The Vice-Chancellor is by far the most important functionary in a University. His duties and responsibilities are enormous. Necessarily the qualities that he ought to possess are of immense importance. The Committee on Higher Education appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins described them as follows:

"This leads us to the position of the Vice-Chancellor. His is a role which, probably unfortunately, is seldom precisely spelt out in written constitutions. Yet it would be difficult to overstate its importance, particularly in a period of expansion which called for imagination and continuous initiative. There is a grave danger that the needs of expansion and the increasingly complex relations between institutions of higher education and Government will impose upon the Heads of the Universities a quite insupportable burden. There are certain duties of which the Vice-Chancellor cannot divest himself. He is at once a member of the Governing body and the chairman of the main academic councils. He must therefore be at the centre of all discussions involving broad questions of internal policy and the outside world. He must represent his institution in all formal or informal relations with the University Grants Committee; he must keep in touch with potential benefactors and he must be aware in general of developments in the various branches of learning. No other enterprise would impose on its chairman the variety and burden of work that the modern University requires of its Vice-Chancellor."

Thus the most important functionary in a university is the Vice-Chancellor. He must maintain right atmosphere for teachers and students so that they may do their work in right spirit. The Committee on Model Act said
The responsibilities of a Vice-Chancellor are no less heavy in this country than in the United Kingdom or anywhere else. In certain respects the burden of Vice-Chancellor in Indian universities is even greater. Among the other things he is the chairman not only of the academic body which determines the courses of study but he is also chairman of the executive body. He also presides at the meetings of the court.

The responsibilities of the Vice-Chancellor in North East India are definitely greater because all the universities came into being after Independence. The eldest of them is the university of Gauhati which is yet to complete thirty years of its age. The youngest of them is the North Eastern Hill University which is yet to begin its schooling. The Vice-Chancellors of all the four universities must have all the qualities enumerated by the Robbins Committee. He is central to its life with infinite capacity for hard work and initiative. We shall discuss in detail the various functions of the Vice-Chancellor.

First he is the chairman of the Court. When the Chancellor is present he presides over its meetings. For some years past Chancellors do not preside over the meetings of the Court. The Vice-Chancellor presides. As Chairman he must control the proceedings of the Court. Here he performs the functions which the Speaker of a legislature performs. He must decide points of order.
He must give rulings on questions raised. He must see that the members do not talk irrelevantly. He must put questions and so on.

He is also the chairman of the Academic Council which determines the courses of study and other academic matters. As chairman of the Academic Council he must have a firm grasp of all the courses taught in the university. He must have detailed knowledge of the rules and regulations relating to examinations and courses of study.

Third, the Vice-Chancellor is also the chairman of the Executive Council which is responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the various bodies. The Executive Council meets very frequently and the work connected with the Executive Council imposes immense burden on the Vice-Chancellor. It is here that the Vice-Chancellor's capacity to run the institution efficiently and effectively are tested.

Fourth, the Vice-Chancellor is also the chairman of the selection committee for the selection of teachers for various disciplines and therefore at the gateway of personnel administration. As chairman of the selection committee he must see that the faculty positions are filled by eminent men and women so that better human material is supplied for the service of the State. In the selection of
personnel for the various departments he must display absolute impartiality and lift his mind from particularism to universalism. Any deviation from this principle may result in the degeneration of the university. Some of the universities like Cambridge, Harvard, Oxford and Chicago are venerated and respected because their faculties consist of eminent men of letters.

Fifth, the Vice-Chancellor is the chairman of the construction committee which is concerned with the construction of the buildings and providing physical facilities to the faculty, students and employees. A Vice-Chancellor must be able to give a direction to the building up of a beautiful campus.

Sixth, the Vice-Chancellor is the chairman of the Research Council. In this capacity he must see that the funds placed at the disposal of the University for promotion of research are utilised effectively and that research is promoted. The main function of a university is to promote research and learning. As chairman of the research council the Vice-Chancellor must encourage those who are committed to research and chastise those who in the name of research waste time and money.

Seventh, the Vice-Chancellor as chairman of the Finance Committee should have a firm grip of the university's
finances and maintain a cordial relation with the Government and the University Grants Commission.

The Vice-Chancellor may attend the meetings of the various Faculties. Whenever he attends the meetings of any faculty, he presides over its meetings. In this capacity he has to keep the needs of the society in view while guiding the faculties in framing courses and syllabi.

The Vice-Chancellor is primarily responsible for the execution of the several provisions of the Act, Statutes and Ordinances in letter and spirit.

The Vice-Chancellor, finally has certain emergency powers which he may exercise without the prior consent of the concerned authority but must report the action taken immediately to such authority.

Above all, he must maintain discipline in the academic community.

Thus, everyone concerned with university administration looks to him for guidance. He must take credit as well as blame for all that happens in the university.

The powers and functions enumerated above are by no means exhaustive. The powers and functions discharged by a Vice-Chancellor depend on the personality of the
Vice-Chancellor. A Vice-Chancellor like Asutosh Mukherjee or Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan could be able to exercise dictatorial powers with the consent of all concerned but times have changed. His success depends not only upon his professional skills as an academician but also on his ability to lead, motivate and inspire people or groups to work toward common objectives. He should be able to cope with the kind of problems which face the University. A successful Vice-Chancellor should have a strong academic background with an earned doctoral degree or its equivalent; ideally he should have achieved national stature in his chosen field and symbolize to the faculty their own scholarly vocation. He should have deep sympathy to the students, understand their problems and attitudes and have regard for their participation in University processes. He should be able to inspire his administrative associates, faculty and staff to cooperative effort in sustained endeavours and be flexible in dealing with complex problems in a period of rapid social and political change.

Appointment of Vice-Chancellor: The statute of the University framed under section 22(11) of the Gauhati University Act, 1947 said that the Vice-Chancellor shall
be appointed by the Chancellor after considering the recommendations of the Court. From the above it is clear that the Court was not authorised to elect its Vice-Chancellor. It was directed to recommend a panel of names for the consideration of the Chancellor. The Chancellor had complete discretion to accept or not to accept the recommendations of the Court. This was the theory. What was the practice? When the Court met for the first time on 26 January 1948 with the Chancellor Akbar Hyderi in the Chair the Chief Minister who was also the Minister for Education proposed that Krishna Kanta Handiqui be 'appointed' Vice-Chancellor. No other name was proposed. The Chancellor would have been perfectly justified if he had asked the Court to propose a panel of names for his consideration. He did not insist on the preparation of a panel by the Court for his own reasons. The candidate proposed by the Chief Minister was the best that Assam could supply. The personal qualifications of Handiqui influenced the Chancellor to accept the suggestion of the Chief Minister.

The first term of Handiqui was over on 1951. The Court met on 10 January 1951 to recommend suitable names for the office of Vice-Chancellor. A prominent member of the Court and of the ruling party in Assam proposed
Handiqui for a second term. This time an attempt was made to prepare a panel. The name of Surya Kumar Bhuyan was proposed for the office of Vice-Chancellor. There was a long debate whether the Court should propose only one name or a panel of names. The Chancellor was requested to give a ruling on this question. The Chancellor did not wish to involve himself in this controversy. Therefore he said that he was not competent to give his opinion on this question. He requested the Court to decide. The Court by 48 to 4 votes decided that only one name should be recommended to the Chancellor. The Court was again requested to select one of the two candidates and the Court selected by 59 votes to 12 Krishna Kanta Handiqui, the sitting Vice-Chancellor for a second term.

Krishna Kanta Handiqui's second term was over in 1954. The Chancellor called for a meeting of the Court on 18 January 1954 for recommending the names for the office of Vice-Chancellor. Again, Krishna Kanta Handiqui was proposed for a third consecutive term. But one of the members of the Court proposed Surya Kumar Bhuyan and thus a second attempt was made to prepare a panel of names. But the situation was awkward. No one seconded the proposal. Therefore the Chancellor did not accept the proposal. To save the delicate situation the
Advocate General, Fakruddin Ali Ahmed said that the proposal need not be seconded and that the Court should be asked to prepare a panel of names for the consideration of the Chancellor. He also pointed out that the framers of the Act (Fakruddin Ali Ahmed himself was the framer of the Gauhati University Act) intended that the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor should be above party politics and factional politics and therefore the Court should prepare a panel of names for the consideration of the Chancellor. The Chancellor, did not deny this assertion; but he insisted that every proposal should be seconded. He could have asked the member concerned to propose a panel of names and not a single name and then call for a seconder for the panel. However the situation was very delicate. It is really remarkable that the candidate for the office of Vice-Chancellor should have no seconder in the Court. The Chancellor was therefore correct when he said that every proposal should be seconded. Krishna Kant Handiqui was therefore recommended to the Chancellor.

Krishna Kant Handiqui's third term was over in 1957. The Chancellor called for a meeting of the Court for recommending names for the office of Vice-Chancellor. The Court which met in January 1957, recommended only one name S.K. Bhuyan. Various factors were responsible for recommending only one name. In 1954, it rejected him by
not seconding his name. In 1957 it elected him by a unanimous vote. The reasons are obvious. The best man available in Assam had already served three terms and was unwilling to serve for a fourth term. Surya Kumar Bhuyan who was a noted historian was considered to be the next best and he was given a chance.

Surya Kumar Bhuyan held office for a single term. His term of office was not significant. The downward trend in the administration of the University began during his term. He was a Hamlet, indecisive, slow and completely dominated by one or two persons. Therefore some members of the Court requested him not to seek a second term.

When the Court met to recommend names to succeed him it proposed again only one name, H.C.Bhuyan. Thus, on five occasions, the Chancellor did not insist on the preparation of a panel of names for the office of Vice-Chancellor of the Gauhati University for his consideration. Therefore according to convention and not according to law, the Vice-Chancellor was elected and not selected by the Chancellor.

H.C.Bhuyan expressed his desire to resign in January 1961 but the Chancellor requested him to continue till February 1962. But on 21 July 1961, the Vice-Chancellor wrote to the Chancellor "It is my confirmed
view that I should quit earlier than that before mere
damage is done to this young University. I have been
passing through a period of unrelieved misery and can
bear it no longer. It is my fervent hope that you will
very kindly accept my resignation."

When the students and teachers came to know
of the resignation of the Vice-Chancellor, a demonstration
took place on 16 August 1961 demanding the continuance
of the Vice-Chancellor. Earlier on the same day, all the
Deans met the Vice-Chancellor at his residence and earnestly
requested him to withdraw his resignation. He acceded to
their request and informed the Chancellor that "on earnest
request from the Deans and Teachers of the University, I
withdraw my resignation." To celebrate the event the
Deans and the Vice-Chancellor agreed to go to the office.
While this drama was going on, the students and some
teachers met before the Administrative Building. Some
of them entered the building and demanded and obtained
the resignation of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts,
the Registrar, the Deputy Registrar, and the Treasurer.
But the Executive Council refused to accept the resignations.
The officers and the Dean returned to their respective
offices after a few days.

To discuss the situation created by the
incident of August 16, 1961, the Court was summoned.
The Court met on 16 September and requested the Chancellor to appoint a Commission of enquiry; that the chairman of the committee should be from outside the State. It also resolved that the Enquiry Committee should enquire into the causes and nature of the incident of 16 August 1961, which led to the resignation of the three administrative officers and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the University; into the general state of discipline in the University and into the financial administration of the University from 1955 as well as the Gauhati University Development Committee from the beginning to the date of incident; recruitment and promotion and conditions of service of teachers and other employees and make recommendations.

On the 7 October 1961, the Vice-Chancellor requested the Chancellor to sanction 1 month and 24 days' sick leave. Leave was granted and the Registrar was in-charge of the administration. Before the expiry of the leave the Vice-Chancellor again requested the Chancellor to accept the resignation and relieve him. But the Chancellor requested the Vice-Chancellor to continue in office for another three months at least. The Vice-Chancellor agreed to continue up to 2 January 1962. But the Chancellor again requested him to continue up to 24 January 1962 when the Court would meet.
The Chief Minister and the Chancellor were deeply concerned with the affairs of the University, the only one in the whole of North East India. The Chief Minister consulted Srimali, the Minister for Education, Government of India and requested him to suggest a suitable name for appointment as chairman of the committee of enquiry. The Chancellor was anxious to secure the services of an outstanding public man preferably an ex-Vice-Chancellor as Chairman of the Committee. The Chancellor after negotiation appointed Pavate, the Vice-Chancellor of the Karnataka University to be the Chairman. The other members of the Committee were B.M. Pugh, B.C. Baruah, the Advocate General and M.N. Goswami, a retired Commissioner of the Assam Valley. M.N. Goswami was the member Secretary.

In the meantime, the legislature realised that the Court had gone too far. Virtually the Vice-Chancellor was elected by it. The legislature desired to clip its wings. The Act was amended in 1960 and the original intentions of the framers of the Act were incorporated. Section 8 A (I) said:

"The Vice-Chancellor shall be appointed by the Chancellor on the recommendation of the Court. The Court shall submit a panel of names of three persons to the Chancellor who shall appoint one
of them as Vice-Chancellor. The Chancellor shall preside over the meeting of the Court which will nominate the panel of names for the office of the Vice-Chancellor."

Thus the Court was deprived of the de facto powers it enjoyed all these years to elect the Vice-Chancellor and vested it in the Chancellor.

But the 1960 Amendment did not work according to the intentions of the legislature. When the Court met on the 24 January 1962, for the preparation of a panel of names of three persons, six panels were proposed each panel containing three names. The Chancellor could have placed all the panels before the Court and vote could have been taken on each panel and the panel that is voted by an absolute majority of the votes polled could have been accepted. The Chancellor however, selected seven names from the six panels which were common in all the panels and placed all the seven before the Court and vote was taken and the three persons who polled the largest number of votes were selected to constitute the panel. Then the Chancellor selected the person who secured the largest number of votes. Here the Chancellor did not anticipate the shape of things to come. The person selected by the Chancellor was P. Dutta, the Registrar. The Chancellor had complete discretion to select any one in the panel. But he did not
exercise his discretion. He simply accepted the majority decision and appointed Dutta. The Court again met on 21 August 1962 under the presidency of the Chancellor to consider the report of the Enquiry Commission. While recognising the services rendered by Dutta he was advised to tender resignation and Dutta resigned on the same date. Thus the Court which elected Dutta in January by a majority vote six months later the same Court which elected him as Vice-Chancellor threw him out.

The Court met on 30 August 1962, for the preparation of a panel of names of three persons for the office of Vice-Chancellor. There were seven panels. The Chancellor adopted the same procedure which he adopted a few months ago in the preparation of a panel, and appointed the person who polled the largest number of votes, H.J. Taylor.

On 4 May 1965, there was a violent behaviour by the students which compelled the Vice-Chancellor to submit his resignation. Taylor said, "We have had another outbreak of mass hysteria and mob-violence on the part of the students. This has been a recurring feature of the University and in my judgment we have reached a point where it is no longer possible to conduct it.... I no longer have any hope of being able to put things
right, and when this is so I am not willing to continue in this atmosphere of student violence. Taylor saw the Chancellor on the evening of 5 May 1965 and handed over his letter of resignation. The Executive Council met on 6 May in the Circuit House with the Chancellor in the Chair and tried to persuade Taylor to withdraw his resignation which he declined. The resignation was accepted on 10 May and in the meanwhile the Chancellor contacted M.N. Goswami who agreed to take over the administration of the Vice-Chancellor. Goswami was appointed temporarily as Vice-Chancellor. To meet this emergency an Ordinance was issued by the Governor prescribing a different procedure for the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor. Because the Government realised that the 1960 amendment requiring the Court to prepare a panel of names of three persons did not improve matters and the best person was not selected and the Chancellor did not use his discretion in the correct direction. The Court continued to elect the Vice-Chancellor even though it was not authorised to do so. To improve matters the Governor issued an Ordinance which prescribed a new procedure.

The Ordinance of 1965, denied the Court the right to prepare the panel of three names for the consideration of the Chancellor. Instead it authorised
the Chancellor to constitute an advisory body consisting of three members, one to be elected by the Court, one by the Executive Council and one to be nominated by the Chancellor. The persons elected or nominated should not hold any office of profit under the University or under any of its constituent or affiliated colleges. The Advisory Board should prepare a panel of names of three persons and submit it to the Chancellor, who shall select one of them to be the Vice-Chancellor.

A similar procedure is contained in the Dibrugarh University Act, 1965. But Section 10(1) of the Act laid down that "the Vice-Chancellor for the first two terms shall be appointed by the Chancellor. For any subsequent appointments to the post of Vice-Chancellor, an Advisory Board consisting of one member elected by the Court, one member elected by the Executive Council and one member nominated by the Chancellor shall be constituted.

Section 19(1) of the Assam Agricultural University Act, 1968, laid down the procedure for the selection of its Vice-Chancellor. The first Vice-Chancellor was appointed by the Chancellor in his discretion. Subsequent Vice-Chancellors are appointed
according to the terms of the Act. The Act laid down that the Vice-Chancellor shall be appointed by the Chancellor from a panel of three names submitted by the Selection Committee consisting of one eminent agricultural scientist or educationist nominated by the Board of Management, the Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, and a nominee of the State Government. But a member of the Selection Committee shall not be a member of the Board of Management or an employee of the University.

In the case of the North Eastern Hill University, the Vice-Chancellor is appointed by the Visitor; the President of India.

In 1965, there were two vacancies, Dibrugarh and Gauhati. For Dibrugarh since the appointment was the first after the commencement of the Act, the Chancellor had complete discretion to appoint any one he liked. For Gauhati, the Chancellor had to constitute an Advisory Board as we had already seen. M.N. Goswami, the acting Vice-Chancellor, the prospective candidate for the office of Vice-Chancellor presided over the meeting of the Court and of the Executive Council for the election of their nominees. Since Goswami himself was the candidate, he ought not to have presided. Before nominating his nominee on the Advisory Board, the Chancellor consulted the Minister for Education.
Before constituting the Advisory Board, the Chancellor consulted the Chairman of the U.G.C. and requested him to suggest a panel of names for the two Vice-Chancellorships of Dibrugarh and Gauhati. Kethari suggested, "D.V.Bhal one of the most distinguished zoologists, who has a great drive and initiative, B.R.Seth, a most eminent mathematician and B.N.Ganguli, a distinguished economist who was then the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Delhi University and A.K.Dutta, Professor of Physics of the Calcutta University.

The Chancellor forwarded these names to the Education Minister and wrote "You may sound such of these gentlemen as you consider suitable for Dibrugarh. Of these I knew only Dr. Ganguli. I doubt whether he would agree to come but he is undoubtedly a good man." While forwarding the names suggested by Kethari to S.K.Dutta, the Chairman of the Advisory Board, the Chancellor wrote "I do not know whether any of these would be available but it might be useful to your committee to consider them and possibly to find out, whether any of them would be available".

S.K.Dutta replied that the suggestions would be useful.

Just at this time a technical question arose. Who should convene the meetings of the Advisory Board?

The Chancellor said that the Registrar of the University concerned should convene the meetings. But he should not
be present at the meetings of the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board met on 1 December 1965. The Board decided that the consent of the persons concerned should be obtained and decided to meet again on 17 December 1965. In the meanwhile the Chairman of the Board consulted Kothari, Chairman of the UGC as regards the candidates for the two vacancies Dibrugarh and Gauhati. Kothari replied "I think that Professor A.K.Dutta and Dr. B.R.Seth would make an excellent choice for the Vice-Chancellorship of the two Universities in the State. I think that Professor A.K.Dutta may go to Dibrugarh with persuasion and Professor Seth could go to Gauhati."

The Advisory Board which met on 17 December 1965 suggested a panel of three persons, A.K.Dutta, B.R.Seth and M.N.Goswami. The names were arranged in the alphabetical order and not in order of preference. The consent of the three was obtained. Seth and Goswami laid down no conditions for the acceptance of the post offered. Dutta would accept the post provided Rs.3000 was paid as salary per month and wanted three months' time to join the post. The Chancellor discussed this matter with the Education Minister and the Chief Minister in regard to the selection of an incumbent for Gauhati and Dibrugarh Universities, through the Chancellor had complete discretion in the selection of Vice-Chancellors. The Education Minister was in a dilemma as to what advice he should render to the Chancellor. Further, a doubt arose in his mind in regard
to the constitutional position of the Chancellor vis a vis Education Minister. So he referred the matter to the Legal Remembrancer, whether the Governor of Assam was to act in his individual discretion or on the advice of the Council of Ministers so far as the appointment of the Vice-Chancellors was concerned. The Legal Remembrancer said that the University Act contemplated an autonomous body and if the "Governor is to act on being aided and advised by the Council of Ministers, then the intentions of the framers of the Act would be defeated. Therefore, the Governor should be allowed to function in his discretion while he functions as the Chancellor of the University. He may consult the Ministry if he likes. But ultimately the selection of a proper and competent person for the post is his responsibility". (10). Therefore, the Minister for Education wrote to the Chancellor * It is more reasonable to hold that the Governor should be allowed to function as Chancellor of the University. I discussed this matter with the Chief Minister who agrees with this view. I would therefore request you to appoint the Vice-Chancellor of the Gauhati University as well as that of the Dibrugarh University according to your choice *• (11)
Since the Chancellor was requested to make his own selection out of the panel, he wrote to A.K. Dutta asking him to take over Gauhati University and M.N. Goswami Dibrugarh University. M.N. Goswami was not willing to go to Dibrugarh since he had already acted as the Vice-Chancellor of the Gauhati University for a year. Since Goswami showed his unwillingness to go to Dibrugarh, Dutta was requested to go to Dibrugarh. Dutta wanted to know the stage at which the building construction was at Dibrugarh. Dutta was informed by the Chancellor that "almost the whole thing has yet to be done". Dutta declined the offer on the ground that "the nature of the work there for sometime to come would be such as to make me give up all academic interest with which I have been concerned so long". Since Dutta declined B.R. Seth was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of the Dibrugarh University and M.N. Goswami as the Vice-Chancellor of the Gauhati University. Though at first Seth did not lay down on any condition, he demanded Rs. 3000 as salary per month. But the Chancellor fixed it at Rs. 2,500, a free furnished house, railway passage from Dibrugarh to Delhi both ways once a year. Thus came into office Seth at Dibrugarh and M.N. Goswami at Gauhati.

Though a brilliant mathematician, Seth was not able to give a shape to the University at its initial stage.
He was frequently out of station. On one occasion he was absent continuously for nine months. This naturally caused great inconvenience to administration. Added to this there were frequent disorders and Seth was compelled to resign before the end of his term. M.N. Phukan a retired IAS officer was appointed temporarily as Vice-Chancellor. Phukan made it abundantly clear that he would not continue in office for more than two months and that his successor should be appointed in the meantime. The Chancellor had to take immediate action in the matter. Section 10 of the Dibrugarh University Act 1965 authorised the Chancellor to appoint the Vice-Chancellor for the first two terms. He need not consult any one. But the Chancellor said 'In order to enable me to get some advice and guidance in the selection of the best incumbent of this office for the next term, I would like to constitute on the analogy of the provisions made for the selection of subsequent Vice-Chancellors in the Dibrugarh University Act and in the Acts of other two universities of Assam, an advisory committee consisting of one member elected by the Executive Council, one member nominated by the State Government and one member nominated by the Chancellor. The Chancellor thought that the election of one member by the Court would entail unnecessary expenditure and inconvenience (12).

(12) No. 9 April 1971.
Who should be the Chancellor's nominee. The Chancellor had in his mind the aims and objects of the Dibrugarh University Bill - development of technological education. He thought that a technologist should be the chairman of the selection committee. So he requested the Chairman of the U.G.C. to suggest three or four names so that he could select one of them to be his nominee on the committee. The Chairman U.G.C. recommended A. R. Verma, Director of the National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi, W.D. West, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Saugor and Triguna Sen. Sen was known to the Chancellor and was therefore selected to be the member and Chairman of the Committee. While accepting the invitation, Sen requested the Chancellor for a list of 'possible Assamese candidates and their qualifications'. The Executive Council nominated Satish Chandra Kakati and the Government nominated Dharmamanda Das, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam.

The Selection Committee consulted the possible candidates J. C. Medhi, Advocate General, P. C. Mahanta, Professor of Physics, Gauhati University, H. K. Baruah, Professor of Botany, Gauhati University, G. S. Phukan, IAS (Retired), M. N. Phukan, IAS (Retired), G. S. Sarma Baruah, Retired D.P.I., S.P. Luthra, R. D. Bhargava and J. N. Das. M. N. Phukan was not
interested in the job. Medhi demanded a salary of Rs.5000 per month; others accepted the offer without laying down any conditions. The committee met on 18 August 1971 and recommended a panel of three names J. N. Das, H. K. Baruah, and G. C. Sarma Barua. The names were not arranged in order of preference.

The Chancellor selected J. N. Das. J. N. Das continued to be the Vice-Chancellor even after his five year term was over because no one was appointed to fill the vacancy. Advisory Board was constituted with Dr. Thyagarajan, Director of the Regional Research Laboratory, Jorhat, Chancellor's nominee as Chairman, D. Gogoi, as the nominee of the Executive Council and A. K. Barkakati as the nominee of the Court. The Advisory Board considered the possible candidates and suggested a panel of names, but the Chancellor rejected the panel. 'I have considered the panel of names' wrote the Chancellor. 'Recommended by the Advisory Board. I gather from the previous papers that the Dibrugarh University was established with a view to giving greater emphasis on the teaching of science and technological subjects and some of the courses provided in the university in recent years reflect the objectives. I have considered the panel of names recommended by the Advisory Board. Keeping the above in view and other
relevant factors I am unable to approve any of the persons recommended by the Advisory Board. Accordingly, under section 10(2) of the Dibrugarh University Act, I call upon the Advisory Board to make fresh recommendations and to do so urgently (13). The Advisory Board met again and prepared a fresh panel of three persons. From the panel the Chancellor selected Saila Dhar Gogoi as the Vice-Chancellor of the Dibrugarh University.

We shall now return to Gauhati. M.N. Goswami completed his term. He held office actually for six years. He had his share of troubles. But he acted firmly at least for four years. To fill up the vacancy caused by the retirement of M.N. Goswami, an Advisory Committee (14) was constituted. The Advisory Committee recommended a panel. From the panel the Chancellor selected S.J. Rajkhowa, a retired D.P.I. for the Vice-Chancellorship of the Gauhati University. But he resigned before the end of his term.


(14). The Advisory Board consisted of Justice Pathak of the Gauhati High Court, the nominee of the Chancellor who was also the Chairman; Barua the nominee of the Executive Council and H.C. Bhuyan, the nominee of the Court.
The All Assam Students Union gave a call to observe the Assam Bandh on the 25th June 1974 for the fulfilment of their 21 point demand. The Guwahati University students stopped some buses and took them inside the campus. The passengers were not allowed to take their luggage from the bus. This brought about police intervention. The Vice-Chancellor was present but he was a helpless spectator. The police entered the hostels and belaboured the students. The police also arrested a number of students in this connection. The Court met on 2 July and passed resolutions demanding unconditional release of the students, maintenance of sanctity of the University campus and on other matters. The Vice-Chancellor resigned on the same day. To meet the emergency the seniormost Professor H.K. Baruah was appointed Vice-Chancellor on 14 July. On the 20th July the Officers of the University met the Chancellor and impressed upon him the need for the restoration of normalcy by releasing the students. The Chancellor agreed with this view and advised the State Government to withdraw the prosecutions. But normalcy did not return. Picketing of the administrative offices continued and the students made some other demands.

On the 25th July the Court met and decided to resign.

On the same day the Vice-Chancellor H.K. Baruah announced
his resignation. He wrote to the Chancellor 'I must, how-

ever, say that we felt very much hurt that in spite of so

much effort we failed to obtain unconditional release

of the students even after a month of their detention in

jail. Under these circumstances, I feel I have no other

alternative but to resign from the office of the Vice-Chan-
cello
tor of the University.

The Chancellor replied on the 30th July 'The Govern-

ment have issued instructions to the Deputy Commissioner to
direct the Public Prosecutor to withdraw the prosecutions
in the particular cases and I expect that the necessary
application will be made to the Court within a day or two.
I further expect that considering the nature of the cases
and the antecedents circumstances the court will give the
necessary permission and the accused persons will be dis-
charged .

'I hope you will agree to reconsider your resignation
now that no scope is left for any doubt or misgivings. I was
grateful to you for agreeing to act as the Vice-Chancellor
inspite of your initial hesitation and I know that you did
so because of your commitment to the academic cause and your
deep feeling for the interests of the Gauhati University and
the youth of Assam. I trust that the same consideration will prevail again. Obviously, the best interests of the University cannot be served unless senior Professors are willing to accept the responsibility for running it.

'May I in conclusion request you not to press your resignation. However, if you wish to have a personal discussion with me before making up your mind finally, we may have discussion at a mutually convenient date' (15).

On 2 August the Vice-Chancellor replied 'Since receiving your letter the Government has released the students and employees of the University arrested in connection with the incident of 25 June 1974. I am indeed grateful for the deep understanding and sympathy you have for the university.

'I also thank you sincerely for your faith in my ability to guide the university as its Vice-Chancellor. I have the greatest pleasure in informing you that I accept your request to withdraw my resignation'.

The Vice-Chancellor met the Chancellor at the airport and discussed the 'new problems' that had arisen. On the 5th August the Chancellor wrote to the Vice-Chancellor expressing his gratefulness for withdrawing the resignation and said 'I hope that the 'new problems' about which you spoke to me yesterday will be solved in an appropriate manner and that the University will resume its normal work'.

Then the problem of appointing a permanent incumbent arose. An Advisory Board was constituted. The Board made certain recommendations (16). The Chancellor appointed H. K. Baruah as Vice-Chancellor on 5 September 1975.

The procedure prescribed by the 1960 amendment was found to be unsuitable so far as the Government is concerned. Because it was not able to get its own nominee on the Advisory Board. So the University Acts of Dibrugarh and Gauhati were amended. The 1975 amendment provided for the constitution of an Advisory Board by the Chancellor consisting

(16) The Advisory Board consisted of Dr. Chandran D.S. Devanesen Vice-Chancellor of the NEHU, C. Das, nominee of Executive Council and Dibakar Goswami, nominee of the Court. The Court nominated M.N. Goswami former Vice-Chancellor of the Gauhati University but he declined to serve on the Board. Therefore the Executive Council nominated Dibakar Goswami.
of one nominee of the Executive Council, one nominee of the State Government and another of the Chancellor (17). The 1975 amendment made only one change namely that the State Government has acquired a voice and a vote in the Advisory Board.

Agricultural University:

The first Vice-Chancellor was appointed by the Chancellor. Subsequent Vice-Chancellors are to be appointed by the Chancellor from the panel of three names submitted by the selection board consisting of one eminent agricultural scientist or educationist nominated by the Board of Management, the Director General of Indian Council of Agricultural Research and a nominee of the State Government. While appointing members of the selection board it must be seen they are not members of the board of management, or employees of the University (18).


(18) Section 19(1) and (2) of the Assam Agricultural University Act 1968.
The first Vice-Chancellor S.R. Barooah was always in conflict with the Board of Management and he was compelled to resign. His successor Negi was selected by the selection board and was appointed by the Chancellor (19).

Now the question whether the constitution and the functioning of the Advisory Board/Selection Committee were according to the intentions of the framers of the Act. The framers of the Act intended that the members of the Advisory Board would sit together, uninfluenced by any extraneous circumstances, survey the whole field and select the best man available.

The Gajendragadkar Committee considered several alternatives for constituting a committee which would recommend the panel (a) the committee may consist of a nominee of the Visitor and two nominees of the Executive Council; or (b) a committee consisting of a nominee of the Visitor, a nominee of the Chairman of the U.G.C. and a nominee of the Executive

(19) The selection committee consisted of H.K. Baruah Professor of Botany of the Gauhati University, the nominee of the Board of Management; B.K. Bhuyan, Special Secretary of the Government of Assam the nominee of the State Government.
Council, or (a) a nominee of the Visitor, a nominee of the Chairman U.G.C., and three nominees of the University. The persons nominated to the committee shall not be employees or members of the University. We are in general agreement with the recommendations of the Gajendragadkar Committee. The committee may consist of one nominee of the Visitor in the case of Central University and of the Chancellor in the case of a State University, one nominee of the University Grants Commission, two nominees of the University one by the Court and the other by the Executive Council. The procedure suggested above will result in the selection of the best academicians with flare for administration. Eminent scientists or eminent mathematicians may not always prove themselves as eminent administrators. Even Directors of Public Instruction have not proved themselves equal to the task.

We may even suggest that the Visitor/Chancellor may prepare a panel of names once in a year or two years and appoint one in the panel whenever a vacancy occurs. A Vice-Chancellor appointed under these conditions will act independently in the best interests of the University. A Vice-Chancellor who depends on the affection of his colleagues will not adopt an objective attitude. Where the
Vice-Chancellor has to depend on his colleagues he is likely to form a party of his own. Cliques will come into existence.

Temporary appointments:

In 1964, the Chancellor was vested with another power. Whenever, there is a temporary vacancy in the office of the Vice-Chancellor by leave, sickness, death or resignation or other causes, the Chancellor is authorised to make arrangements for exercising the powers and performing the duties of the Vice-Chancellor temporarily and determine the emoluments or allowances if any payable to such persons.

The Chancellor exercised this power twice in Gauhati University once in 1964 when Dr. Taylor resigned and in 1974 when S.J. Rajkhowa resigned. In Dibrugarh it was exercised when Seth resigned. In 1965, M.N. Goswami, in 1974 H.K. Baruah and in 1971 M. N. Phukan were appointed Vice-Chancellors temporarily, until permanent incumbents were appointed.

Term of Office:

What ought to be the term of office? In the Gauhati University at first it was three years. In 1965, it was increased to five years. We think that the five year term is
reasonable. In the original Act of the Gauhati University the term was of three years. Three years' time is hardly sufficient for a Vice-Chancellor with vision to implement his ideas. We therefore suggest that the term of office should be five years with the right for re-appointment for a second term, provided he proved a success in the first term. He should not be entitled for a third term. Thus no one should remain in office for more than ten years in any place. The reasons for this suggestion are obvious. First, no appointments should be allowed to create vested interest. Second, this office is one of dignity and honour. Those who had been successful as teachers and research workers and administrators should be honoured by this office. Third, the Vice-Chancellor is assisted by a variety of bodies. Therefore no one should hold office for more than two terms. Whatever may be the number of terms that one may be appointed, no one should be permitted to continue beyond the age of 65. The judges of the High Court and Supreme Court and Members of the Public Service Commission hold office till the age of 65 years. It is true that there are some persons who may render meritorious service even at the age of 80. But this is an exception and exception is no rule.
We also suggest that in the event of a teacher of the University or the Principal of a college being appointed Vice-Chancellor, he should be given extraordinary leave to take up the appointment and after completing his term of office as Vice-Chancellor he may be permitted to come back to his parent post. The period spent as Vice-Chancellor should be counted for increment, leave and superannuation benefits.

**Salary and other emoluments:**

The salary of the Vice-Chancellor varied from time to time. In 1948, the Court fixed the salary of the Vice-Chancellor at Rs. 1400 plus house rent allowance. It was increased to Rs. 1500 in 1951 and free house. In 1954, there was a good deal of discussion on this matter in the Court. Ultimately the Court fixed the salary of the Vice-Chancellor at Rs. 1600 and Rs. 550 house rent allowance. In 1957, the salary of the Vice-Chancellor was reduced to Rs. 1400 plus house rent allowance. In 1960 when it recommended H.C. Bhuyan as Vice-Chancellor, the Court passed a resolution that the emoluments and privileges of the Vice-Chancellor shall continue to be the same as those of his predecessor, that is, Rs. 1400 plus House rent allowance. In 1965, the salary
of the Vice-Chancellor was fixed at Rs. 2500 plus free furnished house. Since then the Vice-Chancellors are paid a salary of Rs. 2500 plus free house and free conveyance.

What ought to be the salary of the Vice-Chancellor. The nominal salary is Rs. 2500, but the real emolument is about Rs. 3500 if the P.F. contribution and other perquisites are taken into account. We suggest that the amount should not exceed the maximum of the salary of the Professor. He should be entitled for a free house.

Conclusions:

During the period 1948 to 1977, there were 16 Vice-Chancellors in North East India. Of the 16, ten were Doctors of Philosophy and the remaining six were the holders of the degree of Master of Arts. As regards their previous administrative experience, five of them were Directors of Public Instruction before their appointment as Vice-Chancellor, two were Principals of well established colleges, three were retired I.A.S. Officers of whom one was a Divisional Commissioner. Of the 16 as many as six resigned before the expiry of their term. Only one of the sixteen held office for three terms. All others held
office for a single term. Except two all of them came to office after spending sixty summers. Of them only one was a Professor of a University.

Now the question is whether the Court should have the power to elect the Vice-Chancellor. Protogonists of this theory claim that the Court must have the democratic right to elect its own Vice-Chancellor. It may be remembered that the Court had never had this right to elect the Vice-Chancellor, though on three occasions its nominee was accepted by the Chancellor.

Now let us discuss the question whether the Court should have this power to nominate or elect the Vice-Chancellor. It has been argued that the Vice-Chancellor is the Chairman of the Court and therefore the Court should have the power to elect its chairman. This argument is fallacious. The Chairman of the Court is the Chancellor. In his absence the Vice-Chancellor presides. Second, the Vice-Chancellor is also the chairman of various bodies like the Academic Council and the Executive Council. Some of the members of these bodies are not members of the Court. They may also claim the right to elect the Vice-Chancellor.
Thirdly, if the court is vested with this power, the Vice-Chancellor may not be able to act according to his discretion. The Court may try to control both the Academic Council and the Executive Council through the Vice-Chancellor. It may try to dictate terms under which he should function. Under these circumstances the Vice-Chancellor occupies an unenviable position. Further election by the Court might bring into existence cliques and the Vice-Chancellor might be compelled to depend on one of the most powerful cliques for his own survival. If this happens the dominant clique will control the administration to the detriment of general interests of the university. Above all the Court is not the sovereign body. It is a coordinating authority. Democracy does not mean that there should be election at all stages in all places.

If the Court should not be vested with the power to elect the Vice-Chancellor then who should have this power? This we had already discussed in the previous pages.