

EDITOR'S NOTE

We take pride in launching *Social Orbit*, the journal of Social Sciences, of Farook College. As nobody in the academic world can overlook the maxim of the day 'publish or perish', there is a huge rush towards the print culture. Whether bound by the brunt of the new academic norms, which has cultivated among scholars a craving for self-advancement, or motivated by the urge for scholarly excellence, it has stormed the academia by flooding the world of publications through an influx of journals and books. Several such publications are mediocre in quality, which blatantly bluff the world of letters for sheer commercial interests, and simply serve as platforms for career advancement. *Social Orbit* explores a different path and commits to adhere to intellectual honesty and academic integrity.

The idea of launching a journal of social sciences, instead of any specific one of the social disciplines, is to emphasize the integral nature of social sciences and to show that they cannot be separated into water tight compartments. In this post-modern age when the objectivity claims of both natural and social science subjects are frowned upon, and when the boundaries among social science subjects are getting increasingly narrowed down, and research as a means to attain the ultimate truth is despised, to become multidisciplinary is to generate a common platform of enquiry which may help to produce a coherent set of knowledge. The skepticism raised towards social science knowledge as well as its 'pseudo'-scientific methods of enquiry also compel an interdisciplinary approach. If truth is subjective/relative, then not only social science research but even research in natural sciences would become absurd. Societies which have attained first world status or are captivated by the comfort zone of a consumerist culture, social science research may have little importance; but for the third world societies which are still reeling under multifarious social issues left unresolved by the modern and even pre-modern times, the efficacy of postmodern ethic is certainly dubious.

To run a journal then, when metanarratives steadily disappear, when dominant ideologies get washed away, and when politics of identity acquire a jubilant rise, is a very difficult task. It makes the choice of an ideological position/perspective difficult; yet, to keep distance from the trend of the times is to become outdated and obsolete. The current attraction towards the 'small' and the 'local' is a natural reaction against the destructive effects of the industrial revolution and a candid realization of the frailty of the notion of progress and the paradigm of development

advocated by modernity. But to give up a historical perspective and to extol the licentious life of consumerism would steal a global vision from us and could mislead us to social Darwinism. In search of trees we should not miss the woods. The relevance of social science knowledge is justified on the ground of the need to foster powerful ethical values and a profound social sense.

We consider the publication of a journal as an act of serious political intervention as it involves upholding vital social issues and confronting the existing iniquitous power relations in the social system. Social science research should focus on generating knowledge favourable to emancipate people on the margins of the society. Similarly, addressing issues demanding immediate attention, concerned with human existence in this universe, such as the damage caused to the environment through our own reckless exploitation of resources, also makes academic activity a significant political intervention. The aggressive appeal for gender justice is another arena which calls for immediate erudite activism. It is a political act in a further sense as it strives to challenge the trivialization of knowledge. The spread of knowledge is now on a horizontal plane – to know less and less about more and more things – but such cursory knowledge about anything would not promote healthy social discourses. Knowledge becomes an effective device for social transformation only if it becomes reflective and develops itself into a tool capable of analyzing the play of power relations in the society. This is the context in which *Social Orbit* seeks to differ from the numerous so-so journals of these days.

All the articles in this volume are not directly linked to a central theme but are on individual topics and are from various social science subjects. They explore important issues of great socio-political relevance. The deteriorating quality of research is a serious matter of concern for us all, but it should not discourage us from launching new organs and platforms for pursuing genuine social science knowledge. Keeping in mind the original mission and the great legacy of Farook College, that is to promote the educational advancement of socially marginalized groups, we reaffirm our commitment to contribute substantially to the knowledge in social sciences which is hoped to create a better social system for the future.