

Call for Book Chapters

Expected Publisher: **De Gruyter Brill** (Scopus Index)

Recovering Marginalised Theatre, Folk Epics and Songs beyond Literary Canons

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The current proposal is a study of how literature has witnessed significant scholarly interventions in recent decades through marginalised studies. Yet a substantial body of folk epics and theatrical performances remains outside academic discourse. The lack of publication, translation, and critical review widens this gap, and a lacuna remains in the marginalised genre's ability to reach a larger readership. The extensive literature and regional languages of states such as Haryana, Rajasthan, Bihar, Odisha, the North-East States, the South States, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and many others remain out of reach for readers. This proposal is written to address those gaps.

Marginalised poetry and fiction received attention in the last 50 years, but oral, folk, theatre, and epic forms received little scholarly attention. Bihar's Bhikhari Thakur, a barber-theatre artist, earns name and fame, but later publication and non-translation leave him on the margins. Haryana's Dayachand Mayna's case is even worse; his plays are stolen by editors and published under other writers' names. Padma Bhushan awardee, Gurram Jashuva, an anti-caste visionary-cum-Telugu poet, was perhaps the first to write a modern Dalit epic, *Gabbilam*, but academia did not review it with enthusiasm. Bihar's Gorakh Prasad Mastana's three canto-style epics, *Thathagata*, *Punyapathi*, and *Ekalavya*, are unique yet have failed to attract a translator. Punjab's Swami Achhutanand's "*Harihar*," a radical theatre work, is rarely studied in academia. Uttar Pradesh's Mata Prasad (Theatre), Karnataka's Siddalingaiah (Long Narrative) and K.B. Siddaiah (Epic), and Tamil Nadu's K.A. Gunasekaran (Theatre) are out of the reach of scholars.

Kiran Nagarkar's *Bedtime Story: A Play*, Mahendra Mittal's Hindi comic *Ekalavya* (2016) and A. K. Lomhor's English novella *Eklavya: The Story of an Archer's Loyalty and Devotion* (2015) are new versions of Ekalavya's myth. A new type of Dalit theatre, which is distributed as pamphlets, is seen in Ram Avtar Pal and Periyar Lalai Singh's three-act play *Ekalavya* (1963, edition 5 in 1900, reprint 2009 and 2022), which is well reviewed in Chinmay Sharma's 'Show the Guru Cheating: Ekalavya re-tellings in post-Independent India's Hindi heartlands' (2025). It was later followed by the pamphlets of Bihari Lal 'Harit' (1963) and Mata Prasad 'Mitra' (1981), then Ramnarayan Singh Rana (2008), and, lastly, Ram Lal Rawat (2009).

Having an orientation towards folklore and Dalit literary canon, this book proposal explores theatre and epic narratives as an alternative archive of collective memory. The themes of migration, caste oppression, labour exploitation, gender inequality, and social justice preserve histories that are often absent from official records and mainstream literary histories. By bringing these genres together, this proposal calls for a re-evaluation of Dalit literary and cultural resources. It proposes a broader understanding of literature that includes various genres, but is not limited to:

1. Marginalised Theatre: Beginning, Rise and Fall
2. Theatre from Indian Constitutional Languages: Hindi, Sanskrit, Bengali, Urdu, Kashmiri, Punjabi, Tamil, Nepali, Telugu, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Santhali, Sindhi, Kannada and others
3. Non-Constitutional Languages: Bhojpuri, Haryanvi, Rajasthani, Gondi, Kurukh, Tulu, Bhil, Ladakhi, Bhoti and others
4. Rise of marginalised Epic Tradition: Hindu, Islamic, Sikhs, Christian, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and others
5. New marginalised literary hero beyond the binary of caste and religion
6. Rewriting of epics from a marginalised angle
7. Revaluation of marginalised Characters
8. Dalit aesthetics
9. Pamphlets as a new theatre
10. Nukkad Natak and ban on marginalised theatres
11. Politics of academic marginalisation
12. Challenging the traditional myth
13. Buddhism in epics and theatre
14. Oral marginalised literature
15. Lack of translation and non-publication for marginalised works
16. Literary Heist of Dalits' unpublished works
17. Theory and philosophy
18. Dalit Ecologies

Important Dates

1. Last Date for submission of Abstract: **30th Sep, 2026**
2. Intimation of acceptance of the Abstract: **15th Oct, 2026**
3. Last Date for submission of the Full Paper: **15th Dec 2026**
4. Send your abstract with your bio-note to: dr.diipk@gmail.com

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