## CONTENTS

### Editorial

### Articles:

- **Developing Local Resources in Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme in Sri Lanka: Follow-up Study in Anuradhapura**  
  Masateru Higashida, Menikralage Gamini Illangasingha, M. R. Shantha Kumara  
  1 - 8

- **Strengths Based Practice with Children with a Mental Health Condition**  
  Abul Khan, Abraham Francis  
  9 - 19

- **Hope Building and Surviving Domestic Violence: Childhood Experiences**  
  Antoinette Day, Kalpana Goel  
  20 - 28

- **Rural Health System in India: A Review**  
  Neelmani Jaysawal  
  29 - 37

- **Devolution as a Means for Self-governance: Its Potential for Poverty Reduction in Kenya**  
  Preston O. Chitere, Veronica M. Ngundo  
  38 - 49

### Book Review

50 - 54
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This journal will resonate the themes of resilience and hope. Practitioners and academia will take the opportunity to present reflective thinking, innovations and advance a community of practice that features strengths based practices and narratives and research that informs, educates and celebrates the infinitesimal capacity of human coping, resilience and hope. Writings that are refreshingly new that celebrate ethical conduct, practice of human values, eco-social justice international security and peace and those that advance non-violent development alternatives in governance of our societies will be welcomed.

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International Journal of Social Work and Human Services Practice is under consideration for indexing in Thomson Reuters SSCI and Scopus

ISSN: 2332-6832 (Print)        ISSN: 2332-6840 (Online)
Website: http://www.hrpub.org/journals/jour_info.php?id=92

Special issue Guidelines for International Journal of Social Work and Human Services Practice

The aim of publishing special issues such as April, 2014 on Poverty and Human Rights In Asia, and the current one on Community Empowerment, Coping, Resilience and Hope is to provide a themed opportunity for the researchers from all over the world to share their valuable work and will contribute to the dissemination of scientific knowledge.

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Editorial

After a major special issue of December 2014, we are offering here an article from practice in Sri Lanka on developing Local Resources in Community-Based Rehabilitation program based on the findings of a follow up study. Authors, Higashida, GaminiIllangasingha, and Kumara examine the factors of developing local resources in the CBR programme in rural areas in Sri Lanka. Their study mainly focused on community workshops and utilised narratives and undertook a SWOT analysis. The result indicates the possibility that local people taking full advantage of opportunities to overcome the weaknesses of local resources.

Khan and Francis, in their article on Strengths Based Practice with Children with a Mental Health Condition impress upon the natural resilience of children and address how the children’s natural resilience and social environmental factors often do not get appropriate priority in the current bio psychosocial treatment system, under the medical model. The authors approach the idea of strength-based practice (SBP) as a respectful recognition to children’s inherent capabilities to address and resolve their social and emotional difficulties in a safe and supportive environment.

Following this article on strengths based practice with children is another interesting article on Childhood Experiences of Surviving Domestic Violence by Day and Goel. They begin with the role of eco-systems in building hope in the context of children surviving domestic violence. Based on a research study the authors write about the importance of eco-systems in a person’s life in building hope and resilience and reiterates the importance of an eco-systems framework that social workers could use to develop resilience research and practice to help those affected with DV in childhood.

Jaysawal in his article on Rural Health System in India provides a literature review. The current paper seeks to pinpoint key challenges of rural health system and possible strategies taken by the state for overcoming them.

Authors Chitere, and Ngundo examined the devolution of power and the introduction of self-governance in the context of poverty reduction in Kenya. In their paper they were able to show that devolution of decision-making powers and resources had potential to ensure further reduction of poverty, especially at the county and household levels.
Book Review

Some Aspects of Community Empowerment and Resilience

Venkat Pulla, Bharath Bhushan Mamidi

Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, India

The book ‘Some Aspects of Community Empowerment and Resilience’ edited by V. Pulla and B. B. Mamidi published by Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, India in 2015 consists of sixteen chapters which have mostly discussed some of the core issues of community development approach such as coping and resilience, human rights, community empowerment and building hope. The authors have identified, explained and analyzed the significance of those issues in developing communities on the basis of their extensive research, practice and teaching experience in social work and related disciplines in the context of India, Bangladesh, Australia, Africa and UK. This book could be considered as a valuable source of knowledge for many professionals with espoused commitment to human rights - social workers and human services workers to fulfill their professional obligations. Catalysts, who can never be undervalued in community development, should also be considered as stakeholders in this arena. The effort made by the authors to bring out such a book is a timely contribution which has equal importance in developing and developed societies.

Now-a-days in globalized world many new features of community life such as apathy, indifference and detachment seem to be growing high instead of stability, safety and security which have been clearly stated in the book. Simultaneously, the book also has stated the necessity of rekindling, reconnecting and re-rooting the communities by offering some fresh and refined approaches such as Emancipatory social work, Afro-centric social work, Community education, Strengths based social work on aspects of coping, resilience and hope, community empowerment and human rights in addressing the needs and problems of disadvantaged and marginalised communities. Implications of those aspects in social work practice, especially in community development practice are considered most prominent throughout the book. The authors have acknowledged that social work with its historical involvement in community development is well suited to undertake human-rights based approach to ensure social justice, empowering communities to build on their own- coping strategies, reducing vulnerabilities through the development of climate change policies and eco-friendly lifestyles, challenging structural inequalities from the grass-roots etc which have been described with practical examples in different chapters in the book. This collection of papers would be helpful for social workers and human services workers to oblige their professional responsibilities and create vibrant and expectant communities.

Venkat Pulla and Bharath Bhushan Mamidi in their first chapter sketch the contours of Community Empowerment, Resilience Development in the context of modern day challenges of community empowerment. They mention that though the components of the process of coping and resilience closely resemble, resilience is more effective than coping. The difference between coping and resilience is that resilience necessarily implies successful adaptation and coping does not. They further mention both successful adaptation or resilience and empowerment of community have some commonalities but are not the same rather resilience is the central to the discourse on community environment and sustainability. Vishanthie Sewpaul et al discuss in their paper the links between emancipatory social work education and community empowerment. The paper describes community-based intervention adopting a whole school approach at an extremely disadvantaged school in a township in Durban, South Africa. Community-based social work to strip itself from its colonial legacies and imbue with meanings consistent with an emancipatory approach that has—at its heart—people centred empowerment, consciousness raising, participation and ecological development.

Leisha Townson and Venkat Pulla utilize an auto-ethnographic and grounded theory approach in their paper in deconstructing their professional and personal experiences. The authors reiterate that all individuals bear multiple social identities. Reflection on these needs to occur on an ongoing basis especially when working with people in a social work role has nicely been presented. In this conceptual paper the authors explore concepts such as reflexivity, positionality, privilege, situated knowledge and perceptions and discuss their intricate relationships and what it means to have an unbiased view.
Deborah Graham in her paper impels us to examine thinking and actively promotes the need of self-regulated thinking of all individuals in a society. How we think about other people affects them and how people see themselves is largely made up of reflected appraisal. Her paper provides examples of racism linked to automatic thinking (and the harm that it can do) along with some strategies aimed at increasing equity and social justice for Indigenous Australians. Rosemary Rae in her paper addresses the intricate issues in the making of social workers. Rosemary examining the notion of discursive accountability suggests that as we engage with “the world”, we acknowledge that we have to take responsibility for the possibility that our own understandings (and ways of expressing and working with our understandings) might affect outcomes.

Ndungi Wa Mungai talks about an Afro-centric paradigm in his paper that has identical principles with Ubantu exemplifying African values and ethics in the service of humanity. The paper is a critical review on how Afrocentric social work could be applicable to Africa and how this would be manifested in social work practice. The Afro-centric paradigm and the concept of Sankofa and Ubantu show that Africa has the foundations for indigenization of social work. Mungai claims that this framework is very useful in understanding and meeting the needs of immigrant African populations throughout the world. Venkat Pulla and Anne Riggs discuss the role of arts in community development in their paper. The authors have identified commonalities and shared concerns between arts and strengths based social work to present a practice narrative. This paper includes voices from the marginalized individuals and communities to strengthen their argument for consideration of arts practice within the prevailing ethos of social work and community development. Shawn Somerset in his paper presents a food security dimension while he adds broader sociocultural dimensions of culture and environmental sustainability to food security. A further broadening of context reflects the notion that food insecurity is often considered as a standalone reflection of social wellbeing. Lambert K. Engelbrecht reveals in his paper the significance of community education in contributing towards the facilitation of vulnerable households’ strengths, resilience and hope instead of single lectures on financial education by reviewing literature regarding the topic. Engelbrecht addresses questions of financial illiteracy that has long been recognized as a major challenge for the inclusion of financially vulnerable households and communities. Although the paper draws on South African contexts, the topic finds resonance in other contexts across the world. Goran Basic shows in his paper how survivors of the 1990s war in Bosnia and Herzegovina have made reconciliation with their former enemies. The author identifies that in spite of prominent implacability of the respondents the possibility of reconciliation is still present. Basic scores forgiveness as the key element for reconciliation, and this he believes occurs as an exchange of emotions between people. Subhash Chandra Mamidi and Bharath Bhushan Mamidi explain the tragic situation of missing children in India and the possibility of child protection, and address the problems of missing children with active support of civil society and involvement of the NGOs. The authors also suggest practical measures that are replicable, prominent amongst these is the role of civil societies, volunteers, media and ICT.

Azlinda Azman presents in her paper a review of the intertwining and the interlinking nature of three important concepts—coping, resilience and hope in helping individuals, groups and communities to enhance their development, particularly from the social work perspectives. In doing this, the author stresses the concept of “person-in-environment” as the main focus of intervention. Venkat Pulla and Tulshi Kumar Das focus on the condition of a group of people who live in an area of Bangladesh called ‘Haor’ and who constantly suffer by perennial flood. The authors highlight that Haor people have developed their own indigenous strategies to cope with the situation of recurring floods that inundates them every now and then, but they always fight back. They firmly stand up and go ahead with their new mission; the mission of survival. This is an ever-present event in Haor area which goes generation to generation and has become a part of their culture. Antoinette Day and Kalpana Goel in their paper seek to gain an understanding of the role of eco-systems in building hope in the context of children surviving domestic violence. Day and Goel mention hope is an important element in the development of resilience. Although adversity and trauma can have a devastating effect on people and their world views by diminishing hope, these are also the situations that give birth to hope. The authors reiterate the importance of an eco-systems framework that social workers could use to develop resilience, research and practice in building hope in this field. In the final chapter, Venkat Pulla and Richard Hill deal with entirely a contemporary issue. The authors are both researcher and practitioner in resilience and have utilized autoethnography to reflect and to draw from their personal experiences to extend understanding on resilience to begin with and finally attempt to create some transformational pathways to hope.

The book could be highly demanding in the Asian region to address some of the major crises that are created in the 21st century. A paper in this direction has been written by Ndungi Wa Mungai and Venkat Pulla. The authors explore in their paper the challenges and opportunities in addressing the issues of human rights and poverty in Asia in the 21st century as this century is often referred to as the ‘Asian Century’. They claim that social work profession is committed to human rights and has an advocacy role for the disadvantaged and voiceless in society. Supporting and empowering the marginalized contributes to building resilience for the community to demand human rights and a dividend in the economic growth. I found it an entirely a timely approach to challenge the major crises of Asian region in the 21st century.
I think the book is very useful one for the students and scholars of applied social sciences as well as for the social workers and human services workers, particularly in community development field across the globe. On the whole, I would like to congratulate all the authors for their effective endeavor and for the discussions and analysis that have been made in each chapter of the book, which will be a valuable source of knowledge for those who teach and practice community development across the nations. The price of the book seems to be reasonable.

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A Welcome Addition to Literature on Telangana Statehood

K Naresh Kumar

As far as pedigree goes, this book has it in abundance. Identity and Struggle: Telangana and Adivasis– attempts to compile a wide array of thoughts and opinions viz. the rationale for small states, demand for separate state for Telangana, constitutional dimensions and peoples’ agenda for the new state. It also raises the most important aspect which the book attempts to address ‘achieving inclusiveness in development where marginalized communities like tribals get justice (which) is the foremost challenge facing the people of Telangana now’.

For a socially inclusive movement like that of Telangana, which has inexplicably received scant coverage in the national English media over the four decades and more it remained as an issue unresolved, books like these are a welcome addition to the meagre lot available in public domain. In fact, in the new millennium as the Telangana statehood issue gained traction, only around half a dozen books, with varying levels of impact and sales hit the bookshelves, an enigma at best.

This latest one, is a compilation of lectures in memory of B Janardhan Rao, (1956-2002), a noted academic and ardent Telangana protagonist. Rao had articulated forcefully the demand for Telangana centered on five issues – finances, irrigation, water, employment, livelihood and decision making power.

This time around, this 235 page book, brings about a bouquet of perspectives from learned scholars and domain experts from across the country. From the much-in-the-news M Kodanda Ram of the Telangana Joint Action Committee to the venerated Prof. K Jayashankar, the father figure of the decade-and-a-half movement in its recent avatar, the book has much more to offer from other luminaries too. Names that roll off the pages are ones like that of K G Kannabiran, D Narasimha Reddy, J M Girgliani, CH Hanumantha Rao, G Haragopal, Manoranjan Mohanty, Justice Sudershan Reddy and C R Bijoy, all stellar names in their respective work sectors.

This review may not be able to capture the entire range of opinions at one go but the key points that emerge surely deserve mention. K Jayashankar’s paper talks about the need for separate statehood, while K G Kannabiran highlights how the state has been deprived of the best of the best of leadership by killing bright young men and women through encounters. Amrit Srinivasan talks about growing powerlessness of the youth which makes them prone to violence witnessed in several regions affected by poverty and eroding democratic spaces. Kodanda Ram makes the point that given the historical experience with violence, Telangana society as a whole treated violence as a major obstacle for wider participation in development.

J M Girgliani concludes in his lecture that the saga of tribals is one of weak against the powerful like the ‘oil lamp and the storm’. The impact of economic reforms and its exacerbation of regional disparities is the focus of D Narasimha Reddy’s address. Manoranjan Mohanty attempts to highlight a broad theoretical framework for pondering over the identity politics and a separate statehood movements from the lens of autonomy and self-determination.

The other notable contributions include Justice B Sudershan Reddy’s paper which examines the constitutional dimensions of the division of powers between Union of India and the states which is only quasi federal in nature in his opinion. On the vital issue of tribal rights, an interesting insight is provided by C R Bijoy who says that Adivasi struggles have resulted in redrawing contours of democracy and governance.
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ISSN: 2332-6832 (Print) ISSN: 2332-6840 (Online)

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CONTENTS

Editorial

Articles:

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Masateru Higashida, Menikralage Gamini Illangasingha, M. R. Shantha Kumara
1 - 8

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ISSN: 2332-6832 (Print) ISSN: 2332-6840 (Online)