

ICLA Standing Research Committee
on South Asian Literatures and Cultures

Preamble:

South Asia, consisting of eight nations – namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – has emerged as a major area of study among scholars from humanities, social sciences, international relations and religious thought in the last few decades. Though South Asia accounts for only 3 per cent of the world's land area, the region is home to 24 per cent of the world population, making it one of the most populated areas in the world. Its linguistic, social, cultural and geographical diversity compounded by multiple religious faiths, pluralistic cultural traditions and diverse socio-political systems defy description or analysis along theoretical categories rooted in Western modernity. In the wake of post-structuralist and post-colonial interventions, the need to theorize the experiences and self-images of such cultures from the margins have assumed greater significance.

The present research group of the ICLA on South Asian Literatures and Cultures formed under the aegis of International Comparative Literature Association of India (CLAI), hopes to contribute to the ongoing debates on the various aspects of South Asian studies by providing an international forum to scholars from within and outside South Asia to exchange their ideas, share research findings and engage in debates.

Objectives:

The following are the major objectives of this research group:

1. To conduct in-depth study of the linguistic, social and cultural diversity of the region as manifested in its literary, philosophical and artistic traditions from antiquity to modern period;
2. To facilitate greater dialogue and exchange of ideas between scholars of the region and the international scholars working on subjects related to South Asia;
3. To identify emerging areas of research in South Asian studies and organize workshops, seminars and conferences devoted to them;
4. To bring out publications on various aspects of South Asian society and culture creating a corpus of knowledge that reflects, and reflects on, contemporary perspectives from the region;
5. To forge greater collaboration between academic institutions of South Asia and major international institutions across the world where the studies on South Asia are being conducted.

Members of the Research Group:

1. Prof. Chandra Mohan, Chair, ICLA Standing Research Committee on South Asian Literatures and Cultures; General Secretary, Comparative Literature Association of India (CLAI)
2. Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan, Co-Chair, ICLA Standing Research Committee on South Asian Literatures and Cultures; Professor Emeritus, Central University of Gujarat, India; President, CLAI; Member of the Executive Council, ICLA.
3. Prof. Anisur Rahman, Senior Advisor, REKHTA, former Professor of English, Jamia Milia Islamia Central University, New Delhi; Secretary, CLAI.
4. Prof. Ipshita Chanda, Department of Comparative Literature, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India; Member, E.C, CLAI; Member of the Executive Council, ICLA.
5. Prof. Jasbir Jain, Emeritus Professor, University of Rajasthan, Director, IRIS, Jaipur.

6. Prof. Kavita Sharma, President, South Asian University, New Delhi; Vice-President, CLAI.
7. Prof. Sunaina Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Nalanda International University, Rajgir, Bihar.
8. Prof. Harish Trivedi, Eminent Academician, former Professor of English, University of Delhi, New Delhi.
9. Prof. Ameena Ansari, Professor and Chair, Department of English, Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi.
10. Prof. Jancy James, former Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Kerala, Kasaragod and former President, CLAI.
11. Prof. Tapati Mukherjee, former Director, Rabindra Bhavan, V.B. University, Santiniketan, Vice President, CLAI.
12. Prof. Sayantan Dasgupta, Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Kolkata.
13. Prof. T.S. Satyanath, former Professor, MILLS Department, University of Delhi, New Delhi.
14. Prof. Subha C. Dasgupta, former Professor of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Kolkata.
15. Prof. Mashrur Hossain, Department of English, Jahangirnagar, University, Savar Dhaka, Bangladesh.
16. Prof. Senath Walter Perera, Deptt. Of English, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.
17. Prof. Munazza Yaqoob, Department of English (Women Campus), International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.
18. Prof. Balaji Ranganathan, Head, Centre for Comparative Literature and Translation, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar.

Ongoing Research Projects:

Scholarly research on various aspects of South Asian literatures and cultures are being undertaken in many universities of India, Sri Lanka, Bangla Desh and Pakistan. Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan, Jadvapour University, Kolkata, Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka, Bangladesh are some of the prominent academic institutions that have undertaken pioneering research in this area.

Recent Academic Events:

1. The Department of Comparative Literature and India Studies, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad organized a three day National Conference from 5th to 7th April, 2017 on “Comparative Humanities: Re-configuring Humanities across Cultures” with emphasis on South Asian perspectives on knowledge and experience. Prof. Ananya Vajpeyi, Prof. Vivek Dharewhar, Prof. D. Venkat Rao, Prof. Ipshita Chanda, Prof. Chandra Mohan and Prof. E.V.Ramakrishnan were the plenary speakers of the conference.
2. The fourteenth Biennial International Conference of CLAI was held at Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad on 11-14, March, 2019 on the subject, **“Studying South Asian Narratives through Pluralist and Dialogic Frames”**. Among the plenary speakers were Professor Rebecca Ruth Gould, University of Birmingham, Prof. Ganesh Devy, Shri Daya Dissanayake (Eminent Writer from Sri Lanka), Prof. Mashrur Shahid Hossain (Bangla Desh), Prof. Hameed Khan, Prof. Anisur Rahman, Prof. Ipshita Chanda, Prof. Tapati Mukherjee, Dr Sayantan Dasgupta, Prof. Sunaina Singh and Prof. Kavita Sharma (President, South Asian University). The conference was attended by more than hundred

delegates and about 70 research papers on various aspects of South Asian narratives were presented in the conference.

Publications:

1. Prof. Jasbir Jain guest-edited the June 2017 issue of *Asiatic International*, a special issue on South Asian Diaspora. This is an online journal being brought out from Malaysia. Among the contributors to the special issue are Santosh Gupta, Bandana Chakrabarty, Senath Perera, Keki Daruwalla, Himani Banerjee, Somdatta Mandal and Avtar Brah. Jasbir Jain also brought out ***Subcontinental Histories: Literary Reflections on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.***
2. Prof. Anisur Rahman published a critical volume titled ***Socioliterary Cultures in South Asia***, which examines social, political, secular and cultural texts from five South Asian countries namely India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangla Desh and Sri Lanka. He has also published an anthology of Urdu ghazals, ***Hazaaron Khwahishein Aisi*** which is sub-titled, “the wonderful world of Urdu ghazals” which covers sixty-five of the finest Urdu poets from the late 16th century to the modern times.
3. Prof. E.V.Ramakrishnan published a critical volume titled, ***Indigenous Imaginaries: Literature, Region, Modernity*** which argues for a redefinition of humanities from a comparative perspective anchored in the regional literary traditions of the Indian sub-continent. The central argument concerns the need to reconfigure epistemologies that do not accommodate the compulsions of creativity and critical reflection in a multilingual society.

Forthcoming volume:

A volume containing 16 seminal research papers presented in the Special Group session on the theme of **“South Asian Pathways: Language, Culture, Gender and Politics”** at the ICLA International Congress, University of Vienna, July 19-27, 2016 is being brought out as a volume titled ***Culture, History and Politics: South Asian Literature and Culture*** by M/s Rawat Publications, Jaipur. It is being edited by Jasbir Jain, E.V. Ramakrishnan and Chandra Mohan. The following scholars have contributed to the volume: Mashrur Shahid Hossain, Devika Narula, S. Asha, Sangeeta Sharma, Jasbir Jain, Neeke Chaturvedi, Abhimanyu Singh Arha, Krishna Gopal Sharma, Manorama Trikha, Bandana Chakrabarty, Urmila Talwar, Chandra Mohan, Tutun Mukherjee, Ameena Kazi Ansari, Rachel Bari and E.V. Ramakrishnan.

This seminal volume is to be released at the ICLA Congress to be held at University of Macau during July 29 to Aug. 2, 2019.

Prof. Chandra Mohan (Chair), Prof. E.V.Ramakrishnan (Co-Chair)