

**Mrinmoy Pramanick**

*University of Calcutta*

### **Literature Unrecognized: Thinking Comparative Literature Locally**

It is always assumed that the comparative study of literature can do best between literatures of different nations and different languages. But the gradual failure of single literature or national literature discipline to address the polyphony of culture and the existence of minor languages in its national boundary. This is only symptomatic that the minor literature and cultures are not studied as the literature of neighbour in the single literature discipline. The canonical culture and the speeches of the power ignore such languages and literature; therefore, the voices of the marginal communities are unheard. This practice of unrecognized the cultural varieties and languages of the minor linguistic communities pushed India into a severe linguistic crisis causing continuous death of languages. This paper does not argue primarily about endangered languages. Still, the societies who are shadowed within the greater linguistic identity find their language, literature, and identity unrecognized in the structure they live in, which are addressed in this work.

This paper argues with reference to a few languages of West Bengal, the eastern part of India and different linguistic variants of the dominant language of the state Bengali. As a practitioner of Comparative Literature, I have introduced a course on “Language Situations in India and Other Literature of West Bengal”, besides this our independent organization called Calcutta Comparatists 1919, took a project on ‘Translation on Site’, to propose a series of translation and preparation of parallel corpus between the variant of Bengali or minor language, standard Bengali and English, to enhance the translation between minor languages, and linguistic variants into English. The ‘Translation on Site’ project aims to understand the text within the geo-cultural location of its origin and with its speakers and poets. Once such parallel corpus is prepared, translation will be more accessible between these neighbouring languages or linguistic variants. In this project, inside and outside the discipline, we are trying to locate Comparative literature locally by recognizing people’s geo-cultural identities. In our case, we are dealing with Manbhum, Sundarban, Mallabhum, Subarnaraikhik, Valley and Hills as the distinct geo-cultural identity of people. Though primarily under one greater linguistic identity, such specific regions have different varieties of Bengali or different other minor languages. Therefore, they have their vocabularies and literature particular to those geo-cultural regions that are unrecognized. So, we deal with Comparative literature locally and try to document and prepare archives of cultural utterances of different communities; this method is valuable for surviving with minor cultures and languages.