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Article For Reading: Centralising control: On the Draft UGC Regulations, 2025

In a federal setup, attempts at undermining any stakeholder in the subject matter of education, which is in the Concurrent List, will prove **disruptive**. The Draft UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2025, seeks to do precisely this. Demonstrating the Centre's **penchant** for facilitating control over institutions through **gubernatorial proxies**, it proposes to divest State governments of their role in the selection process for Vice Chancellor (VC) of universities. All powers are sought to be **vested** in the Chancellor — i.e., the Governor in most State universities — by taking away the function of constituting the search-cum-selection committee from the higher education departments. Such a committee would comprise a nominee each of the Chancellor; UGC Chairman; and of the respective university **syndicate**/senate. The Chancellor would appoint the VC out of three to five names recommended by the committee. Any violations, the draft warns, could attract **debarment** from participating in UGC schemes and denial of funding under the UGC Act. This comes against the backdrop of conflicts between State governments and Raj Bhavans on appointing VCs,

Which have deprived several universities, particularly in Tamil Nadu, of leadership. Naturally, opposition has come from several States, including Tamil Nadu, which passed a House resolution urging the Centre to immediately withdraw the draft. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has argued that the draft is not only against the basic federal principles enshrined in the Constitution but also **poses a threat to** the higher education system. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the AIADMK and the CPI-M have endorsed this **stance**.

A proposal to make non-academics eligible for the VC's job has also drawn criticism. The draft says such non-academics must have served for at least 10 years 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. Mr. Vijayan fears this could be used to appoint Sangh Parivar loyalists. However, universities have benefited from the scholarship of non-academics such as former President K.R. Narayanan and scientist Y. Nayudamma; appointing academics does not guarantee visionary leadership. The proposal to extend the VC's tenure from the typical three to five years is welcome. The UGC would do well to remove anti-federal clauses from the draft regulations and **allay** apprehensions on other provisions.

In the long run, it should aim for reforms to **obliterate** any governmental role in university administration, except maybe, for funding, and elevate them into truly autonomous institutions that nurture excellence.

Summary

The Draft UGC Regulations, 2025, propose centralizing the process of appointing Vice Chancellors (VCs) by giving the Governor (Chancellor) full authority over the selection committee, sidelining State governments. This has sparked opposition from States like Tamil Nadu and Kerala, citing threats to federalism and higher education autonomy. The draft also permits non-academics with industry or public administration experience to become VCs, which critics fear could enable partisan appointments. While the proposed extension of VC tenures is welcomed, the draft's anti-federal provisions have drawn widespread criticism. Reforms should aim for greater university autonomy and reduced government interference.

Vocabulary –

1. Disruptive (Adjective) विघटनकारी, बाधा डालने वाला, या अशांतकारी।

Meaning - Causing disruption, disturbance, or interruption, often challenging the existing order or norms.

Synonyms – Disturbing, Troublesome, Interruptive, Disorderly, Chaotic

Antonyms – Constructive, Orderly, Stabilizing, Harmonious, Peaceful.

Example – The protest outside the office became so disruptive that the police had to intervene.

2. Penchant (Noun) (रुझान)

Meaning: A strong or habitual liking for something or tendency to do something.

Synonyms: Liking, preference, inclination

Antonyms: Dislike, aversion, antipathy

Example: She has a penchant for collecting rare books.

3. Debarment (Noun) (प्रतिबंध)

Meaning: The act of officially preventing someone from doing something.

Synonyms: Exclusion, prohibition, barring

Antonyms: Allowance, permission, inclusion

Example: His debarment from the competition was due to unethical practices.

4. Gubernatorial (adjective) राज्यपाल संबंधी

Meaning: relating to a state governor or the office of state governor () **Sentence:** The gubernatorial candidate promised to reform education policies if elected.

Synonym: Administrative, Executive

Antonym: Non-governmental

Example : The gubernatorial candidate promised to reform education policies if elected.

5. Proxies (noun) प्रतिनिधि

Meaning : a person authorized to act on behalf of another.

Synonym: Representatives, Delegates

Antonym: Principals, Opponents

Example: They voted through proxies at the annual shareholders' meeting.

6. Vested (adjective) अधिकारित

Meaning= secured in the possession of or assigned to a person.

Synonym: Established, Conferred

Antonym: Conditional, Unsecured

Example: After years of service, she finally has a vested interest in the company's profit-sharing plan.

7. Syndicate (noun) संघ

Meaning = a group of individuals or organizations combined to promote some common interest

Synonym: Consortium, League

Antonym: Individual, Single

Example: The media syndicate owns several radio stations and newspapers across the country.

8. Allay (verb) शांत करना

Meaning= diminish or put at rest (fear, suspicion, or worry)

Synonym: Reduce, Alleviate

Antonym: Aggravate, Intensify

Example: The report helped to allay investors' fears about economic instability.

9. Obliterate (Verb) (नष्ट करना)

Meaning: To destroy completely; to wipe out.

Synonyms: Annihilate, erase, exterminate

Antonyms: Preserve, restore, construct

Example: The war obliterated entire villages, leaving nothing behind.

10. Stance (Noun) दृष्टिकोण

Meaning – An attitude, opinion, or position on a particular issue or topic.

Synonyms : Viewpoint, Opinion, Perspective, Approach.

Antonyms : Indifference, Neutrality, Uncertainty.

Example : The company adopted a strict stance against discrimination.

Idioms & Phrases -

1. Poses a threat to:

Meaning - Represents a danger or risk to something.

2. In the long run:

Meaning - Over an extended period of time.

Phrasal Verbs

1. Deprived of leadership:

Meaning - Lacking proper guidance or authority.