

## Visva-Bharati's WISHFUL THINKING (!)

### Ragging, Ragging and Ragging

Following the death of a student of Jadavpur University who was a victim of ragging by the seniors, known as *Baap* (distorted lexicon of father) on 9 august, 2023, the Bengalees have suddenly woken up with the need of taking tough steps to purge the campus of evil forces. Very good realization, though a late realization by the same Bengalees who tend to remain in deep slumber for decades, or like the Ostrich, who prefer to put their head under the sand (read pillow here) to feel that nothing untoward has happened in their *Sonar Bangla*.

Death of a child (the victim was below 18 years of age), is unpardonable and those who are responsible for such a heinous act should be given exemplary punishment to permanently uproot the sources of perverted mindsets. This is not an isolated event; it has been happening in various part of India which creates ripple and then subsides. This is unfortunate. The stakeholders should rise in unison to ensure that such a situation never emerges in the students' hostels which led to the brutal death of a student who join an academic centre for higher learning because of the lackadaisical attitude of the political authority and also those involved in governing universities.

Many Bengalees are hypocrites of the first order since they tend to contradict themselves so often that it is difficult to predict what attracts them to take a 360 degree turn in specific circumstances; furthermore, there is a another nearly universal characteristic which was often mentioned by one of the teachers in Calcutta's erstwhile Presidency College in the early 1970s. Bengalees have a crab mentality. Why there is no lid on the container carrying crabs from one place to another? The answer is that crabs instinctively pull down their brethren once one of them seeks to go out of the container. Many Bengalees are like that. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) in his *Charitrapuja* (1895), while commenting on the inherent behavioural traits of the Bengalees elaborated this; the same view was reverberated in his interview to the essayist, Sajani Kanto Das which was published in *Karmi Rabindranath* (1937). So, as per Tagore, this is a tradition which many Bengalees nurture with utmost care and concern since without this they know that they will probably evaporate like camphor. The plight of Rammohun Roy (1772-1833), Vidyasagar (1820-91) among others was not different; Rammohun was subject to public vilification when he raised his voice against the most inhuman *Sati Custom*; Vidyasagar underwent the same when he took part in the campaign for remarriage of widows. The hypocrite Bengalees, in view of their inexplicable caste pride, did not think twice before hurling abuse to Roy and Vidyasagar for their humanistic activities. The same orthodox Bengalees did not refrain from entertaining the Britishers during Durga Puja presumably to curry favour from the conquerors. Known as *Gentus* in the local literary texts, they privileged their self-driven interests even to transform a religious and also holy occasion for the Bengalees, like Durga Puja to gain various kinds of benefits from the rulers. Pyari Charan Mitra, Kali Prasanna Singha, Prankrishna Dutta, Rajnarayan Bosu, among others wrote extensively about the *Gentus* and their servility to the rulers; they also highlighted how a holy event was utilized to propitiate the foreigners. Liquors were served, nautch girls danced while the religious part of the worship of Goddesses Durga was relegated to secondary importance. Two recent films – *Hansharaj* (1975) and *Andarmahal* by Rituparna Ghosh (2005) (based on novelist Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay's short story), are illustrative here. One should have the mental capacity to understand the underlying theme of how servile were the Bengalee *nouveau*

*riche* in the then Bengal. Illustrative here were the concerns of Bengalees to get title like Rai Bahadur and also the declared willingness to have the face of Queen Victoria as the face of Goddesses Durga. These examples are referred to because half-educated Bengalees (their number is staggeringly high in today's West Bengal) just to state that a thorough study of Bengalees' past reveals that the majority of the Bengalees were instinctively hypocrites.

Let me come back to the most disheartening event of the year – the death of an innocent student (admitted in the department of Bangla of Jadavpur University) on 9 August, 2023 roughly at about past 10 at night within the hostel premise. When he was found on the ground, he was naked and bleeding profusely. Now, the enquiry is going on under the care of the state police which is claimed to be highly efficient on occasions when they are instructed accordingly. We hope that the culprits will be nabbed and punished in such a way so that no innocent life is lost in future.

There is a strange coincidence. When West Bengal is deeply wounded with this unexpected but mentally anguishing event at Jadavpur students' hostel, a fake Facebook post appeared purportedly by a female student of Visva-Bharati which was a source of anguish for those serving this reputed University for their livelihood. The post is purportedly fake as the Newspapers published the story with a rider or disclaimer saying that the authenticity of the post was not ascertained. Very strange because the so-called members of the fourth pillar of democracy, the journalists are happy to put the blame on Visva-Bharati without confirming whether the Facebook post was genuine or not. Visva-Bharati has its own mechanism to enquire into these complaints and it began so as soon as it was brought to the notice of the authority.

The timing of this seemingly false Facebook post is also indicative of a design or one may also say that it was just coincidence because the stated post came to the public domain when the entire West Bengal was highly disturbed by the demise of an innocent freshman within the Jadavpur University students' hostel premise. There is a possibility that it may lead one to argue that the Facebook post was made available in the public domain to divert public attention away from the state-governed Jadavpur University to the only Central University in West Bengal (managed by the Union Government with the hon'ble Prime Minister as its Chancellor). It could be a well-thought-out strategy to disturb Visva-Bharati which is now immune from disturbances due to strong administration under the present dispensation.

The reason that it was a ploy to rattle Visva-Bharati can be **CONJUCTURED** by the events that followed immediately after the news appeared in the public domain. A police complaint was lodged by one (surviving with income from Visva-Bharati like many of us) which the Santiniketan PS received at 6-35 pm and it was turned into an FIR at 6-35 pm; very impressive since police officials here at Santiniketan PS are so intelligent that they instantaneously understood (without losing a fraction of a second) that an offense was made which warranted an FIR. Very appreciative role of the police although when Visva-Bharati suffered due to the destruction of her heritage wall and several thousand thugs congregated in the Mela ground and undertook outlawed activities for THREE HOURS, no police was available despotic frantic call by the deceased Padmashree Dr. Sushobhon Banerjee and those associated with Visva-Bharati. A complaint was lodged and it remained in the category of General Diary and was never transformed into an FIR. Many examples can be cited to prove that state police do not seem to be as neutral as is expected presumably because those who are associated with law-

enforcement agency which is under the control of our VERY EFFICIENT Chief Minister who is well-trained to adopt steps for the well-being of whom: we really don't know.

The police became hyper-active as soon as they preferred to accept a fake (?) Facebook post as authentic and deployed the machinery to begin investigation. Fair enough; it was their duty or *mutatis mutandis* they were instructed to prove that they were too efficient to fix those teachers at Visva-Bharati who indulged in such practices at the cost of innocent students. We strongly feel that the guilty should be sternly punished and Visva-Bharati never refrained from implementing the directions given by the statutory authority by following due processes. In this case, the overactive police are assured of all help because Visva-Bharati is also keen to identify the culprit and stern action shall be taken against him/her/them. Our question is if the complaint is proved to be concocted or made-up to shift attention away from Jadavpur event and if the innocent individuals are heckled in public or if another untoward incident takes place if an innocent teacher were identified as the culprit by the police by following their modes of enquiry, who will be held responsible? The complainant, the police, the state government or who else.

Now let us mention few facts to show that the complainant is not innocent either. His aim is to size up the university administration by hook or crook in collaboration of his close mates with the same objectives. He is a habitual litigant and writers of letters to the hon'ble President, Prime Minister, Education Minister, of the Union Government, the Governor of the State of West Bengal and nobody in the world was spared by his and his collaborators letters at regular intervals. We wonder whether he and his collaborators wrote letter to the US president, Jo Biden or the Russian President, Vladimir Putin. He has a personal axe to grind because he could not do what he desired to do. It has come to our notice from authentic sources (not verified though and we are mentioning it since a fake Facebook receives so much attention) that while he was working in a college in north Bengal, he was warned by the HOD and principal several times for being truant as a teacher. So, the police complaint was not an outcome of his concern for the victims (if there are any), but a device to take revenge because he felt that he was wronged.

Let us also add the role of a section hypocrite Bengalees located elsewhere in the state. Here, there are cases of individuals who flourished in the academia with fake degrees, and again, the claim has not been authenticated. We are referring to this because if a Fake Facebook post is accepted as an instrument to take innocent individuals to task, we have no moral obligation to prove this before the point is made in the public domain. There is one claim being made in the print and visual media that had the Jadavpur University authority been tough and stern in response to deviation by the students from the rule book, the criminals would not have had the courage to embark on such a heinous act! When Visva-Bharati authority talked about the Mela ground being used for anti-social activities and stopped them by iron fist, many of these Bengalees thought that the Rabindrik traditions were guillotined. When many structures which functioned as canteens were demolished because flesh trade was going on under its cloak, many of these self-proclaimed custodians of Bengalee heritage under the protection of political Dadas raised hue and cry. Now, why are they critical when they witness liquor bottles and other items (which are not be seen in public) in the Jadavpur University campus. Isn't it height of hypocrisy? The Jadavpur University should have been strict in applying the disciplinary code of conduct for the students, teachers, non-teaching staff and other stake holders. These pretentious individuals are now shouting at the highest pitch of their voice by forcing their lung

to work beyond its capacity! Now, these intellectuals who were also blamed for having forged degrees, tender such an advice to Jadavpur University authority; but, said exactly the opposite when it concerned Visva-Bharati. Very strange, though the motive is clear. If Visva-Bharati administration is tough and those who love the Institution become stern as soon as deviation is visible, their shops for fulfilling their partisan gains will become non-functional if not disappear completely. Let them see their face in the mirror; they will be scared of their face which is soaked with blood because they don't allow the academic institutions in West Bengal to flourish to attain excellence. The poet, Mirza Ghalib thus rightly mentioned that *bekuf Ghalib jibanbhor yehee galti korta raha, dhul chera pe tha, Aiyana saf korta raha*. (when you yourself are polluted, it is of no use to clean the mirror).