

Professor Manjumdar's pointed reference to 'social sciences' and 'competent social science personnel' in umpteen fields is welcome pointer for all of us. His intentions or commitment to 'social science' may be gauged from his own statements: *'The need for more competent social science personnel has been felt particularly acutely in the context of tribal rehabilitation and welfare; 'competent practitioners in social sciences are needed in the context of 'rural development, slum clearance, problems of human relations and cultural dynamics'; 'we can build for the future if we know what to avoid and what to lay our hands on. That is what the social scientists are expected to do'.* Thus, we may infer that specialised disciplines of sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, etc., may not deliver the goods, instead there is a need of *unitary social science* not only to comprehend the problems holistically and realistically but also to handle them practically. The threads of the contemporary *social science movement* may also be picked up from this Presidential Address of Professor D. N. Majumdar.

**Rajeshwar Prasad**

**Chief Editor**

- - - - **From the President's Desk**

Dear friends and respected authors,

It gives me immense academic pleasure to present before all of you the Special Volume of 'Social Science Gazetteer' on 'Challenges Before Social Sciences'. I am grateful to my friend and a renowned Social Scientist Professor N. Rajaram to act as 'Guest Editor' of this Special Volume. His critical remarks on articles and depth of understanding about Social Sciences in terms of theory, concepts, ideology and pedagogy can be accepted by me as 'sustainable Knowledge Capital'. Thanks, Dear Professor N. Rajaram for accepting the request to direct this Special Volume from the team of Indian Social Science Association.

Friends, before making comment on the world of Social Sciences I would like to inform you with pleasure that Special Issue (1,2,3) of Volume 19 (2) on 'Indian Sociological Thought - Continuity and Change' published by ISSA have appeared in the 'book-market' or 'Knowledge-market' in the form of a book "Re-Imagining Indian Sociology". The book is published by M/s Rawat Publications, Jaipur - a publisher of 'International Repute'. ISSA is grateful to the enlightened team of M/s. Rawat Publications headed by Shri Kailash Rawat. The set of three issues of Social Science Gazetteer on 'Indian Sociological Thought' have also been highly appreciated by the leadership of Indian Sociological Society. I am grateful to Professor Maitrayee Chaudhuri, the former President of Indian Sociological Society and her team for appreciating the efforts of ISSA. ISSA wish that this academic coordination between ISS and ISSA will continue in future also.

The present volume of special nature is associated with what is happening in the field of social sciences in the 'era of insecurity' institutionalised by neo-liberal order. My understanding about Social Sciences, by and large, is organically linked with those conversations

which I had with Professor Rajeshwar Prasad and Professor B. D. Soni (during student days), Professor N. K. Singhi (my research supervisor) and a large number of Sociologists, literary figures and political leadership. In my humble opinion 'Social Sciences' constitute a "movement" by which the values of the enlightenment are produced, consumed and distributed. It is a fact that Social Sciences have not led to revolutions, but it is also a fact that without Social Sciences, no revolution can occur. Patrick Baert (Philosophy of the Social Sciences) has rightly stated that philosophy of the Social Sciences is a meta theoretical enterprise in so far as it reflects on the practice of social research (Baert: 2005). Since any 'meta theory' goes beyond all formal academic disciplines of specialised nature, Social Sciences become part of citizen's consciousness as well as of common sense. The ideas associated with Frankfurt School are its examples which have given rise to 'public intellectualism' and activism of the younger generation. These roles of Social Sciences have never been appreciated by States because they are always eager to control citizens through authoritarian means. Althusser has rightly said that education, religion, culture, polity, public opinion act as ideological state apparatuses which extend security to relations of production behind a 'Shield' provided by the repressive state apparatuses namely the coercive institutions such as army, police and judiciary. Alan Swingewood in "A Short History of Sociological Thought", while discussing Althusser's ideas critically examines the roles of ideology (Swingewood; 1991). In Contemporary world several nations - states have extended the structures of coercive institutions so that theological revivalism and organised corruption could be used by polity, bureaucracy and Corporate Capitalists for their multi-dimensional benefits. Social Sciences are supposed to oppose these occurrences. State authorities are aware of the roles of Social Sciences, thus their efforts are there to marginalize Social Sciences and produce a debate about roles of 'Science, Mathematics, Technology and Management' on the one hand and 'Social Sciences', 'Humanities' and 'Liberal Arts' on the other. This debate in deeper sense is about dilemma between "Skill" and "Critical Conscience", between 'machine' and 'man' and finally between 'economic development' and 'human development'. Corporate Capitalism insists on 'skill' as 'education' which is

conceptually incorrect and it also deliberately undermines the expansion of 'Critical Consciousness' because phenomenon of Critical Consciousness gives rise to radical and transformative movements. In the context of South Asia particularly 'Social Sciences', if they perform mainstream roles in the system of knowledge then communal identities and sectarian /Cultural nationalism may be intellectually threatened.

Professor Rajeshwar Prasad, once, stated that Social Sciences will remain live because the philosophical foundation of Social Sciences is 'Conversation'. Professor B. D. Soni, during discussion argued that Social Sciences means internalisation of Scientific Spirit into personality in order to address 'social illusion' which pose threat to the social life of oppressed people. Professor N. K. Singhi in a discussion at University of Rajasthan treated Social Sciences as 'Knowledge institution for socio - cultural turn in the interest of those who wish to have 'Non-Violent' society.

These memories of mine have become one of the reasons to initiate discussions with ISSA officials and Professor N. Rajaram to enlighten academia about "what is happening in the field of Social Sciences". The present Special Volume of 'Social Science Gazetteer' is an outcome of such cooperative discussion. The articles in this Special Volume will enlighten all of us and academic community to critically evaluate the roles of Social Sciences along with those threats which need immediate response to save human civilization by using Social Sciences as academic tool.

Best wishes to all authors who gave positive response and enriched us by submitting their ideas in the form of articles. Thanks again to the team of Indian Social Science Association for their cooperative presence

**Rajiv Gupta**

**President & Life Trustee**

**Indian Social Science Association - (ISSA)**

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