

## **Research Associate in History/Literary Studies**

### **Location**

Patiala, Punjab

### **Deadline**

1 January, 2025

The project, **‘Through the Literary Lens: Representing Portuguese and Dutch Presence in Bengali, Malayalam and English Literature in Colonial and Post-Colonial India’**, led by Dr. Byapti Sur, funded by a grant from the Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology (TIET), is looking for a Research Associate for research in Patiala, Punjab. The project is hosted by TIET’s School of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The Research Associate will be supervised jointly by Dr. Byapti Sur (Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology) and Dr. Malavika Binny (Kannur University).

**Through the Literary Lens** is a transdisciplinary project that investigates how Europeans were represented and remembered in vernacular and English fiction in colonial and post-colonial India. It studies the lives of simple characters in the society and show how they were affected by the European presence. It tries to provide answers to understanding of early-modern global encounters from the prism of the regional literature of Bengal and Kerala. The representation of the ‘orient’ in the European archives and in travel literature has been a subject of scholarly discussion for a long time. While the encounter between India and Europe has led to stereotypical ideas about the ‘east’, scholars have also argued that Europe’s India was variegated and differed with different observers’ individual accounts. This was mostly true for the vast number of travelogues that started being produced at an intense pace with the coming of the print machinery in the seventeenth century. Books on geography and Indian religion with illustrations in woodblock prints became bestsellers in the markets of London, Amsterdam and Antwerp and they added to the tales of wonder which were circulated among their readers in these cities. On the flip side though, there is a great dearth of literature on Indians travelling

to Europe. There have been a few works on how Europe was observed through the travel narratives of Indians, from a non-Eurocentric perspective in the nineteenth century. But beyond these contemporary accounts, what is worth investigating is how early-modern Europeans were perceived in the colonial and post-colonial times. Some scholars have used temple sculptures and folklores to show the ways European presence in Bengal has been depicted. But what remains to be studied are the representations of the Portuguese and the Dutch in the cultural memory and in public opinion, as reflected through literature. This project zooms in on the two regions of Bengal and Kerala, with a voluminous body of vernacular literature to study the ways in which they dwell upon the memories of the early-modern Europeans and their encounter with the locals. This helps in unravelling this encounter from a non-Eurocentric perspective while also, blending in the history of early-modern global connections with the scholarship on literary studies.

### **What will you do**

You will conduct research in Malayalam literature, especially fictions, from colonial and post-colonial times, defining your research focus within the overall frame of this project and research objectives.

- You will make a list of texts to be read for at least 6 months from Malayalam literature
- Create a literature review of your research
- Participate in meetings and proceedings of the project
- Co-organise and participate in academic events

### **What you bring**

Please apply for this position if you have:

- Completed a Master degree in English literature, Literary Studies, Comparative Literature or History and are pursuing a PhD in one of these relevant disciplines
- Native or near native proficiency of Malayalam
- Excellent command of English (speaking and writing)
- Teamwork and organisational skills

### **How can you apply**

Please send the following documents to [tslasra@gmail.com](mailto:tslasra@gmail.com)

- A curriculum vitae (CV) (2 pages)

- A motivation letter (2 pages), explaining your background, how you connect to the theme of the project and why your unique skills qualify for this position
- Names and contact details of two referees.

**Deadline: January 1, 2025.**

Online interviews will be held with shortlisted candidates by mid-January. The starting date is February 1, 2025.

### **What we offer**

We offer an inclusive work environment and a safe space to explore your ideas for improvement and innovation. We also take account of your personal development and the alignment of your research goals within the large scope of the institute. If you enjoy working in a world of research and education with international colleagues, then this is a place for you. We also offer:

- An employment contract for (40 hours per week) as Research Associate
- A salary of Rs. 25,000
- Flexible working hours and possibilities of partial hybrid working