Appointment of Vice chancellors

Why in news?

There have been reservations expressed from various quarters on the Draft University Grants Commission Regulations, 2025 regarding the appointment of Vice chancellors of universities.

What are the UGC recommendations on appointment of vice chancellors?

- **Vice Chancellor -** A vice chancellor (VC) is the chief executive and academic head of a university.
- **Qualifications -** A distinguished person possessing high academic qualifications and demonstrated administrative and leadership capabilities with a minimum of 10 years of experience as
    - As a professor in an HEI (or)
    - At a senior level in reputed research or academic administrative organizations (or)
    - At a senior level in industry, public administration, public policy (and/or)
    - Public sector undertakings, with a proven track record of significant academic or scholarly contributions
- **Selection process –** It shall be through an all India newspaper advertisement and public notification.
- Applications can also be sought through nomination or a talent search process by a Search cum Selection Committee.
- **Search cum Selection Committee -** The Chancellor/Visitor shall constitute the Search cum Selection Committee comprising three experts.
- **Members of Search-cum-Selection Committee –** They shall be eminent persons with a proven track record of excellence (either Directors/Vice Chancellors or former Directors/Vice Chancellors of HEIs).
- They shall not be connected in any manner with the University concerned or its colleges.
    - **Chairperson -** A nominee of the Visitor/Chancellor shall be the Chairperson of the Search cum Selection Committee.
    - **Members -** A nominee of the Chairman, University Grants Commission.
    - A nominee of the apex body of the university such as Syndicate/ Senate/Executive Council / Board of Management**.**
- **Mandatory -** The composition of the Search cum Selection Committee shall be mandatory for the selection of Vice-Chancellors of all Universities established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, Provincial Act or State Act.
- **Service conditions** - It shall be prescribed in the Statutes of the respective University in conformity with these Regulations.
- **Term -** The Vice-Chancellor shall hold office for a term of 5 years from the date of entering the office**.**
- **Consequences of Violation -** If a Vice-Chancellor is not appointed as per these regulations, such an appointment shall be null and void.

What are the Observations made in the UGC's recommendations?

- **Judicial restriction –** In Dr. Premachandran Keezhoth and Anr. vs The Chancellor Kannur University and Ors. (2023), the Court has enunciated that members of the State executive shall not be members of the search-cum-selection committee
- **Dilution of academic integrity –** Expansion of eligibility of VC to experts from public policy, government, diplomacy, and industry may dilute academic integrity.
- **Overcentralisation -** Search cum Selection Committee is dominated by the representatives of Union government directly/indirectly.

Why states have representations in VC selection?

- **State universities –** They are largely a product of statute of the State Legislatures and that a majority of their funds and efforts have been provided by the State executive**.**
- **Affects regional development –** Mandates of state universities involves regional development and provincial priorities in research and advancement.
- **Affects university & States cooperation -** Universities have to necessarily feed the State innovation ecosystem and work in tandem with the government scientific and development establishment.
- **Impact on enrolment -** The central universities enrol far too low to meet requirements while private universities inaccessible due to high cost.

Suggestion from Experts

- The representative of the university executive can be a consensus candidate who is informally approved by the State executive which is amply represented in the university executive.
- Allow the State executive to nominate one member to the search-cum-selection committee in addition to the member representing the University executive.

Reference

[The Hindu | The Indian university and the search for a V-C]

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