



भारतीय सामाजिक विज्ञान अनुसंधान परिषद
(मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय)
पूर्वी क्षेत्रीय केन्द्र

INDIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
(Ministry of Human Resource Development)
EASTERN REGIONAL CENTRE

1/R-1 Baishnabghata Patuli Township, Kolkata 700 094

Ref.: ICSSR-ERC/2018-19/40

Date: 09.10.2018

To
Dr. Nibedita Chakrabarti
Principal
Victoria Institution (College)
78-B, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Road
Kolkata – 700 009


Dear Dr. Chakrabarti,

We refer to your proposal, dated 24.09.2018 requesting funds for organizing the fourth Series of Extension Lectures for Undergraduate Students of Political Science and Allied Social Sciences, by the Department of Political Science, Victoria Institution (College), Kolkata.

We are happy to inform you that a lump sum of Rs.20,000/- (Rupees twenty thousand only) has been sanctioned towards financial support for the series of lectures. We shall now request you to send a formal request for release of the grant of Rs.20,000/- and name of the payee so that we can send you a cheque for the amount. We shall also require a short report on this programme along with Utilization Certificate for the amount sanctioned soon after it is over.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Saibal Kar)
Hony. Director

Academic Report
On
4th Series of Extension Lectures for Students of
Political Science & Allied Social Sciences
Organized by
Department of Political Science
Victoria Institution (College), Kolkata
Supported by
The Indian Council of Social Science Research –
Eastern Regional Centre, Kolkata



Introduction:

The department of Political Science, Victoria Institution (College) has successfully completed conducting the fourth series of Extension lectures for Students of Political Science and Allied Social Sciences (2018-2019) with financial assistance received from the Indian Council of Social Science Research – Eastern Regional Centre, Kolkata. This year, the series comprised of six lectures beginning in December 2018 and ending in March 2019. The lectures evenly spanned across the honours syllabus of Political Science prescribed by the University of Calcutta. Thematically, the issues were chosen in such a fashion so that the students get acquainted with the finer nuances of the discipline and are suitably introduced to the essential multidisciplinary nature of the subject. Since the lectures are meant to supplement the understanding of the undergraduate students, all the esteemed resource persons not only kept their lectures suited to the needs and capacity of the students but also simultaneously pushed the boundaries by invoking interdisciplinary temper, raising critical enquiries and presenting newer discourses related to their respective themes. As teachers, we were pleased to witness the ways in which our students received the said lectures, discussed and deliberated upon each issue and most importantly raised questions. Their active participation in each of the session has emboldened our desire to conduct similar series in the coming years with your kind assistance. We took a step further this by trying to supplement one of the topics (*Naxalbari: An Overview*) of the series, by organizing a documentary film show on the same titled *S.D.: His Life and Times* immediately after the lecture. The idea was to enable our students with a better understanding about an issue by using the audio-visual medium as a serious pedagogical tool.

We are deeply indebted to the Indian Council of Social Science Research – Eastern Regional Centre, Kolkata for not only lending us financial support to conduct such a series but also for showing faith on our efforts. Conducting this series would have been impossible without the incessant advice and cooperation we received from the Principal of our college. We are also thankful to the office of the Director of ICSSR – ERC. The purpose of this series was to provide our students with a much needed exposure to the newer discourses of the discipline. We thank all the esteemed resource persons for humbly accepting our invitation to deliver lectures and doing so with unparalleled sincerity and erudition. Last but not the least we thank Sri Asit Mondal for providing us with timely technical support throughout the series.

Detailed Academic Report:

1. From Liberal to Neoliberal State: A Trajectory

The inaugural lecture was delivered by Professor Sobhanlal Dattagupta, former Surendranth Banerjee Chair of Political Science, University of Calcutta on December 4th 2018 on the evolution of the idea of state, its transformation from the liberal to neoliberal. Professor Dattagupta began by outlining the transition by earmarking the major historical moments which entailed changes across polity, economy and society. Beginning with a brief overview about the pre-modern era state (absolutist), Professor Dattagupta delved into the question of political modernity. The emergence of modern state was thus placed within the ambit of factors like separation of state from religion (idea of secular), separation between state and government, constitutionalism, republicanism, citizenship etc. Emergence of the liberal (modern) state also facilitated the birth of the capitalist political economy which soon confronted a crisis of its own making. Liberal state thus got mired into its first crisis as a result of the capitalist boom and was left with no choice but to evolve and transform its nature to what came to be known as the 'new-liberal state'. The ideas of Locke made a natural progression towards the ideas of Bentham, Mill and Laski, Hobhouse later. The new liberal state did away with the restrictive idea of the state (the concept of negative liberty) and remodeled state as the ultimate provider of welfare measures to the teeming million thus giving flesh to the concept of social-welfarism. Soon social welfarism was found to be faltering on the threshold of development induced growth which resulted once again in upholding the magic like role of 'capital'. Political theorists like Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, Robert Nozick etc. ushered in the idea of neoliberalism which once again put reason on the virtue of

‘rolling back of the state’. Thus the transformation of state from new-liberal to neoliberal saw the simultaneous emergence of an exclusionary, transactional and a purely economic state.

2. Citizenship: Evolution of the Idea

The second lecture of the series was delivered by Professor Shibashis Chatterjee of the department of International Relations, Jadavpur University on the evolution of the idea of citizenship on December 8th, 2018. Professor Chatterjee began by addressing the notion of citizenship from the perspective of identity, statehood, entitlements and individual rights. He thereafter outlined the evolution of the concept of citizenship, beginning with the Greek-Roman period to the times of Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Rousseau to that of Bodin and Hobbes. The journey of citizenship to a highly legal concept revolving around the state authority and its people(citizens) was elaborated sufficiently. A good part of the lecture elaborated on the collapse of the feudal order in Europe and the advent of mercantilism which in turn shaped the modern notion of citizenship to a substantial degree. The relationship between the modern notion of citizenship and individualism was highlighted as was the fundamental shift which was visible - people were becoming active participants in the order of things, from merely remaining passive recipients.

Having outlined the evolution of the concept, Professor Chatterjee raised the issue of citizenship being a technique attempting to bring about a leveling across population groups. Citizenship, he said, tries to balance out over multiple layers of identity; it subsumes all other identities into its fold of state identity alone. The question which he raised therefore was that, whether citizenship is sturdy enough to hold disparate multiple identities together? Thus, fundamental questions about the project of citizenship were being raised from different political positions like the

multiculturalists, the feminists, the neo-republicans and the debate between the advocates of globalization and cosmopolitanism versus restricted citizenship.

3. Proactive Judiciary, Passive State? – Revisiting India

The third lecture was delivered by Professor Dipankar Sinha from the department of Political Science, University of Calcutta on 25th February 2019. Professor Sinha, began addressing the issue by placing the question within the constitutional ethos of a harmonious relationship between the legislature, executive and judiciary branches of the Indian government and that of an emerging psycho-sociological trend among India's population that the judiciary is alone capable of greater and effective empathy than the executive and legislature. While the former assertion is an institutional/legal truth, the later observation is reflective of the political behavior of the Indian citizenry, and it is therefore within this theoretical space between the two positions that the question / enquiry / reflection about a pro-active judiciary, its efficacy arises. Professor Sinha very effectively, classified the tumultuous relationship between the judicial arm of the state and its executive-legislative counterpart into four periods, namely: phase of establishment (1950-1967); period of friction (post 1965 – death of Nehru); period of judicial rehabilitation (1978-1989) and period of consolidation and image enhancement. Major trends evident during the above mentioned periods were / are a result of the workings of the state, prevalent politics and democracy. The first period, the Nehruvian era made parliament as the chief custodian of the constitution. It is this period when the provision of judicial review was introduced and also saw the famous case of A.K. Gopalan (1950), Bela Banerjee versus state of West Bengal which are instructive about this period's trend. Judiciary played its prescribed role but remained subservient to the legislature and

executive. Post Nehru era, brought Indira Gandhi at the helm and in terms of her relationship with the judiciary this period has been rightly named as the period of friction (1967 Onwards). 42nd amendment of the Indian constitution, Keshuvananda bharati case, R.C. Cooper case etc. very rightfully are instructive of the high-handedness displayed by the executive vis-à-vis the judiciary of India. The period of judicial rehabilitation (1978-1989) was a period which introduced an extremely significant and critical element in legal affairs, the Public Interest Litigation. It is PIL which was regarded by the citizens as a democratic tool in the hands of the common man, to be used timely and often against any infringement of rights guaranteed by the constitution. On the other hand, this paved the way for the judiciary to become proactive. The last period beginning from 1989 marked a shift. Judicial activism moved from being legal to being highly opinionated, politicized and ideological.

4. Gandhi and his Idea of the State

The fourth lecture was delivered by Professor Tapan Kumar Chattyopadhyay, former professor at the department of Political Science, University of Calcutta on March 1st 2019. Professor Chattyopadhyay had divided his lecture into two parts; he began by presenting Gandhi's critique of the modern state and then went on to outline Gandhi's idea of an ideal state.

Gandhi's critique of the modern state rested on its impersonal, extremely technocratic – bureaucratic nature, amoral stance, surveillance which together muzzles the spirit of community based living of an individual. Modern state according to Gandhi was also fraught with a mechanical relationship between authority and the citizens which scuttled all kinds of individual growth. The second part of the lecture was a veritable revisiting the seminal text, the Hind Swaraj, wherein Gandhi had presented his idea of an ideal state. Larger share of the people in decision making, the concepts of self rule and enlightened anarchy, emphasis on man being a moral being and not

merely a legal being were highlighted in the second half. The lecture was drawn to a closure with a brief discussion about the various ways Gandhi scholars have viewed him and his relevance in modern day politics.

5. Power, Authority, Legitimacy

The fifth lecture was delivered by Professor Manabi Majumdar of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata on March 15th 2019. Professor Majumdar began by elaborating independently the notions of power, authority and legitimacy, and then went on to weave their inter-relationship in its various nuances. The main elements of her lecture rested on the traditional definition of power (Hobbesian); various faces of power (decision making, agenda setting and thought control); the double faced nature of authority, sources of legitimacy; Max Weber's classification of authority etc. her lecture made a very special reference to the ways in patriarchy utilizes power and here she mentioned the work of Naira Kabir and her concept of power within and power over. Professor Majumdar concluded by saying a few words about the way, power – authority - legitimacy, as an inter-relational concept has been viewed by Michel Foucault

6. Naxalbari: An Overview

The final lecture of the series was delivered by Professor Pradip Basu of the department of Political Science, Presidency University on March 25th 2019. Professor Basu presented an extremely compelling and graphical view of the various phases, aspects and characters of the Naxalbari movement which according to his opinion had an everlasting impact on Indian politics. Beginning with the inner party struggle within the folds of communist movement centering around the question of ideology to the eventual split in the communist party, the irreconcilable differences which actuated the split to the various stages of the Naxalbari movement, the positional difference between the debaters and the activists (based on the work of scholar Sanjay Seth) were dwelt upon

by Professor Basu. He concluded by effectively pointing out and explaining the positive as well as negative impacts that the said movement had on Indian politics. He categorized the natural tendency to militancy and anarchism, lack of proper understanding of the rural political economy of Indian rural population, a fuzzy notion of class and caste dimension of the Indian rural populace as major drawbacks and elemental flaws of the movement. On the other hand, professor Basu enlisted the following as the positive contributions which the movement made for posterity, they being: it presented an alternative to electoral and vote bank politics; the question of poverty received the importance which was long overdue, and the politics of selflessness and sacrifice. It was this lecture, which was followed by a documentary film screening for the students so that it not only helps them appreciate the issue of Naxalbari better but also exposes them suitably to the politics of representation in a very elementary manner. The documentary film that was screened was based on the polemic radical left leader, poet and columnist Saroj Dutta. The title of the film was 'S.D.: his Life and Times'. This film screening was financially supported by the college.

All the lectures were followed by extensive rounds of deliberation which saw an unprecedented participation of the students, faculty members of the department of political Science and also from other departments.

ALBUM



Professor Sobhanlal Dattagupta speaking on *From Liberal to Neoliberal State: A Trajectory*.



Professor Shibashis Chatterjee speaking on the *Idea of Citizenship*



Professor Dipankar Sinha speaking on *Proactive Judiciary, Passive State?: Revisiting India*



Professor Tapan Kumar Chattopadhyay speaking on *Gandhi's Idea of State*



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Professor Manabi Majumdar speaking on *Power, Authority and Legitim*



Professor Pradip Basu speaking on *Naxalbari: An Overview*

Participation of the Students





