

**National Conference on**  
**“Indigenous Narratives: Perspectives and Problematics”**

**Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi**

**11-12<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

**Concept Note**

Literary attempts to understand the culture of storytelling have often sieved through lenses of orality and literacy. However, with European colonialism, the natives – to a considerable extent indigenous and at times doubly marginalised – were made to abandon not only their socio-political identities but to relinquish linguistic and cultural identities as well. Multi-lingualism and multi-culturalism, particularly in South Asia, are constituted by a variegated social consciousness, political imagination and linguistic expressions. In fact, a major limitation in tracing literary historiography in the South Asian context is the fact that the history of languages in South Asia has remained an unclaimed terrain. Herein, historically, not only the indigenous languages, but traditions, religions, values, and customs have undergone cultural appropriation on account of multiple colonial invasions. A post colonial consciousness, thus, wakes up to the problematics of the Indigenous representation. While the word ‘indigenous’ can literally be understood as ‘a native’, ‘Indigenous’ as a category in itself is inbred with heterogeneous complexities. Do only ‘self-expression’ or narratives by natives qualify to be in the nomenclature or any representation of the native/ the indigenous/the first Nations/the vernacular can be brought into discourse?

Moreover, in the post-colonial era, the theoretical denomination of nationalism that began to assign more significance to literatures in the third world countries essentially highlights the uncomfortable intermingling of the natives with the non-natives. Even a more accommodating concept such as the World Literatures ambit, while on one hand, makes way for Cultural, Ethnic, and Regional Studies to come together and enable a democratic representation and setting, on the other, it largely fails to answer the indigenous angst. Dominant historiographic discourses such as colonialism, modernism, post-colonialism, post-modernism and so on, combined with the politics of canon-formation, also only manage to subsume the indigenous in the newly carved out ‘mainstream’. It is for this reason that the quest for indigeneity is exhibited most inevitably in African, Afro-American, Dalit, and Tribal narratives, which aim to negotiate, question, and oftentimes reject received history and the pre-conceived notions of culture, caste, class, race, and ethnicity via alternative historiography.

While the rational enlightened minds endeavour to be sensitive and accommodative of the 'indigenous' shades into mainstream fabric, the tendency also drifts towards a certain kind of patronising or exoticizing. The politics of recognition significantly directs what gets represented and how via literary festivals or anthologies. More often than not such appropriation of the Indigenous is driven by a narcissistic desire to self-congratulate ourselves on our intellectual endeavours for having brought the margins into the central fold facilitated by media, technology and translation. Can an English speaker, or a reader of translated texts claim the right to consume or interpret the indigenous experience? Do the linguistic and cultural distinctions melt away and become transparent to the new reader or audience? And how is a native or an indigenous narrator represent her/his worldview and make it accessible to the wider world in the colonizers tongue? Will it be a discourse of negation or affirmation/re-affirmation?

Can the struggles over histories, the tussle between identity and appropriation, the resistance to politicisation or reification find a just voice in the new/old tongue, keeping in view that many indigenous languages are becoming extinct? The oral, visual narratives, the art forms, the undocumented experiences, can they be part of a normative discourse or is it even desirable?

With all these and many more questions revolving around the Indigenous Narratives, we invite papers in the following but not restricted to only these sub topics:

- The Indigenous in the post-globalized era
- Cultural appropriation of the indigenous
- The visual and the oral traditions of the indigenous
- Indigenous art forms
- Linguistic and identity politics of the indigenous
- Literary festivals and recognitions
- Culinary and cultural expressions
- The problematics of translation
- Indigenous attempts at alternative historiography
- Indigenous experiences and perspectives from different parts of the world

### **Participation details**

**Last date for submission of abstracts: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

**Intimation of acceptance : 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

Abstracts should be submitted in following format:

- Title : Times New Roman, font size 14, bold
- Name and complete address for correspondence: Times New Roman, font size 12 bold, spacing 1.15
- Bio note about the author/s in 50-60 words each, Times New Roman, font size 12, spacing 1.15
- Body of the abstract : Times New Roman, font size 12, spacing 1.15, word limit 300-350 words
- Key words: 3-4

Abstracts should be submitted to [drc.ind.eng@gmail.com](mailto:drc.ind.eng@gmail.com)