

## CONTRIBUTION OF DR. RĀJENDRALĀL MITRA (1822-1891) TO PUBLIC SCIENCE COMMUNICATION IN THE 19TH CENTURY INDIA

INDRANIL SANYAL\*

---

*Dr. Rājendralāl Mitra (1822-1891) was a versatile genius, the most prominent Indologist of the 19th century and one of the leading figures of Bengal Renaissance. He was among the first Indian cultural researchers and historians writing in English and was the first Indian to become the President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He had many talents, but his enormous fame as a leading patriotic intellectual of his time was primarily for his contribution to the methodical and scientific study of Ancient India during the 2nd half of the 19th century. Overshadowed by this fame, his significant contribution to the Public Science Communication and his bold initiative in creating a Scientific Temper in the society are less discussed. In 1851, he launched the first illustrated Bengali magazine 'Vividhārtha Saṃgraha'. In 1863, this monthly magazine was replaced with another magazine titled 'Rahasya Sandarbha'. These two periodicals contributed significantly to the Public Understanding of Science through Bengali language over a period of twenty years. Rājendralāl was also the pioneer in the studies of Physical Geography and Applied Sciences in India and was the first to use visuals and photographs in periodicals. He was also a pioneer in creating a Bengali glossary of scientific terms. Rājendralāl Mitra was widely hailed as the 'The Most Learned Man during the Bengal Renaissance'. The Nation will commemorate the 200th Birth Anniversary of this 'Renaissance Man' in February 2022.*

---