



A one-day seminar on “Revisiting Science and the Raj: A Critical Appraisal”

K.P. Basu Memorial Hall, Jadavpur University

28 January 2025, 10:30 AM

Organized by Society for the History of Science Kolkata (SHSK), in collaboration with the P.G. Evening Course in History, Jadavpur University

When Oxford University Press first published *Science and the Raj* in 1995, it revealed a decade of preoccupation with the politics of scientific knowledge in colonial India, which had been a major area of study in India and other countries throughout the 1980s. Although "science and society" has been a framework for studying the history of science in India since the 1950s, only a small percentage of science historians have engaged with it, and they have had difficulty establishing its issues and questions within the context of South Asian history writing.

A pioneer in the development of the unique subfield of history that examined science in colonial and modern India is Deepak Kumar. Perhaps one of his most important conceptual contributions was his ability to help us distinguish between a science that is driven by curiosity and a colonial science that became a handmaiden to British rule in South Asia and an integral part of colonial dominance. Even after three decades since its initial publication, *Science and the Raj* remains relevant. There have been two editions and twenty-six reprints since then. Bengali, Urdu, and Hindi translations of the book are available. Given the current state of the historiography of science and technology in British India, now may be the perfect moment to critically engage with the book.

Programme Schedule

10: 30 AM – Welcome Address by **Professor Sahara Ahmed**, Department of History, and Head, Department of Environmental Studies, Rabindra Bharati University; Secretary, SHSK

10: 35 -11:15 AM – **Keynote Session**

Chair – **Professor Deepak Kumar**, Former Professor of History of Science & Education, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Honorary Professor, Department of History, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad; and President, SHSK

Speaker – **Professor Ranjan Chakrabarti**, Director Research & Academic Development, Swami Vivekananda University, Kolkata; Honorary Professor, Department of History, Jadavpur University, and Former Vice-Chancellor, Vidyasagar University, and Netaji Subhas Open University (Re-reading a Classic: *Science and the Raj*)

On Behalf of the Publisher – **Sri Barun Sarkar**, Associate Publisher, Academic India, Oxford University Press (The book and the author: A few words)

Book Release: *Does Environmental History Matter? Shikar, Subsistence, Sustenance and the Sciences* (Primus Books, 2024), edited by Professor Ranjan Chakrabarti

The book will be released by Professor Deepak Kumar



11:15 AM-12:30 PM – First Technical Session

Chair – Professor Sutapa Chatterjee Sarkar, Department of History, West Bengal State University

11:15-11:40 AM – Professor Nupur Dasgupta, Formerly Department of History, Jadavpur University (The book and a reader in the margins: A personal journey in the corridors of HISTEM)

11:40 AM-12:05 PM – Professor Raj Sekhar Basu, Department of History, University of Calcutta (A reluctant sojourner: abracadabra of personal encounters with a science *wallah*)

12:05-12:55 PM – Second Technical Session

Chair – Professor Arabinda Samanta, Formerly Department of History, University of Burdwan

12:05-12:30 PM – Professor Bipasha Raha, Department of History, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan (Locating *Science and the Raj* in Writing Agrarian History of Colonial Bengal)

12:30-12:55 PM – Professor Rupkumar Barman, Vice-Chancellor, Bankura University, and Harichand Guruchand University (Relevance of ‘Science and the Raj’ in Encapsulating Folk Medicines: Reflections on Bengal)

Lunch Break (01:00-02:00 PM)

02:00-03:00 PM – Third Technical Session

Chair – Professor Sujata Mukherjee, Department of History, Rabindra Bharati University

02:00-02:20 PM – Dr Santanu Chacraverti, Independent Scholar (*Science and the Raj*—rethinking the ‘colonial’ scientific touch)

02:20-02:40 PM – Dr Arnab Chakraborty, Associate Professor, College of Liberal Arts, Shanghai University, China (Continuities and Transformations in Science and Medicine in Pre and Post-Colonial India)

02:40-03:00 PM – Dr Dipsikha Acharya, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of North Bengal (Historiography of Iron in India: Revisiting *Science and the Raj*)

03:00-04:00 PM – Fourth Technical Session

Chair – Professor Achintya Kumar Dutta, Department of History, University of Burdwan

03:00-03:20 PM – Dr Rahul Bhowmik, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Women’s College, Calcutta (The Transfer and Transformation of Western Ophiology in Colonial India)



03:20-03:40 PM – Mr Aryama Ghosh, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Narasinha Dutt College, Howrah (Animal History Intersecting the History of Colonial Science: Rereading Professor Deepak Kumar's *Science and the Raj*)

03:40-04:00 PM – Dr Sulagna Som, Guest Lecturer, Department of Islamic History & Culture, University of Calcutta, and Department of History, Jadavpur University (The "White" Women's Health and The Raj: An Account of British Imperial Health Policies in India (1900-1947))

04:00-04:20 PM – Valedictory Session

Chair – Professor Samir Kumar Saha, Formerly Department of Mechanical Engineering, Jadavpur University; and Member, Indian National Commission for History of Science, Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi

Speaker – Professor Arun Bandopadhyay, Former Nurul Hasan Professor of History, and Former Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Calcutta, and Vice-President, SHSK

04:20-04:25 PM

Vote of Thanks – Dr Debajit Dutta, Coordinator, P.G. Evening Course in History, Jadavpur University

