

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EMPOWERED COMMITTEE TO
STRENGTHEN SCIENCE EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES**

The meeting of the Empowered Committee to strengthen Science education in Universities and Colleges was held on 21.8.2006 in the Office of the Commission. The following were present:

- 1) Prof. M.M. Sharma ... Chairman
3, Jaswant Baugh
Behind Akbar Allys
V.N. Purav Marg
Chembur Naka
Mumbai – 400 071
- 2) Prof. G. Mehta ... Member
Hon. Professor and CSIR-Bhatnagar Fellow
Department of Organic Chemistry
Indian Institute of Science
Bangalore
- 3) Professor S.P. Thyagarajan ... Member
Vice Chancellor
University of Madras
Chennai – 600 005
- 4) Professor P. Rama Rao ... Member
Flat No. 301
Naimisum, Plot No 22
Tri Nagar Colony
Hyderabad – 500 073
- 5) Shri Sudeep Banerjee, IAS ... Member
Secretary (HE)
Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of Secondary & Higher Education
Shastri Bhawan
New Delhi
- 6) Dr. T.R. Kem, ...Member Secretary
Secretary, UGC

Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairman, UGC and Dr. R.K. Chauhan, Additional Secretary, UGC, have also attended the meeting.

Dr. Kota Harinarayana, former Vice Chancellor, University of Hyderabad could not attend the meeting.

The Chairman, UGC, assured his full cooperation in the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force (now Empowered Committee). The members of the Committee made a request that a Cell may be constituted in UGC immediately so that the work on the recommendations of the Committee could be expedited. They suggested that additional posts on the pattern of COSIST scheme, which was introduced in 1980s, may be sanctioned for the proposed Cell. The Chairman assured them of an early action.

The Committee also suggested that the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee may be done in a flexi mode operation basis with flexibility in the implementation in UGC as well as to the Institutions implementing the scheme.

The Chairman of the Committee reiterated its earlier recommendations for uniform retirement age for University teachers throughout the country. The Chairman, UGC, pointed out that this issue needs to be sorted out in the National Development Council or the meeting of Chief Ministers/Education Ministers. The Government will have to take action on this recommendation.

The Committee brought to the notice the fact that in most of the States, posts are not allowed to be filled. As a result thereof, the teaching and research in the Universities is suffering badly. The Govt. should take up this issue with the State Governments for allowing Universities to fill their vacant posts. The UGC may also take proactive action on this issue.

The Chairman, UGC, brought to the notice of the Committee that the University Grants Commission has already approved a special allocation based on the recommendations of this Committee in the budget for the current financial year approved in April, 2006. The Commission has made budget provisions for the following new schemes – Science Education New Initiatives.

- i) Fellowships in Sciences
- ii) Post-doctoral fellowship
- iii) Research Scientists in the grade of Lecturer, Reader & Professor

The Committee placed on record its appreciation for the efforts made by the Chairman, UGC, for implementation of its recommendations and suggested that the grants for implementation of these schemes need to be provided by UGC/Govt. on continuous basis like Non-Plan grant. The Chairman, UGC, made a fervent appeal to the Committee to suggest ways and means for implementation of its recommendations in respect of above three schemes. The Committee thereafter, took up the issues one by one and the following decisions were taken.

1) **Fellowships in Sciences**

- i) The Committee decided that five Junior Research Fellowships may be allocated to each DSA and CAS approved Departments of the State Universities. The Central Universities may do it out of the additional budget allocation made by the UGC during the current financial year.
- ii) The Committee further recommended that the State Universities with potential for excellence and 12 identified State Universities with thrust areas may also be allowed five Junior Research Fellowships.
- iii) The UGC may call for the following information from all DRS, DSA, CAS, FIST Departments
 - a) Output of Ph.D by these departments during last three years
 - b) number of candidates registered with them for Ph.D

This information may be collected by the UGC latest by 30.9.2006 and as per above decisions may be communicated to the concerned departments immediately.

- iv) For the remaining number of fellowships, open advertisement may be given by the UGC and selection process may be expedited.
- v) The condition of qualifying NET will be waived in these cases.

2) **Post-doctoral Fellowships**

The Committee recommended that these fellowships may be named after Prof. D.S. Kothari and may be known as Prof. D.S. Kothari post-doctoral fellowship. Prof. Goverdhan Mehta was requested to prepare a scheme for consideration of the Committee. This will be discussed in the next meeting.

3) **Research Scientists in the grade of Lecturer, Reader & Professor**

It was decided that initially selection of 200 Research Scientists may be done centrally by the UGC for placement in State Universities. Detailed modalities of the scheme would be worked out so that the selections could be made at the earliest possible.

The Committee noted that some of the Universities are not following the formal system of admission for M.Phil and Ph.D. The Committee recommended that each University may be advised to advertise the admissions for M.Phil and Ph.D on national basis and the model of JNU may be adopted for this purpose.

The Committee recommended that on the pattern of GATE, NET percentile may also be disclosed to the candidates.

The Committee tentatively decided to hold its next meeting on **4.11.2006** at Hyderabad.

The meeting ended with Vote of thanks to the Chair.