

Note from the Editor

Let me begin with an apology for being late in uploading this issue. The reason, if it helps in absolving my failing, was simply the failure in time management. At the beginning of this year I got back to university teaching, leaving behind my short adventure as the “Director of Research and Knowledge Management” in a local research institute. The job title, particularly the “Knowledge Management” (wow!) bit, and the benefits should have kept me happy there but teaching is so intoxicating that no amount of power, being the “Director” and “managing” knowledge etc., could hold me there for long. But getting to a new university and having to organize a new department, the curricula and managing and editing another journal there were all eating into my personal time little by little. And soon I found that I was failing in my other and, perhaps, more rewarding ventures, like this journal and my personal forays into the world of fiction writing.

But late as I am, the July 2015 issue is finally ready with such an attractive set of papers that I decided give it a sub-title: “South Africa in Focus”. It is, thus, a very rich collection of articles on South Africa beginning with the concept of “human dignity” and “good governance” to as mundane a subject as “stock theft”, all centered on life in South Africa.

Mashele Rapatsa in the article on “Human Dignity as a Foundational Norm in the Understanding of Human Rights” begins with the assumption that the notion of human dignity is the yardstick from which the philosophy of human rights derives its strength. In South Africa, “there is a strong linkage between the justiciability of socio-economic rights and the notion of dignity”. This has been further strengthened by the necessity to redress “the imbalances of the past” and to “achieve fundamental freedoms and substantive equality”. This, the author feels, is yet to be realized “owing to notable triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequalities that make it impossible for the majority to meaningfully assert their dignity”.

B.C. Basheka and M.P. Sebola in their paper “Good Government in Africa: What is the role of Bureaucratic Governance?” raise the fundamental question of “good governance” and the role of bureaucracy in it. They feel that since good government and bureaucratic governance share the same ancestors it should not be difficult to achieve good governance through “democratic, honest and able” administrators. However, they argue that these must be placed on the “foundations” of African values. Ntwanano Erasmus Mathebula goes a step further in “The South African Broadcasting Corporation in Championing Transparency and Accountability in Government: the Bigger they ARE the Harder they Fall” and puts the notion of “transparency” and “accountability” in the government to test in analyzing the role of South African Broadcasting Corporation as “a people centered, content driven, technology enabled, and a sustainable public broadcaster” particularly against the backdrop of “political interference”.

Climate change is the “buzz word” these days and no reputed journal can ignore the topic. BEJS has dealt with this topic earlier but here Professor Kola O. Odeku takes up the issue in relation to the rural settings of South Africa vis-à-vis the role played by the research activities taken up by the Department of Science and Technology through various rural universities. Odeku feels that the Department of Science and Technology is headed in the “right direction” in their effort to tackle climate change issues. Professor Odeku next teams up with Olufunmilayo F. Odeku to investigate the “issues, challenges and prospects” of the mining industry in South Africa. They look at the “legislative interventions that have been put in place, in time and space” as well as at the “various competing rights on mineral resources and the roles of all stakeholders and role players” in a challenging study of the industry.

Eric Pule, Tonie Drotsky, Abel Toriola and Ntwanano Alliance Kubayi a group of researchers from Tshwane University of Technology sought to analyze the “psychosocial influences” of Children’s Participation in School Sport. They found out from a study of 773 children that “primary school children were more actively involved in school sport than the secondary school children”. The overall results

showed that the children participate in school sports for “health improvement, enjoyment; socialisation and opportunity to bond with parents”.

The last of the studies on South Africa takes up the now notorious cases of “stock theft” that have plagued many African nations. This highly involving qualitative study done by W. Maluleke, EE Obioha, and JT Mofokeng of all the parties concerned identify that the contributory factors to stock theft as: “the slaughtering of stock to sell to butchery owners; the alleged involvement of SAPS [South African Police Service] and Department of Justice: Giyani Magistrates Courts’ (DoJ: GMC) officials in stock theft crimes; the negligence of livestock owners; the unmarking of livestock; and, poor reporting when livestock gets stolen”. The researchers then offer a few recommendations and suggest some possible strategies to combat the problem.

The other three papers in this issue also cover new grounds. In the “Dystopian Furcations in Modern Literature” Kubilay Akman questions the very purpose of the “dystopian novels” like the *1984*. He argues that these were primarily written to ward off communism and as such this variety literature ended with the demise of the socialist regimes in Russia and the Eastern Europe.

Suman Paul, a Professor of Geography, proposes a novel approach to study the slums and the spatial dimension of poverty through the use of maps. He uses a combination of municipality generated maps and high resolution satellite imaging to map out various aspects of poverty in the slums of an Indian city and recommends the approach for other such studies.

In the last of the papers, Krishna P Pandey offers a rare insight into the lives of the Santals, an indigenous community living in the eastern regions of Nepal. Defining women’s autonomy by three broad aspects such as “outside exposure, decision making and control over resources”, Pandey goes on to measure the level of Santal women’s autonomy and construct an index. Pandey notes remarkable results in terms of the first two factors and limited autonomy in terms of the third factor. However, he notes that “the reality of Santhal women is the sum total of landlessness and ethnic backwardness resulting from extreme poverty and illiteracy as the major causes of constricted autonomy”.

This issue, thus, covers a very wide range of subjects and disciplines and I am sure will present an absorbing reading. I am particularly glad that I could present such a fascinating collection of materials on South Africa in one issue. In many of the previous issues articles from Nigeria used to so dominate the journal that, in my frustration at the lack of articles from Bangladesh, I once noted that instead of calling it the Bangladesh e-Journal, it may very well be called the Nigerian e-Journal of Sociology. South Africa then had a token presence in the journal. But I am extremely delighted that the contributions of South African scholars from so many universities have, indeed, provided the Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology, with a truly international flavour. I welcome future articles from the large number of South African authors who have already contributed as much as from the new scholars who may find the e-Journal helpful.