

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION



HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT

The conceptual foundation of the Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion was laid as early as in July 1919 when Visva-Bharati was inaugurated as the unique home for all cultures. The programme offered by what was then the Department of Higher Studies included provision for study and research in various aspects of Dharma-Shastra, Purana and Hindu Religion. With Visva-Bharati becoming a registered public body and adopting a constitution of its own on 23rd December, 1921, the Department of Higher Studies, then renamed Uttar Vibhaga, expanded its academic programme by including Philosophy as an independent area of study besides Logic, Nyaya and Vedanta (*Upanisads*). The study-cum-research programme in philosophical subjects received a fresh impetus when the academic wing of Visva-Bharati was reconstructed in 1926. In 1951 when Visva-Bharati became a Central University by an Act of Parliament, Vidya-Bhavana, originally a School of Research, started Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses in a number of subjects including Philosophy and Comparative Religion. That was how today's Department of Philosophy and Religion came into being. In April, 1964, the Department was converted into a Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy. The Centre was designed to promote higher studies and research in metaphysics in collaboration with scholars from other universities in and outside the country. The first director of the Centre was Professor Kalidas Bhattacharya, an eminent philosopher himself.

The Department received Special Assistance Programme for 5 years from 1985 to 1990. At present, the Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion has signed an MoU with University of Lausanne, Switzerland, for exchange of one teacher per year from both the ends and one student from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. The Department is now preparing itself for running UGC-assistance programme in the form of SAP or CAS. Revival of publication of the bi-annual departmental Journal of its own, called The Visva-Bharati Journal of Philosophy, thirty-five Volumes of which have already been published.

PROGRAMMES AND COURSES OFFERED

At present the Department offers following courses

| Programme Name | Number of Courses |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ph.D. in Philosophy | 3 |
| Ph.D. in Comparative Religion | 6 (Including Optional Courses) |
| M.A. in Philosophy | 49 (Including Optional Courses) |
| M.A. in Comparative Religion | 36 (Including Optional Courses) |
| B.A. in Philosophy | 26 (Including Optional Courses) |
| B.A. in Comparative Religion | 28 (Including Optional Courses) |