



## International Conference

On

### **“Crony Journalism: Redefining Journalistic Practices”**

**18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

**Organized by**

**Centre for Journalism and Mass Communication (CJMC), Visva-Bharati**

#### **A Brief Word about Visva-Bharati:**

A study of the evolution of Visva-Bharati during the lifetime of its founder, Rabindranath Tagore, offers an insight into what this institution was intended to achieve. Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel Laureate, founded a school for children at Santiniketan and it was around this nucleus that the structure of an unconventional university developed through careful planning.

In May 1951, Visva-Bharati was declared to be a Central University and "An Institution of National Importance" by an Act of Parliament. It was granted the status of a unitary, teaching and residential university. The status and function of all the major institutions have been redefined in successive Amendment Acts and the University has continued to grow by giving accreditation to new institutions in response to needs newly felt.

Visva-Bharati is ensconced in a rural setting in the district of Birbhum, about 160 km by road from Kolkata. The nearest railway station is Bolpur (Santiniketan) on the Eastern Railway and the air-terminal is Kolkata Airport. The University campus at Santiniketan, about 3 km from the railway station can be reached in a little over two hours from Kolkata by train. By train it is about 146 km. The University has two campuses, one at Santiniketan and the other at Sriniketan, which is about 3 km from Santiniketan. The institutional buildings and departments are distributed among them.

#### **A Brief Word about Centre for Journalism and Mass Communication (CJMC):**

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's interest in media and communication is well known. His contribution to different literary journals and his naming Indian Broadcasting Service as "Akashbani" testify to this. Visva-Bharati started its Centre for Journalism and Mass Communication in 2000, with PG Diploma Course in Journalism and Mass Communication, reflecting the founder's mindset. The Centre started preparing future communicators and fine-tuned them for connecting with people across the world. A full-fledged two-year MA course started in 2003-2004 with 25 students. Today, the Centre takes pride in offering PhD course as well. The PG degree curriculum is different here with thrust on all the media tools, ranging from print to electronic, from broadcasting to narrowcasting, from the very beginning. Initiation to the practicalities of communication is early, so that the absorption is complete. Students undertake visual, radio and newspaper projects in the first two semesters of study. These two

semesters also have Communication Principles, Media Laws, History of Press, Heritage and Cultural Studies (with thrust on Tagore Studies) in the course. Third semester is devoted to Advertising, Public Relations, Development and Rural Communication. Every student specializes with one of the subjects among Magazine Journalism, Media Management and Science Journalism in the fourth semester. In this semester, every student completes a dissertation and undergoes media training too. It is one of the very few media learning institutions, which has its training publication (lab journal), "**Visva-Bharati Chronicle**". This is a tabloid publication, which is 'of' the students and 'by' the students but 'for' the entire community. It gives the budding communicators a real taste of the practical field of journalism.

#### **About The Seminar:**

*"We live in a system that espouses merit, equality, and a level playing field, but exalts those with wealth, power, and celebrity, however gained."*

-Derrick Bell, *Ethical Ambition*

The latter half of the last millennium was taken by storm by a particular idea of social evolution. The idea was that of meritocracy as given by Michael Young in his seminal work, 'The Rise of the Meritocracy'. Young in his work satirizes the concept of meritocracy which he feels shall give way to deep discontent and ultimate rejection of the same. Fifty-five years later, today we find that Young's assertions have indeed come true. While the idea of meritocracy is one that is apparently supported by all, nevertheless, it is an idea that is mostly limited to utopian discussions.

While a lot is being said about the role and importance of the fourth estate, the media, in today's world, the facts remain to say that the media today is plagued by a number of issues. However, perhaps the danger that haunts the media scenario the most today is the nexus between the powers that be and the media houses. This nexus between the outsiders and the insiders pertaining to the field of journalism is pejoratively ascribed to as crony journalism.

Such has been the impact of cronyism that it not only threatens to radically change the traditional nature and ideals of journalism but also re-structure the working mechanism of the media houses which increasingly find themselves at the mercy of people with vested interests whose primary interest remains in anything but journalism. Such people consider the media to be either a profit-making endeavour or a power-sustaining tool. No wonder then, the Gandhian ideal of service being the sole aim of journalism has been shown the door to exploit the potential of the media to maximise the scope of individual goal-attainment. Such an approach has visibly resulted in the lack of faith among the masses pertaining to the functioning of the media. This certainly does not augur well for the future of the media as it is the media that exists for the people and not the other way round.

Keeping the above concerns in mind, this seminar is a humble effort towards bringing to light the issues concerning crony journalism in today's context and the possible ways of countering them. An entire

session will also be devoted exclusively to the role of the social media in today's scenario as the mainstream media finds it increasingly hard to shake off the effects of cronyism and the social media remains the only medium that may still be ascribed as an institution 'of the people, by the people and for the people'.

Thus, we keenly look forward to thoughtful endeavours by academicians, scholars and media professionals alike that are likely to contribute towards formulating a possible roadmap for approaching and addressing the concerns of crony journalism bearing in mind the causes, effects and solutions pertaining to the same in today's perspective. We welcome submissions on the following thrust areas pertaining to the concerns of cronyism in today's scenario:

- 1. Meritocracy vs. Cronyism: The Media Dilemma**
- 2. Cronyism- Redefining News Values**
- 3. Favouritism in Media Practices and Ethical Concerns**
- 4. Media: The New-Age Political Tool**
- 5. Editorial Freedom and its Challenges Today**
- 6. Social Media: Checking or Promoting Cronyism**

#### **Call for Papers:**

Interested participants are requested to submit their abstracts by 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2013 at [cronyjournalism.cjmc@gmail.com](mailto:cronyjournalism.cjmc@gmail.com) / [cjmcvb@gmail.com](mailto:cjmcvb@gmail.com). The abstracts must not exceed 300 words and should indicate the contact address, telephone number, email address, and the institutional affiliation of the author(s). Authors are requested to mention the concerned thrust area in the subject line. Acceptance or rejection of abstracts will be intimated to them by 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2013. The last date of Full Paper Submission shall be 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2013. The length of full paper should be preferably between 3000- 4000 words. The font size should be 12 Point (Title: 14 Point) in Calibri with 1.5 line spacing and Justified alignment. The writers are requested to stick to the APA style of citation. Selected papers will be published in a book form with ISBN number. The participants willing to include their papers in the volume should give their no objection regarding the same with the submitted paper.

#### **Who can participate?**

Faculty Members, Researchers, Media Professionals and Students (Scholarly contributions from others are also welcome)

#### **Important Dates:**

- Last date for Abstract Submission: **28<sup>th</sup> November, 2013**
- Intimation of Acceptance of Abstracts: **30<sup>th</sup> November, 2013**
- Last date for Early Bird Registration: **7<sup>th</sup> December, 2013**
- Last date for Full Paper Submission: **15<sup>th</sup> December, 2013**

**Registration Fees:**

**Early Bird Registration (On or before 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2013):**

1. Researchers/ Students: INR 800/- (Rs. Eight Hundred only) Inclusive of Conference Kit, Accommodation and Meals
2. Teachers, Media Professionals and Others: INR.2000/- (Rs. Two Thousand only) Inclusive of Conference Kit, Accommodation\*\*\* and Meals

**On-Spot Registration:**

1. Researchers/ Students: INR 1000/- (Rs. One Thousand only) Inclusive of Conference Kit, Accommodation (shared for one night)\*\* and Meals
2. Teachers, Media Professionals and Others: INR 2500/- (Rs. Two Thousand Five Hundred only) Inclusive of Conference Kit, Accommodation (shared/single if available for two nights maximum)\*\*\* and Meals

**\*\* If the participants want to stay for more than one night intimation should be sent to [sanhita.chatterjee@visva-bharati.ac.in](mailto:sanhita.chatterjee@visva-bharati.ac.in) by 15 December, 2013**

**\*\*\* Accommodation shall not be provided to Local Participants. Travelling Allowance will not be given to any participant. In case of joint authorship, university will bear the cost of only one author.**

**Mode of Payment for Early Bird Registration:**

Registration fees may be submitted through DD/ Multicity Cheque/ NEFT (Preferably NEFT) in favour of 'VISVA BHARATI CHRONICLE, VISVA BHARATI UNIVERSITY' Account Number - 10598449960, State Bank of India, Shantiniketan Branch, Branch Code: 2121. Upon submission of the fees, the registration form attached herewith may kindly be filled up and sent to us at [cronyjournalism.cjmc@gmail.com](mailto:cronyjournalism.cjmc@gmail.com) to facilitate the registration.

**For any further query, please contact:**

Dr. Mausumi Bhattacharyya, Conference Director & In-Charge, CJMC, Visva-Bharati, E-mail: [mausumibht@gmail.com](mailto:mausumibht@gmail.com) , [mausumi.bhattacharyya@visva-bharati.ac.in](mailto:mausumi.bhattacharyya@visva-bharati.ac.in)

Or Email us at:

[cronyjournalism.cjmc@gmail.com](mailto:cronyjournalism.cjmc@gmail.com)

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**REGISTRATION FORM:**

**Category of Participant: Faculty Member/ Researcher/ Media Professional/ Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Designation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Institution:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mob No.** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email Id:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address for correspondence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**District:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Country:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Pin code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of the paper:** " \_\_\_\_\_ "

**Fee Amount:** INR 2000/- INR 800/- INR 2500/- INR 1000/- \_\_\_\_\_ **Mode of Payment:** DD/ NEFT/  
Cheque \_\_\_\_\_

**Cheque/DD No/ NEFT Transaction No.:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Issuing Bank** \_\_\_\_\_

**NB:** If money is directly deposited, please attach a scanned copy of the counterfoil. In case of NEFT, please provide the scanned copy of the print provided by the online banking service for successful transactions. For cheques, kindly mention your name behind the cheque. All cheques should be marked Account Payee.