

ICLA Standing Research Committee on South Asian Literature and Culture

Report (2016-2017)

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Members of the Research Committee

1. Prof Chandra Mohan, Chair, *ICLA Standing Committee for Research on South Asian Literature and Culture* and General Secretary, CLAI.
2. Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan, Co-Chair, *ICLA Standing Committee for Research on South Asian Literature and Culture*. Vice President – CLAI and Member Executive Council, ICLA.
3. Prof. I.N. Choudhuri, President, Comparative Literature Association of India.
4. Prof. Ipshita Chanda, Department of Comparative Literature and India Studies, English and Foreign Languages University, (EFLU), Hyderabad and Member Executive Council, ICLA.
5. Prof. Anisur Rahman, Senior Advisor, REKHTA, former Prof. of English, Jamia Millia Islamia Central University, New Delhi and Secretary, CLAI.
6. Prof. Jancy James, former Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Kerala, Kasaragod and the former President, CLAI and Member, Executive Committee, CLAI.
7. Prof Kavita Sharma, President, South Asian University, New Delhi and Member, E.C., CLAI
8. Prof. Sunaina Singh, Vice President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (Govt. of India), New Delhi and Member, Advisory Council, CLAI.
9. Prof. Harish Trivedi, former Professor of English, University of Delhi and Member, Executive Committee, CLAI.
10. Prof. Sayantan Dasgupta, Dept. of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Kolkata and Secretary, CLAI.
11. Prof. Ameena Ansari, Chair, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia Central University, New Delhi and Member, E.C., CLAI.
12. Prof. Balaji Ranganathan, Head, Centre for Comparative Literature and Translation, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, New Delhi
13. Prof. Amith Kumar P.V., Head Department of Comparative Literature and India Studies, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad.
14. Prof Rachel Bari, Department of P.G.Studies and Research in English, Kuvempu University, Jnanasahyadri, Shankaraghatta – 577451, B.R. Project, Shimoga, Karnatak.
15. Dr. Rizio Yohanan Raj, Founder and Executive Director, LILA Foundation for Trans-local Initiatives, New Delhi.
16. Prof. Dorothy Figueira, Distinguished Professor, Department of Comparative Literature, University of Georgia, Athens.
17. Prof. S. Walter Perera, Dept of English, University of Peradeniya, (Sri Lanka).
18. Prof. Munazza Yaqoob, Chair, Department of English, Female University, Islamabad, (Pakistan).
19. Prof Mashrur Hossain, Department of English, Jahangir University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

***I. Brief Description of ongoing Research Projects:***

- a) The project on Literary Narratives in South Asia. The ICLA standing committee for research on South Asian Culture and Literature has identified this area as one of the priority areas of focus. Research on South Asian Narratives will allow the comparatists from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Pakistan etc to examine the rich legacy of narrative literature belonging to various traditions such as classical and folk, religious and secular, mythical and mystical and realistic, modernist and post-modern from contemporary perspectives.
- b) The Project on a South-South Research Dialogue: A Comparative Enquiry of the epistemologies of South Asia, has been undertaken by the department of Comparative Literature, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. The thrust area for research is to investigate the 'genos' of South Asia by way of comparing similar 'genos' that have emerged in the contexts of other countries of the global south. A certain degree of similarity in the literary genetics of South Asian 'Haplogroups' could be ascertained in the contexts of tribes from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Coordinator: Prof. Amith Kumar
- c) The Centre of Language and Literature, Jain University, Bangalore has introduced A research based post graduate diploma in Comparative Studies with sub-continental literary interrelationship in Indian Languages with a comparative context in South Asia. Coordinator: Prof. Mythili Rao.
- d) Literatures of South Asia and Literatures of Bangladesh were introduced as courses in a Comparative Literature MA course being taught under the auspices of the Centre for Comparative Literature, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal. The Centre also offers courses in Cross-Cultural Literary Relations, and Literatures of Asia.
- e) The Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, currently initiated a study in 'Comparative Cultural Studies' which focuses on exploring the cultural and literary interfaces between and among the SAARC countries' (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) namely Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

**Literary Events held during 2016-17**

- I. A special plenary session on Literary / Cultural Narratives in South Asia was held at the International conference on Comparative Literature at Visva Bharti University, Santiniketan, March 6-8, 2017. The following papers focusing on South Asian Narratives were presented.

Prof. Chandra Mohan: “Gurbani Shabad” A Unique Devotional and Philosophical Narrative; Prof. Anisur Rahman: ‘Verse Narratives in Urdu: The Case of Masnawi’; Prof. Mashrur Shahid Hossain: Have I Ever Seen My Neighbor? A Comparative Study of Bangladeshi ‘Marginalized’ Poetic Narratives. Prof. Ameena Ansari: Narrativising Pakistan: Khalid Akhtar’s Literary Discourse; Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan: ‘The Return of the Story-teller: A Perspective on Recent Trends in Contemporary South Asian Fiction’.

II. Publications:

A volume containing 25 seminal research based papers in the special Group Section on the theme ‘South Asian Pathways: Language, Culture, Gender and Politics’ presented at the ICLA International Congress, University of Vienna, July 19 to 27, 2016 is being edited by Prof. Jasbir Jain and Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan.

III. Individual Members' contribution in the form of publications relating to the theme of the projects

- Jasbir Jain, *Forgiveness: Between Memory and History*, Monograph published by Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 2016.
- Jasbir Jain, ‘Lost Homes: Shifting Borders and the Search for Belonging’, (under publication in a volume on the Partition ,being published in USA).
- E.V.Ramakrishnan, Editor. *The Trees of Kochi and Other Poems*. Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2016.
- E.V. 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.
- I.N. Choudhuri edited a book Universally Loved: Reception of Tagore in North-East India, in the context of South Asia. (A joint initiative of University of Calcutta and Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, 2016).
- Kavita A. Sharma, *The Sages and Teachers in Mahabharata: Subcontinental Perceptions*, Wisdom Tree publishers, 2017.
- Rachel Bari and Ishmit Kaur (ed), *Remembering to Forget: South Asian Women Writing. (forthcoming volume on sectarian violence in South Asia), 2017*
- Soma Mukherjee, “Ramifications of the Ramayana in India, Indonesia and Thailand: A Comparative Study” in *Comparative Literature as a Critical Approach*, ed. Anne Tomiche, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2016

- Sayantan Dasgupta and Kavita Lama eds., *Call of the Hills: Indian Nepali Short Stories in English Translation: Revised and enlarged second edition* (Jadavpur University Press in collaboration with Centre for Translation of Indian Literatures and CAS in Comparative Literature Phase 2, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, 2016—in press).
- Sonia Irum and Munazza Yaqoob, "Rainbow Alliance": A Subaltern study of selected, South Asian Context (2017).
- Munazza Yaqoob: Contemporary fiction in English by South Asian women writers. *Pakistan Journal of Women Studies: Alam –e- Niswan Pakistan Association for Women's Studies (PAWS)*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 2015 pp. 1 -14, ISSN: 1024 – 1256, Karachi.

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

- (a) Jasbir Jain: 'The Legitimacy of Literature as an Artifact of History in the sub-continental context, presented in a History Conference, University of Rajasthan , January, 2016.
- (b) 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.
- (c) E.V. Ramakrishnan: Delivered the key-note address to the National Conference on "Post-colonial Studies: Issues, Problems and Prospects" organized by the Department of English of Mangalore University on 29-30, November, 2016. He presented a paper on "Liquid Modernity: Environmental Imagination in South Asian Literature" at the Seminar on the "Enigma of Nature" organized by IIT, Gandhinagar on 27-28, January, 2017 and delivered the key-note address at the National Seminar on "Comparative Humanities: Re-configuring Humanities across Cultures" organized by the Department of Comparative Literature, English and Foreign Language Universities, Hyderabad on 5-7 April, 2017.
- (d) I.N. Choudhuri: delivered a lecture at the UNESCO Workshop at Kolkata on Lalan Faqir, the distinguished Baul poet of Bangladesh and India in the context of its impact on South Asian Literature and Culture..
- (e) Rachel Bari: Plenary address: 'Negotiating Boundaries: South Asian Women Writing, National Conference on 'Multiplicity of Cultures in South Asian Literatures,' Tumkur University, 2016.

- (f) Chandra Mohan: Keynote address 'Cross- cultural and Literary Interactions in the South Asian Subcontinent' at the conference on 'Comparative Literature : Expanding Horizons' V.N.S.G University, Surat, 13-14 Feb, 2016.
- (g) Anisur Rahman: Valedictory address, 'Literature Today: Writing, Teaching, Pedagogy in the subcontinent' at a Seminar on 'Trends in Contemporary Literature: Issues and Perspective,' Sikkim University, Gangtok, 2016. He delivered plenary addresses that include: "Re-visiting Urdu Literary Culture" at Hyderabad Central University; "W. B. Yeats's India Connection" at O. P. Jindal University, Sonipat and "Translating Love: The Case of Rekhti" at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.
- (h) Munazza Yaqoob, "Observing Fashion in the Post-Feminist Era: Global Trends from Pakistan to the United States" at Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM) on July 19, 2016 and "Creating Urban Green Spaces, From California to Islamabad" at Cottonwood Canyon, Pasadena (Arroyos Foothills Conservancy (AFC) on July 21, 2016

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