

Special Senate Proceedings dated 21st April, 2019

PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH

Minutes of meeting of the Special **SENATE** held on **Sunday, 21st April 2019** at **11.30 a.m.** in the Senate Hall, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

PRESENT:

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|----------------|
| 1. | Professor Raj Kumar
Vice Chancellor | ... | (in the Chair) |
| 2. | Dr. Ajay Ranga | | |
| 3. | Professor Akhtar Mahmood | | |
| 4. | Shri Amanpreet Singh Sidhu | | |
| 5. | Dr. Amit Joshi | | |
| 6. | Shri Ashok Goyal | | |
| 7. | Professor B.S. Ghuman | | |
| 8. | Professor Chaman Lal | | |
| 9. | Dr. Dayal Partap Singh Randhawa | | |
| 10. | Professor Emanuel Nahar | | |
| 11. | Principal Gurdip Kumar Sharma | | |
| 12. | Shri Gurjot Singh Malhi | | |
| 13. | Dr. Gurmeet Singh | | |
| 14. | Dr. Gurmeet Singh | | |
| 15. | Dr. Harjodh Singh | | |
| 16. | Shri Harpreet Singh Dua | | |
| 17. | Dr. Harsh Batra | | |
| 18. | Ambassador I.S. Chadha | | |
| 19. | Dr. Inderpal Singh Sidhu | | |
| 20. | Principal Iqbal Singh Sandhu | | |
| 21. | Professor J.K. Goswamy | | |
| 22. | Dr. Jagdish Chander Mehta | | |
| 23. | Dr. Jarnail Singh | | |
| 24. | Professor Keshav Malhotra | | |
| 25. | Professor Manoj K. Sharma | | |
| 26. | Professor Mukesh Arora | | |
| 27. | Shri Naresh Gaur | | |
| 28. | Professor Navdeep Goyal | | |
| 29. | Dr. Neeru Malik | | |
| 30. | Professor Pam Rajput | | |
| 31. | Dr. Parveen Goyal | | |
| 32. | Shri Prabhjit Singh | | |
| 33. | Principal R.S. Jhanji | | |
| 34. | Dr. Raj Kumar Mahajan | | |
| 35. | Professor Rajat Sandhir | | |
| 36. | Professor Rajesh Gill | | |
| 37. | Professor Ronki Ram | | |
| 38. | Professor S.K. Sharma | | |
| 39. | Shri Sandeep Singh | | |
| 40. | Shri Sanjay Tandon | | |
| 41. | Shri Subhash Sharma | | |
| 42. | Dr. Surinder Kaur | | |
| 43. | Dr. Vipul Narang | | |
| 44. | Professor Karamjeet Singh
Registrar | ... | (Secretary) |

Special Senate Proceedings dated 21st April, 2019

The following members could not attend the meeting:

1. Dr. Amod Gupta
2. Dr. Amar Singh
3. Dr. Anita Kaushal
4. Ms. Anu Chatrath
5. Dr. Ameer Sultana
6. Capt. Amarinder Singh, Chief Minister
7. Shri Bharat Bhushan Ashu
8. Dr. B.C. Josan
9. Dr. Baljinder Singh
10. Shri Deepak Kaushik
11. Dr. D.V.S. Jain
12. Dr. Dalip Kumar
13. Professor Deepak Pental
14. Justice Harbans Lal
15. Mrs. Indu Malhotra, DPI (Colleges), Punjab
16. Dr. Inderjit Kaur
17. Shri Jagdeep Kumar
18. Dr. K.K. Sharma
19. Smt. Kirron Kher
20. Justice Krishan Murari
21. Principal N.R. Sharma
22. Dr. Nisha Bhargava
23. Dr. Narinder Singh Sidhu
24. Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal
25. Shri Parmod Kumar
26. Shri Parimal Rai
27. Shri Punam Suri
28. Professor R.P. Bambah
29. Shri Rashpal Malhotra
30. Shri Rubinderjit Singh Brar, D.H.E., Chandigarh
31. Mrs. Razia Sultana, Education Minister, Punjab
32. Dr. Rajesh Kumar Mahajan
33. Professor R.P. Bambah
34. Dr. Rabinder Nath Sharma
35. Dr. Raj Kumar Chabbewal
36. Dr. S. S. Sangha
37. Dr. Satish Kumar
38. Dr. Suresh Chandra Sharma
39. Shri Sanjeev Bandlish
40. Shri Sandeep Kumar
41. Professor Shelley Walia
42. Professor Shankarji Jha
43. Shri Satya Pal Jain
44. Dr. Shaminder Singh Sandhu
45. Dr. Tarlochan Singh
46. Shri Varinder Singh
47. Shri V.K. Sibal

Special Senate Proceedings dated 21st April, 2019

At the outset, the Vice Chancellor wished good morning to all the Hon'ble members and extended warm greetings to each of them.

I. Considered the recommendations of the Syndicate dated 21.4.2019 that:

- (i) honorary degree of Doctor of Literature (*Honoris Causa*) be conferred on Dr. Sudha N. Murty, Trustee, Infosys Foundation, Bangalore, under Section 23 of P.U. Act, at page 9 of P.U. Calendar, Volume-I, 2007, in the convocation to be held on 28th April, 2019; and
- (ii) award of Vigyan Rattan, be conferred on Dr. K. Sivan, Chairman, ISRO & Secretary, Department of Space, Bangalore, in the convocation to be held on 28th April, 2019.

It was noted that the Syndicate has recommended that cash amount be **not** given to the awardee of this as well other Rattana Awardees to be conferred in future.

Initiating discussion, Professor Chaman Lal stated that all the Hon'ble members of the Senate must have gone through the e-mail, which he had sent drawing attention that during that last 69 years, 98 personalities had been awarded with these four *Honoris Causa* degrees, i.e., Doctor of Law, Doctor of Literature, Doctor of Science and one degree in Oriental Learning, which was never repeated. In fact, the Honorary degree in Oriental Learning was first conferred in the year 1949 upon Bhai Veer Singh. He had drawn attention that most of the degrees, had been awarded to many eminent persons of their respective fields, i.e., in Science, Literature or Laws. However, the names which have now been recommended did not fall into the category of those kinds of personalities, which had been awarded earlier. As he is a man of literature and humanities, he could not comment on the person belonging to Science, but he could surely comment on the degree of Doctor of Literature. He is sure that the names have been recommended by the Syndicate unanimously, but these names are not at all proper. Dr. Sudha Murty is a good social worker and humanistic personality and has set up a Library and has done other philanthropic activities, but in the field of literature she has absolutely done nothing. Awarding a Doctor of Literature degree to such a person just because she has a big name, maybe in other fields and he has no dispute about it and he has all respect for her, is not proper. Degree of Doctor of Literature had been awarded to personalities like Amrita Pritam, Mulakh Raj Anand, Gurdial Singh, Deepak Tiwana. She (Dr. Sudha Murty) is a very popular writer, but a life style writer. She wrote stories like popular writer Gulshan Nanda and even in English like Harry Potter, but if they find in the Department of Literature, they would neither find Harry Potter nor Gulshan Nanda's name anywhere. So popular kind of writing, is not fit for award of degree like Doctor of Literature. Besides what is written in the e-mail sent by him, he did not want to speak. He had written down in words, which he would read without any kind of comment which might go beyond the issue. He had been supported by Professor Shelly Walia, whose e-mail might have been seen by Professor Karamjeet Singh, Registrar. Professor Shelly Walia has also supported his argument and he would request Professor Karamjeet Singh to read his (Professor Shelly Walia) mail also; otherwise, he would read the same for them. He would read what his resolution is and it is his alternative proposal, he would say. He would read it and gave it for record. His resolution is:

"I oppose awarding *Honoris Causa* degree to Dr. Sudha N. Murty on the following grounds:

Special Senate Proceedings dated 21st April, 2019

- (i) The practice of awarding *Honoris Causa* degree is to recognize at University level which these personalities had achieved earlier nationally or internationally.
- (ii) Since Dr. Sudha N. Murty is proposed to be awarded *Honoris Causa* degree of 'Doctor of Literature', it needs to be seen how much she has achieved in the field of Literature. Though she has received awards as Padma Shree, Atmanand Award, R.K. Naraya Award, etc, she has received no award from the prestigious Literary bodies like Sahitya Akademi, Gyan Peeth, etc. The awards which she has received are of ordinary kind and there is nothing extraordinary about these awards.
- (iii) She writes in Kannada and English and he is yet to see any Kannada or English Literary critic referring to her literary work in research or literary criticism.
- (iv) No doubt, she is a humanist social writer setting up Libraries and doing other philanthropic activities, but her literary writing is not in the category of life style or popular writing like those of Harry Potter, Gulshan Nanda or Dutt Bharti. Hence, she cannot be considered for Doctor of Literature degree from Panjab University. In fact, no University in Karnatka or even Bangalore like Bangalore University or Aziz Prem ji University has considered her name for awarding any honorary degree.
- (v) Her husband Shri N. Narayna Murty has already been awarded honorary degree in Science, which has some justification. Now to award an honorary degree to his wife will **not** look like a favour to a big corporate of India, which will not bring any respect to Panjab University.
- (vi) Hence, he totally rejected the proposal on above grounds to award honorary degree of Doctor of Literature to Dr. Sudha N. Murty.
- (vii) However, he proposed that the following two most eminent and respected names in literary writing – either both can be awarded or one of them can be considered for awarding honorary degree of Doctor of Literature:
 - (a) Mrs. Mannu Bhandari (Hindi writer and Sahitya Akademy Award winner)
 - (b) Shri Gurbachan Singh Bhullar (Punjabi writer (Sahitya Akademy award winner in Punjabi).”

He requested that the mail of Professor Shelly Walia should be read out as the same would affect the opinion of the people.

Shri Gurjot Singh Malhi said that they had gone through the mail sent by Professor Shelly Walia.

Professor Akhtar Mahmood said that he has gone through the recommendations of the Committee, they have proposed and recommended these names. The

Special Senate Proceedings dated 21st April, 2019

recommendations of the Committee along with the recommendations of the Vice Chancellor were placed before the Syndicate and the Syndicate has also unanimously recommended. Once it has gone through these kinds of bodies, there is no point in discussing them. It is a very unusual kind thing and it is for the first time that something has gone through these kinds of bodies and somebody pointing out that it should not be there, it is not true. Had something fishy been there, it must have been pointed out in those bodies. Secondly, in fact, there are not a question that there are hundred people in the country who deserve more than her, but it is not possible in a meeting like this to recommend 100 names for such awards. As such, they have to pick up somebody and recommend him/her. Hence, they should follow what has been recommended and he supported that the degree should be awarded to Dr. Sudha Murty as had been recommended by the Syndicate.

Professor Mukesh Arora said that whenever an award or degree is to be awarded, it should be given with respect because they are not demanded the same from them. If they insulted such a big person here, it would not be proper. If other persons also deserve such award, in future, they should also be given the award/degree. Whenever any award is given – whether it is Bharti Gyan Peeth or any other else, opposition is always there on the plea that such and such is left out. He is the member of the Senate for the last 24 years and he is seeing for the first time that such types of objections are being raised. If somebody sent an email suggesting that a Committee comprising these persons should be constituted, other persons might object to it. Whatever decision has been taken by the Syndicate, they should accept the same without any controversy.

Principal R.S. Jhanji said that, according to him, there should not be any controversy on this issue, especially when it has been approved by the Syndicate. In future, they could get consent of the Senate on such issues, i.e., through circulation. It is an era of digitalization, since there is only one item on the agenda, they could obtain the consent through online system. Their only concern was that they should not put additional burden on the University exchequer. If any of them had any objection, as Professor Chaman Lal had, he had also raised the same by e-mail. It would have been better if the other issues have also been considered. With a view not to put additional burden on the University exchequer, certain persons, including him, have decided not to claim T.A. and D.A.

The Vice Chancellor thanked Principal Jhanji for his kind gesture.

Professor Navdeep Goyal said that so far as seeking consent through online system is concerned, he would like to read out the provisions of the Act for them. Section 23 of the PU Act at page 9, P.U. Calendar Volume I, 2007, says “Where the Vice-Chancellor and not less than two-thirds of the other members of the Syndicate recommend that an honorary degree be conferred on any person on the ground that he is, in their opinion, by reason of eminent position and attainments, a fit and proper person to receive such a degree and where their recommendation is supported by not less than two-thirds of the Fellows present at a meeting of the Senate and is confirmed by the Chancellor, the Senate may confer on such person the honorary degree so recommended without requiring him to undergo any examination.” When it says “Fellows present at a meeting of the Senate”, meeting is to be convened.

Principal R.S. Jhanji said that everything is not done strictly in accordance with the regulations. Since it is an era of digitalization, in future, they should adopt the electronic mode. Nowadays, even the income tax returns are filed online. If problem is being faced by the University, the Act could also be got amended.

Special Senate Proceedings dated 21st April, 2019

The Vice Chancellor said that the points raised by Professor Chaman Lal have been noted. Now, the recommendations of the Syndicate regarding conferring of Honorary degree of Doctor of Literature on Dr. Sudha Murty and Vigyan Rattan Award on Dr. K. Sivan is approved.

Professor Chaman Lal said that they should go through the provisions of the Calendar. The proposal has to be put to vote and they have to do it by ballot.

The Vice Chancellor said that such a convention should not be started.

Shri Jarnail Singh said that they should not rush through the agenda like this. This is not the way of getting the things done. This has been a tradition of this House that if a person has already given his viewpoints, he should be properly listened to.

The Vice Chancellor said that they have already noted his viewpoints.

Professor Chaman Lal said that the note of Professor Shelly Walia should be read out for the members.

The Vice Chancellor said that the note of Professor Shelly Walia is in the record.

Professor Chaman Lal pointed out that they have noted down the consent of the members of the Syndicate, who were not present in the meeting, but here he is not being allowed to read out the note written by Professor Shelly Walia.

The Vice Chancellor said that the note is with him and the same is in record.

Shri Gurjot Singh Malhi said that what is the point in reading out the note when they have already gone through the same?

At this stage, several members said that the item stands approved.

Shri Ashok Goyal said that he would like to say one thing relating to this item. He is very sorry to point out that some of the members of the Senate have sent emails which have come in the public domain and in media also. On Hon'ble member has said right now in the meeting and he has given a statement in the media also that such a thing could have been decided by getting the consent online also. He thinks that the members of the Senate have the responsibility, if at all they want to guide, they should guide the media in right perspective and not in the wrong perspective. This was discussed in the Syndicate also that if they intend to honour somebody by any of their actions, the person in question be not dishonoured at the hands of Panjab University because, in return, Panjab University is also getting the dishonor. But, even today, after having said in the meeting, it is being said that such and such thing could have been dealt with by adopting the online method. He was expecting the Vice Chancellor to guide this House as to what are the provisions. In the opinion of the members, which he (Professor Chaman Lal) has expressed through media and also in the meeting, he also needed to be guided as to what are the provisions. This has also been said, rather alleged, by some of the Hon'ble members, in person with the Vice Chancellor and through media also, as if some of the Syndicate members have misled the Vice Chancellor and the University and the University has been trapped. He wanted to inform the House that he has said in the Syndicate, it is his utmost duty to bring it to the notice of the Vice Chancellor, as to what are the provisions, because if he brings it to the notice of the Vice Chancellor that these are provisions, obviously, by some people or even by the Vice Chancellor, he might be stated to be, is adverse. But if he did not bring that provision to the notice of the Vice Chancellor, tomorrow, the people would point out that he (Shri Ashok Goyal) claims that he knew about the Calendar, why did

Special Senate Proceedings dated 21st April, 2019

he not tell the Vice Chancellor about the provision? Therefore, on both the sides, he would have been on the receiving end. So, to say that the Syndicate has unnecessarily burdened the University, by way of convening a special meeting of the Senate, is completely not accepted. He would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor because it is a very-very serious matter, either the Vice Chancellor should explain as to who has suggested to him for convening the special meeting. Was it suggested by any of the members of the Syndicate that a special meeting be convened or keeping in view the circumstances, was it a proposal given by the Vice Chancellor himself that why a special meeting cannot be convened? Why it is being alleged that some of the members have trapped the Vice Chancellor. He expected the Vice Chancellor to defend the decision of the Syndicate which was taken by the Syndicate at the suggestion given by the Vice Chancellor. Rather it was asked that what will be the convenient date. So, he wanted to tell that this should be clarified in the House that none of the members of the Syndicate was even aware of the fact that such a situation could also come that a special meeting has to be called. As for as the other thing he expected from the Vice Chancellor, does he think that what he (Vice Chancellor) is saying that they approve the degree, the damage has already been done. Some of the damage has been done by his Hon'ble friends, who have mailed the things to reach the media and the remaining damage has been done today in the meeting because they expected from the Vice Chancellor that on this issue, no discussion should have been allowed. He wondered why did he (Vice Chancellor) allow 3-4 members to speak on the issue and, thereafter, he (Vice Chancellor) said that the item is unanimously approved. He requested to go through the provisions because it is a question of the honour of the person who is being discussed. A member strongly feels that he completely rejects the recommendations of the Syndicate. There are other members, who are in agreement with the recommendations made by the Syndicate, but at the same time, they disagree with the Syndicate, the way, the issue has been handled. So, both the persons have criticized the Syndicate in one way or the other. Now, the Vice Chancellor, actually, as per the provisions, that is why in their Calendar, the only issue where the discussion is not allowed is when they have to consider conferring of the honorary degree. He requested the Vice Chancellor to go through the provisions which are mentioned in the Chapter relating to Senate. Therefore, whatever the provision is, the matter should be dealt with accordingly.

The Vice Chancellor said that they should not talk more on the issue and requested to summarize it.

Professor S.K. Sharma said that he thinks that some members by writing an open letter, they may have a different intention in their minds. They should have sent a confidential letter to him (Vice Chancellor). For getting some particular glory, they are trying to undermine the respect of a respectable member of this particular country. He was of the opinion that the University must ensure that such things should not recur. One should not talk to the Vice Chancellor or the Syndicate or Senate through the Press.

The Vice Chancellor said that he has noted the sentiments of the House and now the proposals stand approved.

RESOLVED: That –

- (1) it be recommended to the Chancellor that honorary degree of Doctor of Literature (*Honoris Causa*) be conferred on Dr. Sudha N. Murty, Trustee, Infosys Foundation, Bangalore, under Section 23 of P.U. Act, at page 9 of P.U. Calendar, Volume-I, 2007, in the convocation to be held on 28th April, 2019;

Special Senate Proceedings dated 21st April, 2019

- (2) award of Vigyan Rattan, be conferred on Dr. K. Sivan, Chairman, ISRO & Secretary, Department of Space, Bangalore, in the convocation to be held on 28th April, 2019; and
- (3) in future, no cash amount be given to Rattana Awardees.

Karamjeet Singh
Registrar

CONFIRMED

RAJ KUMAR
VICE-CHANCELLOR