

**Speech of His Excellency Shri M.O.H. Farook the Governor of Jharkhand, on the occasion of inauguration of International Conference on "Diaspora Space: Voices & Voyages" at Jamshedpur Women's College, Jamshedpur on 20<sup>th</sup> February,2010.**

**Vice Chancellor Prof. Beni Ekka**

**Principal Jamshedpur Women's College Smt.Shukla Mahanty**

**Guests of Honour Prof.Alam**

**Dr. Driesen and Ms Chand**

**Delegates to this International Conference**

**Teachers, students,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**It gives me great pleasure to inaugurate this international conference on "Diaspora Space : Voices & Voyages" at Jamshedpur Women's College which stands identified by Universities Grants Commission as a College with potential for excellence.**

**Pursuit of excellence is an imperative for every centre of higher studies and it is indeed gratifying to note that Jamshedpur Women's College has been travelling along the road to excellence through events such as this conference. My kudos to the Principal & Convener of this Conference, to UGC and to the Post Graduate Deptt. of English for this initiative and my best wishes for all their future endeavours.**

**The subject of today's conference is complex and multilayered as it attempts to delve into the diasporic consciousness across generations as manifested in contemporary literature.**

**The term Diaspora originates from the term Dispersion which alludes to the dispersal of the Jews. Migrancy is a very common feature of the modern age, as millions of people are crossing over the boundaries of nations, customs, socio-political borders and the thresholds of their homes to make homes in new worlds. But tracing the history of migrancy we can see that it all started with forced, involuntary, colonial oppression when people from the colonies like India, South Africa, West Indies etc. were taken away as slaves to work in the factories of the Colonisers. They were the first generation Diaspora that dispersed all over the world. The issues of roots, identity, and home, were important considerations for the first generation Diaspora which remained rooted to their native land and, accordingly, in all their cultural constructs its members would rigidly follow the values and customs of their homeland.**

The Second generation Diaspora, however, was born and educated in the countries of adoption and remained in a hyphenated space concerned with both their homeland and hostland. Nobel laureate Sir Vidiadhar Naipaul is the second-generation migrant and that is why the problematic of space and ventriloquism of different voices are so often found in his writings.

These migrants are said to be travelers with no permanent and particular destination as they are always adrift. Mentally and emotionally their constant attachment with their homeland never allows them to settle down. But out of this space, which is a very fertile one, comes out the literary narratives, the life experiences, the autobiographies. As Salman Rushdie says, in this advanced age of technology and science all men who have migrated from one country to another are the residents of Imaginary Homelands. They travel metaphorically with the baggage of their memory, nostalgia and an urge to return where they know they can never return.

The third generation of Diaspora, the modern adolescents are however much settled in their thoughts, as they have started to adopt the culture of their host country and are not restrained by any memory and nostalgia syndrome.

In my 5 year stint as Ambassador in Saudi Arabia I had first hand experience of the concerns, sensitivities and expectations of all these three generations of Indian diaspora.

Indian Diaspora abroad has been increasing in a considerable manner and that is why Indian culture is spreading over the world as never before. From Gandhiji to Ravishankar to Salman Rushdie to Naipaul to Kiran Desai to name a remarkable few, India has sparkled in excellence in the spectacular achievement of Indian diaspora.

Diaspora also contributes remarkably to the issue of globalization. The interconnection between people of different countries, the interface of different cultures and value systems, and the dialogue between strangers certainly contributes to the idea of world citizenry. What the Indian scriptures had chanted from eight thousand years, the mantra of 'Basudhaiba Kutumbakam', the whole world as friend, is the nucleus of the ideal of Globalisation. This is also the nucleus of Diaspora which can bring in peace between nations clashing with each other and within themselves.

With these words I inaugurate this conference and welcome all the delegates and participants from India and abroad to two days to intense and intellectually stimulating deliberations.

Thank you.