

21 March, 2022

## An Open Message to the Visva-Bharati fraternity

Visva-Bharati was a den of corruption. Here a student was removed in recent past from the rolls as his claim of having completed a degree from a university was fabricated. Here, former Vice Chancellors had the rare distinction of being removed, jailed and being proved *prima facie* a guilty of resorting to malpractices after a thorough CBI enquiry. This university is reduced to be a playground of vested interests and the height of this was the loss of the Nobel medallion of Gurudev in 2004. Here, an extra grade pay was sanctioned illegally; here, illegal research grant was given to the faculty members; here, students were allowed to sit for supplementary examinations for five times; nowhere is this admissible. Here, the VC was not allowed to hold an EC meeting in Kolkata by the so-called self-claimed custodians of the reputation of Visva-Bharati. Here, the non-teaching staff were physically assaulted in front of the VC, no police complaint was lodged. In Visva-Bharati, retired teachers kept their offices and laboratories for more than a decade which did not allow the new recruits to even get an office in the department. As soon as I received a letter signed by the departmental faculty members, the administration finally got the space back which made the deprived sections of the department happy. Why wasn't done in the past? Three of my predecessors remained in somber presumably not to disturb the applecart. These examples illustrate, *inter alia*, the hegemony of muscle power and also the prevalence of an environment in which illegality was just normal. The authorities are reported to have allowed the rule of muscle power and illegality presumably for reasons which are best known to them.

Here appointments and admission to various courses (before it was made online) were made illegally, on many occasions. I was also pressurized to follow the pattern. That I didn't budge can be illustrated by the following message from one (of the who's who) who thankfully realized that the present authorities were not as gullible as the past-ones:

*"Sorry for my foolishness. However, may I clarify that I have absolutely no self-interest whatsoever in my approach, even infinitesimally! Thanks for snubbing me harshly which I fully deserve. I take it as an expression of your respect for us monks and your disappointment at our not keeping to the high ideal that we're mandated to uphold. This was my feeling when you expressed your sheer contempt for my conduct and said that you'd reject with scorn any contacts I may try to make with you in future. Hope*

*such an occasion never arises in my life, for we need or require NOTHING from anybody for our personal gain. Thanks for this lesson, a price that I had to pay for my foolish, misplaced "compassion". Hope you'll not seriously carry out your threat to penalize the candidate, but go by sheer merit as you seemed to imply. Kind regards and good wishes for your success".*

The above message is self-explanatory. There are many recommendations (like the above) for seeking favours. This letter is just a tip of the Iceberg.

There are few faculty members who nurture the hurt-feelings because they were not promoted. Let's put the facts on the table for our perusal. Since 2018, when I took over as Vice Chancellor, more than 100 faculty members were promoted barring a few. As everybody knows, promotion is not a charity; if that be so, the UGC would not have asked for assessment of the candidates' past publications and their performance before the duly-constituted Selection Committee. In all cases of failure, the decision was unanimous. The departmental representatives were there when the decision was taken. What is unfortunate is to hold the Vice Chancellor solely responsible for the outcome and the failed candidates and those unwilling to think rationally happily guillotine the Vice Chancellor in case faculty members were not promoted. Many of them have gone to the court. If it is found that promotion was stopped because of other considerations, the authority will certainly look into this. Nonetheless, let me reiterate that the decision was unanimous which the departmental representatives also endorsed and, by being the chairperson of the Selection Committee, the Vice Chancellor acts, as per the 1951 Act, as an authority to ascertain fairness during the interview.

The purpose of this open letter is to get those (surviving on the fat pay packet out of taxpayers' money that they draw monthly from Visva-Bharati) acquainted with the shameful activities that greatly defamed Visva-Bharati. I challenge the detractors to prove whether the above said activities were concocted.

It is a matter of shame that some of the students stooped so low for the last three weeks in March, 2022 that it is difficult to believe that they are/ were students of the Gurudev-founded university. Of course, it is not an aberration because the founder himself was subject to vilification on many occasions, as his written texts demonstrate.

The Vasanta Utsab was scheduled to be held on 18/03 and the preparation for it was going on in full-swing. Due to uncertain circumstances in which the participants expressed being scared which was not unfounded given the severe torture that some of Visva-Bharati's employees underwent on the night of 14 March, the committee entrusted with the task (Karmi Parishad) decided to defer the Utsab. Still, it was not the decision of the Vice Chancellor; the decision to not hold Vasanta Utsav now (which will be held during the spring this year) was taken by the officially-earmarked body of the university responsible for organizing the same. It is also a pattern that has emerged with the change of guard in November, 2018 that no decision was taken unilaterally; decisions concerning university were always outcomes of vigorous discussions in many statutory fora. I PLACE THIS FACT; IF IT'S OTHERWISE, YOU ARE FREE TO CHALLENGE, OF COURSE, WITH EVIDENCE.

There is a warning. COVID has not disappeared: lock down has begun in China and Korea. The Vasanta Utsav congregation may create propitious conditions for the Virus to thrive - that will be a cause of concern if it happens. PLEASE TAKE ADEQUATE PROTECTION TO DEFEAT THIS VIRULENT PANDEMIC.

Bidyut Chakrabarty  
Vice Chancellor