



Colloquium: "Child marriage and submarines in Sakha and Sandesh Notes on tones and half tones in magazines for children"

Speaker:

Rimli Bhattacharya (Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta)

Date / Time:

September 11, 2014 - 2:00pm - 3:30pm

Venue:

10th Floor Auditorium, Pixel A

Abstract:

How do we elaborate on the well-established proposition that childhood is a construction varying in time and across cultures? We have become wary of recovering the unmediated 'authentic' voice of the subject-whether a child, a woman or a marginal subject. Do forms of address in different genres that are primarily meant for children tell us anything about a 'dialogue' with children?

Within this broad framework, and working with a mix of images and texts from two periodicals- Sakha and Sandesh, I draw on my ongoing exploration of children's periodicals in late 19th and early 20 century Bengal, to raise more specific questions:

What are the different ways in which childhood has been conceptualised in these magazines? How has knowledge been conceptualized in a colonial context for children, outside of school textbooks? What is the significance accorded to science and technology in a discourse of progress? How is the latter reconciled with faith? How do we gloss knowledge, information and entertainment-in our own times? And, what's literature got to do with this? The historical perspective is intended to open up for discussion and reflection these and other questions that have a critical contemporary relevance.

A Note on the Speaker:

Rimli Bhattacharya, has trained in Comparative Literature and works on a range of genres and forms in a number of languages, Indian and others. She has published on children's literature, art

and artists, performance history and actresses, and film. Her corpus of translations from Bangla into English includes autobiographies, novels, short stories and essays.

She has worked in primary education in various states of India, focusing on the conceptualisation and production of teaching-learning material. From 2004-2006 she was involved in an international collaborative project on "The construction of the subject English in secondary schools in London, Johannesburg and Delhi." This extended into several other projects with MPhil students on lullabies (in Asomyia, Mizo and Kumaoni) and on school textbooks (Sur Pippa: 'Notes on Running Feet' is a co-authored monograph on 'Subject English' in NCERT English Marigold textbooks, Bhopal, Eklavya 2012.) Her ongoing involvement with the classroom experience informs her M.Phil. seminar on 'Children's Literature: Childhood, pedagogy and literary forms' offered at the University of Delhi. Group projects are an integral part of this seminar

Rimli Bhattacharya has taught at Jawaharlal Nehru University, MS University of Baroda and has been the Rama Watumull Distinguished Indian Scholar at the Center for South Asian Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa and ICCR Visiting Chair at the Dept of South Asian Studies, University of Pennsylvania. Since 2001, she has been teaching at the Department of English, University of Delhi. She is currently Professor, Gender Studies, at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta where she is working on the Centre's extensive digitized archive of children's journals and book illustrations. She is also completing a monograph on Dhan Gopal Mukherji, an early twentieth century Indian based in the US who became a renowned author for juvenile fiction.