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EDITORIAL NOTE

Since 2005, the successive editorial boards of the Socio-Legal Review have been striving towards enriching the socio-legal discourse by giving a platform to writings pertaining to contemporary, pertinent, and less-explored issues. The launch of the Forum in 2017, the online companion to the journal, was another step in this endeavour. This year, once again, the editorial board has strived to curate articles, both, for the Review, seeking out long-form articles that will enrich the socio-legal scholarship in novel ways, as well as for the Forum, focusing on providing timely responses to critical developments.

Encouraged by the recognition of the journal’s contributions to the constitutional law and the criminal law jurisprudence in the Supreme Court’s seminal judgments on the constitutionality of Aadhaar and the decriminalization of adultery, we made two crucial strides this year to put forth enhanced and unparalleled scholarship on various issues. We have attempted to promote research and discussion on niche areas which are largely unexplored. The range of issues addressed in the selection of articles in this, the Spring issue of Volume 16, bear testimony to this. We have also improved our peer review process, by putting all manuscripts through two stages of double-blind peer review.

The board’s consistent efforts in recognizing issues of utmost contemporary relevance and soliciting quality pieces, resulted in the publication of a well-rounded collection of articles on the Forum. We began the year with the Election Series, with four articles responding to and analysing the various controversial issues arising in the aftermath of the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections. Taking our constitutional scholarship forward, Divij Joshi critiqued the Puttaswamy judgment in light of digital technologies such as Aadhaar, while Vivek Anandh set the stage for the new 9-judge Sabarimala reference bench, highlighting different aspects of the religious rights jurisprudence that the bench should consider, and the need to reformulate the propositions under consideration. Rashmi Venkatesan took up the case of the 2019 Nobel Prize-winning experimental method of ‘Randomised Controlled Trials’, underlining its inherently political nature and its limitations. The furore surrounding the hanging of the Nirbhaya convicts was captured by Megha Mehta, who lucidly argued how the death penalty cannot be a solution to crimes against women. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a host of issues of socio-legal importance have emerged. The Forum was quick to capture these burgeoning issues, with Shaileja Verma’s Orwellian perspective on the Indian experience with the pandemic, and Rohini Sen’s take on how Critical International Law can nurture
critical thinking in students. She argued that this critical thinking, in turn, would be useful for coming up with more appropriate solutions for crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

This issue carries a diverse set of exceptional perspectives on contemporarily significant issues. The first piece is Mathew Idiculla’s *A Right to the Indian City? Legal and Political Claims over Housing and Urban Space in India*. It takes up the globally articulated idea of the ‘Right to the City’, and contextualizes it in the Indian context, arguing for the need to adopt both legal and political pathways for realizing the ‘Right to the City’.

Our second piece is Gehan Gunatilleke’s *Coexistence and Violence: The Case for Equality of Opportunity in Sri Lanka*. In this piece, the author analyses equality of opportunity in Sri Lanka, within a constitutional and socio-political framework. The author suggests a multi-pronged approach to ensure meaningful equality of opportunity, and to prevent the recurrence of violent conflict in Sri Lanka.

The *Spring* issue continues to promote interdisciplinary scholarship through Mary Kavita Dominic’s ‘*Essential Religious Practices’ Doctrine as a Cautionary Tale: Adopting Efficient Modalities of Socio-Cultural Fact-Finding*, which argues for the need to consider anthropological expertise, in answering crucial legal questions which require an understanding of socio-cultural factors.

M. Mohsin Alam Bhat’s *Mob, Murder, Motivation: The Emergence of Hate Crime Discourse in India*, contributes to the scarce literature on the hate crime framework in India. The author argues that the concept of hate crime can potentially be used for addressing and framing violence. This piece interprets the case of *Tehseen Poonawalla v Union of India* within this hate crime framework.

We conclude the issue with Shikha Pandey’s *Anti-Terrorism Courts and Procedural (In)Justice: The Case of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Special Courts in South Chhattisgarh, India*. It is a part of the *Notes from the Field* section, which seeks to promote empirical research in law. A critique of the interpretation of the NIA Act and the functioning of the NIA Special Courts, the article is supplemented by the author’s first-hand experiences with procedural injustice in the conflict-ridden Bastar region of South Chhattisgarh.

We are deeply grateful to our peer reviewers, for their insightful and invaluable suggestions, and our team of editors, for their continued dedication, which helped us put this issue together in a timely manner despite the ongoing crisis. We are also thankful to our Faculty Advisor Professor Rashmi Venkatesan and
our Vice Chancellor Professor (Dr.) Sudhir Krishnaswamy for their constant support and guidance.

We hope our readers enjoy this issue. We would love to hear from you; please write to us with your feedback on sociolegalreview.nls@gmail.com.

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Chief Editor and Deputy Chief Editor,
Socio-Legal Review,
Bangalore, June 2020.