

**Snippet**

14 September, 2023

From the desk of the Vice Chancellor

Yesterday, 13 September is a Red-Letter Day in the history of Visva-Bharati for many reasons. Not only was it the beginning of historical trend, the day will be remembered as one when this globally reputed centre of learning began a new journey which corresponds with the idea of its founder, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. On this day, Visva-Bharati has expanded its boundary. With the shifting of the department of Statistics from Siksha Bhawan to this new address, the Science Faculty has also created an independent space for a department in Santiniketan. The change of location may not be so exciting because it happens now and then in many universities in India and abroad. What is striking is the fact that the department has got a new space in a building which was donated by a good Samaritan who studied at Patha Bhavana during the period between 1951 and 1957. This is also striking because the couple who built a house which has all the amenities gifted the property unconditionally. In contrast with the conventional mode of human inherent desire of grabbing land and property for individual gains, unconditional gifting appears to be an exception to the well-entrenched human behaviour.

As soon as the formalization of the new location for the department of Statistics, the detractors took out their fangs to torpedo the endeavour by magnifying the addressable difficulties which are just teething problems confronting any new initiative. They are basically cowards. Hence, they tend to attack by being hidden. An easy way is to publish written texts in social media. They cannot change themselves because they are inherently weak. Hence, they are too scared to even mention their names in their communication to prove that they are spineless creatures of the first order. This is not new. During my stint as Vice Chancellor (2028-23), I have found these invertebrates often; they crawl and once snubbed, they simply turn back presumably that they are, just like those creatures who normally bark at the sight of any object frightening them. Once they apprehend that they will be attacked, they run fast to go to a safer zone.

What is also a matter of shame is also the behaviour of the members of the so-called Fourth Pillar of democracy. A survey of the stories relating to Visva-Bharati since late 2018 reveals that these members are neither trained to be proud members of the Fourth Pillar or they prefer to gain credence by being appreciative of YELLOW JOURNALISM. On many occasions, these priests of yellow journalism reach a height of concoction of stories which is simply unfathomable. It is evident these untrained individuals write their stories which are sensational in character and tend to provoke interests among those who appear to be naive about their socio-economic and politico-cultural environment. The newspaper owners seem to be excited in publishing these unauthenticated narratives since they are likely to enhance the TRP of their dailies temporarily. This is a nexus which prospers out of the *harakiri* tendencies of a select group of people who are neither social nor humanitarian. We have these creatures in every walk of our life today. This is

cancerous and needs to be handled equally with strong hands. The process has begun and as regards other endeavours, it will succeed in course of time. The miscreants will be identified and decimated as history exemplifies.

What is paradoxical is also the role of the collective of humanity that suffers due the flourishing of these socially deviant individuals who can be characterized as miscreants. History is replete with examples that a point will soon emerge when the collective will assert as per its priority. The miscreants will be shown the door. Gurudev's politico-philosophical preferences will reinforce those human values which appear to have lost their salience. As my experiences suggest, Visva-Bharati will show to the world a path for regeneration of humanity to the extent of being powerful enough to scuttle the evil forces with the intention of violating the core values of Tagore's concern for universal humanism.

The purpose of this snippet is just not to be fiercely critical to those who are destroying Visva-Bharati as the prevalent administration is a deterrent to the fulfillment of selfish desires of those deviant forces seeking to weaken the foundation of this great institution of generation and dissemination of knowledge but also an exhortation for uprooting them permanently. Is this new? Not really. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore was not spared of mental agony. He was troubled by the less-endowed ordinary mortals. Disillusioned with many of his colleagues, he wrote extensively in many of his critical essays and other innovative writings. Rathindranath Tagore, Gurudev Tagore's ablest son, also paid the price; the so-called Tagore admirers made his life hell on flimsy grounds which forced him to permanently leave the campus in just two years after assuming Vice Chancellor's responsibility once Visva-Bharati was made a central university and also an institution of national importance in 1951. Many other illustrious individuals who became Visva-Bharati's Vice Chancellor had the same fate. To name a few: the famous Professor Satyendranath Bose, the famous scientist who was credited with the articulation of the widely-known Boson-Einstein formula; the famous economist, Professor Amlan Dutta, the widely-reputed Historian, Professor Sabyasachi Bhattacharya - they were all hounded out because they devoted their energies to make Visva-Bharati as one of the globally sought after academic centres.

Here, the Vice Chancellor is expected to toe the line of those who tend to exploit the University for personal gains. What is a source of concern is the unholy alliance of teachers, non-teaching staff members, students, the so-called Rabindriks and also the select group of alumni. My experience confirms that the nature of this unholy bond of those bent on safeguarding their exclusive interests changes. They are politically supported which enables the local political bosses to get an entry into this holy campus. With the free play of those who are politically motivated, the University becomes, to them, a boxing ring. The deviants from within the campus happily join hands with them as this affiliation will give them material benefits. As soon as they confront hurdles, they stoop low to harass those who are true to the 1951 Statute and Ordinances; there were occasions when those who stood for Visva-Bharati were also bodily harmed. The Visva-Bharati

administration is helpless because the legally-empowered agencies remain indifferent although the complainants against those seeking to eradicate indiscipline from within the campus allow the law enforcement agencies to undertake steps despite not being justified by the canons of justice and fairness. So, Visva-Bharati is an easy pray for those who are annoyed because they are restrained to pursue their self-gratifying goals.

However, Visva-Bharati witnesses a new dawn. A voice against the miscreants gains momentum and the deviants are on the defensive. This is a very critical phase in Visva-Bharati's journey as an institution with a clear civilizational message. There are reasons to believe that history revolves: days of disappointment are soon to be replaced since forces striving the re-establish Visva-Bharati as it was in recent past have gained momentum.