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Editorial

We are happy to bring out the new issue of *The NEHU Journal*. In this issue we have six articles and one book review. The article by Binod Kumar Agarwala interrogates whether the systems of thought of the Hill Tribes of Northeast India have achieved the status of Philosophy. Contesting a section of the academia which supports the idea that traditional belief systems of the tribes of the region should be accorded the status on par with Indian Philosophy, the author argues that although the hill communities have witnessed progress in the last one century or so, still much needs to be done if their religious belief system and worldview are to attain the status of Philosophy. We hope this polemical essay would generate a healthy debate among the scholars in the discipline of Philosophy as to how they should understand the tribal worldview. *The NEHU Journal* looks forward to a counterview to this well articulated paper.

The next article by Sudhanshu K Mishra, written in an autobiographical mode, is also a sort of an essay on the present educational scenario in the state of Bihar. Departing from the positivist mode of explaining a phenomenon objectively with empirical facts, the author shares his personal experiences of educational system in Bihar as a Bihari son, student, scholar and teacher. He identifies community patronage, populism, criminalization of politics, neglect of the study of English, opportunism of the teachers and vulgar competition as the causes for the decline of the standard of education in Bihar. Although some of his observations may be contested as biased ones, we include it as part of the volume, as there is a great need for everyone in academics to discuss the state of education in the country today.

The third article written by Mohammad Shafiqul Islam, is on the literary contributions of Nissim Ezekiel, a prominent Indian English poet. The author writes how Ezekiel, who started as a Romantic poet, broke with it to explore new vistas in literature and emerged as an Indian representative of western modernism. The author quotes appropriate passages from Ezekiel's writings to substantiate his argument. Such an article on an Indian poet coming from a Bangladeshi scholar is commendable.

The article by Prakash Upadhyay explores how adolescents in Nepal have been utilizing the sexual and reproductive services in Nepal. The paper

helps to understand how traditional value system in Nepal comes in the way of the youth coming out openly to utilize the health services provided by the government. Although the sample size is small and not fully representative, the author effectively utilizes secondary sources to argue how cultural constructions of sex and gender roles, lack of professionalism among health personnel and taboos associated with sex related issues come in the way of effective utilization of sexual and reproductive services in Nepal.

The next article by T. Brahmanandam and T. Bosu Babu explores the causes for the continuing educational backwardness of the Scheduled Tribes in India. Reviewing the policies, programmes and recommendations of different official committees on tribal welfare, the authors identify different inhibiting factors that keeps the tribal children away from modern education and calls for the need to provide culturally linked education system that address the problems of the tribal children. The last article by Jayasagar Wary and Oinam Ranjit Singh, relying on British colonial records, gives descriptive and empirical account of the origins and growth of Sal trade in Goalpara district during the colonial period.

In addition to the articles, the issue also includes A.K. Thakur's review of B.B. Kumar's book, *India and Central Asia: Shared Past*.

We are happy that *The NEHU Journal* is getting the recognition and many scholars from within India and from neighboring countries are sending their papers for publication. However, running the journal is becoming difficult due to financial constraints. As the subscription rates of the journal are minimal, we request the readers and libraries to subscribe to the journal so that we could continue the publication of this academic journal.

H. Srikanth
Editor