

Editorial:

Identity, Resistance and Empowerment

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Identity, Resistance and Empowerment are three essential concepts which string the beads of life. Empowerment necessarily draws nourishment from identity; and the resistance to recognise or respect identities is what gives way to crises in societies; it in turn calls for strategies of empowerment. The sequence of the three words is also worthy of note. The word resistance located between identity and empowerment refers to resistance that can be overcome by empowerment if propelled by identity. A standalone of any of these trios of concepts would therefore require other configurations to be meaningful. Sociologists and historians, political scientists and feminists, litterateurs and economists can draw attention to varied manifestations of the relationship between identity, resistance and empowerment. It is these that the present Volume (VII/ 2) of the *Salesian Journal of Humanities and Social Science* has gathered to address. Adopting the rubric of the theme Identity, Resistance and Empowerment the journal puts forth a series of 12 articles which delve on diverse issues that reflect and research on this theme.

Written by authors hailing from different disciplines, namely, literature, geography, political science, psychology, education, economics and mass communication, this issue of the journal brings forth clearly that the concerns though are common yet the lens of looking at the theme differ. Moreover the journal embraces a wide variety of people as case studies to draw the point home. Therefore in the fold are articles on, the tribes, women, children and adolescents, teachers, military personnel, villagers, communities and human beings in general. The discussion is explored not just with "real people" but even characters in fiction be it *Alice in Wonderland* or those imagined by Tagore in terms of cherished values. The dimensions researched are also representative of the range over which identity, resistance and empowerment finds its influence. Therefore the recognition granted to tribes in different sites and situations, food as identity, the

difference between employment and work avenues of women and men, the outsourcing of the recruitment of military personnel for waging wars by a country, the cause of riots, portrayal of women across two literary works, dyslexia among children, values amongst school going adolescents, job satisfaction of school teachers, belongingness to a country of border villages and meaning of life as identified in the *Psalms* by King David and Rabindranath Tagore's *Geetanjali*, are covered.

Banking on different sources of data some historical, some literature and few on primary sources like questionnaire and interview also confirms that there is no one way to research into these themes. Moreover the representation of the information and data is of all shades and hues. A close scrutiny of the 12 articles will reveal that from quotations, tables to maps, many a forms have been used to capture the rather elusive terrains of Identity, Resistance and Empowerment under study.

The key questions raised by the authors of the articles at the root, ring a rather similar inquiry: how can resistance be overcome, or, be introduced? Why is there subjugation, and often non-resistance to it? What is the nature of resistance and what kind of resistance can empower and not debilitate? When does resistance turn to rage? How can identity be recognised and acknowledged as core value of human life? While the themes are closely knit, yet given the emphasis and the attention the 12 articles deserve, they have been grouped under three sub-divisions of identity, resistance and empowerment with skewed distribution. The theme of identity accounts for six out of 12 articles; the theme of resistance dominates two articles and empowerment accounts for the remaining four articles.

The delineation of Identity opens with the issue of gendered identity demarcation in the literary works of Sukumar Ray and Lewis Carroll by Nima Doma showing the Victorian morality and its fallout in gender relations as can be peeped into even within the innocuous children's literature. The identity issue gets a different emphasis in the search for Rabindrik Values by Moumita Basak in school going adolescents and how value perceptions deepen the identity in differential ways among the boys and girls of the adolescent age group. The issue takes yet another turn from the literary and value concerns to that of economic geography and social geography perspectives as providing identity when Punam Tripathi visits the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and engages with the Great Andamanese and Nicobarese tribes on a comparative mode highlighting how location and access or non-access to the outsider can define the self perceptions making a community open to, or, fearful and suspicious of the other. Pamela Deb's study of the Doars in North Bengal's Jalpaiguri District from the grass roots block level situation analysis of the migrant tribes engaged in the tea garden labour ever since they were brought there for plantation work, shows how the identity in terms of economic activity and income generation opportunities has not changed significantly over the past thirty years. The stagnation of their identity as poor, migrant, tribal people amidst a booming region of prosperity is a thought provoking phenomenon.

The next two articles look at the spiritual and material nuances of identity that persons and communities come to appropriate. Peter shows how the religious and spiritual

poetry if 'consumed' in the spiritual sense of the word, can provide meaning and purpose to life and enable individuals and communities to stay their course of action even in turbulent times. Identity issue arrives closer home, when it is studied, as derived and nurtured on the life sustaining primary activity of food production, consumption and the necessary sociality built around it, and this is the thematic explored by Anjana Treasa Joseph. Drawing special reference to the capitalist consumer-culture overflow, found in modern food consumption, she takes a look at the new aspirations crisscrossing into prevailing traditional habits particularly showcasing the class-caste denouements, in Kerala, regarded as one of the more progressive states of India.

The collective search for Identity and its dynamics in a multi-ethnic, racial, religious, regional, linguistic context gives rise to identity politics. This collective search when it fails to achieve an overarching cohesiveness as a bigger entity, as in the case of Indian nation, or in that process, when the sub-nationalities are not evenly perceived, recognized and acknowledged, gives rise to conflicts. One way it has grossly manifested itself in India is through the phenomenon of riots. The role of rumours in riots forms the substance of the study that has engaged Sinjini Bhattacharya comparing the happenings in the two states of Maharashtra and UP between 1980 and 2009. Underlying it are attempts to resist the overarching naming that is done from the outside which becomes detrimental to the groups concerned.

Lhamu Bhutia focuses on the emerging trend of private armies and security personnel pooled from the different regions of the world, by companies located in the first world, to be deployed in wars and conflict zones, and, how this phenomenon is a two edged sword: on the one hand a phenomenon that is as old as ancient Roman armies taking in mercenaries to wage war in different regions and thus benefitting the soldier, his family, the local chieftain states, and on the other, demoralizing the respective armies of the countries. In the present context the issue is even more aggravated as the private companies who recruit and train these mercenaries take over the military functioning of the respective national armies. It is a problematic phenomenon though it is widely practised even without the due legitimacy because of the frequently documented violations of human rights by these mercenary form of 'company militarism', as she points out.

The set of last four articles on empowerment, begin with Rituparna looking at the teacher satisfaction and what contributes the betterment of teachers in schools. While Rituparna looks at job satisfaction of teachers as an indicator of empowerment not only of the individual teachers but eventually of the nation that has an empowered set of teachers, Kranti Dewan looks at another key component of empowerment of people by focusing on Women Empowerment in India. She does this by contextualizing women's deprivations in a historical sense and the birth of women's empowerment measures in and through feminist movements in the world, and in India in particular. She then pins down her analysis to the participation of women in workforce and observes the decline in the workforce rate despite gender awareness and state interventions. Nazia Bano, takes a sweeping overview of the literature that deals with Dyslexia as a Learning Disability and throws up some findings and references to where other societies have

delved into serious study and compares with similar studies and attempts to address the issue in India, offering recommendations. The last, by Urbi Ghosh and Sumitra Naha, contains salient observations derived from the extensive field work in one village of India-Bangladesh border near Siliguri, in West Bengal, and it comes to the conclusion that affinity to the national cause or nation state does not prevent discontent about the local administration for the lack of benefits that are due and yet not provided. The sense of the 'nation' at the border and the awareness of their entitlements are brought to light.