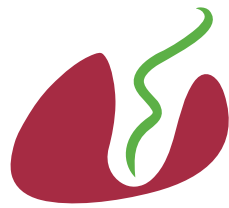


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An International Journal on Alternative Care

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Institutionalised Children Explorations and Beyond

An International Journal on Alternative Care

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Editorial

INSTITUTIONALISED CHILDREN: EXPLORATIONS AND BEYOND

It gives me great pleasure to write this editorial note as the release of this issue of the journal coincides with the second biennial international conference on ‘Improving Standards of Care for Alternative Child and Youth Care: Systems, Policies and Practices’ being held at Amity University, NOIDA, New Delhi on 18 and 19 March 2016. It was only 2 years ago that we launched this journal during the first international conference on ‘Institutionalised Children: Standards of Care and Mental Health’ in 2014, at the same venue and focused on a variety of issues related to the care and management of vulnerable children in institutional care. The second biennial international conference will concern itself primarily working-with and understanding the role of the caregiver, as well as adjustment issues that appear once the individual leaves the institution. I am proud to report that we have published several stellar articles on the care and management of vulnerable children and those in need of care and protection since its launch. Furthermore, we continue to solicit articles from all around the region and have published several papers from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. These articles cover areas of working with orphans who are disabled, have suffered sexual abuse or have been victims of sexual trafficking. Our commitment to addressing matters of policy, care and legal action is unwavering.

The current issue maintains the core structure established in the inaugural issue, ensuring the journal’s characteristic features and dedication to exploring and presenting the key concerns related to the care and management of vulnerable children. It begins with an interview with Siddhartha Kaul, who, as the President of SOS Children’s Village International, shares his thoughts and sentiments regarding the care of children who are without parental care. The interview was conducted by Luis Aguilar Esponda, whose dedication to the journal and to this endeavour is reflected in the fact that he continues to be part of our editorial board despite being based in Mexico. Mr. Esponda’s background in law lends itself to a precise and thoughtful examination of issues related to orphan care and is reflected in the content of the interview itself.

For our main research section, we have a selection of papers that reflect research endeavours, policy and legal matters with respect to orphaned children and the behavioural and mental health concerns that accompany such children. We begin with a paper written by a group of students who conducted a 2-year assessment of the mental and physical health concerns of children in an orphanage in New Delhi under the guidance of their mentor and advisor, Dr. Sumedha Ariely. This paper is

based on data collected as part of a longitudinal study, which was initiated in 2014 with the orphanage in New Delhi. It is one example of how research efforts can contribute further to our understanding of orphaned children and how we can improve their adjustment in adult life. The next paper by Siddhartha Sharma provides a comprehensive account of the devastating impact of child abuse on behaviour and psychological well-being of the child. This is followed by a poignant paper on sex trafficking of children and women and the devastating long-term impact that ensues. Saif Rasul Khan addresses this issue in a paper drawing attention to the grave implications of such rampant evidence of sex trafficking in this population. Following this, we have two papers on child welfare policies and their implementation in our communities. Divisha Mehta and Mona Nooreyaezdan, both fourth year students at the National Law University in Delhi, examine the role of the Child Welfare Committee in the life of an individual being considered for placement in an orphanage. Their paper highlights the critical and imperative role of this agency as bastions for safeguarding the rights of these children. In another paper examining the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act in several homes, Tapobrata Mukhopadhyay and Vineet Bhalla elucidate upon the care and management of juveniles in conflict with the law and yet in need of care and protection. These two papers highlight the ubiquitous role of welfare agencies, legal system and the role of government policies as they impact on the care of vulnerable children.

For our international piece, we are reprinting, with permission, an article published by the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care. In this paper, Nadine Fowler interviews care workers and discusses their views on ‘parenting’ people in their care. She highlights the dilemmas that these care workers encounter as they straddle the fence between the mandatory requirements of their job and their ‘professional responsibility’ towards people in their care. Our ongoing alliance with this journal ensures access to a rich array of papers that this particular one captures and highlights one of the themes of the international conference being held this year.

In our Good Practice section, Dr. Deepak Gupta and his staff expand on the mental health issues that appear in institutional settings and those that benefit from psychiatric care in an institutional setting. The authors examine the barriers to identifying children in need of psychiatric care and highlight the behavioural and psychological issues that emerge when such concerns are not addressed in a timely manner. This paper follows the paper published in the September 2015 issue of the journal that explored the evaluation and assessment of psychological issues in children. It completes our commitment to providing an assessment and evaluation of both psychological and psychiatric concerns in this population of children.

For the movie review, we have an exquisite piece by Tanya Shah, whose review of the movie ‘Miral’ explores the development of a young girl in an orphanage located in a war-torn region amidst the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. A personal favourite of

mine, *Miral* is based on the true life story of Rula Jebreal, and Ms. Shah's review brings to life the character and her story. For the book review, Jaskiran K. Mathur completes her review of Dave Pelzer's trilogy of his life. In this paper, she reviews the second book (*The Lost Boy*) in the trilogy, the first book having been reviewed and published in an earlier issue of the ICEB journal. We hope you will enjoy how Dr. Mathur explores the complexities of this young man's life as he struggles to come of age. His life story resonates with the life of many vulnerable children, who find themselves at the mercy of care-takers. His story of survival is an inspiration to both those who grow up without parents and to those who work with them.

The Brief Communications and Upcoming Events section highlights regional issues and communications and completes the journal. It is our hope that this journal in its entirety will be the stepping stone to promoting research interests, exploring good practice models and highlighting care and policy concerns that are present in the SAARC region. It is a unique journal, essential in its exploration of pertinent issues and critical to elaborate on the care and management of vulnerable children and those in need of care and protection. We urge our readers and others to think of this journal and consider contributing to our next issue.

Monisha C. Nayar-Akhtar, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief

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JOURNAL THEMES will cover a wide range of topics. From time to time, an issue may be devoted to a particular theme as in addressing mental health concerns and treating trauma in this population. Authors are encouraged to submit their ideas for particular themes and can work with the editor-in-chief to develop their ideas into a special issue. We hope to encourage creativity in thinking and promote a desire to develop new initiatives in research and care in this field.

Authors who are interested in editing a special issue should contact Dr. Monisha Akhtar at monisha_akhtar@hotmail.com

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