

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Maintaining the Campus

1. Visva-Bharati's boundaries and its 'Ashrama' area need to be defined, restored and documented on a detailed map, maintained with a conservator's eye. For this, a Visva-Bharati Conservation and Preservation Society should be set up under the powers of the University as enshrined under Section 6 of the Act, or otherwise, headed by the VC with a representative of the Sriniketan-Santiniketan Development Authority among the members. (see pages 11-14, 25-44)
2. A ban on the use of polythene bags and disposable plastics should be imposed and implemented in the area covered by the *Uttarayana* Complex and the 'Ashrama' in Santiniketan. (see pages 12-13, 41)
3. A conservancy and sanitation cell should be set up of the Visva-Bharati and the SSDA together which, in coordination with the concerned local body, to monitor the cleanliness of the open spaces in the Visva-Bharati and the Santiniketan area. An action plan should be drawn up for providing the campus with a proper sewerage and drainage system. (see pages 13, 40-41)

Planning For the Future of the Campus

4. In keeping with the Supreme Court's observation in its Orders on a PIL: "Its environmental ambience, thus, must be maintained...", the Paridarśaka should be requested to be pleased to appoint a distinguished retired Judge of the Supreme Court of India or a retired Chief Justice of a High Court to preside over a Panel with two representatives each of VB, one of who should be the VC himself (or at meetings that he cannot attend, the Registrar) and SSDA and two representatives of the residents of Santiniketan unconnected with VB and SSDA to:
 - (a) Prepare a detailed map laying down these territorial boundaries of VB;
 - (b) Specify the dos and don'ts of construction, land use alteration, and the causing of any man-made changes on existing buildings or natural features by any agency;
 - (c) Specify the heritage areas within the territorial limits of VB, both natural and manmade which require to be totally protected from human interference and preserved as far as possible against the ravages of time.

The Panel should take not more than 3 months to conclude its work.

The HLC recommends that between now and the recommendations of that Panel, all construction, development and realty work within the area described in the Second Schedule of the Act be put on hold. The water levels in Santiniketan need be preserved and prevented from falling further. (see pages 27-40)

International standard guest rooms for visiting faculty and Honorary Fellows should be set up. (see pages 42-44)

5. An action plan providing VB with a sewerage and drainage system worthy of a modern University should be drawn up urgently. (see pages 40-41)
6. The residential nature of the University should be revived in calibrated coordination with the changes in the admission policy to the institutions of VB. (see pages 36, 41, 52-56, 64)

Security

7. A post of a Chief Security Officer should be created. (see pages 44-47)
8. The 'dens' in the hostels and in derelict quarters should be 'de-denned' without any delay. (see page 46)
9. A bio-metric system of infra-red ray be installed inside the Strong Rooms after office hours to detect unauthorized entry. Fire-fighting equipment and fire hazard training of security staff, walky-talkie for the security staff and a 24 hour power supply to Rabindra Bhavana and Kala Bhavana, and the other essential equipment itemized by the experts be urgently installed/organized. (see page 46)
10. A Central Preservation Unit with trained curators be set up and a rapid digitization of the endangered paintings, drawings, murals, frescoes, statues, sculptures, etc. together with the physical verification of these objects with the help of complete catalogues prepared for the purpose as a *security measure, no less than a conservation one*. (see pages 46-47, 178-179, 191)

Patha Bhavana

11. The PB needs to be made entirely residential without loss of time, after PB's size has been optimized at around 600, with all the students drawn through an open system, introduced gradually over a three year programme. (see pages 51-56, 249)
12. The +2 course be integrated with PB, the Uttar Siksha Sadan (USS) being amalgamated in time with PB. (see pages 56-57)
13. Government of India be requested to set up one or more Kendriya Vidyalayas or a Navodaya School in the vicinity which will offer quality day-school education to those local students who do not enter the re-structured PB. (see page 57)

Siksha Satra

14. HLC recommends a greater interaction between the SS and PB. (see page 62-63)
15. A hostel be built for SS's students which in no way is different from the proposed hostel for the PB. (see pages 61, 64)

Kala Bhavana

16. The KB should have its own conservancy staff, independent of the cleaners employed under VB's central arrangements. (see pages 69, 73)
17. KB needs larger studio space, particularly in the Sculpture and Painting Departments. (see pages 73-74)
18. While being 'upgraded', the KB museum should see if it can transfer some of its holdings to the RB museum. (see pages 74, 76)

Sangita Bhavana

19. Sangita Bhavana should move on to new areas of study and research like the theory of music and other traditions of music. The Committee recommends a tie-up with institutions like the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya in New Delhi and Kalakshetra in Chennai. (see pages 80-83)
20. SB should break new ground by taking its repertoire of Tagore dance-dramas outside Santiniketan to other cities of India and abroad, beginning with neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. (see page 82)
21. Sangita Bhavana and Patha Bhavana should collaborate with Professor Martha Nussbaum and the Pratichi Trust to identify methods by which music, dance and theatre can be better integrated with school education. (see pages 82-83)

Vidya Bhavana and Siksha Bhavana

22. Vidya Bhavana and Siksha Bhavana should, in addition to their B.A. Hons and Masters Courses, start a 5-years integrated course each within the respective Bhavanas, offering combinations of subjects (Humanities and Social Sciences within VdB and different Physical Sciences within SB) as also a 5-year integrated course which links the two Bhavanas, i.e., the VdB and SB offering a course which connects Humanities/Social Sciences with the Physical Sciences. (see pages 104-106)
23. This would mean three integrations in two levels, namely, (i) an integration of studies within multiple combinations of the Physical Sciences in a 5-year course within SB, ending in a M.Sc. Degree in the SB, (ii) an integration between multiple combinations of the Humanities and the Social Sciences in a new 5-years course ending in a MA Degree within VdB and a third integration between the SB and VdB in the shape of an integrated 5-year course leading to a M.Sc Degree with elements of the Physical Sciences, Humanities and the Social Sciences. (see pages 105, 109-111)
24. This will require VB to induct high-quality teachers assuring them of infrastructure facilities and a sense of coming to a venue which is not only pleasant but well equipped and functional in terms of medical and schooling facilities. (see pages 42-43, 111)
25. VB, in the two Bhavanas, namely, the SB and VdB, should establish links with organizations that have introduced integrated courses, particularly those in the recent past, such as the Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER) in Pune and Kolkata for the Physical Sciences. Honorary Fellows from India and abroad should be brought to impart quality to pedagogues and research. (see page 106)
26. The integrated course to be sited within SB for a coordinated M.Sc degree, including elements of the Humanities and Social Sciences should use the Santiniketan region as a 'field of study' for problems of sustainability (energy, landuses, water resources, atmospheric environment, effects of industrial transformation, concepts of new villages, social transformation,

etc). Sriniketan's expertise in work in the region would be brought in. The course would be distinct and yet would draw from different Bhavanas and Departments. (see pages 110-111)

27. This 5-year course should be offered to students from all over India who have done their +2 in the sciences (mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology) and admissions should be by means of an entrance test. Admissions to the integrated course will continue with internal quotas progressively reduced as contemplated by VB authorities, but SC/ST and other Government of India prescribed reservations followed scrupulously. (see page 110)

28. As implementation of the recommendations (encompassing infrastructure development and pedagogic recasting) proceeds in a phased manner, internal quotas in admissions would need to be brought down simultaneously, in calibrated phases. It can be expected that the two structures will have their respective difficulties in adaptation and should have a blend of combining existing faculty with inducted brand new faculty of tested talent apart from the mint-fresh first batch of +2 students in their respective courses. For this, the preliminary work in terms of working out the course, methods of recruitment of faculty, assessing infrastructural needs should start next year itself, viz., 2007. (see page 110)

29. A course coordinator will need to be appointed and authorized to run the new integrated course with such modifications of the statutes as may be necessary. (see page 113)

30. The transition to English as a medium of instruction should take place as early as possible. (see pages 56, 95)

Vinaya Bhavana

31. The HLC recommends that VnB be evaluated urgently for the status and calibre of its courses with a view to bringing Bengali and English proficiencies to a position of reasonable parity. (see pages 116-119)

32. The Department of Physical Education should look beyond conventional programmes and also include new programmes which have recently gained importance, such as the orthopaedic and medical responses to sports-related injury (Sports Medicine), the psycho-emotional supplementation of physical education as also certain new forms of health-sports such as Taekwondo, Judo, Karate. (see pages 119-121)

Sriniketan

33. Reorganising the central importance of Sriniketan (SN) as the medium for a creative interaction with the rural environment and population in the region and to facilitate their "development", the HLC notes that while the original components of SN, were the Palli Siksha Bhavana, Siksha Satra and PSV, subsequently, other entities have been added in an ad hoc fashion, and are working disjointedly. (see pages 122-123, 245-246)

34. A major internal regrouping of these disaggregated units is necessary to help Sriniketan realize its manifest objective, including a review on (i) how they are really integral to Sriniketan's original concept, (ii) how they are adapting to the extensive changes in rural and suburban India, West Bengal, Birbhum; and (iii) how they are impacting on the rural population, local farmers, their specific local problems, their social milieu and the environment. For this new energizing,

Sriniketan will need a Director supervising, integrating and propelling its different units. (see page 124)

The HLC recommends :

35. The Palli Siksha Bhavana (The Institute of Agricultural Science) should (i) retain its undergraduate and graduate teaching format (ii) go ahead with a modified version of its 'wish list' enumerated elsewhere; *but* (iii) draw up a completely revamped syllabi, course-content and direction for the UG course, refreshing it and gearing it for a graduate course and research in Sustainable Agriculture and The Environment. (see pages 125-133)

36. The Department of Social Work's courses should be reviewed by an expert body like the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai. (see pages 134-137)

37. The Palli Charcha Kendra (PCK) (The Department of Social Studies and Rural Development) should be integrated into the VdB. The staff of the two departments, teaching space, hostel facilities, infrastructure facilities, including electronic support and the library, being integrated appropriately. (see pages 138-139)

38. Shilpa Sadana's production procedures and marketing strategies including the methods of billing and payments in vogue, should be studied by the Finance Officer of VB. An administrator in the rank of a manager or an assistant registrar should be appointed for the regulation of its production activity.

The SS/PSV/Sriniketan should do a study of the status of handicrafts in Birbhum, requesting the Anthropological Survey of India and the Crafts Council of India for advice on survey designing and for advice on future growth. (see pages 141-146)

39. The Rural Extension Centre (REC) should (a) help develop skills for effective participation in Panchayats, cooperatives, self help groups; (b) inform communities of new opportunities as well as those that adversely affect the quality and productivity of resources; (c) assess the opportunities for a sustainable use of resources by providing information on the appropriate techniques and undertake research to find appropriate solutions; (d) train local leaders in the way government programmes are managed, generate pressures to make them function better, and where appropriate to organize such activities on their own. (see pages 147-148)

40. The Saha-Upacharya proposed separately for VB be made specially responsible for REC's policy direction. (see page 149)

Sriniketan In General

41. Sriniketan should have a full time Director guiding it and coordinating the work of its separate units. The Upacharya and the Saha-Upacharya should attend an office-room of their own in Sriniketan at least one day in a week, *spending that entire day* for Sriniketan work so as to bring to an uncertainty the reassurance of their strength and support. (see pages 148-151)

42. The Upacharya, the Saha-Upacharya and the new Director must devise a method of monitoring Sriniketan's work *using the yardstick of the Surul peasants' attitude to Sriniketan*. (see page 149)

43. Sriniketan should forge a new and vibrant linkage with the Dartington Halls of today in the less developed world. (see page 150)

44. Santhal Perceptions

PSV and Siksha Satra should deepen their engagement with the local Santhal community in a discussion on Santhal aspirations in a changing socio-economic environment. (see page 211)

The Central Library

45. The building needs 'spring-cleaning' by a professional agency supervised closely by a committee of 'library engineers'. (see pages 154-155, 158)

46. The proposal for extending the stack-area by 8000 sq.feet needs to be reviewed for a scientific assessment of the exact additional area needed after consulting all the departments so that after a couple of years the need for yet another extension is obviated. (see pages 154, 159)

47. The digitizing of books must be done with simultaneous and maximum care being bestowed on the upkeep of originals with expert advice being obtained from antiquarian book conservators. (see pages 156, 160-61)

48. Each department should set up a Centre for Course Studies which houses multiple numbers of the prescribed textbooks with its own rules for lending and borrowing so that the pressures on the CL and the departmental libraries is reduced. (see page 162)

49. All those in charge of VB's books – at the CL and in the Departments – should arrive at a consensus on whether to retain or scrap the Open Access System. (see page 163)

The Heritage 'Core', Rabindra Bhavana and The Ashrama

50. Visva-Bharati must act quickly on the Paridarśaka's advice – which amounts to a direction – to restore its heritage buildings. It should seek advice on this, from the Delhi-University which has done such restoring recently. (see pages 172, 178)

51. The Report of the High Level Expert Committee on Security appointed after the Nobel theft should be acted upon in all its aspects pertaining to *Vichitra* with the following borne in mind (see pages 178, 180):

i) The plans and personnel handling museum and heritage security should not convert the outer periphery of the RB campus into a garrison. (see page 179)

ii) The introduction of hi-tech security systems at *Vichitra* is unexceptionable but can be laid low by the absence of an equally hi-tech maintenance cell. (see page 179)

The Tagore Heritage Institute – As A Separate Entity

52. The *Uttarayana* Complex, the Ashrama and RB should be developed on the lines of the Nehru Museum and Library as a heritage zone and the world's single most important Tagore Archive and Museum. This Tagore Heritage Core, as a heritage zone, should be maintained by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, in any nomenclature it may devise, our

recommendation being 'Tagore Memorial Institute'. It should have a separate accounts department headed by an Accounts Officer. Pay scales of personnel should be at par with VB. (see pages 180, 183)

53. The RB should be released from the bureaucratic procedures of a Central University and become a centre for the wider dissemination of arts and literature grounded in the Tagore heritage, distinct from what is being done at Visva-Bharati. (see pages 180-183)

54. The VC, VB should head the body responsible for this new entity and VB faculty and students should continue to have every access to RB utilizing the recommended liberalized and standardized rules. (see pages 180, 183)

55. The Tagore Memorial Institute, headed by the VC, should be run by the Director of the Rabindra Bhavana, under advice from an eleven-member Committee of Experts in archiving, museology, garden-landscaping and heritage-architecture, to be appointed by the Ministry of Culture. It should also request distinguished persons (apart from any other the Ministry thinks of) to join the Committee's deliberations as special invitees and advisers, when convenient to them. (see pages 180, 183, 208-209)

56. RB Museum

RB's new museum should be a contemporary manifestation of Tagore's personality rather than a 'futuristic' hi-tech implant where technology takes the subject over rather than the reverse. The 'Kar' touch must infuse the new building's design. (see pages 183-184)

57. RB Archives and Library

If RB is to become accessible to interested scholars from all over the world, its rules for the use of RB library and archives should be vastly modified. (see pages 184-191)

Visva-Bharati's Administration and Finances

58. The recommendations in this report for the restructuring of the University call for substantial additional funds, both of a recurring nature and also for the improvement of its physical facilities, buildings and infrastructure through onetime renewal grants and an augmentation of its recurring budget. Depending on the acceptance of the HLC's recommendation, the competent authorities will have to work out the recommendation's budgetary implications. Needless to say, the HLC has been ambitious for VB's future but not in a prodigal manner. (see pages 16-19, 193-202)

59. But VB should seek to earmark 20% of its recurring budget to promote academic and research activities, specifically for its library, laboratories and teaching aids. (see pages 16-19)

60. The Visva-Bharati Act does not provide for a position of Saha-Upacharya. (Pro-Vice-Chancellor). In order to make the new programmes effective, which will include as a central component, integrated courses of study and research in the sciences and social sciences, the Upacharya will require support at the highest level to carry his responsibilities forward. A Saha-Upacharya needs to be associated with him in his academic and administrative functions and will substitute for him in his absence. This recommendation will require an Amendment of the Act in Parliament. (see pages 195-202)

61. The Statutory Post of Director of Physical Education can be dispensed with. (see pages 196)

62. A person functioning as a Director for Sriniketan is needed to consolidate and coordinate all the activities of Sriniketan including the work of the Palli Siksha Bhavana and the Rural Extension Centre. Such a post should be created. The Director of Studies, Educational Innovations and Rural Reconstruction should be re-designated as 'Director of Educational Research and Rural Extension Activities at Sriniketan'. This would require an amendment of the Act. (see pages 148-149, 196-198)

63. To reduce the gulf between the Upacharya and the faculty, the HLC recommends the formation of an Inter-Departmental Council comprising the Principals, the Adhyakshas and the Heads of Departments as well as the Director of Sriniketan and of Rabindra Bhavana/Tagore Memorial Institute. (see pages 16-17, 198)

64. A Senior Professor of the University should be appointed by the Upacharya to function as a Proctor. (see page 198, 200)

65. An Overseeing Committee should be appointed for a period of at least two years from the date of the Government of India's official response to the recommendations of the HLC for the purpose of overseeing the implementation of the recommendations. (see page 202)

66. Visva-Bharati Students

Students should design and run academic seminars through 5 Seminar Secretaries covering all graduate and post-graduate students. (see pages 20, 199-200)

67. Medical Systems in Santiniketan

These need to be upgraded by the VB authorities starting with the installation of an ICCU and diagnostic facilities at Pearson Memorial Hospital. The Shian Hospital should also be taken up for a major upgradation through the SSDA by the State Government authorities and the VB should enter into MOUs with reputed Kolkata-based nursing homes so that an integrated facility for escalating attention becomes part and parcel of the medical cover available to VB patients and visitors, *with an ambulance facility*, the ambulance being stationed (with all its equipment) at the Pearson Memorial Hospital.

Santiniketan and Sriniketan should be provided with two or three ambulances fully equipped with personnel and instruments to handle emergency cases requiring transporting to the PMH, Shian, and Kolkata.

The Andrews Hospital at VB should become a credible centre for providing homoeopathic, ayurvedic and other forms of indigenous medicines by high-grade confidence inspiring practitioners of those systems of medicine with a modest supporting staff. (see pages 203-207)

Miscellaneous Recommendations

68. The Visually Impaired

VB should depute a team to the Delhi University's Resource Centre for the Blind (RCB) to begin a new process of support to the vision-impaired (website: www.shruti.org.in). (see page 208)

69. The Indira Gandhi Centre for National Integration

The Indira Gandhi Centre for National Integration (established in Santiniketan in 1986) should be given a new direction by its transformation into an Indira Gandhi Centre for Visiting Scholars for international understanding and national integration. This Centre should identify and host scholars from abroad and within the country, invited by the University as a whole or by several departments together. Individual departments will continue with their programme of inviting visiting scholars. This Centre should be run by the member-secretary of the Tagore Memorial Institute proposed separately. (see page 208-209)

70. Visva-Bharati Centre for Management Studies

'Management', like 'Law', 'Engineering' and 'Medicine' are best left to other institutions more qualified to foster those disciplines. (see page 210)

71. Centre for Journalism and Mass-Communication

This Centre seems to lack congruence with Visva-Bharati and, apart from being de-linked from Vidya Bhavana should be reviewed for its continuance *per se*. (see page 87)

72. Womens' Studies

VB should site within the Department of Social Work, an interdisciplinary programme of Women's Studies.

The University should also have a properly constituted cell to address issues of sexual harassment, counselling centres for students, teachers and non-teaching staff and initiate programmes at the high school as well as UG level so that students can participate in community building projects. (see page 210-211)