Preface

The human family, universal and diverse as it is, represents the complexity of a global phenomenon that escapes scientists’ attention despite the rhetoric of the Universal Declaration of Rights and varied governmental policies and programs. The family, metaphorically as well as institutionally, symbolizes the hopes and despair of humanity. The postindustrial society has not yet invented a viable mechanism that will sustain the viability and functionality of this universal institution. It can be argued that family needs are both a cause and consequence of massive societal changes that warrant urgent attention before a catastrophic explosion irreparably disrupts the main fabric of society.

*Family-Centered Policies and Practices* uniquely offers a postmodern perspective on the global experience of a universal concern: a conceptual and practice-based framework to building family supports and policy. Not many books are written in this field with a focus on international family issues, especially signifying their integrative role and patterns in a fast-changing world. This book assumes a special relevance as globalization and its forces continue to impact intra- and interpersonal relationships.

The main body of the text includes twelve well-organized chapters with facts and analyses pertaining to different aspects of family-centered policies and practices. The background, resources, and talents that helped develop concrete scenarios of practice and policy ably represent a new awareness that skill-based helping disciplines can fruitfully utilize in teaching, research, policy, and planning. Citizens, community leaders, social activists, and policy makers across the national and interna-
tional boundaries need frameworks that truly work. Family-centered policy practice is a viable approach to social development and community building. The chapters unfold family systems, their institutional and preventive aspects; globalization and its forces; social and economic sustainability; differential approaches, policy and practices, and discourses; roles of advocates, practitioners, and helping professionals; and the imminent challenges that abound at the dawn of the new millennium.

The major strengths of this study include its interdisciplinarity and focus on universal issues with a unique emphasis on family-centered policy and practice. Social scientists have used many frameworks for different purposes but—barring a few studies—none has ever encompassed issues, approaches, and contexts that universalize family policy practice as a veritable vehicle of global development and uplift.

In my considered professional judgment, this book makes a significant contribution in a hitherto neglected but fertile field of research. Its significance cannot be overstated. It fills a daunting vacuum that is both intriguing and challenging.

Brij Mohan, Editor
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