



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION

Jan 18, 2017

Press Release

JNUTA Office Bearers' meeting with the VC held on 17th January, 2017. JNUTA in its meeting with the VC in which other administrative officials were present discussed the following main issues. We would like to highlight the fact that it was rather saddening to realize that JNU administration is unwilling to accept suggestion of JNUTA on the pretext that UGC notifications are mandatory. JNUTA is of the opinion the university is an autonomous institution created by the Act of Parliament and can exercise certain degree of autonomy to the point it does not contradict the basic principle of the guidelines.

1. New UGC Regulations and Admission Policy:

JNUTA office-bearers tries to reason with the VC that JNU's admission policy is unique because it not only gives reservation, but also awards deprivation points to candidates from backward districts, higher points for women from SC/ST/OBC/PD from backward districts and women in general. That is why students from various parts of the country and from deprived section could pursue research in JNU. This policy has been in existence since 1970s and was even revised recently in 2016. To dismantle this admission policy in the name of UGC notification would change the very essence of the university. The office-bearers of JNUTA pointed out that the UGC notification gives us lot of scope to retain our own system specifically the notification in no way suggest that deprivation point can not be applied after two stage entrance. We argued that

- a. JNU always followed a two stage process in which written test is the qualifying examination. All the students who appeared for the entrance test are not automatically called for the interview. They have to qualify through a two-stage process. The first one is the minimum pass marks for various categories of students. Only if a candidate has the minimum pass mark in the relevant category, then the School/Centre fixes the cut off mark for various categories of students. After securing the minimum pass mark only those above the cut off fixed by the School/Centre could be called for the viva voce. Thus JNU always followed a qualifying entrance test system for the next stage, i.e. viva voce. The UGC notification does not make a difference to the system we followed till now and in no way suggest that marks of written examination can not be added to finalize the admission list. Our system is in sync with the UGC requirement.
- b. The UGC requires 50 per cent marks to pass the entrance test and be eligible for viva voce. JNUTA suggested that the UGC is silent on how much marks we should earmark for written test and viva-voce respectively. It could be 70 marks as the practice till now or it could be 80 marks, which is to be decided by our AC and EC. Also, several Supreme Court Judgments have established that interview marks can not be a sole criteria of admission and can not be beyond a limit. We argued that in case 50 per cent qualifying marks in written test is to be considered, it should be for general category students only. Lesser percentage should be decided for SC/ST/OBC/PD as has been the practice till now and as per various court decisions. We even cited the case of a student who had to be admitted about two years back with lower eligibility marks both in the qualifying examination (MA with 50 percent instead of 55 percent) and at the time of qualifying for viva voce. The university having been forced to admit the student by the order of the court, still argues that reduction can only be for one stage only.
- c. Some officials present in the meeting tried to argue that how can pass mark be different for different category of students. We gave the example of NET. Incidentally, even the IITs give different qualifying marks to different category of students for the entrance test. This argument and a few other points made by the administration made us realize that either the Administration is not clear about

JNU's current Admission Policy or they want major changes by interpreting UGC's notification accordingly.

- d. What made the JNUTA office bearers shocked was the interpretation given by the Administration officials present with the VC in that meeting. It was said that the written test is just a qualifying test and the marks obtained would not be added to the Viva marks. We argue that in all two-stage processes the written test is a qualifying test but the marks are carried over if the candidates qualify for the Viva Voce. This happens in the UPSC as well. In a situation where the University appointed a Committee to look into the demand of students to reduce viva marks, where the VC in the AC meeting had said that higher Viva marks disadvantage students from backward areas and vernacular language background, it was astounding that the Administration wants to make Viva the sole basis of selection after the qualifying examination. This is a double jeopardy for students from backward districts and deprived background. First most of them would be denied qualification through a 50 percent barrier in the entrance, which in fact is quite high for all categories. The few who would be eligible from these sections would be further disadvantaged by making their written marks redundant and taking performance in viva as the sole basis.
- e. JNUTA also argued that the deprivation points have been increased and improved under the current Vice Chancellor. He should retain the system of addition of these points.

2. Strike Called by JNUTA

The VC raised the issue of Strike call by JNUTA. It was pointed out by JNUTA representatives that we are not a strike-happy organization, rather JNUTA is forced to go on strike. On the one side our colleagues are being intimidated by the university and on the other, the university administration unilaterally is determined to implement the admission policy that would inflict injustice to the future generation by denying them the rights to go for higher education in JNU. The current call is related to these two extremely important issues. It is agonizing to see dismantling the more than four-decades old Admission Policy of JNU which benefited over generations thousands of students from all over the country with its progressive policy of social and gender justice. Many alumni from deprived background are today occupying important positions in all spheres of society. The new policy would take away that opportunity from thousands of future students. We also pointed out that to highlight this concern of the faculty on these serious issues, JNUTA GBM had decided to call for a one-day strike. It was also argued that the saving the existing Admission policy was more than a just cause for the GBM to express its anguish through a call for strike. We also underlined that in this University the Courses are always completed without exception and teachers always take extra classes to compensate.

3. JNUTA Call for Lecture Series at Administrative Block

JNUTA is organizing the lecture series to celebrate the success of its first Lecture Series on Nationalism that is out as a book by Harper Collins and is to be released on 25th January 2017. Teaching, discussion and debate is organized to enrich the debate on relevant issues and all places should be considered as appropriate for lectures at least within University Premise. Further, in the meeting it was argued by JNUTA colleagues present in the meeting that a 20-year old rule that has never been implemented in the past cannot be the basis for denying teachers to speak to other colleagues and students through talks and lectures in spaces they have used in the past for constructive purposes. We suggested that instead of sending notices, the University Administration should have dialogue with all sections of society and resolve issues of importance and relevance.

s/d

Prof. Ajay Patnaik
President, JNUTA

s/d

Dr. Bikramaditya Choudhary
Secretary, JNUTA