

Editorial

The present issue of the LJSS is a celebration of diversity in themes and spaces from where these mosaic of ideas emerge. We are presenting articles ranging from discussions in the domains of academia, aging, organisational development, teaching-learning, and social welfare. Similarly, the authors with the diverse themes represent various thoughts and cultures from Sweden to Asia and South Africa. The Editor has attempted to provide a platform for the authors to spark further debate on the themes considering the fact that they are at best, unconventional.

The article by **Pillay, Ramasamy-Gurayah** and **Naude**, titled “Implementation of Organisational Development to Improve Management of Public Schools in the Umlazi District, Kwazulu-Natal” is an empirical study aimed at determining the effectiveness of organisational development strategies currently being employed in public schools in South Africa. Besides, it further examines the perception of educators and managers towards the use of professional, organisational tools to strengthen and improve the standard of management at schools. Very simple and direct, the paper should motivate the reader, especially academicians to consider employing progressive strategies available in the industry, besides empirical means, to assess and improve teaching-learning strategies in public education system.

“Aging, Narrative and the Elderly” by **Nelson** is a case study based on her post-doctoral work on institutionalised aged in a typical home for the aged in Kerala. The study nuances on their everyday living, their perceptions of being there and the transition they undergo, within homes for the aged, portrayed as a ‘conflicted site of the stranded individual in a community’. As a stark reminder of the effects of ‘panopticism’, the paper succeeds in highlighting the oppressive nature of the context and the constraining dynamics within such institutions, originally designed to be a space for palliation and dignified living. The study has implications for policy formulation on old-age homes and practices therein that could help improve services meant for the aged.

The study by **Karlsson** and **Vamstad** titled “Trust and Social Work in Kerala - Understanding Links and Improving Conditions” is a comparison of generalized trust between the Indian state of Kerala and Sweden. Based on secondary data drawn from the international research on trust and social capital, the theoretical paper reflects on lived experiences, personal observations and interviews with native Keralites. There might be merit in Karlsson’s etic observations about ‘ethnic diversity being an impediment to building effective welfare institutions’, besides the *Malayalees*’ ‘dignified’ preoccupation with equality and attempts to ‘defeat hierarchical caste structures.’ With special attention given to the significance of social and economic equality, ethnic diversity and justice institutions in moderating trust, the study has the potential to improve social work. This study is unique for its treatment of finer aspects of human life that rarely appeals to the Kerala context, where trust and social capital are part and parcel of social living, against the preoccupation with individualism in the West. The study perhaps in hindsight undervalues the contribution of communities and the myriad of castes in the East, in attending to the welfare needs of the public as against the active engagement of Western Governments. Other variables that perhaps that needs serious consideration are resources and the nature of communities, over-expanding in the East, versus their shrinkage in the West.

The penultimate article, is an empirical study titled “Team Effectiveness: A Case Study on Teachers in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Kerala” by **Jose, Sankar** and **Nair**. This technical paper studies the complex aspects that moderate teamwork in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). The present study attempts to assess the team effectiveness among the academicians in HEIs in South India. The study adopted a multistage selection process done in four phases – considering the regions, types of institution, types of department and individuals, besides adopting a mixed method approach – sequential explanatory. It was found that sub-dimensions of teamwork such as task clarity, support, accountability, cohesion, confrontation and collaboration were found to vary significantly across the type of institutions. The study highlights the possibility of focussing on these aspects of teamwork as well as team-building to better the interactions and quality in Higher Education.

The final article, titled Impact of Mentoring in Social Work Education, by **Dinakaral** and **Lokesh** is an empirical study that creatively borrows on the moorings of the Blue Whale fad. In this quasi-experimental study, a group of post-graduate students of

social work were ‘challenged’ on the lines of the Blue Whale strategy, to undertake progressively difficult, mutually-agreed upon tasks based on real-life situations, over a short span of time, in this case, perhaps even over a week-end with definite competency markers. The interesting aspect of the study is perhaps, the perceptive and creative application of subaltern strategies, and evidence-based research to the context of social work education to deliver better learning experiences and still better outcomes. The same has prospects of expansion of such strategies to all fields of higher education.

The last two studies based on the fast expanding and debated sphere of higher education assume significance, given the fact the higher education could do better with effective strategies – for teaching and human resource management, besides organisational development, as mentioned in the Kwazulu-Natal public school experiment.

Taking the opportunity to thank the contributors especially the overseas authors from South Africa and Sweden, for their immense patience while waiting, working and reframing the papers to suit the requirements of the Loyola Journal. My special appreciation to **Dr. Elizabeth B. Mathew**, a generous Lady, and my teacher, for her abundant support. As I sign off on this editorial page today, I take satisfaction in introducing and wishing luck to **Prakash Pillai R.**, the new Editor. Adios!

Sonny Jose Ph.D.

