

REPORT OF THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Starred Question No. 175 replied in the Senate
on 03.11.2017 and referred to the Committee for
Report thereon within 14 days:-**

*"whether it is fact that a number of Pakistani chairs in
foreign universities are lying vacant for the last many
years, if so, the reasons thereof and the steps being
taken by the Government to fill the same?"*

Report No. 02

(Two Hundred & Sixty-ninth Parliamentary Session)

PRESENTED BY

**(SENATOR NUZHAT SADIQ)
CHAIRPERSON**

REPORT OF THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

I, Senator Nuzhat Sadiq, Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, have the honour to present the report, on behalf of the Committee, on "Starred Question No. 175 replied in the Senate on 03.11.2017 and referred to the Committee for Report thereon within 14 days **"whether it is fact that a number of Pakistani chairs in foreign universities are lying vacant for the last many years, if so, the reasons thereof and the steps being taken by the Government to fill the same?"**

2. The composition of the Committee is as under:-

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Senator Nuzhat Sadiq | Chairperson |
| 2. | Senator Muhammad Daud Khan Achakzai, Advocate | Member |
| 3. | Senator Haji Momin Khan Afridi | Member |
| 4. | Senator Atta Ur Rehman | Member |
| 5. | Senator Col. (R) Syed Tahir Hussain Mashhadi | Member |
| 6. | Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed | Member |
| 7. | Senator Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah | Member |
| 8. | Senator Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq | Member |
| 9. | Senator Karim Ahmed Khawaja | Member |
| 10. | Senator Ms. Sassui Palijo | Member |
| 11. | Senator Farhatullah Babar | Member |
| 12. | Senator Syed Shibli Faraz | Member |
| 13. | Minister for Foreign Affairs | Ex-Officio Member |

3. A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was held on 7th November, 2017. The following members of the Committee attended the meeting:-

- i. Senator Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah
- ii. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed
- iii. Senator Ata Muhammad Daud Khan Achakzai
- iv. Senator Haji Momin Khan Afridi
- v. Senator Karim Ahmed Khawaja

4. The Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the following reply:-

Government of Pakistan has established 14 Chairs abroad for the projection of Pakistan culture, heritage and language in foreign countries. In order to fill up vacant posts of these Chairs, a summary containing recommendations of the Selection Board,

chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, was submitted to the Prime Minister in May, 2016. The Prime Minister decided that a Committee, chaired by Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs and including the Cabinet Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Establishment Secretary, Chairman HEC and Additional Secretary PMO, should revisit the overall policy on the subject and submit its recommendations.

Assessment:

The evaluation carried out shows that the concept under which these Chairs were set up, has become out of date. Apart from some Chairs, which attract a few students who wish to study Urdu, the rest are not serving any useful purpose or making any significant contribution to promoting the soft image of Pakistan. Difficulties have also arisen because some of the universities insisted on the creation of an Endowment Fund; others wanted to follow their own selection process rather than appoint a scholar selected by Pakistan. Our Mission in Washington DC, for example reported that one scholar appointed at Quaid-e-Azam Chair at UC, Berkley, failed to meet "quality standards" and his contract was prematurely terminated. Our Mission reported that he was more interested in religious preaching than Chair's activities. The expected outcome of these Chairs, in the form of high quality articles and books, has also been disappointing.

Based on this assessment, the Committee came to the conclusion that there is a dire need for establishing a new institutional mechanism for projecting Pakistan's culture, art history and heritage. The main purpose of such a mechanism is to associate a much wider circle of experts, scholars and eminent citizens with this project. The traditional concept of chairs only, is no longer effective in enhancing the soft power of country of projecting its image. Events after 9/11 have seriously damaged the overall image of Pakistan. As the security situation has improved, the urgency of correcting this image has become even more important. Pakistan should therefore evolve a comprehensive programme to develop and implement its "soft power" by promoting its rich cultural heritage, music, cuisine, festivities, dress, sports, values and the resilience of the people.

Recommendations

The Committee recommended that a semi autonomous Council called Pakistan National Council for Cultural Cooperation (PNCCC) may be established under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to manage the cultural interface with the

global community. The present budget for Pakistan chairs abroad may be placed at the disposal of PNCCC as its initial budget. The Council can prepare its programme of activities and present its budget for inclusion in the budget for coming financial year. The Council should gradually establish Pakistan Cultural Centers in at least 5 important countries by inter-alia establishing endowment funds with the support of prominent Pakistanis in these countries. The Council can lay down the criteria for establishing Pakistan Chairs in different universities of the world with a more updated mandate that is relevant for each country. It will also have the responsibility to select scholars for these chairs. In reviewing Capitals where Chairs may be established in future, newly emerging destinations like Australia, New Zealand and important African countries may be given due consideration. Following suggestions were also submitted:

- i. The proposed PNCCC will have to hire qualified companies and experts for the "branding" of Pakistan.
- ii. Mobilizing civil society, media and Pakistani diaspora for promoting a positive image of Pakistan.
- iii. Engagement with journalists, media houses, think tanks.
- iv. A well-coordinated and comprehensive strategy to promote our heroes, cultural heritage, art and craft, products, landscapes, cuisine and sports.
- v. Efforts can be made for getting the soft image of Pakistan included in the thematic performance of foreign Film and TV serials of different countries. Some of these programmes can also be organized through sponsorship by Pakistan diaspora.

5. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed termed the whole affair as very disappointing. He reaffirmed the importance of academia as an important element in projecting the countries soft image. The idea of PNCCC was termed impractical as it would not serve the requisite purpose. He raised a question why intellectuals and members of the academia could not be found to head the existing 14 Pakistan's Chairs in foreign universities. Instead of scraping these Chairs we must make all endeavours to fill up the vacancies. The Hon'ble Senator termed the current scenario as pathetic and an outcome of the incompetence of the concerned Government institutions.

6. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed proposed establishing a Joint Committee comprising of three Hon'ble Senators, Secretary Foreign Affairs and

Secretary, Cabinet Division, under the Chairmanship of an Hon'ble Senator to expedite recruitment and screening process for appointing heads of these Chairs in Foreign Universities.

7. Senator Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah reiterated the fact that the Pakistan embassies abroad have failed to highlight the soft image of Pakistan. Sometimes back Education scholarships coming to Pakistan use to laps. When this issue was take up by the Senate Committee and appropriate measures were adopted, today none of these scholarships go unutilized. Having a Pakistan Chair in international universities is a matter of prestige for Pakistan and a cultural center cannot substitute a center of learning. He also emphasized that we should formulate a strategy for recruitment and selection of appropriate personnel to head these Chairs. The Hon'ble Senator also rejected the recommendations put forward by the Foreign Office and suggested that the Foreign Office should take it upon themselves the responsibility to select appropriate people from the academia, strictly on merit. The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs rejected the recommendations put forward by the Foreign Office and emphasized that these Pakistan's Chairs in international universities were of extreme importance and relevant to the soft image of Pakistan.

8. The Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated that the Cabinet Division was the lead Division in this respect. It was informed that out of 9 Chairs in China 4 were filled. The Foreign Secretary requested some time to consult the Secretary, Cabinet Division and come back to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs with a proposal. The Foreign Secretary also emphasized shortage of resources and human resource being faced by the Foreign Office. The Indian Government on the other hand had a more aggressive and proactive approach and were effectively conducting their propaganda in US and Europe.

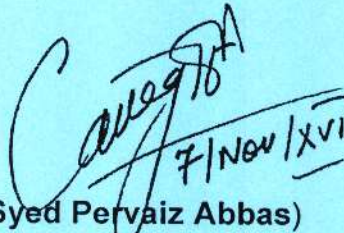
9. Senator Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah again emphasized importance of measures for filling up the positions of the Pakistan Chairs in these Universities.

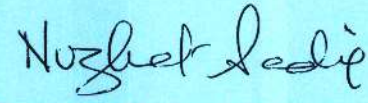
10. The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs recommends that a transparent and merit based process of selection to head these Chairs must be adopted. The Foreign Office is tasked to formulate a procedure for selection to these Chairs in a transparent and judicious manner on priority basis. The Committee allowed

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Chairs in a transparent and judicious manner on priority basis. The Committee allowed Secretary, Foreign Affairs to consult the Secretary, Cabinet Division and come up with a definite proposal.

12. The Chairperson & the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted this report and approved its laying before the Honourable House.


(Dr. Syed Pervaiz Abbas)
AS / Secretary Committee


(Senator Nuzhat Sadiq)
Chairperson