

**CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES, CALCUTTA,  
R-1 BAISHNABGHATA PATULI,  
KOLKATA 700094**

**GENERAL SEMINAR**

Dr. Prakash Kumar  
Associate Professor of History and Asian Studies at Pennsylvania State University

will give a talk titled:

“Modernist Lineages of India’s Agrarian Development”

Abstract

The talk will explore the agrarian ideals of American Presbyterian missionaries and foundation officials whose paths crossed the Allahabad Agricultural Institute in the period when India transitioned from late colonialism to that of post-colony. The Allahabad Agricultural Institute (or AAI) was established by American Presbyterian missionaries in 1912 in colonial India and was serviced by incoming waves of American agricultural experts which gave the institution a distinct identity in the midst of the colonial context. The institution survived India’s transition to sovereignty and on both sides of the independence divide, remained an icon of Americanist effort to launch projects of rural and agrarian uplift. The missionaries at Allahabad were conduits in establishing connections with foundations and Land Grant institutions in the United States in the colonial period and after independence. On both sides of this divide, their modernist ideals competed for prominence with the developmentalist visions of colonial and nationalist political elites. The Americanist visions were full of very specific socio-economic tropes – what one can see, for example, in the notion of family farm where the peasant was assumed to own both his land and simple tools; in the notion of “progressive farmer;” and in expectations of “self-help.” If not opposed to the ideas of colonial and postcolonial development, such visions were in a certain tension with them.

Date: Friday, 3 May, 2019; Time: 3 – 5 pm

Venue: CSSSC Seminar Room 2, Patuli Campus

Debdatta Chowdhury  
(Convener, Seminar Committee)  
All are welcome to attend.