

## **5<sup>th</sup> National Conference General Secretary's Welcome Speech**

Ms. Qurratulaine Hyder. Prof. S.K. Sen, the participants to the V National Conference on Religion, Culture and Politics, the distinguished academic community of Jadavpur University and other honoured participants. I , on behalf of the Indian Association for Women's Studies and its Executive committee, welcome you all to the inaugural function of the four-day conference which commences today. We welcome Ms. Qurratulaine Hyder, a distinguished person not only in the field of literature but also a feminist who has used a powerful medium to make the world aware of the different ways in which women suffer in this society.

It is indeed a benefitting occasion to acknowledge our gratitude to the Jadavpur University, and its Vice Chancellor Prof. S.K. Sen and the University administration for hosting the Conference here in Calcutta. Prof. Jasodhara Bagchi, the Local Organizing Secretary who has been relentlessly working for the past several months for organizing the Conference has handled the job with remarkable efficiency. We gratefully acknowledge her contribution to make this Conference possible. We want to put on record our appreciation for the hardwork put up by her colleagues Ms. Surbani Goswami and Dr. Shivani Bannerjee Chakravorty of the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University. There is a very manifest expression of the contribution of the scholars and faculty members which all the participants must have experienced from the time we entered the city. We thank all of them.

The IAWS is grateful to the Centre for Studies in social science, Calcutta for infra- structural help and to Dr. Nirmala Bennerjee for lending her very able support to the organisation of the Conference.

I, on behalf of the Association, thank Ms. Kalpana Das Gupta of the National Library for putting up an exhibition of rare material for the participants; Prof. Ashol Mukherjee of Printing Engineering for printing the papers and Professor Bharti Roy of Calcutta University for hosting the valedictory tea and other support.

There are other persons and organizations too numerous to mention who have made this Conference possible. We would have not been able to organize the Conference but for the timely support at a short notice from the Department of Women & Child Development, NORAD, Netherlands Government, ICSSR, Ministry of External Affairs (in providing financial assistance to our foreign participants from South Asian Countries) and to the Planning commission and University Grants Commission.

Before I close, I thank my colleagues in the Executive Committee and the President Ms. Kamalini Bhansali for the excellent team work in which they all functioned.

The Conference has 6 sub- theme sessions, 3 Plenary Session, a Reporting and a Valedictory Session. There are scholars from different parts of the country presenting/circulating papers. We look forward to advancing frontiers in the Women's Studies and Women's development in the four days you are here. We hope you will bear with us for any shortcomings and put in your best efforts to make the Conference a success.

Surinder Jetley