



Azim Premji University Colloquium Series
presents a lecture on

**NAMES ARE FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S LANGUAGE: REVISITING LANGUAGE
AND TRANSLATION IN INDIA**

Speaker

Rita Kothari

Associate Professor, Humanities, Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar

Date: April 30, 2015 (Thursday)

Time: 2.00 to 3.30 pm

Venue: 10th Floor Auditorium, Pixel A, Azim Premji University

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About the Lecture

Languages in India, as elsewhere perhaps, are not spatially arranged isomorphs but sites constituted through diversity and pluralism. If we recognize, to use the words of Sheldon Pollock, that "nations are made by turning languages into distinctive national markers," translation in particular acquires a humanist and nationalist colouring. It is allegedly the only "bridge" by which different linguistic nations would understand each other. This rhetoric about the importance of translation in a multilingual society is a historical construction. It needs to be seen in the context of the way India, following philological classification in colonial scholarship, began thinking about languages; the rise of nationalism and its attendant sentiments in the twentieth century as well the linguistic re-organisation of India in the 1950s. Historical developments from the nineteenth century onwards have created in contemporary India what David Washbrook provocatively refers to as a "society of language jatis." A question that now haunts my engagement with translation is: what happens when languages in a given society are not clearly marked off from each other as village and city boundaries in a geographically demarcated landscape, but instead shade off into each other? These form the questions for an ongoing study on multilingualism in India and its relation with translation. The first and foremost step in this direction is the Linguistic Survey of India that "situates" and enumerates Indian languages.

About the Speaker

Rita Kothari is Associate Professor of Humanities at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar. She has published *Translating India: The Cultural Politics of English*; *The Burden of Refuge: Sindh, Gujarat, Partition and Memories and Movements: Borders and Communities in Banni, Kutch, Gujarat*. She has translated widely from Gujarati and Sindhi into English, and is a leading scholar in Translation Studies. She is the co-editor of *Chutnefying English: The Phenomenon of Hinglish* and *Decentring Translation Studies: India and Beyond*.