

Preface and Acknowledgments

Children are the future of a nation. And the development of children at the physical, mental, psychological, emotional, intellectual, or moral level is contingent upon the fulfillment of certain basic conditions such as adequate nutrition, medical care, quality education, a happy home, a safe environment, and the loving care or attention of elderly people. It is only then that we can expect children to blossom into good citizens and to contribute to society. In this sense, child safety, welfare, and well-being are of prime importance for a nation. In developed countries, issues related to children receive considerable attention, not only in terms of theory, but also in terms of practice. Research, legislations, and programs about children are generally followed by their effective implementations. The case is not so with the developing nations where legislations, policies, and programs about children are dismally few; and those taken up often go unimplemented or poorly implemented. It is documented that an incredibly large number of children across the world are not safe. Their welfare and well-being are left at the mercy or whim of the respective authority.

Child abuse and neglect are alarmingly on the rise throughout the globe. They come in various forms and guises, and pose various risks to the victims. Documented evidence shows the terrible consequences of this evil on their physical, psychological, and social health. They often suffer from low self-esteem and emotional instability, resulting in their erratic personality, social maladjustment, poor academic performance, and sometimes in their proneness to self-inflicted physical injury. Studies show that many intervention programs were found to be beneficial in helping the victims out of their problems. Few researches on child welfare and safety have been carried out in the developing countries. The problem of child abuse and neglect is a lot more complex in India than in many developing countries because of its huge children population, its enormous socio-economic diversity, as well as its varied cultural beliefs and practices concerning child rearing. The federal government should do more for the child protection issue and act as such. This issue has so far been given little importance, as proven by poor budget allocation.

The general aim of this document is to present the emerging features and measures of child safety, welfare, and their overall well-being. It thus intends to share the emerging issues with policy-makers, researchers, academics, and professionals working at a grass-root level for creating awareness about child rights and for their implementation. Experienced professionals and academics from developed and developing countries contributed chapters to this document on a wide range of issues. A number of new issues are covered in this book, which were not addressed by the previous competitive literature. The issues covered fall under four broad parts as follows:

Part I: Nature and Extent of Child Abuse and Neglect

This part is comprises seven chapters focusing on the nature of child abuse and neglect in different contexts, for example, child sexual abuse in trusted relationships, cyberbullying, conflict and its psychosocial consequences, problems of corporal punishment, and male circumcision (Chaps. 2–8). In Chap. 2, Kim Oates traces how various developments of understanding child protection have taken place in the past 50 years after the publication of the Battered Child Syndrome article by Kempe and his colleagues in 1962, and discusses changes in our perspective to see abuse as a children's rights issue. Rebecca P. Ang highlights an emerging issue in Chap. 3 and describes how children and adolescents get attracted to the virtual world and indulge in the high risk behavior of cyberbullying. In Chap. 4, Sibnath Deb and Mrinalkanti Ray present the nature and extent of child abuse and neglect in India, its impact, the risk factors involved, and finally discuss the poor implementation of appropriate legislations. Practice of corporal punishment in Pakistan and related legislations are the focus of Chap. 5 by George W. Holden and Rose Ashraf. In Chap. 6, Roopesh B.N. explains the impact of child sexual abuse in general and considers the children who experience the same problem from a trusted relationship and their responses to the assault. Waheeda Khan, in Chap. 7, holds out the disastrous effects of the Kashmir conflict on the lives of innocent children and calls for the need for immediate attention of the government to resolve this conflict. In Chap. 8, Ester I.J. Erlings speaks about the variations in legislations of different countries about the ritual of male circumcision, raises concern for the protection of child rights in terms of physical integrity, and suggests the reforms of legislations.

Part II: Child Rights and Its Practice

There are three chapters in this part (Chaps. 9–11), which emphasize the rights of children with respect to nutrition, health, and education. They treat in detail the nuances of different national and international legislations. In Chap. 9,

Bernadette J. Madrid and Dian Traisci-Marandola outline the sorry state of health of mothers and children even 15 years after the inauguration of the Millennium Development Goals. Inaccessibility to primary education and privation of basic nutrition are other issues addressed in this chapter, finally arguing for basic minimal facilities for all children, such as nutrition, education, and health care. Jagannath Pati, in Chap. 10, deals with the subject of right to information versus right to confidentiality with respect to child adoption and discusses issues and concerns in case of root search of adopted children and the challenges involved in adoption. In Chap. 11, Vimla Veeraraghavan underscores the importance of the Right to Education Act, 2009, for ensuring compulsory education for all children up to class VIII as a legal right and explains the role of teachers in imparting quality education to bring out the talents of the children.

Part III: Rights of Vulnerable Children

The specialty of this part consists in the presentation of issues and perspectives of some categories of vulnerable children, for example, the rights of children with disability, children diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, the problems of children working as child laborers or in precarious circumstances like disaster and adoption. There are seven chapters in this part (Chaps. 12–18). In Chap. 12, Seema Sahay, Archana Verma, Suhas Shewale, and Murugesan Periyasamy emphasize the need for protection of rights of children affected by HIV/AIDS and recommend child's rights to preventive health care, education, and life. In Chap. 13, Nilanjana Sanyal throws light on the challenges that arise after the adoption of a child, raises her concerns for vulnerabilities of adopted children to abuse and neglect, and appeals to adopted parents to be resilient enough to bring up adopted children well. N.K. Chadda and Vandona Gambhir Chopra, in Chap. 14, examine the status of child labor in India, decrying the denial of basic rights of working children regarding survival, development, and participation. They warn us of the adverse effects of working condition on child health. In Chap. 15, Prerna Sharma critically discusses the rights of children with disability and the violation of their rights, also pointing out the barriers encountered in ensuring their rights. Chitra Shah, a social activist working with disabled children, recounts her firsthand experience, in Chap. 16, with regard to the status of disabled children, the stigma attached to disability, and emphasizes the need for community-based intervention program to prevent the abandonment of children with special needs. In Chap. 17, Subhasis Bhadra brings to our notice the challenges faced by children in the wake of natural disasters like Tsunami and suggests a range of psychosocial measures based on his working experience with the survivors. In Chap. 18, Neela Dabir, K. Anuradha, and Raji Satyamurthy write about the benefits of innovative and cost-effective approaches for the education of marginalized children who are mostly deprived of basic primary education in India. The action research was implemented by two

nongovernment organizations (NGOs)—Rainbow Homes (schools for street girls) and Door Step Schools (coeducational schools for the children of underprivileged families) in Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Delhi.

Part IV: Protective Measures

This part contains eight chapters that describe field-based experiences of the researchers on the protection of child rights in different circumstances, for example, child custody cases, mandatory reporting, sexual abuse, and preventive measures (Chaps. 19–26). Jenny Gray, in Chap. 19, emphasizes the need for setting up an effective system for child protection by the State government following multidisciplinary approaches. In Chap. 20, Stefanie Platt, Juhayna Ajami, Nicole Kluemper, Robert Geffner, Morgan Shaw, and Alexandra Assalley argue for the adoption of appropriate evaluative measures for assessing allegations about child abuse in custody cases and discuss challenges in the investigation process of allegations. Child abuse and neglect differ in nature from case to case, a point addressed by Ben Mathews in Chap. 21. In his view, legal and policy response should be based on the gravity and nature of abuse and needs. In Chap. 22, Sue Foley, Jenny Rose, and Liana Lowenstein explain the needs for recognition of the views of children and the importance of listening to them. Lucia C.A. Williams and Sabrina M. D’Affonseca, in Chap. 23, agree with the latest legal provisions in Brazil concerning child sexual abuse and discuss the crucial role of the media in bringing to light the incidences of sexual abuse. In Chap. 24, Bharti Ali provides a pen picture of the deprivation of 20 % children from their basic rights to name and nationality. She states that unless child protection becomes an indicator for national development, the problem will persist or will get worse. In Chap. 25, Lina Acca Mathew speaks in favor of a multidisciplinary approach for protection of children from sexual abuse in India. According to her, the NGOs and CBOs need to engage with the issue in order to ensure effective pre-trial and trial procedure in the interest of the child. Finally, in Chap. 26, Mala Bhandari vigorously defends the protection of child rights at the grass-root level, pins down the missing links in local institutions, and offers suggestions for improving the situation.

Although this document covers a wide range of issues related to child safety and welfare, it is very important to do further research on those issues about which we do not have much evidence. Evidence would help us to understand better the issues and to adopt corrective measures. The issues which call for particular attention of the researchers include:

- Evaluation of various government social welfare measures like Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), and Panchayati Raj Institutions for child protection, in addition to various vocational trainings and rehabilitation programs for street children, trafficked children, and child laborers.

- Follow-up study on girl child marriage and child trafficking in order to understand the kind of adversities they experience.
- Challenges in the recovery of trafficked children and integrating them into mainstream society.
- Benefits and challenges of disadvantaged children under institutional care and their mental health.
- Knowledge and perception of the community about corporal punishment, sexual abuse of children, and its impact.
- Challenges in implementing child welfare-related legislations like Protection of Children from *Sexual Offences Act, 2012*, Right to Education Act 2009, *Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2006*, *The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006*, The Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2012 and their benefits.

Some of the core issues related to safety, welfare, and well-being of disadvantaged children like children engaged in domestic work, street children, trafficked children, juvenile delinquents held in observation homes, and children living with single parent are left out of this document. Another volume is necessary to address these issues.

It is hoped that this book will prove useful for psychology, law, social sciences (sociology, anthropology, education, and women studies, for example), and medical sciences (nursing, community medicine, psychiatry, pediatric, forensic medicine, for example). It is also hoped that the book will be greatly useful to NGOs, policy makers, researchers, and law enforcement agencies working with children.

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