

Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

Usha S. Nayar (ed.). Sage Publications, B-1/I-1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044, India. 2012. 363 pp. Price: Rs 1150. ISBN 978-81-321-0965-5.

The first glance at the book's cover reveals dynamism, hinting towards the nature of the contents within. The editor mentions that she brought together the contents in an attempt to dissolve steadfast disciplinary boundaries to better understanding of the nuances in the area and to outline a shift in perspective for mental health of children and adolescents towards child rights. At the outset, she states that universally children seek a nurturing environment to develop themselves, their self-confidence and identity. Her assertion follows that more vulnerable children require adequate support. This is a frequent assertion by mental health practitioners, working with children and adolescents, and one wonders how the book might do justice to the assertion.

A look at the contents reveals that contributors are from across the globe reflecting the perspectives and contexts that the book spans. This reflects the professional network of Nayar, who is currently on the faculty panel of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India and The New School University, New York, USA. Her involvement with child and adolescent mental health at the national and global levels is reflected in the various focal areas of the book. The paucity of Southeast Asian and non-Indian Asian perspectives is disappointing in a volume of this quality.

The very first chapter of the book is about understanding the costs and cost-effectiveness of mental health interventions at various levels. Several thoughts

regarding the economics of interventions that may have transiently crossed a clinician's mind are defined, explained and discussed in detail. The chapter puts important economic issues and concepts under the spotlight, providing greater clarity about these issues to the reader.

The next section is titled 'Clinical case studies'. With this title one expects that case studies would be central to the thesis of the chapters on depression and on suicidality; however, they are presented as adjunct. The case vignettes, however, are helpful as illustrative snapshots. 'Clinical contexts' may have been a more apt section heading. The content of the chapters presents an overview of depression and suicidality with enough detailing.

Following this are special contexts which include HIV/AIDS; violence and antisocial behaviour; mental health for the media generation – some of the issues that mental health practitioners working with children and adolescents may find challenging in their practice. The lucid lists and flowcharts in the chapter on HIV/AIDS, serve as points to consolidate the reading on existing and proposed pathways to care and policies for care that are presented. The sensitivity to social, cultural and economic factors that is evident in many chapters focusing on complex issues, is also evident in understanding violence and antisocial behaviour in Norwegian youngsters. Attention to the national ethos in understanding the contribution at meso and micro level factors is evidence of this sensitivity. Current day children and adolescents have better know-how of media and gadgets. This gives adults an opportunity to learn about the same by following the youngsters' lead. This is important before attempting discussion on benefits and risks of media usage.

A section on schools and school climate in a volume on child and adolescent mental health indicates the need for practitioners and all other stakeholders to understand the school-goer's psyche. All three chapters in the section facilitate an awareness of the issues and processes involved in optimally supporting the school-goers' overall development albeit in the context of the school, through different perspectives. Cornilissen's thesis on why the current Indian educational system is the way it is opens enquiry along unconventional yet essential lines. One error that catches the eye is the ex-

planation of negative reinforcement. The section highlights the inherent potential to damage the developing youngster with insensitive and imbalanced schooling approaches. It leaves the reader with questions about the imminent action that is urgently required to contain or reverse this situation.

Effective child welfare through upholding the rights of the child and family through cultural sensitivity and greater participation in making decisions about child welfare for the child concerned, are strikingly concordant themes in the chapters on 'Child welfare'. Traditional and novel approaches to child welfare have been described and discussed here. The reading is informative on multiple perspectives for those professionals who may not be actively involved in the process of child welfare. It also naturally leads to a curiosity to know more about the Indian scenario. It would have been invaluable to have a chapter in this section about current policies and practices in India.

A crucial issue in today's world – the capacity to care, has been addressed in a comprehensive manner by the 'equilintegration' (EI) theory in the section on 'Interventions and innovative practices'. It is remarkable to know of a modern theory that attempts to address the socio-emotional issue of care with due sensitivity to formative and contextual variables. Ancient Indian concepts and constructs, such as Yoga find a prominent mention in the proposed and executed interventions reflecting not just a national, but global trend to rediscover cultural and traditional wisdom under layers of industrialization. Appreciating the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of youngsters and actively using the same in theorizing and planning interventions is a common recommendation for mental health practitioners. This book provides live examples of the recommendation in action. The concluding section on 'Country focus – status, policies and children's voices' strongly reiterates how vulnerable children are and how responsible adults are for them, at all levels.

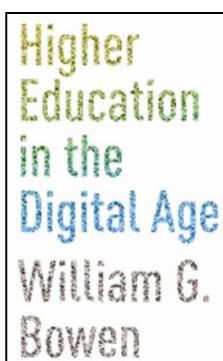
The sense of advocacy for the rights of the child and adolescent that the editor evokes in the Preface is a prominent vein across the chapters. Poverty and difficult economic situations have been significant lenses through which many issues and interventions have been sensitively viewed. I infer that the editor and the

contributors have done justice to the editor's initial assertion that more vulnerable children require adequate support, as succinctly as possible in 363 pages.

As I close the book, I feel like I have had a personally guided helicopter tour across the globe gaining perspective on focal and generic issues imperative for sensitive practice of child and adolescent mental health. The reader's horizons are left expanding with reference to mental health practice with children and adolescents with excellent opportunities for cross-cultural learning. Nayar's statement that 'This book is a personal and professional journey of understanding mental health concerns of children and adolescents', rings through the volume. I consider this an essential addition to the reading list of any child and adolescent mental health practitioner.

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Higher Education in the Digital Age. William G. Bowen. Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ 08540, USA. 2013. xviii + 173 pp. Price: US\$ 26.95.

William G. Bowen, President of Princeton University during the years 1972 to 1988, has first-hand experience of a range of issues in academics. In addition to his career as an economist at Princeton, after his years in academic administration Bowen joined the Mellon Foundation where, among other things, he helped develop the on-line digital journal archive JSTOR. His leadership of one of the major centres of learning in the world, his involvement in initiatives

that have been at the forefront of the digital revolution in academics worldwide, and his scholarly analysis of many issues in education make this book not just insightful and deep, but also important and essential reading for all those with a concern for access and equity in higher education.

For the main part, this somewhat unusual book is a transcript of the Tanner Lectures on Human Values that were delivered by Bowen at Stanford University in 2012. In addition to two lectures – that are reproduced here with their conversational informality, there are additional sections that include the reactions and responses of a number of other distinguished academics.

The first of Tanner Lectures by Bowen deals with the 'cost disease' of the US higher education system. Over the years, there has been a steady increase in tuition fees both in private as well as publicly funded institutions at all universities. How the rising costs have impacted the access to education and its efficacy form the various themes explored in the first chapter. The second lecture focuses on effective methods of using the internet for carrying out instruction as a way of addressing the cost issue through MOOCs, the 'massive online open courses', that have been sweeping the internet in the past few years. Such a drastic change in pedagogic style has wider implications, and Bowen discusses various points that range from mundane issues like certification, validation and credit transfers, to a deeper discussion on the role of technology in educational transformation.

The commentaries on the lectures bring in additional points of view. Howard Gardner, professor of psychology at Harvard, draws attention to the value of the peer group, where learning is reinforced in a community of students spending time together. Stanford's President John L. Hennessy analyses the cost issue, with particular reference to how rising costs effectively debar students from completing a degree. Andrew Delbanco, professor of literature at Columbia, comments on the lower efficacy of MOOCs in the light of the loss of the classroom experience. The last of the comments, by Stanford professor of engineering Daphne Koller, extends the second Tanner Lectures by bringing in the perspective of a teacher who more or less devised the MOOC and who is playing

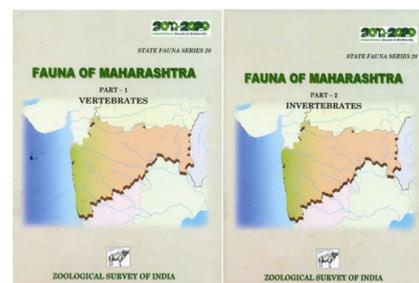
such an important role in implementing it on such an impressive scale through Coursera, the company she co-founded.

The central message of the book, one that is made repeatedly by Bowen and reinforced by the commentators is that, the only way in which education will be both affordable and effective in the coming years is if we learn to use technology efficiently, to blend on-line instruction with traditional styles of pedagogy. This message is simple enough – even self-evident in some ways given the manner in which the classroom has evolved in recent years; but as other reviewers of the book have noted, the discussion is relevant not just within the higher education community, but also among policy-makers. It is therefore important that the arguments that are articulated by someone as insightful and as concerned about education as Bowen have a wider audience.

The diverse audience that should find this book interesting would include teachers of course, but also those interested in the organization of education, university administrators, government and potential employers. And indeed anyone with a concern for the future of education itself, and its evolution at this time.

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Fauna of Maharashtra: Parts I and II. Published by the Director, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata 700 053. 2012. 480 and 1129 pp. Price: Rs 1900 and Rs 2250 respectively.

The fauna of a region is important not only from systematics and ecological viewpoints, but also from agriculture,