

## Press Note:

### Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2015 – Day 3

**Event:** Book launch of Meera Mitra’s ‘Breaking Through India’s Stories of Beating the Odds on Poverty’ followed by a discussion with Goutam Ghosh, Ashis Nandy and Sudha Kaul

**Kolkata, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2015:** Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival hosted the launch of Meera Mitra’s *‘Breaking Through India’s Stories of Beating the Odds on Poverty’*, followed by a discussion with filmmaker **Goutam Ghose**, and social activist **Sudha Kaul**. The book was released by Chief Guest **Ashis Nandy**, Indian political psychologist, social theorist, and critic. The session was moderated by **Anjum Katyal**.

In *Breaking Through India’s Stories of Beating the Odds on Poverty*, India is exemplified through individual, representational stories of innovation, endeavour, struggle and ‘success’. There are several narratives that highlight a complex journey and present the roadblocks that hinder the entry of the poor into economic life and obstruct their capacity to seize the basic entitlements of health, education and political participation. It reminds the readers that to look past these stories of struggle, energy and drive—these narratives of people emerging from poverty—is to miss the vibrancy and complexity of India and her growth story.

#### **About the authors:**

**Meera Mitra:** Meera Mitra is a development specialist and an independent consultant working across the corporate and development sectors. Meera Mitra is the author of *It’s Only Business: India’s Corporate Social Responsiveness in a Globalised World* and *Breaking Through: India’s Stories of Beating the Odds on Poverty*.

#### **About the panelists:**

**Ashis Nandy:** Ashis Nandy is an Indian political psychologist, social theorist, and critic. A trained clinical psychologist, Nandy has provided theoretical critiques of European colonialism, development, modernity, secularism, Hindutwa, science, technology, nuclearism, cosmopolitanism, and utopia. He has also offered alternative conceptions relating to cosmopolitanism and critical traditionalism. In addition to the above, Nandy has offered an original historical profile of India’s commercial cinema as well as critiques of state and violence. He is Senior Honorary Fellow of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) apart from being the Chairperson of the Committee for Cultural Choices and Global Futures in New Delhi. Nandy received the Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize in 2007. In 2008 he appeared on the list

of the Top 100 Public Intellectuals Poll of the Foreign Policy magazine, published by The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

**Goutam Ghose:** Goutam Ghose is an acclaimed film director, music director, and cinematographer and works primarily in Bengali cinema. He started making documentaries in 1973. He also took active part in the group theatre movement in Calcutta and worked as a Photo Journalist. He made his first documentary, *New Earth*, in 1973, followed by *Hungry Autumn* which won him the main award at the Oberhausen Film Festival. He has since made ten feature films including *Maa Bhoomi*, *Dakhal*, *Paar*, *Antarjali Yatra*, *Padma Nadir Majhi*, *Patang*, *Dekha*, *Abar Aranye*, *Gudia*, *Kaalbela & Moner Manush*. Has made a number of prominent documentaries including *Meeting A Milestone* (on Ustad Bismillah Khan), *Beyond the Himalayas*, *Land of Sand Dunes*, *Ray* (On Satyajit Ray), *Impermanence* (On HH Dalai Lama). He has won 16 National Awards besides Filmfare Awards and many International awards. He is also the first Indian to win the coveted Vittorio Di Sica Award. He was awarded the Knighthood of the Star of the Italian Solidarity in July 2006.

**Sudha Kaul:** Sudha Kaul, the founder of Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy (IICP), was driven by an intrinsic belief in the ability to learn in children with special needs. IICP won the National Award from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India for the Best Disability NGO in 2004. Sudha is the recipient of several national and international accolades and was awarded the Padmashree in 2004. She holds a Phd in Augmentative and Alternative Communication from Manchester Metropolitan University. She has authored several a books on AAC and presented papers at numerous national and international conferences. Sudha is currently chairing a committee on bringing out a new Disability Legislation for India.

#### **About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF):**

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) is Kolkata's pioneering literary festival. Instituted in 2010 by the Apeejay Surrendra Group and its heritage Oxford Bookstore on Park Street, AKLF grows out of the bookstore's year round involvement with books, writers & publishers. In the six years since Kolkata saw her first literary festival in AKLF, literary festivals have mushroomed across the country, but AKLF stands apart with its unique identity as the only one with a now 94-year-old bookstore as its nucleus. AKLF offers an atmosphere of warm, welcoming intimacy, favors depth over size, and includes a variety of subjects from history to the environment. AKLF also celebrates Kolkata's magnificent public monuments and heritage sites as settings for Festival events and eminent literati and cultural stalwarts from across India and overseas join the festival scheduled every year in the second week of January. In 2015 AKLF explores literature as part of our tangible and intangible heritage, a theme that runs through several sessions of the festival. AKLF focusses on younger writers, newer voices and fresh audiences in its ongoing attempt to build an audience for books and reading. Prominent personalities attending will be Hanif Kureishi, Naseeruddin Shah, Charles Allen, John Elliott, Mohammed Hanif, Leila Seth, Michael Buckley, Upamanyu Chatterjee, David Davidar, Shekhar Gupta, Shashi Tharoor, Asish Nandy, Ramachandra Guha, Kishwar Desai, Nabaneeta Dev Sen amongst several others. There are some firsts in AKLF 2015. A heritage literary walk, a literary 'adda', a Young Adult litfest for high school students, a bloggers' meet, a children's bookfest crammed with activities, even a standup comic for the college crowd and a leadership training session for young teens on importance of character, karma and individual social responsibility™. Add to

that our signature heritage site evenings at The Indian Museum, National Library, Victoria Memorial, Lascar War Memorial, indepth discussions, top of the line authors, thinkers and performers, and you have a literary experience not to be missed. And all absolutely free for Kolkata and her culture-loving audience.

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