

EDITORIAL

In this short life, when we grow up, we ultimately remember some good moments and some bad moments. The rest of the mundane things are forgotten. While everyone deserves a good life, with pleasant moments and good memories to cherish, many children still face adversities, be it hunger, neglect, abuse, humiliation and discrimination. To make children's lives better, it is not just the responsibility of parents and teachers but also of the State. National Child policies and institutional measures are there to protect children and ensure child rights are already in place, yet children face many adversities.

'Childhood Matters' is a humble effort to share, sensitize and disseminate some issues, concerns and challenges faced by children, but more important are the information, knowledge, awareness, ideas and strategies to be shared on various aspects of childhood to the broader audiences- not just children, parents, teachers, but society at large.

This issue of 'Childhood Matters' covers range of interesting topics, starting with a narrative of the child abuse and how well it was handled by the guest editor. Informative articles on child nutrition and anemia and how to overcome it, class room dynamics and the role of a teacher. Interesting and thought provoking articles on the mental health of teenagers in disturbed families, well-being of children and childhood stories. Sensitisation of transgenders by breaking the binary understanding of gender and some beautiful poems in English and Hindi. I am sure all of you will enjoy reading and sharing with your friends.

With the growing intolerance, individuality, and self-centeredness, there is a need for exposure to the diversity of our society. India is the most culturally and ethnically diverse; children at a young age from 8 years to 18 years, from secondary school to higher secondary schools, can be taken for Bharat Darshan every summer and winter holidays through schools. I still remember my school excursions as part of scouts and guides; what fun and memories!

Under the National Education Policy, the education department can make it a part of the school curriculum, where children can be taken to the length and breadth of the country and, by the time they are adults, have seen most of the nation.

Dr Sunita Reddy
Founder Chair, AIF
Editor of 'Childhood Matters'



We have seen, in general, people from north India see all south Indians as Madrasis, not knowing there are five different states, four different languages and many dialects. Similarly, from the south, ignorance can persist, and many mainland Indians don't even realise that there are eight beautiful, bountiful, ethnically diverse North Eastern States that are considered homogenous.

I am dreaming and wishing for something every child can experience. With his magic wand, the Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi can start 'dedicated trains' for children 'Bal Vahana' painted with colours- India's myriad cultures. Every year with the 'Bal Yatras', the child should be able to see the diversity in food, clothing, art, artefacts, architecture, dance, music, topography, people and their hospitality. These excursions can be curated to give different kinds of experiences to the children.

Though there are School exchange programs, primarily in private schools, where parents can afford and send their children for annual excursions for a week within India or abroad, but the children in government schools too can be given an opportunity with the above idea of Bharat darshan. Rural children can visit and stay with urban kids, and urban kids stay with rural counterparts. The rural kids will get inspired to go to the cities and make their careers, and the urban kids will understand the hardships they go through to compete and excel in life despite all odds. The urban kids will then value what they have, the privileges and comforts their parents have given, and possibly crib a little less. Equally, they become tolerant of other cultures and take pride in the nation's diversity.

I hope to see the dream come true sooner, as children cannot wait and grow in a blink. My kids did.