

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Ms Urvashi Butalia is a publisher and writer based in Delhi. She is the co-founder of *Kali* for Women, India's first feminist publishing house, set up in 1984 and is currently Director of *Zubaan*, an imprint of *Kali*. She has long been connected with the women's movement in India and writes and publishes on a wide range of issues to do with feminisms, gender and social movements in India. Over the years Butalia has written for a wide range of publications both at home and abroad. Key among these are — *New Internationalist* (for which she writes a regular column), the *Guardian*, the *Independent*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, *Hindustan Times*, *Tehelka*, *Outlook* and others.

Among her publications are the following edited volumes — *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays* (1995); *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir* (2001), *Inner Line: Stories by Indian Women* (2006), *Katha : Stories by Indian Women* (2007). Her best known work is her award winning history of Partition— *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, which won the Oral History



Book Association Award (2001) and the Nikkei Asia Award for Culture (2002). She is recipient of

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NCERT MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES 2010-11

SRI AUROBINDO

FOURTH MEMORIAL LECTURE

Organised in Collaboration with
Presidency College, Kolkata



THEME

**The Politics of Contemporary
Publishing in India : Ought we to be
Excited, Concerned or Despairing?**

SPEAKER

Ms Urvashi Butalia

Co-Founder *Kali* for Women

CHAIRPERSON

Professor Amitava Chatterjee
Principal, Presidency College, Kolkata

ON 31 AUGUST 2010

AT 2:30 p.m.

At Presidency College, Kolkata



राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

NCERT MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES

A Brief

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is an apex organisation, assisting and advising the Central and State Governments by undertaking research, survey, and development; training and extension activities for all stages of school and teacher education.

One of the objectives of the Council is to act as a clearing house and disseminator of ideas relating to school and teacher education. We have initiated the Memorial Lecture Series in order to fulfil this role and to commemorate the life and work of great educational thinkers.

Our aim is to strive to raise the level of public awareness about the seminal contributions made in the field of education by eminent men and women of India. We expect that such awareness will set off a chain of discourse and discussion.

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The Memorial Lecture Series covers public lectures commemorating the life and work of nine eminent Indian educational thinkers and practitioners.

We invite persons of eminence from academia and public life to deliver these lectures in English or any other Indian language. Our intention is to reach large audiences consisting particularly of teachers, students, parents, writers, artists, NGOs, government servants and members of local communities. We hope these lecture series will be of use to our audience as well as the public in and outside the country in general.

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TALK BY URVASHI BUTALIA

The Politics of Contemporary Publishing in India : Ought we to be Excited, Concerned or Despairing?

ABSTRACT

The Indian publishing scene is widely acknowledged to be vibrant and dynamic today, and indeed, it is both complex and

varied. After having adopted a policy of self-reliance and indigenism in the years after Independence, the publishing sector today, like much else in the country, has opened up to foreign investment and some of the largest publishing houses in the world have a presence here. Is this a new form of colonialism? Should we be concerned about it or should we take it as inevitable? What will the presence of multi-nationals mean for indigenous publishing in India, and will English publishing, which seems to be dominant, outstrip Indian language publishing? How can Indian publishing hold its own, and should it do so at all? Where, if at all, do the excitements lie? Do independent publishers have anything to offer?

Tracing her own entry into the world of publishing more than three decades ago, Butalia will focus, in this talk, on what has changed, both within the industry, and in the external conditions that impinge on it, and make an examination of whether this change has been positive or negative or a mix of the two. She will argue that the production of knowledge is a political act, and that the Indian State has done little or nothing to help the publishing industry produce books, and therefore, knowledge, in order to reach the continuing hunger for it among Indians. She will further show how it is here that the contributions of the small independent publisher need to be recognised and supported.