

An Afterword From The Chairman

This is not the first Committee to go into Visva-Bharati affairs; nor will it be the last.

What started, in 1901, as an experiment will always experiment. Mahatma Gandhi used that word, in conjunction with 'truth' to title his autobiography. But Tagore's words in the opening sentences of the Deed which brought Visva-Bharati into being in 1921, spoke the same language of truth-seeking. As an experiment, Visva-Bharati will, therefore, always be able to self-correct. What it will need to remember is that it should be true to itself, not mime others.

The Committee was greatly benefited by the guidelines set for its work by Shri Arjun Singh, the Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development; our sincere thanks to him.

To Professor Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairman of UGC, the Committee would like to express sincere thanks for interactions on the subject of specific infrastructural facilities at Visva-Bharati for its short term and long term strengthening.

Several interlocutors and correspondents enriched the Committee's understanding of Visva-Bharati. The Committee appreciates their contribution immensely. Students at Visva-Bharati, in their conversations with us, deepened our understanding considerably. To them, too, our thanks.

The Committee received the unstinting cooperation of the Visva-Bharati authorities – the Upacharya Professor Sujit Kumar Basu and, then, Upacharya Professor Rajat Kanta Ray, the first even as he was handing over and the second as he was just settling-in. The Committee is beholden to them. Visva-Bharati's teachers, department heads and officers of whom the Registrar Shri Sunil Kumar Sarkar must be specially mentioned, were of continuous and the most constructive help.

To Dr. Uma Das Gupta, Tagore biographer and Samsad member, a special word of thanks is due for her invaluable help to the Committee by formulating detailed questionnaires for responses by Visva-Bharati's departments, and for supplying a number of insights and references. Dr. V. K. Ramachandran, the distinguished economist and Professor at the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, gave important inputs for the portions on Sriniketan; to him, also, sincere thanks.

I must express my gratitude to Sri Tuhin Kumar Mukherjee of my Secretariat in Raj Bhavan, Kolkata, the note-taker and typist of the Committee, for doing the work not just single-handed but single-mindedly, in a manner that is truly exemplary.

Finally, I place on record as a pleasure no less than a fulfilling duty my deep gratitude to the Members of the Committee which I was asked to head in an ex-officio capacity. Each of them brought a unique body of knowledge, experience and insight to bear on the work of the Committee. That every one of them was extremely busy with active engagements in the public and academic domains did not prevent them from giving their best attention to the task.

When Mahatma Gandhi ended his 'epic fast' in Poona on 26 September, 1932 to heal divides among the castes of India, Tagore was present. And he sang a piece from his *Gitanjali* in its Bangla original to give the occasion hope. Fifteen years later, when Mahatma Gandhi ended yet another fast, this time in Calcutta, on 4 September, 1947, to bring peace among rioting Hindus and Muslims, Tagore was no more. But the same piece was sung on that occasion as well, as an entreaty and, again, as an expression of hope.

I would like this Report to conclude with lines from that immortal, life-giving composition in its English rendering to express our Committee's faith in Santiniketan's future :

*When the heart is hard and parched up,
Come upon me with a shower of mercy*

Gopalkrishna Gandhi