

### Note from the Editor

Major objectives of the journal, when launched, were to facilitate the growth of sociology in Bangladesh and to encourage publications by the Bangladeshi sociologists. So far, both these objectives have failed to meet our expectations. Contributions from the Bangladeshi sociologists have been few and far in between. During the initial years of the Journal, Bangladeshi sociologists, mainly from the University of Dhaka, contributed research articles for publications. But the numbers soon declined. The Journal flourished largely because of the articles sent by international scholars, primarily from Nigeria, to the extent that it almost read like the *Nigerian* journal of sociology, instead of being the Bangladeshi journal.

The reasons for this lack of contribution from Bangladesh are disconcerting, forcing on us a pessimistic view of the future of sociology in the country. In general, scholarship in Bangladesh is on the decline. It is particularly true of sociology in an alarming way. Because of a switch to Bengali as the medium of instruction after the independence of the country, there has been a serious drain on the knowledge of English in the population while among the university students, especially the sociology students, it has acted as a barrier to any serious scholarship, since most books still available in any subject are in English. This, after their graduation, translates into near complete lack of research and publication, irrespective of whether they become teachers or choose other professions. So that, other than the few still working seniors, no new sociologists are publishing.

Also, the universities in Bangladesh are almost completely teaching universities with very little or no scope for research, particularly true for the social sciences. With no support from the institutions, the researcher is forced either to convert the few "consultancy" projects s/he may be engaged in into academic research or to spend personal funds to do research. Under such conditions research and publication dwindle and become occasional and personal enterprises.

These general problems are compounded by the fact that there is little or no real or even perceived benefits accruing from research and publication since promotion or career advancement at the university has become almost totally dependent on the membership of the "faculty group" associated with the party occupying state power. Thus, "belonging" to the right group can ensure anything up to the Vice Chancellor's job and beyond into the highest level of state bureaucracy. Hence, one is perceived to be better placed in one's career by active involvement, often full time, in "party politics" instead of than "wasting" time in research and publication. In this, rather, anti-academic atmosphere growth of any discipline is thwarted. Sociologists in all public universities in Bangladesh, unfortunately, have, more often than not, been at the forefront of such anti-academic pursuits bringing down the discipline to its current demise.

It is very heartening, therefore, that the current issue is able to report three research papers on Bangladesh and by Bangladeshi scholars (one in joint collaboration). They are all young scholars and are extremely talented as is demonstrated by their papers. One of them actually takes up the English learning situation itself. We hope, very earnestly, that such contributions from Bangladeshi scholars will continue and the Journal will eventually be able to build up a "Sociology of Bangladesh", its avowed objective.

The Nigerian contributions remain strong as ever and cover a wide range of topics, some moving into areas like, 'bullying in schools' and 'agricultural credits', not covered by the Journal earlier. 'Child labour' and 'community health situation' are also covered in this issue. "Northeast India" is again analysed, this time in terms of the very validity of the concept.

We hope the readers will find this enlarged issue as rich as the previous ones.