

## *From the Editorial Desk*

*JOAAG* has now started its 4<sup>th</sup> year of publication. The current issue deals with a diverse range of governance-related topics spread across six full articles, one research note, one case study and a book review.

The first article by Davey is concerned with the issues of sustainability and ‘environmentalism of the poor’ that highlights the need for policy guidelines to systematically reduce poverty without negatively affecting the environment. Ahsan et al’s paper compares Australian central bank with its Bangladeshi counterpart in relation to their governance structure and independence. The third paper by Vargas-Hernández and Noruzi deliberates on the ownership implications of the ongoing economic transformation process in Mexico since the Mexican financial crisis of 1982. The paper presents a chronicle of widespread irregularities and mismanagements within the Mexican governance system that has resulted in an unplanned privatisation program and has created private monopolies. Levin’s paper examines the “Swedish Model” of public administration and its differences with other similar models. The paper has characterised the Swedish public administration as a system with a high degree of openness and accountability, a high level of autonomy for civil servants and a far-reaching political decentralization across regions and municipalities. Ali and Talukder, in their article, elaborate on key trade policy issues within the South Asian countries. The paper indicates that with the existing low level of bilateral and intra-original trade within South Asian countries, the gains from free trade arrangements are likely to be minimal, especially for smaller countries. Nguyen et al’s paper highlights the economic transition of Vietnam to socialist market economy and its impact on the country’s overall business environment. The paper concludes that in the absence of perfect market conditions and adequate institutional support mechanisms, the state needs to successfully pursue a more entrepreneurial role to facilitate the development of SMEs and their competitiveness.

The research note by Sharma emphasises on the role of public private partnerships in creating business opportunities and enhancing rural development. Monga et al present an interesting case study highlighting the increasing use of contracting out of public services at the local levels. Using the example of the municipal council of Panchkula in Haryana, India, the study has revealed that the process of contracting-out suffers from many pitfalls that need to be carefully identified and addressed in order to deliver quality public service to the citizens.

Dhameja’s book review of *Governance and Poverty Reduction: Beyond the Cage of Best Practices* is a well-written account of an excellent publication edited by Singh et al. The review represents an in-depth analysis of the book highlighting its strengths as well as weaknesses.

Overall, I am sure, this issue provides our readers with an array of thought-provoking articles and comments. I would like to thank all authors, reviewers and editorial board members for their contributions to the publication of this important issue.

Sincerely yours,

**Sharif As-Saber, PhD**

Editor-in-Chief

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