

## Editorial

We live in and through negotiating cultures. That cultures play a prominent role in thinking about, situating and understanding identities is a given, with the emergence of fields of enquiry largely encapsulated under “Cultural Studies”. In a time and space when films, television, new media, literary works and other spaces of everyday life reconstruct, circulate and disseminate different sorts of identities, it is important to negotiate and interrogate these spaces as well as the identities constructed by these spaces. In this regard, this issue of *Artha*, the Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, focuses on cultural spaces and the discursive construction of identities in and through these spaces. The issue includes four papers ranging from different domains that ask crucial questions and raise critical concerns around culture and identity construction. Various authors have looked at different cultural spaces including public and popular culture, its varied formats and its problematics in addressing questions of identity formation like gender, class, caste, race among other concerns.

Prabhas Pandit in “The Making of the Maker: The Figure of Krishna in Bankim’s *Krishnacharitra* looks at how the early Indian nationalists asserted an ‘original’ Indian identity in the face of colonialism to counter and establish a difference between the colonizer and the colonized. The paper problematizes this “original India” by showing how these nationalists posited a Hindu India and closely analyses the nationalist discourse framed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his works. The author analyzes the duality in Bankim’s thought – an internal ambivalence of faith and reason – placing Bankim in a peculiar position of flexibility of his arguments.

Nalini Pai reads select Dalit narratives to understand subaltern cultures and how their narratives typify their lived experience. The essay also looks at how basic human rights like Right to Property and Right to Self-Respect are highly problematised in the context of the Dalits. By closely looking at their lived experiences as narrativised in their work, Nalini Pai also throws light on the myriad cultures of the Dalit people from different communities.

Shlok Kumar, in his article “Indented Identities: The Quandary of the Indian Woman” interrogates the role of the soap opera on Indian television in constructing identities for women. The author examines the all-pervasive and intrusive character of television in forging ideologies and upholding conventional, patriarchal stereotypes of femininity and social acceptance. The research article calls for radical interventions into the narratives of Indian soap opera that continue to exert an impressionable control over our collective imaginary.

In their research article, “Public Relations and Corporate Identities: Corporate Social Responsibility- Genuine Concern or Mere Image Building?”, Dr. Jagadeesh Prakash and Suparna Naresh interrogate the convergences between Public Relations and Corporate Social Responsibilities. The article raises urgent questions of accountability and outreach of the CSR exercise in the context of brand-building and establishing corporate identities in a global culture: Is CSR in India a genuine move or is it only an excuse to establish brand identities? Does CSR help businesses in their quest for a unique identity and to what extent is this done? Is CSR practiced with any degree of genuine care for society?

## **Editorial Team**