

Women power in South Asia
By
Nishani Dissanayake (Sri-Lanka)

Editor -Samudura



Veena Sikri

Nandini Sahai

Jaya Jaitley

Recently I was in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. I was there for the 3rd annual conference of the South Asian Women's network. We call it SWAN. We are grateful to professor Veena Sikri who was the former ambassador to Malaysia and Bangladesh and currently the head of Jamia Millia Islamia center in New Delhi for creating this organization and doing whatever is possible for the welfare of women in South Asia. Infact all women in south Asia should be grateful to her for connecting the countries: Sri Lanka, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Maldives through a effective women's network and working for the south Asian women's well being.

From the day SWAN was created it has never looked back and the other person whom we have to be thankful is Nandini Sahai from The International Centre Goa, who is helping professor Veena. Nandini is an exceptional person who has 30 years of experience in the media world .In 2005 she got an special award from the Ryan foundation for her tireless efforts for the wellbeing of the humankind. Women who write this can be sure that the work Veena and Nandini do for the south Asian women is not just an so called "N.G.O."issue.

Through the meetings of SWAN everybody gets the rare opportunity of sharing their experiences and views with others. Especially with the women in countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan and what we hear from them is different from what we get here through foreign media.

Except the above two whom I mentioned there is one lady whom I meet at the SWAN meetings and admire. She is Jaya Jaitley who has done a lot for the welfare of Indian women in rural areas. Delhihaat which is situated in New Delhi is her baby. Delhihaat which is open for women's handicraft is so successful now the government of Sri lanka has invited her to start a similar market in Sri lanka.

Long live swan!

