



The JCB Prize for Literature presents its 2019 shortlisted authors and jury members in a series of discussions alongside a special session on accessibility of literary fiction, at the Jaipur Literature Festival 2020

Thursday, 16 January 2020: India's richest literary award, the JCB Prize for Literature, presents a special series of discussions at the 2020 Jaipur Literature Festival, offering the audience a deeper insight into the 2019 shortlisted books, the jury, and the broader vision of the JCB Literature Foundation. The greatest books of the year will also be available in the JCB Prize for Literature Festival Bookstore, managed by Full Circle.

The JCB Prize for Literature Series comprises four sessions with an exciting line-up of speakers, including the 2019 shortlisted authors Manoranjan Byapari, Roshan Ali, Perumal Murugan, and Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar; the 2019 Jury members, Pradip Krishen, K.R. Meera, Parvati Sharma along with writer and Literary Director of the JCB prize for Literature, Mita Kapur, Translator and Literary critic, Arunava Sinha, Ananth Padmanabhan, CEO of HarperCollins India, Dipendra Manocha, founder of the Saksham Trust and member of the Executive Committee of the World Blind Union and Siddhant Shah, founder of Access for All.

The list of sessions is as follows:

23rd January at 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM in Samvad

There's Gunpowder in the Air

Shortlisted author **Manoranjan Byapari** in conversation with author **Anu Singh Choudhary** discussing the power of words and of silence.

24th January at 11:15 AM - 12:15 PM in Baithak

How to Judge a Book?

Join the 2019 JCB Prize for Literature Jury members, **Pradip Krishen**, filmmaker and environmentalist (Chair); **K.R. Meera**, author; and **Parvati Sharma**, author, as they discuss what makes the cut as a piece of literature.

25th January at 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM in Samvad

Literature for All: The JCB Prize Shortlist in Braille

Supported by the JCB Literature Foundation the JCB Prize for Literature aims to broaden the reach and diversity of contemporary Indian literature. Join **Ananth Padmanabhan**, CEO of HarperCollins India, **Dipendra Manocha**, founder of the Saksham Trust and member of the Executive Committee of the World Blind Union and **Siddhant Shah**, founder of Access for All in conversation with writer and Literary Director of the JCB prize for Literature **Mita Kapur** to discuss accessibility of literature and literary fiction for the visually impaired.

26th January at 11:15 AM - 12:15 PM in Baithak

Negotiating the Male Space in Contemporary Fiction

Shortlisted authors **Roshan Ali** (*Ib's Endless Search for Satisfaction*), **Perumal Murugan** (*Trial by Silence* and *Lonely Harvest*), **Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar** (*My Father's Garden*) and Literary translator, **Arunava Sinha** in conversation with **Manasi Subramaniam**, Executive Editor and Head of Literary Rights of Penguin India, exploring contemporary conceptualizations of masculinity in Indian writing, discussing leading men featured in searing works of fiction seeking answers in settings at once unconventional and disturbing.

The JCB Prize for Literature celebrates the very finest achievements in Indian writing. It is presented each year to a distinguished work of fiction by an Indian writer, as selected by the jury. The Prize encourages translations and aims to introduce new audiences to works of Indian literature written in languages other than their own.

The 2019 JCB Prize for Literature was awarded to *The Far Field* by Madhuri Vijay, published by HarperCollins India.

ABOUT THE PANELISTS



Ananth Padmanabhan is CEO of HarperCollins India. He began his career in 1992 as a bookseller at the Landmark Bookstores in Chennai before joining Penguin India as a sales representative for South India. In 2010, he was named Vice President and was later appointed Senior Vice President in 2014. He is also a published author and photographer.



Arunava Sinha translates Bengali fiction and nonfiction into English. Fifty-one of his translations have been published so far. Twice the winner of the Crossword translation award for Sankar's *Chowringhee* (2007) and Anita Agnihotri's *Seventeen* (2011), respectively, he has also won the Muse India translation award (2013) for Buddhadeva Bose's *When the Time is Right*. He has been nominated for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize and the Best Translated Book award in the US. He is a recipient of an English PEN translation grant for Sangeeta Bandyopadhyay's *The Yogini*. Besides India, his translations have been published in the UK, the US, and in several European and Asian countries. He has conducted workshops at the British Centre for Literary Translation, UEA; University of Chicago; Dhaka Translation Centre; and Jadavpur University. He is an associate professor of practice in the Creative Writing

department at Ashoka University.



Dipendra Manocha is working as the Developing countries coordinator and Lead of Training and Tech Support with the DAISY Consortium. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the World Blind Union. He is Managing Trustee of the Saksham Trust. He worked as Asst. Project Manager for the DAISY For All Project. He is the elected president of the DAISY Forum of India. He worked as Director IT & Services at the National Association for the Blind, New Delhi, India from 1993 till July 2008. He also worked as consultant to the Delhi University for establishing the resource centre for persons with disability. After completion of post graduation and research degree from Delhi University he left the Ph.D. in between to work for the mission

of providing information and content in accessible format to persons with print disability. During the past decade of work he has managed or coordinated several technological development or implementation projects.



Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar is a doctor and an author. He was born in Ranchi, grew up in Ghatshila and Chakulia and went to school in Musabani. His debut novel *The Mysterious Ailment of Rupi Baskey* (2014) won the Yuva Puraskar.

His second book, a collection of short stories titled *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* (2015) was banned in Jharkhand on the grounds that it portrayed Adivasi women and Santhal culture in a bad light. He was also suspended from his job. "During that time, I wrote *Jwala Kumar and the Gift of Fire: Adventures in Champakbagh* (a children's book) and started putting together the

manuscript of *My Father's Garden*. And I wrote essays, book reviews, and did some translations. I just knew that I had to write, no matter what.”

Sowvendra currently works as a medical officer with the government of Jharkhand and lives in Chandil.



KR Meera (2019 Jury member) writes fiction in Malayalam and essays in English, and has published four novels, five novellas, six collections of short fiction, two children’s novels and two collections of essays. She has won all the major Malayalam literary awards, including the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award, Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award (for best novel and for best short fiction), the Vayalar Award and the Odakuzhal Award. Her works in translation include *Hangwoman*, *The Poison of Love*, *The Unseeing Idol of Light*, *Yellow is the Colour of Longing* and *The Gospel of Yudas*.



Manoranjan Byapari was born in 1950 in East Pakistan. After he migrated to West Bengal at the age of three, he lived in two refugee camps before he moved away at the age of fourteen to work. At twenty-four, he became politically active with the Naxals after meeting famous labour activist Shankar Guha Niyogi. In and out of prison, he held various jobs over the years: cook, porter, *chandal* (corpse-burner in a crematorium).

In prison, he taught himself to read. He learnt and practiced writing with a twig in the dirt in the jail courtyard. During this time, he developed a great passion for literature. Later, when he was working as a rickshaw puller, he had a chance encounter with Mahasweta Devi, who asked him to contribute to her journal *Bartika*. He has since then published eight novels, four volumes of memoirs and over fifty short stories. His essay ‘Is there Dalit writing in Bangla?’ which was translated into English by Meenakshi Mukerjee for *Economic and Political Weekly* launched him into mainstream prominence. He worked until recently as a cook with the Helen Keller Institute for the Deaf and Blind in West Bengal. He won the 2019 *Hindu Prize* for Non-Fiction for his autobiography *Itibritte Chandal Jiban* (translated into English as *Interrogating My Chandal Life: An Autobiography of a Dalit*).

Byapari’s writings aim not to evoke guilt or sympathy, but to reclaim the rights denied to large sections of the Indian population.



Mita Kapur is the founder and CEO of Siyahi, India’s leading literary consultancy. Her first book, *The F-Word*, is a food book, memoir and travelogue. She has edited *Chillies and Porridge: Writing Food*, an anthology of essays on food. As a freelance journalist, she writes regularly for different newspapers and magazines on social and development issues along with travel, food and lifestyle.

Mita has received many awards, including the Karamveer Puruskar (2009) for her work as a journalist in creating social awareness and for being the best literary consultant in the country, the Maharani Gayatri Devi Award for Woman of Excellence (2014), and the *Femina* Women Super Achiever Award (2018) at the World HRD Congress. She curated Masala Chowk, a food court for street food in Jaipur in 2018, and was a member of the executive council for Jawahar Kala Kendra from November 2016 – October 2018. She is also the literary director for the JCB Prize for Literature, the producer for the Woman Up! Summit, and Soul Connect Experiences, and was producer for Mountain Echoes – The Bhutan festival of Art, Literature and Culture (2010-2019).



Parvati Sharma (2019 Jury member) began her writing career with *The Dead Camel and Other Stories of Love*, which earned her praise for its depictions of love and sexuality in urban India. Her novella, *Close to Home*, was acclaimed as ‘tender, acute and pulsing with real Indian life’. She has also written a book for children, *The Story of Babur*, and, most recently, a historical biography, *Jahangir: An Intimate Portrait of a Great Mughal*. Sharma lives in New Delhi, where she has worked as a travel writer, editor and journalist.



Perumal Murugan was born in 1966 in Tiruchengode, Tamil Nadu. His first novel, *Eru Veyyil* (*Rising Heat*) was published in 1991. Since then, he has written ten novels, and five collections each of short stories and poems, as well as ten books of non-fiction relating to language and literature, in addition to editing several fiction and non-fiction anthologies. Several of his novels have been translated into English. He has also written a memoir, *Nizhal Mutrattu Ninaivugal*.

His novel, *Madhurobhagan* (2010) translated by Aniruddhan Vasudevan as *One Part Woman* (2013) found itself in the midst of a controversy in 2014 after vociferous protests by local caste-based groups alleging that the author had hurt community sentiments, defamed women, and outraged religious feelings. Soon after that, he publicly announced that he has given up writing. He decided to take up agriculture, an activity he enjoys very much. *Poonachi: Or the Story of a Black Goat*, also shortlisted for the 2018 JCB Prize for Literature was his first book after the self-ban. He now thinks of censorship as a creative challenge towards discovering new forms of expression.

Murugan lives in Namakkal and works as a professor of Tamil literature in a college.



Pradip Krishen (Chair of the 2019 jury) is a filmmaker who taught himself botany and became an ‘ecological gardener’, restoring degraded habitats with native plants, mostly in the desert regions of western India. He is currently Project Director of the Rao Jodha Desert Rock Park, Jodhpur, the Abha Mahal garden, Nagaur and Kishan Bagh, Jaipur, and he curates the garden of the Calico Museum, Ahmedabad. He has written *The Trees of Delhi: A Field Guide* and *The Jungle Trees of Central India: A Field Guide For Tree-Spotters*. His films include *Massey Sahib* (1986), *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones* (1988) and *Electric Moon* (1991).



Roshan Ali, 32, was born and raised in Bengaluru. He dropped out of college in 2008 and began working on a novel. To him, the role of a writer is emblematic of his generation as a whole: *“To dissent when the powers become more authoritarian in nature. It’s not just to directly oppose authority, but to celebrate freedom and pluralism and truth and justice. This in itself is a kind of victory.”*



Siddhant Shah is a Heritage Architect and Access Consultant who specializes in bridging the gap between Cultural Heritage and Disability, through his initiative #AccessforALL. Shah, a Stavros Niarchos Scholar has finished his MA in Heritage Management from the University of Kent (Athens Campus, Greece) and his bachelors in Architecture (BSSA-NMIMS, India) along with a Post graduate Diploma in Indian Aesthetics. It was when Siddhant’s mother became partially sighted; he started looking at the world in a completely different perspective, specifically observing the absence of accessibility for all. His experience of being in Greece and observing the museums’ inclusive planning is what also urged Shah to create “experience based prototypes” using the museum collection in India; in order to make the country’s culture-scape an INCLUSIVE one!!



NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT THE JCB PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

The JCB Prize for Literature was set up in 2018 to enhance the prestige of literary achievement in India and create greater visibility for contemporary Indian writing. The prize encourages translations and aims to introduce new audiences to works of Indian literature written in languages other than their own. It is funded by JCB and administered by the JCB Literature Foundation.

For information about the Prize, please visit: www.thejcbprize.org. For updates, look for [@thejcbprize](https://www.facebook.com/thejcbprize) on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

2018 WINNER

Jasmine Days by Benyamin, translated from the Malayalam by Shahnaz Habib.

2019 WINNER

The Far Field by Madhuri Vijay

ABOUT JCB

JCB is a leading global manufacturer of earthmoving and construction equipment. The JCB Group has been active in India since 1979. Through its subsidiary, JCB India Ltd, the British company today employs 5,000 people in India, and operates five state-of-the-art factories: in New Delhi, in Pune, and in Jaipur. Products made in these factories have been exported to more than 93 countries around the world. Over its journey of close to four decades in India, JCB, through its products has contributed significantly towards the development of Infrastructure in the country. JCB is committed to being a socially and ethically responsible company at both a global and local level. For the past 20 years, JCB India has been working across India with vulnerable communities through the Lady Bamford Charitable Trust with the aim of providing them access to a better quality of life through education, enhanced income, business and skill development, and supporting traditional arts, culture and heritage.