



NATIONAL SEMINAR
on
**DECOLONISING THE INDIAN MIND: EXPLORING
POSSIBILITIES**

Organized by

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
TRIPURA UNIVERSITY
(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)**

March 15-16, 2019

DECOLONISING THE INDIAN MIND: EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES

CONCEPT NOTE OF THE SEMINAR

Mahatma Gandhi's 'Hind Swaraj' is a significant and outstanding vision on decolonizing the Afro-Asian countries. However, Gandhi's vision for Swaraj seems to be elusive as even after seventy years of independence, our country has not been able to free itself from the colonial structures. Although India acquired political independence decades ago, our minds still remain colonized. Through the practices emanating from the colonized mind, we reproduce and reinforce the colonial structures and ideology. The remnants of imposed norms of colonialism coerce our everyday life and activity in multiple ways. The political hegemony established by the colonizers has left behind colonial mode of knowledge and an entrenched colonial worldview. As we know, colonial arrogance was partly driven by colonizer's faith in Western modernity rooted in reason and science; often the colonial Weltanschauung rooted in science was pitched against the native's Weltanschauung rooted in religious dogmas, faith and beliefs.

Colonial rule deeply impacted the national character and various mechanisms were deployed by colonial masters to assert and legitimize the civilizational superiority in the name of 'civilizing' mission and, as a result the colonial rule was justified as a white man's burden to civilize the barbaric East. The process of colonialism, in Ashish Nandy's words, 'helps generalize the concept of modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category'. In the long drawn colonial rule and, thereafter, colonized developed an inferiority complex and redefine themselves through the colonial lenses. Unfortunately, this trend continues and, at times, with greater acceleration in post-Independence India, to reaffirm the colonial Weltanschauung as reflected in the westoxicated narratives heavily drawn on western concepts and philosophical traditions.

Aim of this seminar is not to exclude or ignore each and every aspect of colonial heritage. The spirit is that, as Gandhi once remarked, 'I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any of them'. Similar, concerns were reflected in Bal Gangadhar Tilak's conception of 'Swaraj'. Tilak ardently affirmed that the greatness of future rests on the greatness of past. A nation can't attain glory by disowning its past



and mindlessly following the colonizers. Tilak believed that India's strength lies in its religious fervor and spirituality. There has been an abiding concern regarding the issue of 'decolonization' in modern Indian social thought.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

The proposed seminar is a prelude to engage with the colonial constructs that rules Indian mindset. The main objectives of the are-

- To interrogate how both historically and contemporarily certain normative conception of legitimate culture, values, beliefs, and practices exhibiting the reminisce of colonialism enter into our everyday life and, at times manifest or latently exhibits contempt for culture, values, beliefs, and practices that are Indian.
- To look at how a conscious attempt on the part of colonizers to create a consensus that was absent, has now become the only feasible interpretation of social and intellectual possibilities.
- To understand how everyday life in India is governed by the 'cultural arbitrariness' of the colonial times and, in such a scenario, citizens continues to suffer 'symbolic violence' in their own country. When this everyday reality is juxtaposed to the idea of 'freedom', it is worth examining, whether we have attained freedom in true senses.

This seminar proposes to engage with the dialectics of hope and despair, challenges and possibilities. Hope here represents the possibility inherent in the indigenous thoughts and tradition; whereas despair reckons with the captive minds rooted and engrossed with the colonial mindset, values and beliefs- attempting to harvest Indian fruits from Western seeds. While taking a critical and reflexive stance at the contemporary Indian scenario, the proposed seminar would examine the possibility and feasibility of decolonizing Indian mind and exploring possibilities to realise the true potential of our nation. It will be a collective attempt, to revisit the categories through which we view our culture and contribute in creating a spiritually elevated Indian society.

SUB-THEMES OF THE SEMINAR

- **Rediscovering India's Culture and Civilization through Indigenous Epistemology**
- **Decolonization and the Idea of Nationalism in Post-Independent India**
- **Genesis, Prognosis and Practice of Hind Swaraj**
- **Deconstructing the Nexus of Knowledge and Power in Contemporary India**
- **Decolonizing methodology for resurgence of research**

REGISTRATION FOR PARTICIPATION

The seminar will have inter-disciplinary invited speakers working on the aforesaid theme of the seminar. Beside, scholars, faculties and students are requested to participate in the seminar and have dialogic engagement with the speakers of the seminar.

Registration Fee: Nil (On first-come basis, prior confirmation through Email @ rajeevdubey@tripurauniv.in, will be appreciated)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Rajeev Dubey
(Organizing Secretary)
Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology
Tripura University
Email: rajeevdubey@tripurauniv.in
Phone: +91-8974040172

Prof. K. N. Jena
(Convener)
Professor, Department of Political Science &
Controller of Examination
Tripura University