

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Ex-professor donates Rs 5 lakh to Jadavpur University for disabled students

TNN | Apr 10, 2023, 09:58 AM IST



KOLKATA: An 87-year-old former professor of Jadavpur University has donated Rs 5 lakh to the institution to support disabled students, particularly those with visual impairment, in their pursuit of academic studies. Indrani Haldar taught in the English department from 1969 to 2001.

In spite of suffering from spinal cord degeneration, she has not been hesitant to help the disabled students in their academic pursuit from her savings.

“During my teaching years at Jadavpur University, I came across a few visually impaired students in the English department and some disabled students in other departments, whose sufferings and challenges to access education touched me to a great extent.

Their determination to overcome the obstacles has stayed with me after so many years. So I decided to help them in my meagre capacity,” said Haldar.

She felt that in a violent world, there’s lack of compassion among human beings.

The octogenarian had written a letter to vice-chancellor Suranjan Das expressing her wish to donate for the disabled students, preferably those who are visually impaired. Then she spoke with the finance officer Gour Krishna Pattanayak, who is helping her to complete the procedures. “I am in a haste as I am very old and declining everyday,” Haldar said, adding, “I wanted to donate more but I had to keep aside some money for hospital expenses as I am not keeping well.” The octogenarian felt that there was need for products used by

persons with disabilities — like canes and walkers, electric or manual wheelchair, audio books, hearing and orthopaedic aids.

She believes that her simple living has helped her to save money. “The salary of professors was not as luxurious as it is now,” said Haldar, who studied at St John’s Diocesan Girls’ Higher Secondary School and later did her graduation from Lady Brabourne College and Masters from the Presidency College.

Even at this age, she cooks her own meals, makes her bed and walks with the assistance of a walker.

Haldar remembers her teaching years at JU as “the most enjoyable phase” where she met and interacted with some brilliant students. Some of the students, she said, have become her family and take care of her. She spends her time reading books and translating Tagore songs in to English. “It is the best way to divert the attention from the pain that I am living with,” Haldar said, adding that she has completed nearly 300 songs and they will be published, too.

The former JU professor shared how she, along with her family, escaped Burma during the Japanese invasion in 1941 and her experience of seeing Mahatma Gandhi at Beliaghata during the prayer meet after the Noakhali riots.

VC Das said, “We are overwhelmed by this gesture. JU has always tried to develop an inclusive student community. This donation will help us enrich the support system.”