

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

GENERAL SEMINAR

Sumathi Ramaswamy,
Professor of History at Duke University,

will give a talk titled

Dying to Give in the Age of Colonial Capital

Abstract

This paper will explore the ways in which Pachaiyappa Mudaliar (1754?–94) has been panegyricized as the quintessential benefactor of our times in Tamil prose, poetry, and pictures over the course of the past century and a half. In the bureaucratic and legal documents of the colonial state, he appears as a rapacious moneylender and behind-the-scenes wheeler-dealer, a member of that hated class of ‘Madrasdubashes,’ a ‘most diabolical race of men.’ In contrast, Tamil memory work since at least the 1840s has differently (re)constituted this shadowy eighteenth-century figure. He emerges in their narratives as a selfless benefactor whose vast wealth enabled the setting up of the first educational institutions in Madras Presidency financed entirely by a native and managed by an all-native Trust. I track the posthumous fate of Pachaiyappa’s bequest to argue that even as the founding of the Trust and its educational philanthropy radically departed from his willed intentions, it enabled a new complex of living, dying, and giving for the sake of native education that was put in place in the Tamil country in the age of colonial capital and pedagogic modernity.

Date: Friday, 23 December, 2016

Time: 3 – 5 pm

Venue: CSSSC’s Seminar Room, Patuli Campus

Rosinka Chaudhuri
(Convener, Seminar Committee)