

Cloud over vet univ faculty selection

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Chennai: The selection criteria for recruiting faculty at the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS) is mired in controversy following allegations that substantial marks have been earmarked for the interview component, *allegedly* to favour certain candidates. The university is in the process of recruiting four professors, nine associate professors and 42 assistant professors.

University authorities have earmarked 30 marks for assessing the performance of candidates in interviews as opposed to the widely adopted practice of 10 or 15 marks. This, it is alleged, would give scope for favouritism in interviews by awarding higher marks for

less accomplished but preferred candidates.

Even the Supreme Court had in a case (Mohinder Sain Garg Vs State of Punjab and Others) relating to selection of taxation inspectors, held that allocating 25% of the total marks for interviews is “arbitrary and excessive.” The court

FAVOURITISM ALLEGED

had said, “it would not be reasonable to have the percentage of viva voce marks more than 15% of the total marks in the selection of candidates.”

Insiders in the TANUVAS and RTI activists pointed out that in 2007 when the university had allotted 40 marks for interview, a lady who scored

33.63 marks for academic credentials (out of 60) was awarded 23 marks in the interview and selected as assistant professor. Another candidate who secured 44.33 marks for academic accomplishments, which was the highest score among the 23 candidates, was given the lowest mark (6) and eliminated. This was exposed in documents obtained under the RTI Act.

“It is beyond comprehension that the best candidate would score the lowest in interview. It would be appropriate to add that the selected candidate is the daughter of the then director of research, TANUVAS. This is just one of the probably numerous glaring instances of manipulation of the interview marks,” RTI activist T Renta Pandian said

in a recent letter to TANUVAS vice-chancellor Dr P Thangaraju.

However, Thangaraju strongly denied that the high marks for the interview component would lead to manipulation. “We have allotted 40 marks for academic qualification. Another 30 marks will be awarded based on the medals or awards won by candidates, all India fellowships, experience, research publications, etc. The Supreme Court had said that maximum marks for qualification can be 70 to 80 marks. There is no room for any manipulation of individual score sheets on the basis of performance in interviews, where we test the fluency and class handling ability of candidates,” he insisted.

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