

Editors' Note

We are delighted to present to you Volume 1 Issues 1 and 2 of the *Journal of Development Policy Review* (JDPR). This is a Special Issue on the 'COVID-19 Pandemic and India'. It is divided into the following sections: *Insights*, *Policy Perspectives*, *Special Articles*, *Young Voices* and *Report Review*. Articles in these sections focus on the COVID-19 pandemic that has already posed and continues to pose innumerable challenges for policymakers and citizens across the globe. The pandemic has demonstrated how vulnerable are our economies, health care systems, environment and societies as well as social systems, especially when the strong bond of globalization has connected all the countries of the world. Increasing number of infected persons, fatalities, skyrocketing unemployment and access to healthcare facilities becoming inadequate, etc. have been a feature for advanced, emerging and developing and even underdeveloped economies, alike (of course in varying degrees). Though COVID-19 is a universal challenge, developing countries are disproportionately hurt.

Mitigating measures, especially the lockdown, have brought their economies to a halt and the costs in terms of destitution, hunger, and death are much higher. The pandemic has exacerbated the economic and social divides already present in these countries with women and vulnerable groups and marginalized communities being the worst sufferers. With almost over two full months into coronavirus being declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (March 11, 2020), the future still remains uncertain with heightened levels of anxieties. Government of India responded to this crisis with lockdown and announced a slew of financial packages. Almost all the state governments have responded to the challenge considering their local realities. In fact, these unprecedented times have showcased one of the best examples of cooperative federalism in India, where both the union and the state governments have worked in tandem with each other.

However, weak health infrastructure has led to inadequate testing and diagnoses and so, the true scale of spread of COVID-19 in India has been a matter of concern. Moreover, with 90% of its workforce engaged in informal sector with no job security or benefits and a significant majority of the urban citizen lacking access to basic services and housing, India is facing enormous challenges in controlling the epidemic and the likely regressive impacts on peoples' lives and livelihood.

In this light, this inaugural issue of JDPR addresses the urgent need for new evidence and research to improve our understanding of the economic and social crisis and the appropriate policy responses in developing countries with special reference to India. In particular, this issue explores what does this pandemic mean for globalization? What are the economic and social impacts of this pandemic and who is most affected? What are the new emerging future livelihood opportunities? What are the government policies to mitigate the pandemic effect in short, mid and long-term? What are the implementation challenges and how to improve the effectiveness of these measures? How citizens and communities who are most directly affected can be engaged in policy making and, thereby, facilitating better policy response?

We hope the insights given in various papers of this inaugural issue of the JDPR will greatly benefit the social science research community and policymakers for making appropriate decisions. We also hope that this Special Issue takes the step in the right direction in harmony with the broader aim of JDPR to bring together academic rigour and practical perspectives of the practitioners, scholars, policy shapers, and activists, and bridge the gap between theory and application of public policy by documenting and fostering discussions on development processes, policies and interventions of India and the world.

We are honoured to have Foreword messages for this Special and Inaugural Issue of JDPR from Her Excellency Honourable Governor of Jharkhand, Ms. Draupadi Murmu; Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), Prof Bibek Debroy; the Consul General of the Australian Consulate in Kolkata, Mr Andrew Ford; Distinguished Professor at the Ohio State University and recipient of the World Food Prize 2020, Prof Rattan Lal; Emeritus Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Former Chairperson of University Grants Commission and of Indian Council for Social Science Research, Prof Sukhadeo Thorat; and Chairperson of Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRI), co-founder of APIC éditions and Founding Member of the Global University for Sustainability, Ms Samia Zennadi.

We thank the members of the Journal Advisory Board and of the Editorial Review Committee for embarking with us on this journey of promoting intellectual debates and discussions. This Journal would not have seen the light of the day without the insights and articles of the authors. The alacrity with which they have responded to our invitation and the high standards of their write-ups within a tight deadline have been an inspiration for us. We appreciate the JDPR Secretariat at the Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRI) for their incessant efforts and maintaining a cheer despite editorial pressures. Lastly, we thank our publishers at IndraStra Global New York for commencing on this endeavour with us to disseminate informed insights to enable informed opinion and decisions.

Welcoming feedback and comments at: jdpr.journal@gmail.com!

With Gratitude,
Editors,
Journal of Development Policy Review (JDPR)