



**Department of Liberal Arts
Indian Institute of Technology Bhilai**

presents

Gendered Modalities of Remembering in South Asian Literatures

A National Conference
15–16 January 2026

Call for Papers

Concept Note:

Gender is not merely a performative construct; it is also constituted through acts of remembering at cultural, collective, and individual levels. Feminist scholarship reiterates the need to remember as the fundamental objective in the struggle for agency through its sustained effort at remembering, reclaiming, and reconstructing the lost tradition of women's writings, resisting conscious erasure and selective amnesia on women's role in socio-cultural transactions. The burgeoning of memory studies as a multi-perspectival and interdisciplinary domain in making sense of the present in conjunction with the past through the matrix of remembering and forgetting has indubitably reinvigorated postcolonial discourses as well as gender studies in South Asian contexts, especially by the turn of the twenty-first century. With the 'memory turn' that reoriented attention towards multiperspectival narratives which provide alternate conduits to explore the past, gender studies in general and feminist scholarship in particular appropriated memory as a cogent analytical lens which could lend access to gendered voices that have been stymied in the hegemonic writings of 'his'tory. Breaking away from the givens of what constitutes knowledge, legitimacy, and reliability, memory studies has underscored the politics of remembering and forgetting in constructing cultural identity and national historiography. In the South Asian context, memory studies with its repertoire of mnemonic codes and semantics opens possibilities of accessing 'other(ed)' forms of representation which lie outside the conventional scope of the domain and render them as counter hegemonic discourses.

The theoretical and scholarly engagements of gender studies with epistemological traditions effectively deconstruct the limits of conventional historiography, exposing the deeply problematic patriarchal underpinnings of knowledge that invisibilizes gender and erases gendered voices from hegemonic discourses. The analytical frameworks of memory studies accommodate alternate forms of micro narratives of postcolonial experiences rooted in collective and individual acts of remembrance and give voice to the regional, marginalized, and suppressed herstories. It also broadens the canvas to study the emergent socio-political complexities, cultural tensions, and resilient identities shaped by colonial violence and forced migration specific to South Asian contexts. Gendered engagement with history calls for a closer analysis of what is deemed as domestic, intimate, and private as markers of the experiences of the silenced and the subjugated at the intersections of caste, class and gender. These gendered forms of remembering often challenge the shared—patriarchal—national memory and problematize its claims of progress, modernity, and development.

This conference aims to explore and engage with the ways in which critical insights from memory studies can broaden the schema and generate insightful and nuanced engagements on gendered modalities of remembering as reflected in South Asian literatures. It intends to focus on the potential and impact of literature as a conduit of cultural memory in encoding, reinforcing, narrating, and re/constructing gender(ed) identities. Memory as a diegetic tool in feminist fictions, revisiting the passive archival memory, reclaiming the forgotten voices in nationalist discourse, corporeal memories of trauma, mnemonic explorations of the quotidian and the domestic, palimpsestic play in spatial memory are some of the domains we intend to explore as discourses on the gendered dimensions of remembering in the South Asian context. The emphasis here is to move beyond the confines of the binaries of trauma vs nostalgia, archives vs canon, public vs private, history vs memory and engage with the fluid interstitial spaces between remembering and forgetting, facilitating meaningful explorations on notions of affect, materiality, and performativity in the schema of memory studies. We invite abstracts on gender and memory in literature from South Asia on but not limited to the thematic concerns outlined below:

- Diegetic of memory in feminist fictions
- Engendering spaces and reclaiming agency
- Life writing beyond trauma and nostalgia
- Herstories: nation and politics of forgetting
- Mnemonic cultures and gender identity in the vernacular
- Embodied memory and gender performativity
- Gendered memories of ecology
- Materiality, affect, and the everyday in women's writings
- Engendering the archives
- Cast(e)ing memories and subverting marginality

Keynote Speakers:

- Prof Simi Malhotra, Department of English, Jamia Milia Islamia
- Dr Padma Anagol, School of History, Archaeology and Religion, Cardiff University

How to apply?

We invite abstracts of no more than 300 words, along with a 50-word bio note, from faculty, research scholars, and independent researchers working in literary and cultural studies, as well as those studying gender and memory in other humanities and social sciences disciplines. Please fill in the [application form](#), which will be open from 1 to 30 September 2025.

Registration:

There is no registration fee. All registered participants will be provided with accommodation at IIT Bhilai from January 14 to 16, 2026, lunch on both conference days, and one dinner.

Important Dates:

Abstract submission: 1 to 30 September 2025
Intimation of selection: 14 October 2025
Registration: 15 to 31 October 2025
Submission of working drafts: 31 December 2025
Conference: 15 and 16 January 2026



Scan to apply

Venue: Indian Institute of Technology Bhilai, Durg, Chhattisgarh, 491002

Conference Committee:

Dr Sruthi Vinayan, Assistant Professor, Department of Liberal Arts, IIT Bhilai
Dr Anubhav Pradhan, Assistant Professor, Department of Liberal Arts, IIT Bhilai
Ms Chandrani Sanyal, Doctoral Scholar, Department of Liberal Arts, IIT Bhilai

Contact Details:

In case of queries, please feel free to write to us at symposia_la@iitbhilai.ac.in.