

MONDAY

COLLOQUIUM

Book Talk: Looking Back through Our Identities

Aloka Parasher Sen (UoH, Hyderabad)

18 Aug 2025 (Monday) | 16:00 Hrs (Tea / Coffee 17:15 Hrs) | Venue: TIFRH Auditorium

How does myth find its way into the historical record? is a key question *Looking Back through Our Identities - Itihasa Purana*, a book recently published by Aloka Parasher Sen, addresses. This is today an important question in the Humanities and Social Sciences particularly since methodological avenues of research now must increasingly delve into how experience, orality and memory as sources can be leveraged to write on different social strata.

In this book talk Sen explores the intricate relationship between myth and history in shaping the identities of diverse communities. Through an analysis of ancient texts and oral tradition, it is endeavoured to examine how groups like the Chenchus, an autochthonous Adivasi group living along the Nallamala Hills in Andhra Pradesh, interpret and navigate their past. In essence, it discusses the role of myth in providing alternative histories challenging linear, elite-centric historical narratives. Simultaneously, she addresses the significance of memory and visual representation in preserving history, advocating a broader understanding that encompasses multiple perspectives and identities to offer a comprehensive and inclusive view of India's cultural heritage.

In the Q&A we could draw upon our immediate local environment to discuss the way history of diverse communities can be elaborated upon.