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### Editor's Preface

The Department of English, Annamalai University Organized the **Third ICSSR Sponsored National Seminar on *Subaltern Literature: Resistance and Reconstruction*** from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The aim of the Seminar was to provide the participants as well as experts with a platform to exchange and enhance their innovative ideas and experiences in Subaltern literature. The three-day seminar was attended by a large number of enthusiastic scholars and budding teachers from various colleges and universities in India. More than 300 papers were read by participants from different parts of India.

The selected papers presented in the **ICSSR Sponsored Three-day National Seminar on *Subaltern Literature: Resistance and Reconstruction*** are divided into two categories, namely, **Volume I: *Indian Writing in English: A Subaltern Perspective*** and **Volume II: *Black Writings: A Subaltern Perspective***. These volumes reflect the literary response on contemporary Subaltern literature evoked amongst scholars in India.

The present socio-cultural and literary scenario calls for a relocation in the conception and construction of the terms “Resistance” and “Reconstruction.” These do not refer merely to the everyday experiences and expressions of a particular group but have become resources to be utilized across nationalities. Subaltern literature constitute the most significant development in World literature in the last three decades and the genre has received massive attention among academics, literary critics and creative writers within India and abroad. It is an explicit

corrective agenda and preoccupation with the binaries of nation and fragments, men and women, elites and peasants, urban and rural, haves and have-nots, and the majority and minority. Unfortunately, even the Subaltern School seems to have not greatly focused on the position of the Dalits and Tribes in India. It is a historical fact that the Dalit literature received undue criticism from some leading Indian English in Writing and Indian languages writers in past, questioning the need for such a specialization.

The terms *Subaltern* and *Subaltern Studies* entered post-colonial studies through the works of the Subaltern Studies Group, a collection of South Asian historians. The *subaltern* refers to any specific marginalized situation in any given cultural or social context. Subaltern consciousness is one of the characteristics of subalternity. Antonio Gramsci emphasized the significance of the word in terms of class, gender, caste, marginalization, race, and culture of the society. The term *Subaltern literature* covers themes such as the masses, Dalits, the deprived, oppressed, marginalized, neglected, and Indigenous sections of the society.

Subaltern discourse highlights the conceivable political achievements of the collective in their radical endeavour to recover the histories of peasant rebellions and resistance before and after India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South American's independence from the British. The post-colonial period is an important one for the subalterns because both the nation and the people have just been relieved from the terrible clutches of colonial rule. This period sets out a determined effort to reproduce the colonial experience of the subalterns in literary works.

All the colonized nations of the world have a subaltern identity. The subaltern identity is the identity of difference and the subaltern “celebrates hybridist and cultural polyvalence.” The main motivation of this transaction is to centralize subaltern's marginal position in society in terms of social and political, both of which is the outcome of systematic and structural marginalization. Subaltern writings are narratives of trauma, pain, resistance, protest, and the social change. These writings have a profound social obligation wherein majority of the writers try to create a classless society. Subaltern literatures—Dalit, Tribal, African, and Aboriginal document the sufferings and atrocities committed upon a large section of the population.

Today, Dalit, Tribal, African American, and Aboriginal literatures have been accepted as an integral part of subaltern literature. All are marginalized literature- one arising out of the ‘literature of slaves’ and the other from the ‘literature of untouchables.’ Similarity, it is extended to the Black American and Aboriginal Writings for which the history of slavery is not illusionary or unreal. Indigenous people are struggling to gain their own identity as people Indigenous of the land or country. The liveliness and authenticity of their expressions are

captured all over their writings. Shame, anger, sorrow, and indomitable hope are the trademarks of these marginalized people and the literature created by them. As the world moves toward becoming a global village, some past experiences and lessons learnt become precious and crucial to understand the common sensitivity and sensibility.

From its very inception, Annamalai University has focused on social oppression based on various factors including caste divisions and has encouraged its administrators, faculty members, and students to develop social consciousness to fight against social, economic, and cultural discriminations. Thus, as the organizer of the **ICSSR Sponsored Three-day National Seminar on Subaltern Literature: Resistance and Reconstruction**, I feel happy that this National Seminar becomes an integral part of the history of Annamalai University.

These two volumes offer a modest survey of the trends of recent studies in Subaltern writings and literature. I owe a debt of gratitude to all contributors for their kind cooperation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all renowned participants of the seminar who in spite of their commitments and engagements elsewhere, helped us to successfully complete the national seminar and bring out these two volumes. I am indebted to the authorities of the ICSSR, New Delhi and the **Vice-Chancellor** and the **Registrar, Dean, Faculty of Arts, and Head, Department of English**, Annamalai University, for the opportunity and the facilities they provided me to organize this three-day national seminar. I am indebted to my colleagues for their cooperation. It is my pious duty to put on record my gratefulness to the authorities of the ICSSR, New Delhi for sponsoring this seminar.

Finally, I thank the UGC approved Journal *Language in India* for publishing the reviewed and selected papers of this seminar.

**Dr. T. Deivasigamani**

Editor