

## Editorial

### Darjeeling and the Indian East

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'Darjeeling and the Indian East' is an exercise in imaginative recovery of the past and projection of future. Darjeeling is an imaginative space more than a geographical location. Nearly 200 years of investments in a location – economically and socially – has given birth to the imagination surrounding Darjeeling. Equally the natural beauty that the region holds in its mountainous folds and heights filled with pure air and changing colours on the mountain vegetation add to its aura.

The snow-capped mountains, the terraced slopes, the carpeted tea bushes, rustling streams and the shadowing mists make the hills enchanting. The history of tea and hill cart road, timber and the markets, the sanatoriums and the educational institutions, Himalayan railway and the heritage hotels, gardens and parks, the mall and the bazaar, churches and temples, mosques and cemeteries all go to create the imagination surrounding the attraction for 'Darjeeling'.

The uniqueness of a location is the sum of its resources – nature given and human made. The collective human activity, be it of the indigenous autochthonous communities that dwelt upon the land or the migrants into the region who made it their home cumulatively added to its infrastructure and contributed to the creation of a geographical location that has captured the imagination of the tourist as well as the local communities.

The attempt in this issue is partly to reclaim this heritage of imagination and keep alive the prospects of its future, envisaged ever since the contact between the local indigenous groups and the visiting 'invaders' of varying hues took place.

1857 is an imaginary in the historical space of Indian nationalist upsurge. Nationalist historiography has construed it thus despite objections and denials. Its origin and spread, its causes and impact have been revisited especially in the wake of 150th anniversary of the event. The Seminar organized to mark the event and the selected papers that featured therein contain the other set of articles in this issue. While the significance of

1857 mutiny as an upsurge of animosity amidst the militia is undeniable, its spread across the country is what is yet to be established. Therefore, a closer look into the nature and extent of discontent in the East of India segment of the subcontinent is what is attempted here through some of the papers in this issue. There is one piece that takes a specific look at the creation of the nationalist imagination in early twentieth century Kolkata through the 'love-hate' relationship that prevailed between the football lovers and the nationalist versus colonial elite of the time who engaged in the promotion of the game.

Mir Sofique analyzes the importance of Tourism Industry in Darjeeling, emphasizing its problems and prospects vis-à-vis the development of Human Resource. In order to overcome the anomaly he proposes 'Tourism Education' as a possible solution. He envisages a positive role that the eventual resource enhancement can provide for the future stability in Darjeeling hills. Babu Joseph delves into the past of Darjeeling and its emergence as a hill station turned Tourist destination. The narrative he develops besides highlighting the significant interventions that changes the face of Darjeeling also provides insights into the probable causes for the ills that prevent the actualization of the potential hidden within the terrain of Darjeeling hills.

Anjan Chakrabarti makes an assessment of the 'Development Economics' of Darjeeling with its employment scenario and possible marginalization of rural workforce. He supports his views with the statistics of tea plantation providing two alternative 'models' of development for the rural areas in Darjeeling hills. He further suggests that the successful implementation of these two 'models' will help create a more realistic economy for the development of Darjeeling hills.

Anup Shekhar Chakraborty brings to consideration the state of Mizoram from the North-East as an 'Ethnic Enclave' and furnishes an account for promoting Travel-Tourism in Mizoram. Taking off from the Colonial and Post-Colonial administrative background he encourages the experiment of '*Atitthi Deva Bhava*' in Zo/Mizo hills as a means to open up Mizoram to the 'Outsiders'. In such a step he identifies the right road to the legitimate management of the rich resources related to tourism in this eastern most state of India.

Rohin D'Souza returns to the history of Tourism in Darjeeling hills and critiques the present state of mass tourism as contrary to the ideals of sustainable tourism. He therefore argues for the promotion of Eco-tourism in its different forms, and puts forward the case study on Community based Tourism (CBT) as an alternative if promoted through proper planning and action by both the locals as well as the concerned authorities. Kishan Harijan brings to focus the background and the role of tea plantation industry in Darjeeling hills. He highlights the problems related to human resource management in Tea Plantation Industry and suggests some possible measures for reviving the rich potential of the industry through strategic management.

With Kaushik's piece the discourse takes a turn to the wider scene of the Indian East in this issue. It is an attempt to depict the interlacing picture of sport, especially football,

culture and nationalism. He tries to clarify the relational complexities of 'history-writing' and 'culture-making'. He locates the phenomenon of sport, especially football, to explain the realistic co-relation between culture and nationalism in colonial Calcutta. He explains how football introduced a new and unique means of 'cultural self-expression' into Bengali society. He intricately builds up the emergence of 'Cultural Nationalism' in Calcutta through the story of Mohan Bagan's victory over East Yorks in 1911 IFA Shield Final.

Partha Sen attempts to make a case for the role of North-East India, especially of Assam, in the Revolt of 1857. He reveals the nuanced part played by Maniram Dewan, the Ex-Minister of the Ahom State in the upheaval of 1857 with the gameplan to restore and retain the prestige of Ahom kingdom as a British protectorate State. Besides, the narrative also makes a case for the subdued information on the participation of the common people in North-East and Assam.

Roshani Rai begins with the background and the course of events that led to the Revolt of 1857 in Bengal, starting from Barrackpore to Behrampore. Taking a closer look into some of the events in Calcutta and in North Bengal she attempts to set straight the prevailing historiography by unleashing the claim for a stronger participation of Eastern India in the Revolt of 1857.

Karingamalil Jose views the events surrounding the Revolt of 1857 with a critical lens. He finds flaws in both the prevailing imperialist as well as nationalist historiography of the Revolt of 1857. While not denying a probable emphasis on nationalism he is also quick to present a critical view of VD Savarkar which he claims, eventually, introduced the idea of fundamentalist interpretation of the Revolt of 1857 in and through the baptism the event received as the first war of independence.