

ICLA Standing Committee

for Research on South Asian Culture and Literature

Report (2017-2018)

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13. Prof. Balaji Ranganathan, Head, Centre for Comparative Literature and Translation, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, New Delhi
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. RizioYohanana 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. Senath. Walter Perera, Dept of English, University of Peradeniya, (Sri Lanka).

18. Prof. Munazza Yaqoob, Department of English (Women Campus), International Islamic University Islamabad (Pakistan).
19. Prof Mashrur Hossain, Department of English, Jahangirnagar University, Savar Dhaka, Bangladesh.

I. Brief Description of ongoing Research Projects:

INDIA

The research on South Asian Literature and Culture assumes significance against the complex plurality and polyphony of languages and cultures that comprise South Asian region as a whole. Scholarly responses from India and adjoining countries such as 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, have been received as per some details given below.

SANTINIKETAN

- In continuation of an ongoing project, Literatures of South Asia and Literatures of Bangladesh were introduced as research study 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.

KOLKATA

- In continuation of the earlier program, The Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, currently initiated a research 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. Coordinator: Dr. Sayantan Dasgupta

BANGLADESH

- The research based projects on Comparative Literature in the context of South Asian Literature continued. The first research based publication is dedicated to critical comparative poetics. It explores the points of affinity, influence, and departure among eastern and western poetics (e.g. Aristotelian *mimēsis* vis-a-vis *takhyīl* and *xing*) as well as that between South Asian poetics (e.g. perception of *advaita* in Tamil, Sanskrit and Bangla poetics). The second project, grounds on Bangladeshi indigeneity, explores the interrelationship and tension between the literatures composed in the national language, Bangla, and 'other' languages in Bangladesh, ranging from English to Urdu and Chakma, with a view to exploring the politics of subalternization and approximation. Coordinator: *Prof. Mashrur Shahid Hossain, Jahangirnagar University, Savar Dhaka, Bangladesh.*

## ii. Literary Events held during 2017-18

### EFLU, HYDERABAD

- The Department of Comparative Literature and India Studies organized a three day National Conference from 05 April 2017 to 07 April 2017 on “Comparative Humanities: Re-configuring Humanities Across Cultures”. Prof. Chandra Mohan, Prof. Ananya Vajpeyi, Prof. Vivek Dhareshwar, Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan and Prof. Raghuramaraju were the key speakers of the conference. The focus was on the Humanities in Asia, and among the sub themes were ‘Conceptualizing Asian Epistemology’ and ‘Conceptions of Human in Asian Cultures’.

### Central University of Gujarat and Department of P.G. Studies and Research in English in Kuvempu University, Karnataka.

- Prof. Rachel Bari jointly organized a conference on Women and Sectarian Violence in South Asia: Fiction and Reality in November 2017 at the Central University of Gujarat. The talks and papers presented are to be brought out as a book shortly. Personally, her book, *Teaching Literature in South Asia: Challenges in the Classroom* is being published by *Authors Press* next month.

## iii. Publications:

- Jasbir Jain guest-edited the June 2017 issue of ASIATIC INTERNATIONAL, a special issue on South Asian Diaspora. Several CLAI members such as Santosh Gupta, Bandana Chakrabarty, Senath Perera, Jasbir Jain, Vijaylakxmi, Keki Daruwalla, Himani Banerjee, Avtar Brah, Somdatta Mandal etc contributed articles, poetry, interviews and stories to the volume. The journal is an online journal being brought out from Malaysia. She also published a full length book: Subcontinental Histories: Literary Reflections on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries which moves through the political and historical shifts of undivided India, interfacing with East India Company and the British government through the nationalist movement, divisive politics, partition and its aftermath.
- Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan was invited to the Hindu Literary Festival, Chennai (January, 2017), Kerala Literary Festival (Calicut, December, 2018), Kriti Literary Festival, (Kochi, March, 2018) where he participated in literary discussions on ‘*Literature and Nation in South Asia*’, ‘*Translation Culture in South Asia*’ etc. He has published the following books during 2017-2018: *Indigenous Imaginaries: Literature, Region, Modernity, 2017. Locating Indian Literature: Texts, Traditions, Translations, 2017*. Both books are from Orient BlackSwan, Hyderabad.

- **Volume on South Asian Pathways:**

A volume containing 16 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. The following eminent academics have contributed to the volume: Devika Khanna Narula, Asha, Sangeeta Sharma, Jasbir Jain, Neekee Chaturvedi, Abhimanyu Singh Arha, Krishna Gopal Sharma, Manorama Tikha, Bandana Chakrabarty, Urmila Talwar, Chandra Mohan, Tutun Mukherjee, Ameena Kazi Ansari, Mashrur Shahid Hossain, Rachel Bari, E.V.Ramakrishnan

**Forthcoming Events:**

The Biennial CLAI International Conference is focusing on a topic related to *Studying South Asian Narratives through Pluralist and Dialogic Frames*. It aims at consolidating the conversations on the methods of literary and artistic research and study the plural culture of South Asia, with emphasis on narrative as an expressive and appropriative mode. The International Event will be held in January 2019 and a large international participation from all over the world is expected.

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Shared Inheritance

- Mashrur Shahid Hossain : The One, the one, the ones: *Advaita* and Select South Asian Poetics
- Neekee Chaturvedi : South Asian Politics and Tibetan Buddhism: Changing Perceptions and Global Ramifications
- Krishna Gopal Sharma : Bulleh Shah and Kabir: Sufi and Bhakti Movements in Socio-historical Contexts
- Abhimanyu Arha : The Outsider's Eye: The Travelogues of Pietre Della Valle and Mountstuart Elphinstone
- Ameena Kazi Ansari : Politics of the Rhetoric of Nation(s) before the Midnight Hour, August 1947

Histories of Resistance and Reconciliation

- Jasbir Jain : The Dialectics of History: Narratives of the Subcontinent's Participation in the Empire's Wars
- Sangeeta Sharma : Competing Narratives of Partition: Voices from India and Pakistan
- Chandra Mohan : Socio-Political Subversion in the Tribal Narratives of North East India and North West Pakistan
- Urmil Talwar : Language of Resistance in Mujibur Rahman's *The Unfinished Memoirs* and Benazir Bhutto's *Daughter of the East*

**S.Asha** : **Myths of Redemption across Faith and Culture: Sri Lanka and Pakistan**

**Manorama Trikha** : **Rewriting the Nation: Drama in India and Pakistan**

**The Gendered Voice**

**E.V. Ramakrishnan** : **Religion, Ritual, Identity : Treatment of Gender Conflict in South Asian Fiction**

**Devika Khanna Narula** : **Resistance and Resilience in the Novels of South Asian Women Writers**

**Rachel Bari** : **Re-Contextualizing Self and Language: Women Poets of South Asia**

**Tutun Mukherjee** : **Exploring Multiple Realities of South-Asian Life through Cinema: With Special Focus on Gender**

**Bandana Chakrabarty** : **The Confines of Creativity in the Subcontinent: Religion, Culture and Respectability**

