UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION
NEW DELHI

MINUTES OF THE 17TH MEETING OF THE EMPOWERED COMMITTEE ON BASIC SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH HELD ON 21ST APRIL, 2008 AT 11.00 A.M. IN THE UGC OFFICE

The 17th meeting of the Empowered Committee on Basic Scientific Research was held on 21st April, 2008 at 11.00 a.m. in the UGC Office.

The following attended the meeting:

1. Prof.Mool Chand Sharma
   Vice Chairman, UGC

2. Prof. M.M. Sharma
   3, Jaswant Baugh (Runwal Park)
   Behind Akbar Allya
   V.N. Purav Marg, Chembur Naka
   Mumbai – 400 071

3. Prof.P.Rama Rao
   Flat No. 301,
   Naimisum, Plot No.22,
   Tri Nagar Colony,
   Hyderabad - 500 073

4. Prof.Goverdhan Mehta
   Hon.Prof. & CSIR
   Bhatnagar Fellow
   Indian Institute of Science
   Bangalore - 560 012

5. Prof.S.P.Thyagarajan
   #, 1st Main Road,
   Nehru Nagar, Adyar,
   Chennai - 600 020

6. Dr.(Mrs.) Pankaj Mittal
   Joint Secretary, UGC

7. Ms.Parbati Bose
   Under Secretary, UGC

Prof. Kota Harinarayan could not attend the meeting.

After formal welcome, the committee took up the agenda items one-by-one.

Item No.1:- Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March, 2008.

The minutes of the 16th meeting of the Empowered Committee held on 20th March, 2008 were confirmed.

Item No.2:- Action taken on the minutes

The Committee noted with appreciation the action taken by the UGC on the minutes of the last meeting of the Empowered Committee.

Item No.3:- To approve the award letter for Dr.D.S. Kothari Post-Doctoral Fellowships

The committee after due deliberations approved the award letter to be issued to the candidates recommended by the Empowered Committee for the award of Dr. D.S. Kothari Post-Doctoral Fellowship. A copy of the award letter is enclosed.

Item No.4:- Presentation by departments for consideration of Networking Resource Centres.

The following four departments made a presentation before the Empowered Committee for establishment of UGC Networking Resource Centre / summer / winter schools.

1. Department of Chemical Engineering, UICT, Mumbai
2. Department of Chemical Engineering, BHU, Varanasi
3. Department of Geology, Punjab University, Chandigarh
4. Department of Food Technology and Bio-Engg. Jadavpur University, Jadavpur

The committee after lengthy deliberations decided to recommend the establishment of networking centres / summer/ winter schools at Department of Chemical Engineering, UICT, Mumbai with a total budget of Rs.10.00 crores. However, an undertaking shall be obtained from the department, as done in the past, before formally conveying the approval.

Item No.5 :- Discussions with Prof. Yash Pal, Former Chairman, UGC

Prof. Yash Pal Former Chairman, UGC met the Empowered Committee to discuss various issues pertaining to higher education particularly relating to science education and research with reference to the recently constituted committee to review the UGC and AICTE. He elicited views of the members on the basic issue of working of UGC and AICTE and wanted to know if some of its policies are working as impediment in the development of higher education.

Prof. Rama Rao mentioned that AICTE suffers from a serious problem of lack of permanent staff members. AICTE presently is banking on contractual appointments with no core staff leading to absence of continuation whenever change of heads takes place. He was also of the view that AICTE has put big labels to their programmes which does not match with the understanding, values and quality of the programmes being run. He also expressed his concern on the decline in quality as well as quantity of science research and felt that UGC-AICTE-MHRD should play a greater role to further scientific research and to enhance the research base of the country.

Dr. Thyagarajan felt that both UGC and AICTE are spending more time on policing rather than quality improvement. There is too much of monitoring about the trivial things which leads to a situation where big issues are lost sight off. Moreover, there is a mutual contradiction between the policies laid down by UGC and

some professional statutory Councils which has thus led to some court cases between UGC and AICTE in the past. He also mentioned about lack of professional development of university administrators leading to lack of efficiency and governance. He felt that the Total Quality Management was absent in apex bodies like UGC and AICTE also.

Prof. Goverdhan Mehta felt that major changes are required in UGC as well as in AICTE. He was of the view that there should be one body which should coordinate overall higher education including General, Medical, Engineering, Technical and Professional Education. This apex structure shall coordinate the entire higher education system including universities / colleges/ IITs/ IIMs etc. with further sub-delegation with regard to rules relating to functions like regulating, financing, monitoring and quality maintenance.

Prof. M.M. Sharma indicated that the country is mainly dominated by the state universities who have become mere examining bodies, in view of the baggage of large number of affiliating colleges being served by them. He posed a question that whether each university should be busy in conducting examinations for students or they should concentrate on teaching and research. He felt that affiliating and residential universities shall be bifurcated. Moreover, undergraduate programmes shall not be undertaken by the universities except for the integrated programmes leading to master or higher level degrees.

Prof. Yash Pal while appreciating the views expressed by the members, further touched upon the issue of autonomy of teachers. He raised a larger issue like why can’t a teacher teach what he wants to teach. The new courses take a lot of time to get approved and by that time the relevance of what he wanted to teach is lost. He felt that the quality of teachers has

to be raised remarkably. The Empowered Committee felt that the future of higher education does not lie in central institutes and establishing more central universities will not help. Rather state universities shall be taken care of and certain uniform policies should be adopted with respect to age of superannuation etc. for teachers. The emphasis should be on producing good teachers and researchers and to induce pedagogical skill in them. Prof. Yash Pal mentioned that knowledge cannot develop in cubicles with non porous boundaries. There is a need to create institutions that do not inhibit movement from one subject to another.

Item No.6 :- Finalization of awardees for Dr. D.S. Kothari Post-Doctoral Fellowships."

Prof. S. Gadre presented the list of probable candidates which could be selected for Dr. D.S. Kothari Post-Doctoral Fellowship in various subjects. He mentioned that out of 170 applications processed so far only about 20% have been shortlisted and the applications covered almost all parts of India and the subject-wise spread was 40% in Biological Sciences, 40% in Chemical/ Physical Sciences and 20% in rest of the subjects. The committee went through the list in detail and selected the following 24 candidates for the award of Dr. D.S. Kothari Post-Doctoral Fellowship.

S.No.	Name of the Applicant	Name of the Proposed Mentor / Place
1.	Nagesh Babu R.	Dr. Balaji Department of Microbiology and cel Biology, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore
2.	Oinam Tarunkumar Singh	Dr. Jharna Chakravorty School of Environmental Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University, Priyadarsini Hills, P.O. Kottayam – 686 560 Kerala

3.	Meenu Jain	Dr. Ramesh Bomezai (Ex. Dean, School of Life Sciences) Coordinator, National Centre of Applied Human Genetics, School of Life Sciences, JNU, New Delhi
4.	Soorej M. Basheer	Dr. C. Jayabaskaran Department of Biochemistry, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore
5.	Surender Singh	Behaviour Physiology, School of Biological Sciences, Madurai Kamraj University, Madurai – 625 021
6.	R. Sreekanth	Dr. P. Gautam Centre for Biotechnology, Department of Biotechnology, Anna University, Chennai
7.	Niloo Srivastava	Professor RNK Bamezai, NCAHG, School of Life Sciences, JNU, New Delhi
8.	F.A. Mohiddin	Dr. Abdul Hamid Wani Department of Plant Pathology, University of Kashmir, J & K
9.	Rekha Kushwaha	Dr. T.C. Bhalla Department of Bio-technology & Bioinformatics Centre, Himachal Pradesh University, Summer Hill, Shimla
10.	Kishore Babu Neela	Prof. P. Reddanna Department of Animal Sciences, School of Life Sciences, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad
11.	Akhilesh Prasad	Rajeev Gupta Department of Chemistry University of Delhi, Delhi
12.	Dr. C. Thangaraja	Dr. V. Murugesan Professor, Department of Chemistry, Anna University, Chennai

13.	Dr. Ziya Ahmad Khan	Dr. Mohammad Kamil Department of Petroleum Studies F/o Engg. & Technology, Z.H. College of Engg. & Tech. Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh – 202 002
14.	K. Balasubramani	Prof. Dr. Ashwani Nangia School of Chemistry Univ. of Hyderabad, Hyderabad – 500 046
15.	P. Srinivasan	Dr. V.P. Mahadevan Pillai Department of Optoelectronics, Univ. of Kerala Karivattom-695581 Thiruvananthapuram Kerala
16.	T.Kanagasekaran	Dr. Binay Kumar Department of Physics & Astrophysics, Crystal Lab, Univ. of Delhi, Delhi – 110 007
17.	Panch Ratan Mishra	Prof. O.N. Srivastava & Prof. Shyam Sunder Agarwal Banaras Hindu University Varanasi
18.	Ahmed Abdurrahman	Dilip S. Joag Department of Physics, Univ. of Pune, Ganeshkhind Road Pune – 411007 Maharashtra
19.	Vaibhav Kulshrestha	Dr. S.V. Bhoraskar Professor, Department of Physics Univ. of Pune, Pune – 411007
20	Garima Agarwal	Prof. A.P. Pathak School of Physics Univ. of Hyderabad, Hyderabad – 500 046
21	Veenu Sisodia	Prof. I.P. Jain 14, Vigyan Bhawan, Centre for Non-Conventional Energy Resources, Univ. of Rajasthan, Jaipur – 302004

22	GIJO JOSE	Dr. V.P.N. Nampoori Director International School of Photonics Cochin Univ. of Science & Tech. Cochin – 22 Kerala
23	Valanarasu T.	Dr. N. Ramanujam Bharathidasan Univ., Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu.
24.	Sushmitha Krishnan	Prof. Anubha Kaushik Guru Jambheshwar Univ., Hissar, Haryana.

The committee used the following criteria for selecting the candidates.

1. The selected candidate should have at least two 'B' grades from the referees.
2. The selected candidate should not have received any 'D' grade.
3. Generally the Mentor and the guide should not be same but however if the candidate has obtained one 'A' grade from the referees then same mentor and guide can be allowed.

The Committee further mentioned that in case of rejected candidates their applications should not be considered before one year of the rejection. The committee also complimented Dr. S. Gadre for doing the excellent work. He was requested to put list of successful candidates on the UGC website.

The committee further mentioned that the amount of Dr. D.S. Kothari Post Doctoral Fellowship should be increased from Rs.18000-20000 to Rs.20000-22000 in view of the revision of existing Post Doctoral Fellowship in UGC and CSIR. However, the bridging fellowship shall continue to be Rs.16000/- p.m.

Item No.7 :- To discuss modalities for the UGC Schemes, "Operation Faculty Recharge"

This item was deferred.

Item No.8:- Any other item

The committee desired that the data may be obtained from all the Colleges with Potential for Excellence having science faculty with regard to Ph.D. produced, faculty strength and publications of the faculty in the last 5 years for consideration of the committee in the next meeting.

It was proposed to hold the next meeting of the committee on 6th May, 2008 in the UGC office for brain storming session regarding schemes to be implemented in the new financial year.

The meeting ended with the vote of thanks to the Chair.

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