



BITS Pilani
Pilani | Dubai | Goa | Hyderabad | Mumbai
An Institution of Eminence
Hyderabad Campus

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

STATE OF THE ARTS

A three-day symposium on **doing research**



26th- 28th February 2026

Last date for registration
February 22nd

RESEARCH TALKS • ROUND TABLES • WORKSHOPS
TRAINING • INTERACTIONS & MORE

For more details, contact:

stateofthearts.hyd@gmail.com

FOR REGISTRATION



DAY 1 - 26TH FEBRUARY

10:30 AM - 01:00 PM

- Demystifying Research Writing in Higher Education: Turning Ideas into Arguments

Dr. Jasti Appa Swami, University of Hyderabad

02:00 PM - 04:30 PM

- Locating Politics of Labour in Digital Futures and Archival Records

DAY 2 - 27TH FEBRUARY

09:30 AM - 10:30 AM

- A Study on Sustainable Coping Strategies Among the Mountain Communities of West Bengal Through Qualitative Research Techniques

Prof Sukla Basu, WB State University

10:45 AM - 11:45 AM

- The Makings of A Temple Public: Hindu Temples in Contemporary Kerala

Dr. O B Roopesh, VIT, Chennai

02:00 PM - 04:30 PM

- The City Remembers: Navigating Tomorrow with the Wisdom of Past Ruins
Dr. Soumita Banerjee, Amity University, Kolkata
- Tales of Kolkata's Vibrant Cityscape
Dr. Kunaljeet Roy and Ayushi Banerjee

02:00 PM - 04:30 PM

- Rethinking Work: Methodologies, Sites, and Concepts
Prof. Aardra Surendran, IIT Hyd
Dithi Bhattacharya, Director, Centre for Worker Management

DAY 3 - 28TH FEBRUARY

09:30 AM - 11:15 AM

- Mapping a Literary Movement: Comparative Perspectives
Judhjit Sarkar, Heidelberg University
- Documenting and Writing on Local Cultures
Dr. Brahma Prakash, JNU and Dr. A P Rajaram, IIT Bombay

11:30 AM - 01:30 PM

- **Workshop:** Progressive Literary Movement in South Asia: Multilingualism in Practice

2:00 PM - 03:00 PM

- Talk by **PP Raveendran, Professor (Retd.) School of Letters, Mahatma Gandhi University**

11:30 AM - 01:30 PM

- **Workshop:** Understanding Indigeneity Through Musical Instruments of Assam

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

- **Valedictory** address by **Ipshita Chanda, Professor Comparative Literature and India Studies, EFLU Hyderabad**

DEPARTMENT OF HSS | STATE OF THE ARTS SYMPOSIUM



DEMYSTIFYING RESEARCH WRITING IN HIGHER EDUCATION TURNING IDEAS INTO ARGUMENTS

Dr. Jasti Appa Swami

Assistant Professor, University of Hyderabad

ABOUT THIS SESSION

This workshop aims to position research writing in HEIs in its cultural and situational contexts by demystifying how knowledge is processed, produced, evaluated and communicated in each discipline by their specific purpose, knowledge-making conventions, disciplinary practices, a sense of which is, unfortunately, expected to be acquired through a process of osmosis rather than learnt through explicit instruction. This workshop, through a series of tasks, draws participants' attention to how research writing values disciplinary orientation which largely informs recognised genres in a given discipline, nature of argumentation, rhetorical and citation strategies to turn experience into knowledge, to make appropriate claims through appropriate linguistic resources, and to help organise evidence borrowed and gathered from other sources and from the findings through one's own study.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Open to PhD scholars, post-docs, and faculty from STEM, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Business

26TH FEBRUARY 2026 • 10:30 AM - 1:00 PM

VENUE - G204A

For more details, contact:

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FOR REGISTRATION



Roundtable on:
**Locating Politics of Labour
in digital futures and archival records**

Dr. Bhangya Bhukya (UoH)

Dr. Chitra Joshi (Former Professor, DU)

Ishita Shah (Curating for Culture)

Dr. Karuna D. Wielenga (APU)

Dr. Mitaja Chakraborty (BITS)

Dr. Shanmugapriya T. (IIT Dhanbad)

Dr. Soni (IIT Jodhpur)

Dr. Sujith Parayil (UoH)

Moderator:

Dr. Madhavi Jha, BITS

This roundtable hopes to serve as a moment of reckoning for historians, and of stocktaking for Digital Humanities (DH) scholars and practitioners. It invites critical reflection on how to write histories of labour and political economy in an increasingly digital academia. While DH in India has been shaped largely by scholars in Literature and Cultural Studies, this discussion approaches it from History, drawing on historians' experience with analogue archives to reflect on digitisation and digital archiving. It asks how labour and political economy historians might critically engage DH's successes and limits to shape their own research practices.

Date: 26th February 2026 | Time: 2.00 - 4.30 pm | Venue: G 204 B

For details contact:
madhavi.jha@hyderabad.bits-pilani.ac.in

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A Study on Sustainable Coping Strategies Among the Mountain Communities of West Bengal Through Qualitative Research Techniques



Dr. Sukla Basu

Professor, West Bengal State University

ABOUT THIS SESSION

The study entails the varied facets of the towering Himalayas in everyday lived realities. From traditional practices and symbiotic relations with nature to the post-global present, situational analysis has been conducted using literary evidence from books, maps, articles from reputable journals, audio-visual recordings, and in-depth field research.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Open to PhD scholars, post-docs, and interested faculty from the Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines

27TH FEBRUARY 2026 • 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

VENUE: G204B

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The Makings of A Temple Public: Hindu Temples in Contemporary Kerala

Dr. O B Roopesh

Assistant Professor, VIT Chennai

ABOUT THIS SESSION

This talk will explore the modern construction of Hindu temples by explicating the emerging temple culture in the South Indian state of Kerala since the 1960s. Conceiving a wide range of activities, mobilisations, and expressions in temples as a process of public articulation for/of temples in contemporary Kerala. They are not restricted to the domain of the 'religious' that often gets bracketed into the 'private', as they beseech and configure a specific form of 'public', what is referred as 'temple public'.



TARGET AUDIENCE

Open to PhD scholars, post-docs, and interested faculty from the Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines

27TH FEBRUARY 2026 • 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

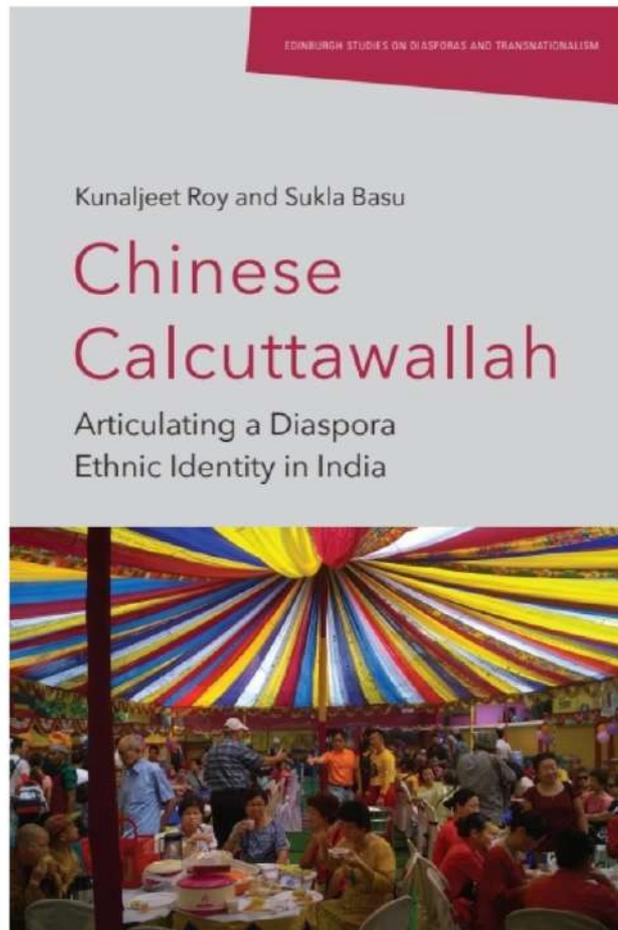
VENUE: G204B

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Book Talk



Kunaljeet Roy and Sukla Basu (Authors)
will be in conversation with Debajit Bora

27TH FEBRUARY 2026 • 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM
VENUE: G204B

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The City Remembers: Navigating Tomorrow with the Wisdom of Past Ruins

Dr. Soumita Banerjee

Assistant Professor, Amity University, Kolkata



ABOUT THIS SESSION

This workshop session will blend talks and hands-on learning experiences about the connection between 'Disaster Knowledge', 'Collective Memory', and 'Urban Resilience'. She will be arguing about how traditional knowledge combined with modern engineering practices, geospatial analysis, and early warning systems helps urban areas develop greater adaptive capacity and reduce vulnerability.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Open to PhD scholars, post-docs, and interested faculty from the Humanities and Social Sciences, Urban Planning and Disaster management disciplines

27TH FEBRUARY 2026 • 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

VENUE: G204A

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Tales of Kolkata's Vibrant Cityscape: A Geospatial & Ethnographic Enquiry



ABOUT THIS SESSION

Kunaljeet Roy (Principal Investigator) and **Ayushi Banerjee** (Field Investigator) will provide an update on the ongoing NFSG BITS Pilani funded project. This session will be through a geospatial and ethnographic exploration of the transitioning city of Kolkata.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Open to PhD scholars, post-docs, and interested faculty from the Humanities and Social Sciences, Urban Planning disciplines

27TH FEBRUARY 2026 • 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

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GHOST OF JUSTICE AND THE QUESTIONS OF IMPERCEPTIBLE JUSTICE

ABOUT THIS TALK

This talk aims to situate ghosts as the figures of performative justice beyond the realms of religious and "superstitious" practices in India. Bhuta and Preta, referred together as bhuta-pretā (often translated as ghosts but also symbolize deities) have their evocative and haunting presence in the world of beliefs in India and South Asia, more so in the imaginative landscape of the folk world. They have various names and manifestations based on their appearance, actions, and sensibilities, from Chudail, Pandubba, Keechin, Jinn, Daiva and Bhootas. They function in the domain of senses and mark their affective presence through visible and invisible gestures. Though they differ from region to region and community to community, I focus on the presence of these figures among the marginalized communities where these agents bring specific vulnerability but also potential. They are the figures who embody corporeal excess or lack — abnormality becomes their marker, thus also a critique of the appearance of abled bodies.



Dr. Brahma Prakash,
Assistant Professor, JNU

Chair: Prof. Shilpaa Anand,
BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad Campus

28TH FEBRUARY 2026 • 9:30 AM - 11:15 AM

VENUE: G-204 A

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THE TASK(S) OF LITERATURE IN A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD: THE PROGRESSIVE-MODERNIST “CONJUNCTURE” IN PERSPECTIVE

ABOUT THIS TALK

When one looks at the literary landscape of South Asia between the 1930s and the 1960s, a period shaped by the combined exigencies of colonial modernity, decolonization, and the early Cold War, one is immediately struck by an intensely polarized intellectual climate, charged with the question of what the role of literature in a late colonial, decolonizing society should be. How was literature to be conceived in such a situation of immense crisis and contradictions, a situation that generated both fervid anticipation and profound discontent? How were writers supposed to respond to these historical pressures? As privileged, Western-educated members of a culturally beleaguered intelligentsia, how were they supposed to position themselves vis-a-vis the largely rural and illiterate “masses” with whom they were in ideological sympathy but who did not share either their sensibility or their language? The expansion of the nationalist movement in the early decades of the twentieth century had already radicalized the imagination of South Asian literary communities, but they remained sharply divided over the modalities of engaging with these urgent and inescapable questions. Progressivism and modernism evolved amid these heightened intellectual tensions as the two major aesthetic ideologies to which the bulk of literary discourse and expressive practices of this period came to anchor themselves. This talk delves into the fractious interface of these two seemingly antithetical aesthetic ideologies—and the combined ethos of literary radicalism and aesthetic internationalism they generated—from a comparative, multilingual perspective, elaborating on the notion of a progressive-modernist “conjuncture” in Indian literary cultures in the mid-twentieth century.



Judhajit Sarkar
Assistant Professor, Department of
Modern South Asian Languages and
Literatures,
University of Heidelberg

Chair: Prof. Shilpa Anand
BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad Campus

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PERCEPTION OF RITUAL PRACTICES/PERFORMANCES: AN ETHNOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF VIRALIMALAI PADUKALAM AS RITUAL PLAY/PROCESSION

ABOUT THIS TALK



Dr. A P Rajaram,
Asistant Professor, IIT Bombay

Chair: Prof. Shilpaa Anand
BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad Campus

The Commonly accepted idea of the term "Ritual" is that it refers to a certain set of codes of/for actions systematically embedded in traditional belief systems and related practices. These predominant codes principally carry and transmit traditional faith and knowledge that are constructed and perceived through many years of socially sanctioned ethnic practices. The pedagogic understanding of the term exists within specialized academic disciplines of sociology, anthropology, history, religion and studies of oral/performative traditions. The socio-cultural understanding of the word(ritual) is community specific and geographically restricted, demanding a schematic understanding that is at once open to a general understanding of roles and functions of belief systems as well as individualized analysis of specific local manifestations. Generally, there are no one or specific theories to understand the rituals due to the vastness of the multiple perspectives of human behavior and there is no specific method or way in studying the rituals and patters. Understanding the rituals in respect to its geographical location could only help in observing the inevitable cultural praxis and the methods and ways depends on the individual researcher as because of the vast pedagogy and complex cultural activities. Here in this paper one such ritual practice is explored; this ritual is performed by the community members in respect of showing the community identity and its presence in the very geographical locality. this paper will focus on one among such festival consisting of a ritual which is believed to be intact even after various intersections, this festival is called as the padukalam, (padukalam in Tamil means war-field).The paper discusses the concept of Ethnography as a method used in observing these cultural practices and also discuss the field work done in different parts of Tamil Nadu, the practices are mostly religious festivals and performance practices of communities with unique history.

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