

IIT Hyderabad Hosts First-of-Its-Kind UKRI International Symposium

Highlights

- **IIT Hyderabad emerges as a global hub for nineteenth-century studies**, hosting a major UKRI international symposium on the cultures of exchange and affect in the colonial Indo-British interface in collaboration with Kingston University (UK)
- **UKRI-funded initiative brings together scholars from India, UK, and USA**, who examine transnational colonial histories and their **contemporary relevance for climate change and health inequities**
- **IIT Hyderabad launches South Asia's first Nineteenth-Century Studies research and collaboration network (Nineteenth-Century Diversities Research Network, NCDRN)**

IIT Hyderabad, January 29, 2026: The Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH) has further strengthened its global academic footprint by hosting the **UKRI International Symposium on Nineteenth-Century Studies**, titled “*Transnational Encounters in/through South Asia*”, on **January 8–9 and January 29, 2026**. Organised by the **Public Humanities Initiative (PHI Centre), IIT Hyderabad**, under the leadership of **Dr. Shuhita Bhattacharjee**, in collaboration with **Kingston University, UK**, the symposium marked the **first event of its kind in South Asia**

The symposium emerged from a **major UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) grant** focused on expanding collaborative research on nineteenth-century Indo-British history, with IIT Hyderabad serving as the **lead India partner**. Scholars from across **India, the United Kingdom, and the United States** convened to explore colonial encounters, gendered histories, visual archives, and cultural exchanges that shaped South Asia during the long nineteenth century.

The event featured **keynote addresses by eminent scholars**—**Dr. Tara Puri (Senior Lecturer, University of Bristol)**, who examined colonial photographic archives of Indian women, and **Prof. Supriya Chaudhuri (Professor Emerita, Jadavpur University)**, who analysed evolving representations of affect in nineteenth-century verbal and visual texts by and about women. The symposium also included significant contributions from scholars such as **Radhika Govinda (University of Edinburgh)**, **Ross Forman (University of Warwick)**, **Fariha Shaikh (University of Birmingham)**, **Alexander Bubb (University of Roehampton)**, **Jessica Durgan (University of Bemidji, USA)**, **Priti Joshi (University of Puget Sound)**, and **Priya Raman (University of Exeter)**.

Across two intensive days, discussions ranged from colonial exhibitions and performance cultures to gendered and embodied encounters, while also drawing strong connections between nineteenth-century studies and **contemporary global challenges**, including **climate change, public health inequities, and sexual violence legislation**. The symposium underscored how historical inquiry continues to inform present-day social and political concerns.

A major outcome of the symposium was the **launch of the Nineteenth-Century Diversities Research Network (NCDRN)**—the **first South Asian network dedicated to nineteenth-century studies**—by **Dr. Shuhita Bhattacharjee**, in collaboration with **Dr. Eadaoin Agnew (Kingston University)**, who heads the UK-based *Victorian Diversities Research Network*. This initiative positions **IIT Hyderabad at the centre of an emerging global research consortium on nineteenth-century studies and public humanities**.

International scholars lauded the initiative. **Dr. Radhika Govinda** (University of Edinburgh) described the symposium as “*a gathering of unprecedented range that generated rich interdisciplinary conversations across diverse global contexts.*” **Dr. Tara Puri** (University of Bristol) highlighted the “*urgent necessity and remarkable achievement of creating a shared platform that meaningfully connects scholars across the Global South and North.*”

Welcoming the initiative, **Dr. Aalok Khandekar, Head, Department of Liberal Arts, IIT Hyderabad**, noted that the launch of the South Asian network exemplifies “*the public-spirited, interdisciplinary scholarship that the department seeks to nurture.*” **Dr. Shuhita Bhattacharjee, Founder-Coordinator of the Public Humanities Initiative (PHI Centre)**, expressed gratitude for the institutional support and reaffirmed IIT Hyderabad’s growing role as “*a significant international hub for nineteenth-century studies and collaborative public humanities research, especially through the establishment of the new global network.*”

The symposium strengthened **IIT Hyderabad’s expanding engagement with humanities and global scholarship**, highlighting how a leading technology institute can actively support and enrich humanities-based interdisciplinary research and international academic collaboration.

About IIT Hyderabad:

IITH, established in 2008, has reached a respectable position in academics, research, technology development, and Start-ups in a short span of 17 years. In the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF-2025), IITH is ranked 7th among Engineering institutes (crossing a first-generation IIT this year), and is ranked 6th in Innovation, while it has maintained its rank within the top 10 Engineering Institutes ever since NIRF was launched. IITH is ranked 664th and 270th in the QS World and Asian University Rankings 2026, respectively (among the top 10% of global institutions in citations per faculty). IITH secured 46 positions by 31 faculties in the Global Top 2% Scientists World list 2025 released by Stanford University (SU) in collaboration with Elsevier across two categories. IITH has been striving for excellence with a motto of "Inventing & Innovating in Technology for Humanity (IITH)".

With 340+ full-time Faculty, 360 non-teaching Staff and 5,700+ Students (PG+PhD students accounting for about 60%), IITH has a strong research focus with 5260+ R&D Projects worth of Rs. 1650+ Cr (Rs. 335+ Cr funding in 2024-25, i.e. Rs. 1+ Cr per Faculty, one of the largest per capita funding among IITs), 12,890+ Publications, 2,48,580+ Citations, 154 h-index, 710+ Patents (250 Patents in 2025, making it 0.75 patents per faculty in 2025), and about 335+ Start-ups (that have generated 1100+ jobs with a revenue of Rs. 1500+ Cr).

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