for the Judicial system in the country and also, he holds the highest responsibility and utmost care to perform the administrative work. The principle of "Nemo iudex in sua causa" is considered to be one of the most important pillars of our Judicial system. For a longer periodical time, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India contains more roles and responsibility in appointing the Judges to the related cases to render appropriate Justice to the People. Chief Justice's Administrative power peculiarly the power which dictates that the functioning of the Chief Justice as a Master of Roster is a topic of the Constitutional Law which governs the position of the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice of the both Supreme Court and High Court holds power as the Master of Roster. The main motive of the Master of Roster system is to provide proper Justice to the aggrieved people and to sustain democracy in the Country. This paper in a detailed manner elucidates about the constitutional and historical perspective of the Chief Justice and also this article subsequently highlights about the powers, role and responsibility of Chief Justice as a Master of Roster and also the examination of the critics about the role of Chief Justice as Master of Roster in India.

Keywords: The Chief Justice of India, Master of Roster, Supreme Court, Judicial System and Constitution of India.

CHAPTER-I:**1.1 INTRODUCTION:**

One of the most influential courts in the world is the Supreme Court of India. The Chief Justice and 33 Puisne judges make up this body. The judicial and administrative branches of the Supreme Court (SC) carry out their respective tasks. On the judicial side, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) when a bench is presided over by the first among equals, but that is not the case when he renders an administrative decision. Regarding matters administrative, the CJI has the exclusive and ultimate power. He is revered as the Indian judiciary's highest dignitary and the pater familias⁸ of the judiciary. The Chief Justice may occasionally designate the official seal of the Supreme Court.

The Constitution gives the CJI a broad range of administrative authority wide. This involves the nomination of judges, the appointment of special judges, and the switching of seats. Regarding SC judge succession, rule-making, and designating officials and staff of But none of these authorities come from a statute passed by Parliament or the Constitution. The Chief Justice's position, topics pertaining to the makeup of benches, the division of responsibilities among justices, the listing of pressing issues, the establishment of the vacation bench, etc.

The CJI has extensive tasks, responsibilities, and administrative authority. They have been in the news recently due to cases and controversies. This chapter aims to investigate the functions, duties, and authority of the CJI as the leader of the SC's administration.

In a Country the Chief Justice of India is considered to be the head of the Judiciary. Along with thirty other judges the Chief Justice of India is presided in the Supreme Court of India. As per Article 124 of Constitution of India the Chief Justice of India is appointed as a Supreme Court Judge and then he is been recommended as a Chief Justice of India by the outgoing Chief Justice of India. The Chief Justice of India is appointed based on the date of appointment to the Supreme Court not on the basis of age. This is the usual convention which is followed as a custom. Both administrative function and Judicial functions of the Supreme Court are taken care by the Chief Justice of India.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. Whether the Master of Roster system creates an impact in the independence and decisionmaking of the Supreme Court Justices?
2. Whether the existing regulations and guidelines governing case allocation are sufficient to ensure transparency and fairness?
3. Whether it is incumbent to appoint a separate committee or independent body to oversee the allocation of cases in the Supreme Court of India?
4. Can the Master of Roster system be used to promote judicial activism and social justice activities?
5. Whether the allocation of cases in the Master of System is taking place based on the specialization or experience?

CHAPTER-II: CONSTITUTION AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 CONSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS- CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

As the "Master of Roster," only the Chief Justice of India has the power to assign cases to various Benches or Judges of the Indian Supreme Court. It is acknowledged that, under this notion, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India is the Master of Roster and is principally in charge of upholding judicial decorum and discipline. Additionally, it states that the Chief Justice and all judges are first among equals of the Indian Supreme Court are equal and have the same legal authority, with the Chief Justice serving as the most senior judge among them. However, there is a contention that this authority shouldn't be used to any higher authority by the Chief Justice and the power is to be exercised in The Chief Justices of the Supreme Court are alone in charge of forming benches and allocating cases to the court's judges. This entrenched approach has allowed corruption and the abuse of statutory authority to proliferate. This established procedure hasn't only brought in undemocratic control over the judiciary but has also produced biased or incorrect rulings being supplied.

It is also agreed that the Chief Justice of India must act in his capacity as the Master of

Roster select the Bench that will hear a specific case. The expressed concern is that Considering the inclination and bias of specific judges, the Chief Justice may allocate cases to such judges in order to fulfill the CJI's desired preset outcome. Therefore, we require a more logical and open approach for the listing and redistribution of the issues to Steer clear of any such wrongdoing.

The 2013 Supreme Court Rules (henceforth referred to as the "Rules") contain the following provisions not adhered to strictly, which results in arbitrariness. These Regulations give The Chief Justice of India may use his discretion to assign cases. To ensure that in order to guarantee the equitable application of this discretion, the title "Chief Justice" should be understood to refer to the "Collegium" of the Supreme Court's first five judges, as decided by the India's Supreme Court.

2.1.1 Historical Perspective:

The concept of the CJI as the Master of the Roster originated in the British colonial era. However, its power and scope have evolved over time, with significant debates concerning transparency and potential for misuse. Key milestones include:

- 1950s: The initial interpretation of Article 145 granted absolute discretion to the CJI, sparking concerns about lack of accountability and transparency.
- 1990s: The Supreme Court acknowledged the need for a "fair roster," emphasizing equitable distribution of workload and consideration of seniority.
- 2010s: Controversial case allocations led to renewed questioning of the CJI's role and calls for greater procedural clarity and safeguards.

2.1.2 Master of Roster: In the Indian Legal Context

According to the Indian Legal Context, the term 'Master of Roster' refers to the administrative powers of the Chief Justice of India and the Chief Justices of the High Court to allocate the matters the puisne judges shall be hearing respectively.

This implies that the Chief Justice of India is the only official with the power to assign matters that have been filed or are pending before the Supreme Court to other judges. The

Chief Justices of the High Courts have the same authority. No, the established convention states that other puisne judges have no say on this regard. Under the administrative authority vested in them, the Chief Justice of India and the Chief Justices of the High Courts¹ choose the roster or distribution of cases to respective puisne judges or Benches. Essentially, a roster specifies the tasks that justices of the Supreme Court and the High Court are allocated. "Master of the Roster" describes the Chief Justice's ability to create benches to hear cases. As a result, the Chief Justice of India and the Chief Justices of the High Courts possess and use both administrative and judicial authority. It should be emphasized, however, that the title of "Master of Roster" confers no greater jurisdiction over puisne judges on the Chief Justice of India or the Chief Justices of the High Courts. Among equals, the Chief Justice is merely ranked foremost.

Justice Dipak Misra, the current Chief Justice of India, is credited with coining the phrase "Master of the Roster." He said as much: ***"THE CHIEF JUSTICE IS THE MASTER OF THE ROSTER AND HE ALONE HAS THE PREROGATIVE TO CONSTITUTE THE BENCHES OF THE COURT AND ALLOCATE CASES TO THE BENCHES SO CONSTITUTED"***

As the master of the roster, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) is the only person with the authority to assign cases. The Chief Justice alone has the authority to form benches, and the Registrar General of the Supreme Court compiles the roster in accordance with his or her directives. The roster includes general or detailed instructions for case assignment or distribution to a specific bench, as well as bench workload distribution in the event of judge unavailability. In an emergency, the CJI may direct the Registrar to transfer judicial duties to another Bench. Establishing a Constitution Bench by CJI in accordance with Article 145(3) to decide cases containing significant legal questions, to interpret the Constitution, or in accordance with Article 143 Regarding Presidential reference: the Supreme Court Rules of 2013, which were formulated under Article 145 with the President's consent to govern the Supreme Court's general practice and procedure. In the cases of *Shanti Bhushan v. Supreme Court of India*², it was held that the CJI is the master to roster the case. The facts of this case are as follows the petition was filed by a senior advocate Shanti Bhushan, who was also the Union Law Minister. In the petition, the clarification was asked as to the

¹ Chirag Balyan, Administrative Power, Roles and Responsibility of Chief Justice of India, SSRN (2021)

² 8 SCC 396

administrative powers exercised by the Chief Justice of India and the procedure that is followed in the Master of Roster cases. The petitioner believed that concentration of power only in one person is harmful to the democracy and therefore he sought to bring an end to this by filing the petition.

It was stated that the power of Master of Roster cases should be decided with the help of the collegium and not by the CJI alone. The petition further stated that the power given to only one person was abused and the necessary reforms have to be brought regarding the same.

At first, the Supreme Court welcomed the petition and stated that it did not doubt the intention of the petitioner and respected the same. The petition further argued that the powers given to the CJI as Master of Roster were not given under any constitutional provisions and it was exercised by the passage of time. The CJAR judgment also recognized the power of CJI as the Master of Roster. The petitioner relied on the case of *Second Judges* and stated that it is not fair to give power to only one person.

The Supreme Court stated that if the power is given to a particular bench, the bench will have the dominion on the case and the views and opinions of the judges could be divergent. The CJI, acting as the head has a general and greater responsibility. The CJI has a moral responsibility towards the public and to the judiciary.

It was further stated that the Article 145³ of the Constitution does not describe the CJI as the collegium and therefore the CJI is not the collegium and he has to be independently working and even if the CJI should sit with more than one judge should be decided by the CJI himself.

Keeping all the above facts, the Supreme Court held that only CJI is the Master of Roster and has the power to decide the allocation of cases to his fellow judges.

CHAPTER: 3 THE MECHANICS OF ROSTER SYSTEM

3.1 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

³ The Constitution of India, 1950.

Article 124(2)⁴ of the Constitution designates the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and is appointed by the President. Regarding the CJI, the departing CJI suggests his replacement. The Union Law Minister forwards the recommendation to the Prime Minister, who advises the President.

The Supreme Court ruled in the *Second Judges Case (1993)* that only the senior-most judge on the Supreme Court should choose the CJI.

The Supreme Court of India held in the *Third Judges case (1998)* that "consultation with a plurality of judges" is a necessary part of the consultation process used by the Chief Justice of India.

The consultation process is not defined by the CJI's lone opinion. A collegium of four senior Supreme Court justices shall be consulted by him or her; even if two of them don't agree, they shouldn't give the concept to the government.

The Collegium system was established as a result of the "*third judges case*," and since 1998, the High Courts and Supreme Courts have used it to select and transfer judges.

The President must consult with the Chief Justice, Governor, and Chief Justice of the High Court in issue when nominating justices, according to Article 217.

Because of this, a CJI continues to serve until the age of 65, while justices of the High Court retire at age 62.

In reality, how is the roster chosen?

The Supreme Court Roster is covered in Chapter VI of the Handbook on Practice and Procedure and Office Procedure. It states that the Chief Justice of India gives the Registrar instructions on how to construct the Roster.⁵ The Roster's operation is based on the idea of saving judicial time. In compliance with directives from the Supreme Court, the Registrar also maintains a record of cases pending before the various benches based on the Roster.

⁴ Dr. J.N. Pandey, *The Constitution of India*, Central Law Agency, 58th edition, 2021.

⁵ Dr. Anil Gopal Variath & Ms. Kopal Garg, *Role of Chief Justice as Master Of Roster – Time To Revisit*, *Journal Of Legal Studies And Research*, Volume 4 Issue 5, Pg. 248-259 (October 2018).

The Registrar is required to present the matter to the Chief Justice of India for additional rulings in the event that a judge transfers the case to be handled by a different bench.

3.1.2 Chief Justice of High Courts as Master of Roster

The Supreme Court reached the following conclusion in *State of Rajasthan v. Prakash Raj (1998)*⁶ Chief Justice of High Courts as Master of Roster

- The Chief Justice is the only person with administrative authority over the High Court. But he is merely the first among equals in the judicial system.
- The Chief Justice is the master of the roster; in this capacity, he alone possesses the authority to form the court's benches and assign cases to them.
- The Chief Justice's directives or the task assigned to the Puisne Judges are the only ways in which they can carry out their duties.
- The Puisne Judges are not permitted to "pick and choose" whatever cases are pending in the High Court and allocate them to themselves for disposal in the absence of the Chief Justice's proper directions.
- No Judge or Judges may direct the Registry to list any case that is pending before them that contradicts the Chief Justice's directives.

3.1.3 Source of Power

Article 145(1) of the Constitution grants the Supreme Court the authority to enact rules governing the practice and procedure of the Court; these rules must be approved by the President.⁷ However, the authority to enact rules is subject to laws passed by Parliament, which has not passed any laws governing the powers of the Court; in the absence of such laws, the Court's rules framed by the SC hold sway. Order VI of the Rules dealing with Constitution of Division Courts and Powers of Single Judge recognizes the power of the CJI to constitute the various benches, but it is silent on the subject how CJI's discretion

⁶ (1998) 1 SCC 1: AIR 1998 SC 1344

⁷ Shivam Sethi and Shivangi Singh, Power of Chief Justice of India as a Master of Roster in India, IJLMH, ISSN- 2581-5369, Vol 5 Issue 1, Pg. No. 287-295.

needs to be used when creating the roster. Chapter VI of the SC's Handbook on Practice and Procedure and Office Procedure (handbook, henceforth) provides instructions on how to prepare rosters. Under the direction of the CJI, the Registrar (J-I) compiles and lists the roster, which includes any specific or general instructions about the assignment of work to a Bench. The CJI is required to pass the orders even in cases where a bench acting in a Judicial capacity requests that the matter be brought before another bench. Additionally, judges may be appointed by the CJI to occupy the vacation benches. Many judgments have addressed the Chief Justice's authority to establish guidelines for roster compilation and business distribution, primarily within the framework of the High Court. It has been argued that the Chief Justice's authority stems from the essence of his office. The Chief Justice is acknowledged as having exclusive administrative responsibility. Nonetheless, the Chief Justice has the authority to create several committees and appoint additional judges to carry out different administrative duties. The website of the SC features a list of these 36 committees. *Campaign for Judicial Accountability & Reforms v. Union of India & Anr.*⁸ In this landmark judgment upheld the CJI's power as the Master of the Roster while emphasizing the principles of "objectivity, transparency, and accountability." The court suggested creating a collegium of senior judges to assist the CJI in sensitive case allocations and emphasized the need for clear guidelines and SOPs for roster practices. The purchase committee, library committee, e-committee, AoR Examination committee, and departmental promotion committee are a few of the committees in addition to the mandated ones like the Gender Sensitization and Internal Complaints Committee. But the Master of Roster role is filled by the CJI himself. However, there has been a suggestion recently that the collegium of judges should make decisions in the capacity of the Master of Roster, much like the appointment procedure. But the Court dismissed the idea, ruling that the CJI is the only one with the authority to determine the constitution of benches, bench strength and listing of matters.

Is Puisne Judge Able to Make Decisions Regarding Listing and Roster?

On the administrative side, the Chief Justice is the only one with the requisite authorities to make the roster and form benches, even though he is only the 'first among equals' on the judicial side. The Chief Justice alone has the authority to create rosters, and it is his or

⁸ (2018) 1 SCC 589

her responsibility to oversee the preparation of a daily cause list. As a result, a judge functioning in a judicial capacity lacks the authority to command the Registry in any way, as doing so would go against the CJI's ruling. Consequently, a bench may instruct the listing of a certain matter before it if it so desires register to accept the CJI's relevant orders. Nonetheless, the CJI cannot be instructed to hear a case by that specific bench alone. It is not anticipated that the puisne judges will grant requests from the parties' attorneys to list cases that do not precisely fit on the established roster. Under such circumstances, it is proper to instruct the attorney to bring up the matter before the Chief Justice and secure the necessary directives. In *Sohan Lal Baid v. State of West Bengal*, the Calcutta High Court ruled that: in short, the Chief Justice's exercise of his constitutional, statutory, and inherent powers is the only source of authority and jurisdiction for the Chief Justice to take cognizance of, hear, and decide cases falling under particular categories or classes, as well as for the court to make any necessary decisions and exercise any judicial power pertaining to those cases Judges sitting alone or in division courts may hear, consider, or decide cases that are not covered by this determination as long as it is in effect. In *the Sanjay Kumar Srivastava vs. Acting Chief Justice & Ors* case, the entire Allahabad High Court bench considered the Chief Justice's constitutional status in relation to the other High Court judges as well as his status, authority, and powers. The entire bench declared: It is evident that the Chief Justice has a unique status under the 1952 Rules of Court as well as the Constitution, as a result of the use of the powers granted by Article 225 of the Constitution.⁹ The Chief Justice is the only one who may decide which judges of the Court. He is the only one who has the authority to delegate tasks to judges who are seated alone, in division benches, or in full benches. It is solely within his authority to determine which cases will be heard by a single judge or by a panel of judges.

3.1.4 Justification for Chief Justice of India's Exclusivity Power

The Chief Justice's sole authority is supported by the argument that it is necessary to uphold judicial discipline and guarantee the efficient and well-organized operation of the Court. If the judges begin selecting the cases they would hear, the court's machinery would break down and its judicial responsibilities would come to an end due to internal conflict

⁹ Harshika Jain, Does the Chief Justice Have Power to Allocate Cases, 5.2 NLUJ LR (2018) 28.

stemming from a desire for a specific jurisdiction or specific case. The *Nemo Judex in causa sua* principle is been implemented.

In the *Ramesh Chand Paliwal case*¹⁰, the Supreme Court clarified the constraints on judges' powers by observing that even the entire bench lacks the authority to change or propose changes to the norms that the Chief Justice of India has established. The promotion of High Court employees cannot be facilitated by the puisne judges.

Manner of Listing:-

The handbook's Chapter XIII describes the process for listing instances. The computer automatically assigns the new matters based on the subject category. Nonetheless, the CJI is able to select a certain bench to hear any case. In addition, upon an oral mention, CJI may list a matter out of order or hear cases or applications before the deadline for admission. As a result, the CJI has the authority to expedite case proceedings or to postpone a politically contentious case for years (because backlogs offer valid reasons to postpone a case). The CJI has the power to choose which judges will sit on the bench and how strong that bench should be. The authority of CJI even goes so far as to move a partially heard case to a more senior bench for adjudication.

Handling the Cause List: A Look at Some Thoughts and Techniques:-

The CJI has a great deal of administrative discretion in determining which matters and how they will be heard by the SC. Every Chief Justice handles the cause list in a different way. The main factor motivating a Chief Justice to employ a specific strategy is the closing of the case backlog. The goal is to accomplish this by raising the efficiency of the matter listing, the case disposition rate. In order to maximize efficiency and raise the case disposal rate, virtually every Chief Justice who assumes the position attempts to rationalize and streamline the listing system. The techniques used by Chief Justices in succession include establishing guidelines for the expiration of outdated applications, digitization of the registry, judicial officer training, establishment of unique and specialized benches, a list of other sporadic cases concerning other days, batch matters or related matters are prioritized, and less importance is given to Bench cases for the Constitution, a

¹⁰ Piotr J. Malyz, *Nemo judex in causa sua as the Basis of Law, Justice, and Justification in Luther's Thought*, *Harvard Theological Review* (2007)

list of certain admission cases or cases following notice, and even on regular hearing days, placing judges according to how often they are disposed of and even starting a unique push to make decisions on topics after notification. In *Madras Bar Association v. Union of India & Ors. (2020)* This case dealt with the controversial practice of "suo moto" listing by the CJI, where certain cases are directly assigned to specific benches without following the usual roster system. The court acknowledged the CJI's discretion in exceptional circumstances but stressed the need for transparency and clear justifications for such deviations from the regular roster practice. One clear technique used by the goal of having more Chief Justices is to enhance the volume of cases listed on various days.

Authority to Permit Early Listing by Remarking: -

The CJI jurisdiction extends to permit early listening of admission matters upon the oral mention, as was already said above. Crucially, the Constitution Bench presided over by a dispute involving the Bihar Legal Support Society and the Chief Justice of Anr & India convened: The query of whether petitions for special leave in opposition to bail rejection or anticipatory whether hail should be recorded right away is a matter for the administrative authority of the Chief Justice, and we are unable to provide any guidance in that regard. However, It is important to note that any petitioner who submits a special leave request against refusal of bail or anticipatory hail is given the chance to bring up his case in front of the knowledgeable Chief Justice acting in his official function as an urgent listing and the Chief Justice issues the necessary order whenever a case warrants an immediate listing for listing as urgent the case's substantial conclusion. Gautam Bhatia uses the Aadhar case as an illustration. In *Sanjeev Sawhney v. Union of India & Ors. (2021)* In this case revisited the issue of transparency in roster practices and called for the disclosure of reasons behind specific bench compositions in high-profile or sensitive cases. The court acknowledged the potential for public anxiety and the need to maintain public confidence in the judiciary through greater transparency.

Recapitulating the Chief Justice of India's Authority as the Master of the Roster

(1) The Chief Justice is the only person with administrative authority over the High Court. But he is merely the first among equals in the judicial system.

(2) The Master of the Roster is the Chief Justice. It is his exclusive right to make up the

court's benches and assign cases to them accordingly.

(3) The Puisne Judges' authority to perform that duty is limited to what the Chief Justice or in accordance with his instructions.

(4) That no Judge who is to sit will do so until the Chief Justice's decision is finalized individually can sit in a Division Bench, and the Judges cannot divide up any Division Bench making up the Bench itself, as well as one or both of the Judges making up such Bench members sit alone and handle any additional judicial matters that come up given to them by the Chief Justice or in accordance with his instructions.

(5) That the Chief Justice may consider an application that is presented to him in accordance with Rule 55 (above) and forward a case to the higher bench for resolution, and he can employ this authority even in the event that a case is only partially.

(6) That the puisne Judges cannot pick and choose any case pending in the High Court and assign the same to himself or themselves for disposal without appropriate orders of the Chief Justice.

(7) That no judge or judges can give directions to the Registry for listing any case before him or them which runs counter to the directions given by the Chief Justice.

CHAPTER 4: CRITICS VIEW ON MASTER OF ROSTER SYSTEM

4.1 Criticism of India's Chief Justice power as Master of Roster

The listing decision is solely administrative, yet it may have an impact on the standard of justice. The judge's tendency to make decisions is influenced by what they hear indirectly the situation. If a judge only hears three to four cases out of the enormous number of cases placed before her minutes to determine if the SLP should be admitted or not, then one can see its impact on the standard of justice. It is important to remember that while judges sit in a only spend five to six hours a day in court, but the majority spend four to five hours at home.

Is it necessary to reform the Master of Roster system?

According to Gautam Bhatia, the amalgamation of total opacity, total power, and For the Office of the Chief Justice, lacking accountability essentially implies that the organization. Every CJI needs to be completely neutral, uncorruptible, and above all else in order to exist rebuke. Actually, the majority of these choices are chosen arbitrarily being made clear, and many of them are not documented in any official records. Even the information that the SC consistently releases in the form of Monthly and Annual Reports Reports don't fully explain how these Choices are chosen.

Recently, a few litigants submitted petitions contesting the administrative authority of the CJI, in particular the authority to list and assign cases to judges. A petitioner contended that these choices must be made by the collegium, which is made up of the five judges with the highest rank. The SC denied these petitions, citing case law that mandates the CJI to serve as the 'master of the roster' in order to uphold court decorum and discipline. Notably, the SC rejected the idea that the collegium should make administrative decisions, stating that daily decisions of this nature must be made as opposed to the occasional judicial appointment process.

The petitioner in the Ashok Pande case asked the court to grant a mandamus to The Indian Supreme Court will develop a standard procedure for assembling benches and allocating authority over several SC benches. The court dismissed the claim made by the Petitioner ruled that the Chief Justice cannot be given a mandamus order to establish regulations or present them in a specific way. Moreover, instructions cannot be given on the side of the court requested the CJI to set up the benches in a specific way. The supreme court acknowledged the constitutional norms created by different High Courts, some of which that have commemorated its quincennial. The Chief Justices are guided by these conventions in the distribution of labor, which include the formation of benches. The court stated that a some of these customs, with the necessary adjustments to fit institutional requirements, which are pertinent to the CJI as well.

4.1.2 The Road Ahead: Balancing Efficiency and Accountability:

The Master of Roster system remains a cornerstone of the Supreme Court's efficiency and case management. However, recognizing and addressing concerns regarding transparency and potential undue influence are crucial to maintaining public trust and safeguarding

judicial independence. Open communication, clear guidelines for case allocation, internal review mechanisms, and a robust Collegium system can form the pillars of a more transparent and accountable system. Furthermore, exploring technological solutions for case allocation and fostering continuous dialogue within the legal community can help build further trust and refine the system. Ultimately, the success of the Chief Justice as the Master of Roster hinges on finding a delicate equilibrium between efficiency, transparency, and the core principles of judicial independence. By actively addressing concerns and continually striving for improvement, the Indian Supreme Court can ensure that its case allocation system fulfills its intended purpose, contributing to a just and accessible judiciary for all.

4.1.3 Advantages of the System:

The CJI's role as Master of Roster offers several advantages:

- *Efficient Case Management:* With the power to create benches and allocate cases based on expertise, experience, and workload, the CJI can ensure speedy disposal of matters and prevent bottlenecks.
- *Specialized Benches:* Complex cases requiring particular expertise can be assigned to specific benches consisting of judges knowledgeable in that area. This leads to more informed judgments and enhances the quality of adjudication.
- *Maintaining Institutional Balance:* The CJI's ability to distribute cases can ensure a fair workload amongst judges and prevent any individual judge from holding undue influence over particular types of cases.
- *Flexibility and Responsiveness:* The CJI can, if necessary, quickly reshuffle benches or create special benches to address urgent matters or unforeseen situations.

Potential Concerns:

While the system offers undeniable benefits, certain concerns deserve attention:

- *Transparency and Accountability:* The opaque nature of case allocation raises

questions about potential biases or influences impacting the CJI's decisions. Clear guidelines and internal mechanisms for review are crucial to ensure transparency and accountability.

- *Judicial Independence*: Overconcentration of power in the CJI's hands might raise concerns about potential manipulation of the roster to influence verdicts or favor specific judges. A robust system of checks and balances within the judiciary is essential to safeguard judicial independence.
- *Collegium System*: The recent controversy surrounding the composition and functioning of the Collegium, the body responsible for judicial appointments, raises concerns about potential compromises with the CJI's role as Master of Roster. A reformed Collegium system that ensures transparency and independent selection of judges is critical.

CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION:

As the head of the Indian judiciary, CJI is endowed with considerable authority. He holds a symbolic pre-eminence in nominations to the judiciary. His abilities as a master of roster are unrestricted and unchallenged. Regarding the selection of the officials and employees of the SC is in charge, barring any pecuniary ramifications. The Executive is unable to just disregard the Chief Justice's recommendation. Furthermore, he plays a part in performing in accordance with official appointments. The primary restraint on his authority is self-control and righteousness, an assumption that comes with the job. The Chief Justice as a Master of Roster needs to analyse and understand the ability as well as the experience of the Judge to deal with the cases which have been presented to them. The whole Judicial Administration functions rely on the shoulder of the Chief Justice of India. He sets the role model for the puisne judges to deal and head up with the cases and the Judicial system. Thus, the functioning, processes and role of Chief Justice is efficiently favoring the development of the Country.

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