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## Editorial

This is the second volume (numbers 1 and 2, 2008) of the digitized edition of the *ICSSR Journal of Abstracts and Reviews* in Political Science. Naturally, both the ICSSR and the editorial committee of the journal would welcome reactions to and suggestions about it, particularly from the perspective of its utility for the students. Indeed, the availability of the abstracts of the researches published in 2008 being put forth two years later could appear outdated, but they would still be useful for young researchers looking for literature on various issues and themes. This will guide them to more work on a variety of themes that they would be carrying out their research in.

A selection of abstracts of research and analytical articles on political science focusing on India appearing in prominent journals, though not in entirety, presented here has been arranged under eight themes. The themes are functional and based on editorial discretion. Any suggestion to make the themes more useful is welcome.

In three volumes continuously we have put the issues relating to Dalits, Tribals, Minorities and Reservation upfront. Each of these issues separately as well as together continues to be significantly important, if not critical, in national politics. The marginalization of each of these three groups over six decades since independence is not merely a matter of policy concern, it has also unleashed politics that needs to be studied more in both micro and macro contexts. Aside from exploitative impact of the prevailing dominance structures and violence resulting from persisting biases, emerging modes of dominance and exploitation due to globalization affecting dalits and minorities are new areas of concerns. So is their alleged linkage with the extremist politics such as Maoism. Concerns highlighted by the Sachar Committee report have yet to be fully put to social science concern.

The question of reservation has been debated for the past couple of decades not only in the context of these social groups, but also in

the context of Other Backward Classes (OBC). The judicial pronouncements on reservations have only added to the ongoing debates on the efficacy as well as appropriateness of reservation policy, even as demands for reservation by various groups are taking curious turn. The Women's Reservation Bill, though catering to a different, though important, category of reservation to attend to a significant area of neglect, too has raised a variety of questions on the efficacy of reservation policy. Since the OBC reservation has been carried forward without recent census based caste data, the plea for enumeration of caste in 2011 census deserves attention also under the shadow of intra-caste and family based violence backed by Khap panchayats. Would these lead to reassertion in a new modern avatar of caste politics beyond what M.N. Srinivas and Rajni Kothari had theorized?

'Honour killing' or what ever nomenclature we may use to describe to conceptualise the killer diktats of khap panchayats as well as actions of families and parents of the youth erring who prefer to follow the call of their hearts rather than family tradition, it is the first and basic building block of individual, familial, social and political violence. From this perspective political science and political scientists need to factor in larger issues of political violence in the country. Escalation of social and political violence in India in the past decade or so is a matter of concern. It manifests equally and pervasively in individual, collective, private and public spheres. Are there linkages in violence that we are witnessing in family domain due to the youth transgressing the caste barrier, violence that we see on roads in urban areas, violence in the urban communities due to perceived claims on shrunk spaces – both public and private, violence that we witness on the political terrain on a variety of pretexts – parochial claims by political parties, contests on political terrain by parties and leaders, violence unleashed by parties to create a perceived claim on 'honour', to express a perceived sense of hurt for political mobilisation, for turning every political protest into a violent expression of strength and so on, and larger expression of violence India experiences as terrorism, Maoism, expressions of frustration by communities in the north east, Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere against the police, security forces, the political class and the Indian state? Political science in India has a challenge at hand to engage itself with layers violence in the country's public life. We need to decipher whether increasingly structured violence

is a fountain bursting from the ground or a cascade flowing below from top. Is it an attitudinal problem affecting the structure or the other way round? In any case, it is affecting lives of every Indian, inviting the attention of social science enquiry and political science should not hesitate to take the first step.

A discussion on violence immediately turns our attention to the institutional mechanisms that remain primary and secondary bridge with violent social groups and the state, even before the political leadership reacts and acts to douse the fire. We are indeed talking of the police and para military 'forces'. 'Force' has continued to be the suffix to these institutions since the days of the colonial government. Neither the independent Indian state, nor India's democratising, if not democratic, society has engaged itself with as to why the country's public security institutions be suffixed with 'force', which indeed gets expressed in organisational culture and behaviour. Social Sciences in general and political science in particular have not engaged themselves constructively about and with these institutions beyond attempting to corner them in human rights framework. Perhaps looking at them in the traditional framework as mechanisms through which the state exercises its 'legitimate use of force', political science not transcended the democratic institutional barrier to look at them institutions and replace the oppressive 'force' with an ordered and gentler organisation. Police, public security and criminal justice reforms have been crying needs of institutional reforms within the Indian state since independence, not only the Indian state has been remiss about, a sustained constructive engagement by the political science community on this has missing. Does this add to the growing violent scenario we have underlined above?

I have raised a few issues here for consideration and attention of the political science community, more importantly for the young scholars and research scholars, in the country.

**Ajay K. Mehra**