

Editorial Note

Review of Historical Studies (RHS), a peer-reviewed journal of social science, launched by the Department of History, Bankura University, is committed to explore social, political, economic and cultural history of India including the gender *history* in wider perspective. Our purpose is to accommodate a variety of subjects to present before our readers a panoptic understanding of the changing trends in historical writing. *RHS* also features research on the intense changes in the domain of politics, cultures and history of South Asia and beyond. This changing pattern has not only reshaped the history, but also encouraged scholars all around to discuss or interpret it in terms of divergent or convergent perspectives in a common platform. *RHS* would thus become a platform, where many voices are focused without any bias. In short, *RHS* will try to work constantly for a wider, more human and whole or total history as mentioned by Bloch in his magnum opus volume '*The Historian's Craft*'. It will help the teachers, scholars and students to get an updated view on the present state of history writing, evolved through the ages, always making a distinct departure from the earlier trends. Another objective will be to facilitate an interdisciplinary run-up between various branches of social science amidst constantly emerging theories in reconstructing the concept of history.

Review of Historical Studies also lays stress on oral history in order to supplement or counter the empirical researches. There has been an unending debate from the late twentieth century on the importance and sustainability of oral history. With the growing popularity of subaltern and postmodern studies the debate has got a momentum. Hence the Review of Historical Studies (*RHS*) would uphold oral history in its proper context to replete the lacunae, wherever that is, in historical studies.

The present issue contains eleven articles on multi-dimensional themes by the experts in their respective fields. Rupendra Kumar Chattopadhyay and Arkaprava Sarkar have explored geomorphological features, landscape and richness of mineral wealth, forest products and socio-cultural diversity of Durgapur-Asansol region. After an extensive field work, they have shown that in spite of some major sequential changes over a long course of time, forces of continuity have still played a major role in the society and economy of the locality. Debarati Ghosh has tried to identify the processes of state formation, vis- a-vis, the secondary state formation in the "bhum" territories evolved in the fringe areas of the Chhotanagpur plateau with special reference to Mallabhum.

The next article on the education system in pre-colonial Kochbihar is written by Partha Sen. He examines how Vaisnavism flourished in Kamata-Kochbihar and helped the spread of mass education among common people under the patronage of Koch King Maharaja Nara Narayan. The Zamindars of Rangpur took initiative to introduce English education after the coming of the English East India Company with the financial support from the Koch kings.

Nikhilesh Guha's contribution on "Rajendra Nath Mookherjee and Business Enterprise in Bengal" deserves special mention particularly when the question of development of West Bengal has become a watchword in the recent days.

The colonial concept of so called backwardness of medieval India has been challenged by Amit Dey. He has analysed the ideas of cultural pluralism and works of Dara Shukoh, Tagore and Azad in a broader context and tried to resolve the most complex issues of the present day world. Professor Dey has shown that many saints and thinkers in India, before and after this liberal and eclectic prince, made sincere efforts to promote mutual understanding between different communities which in its turn created an environment of mutual appreciation.

So far as the gender histories are concerned, Koushiki Dasgupta explores the nuances of writing an intellectual history of women within the existing historical narratives of gender and society, analysing the writings of a 'post-colonial' woman writer named Qurratulin Hyder--once a part of the Progressive Writers' circle in Pakistan. Her essay looks into the problems of locating women as 'thinker', focuses on the institutional constraints that have denied an autonomous ideological agency to women and attempts to grapple with the question of locating women's writing inclusive with broader historical scholarship in India and Pakistan. Aparna Bandopadhyay has situated women history both in the Indian and the international context. It outlines the evolving conceptual frames of women's history, highlighting the shifts and redefinitions in the perspectives and paradigms underpinning feminist historical scholarship. Finally, she locates women's history within the institutionalised teaching-learning curriculum of history, highlights its continued marginality in institutional praxis, and exposes the persistent androcentrism of the discipline.

"Reassessing Women Role in the Communist Leadership: A case study of Mrs.Usha Rani Chakraborty in Midnapore" by Tapan Hazra belongs to an important genre of study. Hazra seeks to cover up on the communist leader, Mrs. Usha Rani Chakraborty and her skillful leadership, her endless inspiration to the women cadres and her lifelong sacrifice to the vertical expansion of the Communist party.

There are two other articles in this issue, one on "Darjeeling District in the study of Regional History" by Anil Kumar Sarkar, which critically deals with the historiography of Darjeeling and the other on "The History of Bankura Sammilani Medical School and Hospital: A Study" by Sanjoy Mukherjee, addressing the question of public health in the colonial and Post-colonial Bankura. Dr. Mukherjee, an established scholar in the regional history of Bengal, deals with various cases of public health and concludes that without individual enterprise it would have been impossible for the British government to set up an efficient health network of its own in a vast country like India. He tries to explore how the Bankura Sammilani Medical School and Hospital, situated in a remote corner of Rarh Bengal, played a very crucial and important role of in this regard.

The article of Bidisha Chakraborty is about public records and archives. She makes a few observations in this field as an archivist. We come to know from her short article that ‘all records are documents but all documents are not records’, a lesson that is very crucial for historical research.

There are two book reviews in the present issue. The first one is made by Tista Das, on ‘*The Partition of Bengal: Fragile Borders and New Identities*’ authored by Debjani Sengupta. Tista has mentioned here, how, the author tried to focus exhaustively the vast body of literature that the event of the Partition of India in 1947 has produced. The other review is done by Kaustubh Mani Sengupta on Ranjit Sen’s *Birth of Colonial Town and Calcutta in Colonial Transition*, covering a period of almost three hundred years (eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries). Kaustubh Mani Sengupta has taken up four issues (Geopolitics, Calcutta as a power centre, Trade and Business in Calcutta, and Nationalist Politics in Calcutta) discussed in these volumes to look at the way Dr. Sen has delineated the history of Calcutta.

As the editor, it is my pleasant duty to record sincere thanks to the referees who examined the articles and made valuable comments. We would also like to thank to all the members of the Advisory Board, Editorial Board and all the Contributors of this issue. I must express my sincere gratitude to our Hon“ble Vice Chancellor, Professor Deb Narayan Bandopadhyay, for his kind cooperation and active support in almost all aspects of this academic exercise. I also thank our Registrar and Dean of Arts who always encourage our department. Finally, I am thankful to all the faculty members of the department of History and the System Analyst of our University who have spared their valuable time and efforts to come out with this issue.

Moreover, the Department of History eagerly looks forward to magnanimous help and cooperation of the competent authority and all well-wishers of the Bankura University to carry on our academic activities.

Sankar Kumar Biswas

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