

The NEHU Journal

Vol. XIII, No. 2, July-December 2015

NEHU

ISSN. 0972 - 8406

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Editorial

In this issue of The NEHU Journal, we have a special article from Prof. David R. Syiemlieh titled, 'In Pursuit of History: Discussion on the Collection and Interpretation of Data'. In the article the author, an eminent historian of Church History, presently a Member of Union Public Service Commission, (UPSC) New Delhi, shares with us his experiences in empirical research on the history of Church in Khasi Hills, Meghalaya. His efforts and experiences as a historian would be a source of inspiration for budding historians.

In addition to this commissioned article the present issue includes six articles and two book reviews. The issue includes well-researched papers on Female Employment in India, Rural Health Infrastructure in North-East India, Agricultural Productivity in West Bengal and Declining Sex-Ratio in Sikkim. In addition to these vital economic issues, the volume also includes two more articles, one reflecting on Railway Workers' Strike in Bihar and the other on Janice Pariat's story, "Boats on Land". The Book Review section includes review of two books: Vimal Kant's *Caste Consciousness & Power Politics in Bihar (1937-1967)*, and Rekha Sarin and Ranjan Kapoor's *Chai: The Experience of Indian Tea*.

Relying on NSSO data, Anand Sharma and Sanjoy Saha in their article, 'Female Employment Trends in India: A Disaggregated Analysis' attempts to give a comprehensive picture of female employment in the country. Their study shows that female participation in work force is growing in rural areas, compared to the urban areas, but unfortunately that does not lead to the empowerment of the rural women.

Lasara M. Lyngdoh in his article, 'Inter-State Variations in Rural Healthcare Infrastructure in North-East India' attempts to study whether the manpower and facilities for rural health mission are adequate to meet the requirements of rural population in the northeastern states. The author points out difficulties in evolving a satisfactory index due to non-availability of data on health in the region. He feels that the health facilities available in the northeast are far from satisfactory, and calls for the government intervention to restructure the health system.

Nasim Aktar in his article, 'Agricultural Productivity and Productivity Regions in West Bengal' attempts to examine the pattern of agricultural productivity in different districts of the state West Bengal which exhibits wide variations in agro-climatic specificities. The author identifies high, medium and low productivity regions within the state and accounts for the social, economic and technological factors that account for differential productivity. In the conclusion, he proposes different steps that need to be taken to protect the farmers, whom he identifies as mostly small and marginal farmers.

In her article, 'Declining Sex Ratio in Sikkim: A Spatial Analysis', Jayashree Dey tries to probe the reasons why Sex Ratio in Sikkim is declining, although the usual reasons attributed to the disparities in the sex ratio in other parts of the country are absent in Sikkim. Based on National Family Health Survey (NFHS 3), the author arrives at the conclusion that factors like early marriage, short spacing of birth interval, high maternal mortality rates, preference for son, lack of attention towards maternal care, health hazards and migration of men folk in search of jobs to other parts of the country are responsible for declining sex ratio in Sikkim.

In her article, 'The Gandhian Movement and Railway Workers in Bihar: A Case Study of the Workers of Jamalpur Railway Workshop (1919-30)', Pushpa Kumari narrates how in absentia, Mahatma Gandhi acted as a cementing force to inspire the workers of Jamalpur Railway Workshop to fight for redress of their grievances and at the same time to respond to the call of the nation to raise voice against colonialism as citizens of India. The author discusses three phases of their movement, the first one coinciding with the entry of Mahatma Gandhi, the next one during the Non-Cooperation Movement and the third one during the Civil Disobedience movement. At no point of time Gandhi visited the workers. But the workers took inspiration from Gandhi to lead their own struggles against exploitation, racialism and colonial domination, at times following Gandhian tactics and at times even indulging in violence.

In the west, there is considerable literature valorizing lesbian relationships. In India it is still a taboo; not many Indian writers have written about it. Harpreet Kaur Vohra in her paper titled, “Experiments with Love: Janice Pariat’s Boats on Land” reviews the Janice Pariat’s story of lesbian relationship between two girls with different social background and experience. How the acquaintance of two girls develops into an emotional relationship and how that relationship changes the personalities and perceptions of both is the focus of the paper.

From next issue onwards, with a view to encourage and showcase the works of young scholars, The NEHU Journal will be publishing short notes on research and findings of the doctoral scholars. We hope the initiative will get positive response.

H. Srikanth
Editor