

An Indian-Australian research partnership

Project Title:	Migration, Minority, Memory	
Project Number	HSS0504	
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Research Academy Themes:

Highlight which of the Academy's Theme(s) this project will address?

(Feel free to nominate more than one. For more information, see www.iitbmonash.org)

1. Advanced computational engineering, simulation and manufacture
2. Infrastructure Engineering
3. Clean Energy
4. Water
5. Nanotechnology
6. Biotechnology and Stem Cell Research
- 7. Humanities and Social Sciences**

The research problem

Define the problem

Our plural polities in modern South Asia and its diasporas are marked by histories of migrations. Initiated on a mass scale by colonialism—for example, indenture—and the 'population transfer' of Partition on the eve of Independence, mass migrations are also a distinct modern phenomenon. People and communities have moved, both within South Asia and inter-continently, for reasons of labour and livelihood, in search of better lives and sustenance, to escape caste and sectarian violence, in response to 'development' and environmental disasters. These histories of mass movement have a huge impact on our contemporary South-Asian societies, their self-perceptions, and the subjectivities of their peoples. We stand to gain insights into these societies and peoples by grappling with how South Asian subjects make meaning of their contemporary lives through their histories and memories of migrations. Speaking more specifically, we understand people, communities, and their relationships with each other, by examining what stories they hear and tell of the nation, state, and community, of places and spaces, of past and future that incite them to move; how they remember, narrate, and deal with migrations that were forced; how they contest public/national/majoritarian histories with communal/local/minority memories; how they get shaped and shape their polity with the flux of majority-minority dynamics. While social sciences—History, Sociology, Political sciences—have given us many critically important tools to understand the complexity of our contemporary polity through grappling with migrations, the problematic also

needs to be understood through examining the instances and practices of narratives of a society: its everyday discourses and stories, its literatures and cultures, and other forms of self and collective representations.

Project aims

Define the aims of the project

This project aims to address questions of how narratives and cultural representations of migration have shaped our complex, plural polities in South-Asia and its diasporic locations as well as our understandings of these societies, using the broad topic of “Migration, Minority, Memory” as a heuristic in the realm of narrative, discursive, and cultural practices.

Accordingly, proposals for doctoral projects are invited on the topic of “Migration, Minority, and Memory,” in the context of South Asia and its diasporas. The objects or locations of enquiry could be sub-continental literatures in English or any other language in translation, as well as non-literary narratives and other discursive formations, and indeed in any site of culture and representation. Individual projects may adopt an interpretive approach to the broad topic including, but not limited to, one or more of the following threads:

- Migration and class and/or gender and/or caste
- Minority subjects/Minority communities and representation
- Commemoration/remembrance/memorialization
- Translating selves/translating texts
- Minorities and Public space/Public claims
- Contested territories/Contested memories
- Trauma and literature
- Plurality and citizenship
- Cartographies, Places, Spaces
- Culinary Cultures

Expected outcomes

Highlight the expected outcomes of the project

We hope to make productive inroads in forming, shaping, and answering questions of political belonging and modern subject formations in the context of migrations and collective identities in South Asia and its diasporas. We stand to gain further understandings into how the historical, political, and social shaping of populations through migrations, into majorities and minorities, determine and affect our communal and social relationships and self-definition as communities. We also hope to have a better understanding of the tools of self-description of migratory and minority subjects, by examining the role of memory as one such tool.

How will the project address the Goals of the above Themes?

Describe how the project will address the goals of one or more of the 6 Themes listed above.

This project, while located in the discipline of Literature and Cultural Studies, identifies a field of enquiry that is not internal to one discipline solely and needs to be navigated and mapped in conversation with other disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Thus it will be collaborative and interdisciplinary in nature.

Capabilities and Degrees Required

List the ideal set of capabilities that a student should have for this project. Feel free to be as specific or as general as you like. These capabilities will be input into the online application form and students who opt for this project will be required to show that they can demonstrate these capabilities.

Students should have a Masters in English, Women's Studies, Comparative Literature, or an allied discipline in Humanities and Social Sciences. MPhil not mandatory but strongly preferred. A proposal, no longer than 1000 words, with a specific topic and indicating research questions, is to be submitted.

Potential Collaborators

Please visit the IITB website www.iitb.ac.in OR Monash Website www.monash.edu to highlight some potential collaborators that would be best suited for the area of research you are intending to float.

Professor Sue Kossew: sue.kossew@monash.edu
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Please provide a few key words relating to this project to make it easier for the students to apply.

Migration and Gender/Class/Caste, Minority subjects/Minority communities, Representation, Narrative, Memory, Contested Territories, Trauma, Plurality and Citizenship, Cartographies, Culinary Cultures