



“Subaltern Studies and Beyond”

Symposium under IQAC, DAULAT RAM COLLEGE

Call for Paper

The Department of History, Daulat Ram College is pleased to announce a symposium on Subaltern Studies, which will be held on 12-13 February, 2019 at Daulat Ram College, New Delhi. Early career academics and research scholars are invited to send proposals for papers addressing one of the themes (but not restricted to) outlined in the concept note.

Proposals for the papers should include a title, abstract of the paper and a short CV. The abstract should not exceed 300 words. The proposals should be submitted via email no later than 21st November 2018. Accepted abstracts will be notified by 1st December 2018, and the deadline for submission of full paper is 3rd January 2019.

Please send your abstract here: symposium.drc2019@gmail.com

Registration Fee: 1000 rupees

Kindly note:

- * All submissions should be the original work of the author(s), and should not have been published anywhere or submitted for publication/conference.
- * Guidelines for Full paper submission will be provided after the acceptance of the abstracts.
- * No TA/DA will be paid for attending the symposium.
- * For any queries related to the symposium write here: symposium.drc2019@gmail.com

Concept Note

The school of History writing known as the Subaltern collective became popular in the 1980s with its claim to give voices to those who had been missing from histories, i.e., 'the subaltern'. Being subaltern was based on marginalization in terms of caste, class, race, gender, language and culture etc. Their initial efforts were hailed for democratizing and decolonizing the process of history writing by focusing on the invisible and the silenced, and breaking away from both Neo-Imperialist and Marxist interpretations of Indian history. The project aimed to give voices and agencies to the subaltern, historically by locating alternate sources or by redefining traditional sources. It published a series of edited books, with contributions mostly from scholars either trained or based in universities in the west.

However, this school went through substantial methodological revisions in the later volumes, wherein the boundaries between the elite and the subaltern became narrower, and the colonial narratives of the subaltern experience was slowly replaced by narration of the new elites with similar assumptions and projections. This led to criticism from many quarters in the historical circle, and even from within the subaltern collective. Some questions have been raised by the critics of the project. Is it really possible to fully break away from the colonial narrative? How do we abandon western paradigms such as Marxism, and seek a nativist approach for writing histories of the subaltern? The project has been accused of replacing one western paradigm with another, such as privileging postmodernism in locating the production of symbols and meanings of marginalization in a society over material experience of poverty and inequality. Is academic history writing with its reliance on a paraphernalia of 'objective sources' useful in writing the histories of the marginalized? Has the subaltern project succeeded in subverting academic history writing and the colonial archive by 'reading against the grain' to produce non-colonial and non-elitist histories of the marginalized? Has the project also in the process marginalized issues such as gender and sexuality for various reasons?

The proposed symposium is primarily meant for early career research scholars, and therefore it will expose them to the subaltern project as well as its reception amongst the historical community. It would enable them to understand the origin, trajectory, themes, and influences on history writing in general since its inception. At the same time, it would also

attempt to highlight the limitations of this school and criticisms that it has received from other scholars. While the broader focus would be on South Asian History, the relevance/irrelevance/resurgence of the subaltern project should be examined significantly as a global intellectual movement due to its popularity and reception among the academic community outside the global south.

Some of the proposed themes are as follows:

- The category 'subaltern'
- Gramscian idea of subaltern
- Historical sources and the history of the subaltern
- Subaltern as a political construct
- Representing the subaltern: new and old
- Subaltern agency and voices
- Subaltern sexualities
- Subaltern history versus history from below
- Subaltern history versus popular history
- Critique of subaltern historical claims and methodologies
- The subaltern and the postcolonial
- Beyond Subaltern history writing