

## 4.1.2 CULTURAL/YOGA/GAMES/SPORTS

### 1. Cultural Activities

The overall ambience of Visva Bharati truly demands exceptionality. Here learning is a holistic all-encompassing process rather than a regulated and stifling experience. Large portions of the campus are open to the general public as Santiniketan and Visva-Bharati are as much cultural pilgrimage spaces as they are educational institutes. The overall ambience of the university is a small town with students, teachers, administrative staff rubbing their shoulders in the common campus space with locals and visitors. It must be noted that entry of visitors into academic classes and spaces during the academic exercise are not permitted. Many of the university's facilities and spaces – washrooms, roads, museums, parts of the core *Ashrama* areas during specific times – are open to public viewing and visiting. During cultural events and *utsavs* in Visva-Bharati's packed academic calendar, visitors are allowed into the campus especially during the two major events of *Vasanta Utsav* and *Poush Mela*. During those times, a large number of Visva-Bharati facilities and spaces are open to the public albeit under careful scrutiny and control.

### 1. Poush Mela:

Poush Mela is celebrated for three days in mid-December that takes place in the large Mela Maath opposite the ashram. Poush Mela is an annual fair and festival that marks the harvest season. The event is characterized by its live performances of Bengali folk music, especially Bauls, tribal dance (Santhali), firework displays. The rows of stalls here sell a wide variety of products like toys, garments, books, household items, utensils and local handicrafts. The fair offers a perfect insight of the true heritage of the place and the performance of the students add the zest in this festival. Poush Mela integrates the Santhals and the locals with the students.



**Fig 15: Hon'ble Vice Chancellor with others at poush mela**



**Fig 16: An event of Poush Mela**

## **2. Basanta Utsav**

The festival of colors celebrated all over India, known as 'Holi' or 'Doljatra' is 'BasantaUtsav' in Shantiniketan. This festival was started by Rabindranath Tagore that represented a holistic celebration of diversity that included all. 'Basanta Utsav' denotes the arrival of spring when nature decks itself in a tumultuous burst of colours as Palash, Malati and Ashoke bloom. In Santiniketan, the festival is celebrated with

colourful cultural programmes. It is a universal festival with its own dignity graced by dance and music, performed by local artists and the students of the University. Performers decked in colourful saris, dancing to Tagore's songs of Basanta, placing 'aabir' (coloured powder) on the feet of the elders – add grace to the spirit of festivity that gets mingled with the spirit of togetherness.



**Fig 17: Possession during Vasanta Utsav**

### **3. Vriksharopan and Halkarshan:**

Tagore always emphasized on the co-existence of nature and mankind. Vriksharopan (tree planting festival) and Halakarshan (plough festival) pioneered by Tagore is a part of an annual environmental awareness campaign, which continues in Shantiniketan till date. Saplings are planted accompanied by chanting of Vedic Mantras, singing and dancing.

The Vriksharopan ceremony is preceded by Halokarshan (ploughing) aimed at endowing the work of ploughing with the dignity, almost sacredness that was its due. Tagore was against the ruthless deforestation of the countryside. These festivals are meant to invoke nature's fertility and symbolizing its ever-recurring youth through dance, music and mantra.



**Fig 18: A glimpse of Vriksharopan**

#### **4. Barsha Mangal:**

It is the festival of poems. Barsha Mangal takes place in the month of July-August to celebrate the advent of the rainy season. Tagore was eternally fascinated by the beauty of nature during monsoon. It's an evening of cultural performance set to the poems, plays and songs by Tagore attended by poets and art enthusiasts across the country.



**Fig 19: An event of Barsha Mangal**

## 5. Rabindra Jayanti:

Rabindra Jayanti (25she Boisakh according to Bengali calendar) denotes the birth anniversary of Kobi-guru Rabindranath Tagore. On this day, Shantiniketan pays its homage to its founding father through cultural programmes by the students and teachers of Visva-Bharati. Shantiniketan comes alive remembering Tagore in its own way through poetry, dance and drama, written and composed by him.



**Fig 20: An event of Rabindra Jayanti**

## 6. Sharadotsav

October-November is the month of festivals for all Indians. People of Bengal are eagerly waiting for the time. Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Kali puja are the main festivals for all Bangali's. It is an autumnal festival, celebrated by the students of Visva-Bharati. Songs and dances are performed before the University close for the Puja vacation. At the time of Gurudev "Sharadotsav" held on the previous day of "Mahalaya" and next day held "Ananda Bazar". At present all rituals are same only extended few days the celebration of "Sharadotsav".

## 7. Ananda Bazar

Ananda Bazar is one of the most awaiting festive for the students of Visva-Bharati University. It held at Gour Prangan every year on the day of Mahalaya. Basically, Ananda Bazar is a fair organized by the students of Visva-Bharati. They create some

hand-crafts product by themselves and those sales on this occasion. And the profit earned from this fair is going towards a charity fund.

After this occasion, students are on long holiday for Sarodiya (Puja Holidays).



**Fig 21: A glimpse of Anandabazar**

## **8. Rathindra Mela**

The students of Palli Samgathana Vibhaga, Sriniketan, for last few years, have been organising a fair on 27th November commemorating the birth anniversary of Rathindranath Tagore, son of Rabindranath Tagore.



## Fig 22: A glimpse of Rathindra Mela

### 9. Nandan Mela:

To commemorate the birth anniversary of Nandalal Bose, the art fair, known as Nandan Mela, is organized every year on the 1st and 2nd of December by the Kala Bhavana. The students involve themselves with various activities ranging from constructing outdoor sculptures and installations to putting up stalls selling craft items, food, calendars, and so many other things. In the morning on the 3rd of December, which is Nandalal Bose's birthday, the students and teachers have a candle-light procession to his house every year.



Fig 23: Out Door Installation - Kalabhavan Nandan Mela (Left), A glimps of Maghmela (Right)

### 9. Magh Mela:

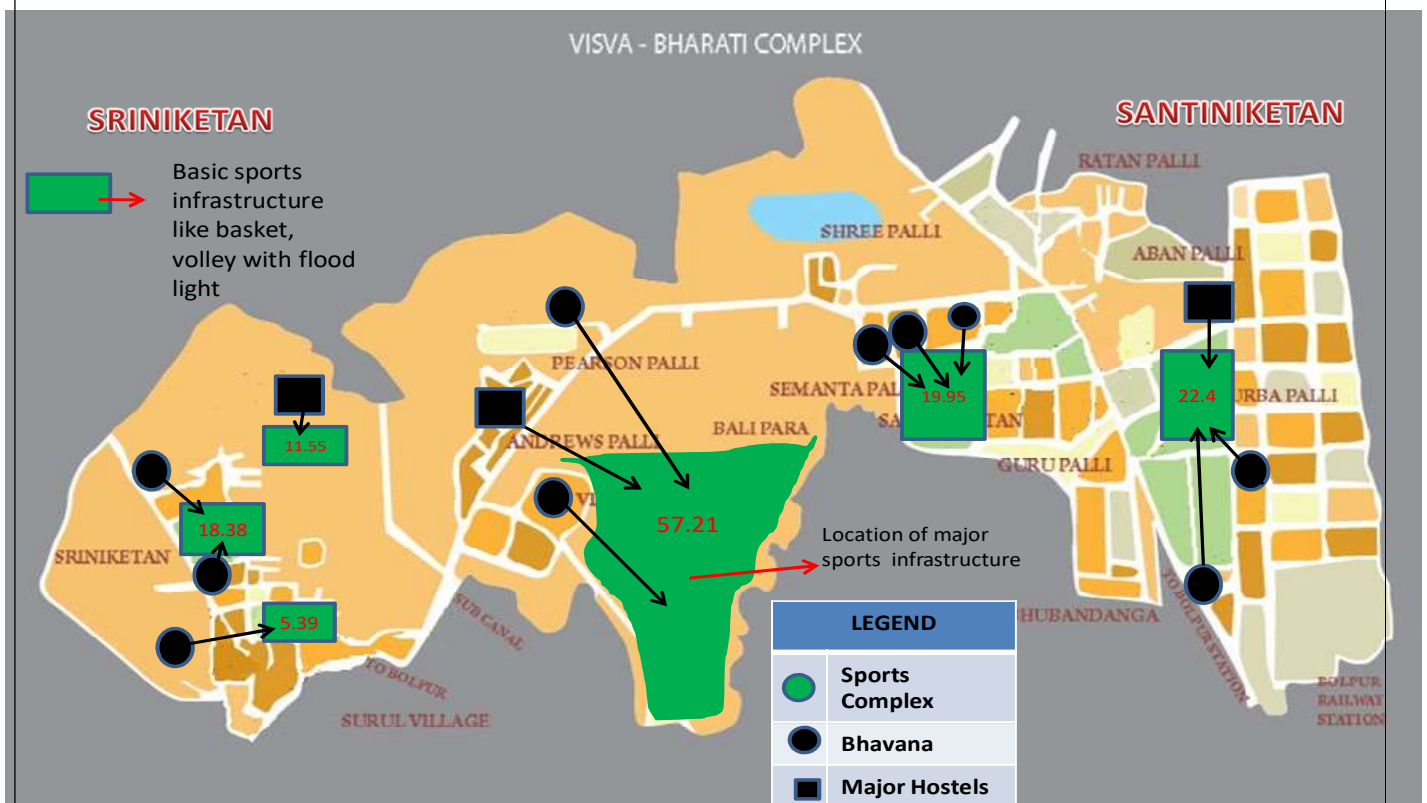
In the year 1922, Rabindranath Tagore established Sriniketan – the rural center for folk culture and cultivation of rural activities, near Santiniketan. Sriniketan Utsav or Magh Mela along with an exhibition was formally started on 23rd Magh, 1328 of Bengali Calendar (6th February 1922). To mark the foundation day, a fair is organized every year on 23- 25 Magh (6-8 February) at Sriniketan. Fair is based on agricultural products grown in a scientific way, equipment as well as the rural handicrafts. Functions of folk culture are the other attractions of Sriniketan Utsav.

Farm technology dissemination during *Sriniketan Utsav (Magh Mela)* aims to expose the farmers to the latest science & technological aspects of agriculture through exhibition and distribution of farm publications. It links the farmers with agricultural experts to meet their farm information needs as well as solving farm problems

through interactions. This practice provides the opportunities to students to get real life exposure and to develop knowledge and skills by actively involving in dissemination of farm technologies. The principles of “seeing is believing” and “not aware – not known, not known – not practiced” are the basis of this practice. This practice underlines the importance of bridging the gap between farming community & experts that can change the production and productivity fabric of agriculture. Students get benefit in terms of a real-life exposure to linking theoretical knowledge and actual farming practices through interaction with farmers.

**2. Sports:** In order to involve students in various sports activities and to develop their physical well-being, University has made it compulsory for the undergraduate students to participate in any one option among Games and sports, National Cadet Course (NCC) and National Service Scheme (NSS).

## LOCATION OF SPORTS COMPLEX



There are many sports nodal units in both the campus of the University (i.e. Santiniketan and Sriniketan), where facilities are provided for playing outdoor games such as





**Fig 24: Raibese and Bratachari Demonstration at Visva-Bharati**

basket ball, lawn-tennis, football, volleyball, throw ball, Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, athletics, cricket. Sports trainers on contractual basis are involved in all these nodal points to train the students. A well defined infrastructure is also offered to develop their skills in indoor games such as judo, yoga, chess etc. Instructor specialized in Judo, Cricket and Basket Ball are hired for training the students. University has three



**Fig 25: Malkham Demonstration at Visva-Bharati**

gymnasium equipped with all modern equipments. The Multi-speciality gymnasium at New Sports Complex at Vinaya-Bhavana is facilitated with infrastructure to play various indoor games such as table-tennis, badminton, weight lifting. There is Swimming pool of international standard used by the students, teaching and non-teaching members of Visva-Bharati.



**Fig 26: Inter Village Volleyball Tournament at Visva-Bharati**

The University provides academic flexibility to good student sports persons in respect of examination schedule at least. In case of overlapping of examination schedule with final sports schedule of a student sportsperson, he/she is allowed to take on participating in Inter-University/Zonal/National tournaments are given Dress allowance to buy sports uniform, tracksuit etc. Playing equipment is also offered to the students for coaching camps.



**Fig 27: Inter School Basket ball Tournament (Left) and Kallol Pal & Tapas Mahato Football Tournament (Right) at Visva-Bharati**



**Fig 28: Race during WBCIPE Meet during 2015 – 16 at Visva-Bharati**

examination on a different date with another set of question papers. During coaching camp of various games at University, diet rich in carbohydrates and protein are given to the players such as fruits, eggs, banana, sweet etc. Players participating in Inter-University/Zonal/National tournaments are given daily allowance for foods. Players



**Fig 29: Judo and Karate Demonstration at Visva-Bharati**

University has left no stone unturned when it comes to ensure participation of women students in intra-inter institutional sports competitions and cultural



**Fig 30: Women Football Tournament at Visva-Bharati**

activities. Infrastructure has been developed for involvement of girls' participation in intra-inter institutional sports competitions. The infrastructure for playing volley ball, kho-kho, kabaddi, table tennis, badminton, chess, basketball, athletics, yoga, gymnastic have been introduced in greater manner so that they can rehearse in well manner and perform well in various tournaments. To empower the girls with self-defence techniques and to develop their skill in Judo, they are imparted training by Judo Coach. Cricket Coaching camp for women cricket at University: Special coach from Cricket Association of Bengal has trained the girl player of the University. The sports board of Visva-Bharati has decided to form women sports team in cricket, football, kho-kho, volleyball.



**Fig 31: Fit India Moment on National Sports Day at Visva-Bharati**

Visva-Bharati has dedicated departments of Physical Education and Yogic Art and Science who have their own specialized sites for practice and

dissemination of the ancient Indian art as well as their new avatars in the area/arena of sports and games.

2. **Yoga Session:** The Office of the Dean of Students' Welfare also regularly organizes yoga and meditation classes and courses in its own premises that are more than adequate for hosting such events for all university student and staff. Apart from organizing regular yoga session for VB employee and their families, the department of Yogic Art and Sciences holds several yoga competitions round the year.
3. **Swimming Pool:** It is mention worthy that department of Physical Education possesses a well-equipped swimming pool as well where anyone from VB fraternity can join for regular practice under the tutelage of experienced trainer.