



## **Call for Expressions of Interest for Researcher Participation in an AHRC/ICHR workshop on Cultural Heritage, Migration and Indian Diaspora**

### **Introduction**

The Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR) is pleased to announce a call for India researchers to attend a workshop on 'Cultural Heritage, Migration and Indian Diaspora'. Organised in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK) the event will bring together academic experts from both countries to explore how the experiences of the Indian diaspora and migratory movements have shaped Indian cultural heritage, and the importance of this heritage to the sustainable development of India.

The event will convene approximately 40 experts from the UK and India and draw on a range of disciplinary perspectives including history, heritage, languages, literature, the digital humanities, creative arts and archaeology. It will build on two previous joint AHRC-ICHR workshops and funding calls held in 2015 and 2017, which gave researchers from the UK and India the opportunity to build partnerships, networks and collaborative projects addressing challenges related to urbanisation and cultural heritage in India. A report from the 2015 workshop can be found here: <https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/cultural-heritage-and-rapid-urbanisation-in-india-report/>. A report from the 2017 workshop can be found here: <https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/india-workshop-report/> .

A key aim of this workshop is to enable researchers from the UK and India to reflect on the achievements of the AHRC/ICHR 'Cultural Heritage and Rapid Urbanisation in India' programme so far and to develop new partnerships with a view to longer-term collaboration. Discussions at the workshop will inform a call for Research Networking

projects that will launch shortly afterwards. This call will invite applications with a duration of up to 6-9 months and a budget of £30-45K per project on the UK side with matched resources from ICHR to support the Indian component.

The workshop will take place over 2 days in Ahmedabad, India from the 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

## **Context**

India has a long history of migration. Since pre-historic era Indian scholars, religious monks, businessmen and travellers have found their way to other countries from far east to far west. The Indian cultural and religious heritage thus became popular throughout the world. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a host of factors have influenced the movement of people from India to various parts of the world in large numbers. Large scale migration and the consequent expansion of diasporic communities has had far reaching impacts on both a micro and macro scale, however, one particular impact area has been the effects of migration on cultural heritage- both tangible and intangible. Like all migrations, the impact of people leaving from the Indian subcontinent has been the adaption, loss and in some cases creation of new forms of cultural heritage. Today, it is the present generation of Indian Diaspora that acts as the main custodian of this heritage and continues to ensure its preservation. There is a need to not only understand how Indians living in different parts of the world ensure the preservation of their cultural heritage, but also what challenges they face in doing so in order to develop better ways in which this preservation can be ensured in future. In recognising these challenges, there is a strong need to strengthen ties between the people of Indian origin in foreign countries and the present Indian generation.

The 2018 UN World Migration Report published by the International Organisation for Migration revealed that the Indian diaspora is the world's largest with over 15.6 million people from India living overseas. With the UN predicting that India is to become the world's most populous country from 2024, the Indian diaspora will continue to grow. This issue is of growing interest and importance in India, with Indian communities around the world being sought out as part of the current social-cultural, political and economic agendas of modern India. It is within this context that understanding the relationship between the patterns of migration from India and the role of the Indian diaspora in the preservation of cultural heritage has important implications for research and policy in India.

The socioeconomic benefits of India's diasporic community can hardly be underestimated. The economic impact of remittances, cultural representation in different parts of the world and its subsequent contribution to soft power, as well as the

knowledge and resources provided by the international diasporic community are perhaps some of the most clearly identifiable. However, the wellbeing of diasporic communities is intrinsically linked to the cultural heritages they bring with themselves and further develop over the course of their generations. This only heightens the need for undertaking the research proposed under this joint programme. Over the last twenty years, India has also seen an unprecedented movement of people from its villages to its big cities and towns. Patterns of migration within India could also be considered in relation to how they have shaped and altered the cultural heritage of Indian cities as well as rural settlements.

Diaspora communities are important stakeholders for heritage. They preserve and develop both tangible and intangible heritage through the process of migration. Research into migration from and within India and how the experiences of the global Indian diaspora have helped shape the ways in which Indian cultural heritage is preserved, adapted or indeed lost is essential to build knowledge, understanding and shape policies. It is this cultural heritage that has a crucial role to play in cultural relations, sustainable economic growth and social cohesion in India.

Through creating channels of cultural exchange and markets overseas, the Indian diaspora has a significant role to play in India's international relations, shaping the way in which India is perceived and therefore contributing to the development of global cultural relations.

In order to identify new and emerging areas for collaborative UK/India research, the workshop will focus on the following thematic areas:

**1. Indian diaspora and cultural markets**

- How does the Indian diaspora contribute to cultural relations between India and the rest of the world?

**2. Digital technology as a bridge**

- How is digital technology changing the relationship/s between the Indian diaspora and cultural heritage?

**3. Cultural Heritage Transformations**

- Through the process of migration, what is gained, adapted and preserved in terms of tangible and intangible cultural heritage? How does cultural heritage change within the context of migration and what are the implications for the concepts of authenticity and integrity?

**4. Cultural heritage as a driver of migration**

-What are the push and pull factors between forms of cultural heritage and Indian migration?

### **5. Resourcing migration**

- How can cultural heritage institutions better support the Indian diaspora and international researchers who study its associated processes and impacts?

### **6. Identities and Migration**

- What is the relationship between cultural heritage and migration with regards to the formation of multiple identities and contested heritage?

During the workshop, researchers will consider how future research collaborations could demonstrate the benefits of the research to development challenges in India, for example how research into migration and the Indian diaspora can demonstrate active relationships and beneficial opportunities. Beyond collaborative research between researchers and stakeholders from the two countries, this could include exhibitions, resource sharing and new understandings of the social, cultural, political and economic relationships between diasporic and host populations for example new cultural and creative markets, sources of investment, inter-cultural relationships and policy.

## **Call for Expressions of Interest**

Expressions of interest to participate in the workshop are invited from India-based researchers who have done substantial work and have a particular research interest on the topics noted above from all disciplines within the arts and humanities. Indian applicants shall submit (via email at [adr.ftgcep@ichr.ac.in](mailto:adr.ftgcep@ichr.ac.in)) a 500 word account of **Attendance Justification** (outline their interest in attending the workshop, including their relevant expertise and experience, and their thoughts on how it might contribute to longer-term developments.) along with a **Short Biography** (max 250 words).

Expressions of interest are welcome from researchers at all stages of their careers, including early career researchers. The ICHR expects to support the attendance of around 20 Indian researchers across a range of arts and humanities disciplines.

The ICHR will process the information you send for the purposes of workshop attendance only and inform you via email.

**Deadline for submission of EoI:** Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Expressions of interest will be assessed by the ICHR, against the following criteria:

- Fit to call: the strength of the case made to attend the workshop and ability to support the realisation of its aims;
- Track record: a demonstrable history of research excellence appropriate to career stage;
- Development: the potential of the workshop to add value to the research of the applicant, including the benefits of engaging with a wider network of individuals and organisations from the UK and India, and the potential for those parties to benefit from the experience and perspectives of the applicant;
- Legacy: the ability of the applicant to perceive and articulate the longer-term potential benefits of the workshop, including to their own research, their discipline, and in terms of wider activity.

### **Costs covered**

The ICHR will pay for all tickets (economy class), accommodation (to a maximum of 3 nights) and taxi fare to & from the airport. Detailed information about logistics and procedures will follow upon acceptance.

### **Workshop format**

The exact format of the workshop will be determined through consultation between AHRC and ICHR. In order to stimulate practical steps towards future intellectual collaboration, the majority of the workshop will focus on networking, discussion and exploration of the key issues through a series of facilitated breakout sessions.

It is important to note that this workshop is not intended to be a stand-alone event, rather it is an opportunity to network, share experiences and begin discussions that will foster future collaborative activity. As above, it is anticipated that longer term, the workshop will enrich and bring new dimensions to other networks and forums working in this area and involving research collaboration between the UK and India.

The AHRC and ICHR intend to commission a report from the workshop, which will include recommendations for follow-up activity.

### **Contacts**

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