

From the Editor

Dear colleagues,

With the use of internet permeating every domain of the contemporary world, the emergence of electronic journals (e-journals), transcending the initial academic circumspection about it, is now widely recognised as a natural and positive outcome. That almost each leading print journal in the world today has its electronic or online version is a clear testimony to the edge the latter offers.

Indian Sociological Society (ISS) recognised this emerging trend and need by launching its e-journal in 2012, not as the e-version of the official journal of the ISS, Sociological Bulletin (SB), but as an autonomous entity. The e-journal did not continue for long. The present journal is its new version. It seeks to accommodate the publication potential of the Indian sociological community which is expanding fast with the growing footprint of the discipline in the higher educational institutions of India.

I am happy to present the first issue of *Explorations*, the new e-journal of the Indian Sociological Society. This issue is focused on the Northeast region of India, a rather unexplored and under-represented region in the Indian sociological literature. However, the region, consisting of eight states, is much diverse in terms of its society, economy, culture and geography. It is thus not possible to represent the myriad issues of the region in one number of a journal. It has to be a continuous process. With that spirit, this special number of the journal has addressed only a few issues which are considered critical to understand the social and political processes in the region.

In this issue, we present all together five essays on the region. Out of these, four essays are under the category of 'articles' and one in the category of 'research in progress'.

In the first paper titled *Ethnic Assertion and Middle Class Hegemony in a Colonial Hinterland*, Apurba K. Baruah argues that the conflicts of the middle classes of some of the smaller nationalities in Northeast India with the Indian state are often wrongly depicted as ethnic conflicts. These conflicts hardly represent the interest of these nationalities as a whole even as they often receive the support of

the other sections of the concerned nationalities. The paper contends that these conflicts are the result of middle class hegemony in a colonial hinterland.

The second paper *Land Alienation and Rural Development in Northeast India* by Walter Fernandes argues that contemporary state-driven development initiatives in the rural areas in Northeast have led to land alienation and conflicts resulting from it. It suggests some alternatives through collaboration between the state and the civil society to the dominant development practices in the region, some of which have already been attempted in some states of the region.

Terrifying Picnics, Vernacular Human Rights, Cosmos Flowers: Ethnography about Militarised Cultures in Northeast India by Dolly Kikon focuses on the social life of vernacular human rights culture in Northeast India and presents three ethnographic accounts about experiences of human rights activists from the region. Highlighting everyday experiences of human rights activities in Northeast India, the essay describes the ethics and challenges of engaging with notions of human rights in militarised societies like Northeast India.

The paper titled *Culture and Indigeneity: Women in Northeast India* by Vijaylakshmi Brara seeks to bring forth the need to view women's issues in Northeast India through the prism of indigenous perception of femininity and masculinity. The paper argues the need to locate these issues in conjunction with the South East Asian societies and see from a broader lens the issues concerning women in the Northeast region.

The paper titled *Racial discrimination and Violence against Northeasterners and the Bezbaruah Committee Report, 2014*, which is part of an ongoing research, by Hoineilhing Sitlhou and Salah Punathil examines the racial discrimination and violence against people from Northeast in Delhi and the state's response to this in the form of the Bezbaruah Committee Report, 2014. It also seeks to understand the receptions and perceptions among migrants in Delhi about its implementation.

This issue of the journal also includes a comprehensive interview of Professor N. Jayaram, a noted Indian sociologist, sharing his life experiences in teaching and research, and his perspectives on them as well as on myriad issues of sociological significance.

I take this opportunity to invite your contributions for future issues of the journal. I would also like to call upon you for sending your feedback or suggestions on this issue in particular, and on the journal in general.

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