

Appointment of Vice-Chancellors: Rules, Procedures and Intentions

K. Sudha Rao^{*}
Mithilesh Kr. Singh[^]

Universities are autonomous and the Vice-Chancellor is the leader of a higher education institution. As per the norm he/she should be an eminent academician, excellent administrator and also someone who has a high moral stature. How the Vice-Chancellor is selected and appointed; the process and procedure adopted for the appointment in universities and the relationship between Governments and universities in this process, are interesting issues. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyse different methods adopted for the appointment of Vice-Chancellors in Indian universities along with those of some foreign universities. Acts and statutes of 144 Indian universities have been analysed and the differences existing in states/universities and different methods adopted by foreign universities on the basis of a survey carried out by Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service (CHEMS) 1996 have been highlighted.

As a word of caution, the analysis of various Universities' Acts is made as available at the time of study in the libraries of universities and might have been updated with the latest amendments but are yet to reach the libraries.

As per the constitution of the University the Vice- Chancellor (VC) is considered the 'Principal Academic and Executive Officer of the University'. As head of the University he/she is expected to function as a 'bridge' between the executive and the academic wing of the university. It is to facilitate this expected role that universities are always in search of persons with values, personality characteristics and integrity in addition to academic excellence and administrative experience. The community's expectations are no doubt high, and at times it is difficult to find persons coming up these expectations; still these expectations indicate a standard. (Ramlal Parikh Committee 1993: 15-17) Finding the right person to fit into the position is important, not only in the interest of the university, but also in the interest of nation building, as thousands of students observe this leadership with high expectations as somebody who contributes to their future.

The reports of the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948: 422-23), Kothari Commission (1964-1966: 334-35), Gnanam Committee (1990: 27-30) and Ramlal Parikh Committee (1993: 15-17) have highlighted the importance of the role of VC in maintaining the quality and

^{*} Vice Chancellor, Karnataka State Open University, Mysore & Advisor ASERF

[^] Senior Fellow, (ASERF), New Delhi

relevance of universities, in addition to its growth and development, keeping in view, the much needed changes from time to time. Further, these committees have also made suggestions and recommendations for identifying the right person for the said position. Some of the recommendations are:

Despite everything the vice-chancellor remains the king-pin of the resilience of a university system as keeper of the university's conscience. (Radhakrishnan Commission – 1948: 422).

Generally the Vice-Chancellor should be a distinguished educationist or eminent scholar in any of the disciplines or professions, with a high standing in his/her field and adequate administrative experience. We are not generally in favour of appointment of persons who have retired from other fields. An exception to this general recommendation should be made only in the case of very outstanding persons whose association with the universities would be desirable from every point of view and should not be made an excuse for 'accommodating' or 'rewarding' individuals who do not fulfill the conditions laid down. *A vice-chancellor is one who stands for the commitment of the university to scholarship and pursuit of truth.* (Kothari Commission 1964-66: 334)

A Vice-chancellor should be a person with vision and (have) qualities of academic leadership with ability for administration. He should command high respect among all sections of the society. The Vice Chancellor should be a distinguished academic...(who) has commitment to the values for which the universities stand...He must have the ability to provide leadership to the university by his academic worth, administrative competence and moral stature. (Kothari Commission 1964-66: 334)

Parikh Committee was not in favour of appointing government officials as VC's. Quoting the Kothari Commission Report, the Parikh Committee mentions that the Vice-Chancellor is the most important functionary in a university not only on the administrative side but is also charged with the responsibility of creating the right atmosphere for teachers and students.

The universities need distinguished and dignified persons as VCs and it is necessary to ensure that they are treated with dignity and regard, which the office merits. (Ramlal Parikh Committee 1993: 15).

The Vice- Chancellor is the most important functionary in a university, not only on the administrative side but also for securing the right atmosphere for the teachers and the students to do their work effectively and in the right spirit. (Report of the Committee on Model Act for Universities 1964: 11).

The Vice-Chancellor being the principal executive and academic officer of the university, should exercise general supervision and control over the affairs of the university and give effect to the decision of all its authorities. He shall be the ex-officio Chairman of the Court, Executive Council, Academic Council, Finance Committee and Selection Committees and shall, in the absence of the Chancellor preside at any convocation of the

university for conferring degrees. It shall be the duty of the Vice-Chancellor to see that the provisions of the Act, Statutes and Ordinances and Regulations are fully observed and he should have the power necessary for the discharge of this duty. (Gajendragadkar Committee on the Governance of the University, 1971: 60).

In accordance with Regulation 1 for the office of VC (*Statutes and Ordinances of Cambridge University, June 2002: 655*)... the VC is of a stature and his/her presence commensurate to lead a distinguished academic institution. The stated mission of the University is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence. The VC must be of exceptional calibre with academic credibility, clear strategic vision, and outstanding leadership qualities. He/she should have strong management skills and senior-level experience gained in a complex institution and the ability to bring them to bear in a democratic, self-governing university. The ability to promote the University in a regional, national, and international context, and to increase the financial resources available to the University, should be key, particularly in order to realize the full potential of the University.

The present status and the future development of a university, is in a way directly linked to the head of the university viz, the vice-chancellor. However, well equipped and well staffed an institution may be, the quality and status of an institution gets affected by poor leadership. The performance of a person in this position is no doubt a joint responsibility of all those partners who are involved in the selection process. It is to understand the given structure and the constraints under which the selections take place that the acts and statues of 144 universities in India have been analysed and a synthesised report has been presented in brief in this article. In addition, an effort has also been made to understand the existing practices in other countries as well. This article is expected to raise critical issues in the minds of readers, towards selection of right persons as VCs. It is known that identification of right persons to the key position such as a Vice-Chancellor depends on several factors in which search committee play a crucial role.

As it is Abroad

It has been noticed that the procedure adopted varies widely from region to region and university to university. Further, this variation also depends on the degree to which the Government's (centre/state) involvement is present in the selection process. The method adopted in different universities for appointing the VCs could be categorised as:

Group-1: appointed by the Head of the State or the Chancellor in consultation with the University Council.

Group-2: appointed by the Head of the State or Chancellor without the consultation with the University Council.

Group-3: appointed by the Government from the panel submitted by the University Council or a specially convened Selection Committee.

Group-4: appointed by the University Council after formal approval from the Government.

Group-5: appointed by the University Council having a substantial number of Government representatives (more than 33 per cent).

Group-6: appointed by University Council where there is little or no Government representation.

The above categories indicate that state/government's involvement in the appointment of VCs has been in practice, not only in India, but also in other countries. Probably the government feels that it is too important an issue to be left to the decision of the academicians alone. The two extremes observed in the method of selection are: on the one hand, the appointment is made directly by the Head of State or the Chancellor without even consulting the governing body of the university, and, on the other extreme, the university council in which there is very little or no government representation selects the Vice-Chancellor in which the government has no role in the whole process. In between are the other methods.

In general, in the universities of Asian countries (including India), the Vice Chancellor is appointed either by the Head of the State or the Chancellor without or in consultation with the University Council. It may be noted that for most universities in the states, Head of the State is also the Chancellor of the university. There are also a number of institutions where the selection process enables the university to make a greater contribution in identifying the right person for the said post. A survey carried out by the Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service (CHEMS) in 1996, presented the analysis of several countries with regard to appointment of VCs in those countries that were included in the survey. It also revealed that in 55 per cent of the Asian universities VCs are appointed by the government; 18 per cent of the VCs though chosen by the Council have to get approval from the government; and it is in only 27 per cent of the universities where appointment is made by the university itself. It is obvious that the government plays a greater role in the appointment of VCs in Asian countries. Following are the examples of practices followed for the appointment of VCs in CHEMS surveyed universities.

Table 1. Procedure for Appointment of VCs

| Countries | Procedure of appointment | Notes | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Malaysia (Act 1961) | University council appoints | Special committee advises the appointment of Members - two from council, two from senate, chairman is appointed by the chancellor (<i>Note - except international Islamic university</i>) | Council Government nominees are there in the council appoints. |
| Hong Kong (Act 1964) | University Council appoints | After consultation with the senate | |
| Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Ordinance 1987) | By resolution of the council | Passed by votes not less than three quarters of its members | |
| Africa (University of Namibia Act 1992) | By the university council | Less than half of the council members are from the Government | |
| Pakistan | By the President or Provincial Governor | Formal consultation with the university council is not necessary Direct control of government | |
| Singapore | By the Government | Direct control of Government | |
| Kenya Zimbabwe | By the President Informal consultation with the university council | President is the chancellor | |
| Nigeria (Decree of 1993) | President appoints | From amongst the Nigerian candidates. Based on the final recommendation of one person from each university council | |
| Bangladesh (Act 1973) | Chancellor appoints | From a panel of three names nominated by the senate | |
| Sri Lanka (Act 1985) | Chosen by the UGC and appointed by the President | From three candidates nominated by the council | |
| Delhi State Statutes | Visitor appoints (President of India) | Three names recommended by the special committee. If not satisfactory visitor can call for more recommendations | University Council has greater participation in decision |
| Malawi (Act 1974) | The council/chancellor | Committee of seven members recommends 5 names (Three, from council/three from senate/one chairman) Chancellor/President or his appointee | |
| Ghana (Act 1961) | University council appoints Chancellor approves | Chancellor is the president of Ghana or his appointee | |
| Australia, New Zealand, U.K. | University council approves | More than 33percent members are Government representation (or) There is little or no government representation | |
| Canada | Government involvement is there in appointment | Ex. 33percent Canadian universities Government appointees sit on the selection panel | |

Source: (Markham, Lucy 1996: 3-5)

The analysis as conducted by CHEMS shows that,

Appointment by the Government appears to be less common in Africa than in the Asian countries. In 25 per cent of African universities, the VC is appointed by the Government. In 17 per cent of the universities, the Council chooses its VC and the appointment is approved by government and in 50 per cent of the universities the Council appoints the VCs. It is obvious from the above analysis of CHEMS that in a considerable number of universities, the VC is appointed by the Head of the State or his/her appointed Chancellor without or with consultation with the University Council. This method provides greater say for universities in the choice of their executive head. The government's contribution is very much smaller than in Asia and Africa. (Markham, Lucy 1996: 3-5)

Kilemi Mwiria (1992: 5), on the basis of the survey conducted by CHEMS observes that

.... in state-controlled universities, VC's suffer as they have to “serve two masters”[i.e. government and the University Council] without causing friction between them. Such a balance is likely to be achieved, if, those appointed are acceptable to their respective constituencies. Hence it is necessary to have such a method of appointment by which both the government and the University have contributed to the selection procedure.

The procedure of appointment of VC in Brock University St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada is quite interesting. According to the Act Section (14-E : 13), the Board of Trustees in consultation with Senate appoints the Vice-Chancellor. The procedure adopted for selection of the right candidate is as follows:

- Board of Trustees establishes a Committee, which engages the services of a highly qualified executive search consultant, who possesses expertise in the field of senior level institutional searches to assist the Committee in its search for a President (VC);
- The position is widely advertised and applications and nominations are invited till a specified date, preferably at least eight months before the expiration of the President's term of office;
- The Committee also has the power to contact the individuals directly for considering their names;
- The Committee makes extra efforts to ensure that the attention of qualified women is drawn and that women candidates are given fair consideration;
- The Committee establishes its own procedures for assessment of the candidates, conduct of interviews, and develop a short list;
- The name and *curriculum vitae* of each candidate is provided to the members of the Senate. The Senate holds information regarding the identity of the candidates in the strictest confidence;

- Senators are invited to make individual submissions to the Committee, in writing, with regard to the short-listed candidates;
- From the short-listed candidates the Committee then rank the candidates and invites the most suitable candidate to meet separately with representatives of the various segments of the University Community, including (but not limited to) the Senate, the Committee of Deans, Department Chairs, the Brock University Faculty Association, the Brock University Students' Union, Senior Administrators and the Board of Trustees;
- The Committee solicits the views of these representatives to aid in arriving at its final recommendation; and on completion of the procedures set forth above;
- The Committee either formulates a positive recommendation or repeats the procedure with the next best candidate in the judgment of the Committee. The Committee thus consults with the Senate in camera before making a formal recommendation to the Board regarding an appointment.

Procedure for Appointment of Vice-Chancellors in Indian Universities

The Gajendragadkar Committee on 'Governance of Universities and Colleges' (UGC, 1971: 61-62) has in its report, after considering several alternatives, recommended that the VC may be appointed by the Visitor (or Chancellor) from amongst a panel of names submitted by a committee especially constituted for this purpose. The UGC Committee has suggested the following alternatives:

Pattern I

- a. A nominee of the Visitor (or Chancellor)
- b. Two nominees of the Executive Council (or Syndicate)

Pattern II

- a. A nominee of the Visitor (or Chancellor)
- b. A nominee of the Chairperson, UGC
- c. A nominee of the Executive Council (or Syndicate)

Pattern III

- a. A nominee of the Visitor (or Chancellor)
- b. A nominee of the Chairperson, UGC
- c. Three nominees of the University, one of whom may be nominated by the Academic Council and the other two by the Executive Council (or Syndicate). Alternatively, one to be nominated by the Executive Council (or Syndicate) and the other two by the Academic Council.

The person or persons to be nominated by the Executive Council (or Syndicate) and other authorities of the University may not be the employees of the University or the member of the Executive Council (or Syndicate) or Academic Council.

The committee should prepare the panel, arrange it in an alphabetical order and need not indicate any preference.

Radhakrishnan Commissions (1948 : 423) recommendations on the procedure for the appointment of Vice-Chancellor suggested that:

- I. The Chancellor should appoint Vice-Chancellor based on the recommendations of the Executive Council.
- II. The Executive Council should send forward one name only to the Chancellor.
- III. There may be differences of opinion and actual voting inside the Executive but they should recommend only one name for the post of Vice-Chancellor
- IV. They can privately approach the man of their choice to find his willingness to serve, before recommending his name to the Chancellor.

Report of the Committee on 'Model Act for Universities' (1964 : 11) suggested two methods:

- I. Nomination by the Visitor/Government in the case of newly established universities.
- II. Election by the court from among three persons recommended by the Executive Council.

G. D. Parikh Committee (1969: 38) (Goa University Commission) recommended:

- I. Two Executive Council nominees and one Chancellors nominee
- II. Power of appointment should be vested with the Chancellor

(But raised questions about the influence of Executive Council on its nominee).

G.D Parikh also highlighted the aspect that:

The members of the Selection Committee may or may not be familiar with the actual situation in the university concerned and the qualities the individual should possess in order to deal with it successfully. They are more likely to be guided by somewhat general considerations. Again, since the function of the committee is only to recommend a panel of names, it is obviously not possible for the Committee to consult directly any of the individuals included in the panel. What is more, if the authorities have a particular name in mind. It is possible for them

to get it included in the panel. They can thus make an appointment of their choice without being in any sense directly responsible for it. (G. D. Parikh Committee 1969: 38)

Gnanam Committee's Report on (Constitution of Search Committee for the appointment of Vice-Chancellor 1990: 27-30) suggested:

- I. A nominee of Executive Council
- II. A nominee of University Grants Commission/State Council of Higher Education
- III. A nominee of Visitor (Convenor of the Committee)

CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education) agreed with Gnanam Committee (1992: 30) and added one Representative by High Court Judge on such Committee.

The Ramlal Parikh Committee (1993: 15-17) suggested that the composition of the Search Committee for appointment of VCs/Directors should be as follows:

(a). *State/Central Universities*

The Search Committee for the selection of Vice Chancellor may comprise of:

- I. A nominee of the Visitor/Chancellor, who should be the Chairman of the Committee and should be selected in consultation with the Government concerned (Central/State).
- II. A nominee of the Chairman, UGC;
- III. A nominee of the Executive Council of the University; and
- IV. A nominee of the Academic Council of the University.

The nominees of the above authorities shall be persons of eminence in the sphere of education and shall not be connected in any manner with the university concerned or its college or any constituent parts. The Visitor/Chancellor should appoint the Vice Chancellor from outside the panel.

(b). *Deemed Universities*

In the case of Institutions deemed to be universities, which are by nature and character, specialised unitary institutions, the President of the Institution should exercise the prerogative of

the Chancellor. In the case of such institutions, the Search committee for the selection of Vice Chancellor/Director may comprise of:

- I. A nominee of the President of the Deemed University who shall be the Chairman of the Committee;
- II. A nominee of the Chairman, University Grants Commission;
- III. A nominee of the Executive Council/Board of Management of the University/Institute; and
- IV. A nominee of the Academic Council of the University/Institute.

The nominees in general are persons of eminence in the sphere of education and shall not be connected in any manner with the University/Institute concerned. The President of the Institute should appoint the Vice- Chancellor/ Director out of the Panel.

It is important that:

- (a) The Chancellor's Office should initiate the processes and procedures of the preparation of panel for Vice -Chancellorship in a university at least six months before the office of the VC is likely to fall vacant;
- (b) In no case should there be a provision for calling a fresh recommendation from the Search Committee nor should there be a provision for reconstituting the Search Committee;
- (c) In the absence of the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-chancellor should officiate as the Vice- Chancellor, a senior Dean/Professor should function as Vice -Chancellor; and
- (d) A University should not be left in the charge of an acting Vice Chancellor for a very long period.

Alexander Committee (1997 Approved in 2003: 9-10) "The Role of Governor as Chancellor of the University recommended:

- I. A Nominee of the UGC
- II. A Nominee of the Executive Council/Syndicate
- III. A Nominee of the Chancellor
 - The Chancellor should nominate one of the members as Chairman of the Search Committee

- It would not be desirable to have a nominee of the State Government in the Search Committee or to have any government functionary as its ex-officio member as it would not be in keeping with the principle of the autonomy of the university.
- While the Chancellor may consult the State Government informally with regard to the appointment of a Vice Chancellor, after he has made selection, there should be no statutory requirement for formal consultations with the State Government or advice to them in the matter

University Acts and the Appointment of VCs

A brief analysis of the Acts and Statutes of 144 Indian universities in 28 States and UTs regarding the appointment, process and procedure of VCs is presented below:

Analysis of Acts reveal that the VC of a university, in general, is appointed by the Visitor/Chancellor, from a panel of three to five names recommended by the duly constituted Search/Selection Committee. Visitor's nominee is the Chairman/Convenor of the Committee. Visitor is empowered to call for a set of fresh names in case of dissatisfaction with the given panel. In general in Indian universities, the President of India is the ex-officio Visitor of all the Central Universities and the Governor of the respective states is the Chancellor of all the state universities. Necessarily this system is not uniform in all the universities. As far as the procedures adopted by different states are concerned, it varies. For example, in the University Acts of States like Punjab and Bihar, there is no mention of provision for the constitution of Search/Selection Committee. In Aligarh Muslim University, the Vice- Chancellor is appointed by the Visitor, from a panel of 3 persons recommended by the Court. The Court consists of a panel of 5 persons recommended by the Executive Council.

The Government plays a major role in the appointment/selection of the VC in Karnataka, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Bihar, Gujrat, and Haryana State University Act; Himachal Pradesh University Simla, Punjabi University Punjab and Calcutta University, Kolkata. The VC is appointed by the Chancellor in concurrence with the State Government, from the panel of names forwarded by the State Government. According to the Andhra Pradesh State University Act No.4 of 1991 (amended 1993), 'the State Government shall recommend one person to the Chancellor for appointment as Vice- Chancellor and the Chancellor appoints the VC'. It clearly shows that all power of appointment is with the State Government. In Central

Institute of English & Foreign Languages (Deemed University in Hyderabad), the VC is appointed by the Board, with the approval of the Central Govt. In NTR University of Health Science and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (Andhra Pradesh), the Chief Minister who is also the Chancellor, appoints the Vice Chancellor. In Arunachal University, the VC is appointed by the Chancellor with the prior approval of the Visitor. According to the Madhya Pradesh Vishwavidalaya Adhiniyam, the VCs are appointed by the State Government. In this case, the Chancellor has no role to play in the appointment procedure. In the University of Jammu and University of Kashmir, the VC is appointed by the Chancellor in consultation with the Pro-Chancellor. According to the West Bengal University Act, the VC is appointed by the Chancellor in consultation with the Minister of Education. Recently, some of the states have amended their University Acts and Statutes of which, one is Karnataka State. The present amendment grants greater power to the government than the Chancellor.

In some states, the government representative is in the Search/Selection Committee. For example, in Maharashtra, the Secretary in charge, Higher and Technical Education is a member.

Table 2 Percentages of universities and the authority that appoints the VC.

| Appointed by | % of University |
|---|------------------------|
| Chancellor | 39.58% |
| Chancellor in consultation with State Govt. | 34.41% |
| Chancellor in consultation with Minister of Education | 3.47% |
| Chancellor in consultation with Pro-chancellor | 2.08% |
| Chancellor with approval of Visitor | 0.67% |
| Chief Minister | 1.38% |
| Visitor | 9.27% |
| President of Institute (Deemed University) | 2.77% |
| Board | 2.08% |
| Board with Central Govt.'s approval | 0.69% |
| State Govt. | 1.38% |
| Regulating Council (<i>Nyamak Mandal</i>) | 0.69% |

Total sample : 144 University Acts

Table 2 reveals that in 51 per cent of the universities the VC is appointed by the Chancellor either by himself/herself or in consultation with the State Government. In these Universities, the Search Committees are constituted by the State Government or by the Chancellor in consultation with the State Government. The issue of concern is whether the government remains neutral in the whole process of appointing the Vice Chancellor.

University Acts and the Search/Selection Committee

The Search/Selection Committee recommends a panel of three names along with a concise statement indicating the academic qualification and other distinctions of each in an alphabetical order, without indicating any preference to the Chancellor/Visitor, from which the Chancellor appoints one as the VC of the university. For the State Universities of Karnataka 'the state Government constitute a Search Committee consisting of four persons of whom, one shall be nominated by the Chancellor, one by the University Grants Commission, one by the State Government and one by the Syndicate. The State Government shall appoint one of the members as the Chairman of the Committee. The Secretary to Government in charge of Higher Education or his nominee not below the rank of the Deputy secretary to Government shall be the convenor of the Search Committee. The Search Committee shall submit to the State Government a panel of three persons who are eminent academicians, in the alphabetical order. The State Government shall forward the panel to the Chancellor who shall, keeping in view the merit, equity and social justice and with concurrence of the State Government, appoint one person from the panel as the Vice Chancellor' (Karnataka State University Act, 2000, Chapter III, 14 [2] & [4]).

The number of members of the Search/Selection Committee varies between three to seven depending on the state/university. For example, in Bharati Vidyapeeth, Pune, the Search Committee consists of six members while in Deccan College it has seven members. In general, in majority of the universities there are only three members.

Table 3 Number of search/selection committee members in different universities for selecting VCs.

| Search Committee Members | % of Universities |
|---|--------------------------|
| 3 | 58.33% |
| 4 | 13.19% |
| 5 | 9.07% |
| 6 | 0.69% |
| 7 | 0.69% |
| Regulating Council | 0.69% |
| Board consisting 5 Ex Officio Member and 13 members | 1.38% |
| Not Available | 15.97% |

Further, the nomination to this committee also varies from university to university. Nominations are made by different bodies such as by the Visitor/Chancellor, UGC, State government, Senate, Syndicate, Executive Council, Academic Council, jointly by both Syndicate and Academic Council, Judge or the Chief Justice of the respective High Court, VCs of all the Universities of the respective state, etc.

According to Uttar Pradesh State Universities' Act of 1973, the High Court Judge of Allahabad or the Chief Justice himself or his nominee is one of the members of the Search Committee. Similarly, in case of Madhya Pradesh State University Act 1973 (amended 1995), one of the members of the Search Committee is the Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court or his nominee. According to Gujarat State University Act, one of the members of the Search Committee is nominated by VCs of all the State Universities of Gujarat and another one is appointed jointly by the Syndicate and the Academic Council.

Table 4 Number of members of universities along with the percentages the nomination made by different bodies for the search committee.

| Nominated By | No of Nominations | Number of Universities | % |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Chancellor | 1 | 69 | 47.91% |
| University Grants Commission | 1 | 49 | 34.02% |
| Central Government/ MHRD | 1 | 3 | 2.08% |
| State Government | 1 | 39 | 27.08% |
| Board of Management/ Board Members/ Board/ Chairman of the Board/ Governing Body/ EC | 2 | 17 | |
| | 1 | 59 | |

| | | | |
|--|--------------|------------|---------------|
| (Elected/ Nominated)/ Syndicate | 1 (Elected) | 28 | 70.01% |
| (Elected/Nominated) Management Council | Total | 101 | |
| University Council/Senate/Regulating Council/ Medical Council/ICAR | 1 | 24 | 14.58% |
| President (Deemed Univ) | 1 | 5 | 3.47% |
| Chief Justice of State High Court or his nominee (M.P and U.P State Univ) | 1 | 21 | 14.58% |
| Executive and Academic Council jointly | 1 | 7 | 4.86% |
| Academic Council | 1 | 12 | 8.33% |
| Court | 1 | 3 | 2.08% |
| VC's of all the State Universities of Gujarat | 1 | 8 | 5.55% |
| Secretary Hr and Technical Education (Maharastra State Univ.) | 1 | 9 | 6.25% |
| Trust /Society (Deemed University) | 1 | 1 | 0.69% |
| VC of IGNOU (Kota Open University) | 1 | 1 | 0.69% |
| Not Available | - | 22 | 15.27% |

Total sample 144 universities

University Acts and the Term of Office

In India, the duration and the term of office of VCs vary from university to university. It has been observed that the duration varies between 3 to 5 years. Further, the provision for second-term is there in some University Acts, but not in many. It is also noticed that, in general, the second-term is given only in universities where the duration is for 3 years. In Uttar Pradesh the term of office is for 3 years, but extension is given for one year. Wherever appointment is for a period of five years, in general only one term is given, still exceptions are there, for example in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Universities in Andhra Pradesh, etc.

The consensus is that a three-year term is too brief a period for a Vice Chancellor to formulate and implement policies and plans, in fact it is difficult to make an impact, administratively or academically in this short period. Hence a single term of five years is being advocated' (K. Sudha Rao, M. Singh and A. Chatrapathi 2003: 8).

The Ramlal Parikh Committee (1993 : 16) also suggested that, the term of office of the Vice Chancellor should be for five years and that he/she should be eligible for re-appointment for a second term in the same or another university. A five-year term is a sound proposition and is

being adopted by many states. Considering the fact that VCs are now being appointed in their early fifties, a second-term seems logical.

University Acts and the Age Limit

The UGC recommendation with regard to an upper age limit is 65 years for VCs and this has been accepted by most of the states and the central government. However, there is no mention of age limit in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh Universities' Acts. The Ramlal Parikh Committee (1993 : 17) has opined that, appointment beyond 65 years could be made in specialized institutions and only in an honorary capacity. The age limit of 65 years should normally be adhered to but there could be exceptions in very deserving cases. A Vice-Chancellor, whose term of office has expired, and if he/she is not re-appointed for second term, then, he/she can continue in office not exceeding a total period of one year.

According to the Acts and Statutes of the Universities, no VC can hold the office beyond the age of 65 years.

Table 5 Term of Office and the percentage of universities in which re-appointment is in the order.

| No. of Years | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 3 yrs | 51% |
| 4 yrs | 7% |
| 5 yrs | 24% |
| Not mentioned | 19% |
| Re-Appointments | |
| Re-appointed for 2 nd Term | 58% |
| No Re-appointment | 28% |
| Not Available in the Acts | 14% |

It is noticed that in 51 per cent of the universities the term of office is for 3 years, in 7 per cent of the universities, it is 4 years and in 24 percent of the universities it is for 5 years. In 27 per cent of the universities the term of office of the VC is not mentioned. Further, in 58 per cent of the universities the VCs are appointed for a second-term, whereas in 28 per cent of the universities no re-appointment is in practice. In the Acts of 14 per cent of the universities, the issue of either re-appointment for a second-term or extension is not mentioned.

To Sum up

It is obvious that no matter which country it is or for that matter, in states within a country the selection of a Vice-chancellor is made through a fairly elaborate procedure. Eminent persons nominated by the Chancellor and other august bodies such as the UGC, the Executive Council, the Academic Council, Senate, Syndicate and the Government are involved in the preparation of the panel of names for appointment as VCs. After the panel is prepared, the names are sent to the appointing authority such as Chancellor, Visitor, State Government, etc. Recently, the question has arisen with regard to whether the Governor, who is also a constitutional head of the State, can make the appointment on his own, or he/she is supposed to act on the advice of the respective State Government. This remains a grey area, and there is a difference of opinion and the victims of any disagreement are the institution and the Vice-Chancellor. The Chancellor as a non-political person is important as head of the institution, the Government is important as the funding agency. The Chief minister or the Education Minister are also important as they represent the university in the legislature and remain accountable to it. Hence, it is possible that there could be a difference of opinion between the Governor and the Government, which of course is a matter of concern.

It is clear, that, not all universities are able to adopt appointment procedures with little or no government involvement. Certain facts about the appointment of a VC should be given due consideration, such as, appointing a VC on the basis of political affiliation often means that he/she is viewed in general as more accountable to the government than to the university, and at the same time is a major cause for conflict between the academicians and students on the one hand, and the university administration on the other. Appointment on the basis of only academic merit might at least ensure that the chosen VC has some credibility in the eyes of the academic staff and the students of the universities.

As far as the process and procedure of the working of the Search / Selection Committee is concerned. There are no set procedures for the committees working. They can produce a panel of three or more names in just one sitting, or can follow a more detailed method of inviting suggestions from various sources as per their choice, and then short list the names for final selection from those that are received. It has been observed by many that earlier the

process of selection of VC was credible and it was an objective exercise. With the increase in the number of universities and the regional, state and communal pressures for control and management of the process it is becoming more and more difficult to establish the credibility of selection. The process of selection of VCs has not only fallen victim to such pressures but also to the pressures of caste, religion, gender etc. Not surprisingly, expediency, and not merit, decides the choice. This may be an individual statement but this is not untrue. The recent amendments in the Universities Acts of certain states have caused greater anxiety in the minds of those concerned with the quality of higher education.

It's true that the Search / Selection Committee plays a significant role in the selection of the Vice Chancellor; yet the selected VC's performance in the universities vary from university to university. So the members of the Search Committee, who are given the privilege and honour of selecting and suggesting names for the appointment of VC are directly or indirectly responsible for the achievement of the university. Commitment to the quality and the objectives of the universities in particular and higher education system in general, are of course the deciding factors in selecting the right person.

With all these, it is obvious that the selection of the VC is not only dependant upon the norms laid down in the State and University Acts and the UGC guidelines but also, on other contextual factors as has been mentioned above. Under these circumstances, the challenge is who should be the VC? How to select the right person? What should be the process that will enable selection of the right person? In doing so, what should be the role of the UGC, the State government and the University? These are important issues as they are directly linked with the selection process of not only VC, but also all others.

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