

Editorial

Development practice has become a contested term. The experiences of the contemporary world especially from the latter part of the 20th Century onwards not only confirm this reality but has also shown a full ‘paradox of development’ experience.

While the world has achieved great global strides in economic growth, social upliftment, political participation and technological progress, one also needs to be aware that there is no denying the fact that large sections of the people are being deprived of their right to inclusion and participation in the development process and also victimised by development policies and programmes. One can find mega housing projects, dams, speedways and economic zones being built at the expense of the marginalized and vulnerable like the slum dwellers in cities and the tribals and farmers in rural areas. Thus the poor, marginalized and vulnerable are not only denied their rights but quite often stripped of even what they have.

Such experiences raise a fundamental question – ‘*Why has development which is a dream and wish of all turned out to be a nightmare for some?*’ Do these sections of the people not count in the global economy, politics, culture and tradition? What makes the degree of this grim reality more serious is that their ‘culture of silence’ seems to be not anymore imposed by tradition but by state machinery and often in the name of development.

It is in this context that the Journal of Development Practice has been conceptualised and realized. While the journal aims at bringing about a resolution of the contested term ‘development practice’ and ‘paradox of development’ experiences of the yester decades by creating and providing space for the articulation of *EXPERIENCES* from the *FIELD*, it also vows to be a clarion of justice and rights for the oppressed and the marginalized.

To achieve these aims the Journal of Development Practice envisages promoting ethical intellectualisation of development practice, experiences and challenges by academicians and development practitioners who are in the field, thus contributing towards the generation and dissemination of knowledge in a scientific and academic ambience.

The first volume of the Journal features six articles that are related to environment and public health, theory of tribal social work, methodological challenges in study of social movements, maternal health, urban homelessness, and social work education among indigenous peoples. All the articles arise out of critical reflections from prolonged engagement and experiences in the field.

The article on **A Meta-Analysis on the Health Risk of Forest-Ecosystem Degradation** by Jacob Islary brings out a relationship between forest-ecosystem and human health from literature on environment studies, environmental health, public health and ecology. The study articulates a clear

line of relationship between human health and forest-ecosystem. The study also points out the existence of a major gap and need for the development of a methodology of study to statistically link these two variables.

In the article titled **Towards a Theory of Tribal Social Work: Some Reflections on its Methodological Foundation**, Bodhi S. Rane discusses the theoretical evolution of Tribal Social Work in India, and attempts to provide a conceptual overview of the key constitutive elements of its methodological foundation by using a historical approach. The study is a major contribution towards strengthening tribal social work in India.

Samson Kamei in the article **Conceptual and Methodological Problems in a Study of Tribal Movements** examines the conceptual ambiguities and problems of categorization in the study of tribal movements. It discusses the methodological challenges from both emic and etic perspectives and points out a knowledge gap in the area of an authoritative formulation of the issue.

The article on **The Phenomenon called 'Access to Maternal Health Care'**, by Chesta Sharma presents a review of the models and frameworks of 'access to maternal health care' and proposes a new framework for a better understanding of the phenomenon. The study presents various influencing factors and arrives at a definition of the term 'access' by incorporating aspects that go beyond physical and financial face values by highlighting the involvement of the complex interplay of health seeking behaviour of individuals with the various components of health systems.

Understanding the Problem of Homelessness: A Case for Using Habitus as a Tool by Anup Tripathi speaks about the experiences of homelessness and all the challenges and problems that come along with it. The paper argues that the concept of habitus and social field by Pierre Bourdieu may be able to shed light in understanding the problem of homelessness.

Victor Narzary in his article **Social Work Education and the Tribal/Indigenous peoples of India's Northeast** attempts to conceptualise a social work education framework suited to meet the unique needs of the tribal/indigenous situations of India's Northeast. The study calls for social work education to move away from the remedial approach to an approach that responds to the needs of the tribal/indigenous Peoples by accommodating structural and critical perspectives.

The Journal of Development Practice wishes to thank the authors of the first volume and hopes that the readers will be informed and enlightened by the thoughts and reflections expressed by them through their articles in this volume.

Jacob Islary