

**LITERARY AND CULTURAL INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INDIA,
ITS NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND THE WORLD: REPORT (2015-2016)**

Members of the Research Committee

1. Prof. I.N. Choudhuri, President, CLAI, New Delhi.
2. Prof. Jancy James, former President, CLAI, New Delhi.
3. Prof Chandra Mohan, General Secretary CLAI, New Delhi
4. Prof. Jasbir Jain, Director, Institute of Research and Interdisciplinary Studies, Jaipur
5. Prof. Anisur Rahman, Senior Advisor, Rekhta Foundation, Noida.
6. Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan, Professor Emeritus, University Grants Commission, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar.
7. Prof. Ipshita Chanda, Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Kolkata.
8. Prof Kavita Sharma, President, South Asian University, New Delhi
9. Prof. Sunaina Singh, Vice Chancellor, English and Foreign Languages Central University, Hyderabad and Vice President, ICCR, New Delhi.
10. Prof. Manorama Trikha, former H.O.D., Department of English and Comparative Literature, University of Meerut, Meerut.
11. Prof. Ameena Ansari, Chair, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia Central University, New Delhi.
12. Prof. Rachel Bari, Department of English, Comparative and Culture Studies, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar.
13. Dr. Rizio Yohanan Raj, Founder and Executive Director, LILA Foundation for Trans-local Initiatives, New Delhi.

Associate Members

14. Prof. Dorothy Figueira, Distinguished Professor, Department of Comparative Literature, University of Georgia, Athens.
15. Prof. Sieghild Bogumil, Bochum.
16. Prof. Munazza Yaqoob, Chair, Department of English, Female University, Islamabad, Pakistan.
17. Prof. S. Walter Perera, Dept of English, Univerty of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
18. Prof Mashrur Shahid, Dept of English, Jahangir University Dhaka, Bangladesh.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

1. *Presentations of 25 seminal research based papers in the special Group Section on the theme 'South Asian Pathways: Language, Culture, Gender and Politics' relating to ICLA Research Committee project: 'Literary and Cultural Inter-relationships between India, Its Neighboring Countries and the World' at the ICLA International Congress, University of Vienna, July 19 to 27, 2016.* Working on the research project has created a stronghold of Comparative Literary studies in the subcontinent, including participation from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and other neighboring countries. The thematic division of the presentations at the Group Section is as follows. These will form the contents of our forthcoming book on the subject.

Dialectics of History: South Asian Narratives:

Prof. Jasbir Jain, "*Dialectics of History: Sub-continental Narratives of Participation in the*

Empire's Wars", Prof. Sieghild Bogumil, "*Daimon, Genius, Duende, Jibandebata- One History or Histories of One's Own?*" and Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan, "*Religion, Ritual, Identity: Gender and Power in South Asian Fiction*".

Rewriting the Nation: Memories, Myths and Resistance:

Prof. Manorama Trikha, "*Rewriting the Nation: India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*", Dr. Urmil Talwar, "*Languages of Resistance in Rahman's 'The Unfinished Memories' and Bhutto's Daughter of the East*" and Dr. Asha Sundaram, "*Myths of Redemption Across Faith and Culture: Sri Lanka and Pakistan*".

Political Rhetoric and Cultural Practices:

Prof. Tutun Mukherjee, "*Exploring Multiple Realities of South-Asian Life through Cinema*", Prof. Ameena K. Ansari, "*Political Rhetoric of Nation(s) before the 'Midnight Hour', August 1947*" and Prof. Ranjamrittika Bhowmik, "*The Culture of Rice in South Asia*".

Creativity in the Subcontinent: Religion, Gender and Politics

Prof. Bandana Chakrabarty, "*The Confines of Creativity in the Subcontinent: Religion, Culture and Respectability*", Prof. Mythili P. Rao, "*Caught in the Crossfire: Armed Conflicts and Women of South Asia*" and Prof. Supriya Agarwal, "*Aestheticized Politics and Gender in the Memories of Sara Suleri and Nayantara Sahgal*".

Tribal Narratives in the Subcontinent and Idea of One Critical Framework

Prof. Ashraf Uddin Kazi, "*Monster in the Pastoral: Reading Eco-Subaltern Narrative in South Asian Literature*", Prof. Chandra Mohan, "*Positions of 'Dissent' in the Tribal Narratives of North Eastern India and the North Western Pakistan*" and Prof. Mashrur S. Hussain, "*The One, the One, The Ones: A Critical Comparative Study of South Asian Poetics*".

Women Poets of South Asia: Resistance and Alterities

Prof. Rachel Bari, "*Re-Contextualizing Self and Language: Women Poets of South Asia*", Prof. Devika Narula, "*Resistance and Resilience in the Novels of South Asian Women Writers*" and Mr. Kumar S. Satish, "*Comparing Gendered Alterities: Locating the Feminine Post-colonial Subject in South Asia and Africa*".

Sufi Poetics, Buddhism and Travelogues

Prof. K.G. Sharma, "*Bulleh Shah and Kabir: Sufi and Bhakti Movements in Socio-Historical Contexts*", Dr. Neekee Chaturvedi, "*South Asian Politics and Tibetan Buddhism: Changing Perceptions and Global Ramifications*" and Dr. Abhimanyu Singh Arha, "*The Outsider's Eye: The Travelogues of Pietro Della Valle and Mountstuart Elphinstone*".

Graphic and Competing Narratives of Partition

Dr. Sayantan Dasgupta, "*Reconstructing Partition: A Study of Graphic Narratives from South Asia*" and Dr. Sangeeta Sharma, "*Competing Narratives of Partition: Voices from India and Pakistan*".

Critiques of Gender

Dr. Soma Marik, "*Critiques of Nation and Gender in South Asia: Akhtaruzzaman Elias' Khwabnama and Savitri Roy's Trisrota and Swaralipi*" and Dr. Aratrika Ganguly, "*A Study of the Position of the Women of the Antahpur of South Asian Royalty Ranging from the earlier times till this day*".

2. Main Presentations in the Special Panel on Culture and Socio-political Movements in the

International Conference on Comparative Literature at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, March 1-4, 2015.

- a) “Cultural Foundations of South Asia” : Special Presentations made in this panel included Dr. Kapila Vatsayan's keynote address. She remarked: "The region called South Asia today is distinct from India or Indian". Professor Ameena Ansari from Jamia Millia Islamia Central University, New Delhi and Prof Taqi Abedi from Canada in their presentations developed a broader discourse on South Asia as a space for multiple configurations, of tradition and ethnicity, religious and secular movements and also movements of resistance and affirmation.
- b) “Socio-Literary Movements in South Asia” : Prof. Jasbir Jain focused on *"Travels of Maoism in China, Nepal, Tibet and India"* explained how Maoism's application has appeared in different cultural contexts in the adjoining countries. Prof. Manorama Trikha dealt with the *"Apotheosis of Gandhi in Independence Movement and its 'Literary Space'"*. In a similar vein, Prof. Nandini Bhattacharya analyzed *"The Politics of Embodiment : Gandhi and Satyagraha"*. Prof. Safdar Imam Quadri presented *"The Literary Impact of Sufi Bhakti Movements in South Asia: A Multilingual Discourse"*. Prof. Munazza Yaqoob from International University Islamabad focused on *"Cityscapes of South Asia in Hamid's How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia and Adiga's The White Tiger"* against the political-ecological analysis of urban spaces. Prof. Anisur Rahman commented that the culture of tolerance owed its origin in the Sufi Bhakti tradition of the Indian subcontinent.

3. *Individual Members' contribution in the form of lectures/addresses delivered at various academic events, relating to the theme of the project:*

- Jasbir Jain: ‘The Travels of Maoism : Ideology, Ethics and Violence (China, Tibet, Nepal and India)’, paper presented at the XII International Conference of Comparative literature Association of India Conference in March, 2015.
- Jasbir Jain: ‘The Legitimacy of Literature as an Artefact of History , Presented in a History Conference, University of Rajasthan on 28th January, 2016.
- Jasbir Jain, ‘Historicity, Contexts and Timelessness: The Aesthetics of Translation’ (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), Presented at a Conference on Translation, Department of English , Veer Narmad University, Surat, 9th February 2016 , Surat.
- Rachel Bari, Plenary Address: Negotiating Boundaries: South Asian Women Writing, National Conference on Multiplicity of Cultures in South Asian Literatures, Tumkur University.
- Anisur Rahman, Valedictory Address, “Literature Today: Writing, Teaching, Pedagogy,” in the subcontinent in the Seminar on “Trends in Contemporary Literature: Issues and Perspective,” Sikkim University, Gangtok.
- E.V. Ramakrishnan,
- Mashrur S. Hussain,

4. *Preparation of e-content for Comparative Literature pedagogy :*

This program undertaken by the faculty members of the Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, chaired by Prof. PC Patnaik at the University of Delhi, is in progress. It has further defined areas of Studies and Research to include the impact of cultural and literary inter-relationships for comparative literature. It has involved many members of CLAI in the research work. This landmark project sanctioned by the University Grants Commission of India is currently engaged in developing e-content material which will be most useful for research and comparative literary studies in India and its adjoining countries.

5. *Introduction of academic course relating to the development of the Project:*

Dr.. Mythili Rao, Chair, Centre of Language and Literature, Jain University Bangalore is to introduce post graduate diploma in Comparative Studies with sub-continental literary interrelationship and Short Term Certificate and Diploma Program in Indian Languages in comparative context which can be offered to foreigners too.

Literatures of South Asia and Literatures of Bangladesh were introduced as optional courses in a Comparative Literature MA course being taught under the auspices of the Centre for Comparative Literature, Viswa Bharti University, Santiniketan, West Bengal.

6. *Recent publications relating to the Project :*

- Jasbir Jain, *The Diaspora Writes Home : Subcontinental Narratives*, Rawat, Jaipur: 2015;
- Jasbir Jain, *Forgiveness: Between Memory and History*, Monograph published by Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 2016. Based on talks delivered there (enters the forgiveness discourse, traces the concepts of history through several religions and focuses on political aspects of forgiveness necessary for intervention in the linearity of history) .
- Jasbir Jain, ‘Lost Homes: Shifting Borders and the Search for Belonging’, (under publication in a volume on the Partition (being published in USA)
- Kavita A. Sharma, *The Sages and Teachers in Mahabharata: Subcontinental Perceptions* (forthcoming), 2016.
- Rachel Bari (co-ed), *Remembering to Forget: South Asian Women Writing. (Forthcoming book on sectarian violence in South Asia), edited volume (2016).*
- EV Ramakrishnan, ‘Habitations of Resistance: Role of Translation in the Creation of Literary Public Sphere in South Asia’ published in the book *Translation and Global Asia: Relocating Networks of Cultural Products* Edited by Lawrence Wong and Uganda Szepul, by Chinese University of Hong Kong Press.
- Ipshita Chanda, *Bonobibir Johuranama: A Method for Reading Plural Cultures*” forthcoming in the Delhi University Journal of the Humanities and the Social Sciences, Vol. 2, 2015.
- *Tamang Selo*, Annotated Text and English Translation edited by Sayantan Dasgupta and Shradhanjali Tamang (Jadavpur University Press in collaboration with Centre for Translation of Indian literatures, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, 2015). This is a collection of the Nepali-language Tamang Selo songs in a bilingual edition.
- Mashrur Shahid Hussain, “Women Against Violence: Mahashweta Devi’s Dopdi and the Subversion of Masculinist Victim Discourse” (co-author: Sharmin Afroz Shantu) in *Chaos*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 2015, Department of English, Independent University, Bangladesh.
- Ashraf Uddin Kazi, “Voicing Draupadi: (Re)Constructing the Female Archetype” which located the creative potentials of South Asian female writing and a recent paper titled “Swinging between ‘Ratan’ and ‘Ratna’: Gender Ambiguity in Anan Zaman’s *Shikhandi Katha*”

7. *Research Undertaken:*

The following M.Phil and Ph.D dissertations relating to the research committee project were undertaken under the supervision of Prof. Anisur Rahman.

- *Representations of Society, Culture, Gender: Reading elect Memoirs by Pakistani Women*, 2014. (M. Phil degree awarded to Kanika Gandhi).
- *Pakistani Women Poets: Literary Representation and the Dynamics of Religion, Politics, and Society*, 2014. (Ph. D. degree awarded to Urvashi Sabu)

- *Indian English Literature: A Critical Inquiry into Reading Strategies and Pedagogy*, 2015. (Ph. D. degree awarded to Shatarupa Sinha)
8. A Milestone Achievement in the Development of Comparative Literature movement in India has taken place. A recent contract will begin a new chapter in creating awareness to the importance of C.L. and will bring credit to the central power esteem body, International Comparative Literature Association of India.

On behalf of the CLAI, General Secretary has signed a contract for the grant of 30 lakhs (50 thousand US dollars) as funding provided to us under the Corporate Social Responsibility network functioning to launch an ambitious program on 'Literary Events and Awareness on the Importance of Comparative Literature " in India. This funding will be supplemented with an equal or more amount of budgeted funding provided by the educational institutions and universities for the benefit of primary and tertiary stake holders in India, its neighboring countries and the world.

Chandra Mohan, Coordinator / Chair
ICLA Research Committee,
General Secretary, CLAI
(c.mohan.7@hotmail.com)