

आचार्य  
श्री नरेंद्र मोदी

ACHARYA (CHANCELLOR)  
SHRI NARENDRA MODI

उपाचार्य

प्रो. विद्युत चक्रवर्ती

UPACHARYA (VICE-CHANCELLOR)  
PROF. BIDYUT CHAKRABARTY

# विश्वभारती VISVA-BHARATI

(Established by the Parliament of India under  
Visva-Bharati Act XXIX of 1951  
Vide Notification No. : 40-5/50 G.3 Dt. 14 May, 1951)

संस्थापक

रवीन्द्रनाथ ठाकुर

FOUNDED BY  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE



शान्तिनिकेतन - 731235

SANTINIKETAN - 731235

जि.वीरभूम, पश्चिम बंगाल, भारत

DIST. BIRBHUM, WEST BENGAL, INDIA

फोन Tel: +91-3463-262 451/261 531

फैक्स Fax: +91-3463-262 672

ई-मेल E-mail: vice-chancellor@visva-bharati.ac.in

Website: www.visva-bharati.ac.in

सं./No. \_\_\_\_\_

दिनांक/Date. 19 June, 2020

## To my colleagues, students, and other stakeholders surviving on and thriving because of Visva Bharati:

As a member of the Visva Bharati Parivaar, let me share the most probable reasons for Visva Bharati's fall in the NIRF 2020 ranking from # 37 to # 50, which marks the lowest point of a regrettably steady regression since 2016.

Attributing the blame to the university authorities is an ineffectual, though easy move when the teachers, students, non-teaching staff and other stakeholders are responsible in their own ways for both the university's yearly academic output and for the upkeep of its rich legacy. Visva Bharati is the proverbial goose that lays golden eggs for everybody – students, teachers, the local businessmen, the toto drivers, the journalists, and other stakeholders. What is required is to take care of the goose instead of contributing to its slow demise.

Since my joining in November 2018, I have been engaged in cleansing the institution of its rampant deviations from well-established rules and regulations which perhaps create an image of Visva Bharati being a deviant system, embroiled in controversies. This extremely urgent task has unfortunately left the administration with little time to address other pertinent issues. I don't want to wash our dirty linen in public, but I feel that the truth behind our university's low rank should be available in the public domain. Visva Bharati appears to have lost the race largely due to "the outsiders perception and the low alumni contribution and lack of proper reporting of the activities being undertaken in the campus", the reasons for which are not difficult to fathom:

- 1) A week after my joining in November 2018, I received a letter from the UGC ordering me to stop extra-salary payment to *some* of the non-teaching colleagues in order to avoid the non-payment of salary to *all* the employees of Visva Bharati. My decision was made in favour of the majority of the staff, and against those who had been enjoying this illegally made extra salary payment, which naturally upset the latter.



- 2) Post my joining, my attention was drawn to the UGC instruction (supported by Audit observations) which clearly says that those who took LTC for the alleged trip to the Pangong Lake in Ladakh were asked to pay back the amount that they received on account of their “claimed” trip. The Account Office of Visva Bharati started recovering the amount from the colleagues and as of June 2020, the amount is almost recovered.
- 3) Many colleagues were asked to return the advance that they had taken for academic and other activities which amounted to a sizeable sum. This disheartened them as they had long been beneficiaries of the university being in slumber.
- 4) The MHRD has asked me to enquire into the 24 academic/non-academic appointments made during the reign of an erstwhile Vice Chancellor of Visva Bharati, because of the alleged irregularities therein. The enquiry has begun and the outcome, if it does not serve the interests of those who were beneficiaries of this alleged ‘deviation’ from what is deemed to be done in case of recruitment, will cause heart-burn to them.
- 5) In May 2019, a group of almost two hundred non-teaching employees barged into my residence Purbita and started verbally abusing me in a highly uncivilized manner. One of the senior female colleagues who was present that day for a meeting was subjected to particularly offensive words, which was unexpected of those who claimed to have been nurtured in the Rabindrik tradition.
- 6) In October 2019, the Vice Chancellor was verbally abused with reference to his deceased father, in an open meeting attended by three former colleagues who did not receive the favours that they expected from the administration. Interestingly, opposition to such abuse was highly feeble.
- 7) The Karmi Sabha sat on a strike for 22 days just immediately prior to last year’s Durga Puja holidays. They had two demands: release of the arrear of the & 7 CPC and return of the Granthan Vibhag Guest House which belonged to the university, but the income that it generated went straight to the Karmi Sabha coffers. I was befuddled as to how a guest house that belonged to the university could be run by the Karmi Sabha, a voluntary organization (as per the characterization of the Executive Council). Now, the Kolkata Guest House is functioning under the university’s care. It should also be noted that although the non-teaching staff had been on pen down strike, they continued to sign the attendance register twice a day (as per rule) so that their claim to salary was established.
- 8) We were gheraoed last year for 25 hours by the students who did not even allow the provision of insulin for our colleague, who, as a result, had to be hospitalized. Nonetheless, the stalemate was resolved amicably through dialogue and discussion with the students in which some of our colleagues took leading roles.
- 9) Early this year, a group of non-teaching staff belonging to the Karmi Sabha barged into my office to verbally abuse me as they were frustrated that one of their colleagues had been transferred to our Kolkata office which was at odds with the Sabha’s interests. Ultimately, they locked the entrance to my office which caused utter pandemonium. We were rescued once a group of teachers and non-teaching colleagues countered them. An enquiry was held and the outcome is awaited.
- 10) A faculty member’s request for four extra increments was granted after having joined the service, which is highly illegal and thus not admissible. The regular audit team, sent by the Government of India, has asked the university to re-fix the salary of the faculty member as per the rule because after the selection committee meeting, the decision regarding extra increment is contrary to the rule. The Executive Council has instructed the university authority to act in



accordance with the audit observation. This will again be a source of consternation for this colleague as well as those of his/her ilk.

- 11) Visva Bharati is perhaps one of those rare seats of learning which has a great legacy and yet is distinctively famous for all the wrong reasons: a) the Nobel prize medallion that Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore received in 1913 was stolen; (b) a former vice chancellor was incarcerated along with one of the former registrars, and (c) a former Vice Chancellor had an ignominious exit for his alleged involvement in 'improper practices'. Recently, a former Vice Chancellor (acting) along with a former Registrar (acting) and Finance Officer (acting) were suspended for their alleged complicity with highly deviant practices.
- 12) Two former Finance Officers drew transport allowances while using the official car meant for the Finance Officer, which is contrary to the Government Finance Rules. An order for recovery was issued which was difficult to execute with regard to one of them since he died, while the other Finance Officer has started paying back the transport allowance in instalments.

With this I end the first list of what I believe has led to Visva Bharati's fall in public perception in the recent past. I leave my colleagues with two reminders: (a) there is a difference between intervention born of belonging and interference born of invalid feelings of entitlement, and (b) the Vice Chancellor possesses no magic wand with which to erase decades of systematic deviation from the practices supportive of the Rabindrik Ethos and the 1951 Visva Bharati Acts and Statutes. Through this missive, I seek the support of this institution's well-wishers, so that we may collectively address the easily identifiable lacunae in its functioning.

As always, I urge you to stay safe and stay connected.

*Bidyut Chakrabarty*  
Bidyut Chakrabarty  
Vice Chancellor  
Visva Bharati  
19/06



Vice-Chancellor  
Visva-Bharati  
Santiniketan  
West Bengal-731235  
India