

From the Editor

Dear colleagues,

It is my pleasure to present the fourth issue of *Explorations*. The issue consists of six essays of which one is a Special Article, two essays are published under the 'Articles' category and three essays under the 'Research in Progress' category.

The Special Article *Tribes in the Democratic Politics of India* by Virginius Xaxa argues that while the political 'reservation' extended to the tribes has been greatly successful in integrating them in the so-called 'mainstream' of Indian life, it has not helped much in the direction of protecting their rights over their traditional resources in making substantive contribution in the decision-making process. It further contends that the popular mobilisations, rather than the statutory democratic processes, have contributed more toward political empowerment of the tribal people in post-independence India. Yet being economically weak and demographically a minority, they are unable to translate political institutions and processes to their advantage.

The following article by Neshat Quaiser, titled *Consuming Leisure not so Leisurely: Political Economy of Leisure and Desire*, examines the contemporary contours of leisure through an inclusive parameter by exploring the 'frontiers' of leisure that signifies the fluidity of leisure practices. Through the theoretical framework of political economy of leisure and desire, and leisure as an object of desire, the essay raises the question of consumption and the ownership of what one consumes within the hierarchy of social class locations of those who consume.

In the next article *Sovereignty Question and Culture Discourse: Interrogating Indo-Naga 'Framework Agreement' in relation to Naga Movement*, N.K. Das discusses the key features of the 'Framework Agreement', the Indo-Naga Peace Agreement, and situates them within the historically evolved notion of Naga sovereignty and territorial-integration questions. The paper puts forth a critical evaluation of culture discourse vis-à-vis Naga nationhood and positions it within the projected model of 'shared sovereignty'.

The first paper under Research in Progress is *Urbanisation of a Tribal City: Contestations of the New Shillong Township* by Aashish Khakha. The paper analyses the contestations in urban expansion and development in the context of a ‘tribal metropolis’ of the Northeastern region of India, that is, Shillong. The paper reflects upon the complex and interlinked future of urban space for its tribal population with regard to the tremendous change in its urban landscape.

The next paper, *Rural Out-Migration and its Impact on Caste, Family and Gender: A Study in a Nepali village in Assam* by Pinku Muktiar, discusses the issue of large-scale rural out-migration from Assam in recent years and highlights the various ramifications of this phenomenon on caste, family and gender relations in the context of a Nepali village in Assam.

The final paper, *The Silk Loom Community in Assam: Identity and Means of Livelihood amongst the Workers* by Atlanta Talukdar and Deepshikha Malakar, delves into the various socio-economic issues and problems faced by the silkworm sector in Assam. The paper highlights the impact on the livelihood of weavers in the present scenario of the declining position of Assam silk in the global market.

Explorations invites your contributions for future issues of the journal. We will appreciate your feedback or suggestions on the journal.

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