

Editorial

As editors, we are pleased that the current issue of IJSRI includes research that gives voice to children, to college students and to women in the workforce. This issue includes contributions on transitioning in the school system; young people's expectations from their tertiary education; social inclusion and justice for women in the workforce; and on law and policy on vessel source pollution. All of the four papers highlight major social concerns, as we prepare for life after the Covid 19-pandemic. Therefore, we dedicate this editorial to highlight potential research areas and invite authors to contribute towards socio-economic cohesion and prosperity through research evidence. We welcome conversations with researchers and we provide mentoring and support, to enable authors to publish.

Dr Ahmed Adham Abdulla's paper on jurisdiction of Maldives to prevent vessel source marine pollution, is timely, highlighting existing law and gaps in Maldivian law as a flag state, and expectations for local jurisdiction to meet international legal obligations. Addressing gaps in laws, policy development, implementation and monitoring for prevention of marine, land and air vessel source pollution, is essential to prevent pollution and mitigate for climate change adaptation. Both are areas of research which are prioritised by IJSRI for publication.

Currently Maldivian women's participation in the labour force is at 42%, indicating that 58% of women remain outside the labour force. Majority of these women do not work because of spousal and social expectations for women to take on the lion's share of domestic chores and care responsibilities. However, Maldivian women, already outnumber Maldivian men who complete tertiary education. Thus, it can be expected that more women, given the right support, can enter the workforce, and contribute to socio-economic development. Organisations, hence, need to adapt to the needs and demands of women, who join the workforce at different points in their lifespan, with a wider range of expectations for better work-life balance, flexible work arrangements, and affirmative action to ensure gender equity, and fulfilling lives for both men and women. Aishath Shifna's quantitative correlational research on social factors which hinder women's ability to succeed in Maldivian IT sector demonstrates the need to work at school, university, employers, family, community and society levels, to address gender inequality, gender stereotyping, and patriarchy, thus ensuring the nation benefits from the demographic dividend of well-educated women working in collaboration with gender sensitive employers to shift the perspective of women in gainful employment. Further research on law and

policy responses to enable women to access and to develop their capacity to participate in economic and social life is needed, to address gender inequalities in opportunities and in national socio-economic outcomes. Research on gender equality, and human rights monitoring to ensure equal opportunities to economic, social, cultural rights and rights to family life, to love and care are needed.

Young people, who are unemployed often miss opportunities to develop work-relevant skills and experiences, thus can end up in long term low wage employment, underemployment or in unemployment, costing the nation in lost revenue and increased government welfare pay outs. When young people lack communication, relationship and resilience skills, this impacts their family life. As young people spend more time in higher education than previously, it is important that young people gain work experience and skills required of them for employment, family life and citizenship, while studying. Hidayah Zahir's research on what Maldivian college students seek from their education for 21st century work and life highlights gaps in provision and how to meet the students' and society's needs, through planning, preparation, training and support by tertiary education leaders. Action research on policy implementation and planning at tertiary educational institutions to ensure graduate and employer expectations are met through college education can provide the research evidence required to facilitate efficient and successful implementation within local contexts.

It is well known that socio-economic support and transitional support enable children from poor and migrant families to succeed in secondary education. Jannath Shareef's qualitative study on transitional experiences of Maldivian students in a higher secondary school in Male' highlight the need for positive communication between students and care givers, necessity for additional work on developing teacher student relationships, career guidance and preparation for enrolment, including study skills training, and financial aid for the poorer students. Further research is needed on development of policy, planning and implementation of transition experiences at school level and at the whole school system level.

Other research areas relevant for the post pandemic transition to a new-normal life, could be to study the impact of various pandemic related state welfare payments, how these have been utilised by the recipients and the effect of planned withdrawal of these payments as we come out of the pandemic. Another area of research could be on how health data management has improved as a result of the necessity to share pandemic related statistics daily

on a global platform, and to explore features of international health systems that can be used locally to connect service users, and service providers.

While the last 18 months of the COVID-19 pandemic have been hard on our colleagues, and on our authors, we are proud of the work we have achieved, including putting IJSRI on its own online platform as an open access journal. We look forward to continue to promote research on current social concerns and interests.

Dr. Mohamed Adil

Dr. Sheema Saeed

Dr. Ahmed Shahid

(IJSRI editorial team)