



## **Editorial**

This edition (Vol 23; Issue 4) of the Artha Journal of Social Sciences features five articles that tackle a variety of important and diverse social issues. Drawing on empirical data, the initial four articles delve into developmental and policy issues along with their related social challenges. The fifth article differs somewhat from the usual style of submissions to Artha. This piece highlights the complex interplay between memory and history by offering an analytical exploration of partition narratives. Written by scholars from South Africa, Tanzania, and India, these articles showcase the vibrant heritage of empirical methods and critical perspectives in social science research. Below is a concise summary of the articles featured in this issue.

The inclusive governance practices within South Africa seek to cater to the cultural diversity embedded within its heterogeneous population using democratic principles. However, the lack of research models to address enduring sustainable services to vulnerable citizens has resulted in a severe governance gap. Yet, ambiguity around the roles of traditional leaders, who manage vast areas of communal land and preserve cultural norms, has created challenges in governance, particularly in rural areas where both councillors and traditional leaders operate. In this context, Duma's article examines the dynamic interplay between councillors, traditional leaders, and society in the democratically administered Ubuhlebezwe Local Municipality. Further, the article also reflects on lessons from other countries like Namibia and Zimbabwe and the evolution of South Africa's traditional leadership institutions before and after democracy. Drawing on cooperation theory, this study emphasizes the importance of establishing effective mechanisms to promote collaboration between municipalities and traditional leaders. This is vital to attain inclusive and cooperative governance, as explained in detail using a case study of Ubuhlebezwe Local Municipality. The paper enforces the importance of restorative justice as a framework for social reform. It emphasises that developing such mechanisms is crucial to achieving sustainable service delivery and fostering inclusive governance.

The issue consists of yet another article set within the South African context. Based on existing literature that highlights that South Africa follows a policy that balances free trade and protectionism, the following article engages in a discourse that questions the influence of International Trade Policies on the economic growth and development of South Africa by examining the effect of free trade and protectionism on economic growth and development. Drawing on the Mercantilism theory of economic development, which supports the idea that home governments should regulate the economy and promote international trade, this paper conducts a semi-systematic literature review as its methodological approach. Concluding on the argument that if the government wants to tackle poverty, unemployment, and income inequalities, trade agreements and policies must be reevaluated, selected areas of the economy must be reserved for local industries and producers, and MNCs must be brought in where local industries cannot supply.

Another article from an East African context examines the role of carpentry in improving the livelihoods of carpentry-trained youths in Bukoba Municipality, Tanzania. Employing a descriptive design, the study gathered data from 45 respondents through semi-structured interviews, which were then analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal the significant reliance on carpentry as a primary source of income for most trained youths in the field. The article initiates a discourse that underscores the transformative potential of carpentry for youth empowerment, particularly for those who have completed vocational education training (VET). Despite the challenges, the article proposes interventions to address them, such as reducing taxes, enhancing access to loans and grants, revising the VET curriculum, and more. This article underscores the urgent need for targeted policies to improve carpentry training and support, ensuring long-term benefits for individuals and society.

Nanjunda and Lakshmi's article engages in a discourse on the alarming vulnerabilities faced by the children of female sex workers in Karnataka, South India, shedding light on their marginalised status and the urgent need for targeted interventions. Their study in select districts of Karnataka in collaboration with local NGOs reveals that these children endure educational barriers, economic

deprivation, health risks, and legal vulnerabilities. Through the results, the contributors propose geographically and culturally oriented rehabilitation models that shift beyond the HIV prevention efforts by the National AIDS Control Organisation. In conclusion, the study emphasises that addressing the vulnerabilities of children of female sex workers requires a multidisciplinary approach. Further, they pitch in the need for holistic support structures models, policy reforms, and other targeted interventions prioritising the vulnerable population's education, health, and social inclusion. As per their argument, this is the best way to break the chains of intergenerational poverty and marginalisation.

The fifth article of the present issue, *Recovering Memory, Choosing Forgetting: Reading My Family, Partition and Me: India 1947- A Documentary*, examines the intricate relationship between memory and history through an analytical reading of partition narratives and the 2017 documentary *My Family, Partition and Me: India 1947*. Drawing on insights from memory studies, oral histories, and documentary filmmaking, the article explores how the interjection of memory and history shapes storytelling, reconciliation, and justice. The analysis sheds light on how these choices influence restoration processes and the recovery of the suppressed by engaging with works like Urvashi Butalia's seminal *The Other Side of Silence: Voices on the Partition of India* and Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*. The article illustrates how memory, as opposed to history, allows for a more nuanced understanding of the partition's lasting impact. The work also reflects on the role of the documentary form of presentation in recovering memory. It highlights how documentary storytelling facilitates the reconciliation of fragmented narratives by juxtaposing personal experiences with broader historical records. By asserting that visual and oral testimonies provide a powerful medium for memory recovery, and fostering audience empathy, the article proposes a sustained engagement with the documentary form as a vital tool for bridging the gap between history and lived experience.

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