

EDITOR'S NOTE

It has been an honour to edit the XXIII Volume of DUJOP, 2023 in which a melange of articles from different aspects of the social sciences have been discussed with immense academic thoroughness. The articles showcase theoretical rigour and are also based on arduous field visits to an array of socio-political and environmental locales. Some of the articles are also foregrounded in literature including novels and poems that have been used to study the shaping of ethnic identities and the formation of class consciousness. The essence of the articles is provided here as a brief overview of the contribution to scholarship that has emerged from the collection of articles published under this volume of DUJOP, 2023.

Prof. Sanjukta Banerji Bhattacharya in the article 'The Strategic Significance of the Indian Ocean for India's Security in the 21st Century: An Overview' discusses the significance of the Indian Ocean for the security and economic interests of India. The paper also analyses the challenges in the region including the presence of countries such as China and it examines the naval capabilities of India and India's ties with the littoral states of the Indian Ocean which are decisive for India's interests in the region.

Prof. Samir Kumar Das in the article Research Note: People, Populism, Democracy focuses on how different segments of people constitute a body and how people as a body materialize into a being and the effects therein. The paper elaborates on the populist construction of demos and dwells on populist and popular politics which are discussed with examples from the Northeast of India and West Bengal.

Dr. Padam Nepal in his article 'The 'Rong' Verses, Subverses And Subversions The Versical Art of Creation of Spaces of Remembering, Reconfiguration of Contested Spaces, and Resistance against Historical Erasures'

explores the construction of group identities through the discourse of collective memory, with special emphasis on poetic literature of the Lepcha Community in Darjeeling Hills who face assimilation threats under dominant identity-based movements in the region.

Dr Phulmoni Das and Robin Hazarika in the article 'Women's Effort to Resist against Patriarchy and Poverty: A Tale from Amrapari (We Can)' study the engagement of women in 'Ketha-making' (traditional embroidery) under Amrapari -a registered cooperative society situated in Barpeta district of Assam. The paper seeks to explore how Amrapari through the reinvention of Ketha helps women counter patriarchy and poverty by providing them with visibility, access to decision-making and financial security.

Hasmin Ahmed and Dr.Borun Dey in the article 'Internet Memes as Catalysts for Political Activism in China' argue that memes have emerged as ways for citizens to criticize the government in an otherwise heavily censored atmosphere. Internet activism of citizens of China is explored in the article to understand how they evade censorship and engage in shaping the political discourse.

Ankur Saikia in the article 'Locating Gender in between Oil Palm and Neo-Liberal Agriculture: Field Experiences from Kolasib, Mizoram' seeks to explore the consequences of the new policies in agriculture regarding palm oil plantations of Mizoram on the life and livelihood opportunities of women. Saikia argues that the current development mechanism does not take into consideration existing patterns of indigenous forms of cultivation and practices of life and asserts that gendered divisions that are unequal have arisen due to palm oil cultivation.

Debahuti Das in the article 'Is Multi-culturalism a hindrance to National Unity? Exploring the dynamics of Multi-culturalism in the context of the Bodoland Movement in Assam' argues that the Bodoland movement underscored that to balance multiple identities and aspirations there is a need for inclusive policies. Das also highlights that multiple identities add greater nuances to national identity which in turn have ramifications for integration and national unity.

Dhriti Sonowal in the article 'Cultural Elites And Middle-Class Politics In Post-Independent Assam' highlights the impact that the elite cultural organizations

had in how the political discourse of Assam was shaped. Sonowal argues that exclusionary spaces were created by cultural elites that shape political discourses and the political trajectory of a region. The role of the Assam Association and the Axom Sahitya Sabha form the mainstay of the article.

Prodakshina Singha in the article 'The Tale of Coexistence of Humans and Gibbons in Barekuri: Understanding the Harmony, Challenges and Prospects' explores the impact of the Baghjan tragedy and subsequent politics on the peaceful coexistence between humans and Hoolock Gibbons in Barekuri village. Singha argues that conservation measures that consider local ecological knowledge are required to ensure a balance between development and the environment.

Puja Dihingia in the article 'The Journey of the Indian State from Exclusionary to Inclusionary Forest Conservation Model with Special Reference to the Joint Forest Management Programme' argues that JFM has emerged as important for sustainable forestry, livelihood needs of forest dwellers and improving biodiversity. It is argued that participatory forest management is the need of the hour for governing such commons.

Satyadeep Lahkar in the article 'Labour Consciousness and Class Struggle in Colonial Assam: Some Reflections' on Dr Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's novel *Pratipad* seeks to underscore labour consciousness during the strike by the workers of the Digboi Oil Refinery in 1939 as portrayed in the novel *Pratipad*, which also sheds light on the contemporary society of the time given the shifting local politics of the time.

Sun Gogoi in the article 'State Administration and Tribal Politics: Ethnic Assertions among the Moran community of Assam' explores the origins of the political and cultural consciousness among the Morans. Gogoi also attempts to explore the dynamics of the claims of indigeneity that are asserted by the Morans.