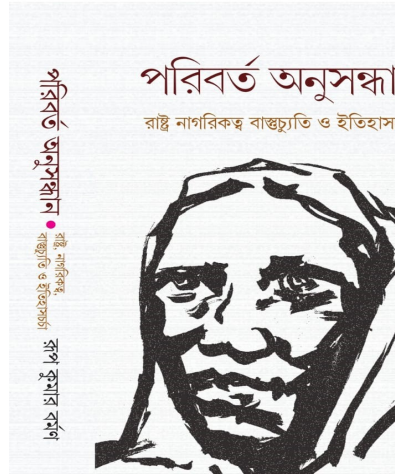

Book Review



Rup Kumar Barman:*Paribarta Anusandhan: Rashtra Nagarikatwa, Bastuchyuti O Ithihasarcha (In Bengali)*,(Search for Alternative: State, Citizenship, Displacement and Historical Studies),(Kolkata,Gangchil, 2022, Hardback, , pp. 170,Price: 450/p INR)

Dhananjay Saha¹

Great men's approach had been a dominant trend in historical studies till the mid-twentieth century. However, the beginning of the much-discussed model of 'History from Below' has

¹Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, Presidency University, Kolkata, India, Email: Sahadhananjay@gmail.com

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contributed to the growing historical studies in the Indian context with several new approaches.

In some cases, it stimulated the passion to search for the alternative school of thought in historical writings like the Subaltern Studies, Dalit Studies, and Dalit Discourse. Still, there are possibilities for developing a newer model for analyzing the 'people's history'. In this context, the recently published book titled "*Paribarta Anusandhan: Rashtra Nagarikatwa, Bastuchyuti O Ithihascharcha (in Bengali) Search for Alternative: State, Citizenship, Displacement, and Historical Studies*", Kolkata, Gangchal, 2022] is a significant contribution for understanding and writing the history of common people. The author of this book, Dr. Rup Kumar Barman has attempted to instigate the inner feelings of scholars to search for new approach by rethinking (and to some by discarding) the popular models of social science.

This work '*Paribarta Anusandhan*' or '*Search for Alternative*' is a sequel of transformation of life of author and his understand as well as dialogue with the environment, internal displacement, migration, resettlement and quest for recognition. He experiences of caste-based discrimination and presentation of race, regional disparity and identity has reflected in this work with a new approach. His journey from an ordinary village of India to a metropolitan city in the light of regional, national and international events gives an outlook of alternative history.

'*Search for Alternative*' is divided into four main chapters. In the first chapter, the author begins his journey from a marginal village called Chhoto Chowkir Bos located in Alipurduar district (which was a part of Jalpaiguri district). By describing the geo-environmental and social composition of the village, the author has illustrated a broader plural society comprising various ethnic, caste, religious, and linguistic communities of India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh (earthshine East Bengal or East Pakistan). Along with the migration of different linguistic communities, Chhoto Chowkir Bos has experienced the intermixing of different cultures and religions which was and still is connected with global society in several ways. The first chapter of this work has also presented the local history of Mahakalguri, Samuktala, Kamakshyaguri, and Alipurduar from a global perspective.

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The second chapter discusses the author's experience at the University of North Bengal and Darjeeling (1997-2001) where he got his higher education and worked as a lecturer at St. Joseph College. While writing his involvement with Darjeeling district, he tangentially touched on the history of Naxalbari movement, urbanization in Siliguri, dyeing of rivers, concentration of migrant laborers, and the growth of Kamatapur movement and Gorkhaland movement for political autonomy.

The third chapter of '*Search for Alternative*' has recorded the history and public memory of Cooch Behar. Incidentally, the author has started his academic research from Cooch Behar His study '*From Tribalism to independent state: Reflection on the Emergence of Kamata-Koch Kingdom*' on the transition of a tribal polity into an organized kingdom in the 'Tista-Brahmaputra region' can be accepted an alternative model of state formation theory in the Indian context. On the other hand, the author has critically illustrated the Durban Conference of 2001 [*World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance Declaration (2001)*] as an alternative thought for the elimination of racism, casteism, and other forms of discrimination. Here, he has expressed his views that colonialism was responsible for the introduction of racial theory for legitimizing colonial rule. Colonial anthropology had a significant influence on the so-called western-educated section of the Indians who have been accepted as the Great men of colonial Indian history.

The fourth chapter of the book under review has narrated the life of the author in Kolkata, particularly at Jadavpur University. It shows that the author had faced a lot of challenges from the educated elites of Kolkata in a different way. The author even recorded three incidents that are nothing but the example of casteism that exist in the consciousness of the so-called higher educated people of Kolkata. However, he has overcome all challenges by paying more attention to his academic research on such issues which are even not touched by the members of the 'Subaltern school' and 'history from below'. His researches on the fisheries, fishermen, partition of Bengal and migration, the question of citizenship, rivers, folk medicine, and Dalit discourse are quite different than the traditional interpretations of history. However, the most significant contribution that the author had added to the academic

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research is his attempt to construct a model for ‘Dalit Discourse’. The author has argued that the ‘Dalit Discourse’ is an alternative paradigm that recognizes the contribution of socio-economically backward people to the main trends of society.

Apparently, it looks that ‘*Paribarta Anusandhan*’ is an autobiography of Dr. Rup Kumar Barman from the Dalit perspective. But it has crossed the level of autobiography. Rather it has presented the local, regional, national, and international history and historiography in a single historical frame with an alternative. It has rightly constructed a close relationship between a village and metro city, between a region and a nation, between a nation and the international society. As a whole, it can be accepted as an alternative approach for writing social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental history general and ‘the history of common people in particular.