



W.P.No. 21681/2022 C/W  
W.P.NO. 23349 of 2022

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA AT BENGALURU**

**DATED THIS THE 7<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2023**



**PRESENT**

**THE HON'BLE MR PRASANNA B. VARALE, CHIEF JUSTICE**

**AND**

**THE HON'BLE MR JUSTICE KRISHNA S DIXIT**

**WRIT PETITION No.21681 OF 2022(S-RES-PIL)**

**C/W**

**WRIT PETITION No.23349 OF 2022 (S-RES-PIL)**

**IN W.P.NO.21681/2022:**

**BETWEEN:**

PROF. B. SHIVARAJ.,

Digitally signed  
by SHARADA  
VANI

Location: HIGH  
COURT OF  
KARNATAKA

...PETITIONER

(BY SRI.NARAYANA BHAT., ADVOCATE FOR  
SRI.MANJUNATH K V., ADVOCATE)

**AND:**

- 1 . THE STATE OF KARNATAKA  
REP BY ITS SECRETARY  
DEPT OF HIGHER EDUCATION,  
M S BUILDING, 6<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR,  
BENGALURU-560 001.



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- 2 . THE CHANCELLOR,  
VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY  
RAJ BHAVAN, RAJ BHAVAN ROAD,  
BENGALURU-560 001.
- 3 . VIDYASHANKAR S,
- 4 . THE VICE CHANCELLOR,  
VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY,  
JNANA SANGAMA, BELAGAVI-590 018.
- 5 . VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY  
REP BY ITS REGISTRAR JNANA SANGAMA  
BELAGAVI-590 018.
- 6 . SEARCH COMMITTEE  
REP BY ITS CONVENER AND  
SPECIAL SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR,  
RAJ BHAVAN, RAJ BHAVAN ROAD,  
BENGALURU-5460001.
- 7 . UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION,  
REP BY ITS CHAIRMAN,  
BAHADURSHAH ZAFAR MARG,  
NEW DELHI-110 002.
- 8 . UNION OF INDIA,  
REP BY ITS SECRETARY,  
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE  
AND DEVELOPMENT,  
SHASTRI BHAVAN, NEW DELHI-110 001.

...RESPONDENTS

(BY SRI. VIKRAM HUILGOL., AAG FOR R1;  
SRI.SANTHOSH S NAGARALE., ADVOCATE FOR R-2 & R-6;  
SRI.UDAYA HOLLA., SENIOR ADVOCATE FOR  
SRI.ABHISHEK KUMAR., ADVOCATE FOR R3;  
R4 SERVED & UNREPRESENTED;  
SRI. M P SRIKANTH., ADVOCATE FOR R5;  
SRI.SHOWRI H R., ADVOCATE FOR R7;  
SRI.POOJAPPA J., ADVOCATE FOR R8)



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THIS WRIT PETITION IS FILED UNDER ARTICLE 226 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA, PRAYING TO A) ISSUE WRIT OF QUO-WARRANTO OR ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE WRIT OR ORDER OR DIRECTION REMOVING THE 3RD RESPONDENT FROM THE POST OF VICE CHANCELLOR OF VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, BELAGAVI, KARNATAKA AS THE SAID APPOINTMENT IS VIOLATIVE OF UGC REGULATION ON MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS AND OTHER ACADEMIC STAFF IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND MEASURES FOR THE MAINTAINENCE OF STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 2018 DATED 18/07/2018 PRODUCED AT ANNEXURE-C AND SEC.13 OF THE VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY ACT 1994 AN EXTRACT OF WHICH IS PRODUCED AT ANNEXURE-C1 AND ALSO OPPOSED TO THE LAW LAID DOWN BY THE HON BLE APEX COURT PRODUCED AT ANNEXURE-B AND ANNEXURE-B1 RESPECTIVELY AND ARTICLE 14 OF THE CONSTITUTION AND ETC.,

**IN W.P.NO.23349/2022:**

**BETWEEN:**

DR. K. MAHADEV,

...PETITIONER

(BY SRI. NARAYANA BHAT., ADVOCATE FOR  
SRI. MANJUNATH K V.,ADVOCATE)

**AND:**

1. THE STATE OF KARNATAKA,  
REP BY ITS SECRETARY,  
DEPT OF HIGHER EDUCATION,  
M S BUILDNG, 6<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR,  
BENGALURU 560 001.



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2. THE CHANCELLOR,  
VIVSVESVARAYA TECHONOLIGICAL UNIVERSITY  
RAJ BHAVAN, RAJ BHVAN ROAD,  
BENGALURU 560 001.
3. VIDYASHANKAR S
4. THE VICE CHANCELLOR,  
VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSTIY,  
JNANA SANGAMA,  
BELAGAVI 590 018.
5. VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERISTY  
REP BY ITS REGISTRAR  
JNANA SANGAMA,  
BELAGAVI 590 018.
6. SEARCH COMMITTEE  
REP BY GOVERNOR AND  
SPECIAL SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR,  
RAJ BHAVAN, RAJ BHAVAN ROAD,  
BENGALURU 560 001.
7. UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSIONER,  
REP BY ITS CHAIRMAN,  
BAHADURSHAH ZAFAR MARG,  
NEW DELHI 110 002.
8. UNION OF INDIA,  
REP BY ITS SECRETARY,  
MINISTRY OF HUMAN  
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT,  
SHASHTRI BHAVAN,  
NEW DELHI 110 001.

...RESPONDENTS

(BY SRI.VIKRAM HUILGOL., AAG FOR R1;  
R2 ,R4 & R8 ARE SERVED AND UNREPRESENTED;  
SRI.UDAYA HOLLA., SENIOR ADVOCATE FOR



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SRI. ABHIKSHEK KUMAR., ADVOCATE FOR R3;  
SRI.M P SRIKANTH., ADVOCATE FOR R5;  
SRI. SANTHOSH S NAGARALE., ADVOCATE FOR R6;  
SRI. SHOWRI H R., ADVOCATE FOR R7;  
SRI. POOJAPPA J., CGC FOR R8)

THIS WRIT PETITION IS FILED UNDER ARTICLES 226 AND 227 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA, PRAYING TO CALL FOR THE RECORDS FROM THE FILE OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> RESPONDENT AND GRANT THE FOLLOWING RELIEFS  
a)ISSUE WRIT OF QUO-WARRANTO OR ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE WRIT OR ORDER OR DIRECTION REMOVING THE 3<sup>RD</sup> RESPONDENT FROM THE POST OF VICE CHANCELLOR OF VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, BELAGAVI, KARNATAKA AS THE SAID APPOINTMENT IS VIOLATIVE OF UGC REGULATION OF MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS AND OTHER ACADEMIC STAFF IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND MEASURES FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 2018 DATED 18/07/2018 PRODUCED AT ANNEXURE-C AND SEC.13 OF THE VISVESVARAYA TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY ACT 1994 AN EXTRACT OF WHICH IS PRODUCED AT ANNEXURE-C1 AND ALSO OPPOSED TO THE LAW LAID DOWN BY THE HON'BLE APEX COURT PRODUCED AS ANNEXURE-B AND ANNEXURE-B1 RESPECTIVELY AND ARTICLE 14 OF THE CONSTITUTION.

THESE PETITIONS HAVING BEEN HEARD AND RESERVED FOR ORDERS, THIS DAY, **CHIEF JUSTICE** PRONOUNCED THE FOLLOWING:



**ORDER**

1. These two petitions invoke the PIL jurisdiction of this Court essentially for a writ of *quo warranto* for the removal of 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent from the office of Vice Chancellor of the 5<sup>th</sup> respondent –University.

2. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioners argued that the subject appointment is liable to be voided for the following reasons:

(i) The Search Committee was wrongly constituted inasmuch as two of its members were associated with the affairs of the respondent–University and there was no UGC nominee in the said Committee.

(ii) The 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent appointee lacked requisite qualification both in terms of Section 13 of the Visvesvaraya Technological University Act, 1994 and the 'UGC REGULATIONS ON MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS AND OTHER ACADEMIC STAFF IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND MEASURES FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 2018'. His academic performance was very bad.



(iii) The 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent does not have good credentials as are required for the high office of the Vice Chancellor of a University and that he has some criminal antecedents too.

In support of his submission, he pressed into service certain Rulings of the Apex Court.

3. After service of notice, the State has entered appearance through the learned Additional Government Advocate; the Chancellor of the University & the University are represented by their Panel Advocates; and the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent against whom a Writ of *Quo Warranto* is sought for is represented by his private counsel. The Chancellor of the University and the University together have filed a common Statement of Objections on 15.03.2023. The 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent has filed an application in I.A.No.1/2023 for the rejection of the writ petitions. The respondent-UGC spoke through its panel counsel. The UOI is represented by the learned CGC. All the learned advocates appearing for the answering respondents vehemently opposed the petitions making submission in justification of the appointment to the office in question.



The contesting respondents too have relied upon a few Rulings in support of their stand.

4. Having heard the learned counsel for the parties and having perused the petition papers, we are not inclined to grant indulgence in the matter for the following reasons:

**(I) FOUNDATIONAL FACTS OF THE CASE AS EMERGING FROM THE RECORD:**

(a) The vacancy in the office of the Vice Chancellor of the respondent-VTU having occurred, the Search Committee came to be constituted vide Chancellor's Order dated 10.08.2022 issued u/s 13(3) of the VTU Act, 1994. It comprised of 4 persons viz., Dr.Himamshu Rai (Director, IIM, Indoor), Prof. M.S.Shivakumar (former Vice Chancellor, CMR University), Prof. Krupa Shankar (former Vice Chancellor of Uttara Pradesh Technical University) and Sri Jitendra P. Nayak (Executive Director, Sujirkar's Group, Hubli). The Special Secretary to Governor was appointed as the Convener of the Committee. Applications were invited for the post of Vice Chancellor vide





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Notification dated 10.08.2022. This Notification came to be followed by another Notification dated 16.08.2022. The last date for filing of the applications/nominations was 06.09.2022.

(b) Several candidates including the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent in these petitions had staked their claim. The Committee having held deliberations concluded the selection proceedings vide report dated 24.09.2022 short-listing names of three of the persons in the fray. These were Prof. Anand Deshpande (the then sitting Registrar of VTU), Prof. Gopal Mugeraya (the Director of NIT, Goa) and Prof. S.Vidyashankar i.e., 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent herein (the then sitting Vice Chancellor of KSOU, Mysuru). The Chancellor issued the Notification dated 29.09.2022 appointing the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent as the Vice Chancellor of the respondent-University.

(c) The case in W.P.No.21681/2022 has been filed by Prof. B.Shivaraj on 31.10.2022 and the companion case in W.P.No.23349/2022 has been filed by Dr.K.Mahadev on



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21.11.2022. Both these cases are represented by the same learned counsel on record. The 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent i.e., the incumbent of the office of the Vice Chancellor has filed an application in I.A.No.1/2023 in both these petitions on 25.03.2023 seeking their dismissal. Rejoinder and counter affidavits have been filed thereto by the petitioners.

**(II) AS TO THE CREDENTIALS & CONDUCT OF PETITIONER-DR.K.MAHADEV:**

Petitioner –Dr.K.Mahadev in W.P.No.23349/2022, at page 15 of the petition has falsely averred ‘Petitioner’s has not been involved in any civil, revenue or criminal litigation in any capacity before any court or Tribunal...’ (*sic*). However, this assertion is plainly false as is demonstrated from the following:

- (a) He had held a press conference wherein serious allegations of corrupt practices against the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent herein were leveled, when his name was being considered for the post of Vice Chancellor. This led to the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent filing a civil suit in O.S.No.6362/2022 on 29.09.2022, wherein this petitioner happens to be one of the



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defendants. Learned XLII Additional City Civil Judge, Bengaluru City has issued an *ex parte ad interim* order of temporary injunction on 01.10.2022 which reads as under:

*"Issue an exparte ad-interim order of temporary injunction against restrain the defendants from publishing any news, newscast, telecast, newsflash, bulletin, update, information, gossip, conversations, documentation, material report, communication of any kind which may damage the image or cause harm to the plaintiff and also from publishing, broadcasting, communicating or in any manner making available or causing or continuing to do so."*

It is notable that he has filed the PIL on 21.11.2022 i.e., much after suit summons was served on him along with the order of temporary injunction. Several contentions have been taken by him in the Petition that are plainly defamatory of 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent.

(b) In W.P.Nos.25339-40/2003 filed by the then Vice Chancellor of Mysore University Prof. S.N.Hegde and in W.P.No.24135/2003 (GM-KLA), filed by one Dr.B.R.Ananthan, petitioner-Dr.K.Mahadev happened to be the 4<sup>th</sup> respondent in both. He suffered a common judgment on



04.02.2004 whereby the Lokayukta proceedings instituted on the basis of his complaint came to be quashed, with caustic remarks, that were held to be defamatory of those Writ Petitioners. Very wild allegations were made by him as has been discussed in a reported case in *PROF. S.N. HEGDE VS THE LOKAYUKTA*, **2004 SCC OnLine Kar 70**.

(c) In W.P.No.870/2006 filed by Prof.S.N.Hegde against Lokayukta, a learned Single Judge of this Court vide order dated 1.12.2015 has quashed the Lokayukta proceedings in which act of bribery was alleged against this petitioner wherein, at internal page 4, it is observed against Dr.K.Mahadev as under:

*"...It is the petitioner's belief that one Dr. K. Mahadev is the master mind behind these complaints, who is known to have a history of having filed such complaints against several former Vice Chancellors. All of which were found to be baseless. The petitioner's belief flows from the fact that Dr. Mahadev was also in the USA when Dr. Ramadas was there. They along with Kumaraswamy had engineered the complaint..."*

(d) He had filed an FIR which came to be registered by V.V.Puram police as Crime No.34/2017 against the office bearers of Rajya Vokkaligara Sangha, Bengaluru. After investigation, the Charge



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Sheet was filed by the police for offences punishable under sections 506, 504, 323 read with section 34 of IPC. The cognizance having been taken, learned XXIV Addl. CMM, Bengaluru, registered the same as C.C.No.17289/2017. A learned Single Judge of this court in Crl.P.No.2613/2018 between *SRI.SATISH & OTHERS vs. STATE & DR.K.MAHADEV* quashed the criminal proceedings vide order dated 13.04.2022.

(e) He had filed a PIL in W.P.No.19111/2006, in which the Mysore University, its Chancellor & Vice Chancellor were parties along with the State Government, challenging the proposal for conferring Honorary Doctorate Degrees on certain persons and excluding certain others from the proposal. He had made a bit wild allegations against the then Governor of the State who happened to be the *ex officio* Chancellor of the University. A Coordinate Bench of this Court headed by the then Chief Justice dismissed the same observing at para 5 of the judgment as under:

*"...The Chancellor is not a mere signing machine to approve every proposal of the Syndicate. He is not expected to act mechanically to grant or to refuse approval to the proposal of the Syndicate. There can be meaningful interaction and exchange of views between the Chancellor and the*



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*Syndicate. Such interactions and exchange of views will only facilitate smooth functioning of the University and increase the quality and credibility of the decisions of the University. It does not amount to interference with the power of the Syndicate. Therefore, the contention of the petitioner that the first respondent Chancellor has exceeded his right, power and jurisdiction is totally misconceived..."*

(f) There are several other cases too in which he was a party. All these have been suppressed by him, though the PIL *pro forma* required their compulsive disclosure. Such a requirement is justifiably enacted in the extant Rules to facilitate ascertainment of *bonafide* of the PIL litigants, who at times, have hidden agenda. The explanation offered by his counsel for such non-disclosure, is far from satisfactory, to say the least.

**(III) AS TO THE CONDUCT AND CREDENTIALS OF PETITIONER-PROF.B.SHIVARAJ:**

In W.P.No.21681/2022, petitioner-Prof. B.Shivaraj claims to be an educationist and a former acting Vice Chancellor of Mysore University. He has retired as a Professor from the said University. He is a Senior Fellow of ICSSR and he was a Member of AICTE Expert Committee. This petitioner



asserts in so many words that he is a public spirited citizen and has no personal interest in the *lis*. He also avers at page 15 of the petition '*That the Petitioner respectfully submits that Petitioner's has not been involved in any civil, revenue, criminal litigation in any, capacity before any court or Tribunal...*' This assertion is demonstrably false because of the following:

(a) The petitioner-B.Shivaraj was arrayed as a delinquent along with another in a disciplinary enquiry way back in 2015. By way of penalty, he was compulsorily retired vide Syndicate Resolution dated 21.11.2016 on a proven misconduct. However, in appeal, the penalty came to be scaled down by reducing his salary to the '*minimum pay*'.

(b) In W.P.No.33386/2015, another learned Single Judge of this court at para 16 of the judgment dated 15.07.2019 has observed against him as under:

*"...It has been held by this Court as also Hon'ble Supreme Court that it is not open for the Tribunal or Courts to re-appreciate the evidence so as to interfere in the enquiry proceedings and also for reducing the punishment. The only scope in such proceedings is to find out whether the Enquiry Officer has committed any basic error and*



*there is violation of principles of natural justice or any provisions of law. No such circumstances exist in the instant case. In the circumstances, I hold that University is justified in punishing the petitioner for the charges framed against the petitioner..."*

(c) In W.P.No.33863/2015, he had laid a challenge to the reduced penalty order contending that the government vide order dated 12.6.2017 had set at naught the entire Resolution levying the penalty and therefore, the order reducing the penalty was also *non est*. Another learned Single Judge of this court vide order dated 10.08.2022 dismissed the Writ Petition observing at paras 7 & 8 as under:

*"...The Government in its order has specially refused to enter into the aspect of decision of the Syndicate regarding reduction of pay on the ground that the matter is sub-judice...Needless to state that the order of Government does not have the effect of wiping off that portion of the order of the Synidcate relating to reduction of pay in light of the observations made in the order that "the matter was sub-judice, no decision is taken in that regard."*

(d) The penalty order made in the D.E came to be set aside by the Government on 03.05.2023 may be true. But that is no answer for not disclosing a





few writ petitions which he had filed before this Court and suffered adverse orders.

5. It hardly needs to be stated that one who invokes PIL jurisdiction, more particularly with a prayer for a Writ of Quo Warranto, has to approach the court with '*clean heart, clean mind and clean objective*' vide *STATE OF JHARKAND vs. SHIV SHANKAR SHARMA, 2022 SCC OnLine SC 1541*. Learned advocates appearing for the contesting respondents are more than justified in contending that the Writ Petitions lack *bonafide*. Their contention that because of the caveat entered by the 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent *qua* Dr.K.Mahadev, he has setup Prof.B.Shivaraj to file an independent petition, cannot be discounted in the pleaded circumstances. The text, tenor & language of these petitions are ditto, barring in those paragraphs which mention personal credentials of the petitioners. These are 'copy-paste' petitions couched in verbatim duplicate language. The same counsel on record represents the petitioners has drafted these petitions, does not dilute our this impression, even in the least. The



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persons presenting & prosecuting social action litigations should act in *bonafide*; those seeking to secure vengeance *qua* certain private parties cannot be granted indulgence by the Court of Constitutional jurisdiction vide *CHANCHALPATI DAS vs. STATE OF WEST BENGAL, 2023 SCC OnLine SC 650*, wherein it is observed that parties cannot take up court proceedings as a platform for settling their personal scores or for nurturing their personal ego.

6. Learned counsel for the petitioners has advanced his contentions as to the violation of UGC Guidelines of 2018 whilst forming the Search Committee and later treating its recommendation for appointment to the post of Vice Chancellor. He pressed into service certain Rulings of the Apex Court to the effect that these Guidelines are mandatory and have to be followed notwithstanding the provisions of State enactments in variance thereto. The Rulings cited by him are *GAMBHIRDAN K. GADHVI vs. STATE OF GUJARAT AND OTHERS, (2022) 5 SCC 179*; *STATE OF WEST BENGAL*



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*vs. ANINDYA SUNDAR DAS AND OTHERS, 2022 LiveLaw (SC) 831; PROF.(DR.) SREEJITH P S vs. DR.RAJASREE M S AND OTHERS, 2022 SCC OnLine SC 1473; PROF. NAGENDRA SINGH BHANDARI vs. RAVINDRA JUGRAN AND OTHERS, 2022 SCC OnLine SC 1555; DR.K.K.VIJAYAN vs. THE CHANCELLOR* in W.P.(C)No.16457/2021 disposed off on 14.11.2022. The learned Advocates appearing for the respondents too have advanced their counter contentions. However, in our considered opinion, petitions lack *bonafide* and petitioners have not approached the court with '*clean hands, clean heart & clean objective*'. This apart, there is a short unexplained delay on the part of the petitioners in calling in question the subject appointment to a public office. The Vice Chancellor, ideally speaking, is the "Conscience Keeper of the University" vide *MARATHWADA UNIVERSITY vs. SESHRAO BALWANT RAO CHAVAN*, (1989) 3 SCC 132. Whilst examining the appointment of such a high functionary, this aspect cannot be lost sight off. After all, Mahatma Gandhi said "*means are as important as the ends*".



7. It has been a settled position in the domain of public law that where a litigant, more particularly *dominant litis* is not fair in approaching the court inasmuch as he has not laid bear all facts including those of his credentials, ordinarily, the lis will not be examined on merits. The Apex Court in *K.JAYARAM vs. BDA, (2022) 12 SCC 815*, has observed:

*"... a prerogative remedy is not available as a matter of course. In exercising extraordinary power, a writ court would indeed bear in mind the conduct of the party which is invoking such jurisdiction. If the applicant does not disclose full facts or suppresses relevant materials or is otherwise guilty of misleading the court, the court may dismiss the action without adjudicating the matter..."*

Therefore, we are not inclined to undertake the examination of the contentions and counter contentions of the parties on merits of the matter.

In the above circumstances, these petitions are dismissed, costs having been made reluctantly easy.

We make it clear that we have not expressed any opinion as to the regularity or otherwise of the entire proceedings that culminated into the appointment of the



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3<sup>rd</sup> respondent in these petitions, as the Vice Chancellor of  
5<sup>th</sup> respondent-University.

It is also made clear that the observations hereinabove made being confined to the disposal of these cases, the same shall not have any bearing on any other proceedings by and between the parties.

**Sd/-**  
**CHIEF JUSTICE**

**Sd/-**  
**JUDGE**

Snb,  
List No.: 1 Sl No.: 40