

## Contribution of Rangit Guha in Subaltern History

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### Abstract

The Subaltern School of historiography emerged in the 1980s. Modern Indian historians thus have been rewriting Indian history, and have done so in nationalist, communal, secular, and Marxian frameworks. Subaltern is the latest recent trends in history. It is the extension of Marxist school. Subaltern Studies is a school that originated in India in 1982. The main object of the subaltern studies are the historiography of Indian Nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism -colonialist elitism, nationalist elitism and they did not give credit for common man (History from below) activities. Dr. Guha has given the new approach to the historical writing. He has been got the world reputation for his valuable contribution in historical writings. Subaltern tried to interpreted dominance in the culture point of view. Their relation with social and economic factors was neglected.

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### Introduction:-

The academic community feels inadequate in the face of the new social reality. Scholars such as E. P. Thompson and Eric Hobsman began to change the old categories of analysis in the 1970s by including the role of culture in the writing of working-class history. Because of their initiative, the ideas of "**history from below**" and the "role of agency" became popular and gained wide acceptance<sup>1</sup> The term "Subaltern" came from the writings of Antonio Gramsci and is referred to the subordination in terms of class, caste, gender, race, language and culture.

The founding members of the group challenged Indian Marxist historians and their claims to write the people's history. In doing this they responded to a genuine need for a new methodology, epistemology, and paradigm, a need felt not only in India but worldwide. Perhaps it is no coincidence that most of the founding members of the Subaltern Studies *Ranjit Guha, sumit sarkar, Dyan pande, Vanita Das, Parth Chatarjee*, and other contributed to history by them subaltern approach is using its position giving them such kind of history. Ranjit Guha has a main researcher as a representing the subaltern theory in for Indian Nationalism movement period.

### Early life of Ranjit Guha:-

Ranjit Guha was born on 23 may 1922 in a small village *Siddhakati* eastern Bengal on bakarganj district. He had a distinguished educational carrier at presidency college he became a Marxist and joined a communist party of India his political activities affected his academic carrier.

During his students days he was influence by the Marxist philosophy after getting the degree he made a various attempts to develop his academic skills. He worked as a full time activity after communist movement and then come back Calcutta in 1953.then he stared his carrier as a lecture in history in 1958-1959; he went to England and joined the

University of Manchester. Then he went to the school of African and Asian studies at Sussex University in 1971 he came back to India.

### **Definition of subaltern:-**

The word subaltern in the title stand for the meaning as given in the concise oxford dictionary, that is 'of inferior rank' in subaltern school historiography is expressed in terms of class, cast, age, gender any other way. The term 'elite' has been used to signify dominate groups, foreign as well as indigenous.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ashok Sen Define the word 'Subaltern' in his book *Capital, Class and Community*-“ The term Subaltern is used to denote the entire people that is subordinate is term of class, cast, age, gender and office or in any other way.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Themes of Subaltern Studies:-**

Subaltern Philosophy is the philosophy of Antonio Gramsci. He was Italian. He opposed to Mussolini and so he was thrown in prison and there he wrote the '*prison notes*'. In prison notes we has this philosophy here he talks about the role intellectual class. Subalternists maintained that colonialist, nationalist, and Marxist interpretations of Indian history had denied the role of the common people and their agency. To rectify this situation, Subaltern Studies announced that its new approach would restore history to the subordinated.

Since 1983 the Subaltern Studies collective has produced eight volumes and several monographs. Ranjit Guha edited the first six volumes(1982), which had various themes including critiques of elite historiography, uncovering peasant belief systems, peasant movements, peasant revolts, Indian nationalism, sectarianism, the colonial construction of communalism, power relations within the community, peasant insurgency, subaltern consciousness and politics, the people's perception of Gandhi, Gandhi's politics, the mentalities of the people, the character of the state, the ecological dimension of peasant protest, tribal protest, patterns of liquor consumption, Western medicine and caste, critique of feminist writings, crime in the context of the nationalist movement, and even a few critiques of Subaltern Studies.<sup>4</sup> These volumes include very few themes related to the working-class movement, or to work, or production. Most of the studies concern protests by peasants and by tribal people, but have no connection with the broader context in which they occur.

Their for it is rightly it is observed that subaltern studies in India means and Indian history of peasant struggle as this kinds of history pick up the peculiar nature of peasants issues, their peculiar mode of perceiving and conceiving a social phenomenon, their peculiar life style ,their peculiar way of dealing with the socio - economic and political questions.

### **The Origin of the Subaltern Studies Group:**

The Subaltern Studies group was founded in India in 1982 by Ranjit Guha.<sup>5</sup> He edited the first six volumes of the series of publications bearing the group's name. A biographical sketch <sup>6</sup> shows that during 1979-1980, Guha and a number of younger historians, then living in England, held a series of intensive discussions on Indian colonial history; this led to the formation of their group in 1982. The group published its first volume in 1983. In 1971, during a visit to India, Guha had become involved with the

Maoist students' movement in Delhi; some of these students subsequently went to study in England. Today most of them have close connections with the academic communities of England and Australia and now in the United States as well.

#### **A Bibliography of Ranjit Guha's writings:-**

- 1) The salt industry of mindnapore - 1954
- 2) An Administrative blue print of 1785 - 1955
- 3) The origins of the permanent settlement - 1956
- 4) On torture and culture - 1971
- 5) The Mahatma and the mob - 1973
- 6) Review of Elizabeth Whatcom - 1974
- 7) Knowing India by its prisons - 1979
- 8) A Rule of property for Bengal - 1983
- 9) Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency colonial -1983

#### **Contribution of Ranjit Guha to historical writings:-**

A Rule of property for Bengal An essay on the idea of permanent settlement -(Paris: Moutons, 1963.) Above titled book is mentioned to words. English east India Company started permanent settlement in Bengal at 22 may 1793. What is the aim and purpose of this policy in Bengal it had discussed the merit and de merit of the permanent settlement. The system resulted in emergency of a new zamindar class. Ranjit Guha tried to examine and criticize to permanent settlement, is system was totally different from previous land revenue system. It fixed to revenue it reflects that the concept of Zamindars private property rights are inevitable. Ranjit Guha discussed why company started permanent settlement in Bengal. Elementary aspect of peasant Insurgency in Colonial India-(Delhi: Oxford Uni.press, 1983)

The main purpose of this book was that in which conditions the rebels were created in colonial states. According to Guha says in the preface of this book. In this book He gives the six causes for more important peasant revolt.<sup>7</sup>

##### **1) Negation:**

It's reflected in their refused to the dominated by their superior or dominators. A signs of dominations become the targets of resistance.

##### **2) Ambiguity:**

Which prevail is due to violence as an integral part of the subaltern insurgency. The violence by the subaltern is generally taken as crime. Where's Ranjit Guha draws a distribution both the two crime is individual or gang oriented secretive action comersely

insurgency has a mass character therefore it is an open action as a matter of fact crime and insurgency represent two entirely different aspects of violence.

### 3) Modality:

The insurgent subaltern conciseness assumes modality or forms first in the destruction of the signs of authority like police station or landlord's rent-collection officer or money Landers house and second in the setting up of a rebel authority which is public in character and has power to impose sanctions and on the community.

### 4) Solidarity:

Solidarity expressed in more in ethnic kingship and community relation then in Class affinity.

### 5) Transmission:

The fifth elementary aspect is associated with the mode of transmission of the subaltern insurgency the patterns of the diffusions of insurgency iconic and symbolic signs.

### 6) Territoriality:

The six aspects refer to ethic space and physical space. The basic or the subaltern cohesiveness or fusion are found in a common lineage and shared habitat.<sup>8</sup>

### Conclusions:-

The subaltern criticizes the elitist's history on various grounds. They criticize elites - history as one sided history. In senses that elitists historian project only that side of history in which they are interested. However the same level of creates, the point of critics can also used against subaltern history ender laying the same point that, 'subaltern history' is also a one side history. It also reject the the role of elitist in any movement. Dr. Guha has given the new approach to the historical writing. He has been got the world reputation for his valuable contribution in historical writings. For this he also has been praised by Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen, He says, "*Guhas work has deeply influenced not only the writing subcontinental history, but also historical investigation elsewhere as well as cultural studies, literary theories and social analysis across the world.*"<sup>9</sup>

Subaltern tried to interpreted dominance in the culture point of view. Their relation with social and economic factors was neglected. Even today problems are not solved by replacement of subalterns; at the class subaltern historian neglected the cast movement in writing of subaltern history all writing has been done in English. So there is no dialogue both national and regional.

### References

- 1) Arif Dirlik, Vinay Bahl and Peter Gran (edited) History after the Three Worlds: Post-Eurocentric Historiographies, (Maryland: Rowman and Little field publishers, 2000), page no. 86
- 2) Pravin Chavan, *Subaltern Ek Shokantika- Sadhana Deepavali Aank*, 2005, page no. 118.
- 3) Shanta Kothekar & Vaidhya, *Itihaas Tantra Aani Tatvadnyan*, page No. 246.
- 4) Ranjit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983.

- 5) Biographical Sketch of Ranjit Guha. Published in Subaltern Studies, Volume VIII Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1993, pp. 222-225.
- 6) Subaltern studies vol-I, IV, Ed. Ranjit Guha
- 7) Subaltern Studies Vol. 1-8. Oxford University Press.
- 8) Review article on subaltern - economic and political weekly, June 8, 2002
- 9) Shanta Kothekar & Vaidhya, Opcit, page No. 247.