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# Editorial

We live in times of war, with uncertainty looming over the lives of billions who inhabit this planet. The US-Israel war on Iran, the latest in a series of global conflicts, has brought further human suffering. As is widely acknowledged, there was little need for this war. Its ripples are being felt far beyond the conflict zone of West Asia. Fuel shortages have gripped several nations, with the effects borne disproportionately by the poorest citizens. The marginalised, already leading precarious lives, must now spend more and make do with their meagre incomes, even as the future appears bleak.

*Artha Journal of Social Sciences* brings out this issue with three articles, one commentary, and a book review. The book review reflects on the human costs of war, a timely contribution in the light of events unfolding around us. The articles and the commentary, along with the book review, raise several important questions. These contributions explore the community-driven approaches to township development in South Africa, work-life balance in policing in India, local government responses to climate change in African countries, and the implications of the newly introduced online gaming act in India. We hope these together will contribute to the scholarship on social sciences and demonstrate the myriad ways by which scholars examine their surroundings through their academic lenses.

Hlanganani Mnguni and Mandla Mubecua examine the vexed question of township development in South Africa. Townships, comprising income-poor households that serve the more affluent cities and urban areas, have faced challenges of widespread unemployment for a long time. The article by Mnguni and Mubecua adopts a scientific approach to examine evidence from 48 scholarly articles on township development in recent years. The analysis, undertaken using the Asset-Based Community Development framework, reveals several interesting findings. The persistent underdevelopment of townships has come despite increasing infrastructural and corporate-led initiatives. But township residents lack the skills and necessary support to participate, especially in entrepreneurship. It is here that the community-driven participatory approaches offer an opportunity. The reviewed literature shows that initiatives under such settings have enhanced service delivery and fostered collective ownership. The cases of Gugulethu Cooperative Development Project and Soweto Urban Farmers' Cooperative stand out as successes for improved livelihoods and upward mobility. Sustainable development requires the active participation of the citizenry, and examples from South Africa reaffirm this dictum.

Policing is often seen only from the viewpoint of law and order in public discourse, and the workers who engage in such high-stressful jobs are often invisibilised. Dhanush M. R. and Shobha C. examine the working environment of police personnel in their article "The Wellbeing Equation: Work-Life, Support, and Satisfaction in Policing." Their study, based on a survey of 400 police officers in Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, used a research instrument that assessed social support, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. The analysis of data indicates that the perceived social support influences both occupational attitude and well-being. This is in alignment with the theoretical predictions, which point out that the feeling of being valued improves functioning in high-demand work environments. While the study is based in a large urban setting, there are implications for having more initiatives aimed at an inclusive work culture, which leads to peer support and improved family support policies.

Integrating decentralised governance into policy can improve the effectiveness of climate-change adaptation, argues Christopher Dick-Sagoe in his review article on the responses by local governments in African countries. This review addresses the gap of examining localised responses, which tend to get obfuscated by attention on national-level climate action policies. This is unfortunate, as local governments are largely responsible for climate-change adaptation, or "actions adopted to prevent, minimise, or take advantage of the negative effects of climate change." The 12 articles reviewed by the author highlight the responses by local governments to the efforts aimed at institutionalisation and integration of climate-change adaptation in their activities. However, these efforts are constrained by several barriers, including cognitive, regulatory, and institutional factors. A notable feature is the lack of specialised staff in addressing the needs within the local governments. While there are a few commendable efforts at various levels, strengthening local governments to mediate between the macro-level policies and ground-level reality remains an important task for the future.

The commentary by Neeraj Kumar and Maya K. contextualises the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, a landmark legislation that came as a shock to the thriving online gaming industry in India. The Act tries to balance the societal imperative of safeguarding those vulnerable to gaming addiction and channelise a growing industry for economic development. While there exist cases of China and South Korea, which have taken conscious steps in this sphere, India's case appears to be different. Here, the motivation for the Act seems to have come from the instances of suicides associated with online money games. It is too early to predict the effectiveness of the Act, but the experiment appears to be unique.

Finally, the book review by Satyaki Dasgupta engages with the pains of war. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, a novel by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, traverses

the horrific experiences of the Nigerian Civil War. The war, which led to the deaths of millions and widespread starvation, forms the backdrop for the coming of age of the novel's characters. Dasgupta emphasises the moral dilemmas faced by the characters as they live through troubled times. Human loss and suffering are often absent in geopolitical commentaries. Despite being a fictional account, the novel "breathes life into the anonymous statistics of conflicts." We look forward to further contributions of this kind, wherein social science researchers critically engage with and reflect upon social realities as represented in works of fiction.

There has been a change in the editorial team of *Artha*. After five years of helming the affairs of the journal, Dr Om Prakash L. T. has passed on the role of editorship to me. It is a daunting task, but I hope to carry this forward in the same spirit, with the support of all well-wishers of the journal. I wish to thank Dr Om Prakash for his exemplary leadership and the unwavering support he provided throughout his tenure as editor.

The journal team wishes to convey our sincere appreciation and thanks to all the authors and reviewers for their contributions to this issue. I would also like to thank our editorial assistants—Aneetta Alexander, Albeena Stephen, Ritwik Gupta, and Nikita Biswal—for their help with coordination and manuscript editing. Dr Malavika Menon, Coordinator, and Mr Jery Mathew, Administrative Assistant, from the Centre for Publications at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), have, as always, provided immense support in the process, and I am deeply grateful to them. We also extend our gratitude to all the officials at CHRIST for their exceptional support.

Deepak Johnson K, PhD
**Editor, Artha Journal of Social Sciences**