

## Editorial

Dear Readers,

It gives me immense pleasure to share our fourth issue of the digital magazine 'Childhood Matters'. As we celebrate the 75th year of independence, it set me thinking that we are still far from ensuring the safety and security of our children and giving them joy, happiness and pleasures of growing up. The increase in crimes against children perturbs every rational mind. COVID-19 further aggravated the problem, and child abuse is now a glaring pandemic. The guest editorial by Itishree touches a raw nerve by bringing the dark reality of children being abused every minute. Despite having the most stringent laws like POCSO, the crimes continue unabated. Thus, the need to educate, sensitise and make all of us aware of child rights.

Further, the touchy prose by Soumi brings out the pain of being born a girl. Priyanka, a competition winner, wrote a beautiful article on child rights. This issue also presents facts and figures related to child marriage. Even though child marriage is legally banned, this practice continues in many states, burying their childhood and dreams. Isn't it time that we all realise the sufferings many of our children go through and do something about it in our capacity, starting from introspecting how we treat our children and the children around our neighbourhood? It just takes a few minutes and a few resources to make a child happy and childhood joyful before the phase is over.

While Ramneek and Christy's articles reveal the true meaning of 'freedom' and 'independence', Aditi and Sangeeta create awareness and sensitivity about children who are differently abled 'divyang' and the uniqueness of each child. It is crucial to understand each child as a gift of nature, not to compare and burden them with the adult's expectations, but to give love and encouragement to flourish. Habiba's article questions another fascinating aspect of assessing the abilities and skills of children. Can we evaluate them accurately? Have you seen the most humble and quiet child making it big when grown up and the most naughty child going utterly silent as they grow up? One can only guess... what journey they must have been through and who is responsible around them—leaving all of us to remember

our childhood passing through good and bad phases.

In the continuation of the earlier article, Indira brings out more on National Education Policy and Preetha's article on 'Let's talk money' to understand the value of money and handle it early on, to earn and spend wisely, which unfortunately is never taught in any school! It is time for the school curriculums to teach children, perhaps at the secondary education level, to be 'money-wise', as each of us, be it a rickshaw puller or a multimillionaire, have to deal with monies. Another pertinent issue is raised by Bharat on the impact of climate change, especially on children and future generations. We must be mindful of what we will leave for our children and engage in environmental movements. It is followed by a beautiful article from the heart of a loving and doting father of a girl. He talks about the dilemmas and joy of raising a daughter, a daughter who has a mind of her own and keeps communication open. This prose sets an example of building confidence and healthy relations between parents and children; a must lesson on parenting tips. I am sure you will all enjoy the three beautiful Hindi poems by Sanjeev, Pawan and Pranjal on various topics, a treat for our senses.

We look forward to your feedback and various contributions to the forthcoming issues of 'Childhood Matters'. This effort is a drop in the ocean to sensitise on the issues we are grappling with...I am sure you will add a precious drop.

With warm regards and best wishes to all our readers,

Dr Sunita Reddy  
Founder Chair, AIF

