

# Made in Chandigarh: City has given me a lot in terms of teachers, mentors and friends, says Nishtha Jaswal

Nishtha Jaswal says growing up in 'peaceful' Chandigarh helped her find inner calm and peace and taught her the art of managing time and relationships

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Nishtha Jaswal(HT File)

Nishtha Jaswal is the first woman vice-chancellor of Himachal Pradesh National Law University (HPNLU). With over 34 years of experience, she retired as professor from the department of laws, Panjab University (PU), Chandigarh, in 2019. Jaswal has been member of the Chandigarh State Legal Services Authority, the Punjab Legal Services Authority, the Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee of the Chandigarh Judicial Academy, Chandigarh Commission for Protection of Child Rights and the Academic Planning Board of the Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law. She has also been a member of the board of studies for various universities, including Kurukshetra University, Maharishi Markandeshwar University, Himachal Pradesh University and

the University Institute of Legal Studies, PU. Before taking charge as HPNLU's new V-C, she was the chairperson of the law department at PU, acting as the university's dean of students welfare and officiating as the dean of university instructions.

## **Hometown**

Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

## **Education**

Jaswal studied in Chandigarh, clearing Class 12 from Government Girls Model Senior Secondary School-18 and graduating from MCM DAV College for Women, before joining the department of laws at PU for postgraduation and doctorate in law.

## **My area of expertise**

Constitutional law, administrative law, human rights and environmental law

## **My secret sauce**

Management and planning are important to achieve success. One needs to learn to adjust, bring a balance to different aspects of life and stay positive. Even though I was working, I devoted time to my daughters and never let them feel I was absent.

## **The mantra of success in your profession**

Hard work, honesty and dedication are the keys to become a successful teacher. One should be broad-minded and ready to face challenges. Teaching is a very difficult profession and must be taken seriously. If you are focused on your work and carry no ill-will, vengeance or sense of competition against others, you are bound to rise.

## **The turning point**

Joining MCM DAV College was a turning point in my life. The founder principal of the college, Mrs Roy, was a role model. She always wanted good results from her students. I studied there for four years and topped the college every year. Another

teacher, Ansuya Sharma, changed my life as she said, “Don’t run after anything you can’t achieve, rather, excel in what you can do.”

## **What I owe to Chandigarh**

I have learned a lot here. I have actually grown up with the city. Chandigarh’s peaceful environs have taught me to remain calm and composed while its design has taught me management, be it of time or relationships. I have really got a lot from the city in terms of education, friends, teachers and mentors.

## **Things I like to do when I visit Chandigarh**

Chandigarh is like our family headquarters. I come from Shimla and my husband comes from Patiala to meet our daughters who live here. We all have a family reunion here. I have many friends who I meet when I am in the city.

## **How has the city changed over the years?**

When I was studying in MCM, the area from Sector 22 to 36 here was empty and isolated. Now buildings have come up everywhere. Over time, the city has witnessed a lot of technological development. From Sector 17, there is a shift to Elante mall.

## **Changes I would want to see in the city**

I think we should let it go the way it is going. Time will tell what changes should be there in the city. The changes are perspective oriented, I might not appreciate the growing night life while youngsters might feel the city is dead as compared to bigger cities.

## **The best advice I’ve ever got**

I was a very blunt person but my mother Prem Kanti told me, “Andhe ko andha nahi Soordas kehte hain”. (A visually challenged person should be referred to in the best possible terms.” This changed my personality.

## **My advice to youngsters**

Don't do anything wrong and also have confidence in yourself. Don't be demotivated by people, you can't change them.