

Editorial Note

Two factors shaped the present volume of *The JMC Review*. First, the NEP 2020 emphasis on faculty research in HEIs, including at institutions primarily offering undergraduate study programmes. And, second, the faculty recruitments, after several years, across departments at Jesus and Mary College, where most of the candidates appointed as Assistant Professors had completed their doctoral studies. Quality research, unlike before, has become sine qua non, at least on paper, for both institutional accreditation as well as faculty appointments and promotions at all levels of a changing tertiary education landscape in India. Acknowledging the research deficit typically characterising undergraduate campus cultures in India and spotting opportunity in the faculty appointments to better align with altered national higher education policy imperatives, this volume was consciously oriented towards showcasing the work of early-career researchers and doctoral scholars, among others. In this, the editorial policy was moved to not just provide an academic forum for emerging scholarship, but also to foster a research ecosystem that is as fertile as it is resilient.

Platforming the work of doctoral scholars and newly appointed faculty amplifies voices that are often underrepresented in the everyday operational hierarchies of HEIs. To strengthen credibility for this enterprise while ensuring constructive engagement, we instituted a double-blind peer review system supported by a carefully selected panel of referees (who will be acknowledged and thanked by name in future volumes to maintain confidentiality) and a structured referee report form. While rigorous, this process was geared to build confidence, encourage the practice of scholarly revision based on feedback received, and nurture resilience in contributors. Constructive criticism, when thoughtfully delivered, helps researchers refine their arguments, locate themselves within wider academic conversations, and embrace critical responses to their work as an act of generosity rather than animosity. Fostering such a research culture would help position the journal as not just an avenue for

publication but as an institutional hub and discursive space where emerging scholars can grow through the free and frank sharing of ideas.

Volume 8 carries 10 research articles and 4 substantive book reviews dealing with topics as varied as menstrual leave, trans poetry, Chinese political cartoons, and Walter Benjamin's radio broadcasts for children. Essays on folklore and language studies, pandemic psychology, European Orientalism, as well as a featured interview with pioneering feminist scholar, Urvashi Butalia, underscore the journal's continued commitment to intellectual diversity and inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary inquiry.

The publication of Volume 8 has been delayed due to various operational challenges. Notwithstanding, we have taken deliberate steps to refurbish the journal's production values. A vibrant research culture is stimulated by quality content as much as a professional and inviting platform. A distinctive cover design, a dedicated logo, and a remodelled layout now give the journal a unique visual identity. To reiterate, these refinements, along with expanded editorial processes, are not merely cosmetic. They signal our ongoing efforts to enhance rigour, readability, accessibility, and aesthetic appeal, so that the journal is as engaging to encounter as it is edifying to read.

While many colleagues have supported our efforts, it would be especially remiss not to acknowledge the steadfast support received from both the erstwhile principal, Prof. Sandra Joseph, as well as the incumbent principal, Prof. (Sr.) Molly Abraham, in steering this volume of *The JMC Review* to completion. For this, we thank them wholeheartedly.

—Sharon Pillai and Saumya Varghese
(Executive Editors, *The JMC Review*, Vol 8)