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## Editorial

Quality of research publication has gathered a salience seen never before. Today, terms such as impact factor, double blind peer review, ABCD journals, Scopus and Web of Sciences have captured the imagination of the academia as never before. This has ensured mainstreaming of 'quality' in research publications. The University Grants Commission, which is the apex body of Higher Education in India mandated with the task of ensuring quality in higher education, has come up with the list of approved journals.

Quality of research publication and hierarchisation of research publication on the basis of indexing and impact factor have its own advantage and disadvantages. No doubt, indexation and hierarchisation of journals on the basis of their quality and citations have improved quality of publication. However, in some other way, it is an anachronism in the sense that research by its very nature needs to be contributing something new to the body of knowledge. Whether a research publication fulfils this criterion only on the basis of its accession and indexing to reputed consortium controlled by Print Capitalism or genuinely does so irrespective of its accession and indexation also needs to be thought of. The larger issue that has emerged in this mad scramble for quality publication is the silent suffering and death of many of the old reputed journals which had their in-house publication by old research institutes or old universities and their department. This point needs to be highlighted in greater details.

In old days, Asiatic Society of Bengal was publishing its own journal *JASB*. It is now coming out in new series. There are many universities and museums which had their own research publications. The Indian Museum had its own *Bulletin*. Odisha State Museum has its own Publication called Orissa Historical research Journal. These journals contributed immensely to our knowledge. These publications suffered some lacunae, such formatting, citation, foot-noting and end noting but they carried significant discoveries of inscriptions, icons and sites. These journals provided huge body of new data.

On the other hand the indexed journals today focus more on grand narrative, social and cultural formations. In the process new discoveries, reporting of a new inscription, images, a archaeological sites never find space in the indexed journals which focus on theories. In the process, it pushed to background these significant aspects of historical research which old journals of universities, museum and oriental institutes were performing. To a discernible observer, it is quite visible that 'quality journals' has to do more with indexation controlled by print capitalist than with the quality of research and its significance to various levels of audience, such local, sub-regional, regional, national and global. In the name of developing a metrics, a universal yardstick has been developed by print capitalists ignoring that social sciences produce knowledge for different levels of audience.

Another outcome of salience of quality is the possible languishing of book publication. Journals had its origin in natural sciences. But these journals

were largely the labours of editors. Peer reviews of the journal *Nature* started only in 1973. It was editors who went through manuscripts and decided the publication worth of a journal. Double Blind Peer review is good but very often their reviews fail to see the argument of the author and are very often negative. In natural sciences, book publication is secondary while in social sciences and Humanities book publication is considered to be an ultimate barometer of your intellectual labour and creativity. With the privileging of journals over book and book chapter publication, publication of books will suffer in the long run.

However, the above ruse is not to justify shabby publication but to bring to fore the oligopolistic business of world publication with its own certification system. A research publication must contribute something new; it must bring to fore new data, evidence; should make a new argument; must be neatly formatted and every contributor must adhere to these ethical considerations. The indexing journals adhere to these principles but their business standards includes some and exclude many. In the process, production of local knowledge would suffer.

*Kanpur Historiographer* comes up with the Ninth Volume of its publication for its readers. This issue contains eight articles on diverse range of topic. However, identity, communal politics of partition time predominate the volume. The first article explores the genealogy of Maqdumi family who played key role in the spread of Islam in medieval Kerala. The dominance of Indian Oceanic trade from 8<sup>th</sup> century CE by Arab diaspora provided initial context of spread of Islam in Kerala which received patronage from local rulers in view of its association with trade and profit. The *Maqдумis* hailed from south Yemen and they came to Kerala coast and settled in *Ma'bar* (Coromandal-Tamil Nadu) and another in Kayalpattanam (Tamil Nadu). The author then narrates the life trajectory of Zainuddin Maaqdumi of Kochi who assumed Maqdumi qadi in 15<sup>th</sup> century. Under his leadership Ponnani became the centre of Islamic learning in Kerala. He played an instrumental role in the spread of Islam in Kerala and the Sufi route he adopted for spreading Islam emphasized on spiritual practices of love and surrender. Ponnani in Kerala emerged as major centre of Islamic learning under Zainuddin. The article then explained the specificities of this Ponnain Model of education which combined the religious, philosophical, metaphysical and material knowledge in its comprehensive course structure spanning over 15 years.

Aditi Govil's *The European Merchant as the 'Other'* raises an important historiographical issue i.e the Moghul's state's attitude towards foreign traders vis-a vis Indian traders. The initial hostility and indifference of the Moghuls towards the EIC was shaped initially by their memory and experience of the coercive and piratical activities of the Portuguese. This also shaped the oppositions of the Indian merchants towards the British in its initial years of operation. The author cites many other instances of the Moghul's proactive involvements in maritime coast and trade of India in order to dispute with

Ashin Dasgupta's formulation of the Moghul state's maritime policy as being characterised by absentmindedness or indifference.

'Communal Accord of Muslim League: A case study of Bengal' by Dr Fatima Rahman explores the political manoeuvre of one of the wildest political leaders of India i.e Fazlal Haq. Using Linlithgow Paper extensively, she has brought to light the balancing acts of Haq in chreterinng a pro peasant legislations at a time Congress was becoming a militant opposition leader trying to project the ministry as a communal one. Haq's adroit use of the Muslim League in his endeavour to consolidate his position in the face of the Congress opposition speaks volumes of Haq's maturednes as a politician and head of Benagal provincial government in the last decade of colonial Bengal.

'Partition of India with Gandhi's theme of communal harmony' by Baladi Chirade highlights the Gandhian position of India as land of all religionist and dangerous consequence of identity politics based on religion. The very idea of creating modern nation state on the basis of religious identity was abhorring and impractical for Gandhi. According to Gandhi, the Muslim League was engaged in a separatist politics which had no precedence in Indian history. Gandhi said, 'You are trying to do something, which was not attempted even during the Muslim rule of 200 years. We shall not allow you to do it.' The fact that this fear turned out to be reality leaving the body polity of India fractured, merely underscores the fault lines that exist among communities in India, which could be easily exploited and used for grabbing power.

Buddhism and Social outlook of Indian Society by Chandrakant Jamadar has looked into the Hinduisation of Neo Buddhism with importation of Hindu rituals and practices. The article argues that neo Buddhism had emerged as a rational religion fostering a positive identity for its followers. he challenge is to deal with the marginalisation of so-called lower castes and their inferorised self-images which play an important role in constituting their identities. The revolutionary potential of fostering a positive identity to Dalits of India by Neo-Buddhism would not be realised if such Buddhism imitates the religious practices of Hinduism, the author argues.

Hero myths and communal overtones in Colonial India by Atul Kumar Shulka delves into the ways identity politics are integrally related to the project of a kind of history writing which was characterized by hypothesis that big men and their actions shaped the course of history. Communal politics and separate politics of Muslim league created their own heroes and myth. The invention of an imagined political community by invoking past created new icons in history.

New trends in international politics including terrorism & unilateralism by Dr. Viyai pal charters a new theme in this volume which is not organically linked with previous essays. However, terrorism, especially religious terrorism in some of the Muslim majority country also brings up the issue of use and abuse of religion by both fringe and mainstream elements in various countries. The last article on social classes reflected in the inscriptions of Chamba by doctoral scholar Roshi Charak uses epigraphic records of Chamba to articulate

the ways social identities and occupational class became visible in the social landscape of Chamba in medieval Himachal Pradesh.

I hope this volume receives positive feedbacks from the readers.

Umakanta Mishra

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