

**S Satish Kumar**

*GITAM University (Deemed)*

*School of Humanities and Social Sciences*

*Hyderabad, India*

### **This Time for Africa: The Challenges of African Studies in India**

Fortunately, at least one hopes that is the case, as Africanists, we no longer have to inhabit the bizarre predicament of proving the existence of African Literatures. Those of us though who choose to think of the literary production of an entire continent in the plural, still find ourselves having to explain such a position, which is not perhaps the worst thing to have to do. Those of us who endeavor with disciplinary models such as African Studies outside of the African continent, with no ostensible ties to African literatures, languages, cultures, histories and realities besides academic often find ourselves faced with the question, “Why Africa?” In this paper I seek to examine precisely such interrogations. Examining a history of African Studies in India, this study will attempt to present an account of the motivations and ramifications for academic and literary engagements with African realities in South Asian contexts. In the final analysis, I will be exploring the possibilities for alternative modes for the conceptualization of decolonization that such intercultural work across the “Global Souths” offers. To such an end, I will be examining not only curricula for African Studies at Indian universities and the pedagogical approaches that frame them, but also a more general awareness of African realities through cultural transactions in Indian languages besides English. Thus, venturing a response to questions such as, “Why Africa?” through an understanding of what an engagement with African realities—literatures, cultures, languages and histories, has and continues to offer to our understandings of the realities we inhabit in South Asian contexts such as India.