

HC to state: Follow UGC rules while appointing VCs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: The Madras high court has slammed Tamil Nadu government's 'recalcitrant' attitude and steadfast refusal to adopt UGC (University Grants Commission) Regulations concerning appointment of vice-chancellors of universities and other academic matters, and cautioned that failure to fall in line would entail certain consequences.

The first bench of Chief Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana said UGC Regulations would not apply to state universities "on account of the recalcitrant stand of the state government not to amend the university statutes so as to bring them in conformity with UGC Regulations, even though assurances were held out while availing of the financial aid."

The state government should also now be quite aware of the consequences which will flow to them on their inaction or refusal to amend the provisions of the statutes pursuant to regulations and should be ready to

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face them. This may entail difficulty in the functioning of the state universities on account of the lack of support and fund flow from the UGC, the judges cautioned.

Refraining from issuing any 'positive direction', the judges said it would, no doubt, be advisable and desirable for the state government to amend the Acts in terms of UGC Regulations in view of the pre-eminent role of the UGC so that both are in conformity.

It all started after search committee for appointment of Madurai Kamaraj University vice-chancellor specified qualifications that included 'associate professors' serving in colleges as well. While UGC said search committees had no juris-

diction to fix VC qualifications and that UGC provisions should be adhered to, counsel for the university said some of the colleges were bigger than university itself and they have been conferred with the status of 'Colleges of Excellence' and 'Colleges with Potential for Excellence'. If the designated professors alone are to be considered for VC posts, the large segment of faculty members with better qualification may not have an opportunity to take part in the process.

With regional, state and communal pressures for control and management of the process, with the increase in number of universities, it has become more and more difficult to establish credibility of selection, the order said, adding: "The very process of selection of vice-chancellors not only fallen victim to such pressures but also to the pressures of caste, religion and gender etc., The choice of adoption of UGC Rules and Regulations left to the universities has caused greater anxiety in the minds of those like the petitioner herein."