From the Editor

Dear colleagues,

It is my pleasure to present the tenth issue of Explorations. Apart from the regular contributions, the issue carries a Special Section on Sociology of Law. The regular contributions consists of five papers published under the ‘Articles’ category.

The first article titled *Pandemic-Pedagogy: Provocative Rumination on Sociology of Teaching Practices in Contemporary India* by Dev Nath Pathak dwells on the pedagogic questions in the time of the Corona virus pandemic toward exploring the possibility of sociology of teaching practices in contemporary India.

The second article titled *Mother-Work and School Culture: Parenting Strategies in Banaras* by Nirmali Goswami examines how the ideas of parenting are shaped by occupational and spatial location by drawing from the experiences of mothers with lower educational backgrounds.

The third article titled *Epistemic Ashrāfiya-morality and Urdu Theatre Public Sphere in Nineteenth-century Bihar: Muslim Internal-Decoloniality* by Neshat Quaiser provides a Muslim internal-decolonial critique of the hegemonic ashrāfiya knowledge-oligarchies through the prism of western-style Urdu theatre in the last quarter of the 19th century in the Indian province of Bihar.

The fourth article titled *Corporate Social Responsibility and Prevention of HIV & AIDS in the Tea Gardens of Assam, India* co-authored by Dilip Gogoi and Ksenia Glebova examines the risk of HIV and AIDS among tea estate workers in Assam and the potential of addressing the issue through the channel of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative for the Assam tea sector.

The fifth article titled *Census as a Site of Contestation: Identity Politics among the Plains Tribes in Colonial Assam* by Suryasikha Pathak attempts to relook at the early censuses, and the debates it generated within the purview of identity articulation, as a complex process, and explores how the diversity of communities and fluidity in the demographic structure in Assam added to this complexity and led to the formation of identities and identity politics.
SPECIAL SECTION

Sociology of Law is an important sub-field within the discipline of Sociology. The special section on Sociology of Law in this issue of *Explorations* is guest edited by Rukmini Sen, Professor of Sociology, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD). Over the last forty years, sociologists/anthropologists and legal scholars in India have been doing research on law and society interface and contributing to the emergence of this sub-field. The move from research on legal issues impacting social relations to teaching sociology of law has been slow and not really popular. While law schools need to teach sociology at the initial years to primarily fulfil their objective of interdisciplinarity, sociology of law or studying the law-society interface is not mandatory within the discipline of sociology, and sometimes happens as an elective, based on faculty specialisation. It is however heartening to see that research at the law-society interface is happening through various departments and disciplines in recent times.

All the papers in this section engages with either legislations or judgements or constitutional debates and use survey methods, content analysis or autoethnographic methods of enquiry to provide sociological perspectives to legal texts. This special section has five ‘articles’ and four ‘research in progress’ papers. Kimsi Sonkar makes an analysis of judgements where the Maternity Benefits Act was used to engage with questions of non-permanent nature of women’s labour in the formal sector and subsequent denial of the ‘benefits’, as envisaged in the law. Nishit Ranjan Chaki engages with the conflicting questions of the constitutional guarantee of language rights on the one hand and the social exclusions of the Dhimals in the Terai-Himalayas region on the other. Sampurna Das looks at the National Food Security Act 2013 which was supposed to take care of food shortages failed to provide food security to women in the informal sector in the state of Assam. Snehal Sharma focuses on the ‘Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance’ of 2020 to ask critical questions around the politics of ‘love jihad’. Tasha Agarwal makes an enquiry into H4 visa and immigration policies for dependant women to join spouses in the USA.

In contrast, all the research in progress papers deal with important methodological questions on sociology of law. Gitanjali Joshua interprets two judgements involving inter-religious marriage and conversion while subverting individual’s choices when community boundaries are transcended. Guinea analyses parts of the forty eight in-depth interviews that she did in her PhD fieldwork with first
generation Delhi-based lawyers to assess presence of sexual harassment in the legal profession. Nidhin Donald examines the meanings of being a Christian and the legal discourses on endogamy outside of the Hindu stratum. Ashwin Varghese and Aishwarya Rajeev document the contraction between legal sanction and moral opposition to interfaith marriage and ways of navigating with the possibilities and limitations of the Special Marriages Act.

The special section also includes a detailed interview by Rukmini Sen with Kalpana Kannabiran, an expert in sociology of law. The interview engages with questions of interdisciplinarity as a pedagogic practice, lessons learnt from taking part in law making and legal education curriculum formulation, violence studies as part of sociology and/or law and ethics of doing social science research and teaching in contemporary times in India.

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

Finally, as I complete my term as the Editor of *Explorations*, a new editorial team will take over the journal from January 2022. I wish the new team all the very best and hope you will extend similar support to the journal in future.

Stay safe.

**Chandan Kumar Sharma**
Department of Sociology
Tezpur University
Editor, *Explorations*
Email: explorationsiss@gmail.com
October 2021